

**Atlanta Chapter,
American Theatre Organ Society**

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www.theatreorgans.com/georgia/atlanta/atos/

*AC/ATOS is recognized as a tax-exempt organization under
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elfields@yahoo.com*

***Thanks Jim Ingram
and Jeff Ayers***

The Atlanta Chapter would like to thank Jim Ingram, former President of Allen Organ Studios of Atlanta, and Jeff Ayers, current President of Allen Organ Studios, for their wonderful support of the Chapter's Strand Allen theatre organ project.

Jim picked up the Allen 317EX from the Strand and transported it all the way to Columbus Ohio. While there, he picked up the GW4 for return to the Strand, 11 speaker cabinets from two different locations, and assisted Tom Hamilton, new owner of the 317EX, in the installation of his instrument. Jim drove over 1500 miles and donated four days of his time to the Atlanta Chapter only asking for reimbursement of his expenses.

Jeff Ayers prepared the appraisals for both organs at no charge, donated eight deflectors to the Strand installation and a whole day of technical service time by his technician, Alan Buchanan. He also loaned us an SR5 pedal cabinet!

Both of these fine men have gone beyond the call of duty over the years supporting ACATOS and we offer a sincere **THANK YOU!!**

Welcome to Atlanta

ATOS President/CEO and Atlanta Chapter member Ken Double has moved to Atlanta. His new address is:

Ken Double
281-798-6205
1615 Defoors Walk NW
Atlanta, GA 30318-3005
atosprez1@gmail.com

Welcome New Member

Phil Haga
423-383-3519
3449 Highway 126
Blountville, TN 37617-4525
philhaga@btes.tv

Thanks for the Donations

Ron & Donna Carter
William & Pam Hudson

Don't forget the continuing need for donations to make our \$300 per month payments on the Allen digital theatre organ being used at the Strand Theatre. Although we have traded John McCall's Allen 317EX on the newer and larger Allen GW4, we are still obligated to continue the monthly payments to John. Make your checks payable to:

"Atlanta Chapter, ATOS". Enter "Allen Organ" on the memo line and mail to: Atlanta Chapter, ATOS, Attention: Treasurer, P.O. Box 426, Marietta, GA 30061-0426.

Bucky says "Thank You"

to the following for all their invaluable help at the August meeting: Svetlana Saterlee, Tom Cannon, Mike Knight, David Bell, Steve Worthington, Dan Angerstein, James Thrower and -- the ATOS Cleaning Crew -- Donna Parker & Nathan Avakian.

Atlanta Chapter's Youngest Member Attends Meeting

We are pleased that our new member, fourteen-year-old Joshua Dill of Albany, GA, attended his first Atlanta Chapter meeting at Bucky's on August 22nd. We enjoyed getting to know Josh, his mother and his grandmother and hope he can be a regular attendee.

"Wings" at the Strand — August 29th, 3:00 pm

Ron Carter to accompany the first Academy Award winning motion picture *Wings* at the Earl Smith Strand Theatre, Sunday afternoon, August 29th at 3 pm. Special ticket prices for ATOS and AGO members of only \$5. Come hear the newly-installed Allen Four-Manual George Wright Digital Theatre Organ. This is the same model that is in Ron and Donna's home in Marietta, a fantastic 16-channel, 32-digital rank instrument with Allen subwoofers and all speakers placed strategically in Strand's four pipe chambers. This is a sound you will not believe!

Wings was the first film ever to win an Academy Award for Best Picture 1927-1928. It is the story of two men who have gone to war and the girl they both leave behind. Starring: Richard Arlen, Buddy Rogers, the IT girl Clara Bow and in his first picture, Gary Cooper. What is so unique about this film is the thousands of extras used in the battle scenes, the photography of the flying scenes where the actors flew their own planes. No special effects here, everything you see is real.

Invite and bring your entire family, friends, neighbors and support the Strand theatre, silent film presentations and the theatre organ!!



LARRY DAVIS IN MERIDIAN

By J. Frump, III

Every now and then one has the opportunity to visit with another ATOS chapter. Such was the occasion on the weekend of August 15 that I traveled with Larry Davis to Meridian, Mississippi. Larry had been invited by the Magnolia Chapter ATOS to perform on the 3/8 Robert Morton in the Temple Theatre. I tagged along as Larry's chaperon and also a roving reporter for the chapter newsletter.

We left Saturday morning, and after a brief stopover to say hello to some of the members of the Alabama Chapter, we arrived in Meridian around 2:00. At the Temple Theatre we were greeted by Magnolia Chapter members Frank Evans, Bob Garner, and Dolton McAlpin.

After a short time of fellowship Larry got down to the business of practicing and getting familiar with the organ. With a few pointers from Dolton about how to set the pistons and suggestions on several combinations, Larry started practicing. While Larry practiced I wandered about the theatre, taking pictures and helping Frank with a hesitant tremolo on the Tuba and Diapason. The problem turned out to be a spring that had worked its way off. Once the spring was fixed the tremolo was well behaved.

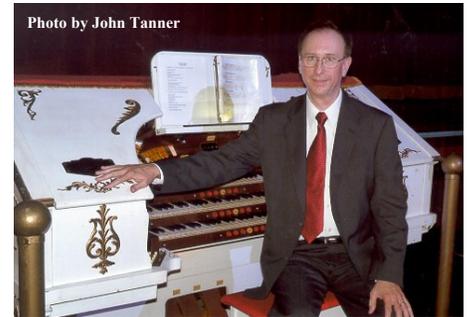
The Robert Morton is a three manual eight-rank organ, installed when the Temple opened in 1928. The Temple, like the Fox, was built by the Shriners and at one time boasted the largest working stage in Mississippi.

After the practice session we went to dinner. Then we all went over to the home of Frank and Gean Evans for more fun and fellowship which included getting to know the Evan's three dogs. The evening concluded with a musical duet, Larry at the piano and Dolton at the Rogers Organ.

The next day was the meeting of the Magnolia Chapter and then Larry's program.

Slowly out of the pit Larry brought the console up, to the tune of *Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah* and *Everybody's Got a Laughing Place* from the film *Song of the South*. Next, Larry had Georgia on his mind with a medley of songs about Georgia including *Meet me at the Dempsey Corner* by John McCall.

Larry next proved that all types of music can be played on the theatre organ by paying tribute to our country music heritage. His selections were not by Gershwin, Rogers and Hart, Porter, or Hammerstein, but by Cash, Elan and Scruggs, Nelson and of course Patsy Cline.



Larry then accompanied the Buster Keaton film *One Week* in which Buster and his new bride build a do-it-yourself house.

Next was a medley of Woody Guthrie songs beginning with *Roll on Columbia* and finishing with Guthrie's best known song, *This Land Is Your Land*.

To show that Larry is a truly international artist, the audience was transported to Australia with the song *The Road to Gundagai*. Larry wore a green hat sent from Australia just for the occasion.

Rounding out the program was Irving Berlin's *God Bless America*.

Finally Larry slowly descended back down into the orchestra pit with the tune *Supper Time* by Rogers.

After the large round of applause by the audience, there was a reception in the lobby hosted by the members of the Magnolia Chapter.

I personally would like to thank the members of the Magnolia Chapter, especially Frank and Gean Evans, Bob Garner, and Dolton McAlpin for their kind and warm Suuutherin Hospitality. Also I would like to thank Roger Smith, the owner of the Temple Theatre, for making the theatre available for the program. Also I would like to encourage many of our own chapter members that when the opportunity presents itself to go hear a program in one of our surrounding ATOS chapters to do so. It is always a rewarding experience and the opportunity to meet some really nice folks.



Staff/Laura Moon

From left, Rick McGee, Strand board members Steve Imler and Ron Carter, Jim Ingram, Larry Davis, Earl Reece and James Thrower

The Strand makes trade for state-of-the-art organ

by Kim Isaza

Reprinted from the August 15, 2010 issue of the Marietta Daily Journal with permission

MARIETTA - An organ transplant has taken place at the Earl Smith Strand Theatre in Marietta.

A 1989 Allen digital organ had been in place at the Strand since the historic theater reopened in December 2008. But this week, that organ was trucked to the new home of an organ enthusiast in Ohio, who in turn sent a newer, more advanced Allen digital organ to be put in the Strand.

"We're just tickled to death," said Ron Carter, the Strand's resident organist. "It's beautiful. We call it a virtual theater organ. It's got all the latest software upgrades, and 16 channels of audio. It's in excellent condition, and it's state-of-the-art."

The 1989 organ that was sent up to Ohio is worth about \$18,000, said Carter, who serves on the boards of the Strand and the Atlanta chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society. The organ that arrived at the Strand on

Thursday afternoon is worth about \$100,000, Carter said.

The unusual trade came courtesy of Tom Hamilton, 82, of Columbus, Ohio. Hamilton, a retired electrical engineer, has moved into a retirement-center apartment, and his Allen GW 4 organ, which he bought in 2000, would not fit through the door, he said.

"I was talking to Ron Carter on another matter, and he said the Atlanta chapter would love to have that organ. And I told him I would like a three-manual organ for my apartment and that's what was in the Strand. So I said 'let's trade,'" Hamilton said in a telephone interview Friday.

"I've had it 10 years, and I've enjoyed it. It's the fourth organ that I have owned or built," Hamilton said. "Now they can use it, and they will be extremely happy."

Carter hasn't gotten a chance to play the new organ - which is more than twice the size of the previous organ, and installation will require about 2,000 feet of cable and take about two weeks - but he will be playing it on Aug. 29 when the silent-film feature "Wings" is screened at the Strand at 3 p.m. The 1927 classic, which was the first film ever to win the Academy Award for Best Picture, tells the story of two men, played by Buddy Rogers and Richard Arlen, in love with the same woman, played by Clara Bow. After the U.S. enters World War I, both join the Air Corps to fight in France and their rivalry grows into a wary friendship as they become fellow fighter pilots.

The organ is the property of the Atlanta chapter of the organ society, which has placed it at the Strand, Carter said. The previous organ was also the property of the organ society, which strives to keep organ music alive, he said. The trade, including the move and installation, is not costing the theater at all, he said. Jim Ingram, of Columbia, S.C., who is the former president of Allen Organ Studios in Atlanta, donated his services transporting the organs back and forth, Carter said. And the Atlanta chapter of the organ society is covering other costs, such as the installation and electrical upgrades to the theatre that are now necessary.

Twenty-four speaker cabinets, each weighing 90 pounds, accompany the new organ.

"We feel like, and the Strand agrees, that this makes us a more unique facility," Carter said. "This is not just your typical movie theater. I call us the Fox (Theatre) of Cobb County. It's just another attraction for the patrons to experience when they come to the Strand."

Incidentally, Carter and other members of the Atlanta chapter have been working on a large pipe organ, which they hope to one day finish and install at the Strand. But that project, in which a new organ is being created by combining two separate pipe organs, has been seriously stalled by the economy, Carter said.

"The pipe organ project is not completely dead, but the economy has killed us," he said.

And at any rate, Earl Reece, the executive director of the Strand, said the new virtual theatre organ "is a dream come true for the Strand."

"The sound will be so rich," Reece said. "It will be of a quality no one has ever heard in the Strand."

(Date on marquee should be Aug 29)

Organists Needed for Christmas at Callanwolde

The Aeolian organ is back up and sounding good. For the first time in many years Callanwolde is going to have its Christmas Decorator showcase and as house organist I am responsible for scheduling organists to play on selected days and times.

As organist you and one guest receive free admission to the house, parking in the back parking lot and free refreshments. Please see the below schedule and let me know if you can play. Call 770-428-4809 or email ronhcarter@msn.com

December 1-12th 10 to 11 am

Ron Carter



The Groundbreakers...

By John Clark McCall, Jr.

Rest assured that the art of the theatre organ is vibrantly alive—at least wherever Donna Parker and her brilliant student, Nathan Avakian, perform. Their joint presentation at the Reddish Walker was groundbreaking in many ways. The program afforded them one of the first times ever to play in tandem, it allowed both of them to take turns at the Haddorf piano and exhibit prodigious additional keyboard skills, and—most importantly—their selections brought a breath of fresh air to the repertoire of the theatre organ.

For some time Donna Parker has sought out new and innovative ways of presenting the theatre organ as witnessed by both the arranging of her work and the selection of her compositions. Now paired with the talents of her student, Nathan, there is even more of a contemporary approach to what the theatre organ is capable of presenting. Mind you, this venture into an almost new world of organ literature is not an easy one. Much of what was played was extremely difficult music, and music that can literally fall on its face if it is not very carefully dressed and presented. Rhythm, registration, phrasing—actually all the bywords of scholarly playing—must be at the forefront. Thus, when Dave Brubeck compositions like *Rondo a la Turk* and *It's A Raggy Waltz* got their treatments from Parker, they were dead-on-

the-money...expertly registered, cleanly played and true to the composer's intentions. The Reddish Walker is an instrument that has an almost limitless set of tonal amenities. It can never be said that an artist has ever had to make "adjustments or allowances" for the lack of a needed voice or effect on this fabulous instrument. And Parker and Avakian certainly made sure that everything appropriate was employed!

It is unfortunate that there is so little space here to recount the magic of this day, but in summary, mention must be made of some of the musical highlights. Parker's Oscar Peterson arrangement of *Wouldn't It Be Lovely?* from *My Fair Lady* was sophisticated and proof again that less is more in good theatre organ registration. Nathan's brilliant concept of Leonard Bernstein's *America* from *West Side Story* (a favorite show from this young aficionado of the musical stage) was vibrant and played with a visceral but sensitive approach that simply said in big capital letters: "The theatre organ rules!" Clayton's *Avenue C* would please even Barry Manilow, who as Parker recounts, used to often "sneak in" great compositions from the 1930's and 40's like this one in his million-seller record albums.

And, just when you wanted a bit more of traditional theatre organ literature and registration, Nathan proved that even the more recent works of Henry Mancini can fill the bill. His "Mancini Medley" was brilliantly conceived and often recalled musical embellishments that appeared earlier in the medley, juxtaposed with the introduction of yet another Mancini hit. This brand of musicianship doesn't just occur from an improvisational mind; it comes from very hard work and learning and sticking to an arrange-

ment. The evidence of Donna Parker as *pedagogue supreme* was certainly evident throughout her student's stunning performances.

By now, I'm sure you, the reader, concludes that I am writing with a decided bias. It was my honor to serve as one of the judges when Nathan competed for the ATOS Youth Scholarship at the Cleveland National Convention. In addition to leaving us somewhat breathless with his musicianship and his capable and assured presence at the console, Nathan was given a spot in the program of his other teacher and mentor, the great Jonas Nordwall, who played a magnificently installed Walt Strony IV Allen in Cleveland's cavernous State Theatre. I was lucky enough to witness some of the last-minute teaching sessions with Jonas and Nathan and I was treated to a preview of his selected work, Disney's *Fantasmic*. I almost insisted that Nathan include this orchestral transcription (done by Nathan himself) in the Atlanta program. I personally think this music is some of the finest to come along in recent times; it has glimmers of Shostakovich and a smattering of other great composers' influences. But it is fresh and engaging, and when played on the theatre organ, it is a firm reminder that any GOOD music can be rendered successfully on a horseshoe console.

Other highlights included Donna's *What Are You Doing for the Rest of Your Life*, and her medley from the Rice/Webber collaboration, *Jesus Christ, Superstar*.

Nathan's pre-recorded (and done by the artist) rhythm tracks for works like the recent rock piece *Grace Kelly* reminded me of the legendary George Wright who

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always pushed the envelope of the theatre organ. He was known to use automatic rhythm units, real percussionists, and other effects to bring theatre organ beyond its stereotyped identification with “tied to the tracks” silent movies. His Dot LP album, *Now's the Right Time* included very new and “hip” music with an ensemble of supporting

musicians and the use of not only George's Pasadena Studio Wurlitzer, but a Hammond organ as well.

George would indeed be proud of Donna Parker and her talented student. Together, they are representative of the future of this art form. And, when one can hear *Linus and Lucy*, *Bumble Boogie*, Carole King's *I Feel the Earth*

Move, Billy Strayhorn's *Chelsea Bridge*, and selections from the musical *Little Shop of Horrors*—it is evident that this ingenious instrument continues to interpret all that is exciting and new in music.

“The Groundbreakers” did indeed live up to their title. Catch them at a theatre near you soon.

Upcoming Meetings & Events (Mark your Calendars)

- August 29, 3:00 pm — *Silent Movie Event: Wings* featuring Ron Carter accompanying the very first Academy-Award Winner for Best Picture (and the only silent movie to win a Best Picture Oscar) on the new Allen GW4 Digital Theatre Organ, with Phillip Allen performing the pre-show entertainment and sing-a-long.
- September 17, 7:30 pm, Ron Carter to Accompany the silent film *Dancing Daughters* starring a young Joan Crawford at the Sacred Heart Cultural Center in Augusta, Ga.
- September 17, 2:00 pm CST, The Charlotte Chapter of the American Guild of Organists presents John McCall accompanying Buster Keaton's silent, "The Playhouse" and concert fare with Charlotte Symphony percussionist Rick Dior. Allen Elite-Schlicker at First Presbyterian Church Chapel, 1621 E. Garrison Blvd., Gastonia, NC. For time and more information contact: Tim Belk, tbelk@fpcgastonia.org
- September 18, The Alabama Chapter ATOS presents John McCall in concert at the Alabama Theatre Wurlitzer, 1817 Third Avenue, North; Birmingham, AL, free and open to the public.
- **October 16th, 3:00 pm, Meeting and Concert** — *A Trip to the Rylander Theatre in Americus, GA featuring John McCall in Concert* on its restored 1928 3/11 Möller Theatre Pipe Organ complete with a newly installed and more powerful blower. The concert will be followed by a dinner break and then it's open console time back at the Möller.
- October 24, 3:00 pm, Silent Movie Event: *Phantom of the Opera* featuring Ron Carter accompanying this Halloween classic on the new Allen GW-IV Digital Theatre Organ, with Phillip Allen performing the preshow entertainment and sing-a-long.
- October 31, 2:00 pm, Silent Movie Event *Phantom of the Opera* at the Athens Theatre in Deland Florida by Ron Carter

Upcoming Events at The Earl Smith Strand Where The Newly- Installed GW4 Will Be Used

by Strand Organists Larry Davis, Rick McGee, Phillip Allen, James Thrower and guest organist John McCall.

(Please support the Strand and the use of the Theatre organ by your attendance!)

Aug 29th **WINGS**: Silent film accompaniment by Ron Carter

Sept 11th **PATTON**: Organ preshow (Strand staff organist TBA)

Oct 8th **SIDEWAYS**: Organ preshow (Strand staff organist TBA)

Oct 15th **CASABLANCA**: Organ preshow (Strand staff organist TBA)

Oct 24th **PHANTOM OF THE OPERA**: Silent film, accompaniment by Ron Carter

Oct 30th **ROCKY HORROR MIDNIGHT SCREENING**: Organ preshow (Strand staff organist TBA)

Oct 31st **REAR WINDOW**: Organ preshow (Strand staff organist TBA)

Nov 19th **MAMA-MIA SING ALONG**: Organ preshow (Strand staff organist TBA)

Nov 26th **SOUND OF MUSIC SING ALONG**: Organ preshow (Strand staff organist TBA)

Nov 27th **AVATAR**: Organ preshow (Strand staff organist TBA)

Dec 21st **HOW THE GRINCH STOLE XMAS**: Organ preshow (Strand staff organist TBA)

Dec 21st **WHITE CHRISTMAS**: Organ preshow (Strand staff organist TBA)

For more information, check the Strand website at:

www.earlsmithstrand.org