



THE POST HORN

Winter 2022 - 2023

Official Newsletter of the

Bluegrass Chapter

American Theatre Organ Society

BGATOS.org

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By DANA ROSS

Hello Everyone!

Last year was a good year for the Bluegrass Chapter. For the most part, we were able to move to a sense of normalcy and enjoy our activities as they were meant to be. As sort of a year-end review, **here are some of the highlights of 2022:**

SUMMER MOVIE CLASSICS

We had a great season playing for the Movie Classic Series at the Kentucky Theater. Thanks to Dr. Landon, Tim Jones, Brian Hunt, Grant Holcomb and Lynn Vera who entertained the audiences prior to the start of the movies. In addition to the Wednesday night performances, Dr. Landon also played for the Wednesday matinees and the Friday evening shows. Everyone was very flexible in adapting to the schedule changes. We were able to play for every show except the one where our Allen organ decided to take a holiday with a bad hardware connection the night of the movie "Roman Holiday".

SUMMER PICNIC

We were able to get together for our annual meeting and picnic in June. Dr. John Landon and Ray Holt graciously hosted our gathering. Everyone brought their favorite pot luck, Brian Hunt manned the grill and everyone in attendance had a great time.

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SILENT MOVIE NIGHT

Tim Baker did a wonderful job playing for the film "Nosferatu" in October at The Kentucky Theater. It was great to be able to resume presenting silent films. The performance drew one of the larger crowds of the year at the theater and they were more than appreciative of the organ accompaniment as they gave Tim a standing ovation.

PIANO DONATION

We were excited to receive a piano from the estate of Jack Moelmann who sadly passed away on 12/30/21. The piano, from Jack's home organ, is fully restored and ready to be interfaced to our Wurlitzer organ. Bill Webber, who has been to Jack's home on several occasions, has heard the piano play and he worked with Patrick Ryan to arrange for the chapter to receive the piano.

WURLITZER RESTORATION

Under the leadership of Tim Jones, we have made excellent progress on the restoration of the Kentucky Theater Wurlitzer.

a) **PRIMARY PNEUMATICS** – we have enough done to proceed with the wind chest restoration. Thanks to Garry Marsh, Brian Hunt, Cathy Hunt, Tim Jones and Julene Jones for their efforts in making these pneumatics.

b) **REGULATORS** - The regulators are restored and onsite at our storage location in Nicholasville. This work was done by Chicago Organ Works.

c) **WIND CHESTS** – We have a grant to purchase the parts (mainly secondary pneumatics) needed to restore the wind chests. It is important to note that this grant is for the parts and materials only. We will provide the labor to do the work ourselves. This effort has started. We are working on the five-rank chest and the three-rank chest which are targeted to be the initial installation.

HOLIDAY PARTY

Many thanks to Brian Hunt who hosted our Holiday Party. In addition to the food and fellowship, Brian led the group in a sing-along on his Allen organ. It was a great way to celebrate a successful year for the chapter.

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Looking ahead to 2023, we are expecting a full year of activities:

EASTER SILENT MOVIE

On March 24th, the Kentucky Theater will be showing the silent film "King of Kings". The chapter has arranged for Mark Gifford, of the St. Louis chapter, to provide the organ accompaniment. Mark is a very entertaining performer and we expect this to be a very successful event. *(More information on page 4.)*

RESTORATION PROJECT

The work to restore the Ky Theater Wurlitzer is in full swing. We are currently working on the wind chests. They have been disassembled and the old parts which will be replaced have been removed. We are working on the pallet valves at this time, cleaning and sanding them. The work sessions are generally on Saturday mornings from 9:00am to 1:00pm. If you can come help us out or just want to get on the list for announcements, please let Tim Jones know.

tim.jones@uky.edu

ONGOING

We are also looking forward to playing for [The Kentucky Theatre](#) "Summer Movie Classics" series again this year. Our annual meeting and picnic will be in the June timeframe. Hopefully we will be able to have another silent film showing later in the year. And then before you know it, it's time to have our holiday party and talk about everything wonderful that happened in 2023.

CATHY HUNT

I do want to take a moment and express our sadness at the passing of Cathy Hunt in October of last year. She was a loving wife to Brian, a wonderful mother to Sarah & Whitney, a talented organist, and a dedicated member of our chapter who was serving as our Secretary. But most of all she was a dear friend. We all miss her greatly.

FINAL THOUGHTS

I want to say thank you to everyone in our chapter for all you do. We talk a lot about the Chapter doing this and the Chapter doing that, but it's really you, the members, that we're talking about who are getting things done. We would not be able to accomplish any of our goals without the commitment and dedication that you have shown. I'm looking forward to another year of great things happening.

Dana Ross, BG-ATOS President

ANNOUNCEMENT:

MARK GIFFORD at THE KENTUCKY THEATER

ON MARCH 24!



St. Louis area organist **MARK GIFFORD** will be accompanying the film **KING OF KINGS**, which will be shown at **THE KENTUCKY THEATER** on Friday, March 24 at 7:30pm.

This movie is a 1927 American silent film produced and directed by **Cecil B. DeMille**. It depicts the last weeks in the life of Jesus before his crucifixion and stars **H. B. Warner** in the lead role of Jesus. Many of the other actors are a “who’s who” of some of the greatest stars of the silent film era:

Joseph Schildkraut was an Oscar-winning Austrian-American actor who played Judas.

Ernest Torrence, who played the Apostle Peter, was the man you loved to hiss. This towering, highly imposing character star with cold, hollow, beady eyes and a huge, protruding snout would go on to become one of the silent screen’s finest archvillains.



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This image of the original “King of Kings” movie poster is in the public domain.

Dorothy Cumming was an actress of the silent film era. She appeared in 39 American, English, and Australian films between 1915 and 1929. In this 1927 film, she plays The Virgin Mary.

Playing Martha was **Julia Faye**. Julia Faye Maloney, known professionally as Julia Faye, was an American actress of silent and sound films. She was known for her appearances in more than thirty Cecil B. DeMille productions.

These are only a few of the many (over 5000) important actors of the silent film era that you will see in this excellent movie.

Source:

Wikipedia contributors. (2023, January 31). *The King of Kings (1927 film)*. Wikipedia.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_King_of_Kings_\(1927_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_King_of_Kings_(1927_film))



Mark Gifford is a St. Louis-area organist who accompanies this silent film, and he has a great resume. He is currently Director of Music and Organist at The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Springfield, Illinois. He is also a staff organist at the historic FOX THEATER in downtown St. Louis, and has been the organist on the Barton Theatre pipe organ at Springfield High School since 1993.

Finally, and this is a big one, his theatre organ teacher was none other than the famous **Stan Kann**, the former organist at The Fox Theater in St. Louis. Mark has accompanied KING OF KINGS on theatre pipe organs many times over the years, and is looking forward to being our guest artist.

SO....Tell your friends, loved ones, your in-laws, and your outlaws about this wonderful event on the evening of March 24. I will be there, and I hope to, see you there as well!

This event is co-sponsored by the [Lexington Chapter of the American Guild of Organists](#) and [The Bluegrass Chapter of The American Theatre Organ Society](#).

William Webber, BG-ATOS Director

EDITOR'S NOTE: to hear Mark Gifford playing at The Fox Theater in St. Louis, click on the Featured Video link on page 18. - LMV

NEXT PHASE OF RESTORATION

Progress was slow through the fall, but dedicated time was spent over the holidays to catch up. The top boards have had the racking, pallets, spring rails, and guide pins removed, so they are ready for further prep. The pallets were stripped of the felt/leather, most of which was original. Columbia Organ Works is in the process of manufacturing new secondary pneumatics, so we are hoping to be finished with the top boards by the time those pneumatics arrive.

Tim Jones, BG-ATOS Vice President



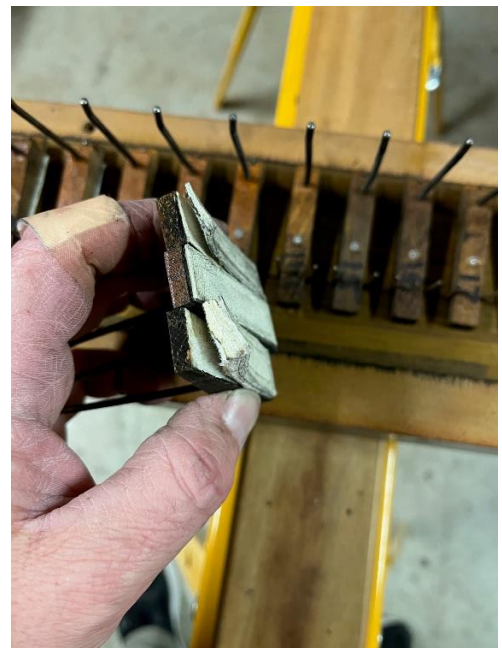
This picture shows using an electric screwdriver and mini-chuck to spin out pallet guide pins.



This is the underside of the top boards of the main 5-rank chest, prepared for the next stage.



These pictures show the varying types of felt and leather used. Much of it was original, however, I encountered varying thicknesses of felt and leather. The remnants will need to be removed with hot water and then the pallets lapped/sanded for flatness.



The photos above were provided by Tim Jones.



Cleaning toe boards: Scott Marsh at left, Tim Jones and Brian Hunt at right.



Cleaning pallets (removing leather and felt remnants):
Garry Marsh and Tim Jones at left, Scott Marsh at right.

Photos on this page were provided by Dana Ross.

HOLIDAY PARTY 2022

Some of the chapter members planned a holiday party at the home of Treasurer Brian Hunt on "twelfth night," January 6th in Lexington. Brian was a gracious host. We decided it would be 'potluck' for we have some great cooks in our chapter. Mr. Hunt owns an Allen MDS Theater III electronic theatre organ, and he made good use of that instrument in leading us all in singing holiday songs and carols.

Many of our chapter members are still afraid of the pandemic at this point, and it was also a cold winter night here in Kentucky. Therefore it wasn't as large a crowd as usual. However we enjoyed our dinner and seeing our chapter friends who were able to attend. We were enjoying ourselves so one wanted to leave at the end.



From left to right: Patrick Ryan (Oldham Organ Works), Tim Jones (Vice President), Bill Webber (Director), David Schroth (D.C. Schroth Organ Builders), Jane Johnson (Lexington AGO Dean), Brian Hunt (Chapter Treasurer) holding Boone the tomcat, Devon Williams, Dana Ross (Chapter President).

Brian Hunt at the organ leading us in singing holiday carols and songs.

Photos on this page by Bill Johnson.





Tim Jones playing Brian Hunt's Allen MDS-Theatre III organ, "assisted by" Boone the tomcat.

*Photos on this page by
Brian Hunt*



Chapter President Dana Ross addresses chapter members.

- William Webber, BG-ATOS Director

FEATURE ARTICLE

THE RAREST OF ALL THEATRE ORGAN RECORDINGS

By Dr. John Landon

Author of JESSE CRAWFORD, POET OF THE ORGAN: WIZARD OF THE MIGHTY WURLITZER (1974)

This article appears by permission of the current Editor of Theatre Organ Magazine.



My own record collection includes thousands of 78 rpm discs, to say nothing about cylinder records, LP's, 45 rpm discs, compact discs, shelves and shelves of open reel tapes, 16 inch transcription discs, cassette tapes and thumb drives. I haven't attempted to count the entire collection. It includes eight four-drawer file cabinets, wooden shelves, a whole wall of LP's, boxes and piles, etc. It includes many recordings of organists long dead and/or forgotten. Yet I believe it is safe to affirm that the records I am about describe for you are the rarest.

In 1877 Thomas Edison developed the phonograph. It was his favorite invention. It was capable of recording and playing back cylinders of recorded music including pipe organ music. Ten years later a man by the name of Emile Berliner invented the disc record and it became, over time, the prevailing format of recording. Cylinder records grew scarce a decade or so into the 20th century. Other record companies had gone to flat disc recordings and reluctantly Edison joined them. The result was the Diamond Disc phonograph and records. Reportedly three million dollars was spent by the Edison Company in inventing the Diamond Disc machine and records. The records were a quarter inch in thickness, 10 inch in diameter and were almost completely indestructible. These records could not be played on other phonographs without damage to the discs. From 1912 to 1927 this was the format used by Edison. By the time that electrical recording was introduced by companies such as Victor, Columbia and Brunswick Thomas Edison himself had relinquished management of the record division to his son. Eventually some Diamond Discs were electrically recorded but in 1927 Edison decided to enter the market of ordinary flat disc records playable on any phonograph.

As a dedicated record collector I looked for years for any copies of these records. The rumor was that some of these flat discs had included theatre pipe organ solos.

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Along the way I encountered a few electrically recorded Edison Diamond discs of organist Henrietta Kamern playing a 3/32 Moller pipe organ in Loew's Rio Theatre in New York City. She was a fine organist and I wish she had made more than the handful of recordings which remain.

I had heard that Edison had recorded some ordinary flat disc records that could be played on any ordinary phonograph but I had never seen one in person, nor had any appeared on any record collector lists.

IN 2009 I made arrangements in advance to tour the Edison National Historic Site in West Orange, New Jersey. Through correspondence persons at the Edison Historic Site agreed to let me see and hear such discs which had been produced but never released. Furthermore they said that if I would write a research article on this subject they would make an open reel tape recording of these discs in their collection.

I was filled with excitement when I arrived at the Edison Site. I toured their phonograph collection and then, eventually, was able to see some of these rare discs. They were brought into the reading room in a padded box, and a museum employee stood by as I examined the original discs. Good to their word I was sent an open reel tape recording of these discs. I wrote an article for THEATRE ORGAN MAGAZINE about these rarest of rare theatre organ records which appeared in the [January/February issue of THEATRE ORGAN. \(pp.\)28-32](#).

The records which I saw and handled with my own hands were the discs they recorded for me on open reel tape. I believe them to be among the most rare theatre organ records ever recorded.

Henrietta Kamern was not the only theatre organist who recorded theatre organ records for Edison. Kamern recorded electrically which preserved most of the tonal range unavailable with acoustical recording. Frederick Kinsley recorded 74 sides of organ solos acoustically on the Edison Label but none were electrically recorded. The needle type Edison records which could be played on any standard phonograph included offerings recorded by: HENRIETTA KAMERN, JOHN GART, WARREN YATES and WALTER C. SIMON.

One reason why these records are so rare was because they were never issued for sale. Only a few test copies were produced. There may be a collector out there somewhere who has managed to locate one of the test copies but I have never heard of it.

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Because Thomas Edison himself did not like the results of electrical recording, experimentation was carried on, perhaps without his knowledge, beginning in April 1927. Edison's serious hearing loss required that records be played back at advanced volume levels, and to his ear they sounded distorted and unpleasant. Therefore such experimenting was done without his knowledge and the first record labels did not reveal that they were any different from the acoustical recordings.

It is interesting to note that Frederick Kinsley later became organist of Riverside Church, New York. I once asked the famous organist Virgil Fox about that, and he remarked, "Kinsley remained there for a short time but he wasn't exactly what they had in mind."

A few years ago I corresponded with JOHN GART who told me that he had no copies of his Edison records. His playing on these Edison "electricals" was excellent indeed. He recorded four sides for Edison.

There are several reasons why these recordings are so rare. First of all sales of Edison records were declining along with those of other major companies. By the late 1920's, Edison controlled only two percent of the phonograph market. Radio played a part. Why pay for a record when you can turn on your radio and hear music for free?

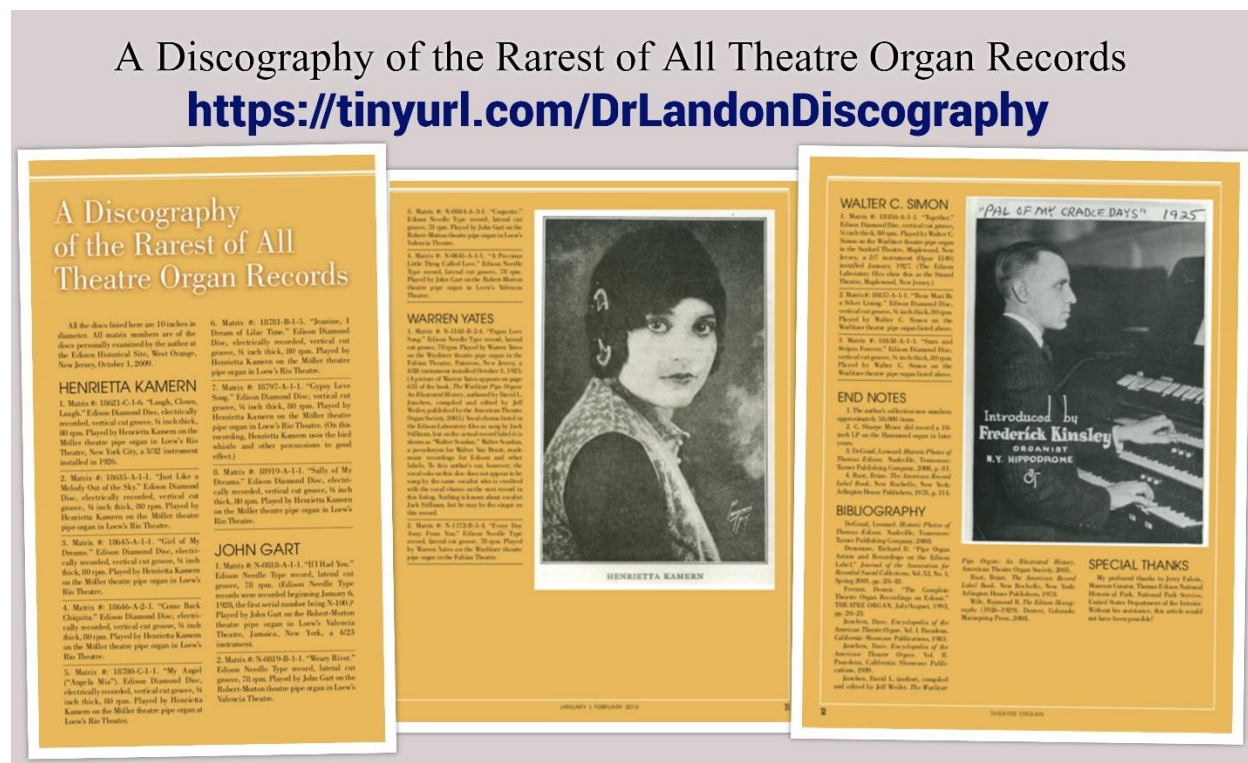
The Edison policy was to make three "takes" of each session. In some cases all "takes" were rejected and the recordings remained locked in Edison's vaults. As long as Thomas Edison himself was passing judgement on each recording issued by the company, he tended to reject a significant number of them due to his personal preferences. Most often this was due to his failing hearing. Also Edison records were meant to be played on Edison phonographs, machines which were never as popular as those of Edison's competitors.

In the Spring of 1929 Edison began experimenting with these "needle-type" discs. However, the Edison Company closed out its record business at the end of 1929. As a result, these recordings may well be the rarest of any theatre organ records ever recorded.

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A DISCOGRAPHY OF THE RAREST OF ALL THEATRE ORGAN RECORDS

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to access THEATRE ORGAN Vol. 52 No. 1 (2010): January-February, beginning on page 32.



NOTE:

If any of you would like to hear some of these very rare discs, feel free to make an appointment with me to come to my house and we will be able to play the tape-recorded copies of them.



Dr. John Landon

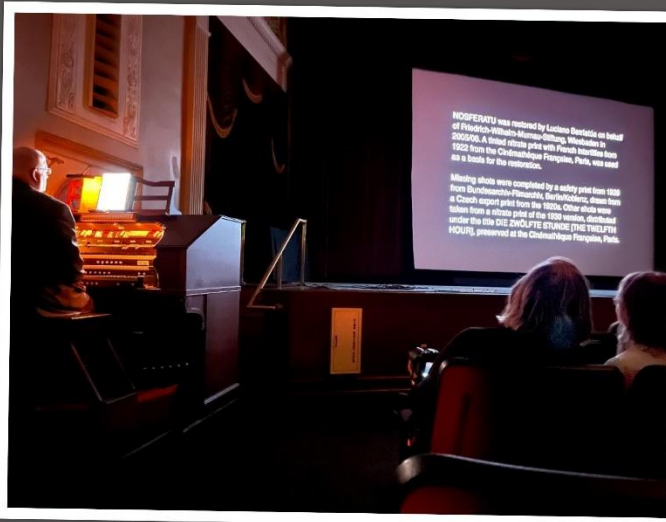
REPORT FROM LOUISVILLE

The William H. Bauer Foundation has received the "lion's share" of Mary Bill Bauer's estate. This translates to \$153,000+ for restoration and maintenance of the world's largest Pilcher Pipe Organ at Memorial Auditorium! We are ecstatic about this generous gift and what it will enable us to accomplish in our ongoing restoration work. – **Tim Baker, BG-ATOS Director**

MEMBER NEWS

On October 15, 2022 our member **Tim Baker** accompanied the silent film "Nosferatu" at The Kentucky Theatre. Tim did a fantastic job and the sellout crowd was very enthusiastic. It was a wonderful evening! As Tim reports:

"That was a great experience. I believe that's the largest crowd for which I have played a movie. There are no printed scores to my knowledge, so I assembled music from my silent film music collection. In certain sections I actually composed music for the movie. While I have played a shorter version, this is the first time I have played the full-length version. I was thrilled with the audience reaction at the end, and also when they thought my quoting "Itsy Bitsy Spider" was hilarious and applauded during one scene. I had not planned to do that "but the Devil made me do it". Mea Culpa to movie aficionados who would shriek at the idea of making people laugh during such a serious film, but it happened and let's move on. I hope to return to Lexington to play again sometime, it was a real treat for me."



"NOSFERATU"

Silent Film accompanied by Tim Baker at The Kentucky Theatre
October 15, 2022

photos by Lynn Vera

IN MEMORIAM

Cathy Hunt, beloved wife of our Chapter Treasurer, Brian Hunt, passed away October 19, 2022 in Lexington. She succumbed to small cell lung cancer, having just been diagnosed in January of 2022. She had become a more active member of our Bluegrass ATOS chapter, most recently serving as the Chapter Secretary officer.

Cathy was a music major, earning both BA and MM from the University of Kentucky. She served in three churches in the Lexington - Paris area for almost forty years!



In her professional daily work, she earned a Masters in Science in Library Science, and was for seven years the Music Librarian for the UK School of Music. After a period of being a 'stay at home' mom to hers and Brian's two daughters, Sarah and Whitney, she returned to the University of Kentucky where she served as an Academic Advisor in the College of Arts and Sciences. For the last fifteen years of her career she served in the College of Communication and Information Sciences, including twelve years as Director of Undergraduate Programs.

Cathy was one of four children of the late Chester Stevenson and Helen Stevenson. Two of her siblings reside in Phoenix, AZ, and her next oldest brother lives in Lexington.

Following her retirement in 2015, she became involved with volunteering in two primary organizations very close to her heart. She served for a few years with God's Pantry, working two days a week for them. Later she served about two years at the Lexington Humane Society. Her parents modeled a life of service, and she honored them well in her own life.

Cathy's presence, her laughter, her gentle hugs and winning smile will certainly be missed by us all, but her spirit shall remain with us for years to come. Brian wishes to express his thanks for ALL the many family and friends who have continued to support him and his daughters during these past months.

PARTY ON THE PIPES



The poster on the right is for the St. Louis Theatre Organ Society's 'Party on the Pipes' event. It features a graphic of a pipe organ facade at the top. The text on the poster includes the society's name, the event title 'The Mid-America Theatre Organ Festival Party on the Pipes', the dates 'March 11th - 13th, 2023', and the price '\$525.00 per person for 3 days of music, fun and food!'. It also mentions 'Open Console all venues including the Fabulous Fox!', that meals and transportation are provided, and lists the home base as Fairfield Inn & Suites in O'Fallon, IL, with a contact number for hotel reservations. A small code 'Party On The Pipes' is visible at the bottom right of the poster.

Featuring
Nick Renkosik
Dave Wickerham
Henry Evans
Bert Kuntz
Marvin Faulwell
Bob Ruby
Brad Kuntz percussionist

St. Louis Theatre Organ Society
The Mid-America Theatre Organ Festival
Party on the Pipes
March 11th - 13th, 2023
\$525.00 per person for 3 days of music, fun and food!
Open Console all venues including the Fabulous Fox!
All meals and transportation furnished with
pick up at airport, train or bus station.
Home Base: Fairfield Inn & Suites O'Fallon, IL
(618) 206-8869 for hotel reservations
Code: Party On The Pipes
St. Louis Theatre Organ Society

Schedule and Registration Information
call (618) 476-3233

Image used with permission from the St. Louis Theatre Organ Society

Dear Theatre Organ Enthusiasts,

Just got off the phone with Pam Masching, a good friend and secretary of the St. Louis ATOS chapter. I am sharing this information for **PARTY ON THE PIPES** which is March 11-13 near St. Louis in O'Fallon, Illinois. Tim Jones, David Pilkinton and I have been to this annual event several times over the last few years. The food is fabulous and it's FREE. And they have buses that take you to all of the events, including restaurants. This includes the famous big Wurlitzer at THE FOX THEATER in St. Louis.

Hotel rooms are \$119 per night, but you probably should arrive on March 10th and get settled in, for the next morning the events start rolling early. Nationally acclaimed theatre organist **DAVE WICKERHAM** will be one of the artists for this event. So will **NICK RENKOSIK**, a young theatre organist who is being recognized for his talent on this instrument.

This event is less expensive than the national convention, with the added benefit of OPEN CONSOLE TIME ON ALL OF THE THEATRE ORGANS there. So you can actually put your hands on a theatre pipe organ with all the bells and whistles! This looks to be a fun time, and lots of good theatre organ music, organs, and organists will be there. Food, buses to events, meeting the artists are all free with your paid fee as listed in the ad above. A full-service hot breakfast is provided each morning at the hotel for FREE. I am hoping to attend this year. Come and join me !!

William Webber, BG-ATOS Director

ATOS NATIONAL CONVENTION

July 2-7, 2023 in Chicago

In July there will be a great reunion of theatre organ folks in a city full of magnificent theatre pipe organs, many of them in the theaters that they were built for and originally installed. This is going to be an exciting convention due to the number of organs and artists who are masters at playing them. So far at least six members of our chapter have indicated that they will be in attendance. Please consider joining us in Chicago.

Here are some important links and information regarding the convention, including hotel and convention registrations:



THE MAIN LINK FOR CONVENTION REGISTRATIONS AND HOTEL RESERVATIONS:

CLICK HERE >>>> <https://atos.org/convention>

At this site, check out the orange buttons in the upper left part of the page for either paper or online registrations for the convention, and the orange button directing you to the hotel reservations link. Using these links will save you lots of time. You will also be able to see beautiful pictures of the organs being played at the convention, pictures of the Artists who will be performing, and an hour-by-hour schedule for each day.

Please note that the end of regular registration is **May 31**, and late registrations both at the convention and at the hotel will get more expensive the longer you wait to make these arrangements. Please also note when registering for the convention that for the Awards Banquet and Luncheon on Wednesday afternoon (July 5) you will be asked to pick from several entrée choices.

It is my hope that each of you will consider this opportunity to attend splendid theatre organ events, see old friends, make new ones, and spend some "down" time eating at the wonderful restaurants and do some shopping or visit museums and art galleries while in Chicago. I hope to see you there !!

William Webber, BG-ATOS Director

FEATURED VIDEO

Mark Gifford: "Fun at the Fox St. Louis"

Mark Gifford will be our theatre organist for the "King of Kings" silent movie presentation on March 24 (see the announcement on page 4 of this issue). Here he is at the Fox Theatre in St. Louis playing "Dream a Little Dream of Me" and "Happy Trails". [CLICK HERE](#) to view the video.



THE POST HORN is an official publication of the Bluegrass Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society. It is published quarterly in digital format and emailed to Chapter Members and Friends. Anyone may request a copy; simply fill out and submit the ["Contact Us" form on BGATOS.org](#).

For up-to-date news, event postings and other items of interest please visit our [Facebook page](#).

Our website is here: [BGATOS.org](#).