



# ATOS ATLANTA



Official Newsletter of The Atlanta Chapter of  
the American Theatre Organ Society

## Our Next Chapter Meeting:

**SOMETHING SPECIAL IN SEPTEMBER - TOM HELMS AT THE PAGE!**  
Stephenson High School, 701 Stephenson Rd., Stone Mountain GA

**Sunday, September 21 at 3 PM**



**Dr. Esther Morgan-Ellis –  
Page 3**



**Larry's Mystery Photo Part 3 – Page 4**

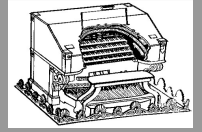


**Tom Helms – Page 6**

Please renew your ATOS Chapter membership if you haven't done so.



Level	Base	Cap
Student	\$17.50	
Basic	\$35.00	
Donor	\$75.00	\$149.00
Contributor	\$150.00	\$249.00
Sponsor	\$250.00	\$499.00
Patron	\$500.00	And up



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ACATOS is recognized as a tax-exempt organization under Section 501.c.3 of the Internal Revenue Code.

Chapter President – David Yackman  
Vice President – Ken Double  
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Secretary – Larry Davis  
Newsletter Editor – Brady Born  
Chapter Correspondent – Larry Davis  
Membership Director – Lee Lanier  
Board Members:  
Brady Born  
Ron Carter  
Ken Double  
Randy Hendry  
Eddie Hulsey  
David Tuck  
Strand Project – Ron Carter

## A Letter from your President

Hi, Everybody!

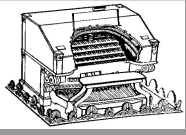
I knew our August meeting was going to be interesting, but I had no idea how great it would be! Dr. Morgan-Ellis's presentation was captivating, and her beautiful voice was the perfect surprise "cherry on top" of our event at The Strand Theatre. A huge thank you to her for an unforgettable evening. We hope to see you again very soon, Professor!

This month, we have another top-notch performance lined up for you. We are thrilled to host Tom Helms for a rare concert at the console of our beloved Grande Page at Stephenson High School. Be sure to join us on Sunday, September 21st at 3 PM for what promises to be a spectacular event!

I know it feels like the year just started, but it's not too early to think about our upcoming annual board of directors election. Our board thrives on new faces, new voices, and new perspectives. While our current board is doing a great job, we would love to see more members get involved. If you are considering throwing your hat in the ring for a board position, please let us know!

Best Regards,

David Yackman



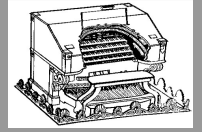
**Dr. Esther Morgan-Ellis with Ken Double at the GW-4 Console**

### **The Way That It Was Done!**

*The Chamber Mouse observes that of all the meetings where he has had the occasion to be present, this one was the most unusual, but as delightful as it was different. He reports his observations from his favorite hiding place at the Strand, adjacent to the urn in front of the left organ chamber.*

When we think of the theatre organ, and the history of the theatre organ, we enthusiasts know that in the grand days of silent film, the organ was used to accompany the films, and in larger houses, used for organ solos as part of the overall stage presentation surrounding the film. But a third and often less considered part of show was the audience sing-along, accompanied by the organ.

Once might say less considered until now. **Dr. Esther Morgan-Ellis, music historian, musician, and professor at our own North Georgia University in Dahlonega**, has written a book, *Everybody Sing! - Community Singing in the American Picture -Palace* and her book marvelously brings into the light, the history, practice and popularity of singing along to the theatre organ.



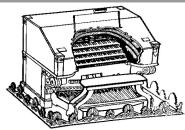
This is not a place to present the contents of the book, but did you know that there was a time when the sing-along would be led by a singer who would sing verses and chorus to demonstrate how the song flowed before leading the audience in singing it? Did you know that in some places that the audiences flocked to the theatre not to see the film, but to hear and participate in the “organ solo” that included the sing-a-long? Did you know that in the major theatres, sometimes singing along with songs was considered “low class” and some theatre organists, including some we like, discouraged it?

So, we have an author and college professor coming to speak at our meeting. A lecture, right? But so much more than that. It was, wait for it, entertainment, something that we recognize when we see it. Oh, yes, Dr. Morgan-Ellis talked about some of the history and practices of the art, but far more than that, her presentation was a demonstration of “how things were done.”

The program opened with our own “professor,” Ken Double, bringing the console up to the appropriate “Let’s All Sing Like the Birdies Sing.” Then he launched into a series of songs for which he was the accompanist and Dr. Morgan-Ellis was the singer who demonstrated them and before singing them – the way it was done in the early days. She talked about the history of community singing, when it began and the changes that happened over time, the popularity of the sing-a-long and the star organists who accompanied the singing in some theatres, and the sometime hostility to the practice by reviewers. We then sang along some more. The slides that she has collected from across the country were beautiful, stunning even. Maybe even inspiring to some of our own, who do sing-alongs at the Strand. She concluded by answering questions from the audience, during which she told us that our meeting was the first occasion that she had ever had to sing along with a live theatre organ, so it was as special an event for her as for us.

The afternoon was different, unusual, a success, and absolutely wonderful. After the meeting, people were heard to exclaim, “We need to have her back again,” and “They need to bring her to the ATOS annual convention. She would be a big hit.” Rochester, are you listening?

Our thanks to Dr. Morgan-Ellis for a remarkable afternoon of show business and entertainment that we will be talking about (and talking up) for a long time to come.



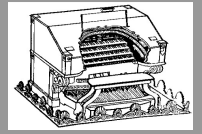
### Larry's Mystery Photo – More Information Comes to Light!

The Mystery Photo presented in July and answered in August accomplished something that is often the best part of publishing it, and that is receiving more information that I knew was out there, and in this case, more than Jay Mitchell, who provided the photo, knew.

It turns out that those Wurlitzer relays in that photo are now – guess where – in Randy Hendry's garage! Randy wrote me with this information:

“This was something that Rick McGee had found out about - the then-owners wanted the space where the relays were stored in the basement. He asked if I wanted them, and I said yes. So, he and I and one other person went down to a stone church near Grant Park (*Grant Park Aldersgate UMC - Editor*) and spent the day digging them out. At that time, the pipes were still in the chambers, where I suspect they still reside: the chambers were off in 2nd story lofts on each side of the altar, and not easy to get into, so we did not even inspect them. The console was in the balcony hall-like area at the rear of the church, sort of in the way, so I suspect it has been moved at least. There were two 3-manual relays there, one marked with Tivoli and a matching wiring schedule. The other was a 3-manual style H (rare) which I traced to somewhere in the northeast. Also included was a second touch relay. All of these are now in my garage.”

So Randy has those relays, but there may yet be 8 ranks of Kimball in that church and possibly even a 3m console. (*Note from Editor: That balcony Kimball console is pictured above, 2019.*)



## SOMETHING SPECIAL IN SEPTEMBER - TOM HELMS AT THE PAGE!



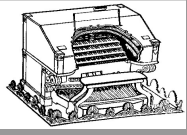
### A Distinctive Treat Sunday, September 21 at 3 PM

Best known for his incredible run of accompanying *The Phantom of the Opera* on Big Bertha at the Alabama Theatre, organist sublime **Tom Helms** is treating us to a concert performance at the Grande Page theatre pipe organ for our chapter event this month.

Tom is a native of Pensacola, FL and still calls that panhandle city home. He was largely self-taught on the keyboard until formal studies, first at the University of Alabama, then later at Texas Christian University. Helms then traveled to Paris to continue his formal studies in organ performance, which paid off handsomely.

Once bitten by the theatre organ bug, he began working with Lee Erwin, which clearly influenced Tom's love of silent film, and his now 49-year love affair with Eric, the ghostly and ghostly Phantom, and Big Bertha at the Alabama Theatre.

In addition to his stellar playing, Tom has restored, repaired, and installed several theatre organ installations, including his spectacular efforts on the 3/8 Robert-Morton (now at 19 ranks!!!) at the Jefferson Theatre in Beaumont, TX.

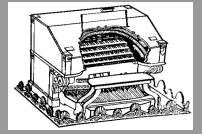


## ATOS Atlanta

He has toured all across the country and internationally as well. In 1978, he performed on Mighty Mo for that year's ATOS convention. And now we have him back at the Grande Page organ in what will be a marvelous treat. Make your plans to head to Stone Mountain to enjoy Tom Helms on Sunday, September 21st at 3 PM. Bring your friends for a special event, free of charge for our Atlanta Chapter meeting.

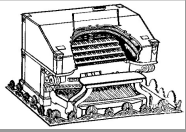
### ATOS CHAPTER MEETINGS

October 11, 2025	Saturday, All day	Road trip to Manchester, TN and the home of Bert and Ann Alle, and Bert's distinctive pipe organ installation. Depart early; enjoy lunch; and a perfect Fall trip!
October 25, 2025	Saturday 7:30 PM	Silent Film: <i>Phantom of the Opera</i> at RiverCenter, Columbus GA, accompanied by Ron Carter on the GW-4
October 30, 2025	Thursday at 7:30 PM	Silent Film: <i>Nosferatu</i> at the Plaza Theatre, with Kerry Bunn at the LLQ 324
November 9, 2025	Sunday at 3:00 PM	Mark Herman in Concert on the Grande Page Theatre Organ
December 20, 2025	Saturday at 3:00 PM	Our holiday meeting at the Grande Page Theatre Organ at Stephenson H.S., artist TBA



## STRAND THEATRE EVENTS

Wednesday, Sept. 24	Top Hat (1935)	2:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 1:30 PM, Larry Davis
Wednesday, Sept. 24	The Great Locomotive Chase (1956)	7:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 6:30 PM, Ron Carter
Friday, Sept. 26	Frozen (2013)	3:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 6:30 PM, Misha Stefanuk
Friday, Sept. 26	Three Faces of Eve (1957)	8:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 7:30 p.m., Larry Davis
Sunday, Sept. 28	College (1927), Buster Keaton	3:00 PM, Ron Carter Accompanying, Pre-show Organist at 2:30 PM, Ken Double
Thursday, October 2	Dark Crystal (1982)	7:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 6:30 PM, Misha Stefanuk
Sunday, October 5	Edward Scissorhands (1990)	7:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 6:30 PM, Ken Double
Thursday, October 9	Get Out (2017)	7:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 6:30 PM, Misha Stefanuk
Friday, October 10	Young Frankenstein (1974)	8:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 7:30 PM, Eddie Hulsey
Weds, October 15	Nightmare Before Christmas (1993)	7:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 6:30 PM, Larry Davis
Thurs, October 16	Scream (1996)	7:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 6:30 PM, Misha Stefanuk
Thurs, October 23	Night of the Living Dead (1968)	7:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 6:30 PM, Larry Davis
Sat., October 25	Hocus Pocus (1993)	8:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 7:30 PM, Misha Stefanuk
Sunday, October 26	Phantom of the Opera (1925)	3:00 PM, Ron Carter Accompanying, Pre-show Organist at 2:30 PM, Misha Stefanuk
Thurs, October 30	Halloween (1978)	7:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 6:30 PM, Larry Davis
Friday, October 31	Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975)	8:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 7:30 PM, Larry Davis
Friday, October 31	Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975)	11:59 PM, Pre-show Organist at 11:30 PM, Misha Stefanuk

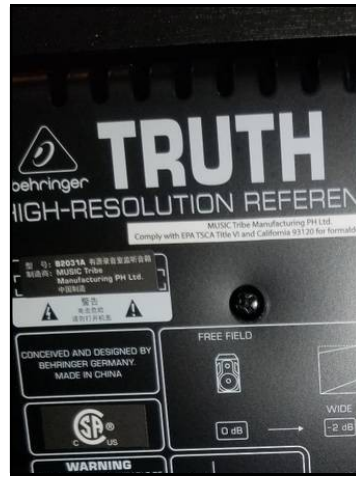


## Music Room Sale

Behringer's **TRUTH B2031-A** Studio monitor speakers:

I overbought 6 of these new speakers for my Hauptwerk organ and would like to sell them. They were unboxed and put into service for a total of 20 minutes, just to be sure they were working properly. They are terrific sounding speakers! I just bought too many of them.

I paid \$202.00 each for these. I will accept any reasonable offer.



**Conn Organ speakers:**

From my wonderful old Conn Theatre Organ, model 644, I built a large rolling tone cabinet to house its speaker system. It sounds much better when not installed in the console. This cabinet holds the four main speaker, 15" – 12" – 10" – 6 X 9" plus the Leslie rotating baffle speaker. It also holds the crossover network for all these speakers. All it needs is hooking up to an organ amplifier and two 125 VAC on-off switches to power the Leslie fast and slow rotation motors.

Tone Cabinet Dimensions: 24" D X 26" W X 6 Ft Tall.

In addition, I have duplicate "backup" replacement speakers for this tone cabinet, plus a backup crossover network. Asking \$100.00 but will consider any reasonable offers.

Phone: 770 926-2713 (voice mail – please leave a message)

Jay Mitchell email: [sousascousin@gmail.com](mailto:sousascousin@gmail.com)