

# DETROIT THEATER ORGAN SOCIETY

Volume 51, Issue 10



October 2012



DTOS  
Executive Board  
& Directors

## Stephen Warner Returns to the Senate Sunday, October 21, 2012 3:00p.m.

- **President**  
Connie Masserant  
cmasserant13@gmail.com
- **Vice President**  
Lance Luce  
lanceluce@wowway.com
- **Treasurer**  
Richard Dengate  
rmd1121@comcast.net
- **Corporate Secretary**  
Dave Calendine  
dave@calendine.net
- Fred Brufloft  
fred.audioarts@prodigy.net
- Michael Fisher  
fisher.michael65@yahoo.com
- Gil Francis  
ggef@juno.com
- Paul Jacyk  
paul5jacyk@aol.com
- Dick Leichtamer  
tibiaplana434@buckeye-express.com
- George Orbits  
gorbits@comcast.net
- Glenn Rank  
grank@comcast.net
- Bob Weil  
robertjweil@yahoo.com
- Vacant Seat



Fair Lady” and “West Side Story”. Currently, she is teaching voice in an ever-expanding home studio in Southfield. In addition, Rose is vocal director for the Farmington Youth Theatre/Sky’s the Limit Productions. She enjoys performing with her husband Stephen, laughing with her 12-year-old daughter, Mallory and cuddling with Amy the family cat.

Stephen Warner is the organist and music director at Jefferson Avenue Presbyterian Church in Detroit where he has the privilege of conducting Jefferson Avenue’s semi-professional choir and playing their historic 1925 E.M. Skinner pipe organ on Sunday mornings. Recently, the choir and their soloists performed a concert of

The October concert on the DTOS Mighty Wurlitzer brings Stephen Warner back to the front of the console. Stephen is no stranger to our Wurlitzer, as he has spent many hours working on the console and in the relay room restoring our prized organ. As an added bonus to the program, Stephen will also have his lovely wife, Rose, performing with him. Be sure to come spend a Sunday afternoon at the Senate for this enjoyable concert!

Rose has spent the last 29 years working in the

performing arts both on and off-stage. Highlights include touring with a vocal jazz quartet, recording with a classical octet, working as a church musician, performing in summer stock theatre as well as doing commercial jingle work. Favorite roles/shows include Mamma Rose in “Gypsy”, “Side by Side by Sondheim”, “My



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## Stephen Warner in Concert

Detroit Theater Organ Society

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opera arias and choruses accompanied orchestrally by the Skinner Organ. In addition, they spearheaded a multiple choir recording session for a short film, “Detroit, Hope In Action,” shown at the 2012 Presbyterian.

Mr. Warner also works as a technician for the Holden Pipe Organ Company which cares for many of the E. M. Skinner organs in Southern Michigan and many other fine vintage and historic instruments in Met-

ro-Detroit. This company recently collaborated with Scott Smith Pipe Organs on the restoration of the relay at the Senate Theater and is now collaborating on a large Skinner renovation in Saginaw, MI. Mr. Warner also works as one of the volunteer technicians who maintain the Mighty Wurlitzer at the Senate.

Mr. Warner can be heard playing almost weekly at the Michigan Theater in Ann Arbor before film screenings and events. He

has also enjoyed collaborating with his wife, Rose, singing with him in performances on both the classical and theater organ. In recent years his performance focus has also turned to accompanying silent films. This winter he will be editing a new addition of James Wilkes book, Pipe Organs of Ann Arbor for the Ann Arbor AGO.

He studied organ with Dr. James Kibbie at the University of Michigan and in 2003 he graduated with

degrees in Organ Performance and Mechanical Engineering. While still in school he had the privilege of working in a summer internship with John Brombaugh and Associates in Eugene, Oregon and traveled to the University of North Texas program “Summer in French Organ Studies” in Souvigny and Lyon, France.

Make plans now to attend this concert! You will not be disappointed!

## From the President’s Desk

Connie Masserant, DTOS President

I would like to thank all of the Directors and members who helped with the preparations for our first rental event, and those who worked it. It went very smoothly with everyone working their specific areas.

We are all encouraged as more and more people are finding out that we are here and open, not only for concerts, but for other events as well. It is truly exciting to see all of our hard work come to fruition as we

see those event dates being entered onto our calendar.

These events would not be possible without membership support. With more events being scheduled every day, it is going to take more volunteer

involvement. I hope that some of you will find the time to reach out and help when you can in whatever capacity.



## Notes From the Treasurer

Richard Dengate, DTOS Treasurer

Once again it will be dues time. The board remains committed to avoiding an increase at this time. We will continue to explore alternatives in raising revenue. Since my last tenure as treasurer (some 40 years ago), there have been intermittent increases. Taken together these increases have

amounted to an average annual rate of 3.4%. Over the same period of time the cost of living as measured by the Consumer Price Index rose at an average annual rate of 4.3%. With this in mind, please consider sending a donation along with your dues this year. Remember, donations are tax deductible

as we are a 501(c)(3) organization.

We are faced with several projects to be undertaken soon. There is a great need for ground-level restrooms and our marquee is in need of attention. We are in the process of assessing these needs and estimating the costs. While we have

come a long way with painting on the inside of the theater, the auditorium walls need a new coat of paint. The outside walls need to be scraped and painted on the parking lot side. With all of us pitching in the DTOS will continue for another fifty years.

# Renovations Continue

Connie Masserant, DTOS Board of Directors

The wooden box that was built to store our Mighty Wurlitzer during certain events was used for the first time Saturday night, September 22, 2012.

closed and locked, only to find out that one of the outer walls needed to be painted. Glenn Rank came to the rescue, painting the wall with less than four hours



The console was pulled in by ropes that were fastened to eye screws on the dolly. Four men pulled while two others held and guarded all of the cables. Once in, the doors were

before show time! Shortly after the event the doors were opened so that playing members could once again use their practice time. The Wurlitzer will stay in place as we have

several events before the next concert. Before concert time the console will be moved back to the original location on stage.

An update on our new exit door on the east side of the building—the door was supposed to be installed Saturday morning Sept. 30th, however, it has

been postponed until possibly next week. Stay tuned.

Three new boxes have been recessed into the stage floor. These will be wired for microphone inputs and for electrical power. This will make us more updated for rentals that need these applications.



Please consider getting the DTOS Newsletter electronically! This will save money from less printing, and the cost of postage. To sign up for electronic delivery, please send an e-mail to Dave Calendine. [dave@calendine.net](mailto:dave@calendine.net)

# From the Bench

Of Media and Music  
Scott Smith

Recently, there's been a lot of discussion on the various social media about the Fisher Wurlitzer and what we've done to make it sound so good. President Connie was so pleased by this, she even sent members of the Organ Committee a nice note congratulating us, and added her own kind comments. Well...we can't really take much of the credit, and while we might take just a little, let's first give credit where credit is due...

First and foremost, most of the credit for the sounds in the Fisher Wurlitzer goes to the parent company in North Tonawanda, New York and the nearly 1,200 people who worked to build pipe organs there at its peak of production. To be able to produce such a wonderful sound consistently on an assembly line is nothing short of a miracle. Obviously, a very few of the more important instruments like the Fisher organ received a bit more attention, but those were few and far between. More than any other organbuilder of its time, Wurlitzer took Henry Ford's grand idea of the assembly line and applied it to the pipe organ, and were extraor-

dinarly successful in doing so. Secondly, those who carefully removed it from the theatre and reinstalled it not once, but twice deserve a tip of the hat. Here were two perfect opportunities to really mess things up badly, but those level-headed people were smitten with an intoxicating sound they heard in the theatres and somehow knew was not one that needed "improving." Among those people who are still with us fifty years later are George Orbits and Dave Voydanoff. You may want to occasionally shake their hands and thank them for shepherding our much-beloved Wurlitzer through uncertain territory that came without a schematic or a map or a plan. I know they wouldn't mind your appreciation. Once the organ got to the Iris Theatre, they began to care for the organ, and were joined by various people who also appreciated that which was already in it. By the time it reached the Senate Theatre, it had reached iconic status. Other great minds in the club took on associate roles in the caretaker-ship of the organ, including Ben Levy and Dave Brewer, to name just a few. Like those

who worked with and before them, they were craftsmen who respected what was there, and, in addition to caring for the organ, were often called upon to throw a body block on anyone even suggesting that dramatic changes were needed. Time has moved on and now it's our turn, and I could not be in better company than Jeff Slabaugh and Steve Warner. Like our predecessors, we want to continue the tradition and level of respect for the fabulous, unique and fine Fisher Wurlitzer. While it sounds like a cliché, it is both an honor and a privilege to be a member of this group.

Having said all of that, just what has made the improvement in the sound of the organ of late? You'll be as surprised as we were...

At some point, we decided to review all of the wind pressures throughout the organ. Some were dead on, some were off, and we simply adjusted those that were off back to the factory settings. In some cases, this included the substitution of bogus springs and such with original Wurlitzer parts, especially when it came to the Solo Tibia. Secondly, we wanted to be

sure the tremolos were all functioning as they should, and as in the case of wind pressures, review each one for mechanical efficiency and musical result. Some get grumpy about making changes, and some are just grumpy in general. Luckily, most are happy to do anything we ask of them. In the process of all of this, somewhere around mid-Winter, several of the stoppers in the Solo Tibia began dropping, which means when the cold, dry air started drying out the pipes, many of the stoppers used for tuning no longer wanted to stay in position and slowly, silently descending down into the pipes. The result was that the tuning was WAY off in some cases. Jeff suggested the replacement of the old, dried out stopper leather in just the troublemakers, but soon he set about to recover all of them with new leather. To our amazement, no matter how perfectly we thought we had adjusted the tremolos and springs and weights, it was the repacking of the pipes that was the icing on the cake. Who knew?

Moral of the story: It's what you learn after you know it all that really counts.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

With the increasing amount of rentals and other activities happening at the theatre, we are in need of more active participants to help out. Please consider volunteering for one of the many positions that need to be filled. No job is too big or too small!

Please contact any Board member for more information.

Contact information is located on the front page.

# Notes From the Editor

Dave Calendine, DTOS Newsletter Editor

It is hard to believe that the end of summer is here. It is also hard to believe that we are almost ready to announce our exciting line-up of artists for the 2013 concert season. Paul Jayck has been working hard to book some of the best theater organists in the world. Watch for more details in next month's Newsletter.

As you will read in other sections of this Newsletter, our theater home is being rented by various organizations. This is due in part to the hard work of Michael Fisher. Mike is chairman of the rentals committee, and fields many phone calls from various groups interested in our theater. Many times, he takes the opportunity to meet interested parties at the theater and show them our venue.

Once the rental is confirmed, there is a great need for man power to operate the theater for the event. This is where our most crucial help comes in ... *YOU!*

We need *your* help to make the Senate Theater a successful place to not only have our Wurlitzer, but to have other shows as well.

There are many needs that can be filled by *your* shoes. Many of these jobs are simple. Some jobs take a little more effort. I am going to try to list the various jobs that are needed to be filled for an event to happen without a hitch. Please note that many of these jobs are also done on a typical organ concert, so please consider helping out!

**BOX OFFICE.** With our unique setting of having a front and a side en-

trance, we need two separate box office positions. The box office job involves greeting patrons as they enter, selling them their ticket, and letting them enter the building.

**CONCESSION STAND.** What would a theater be without a concession stand? This job requires arriving a little earlier to prepare everything for the event. Popcorn needs warmed. Coffee needs made. The pop coolers need to be turned on and stocked. And don't forget the candy! Once the doors open, there will be less to clean up at the end than when you started, and there will be many happy patrons leaving the counter with their goodies!

**USHERS.** We don't normally have ushers for organ concerts, but there is a need for those to look over the auditorium and make sure that seating is going smoothly. Broken seat? Let someone on the Board of Directors know so that we can get it repaired. Some shows will require reserved seating, so we will need to have ushers to guide the patrons to their proper seat.

**LIGHTING.** Concerts wouldn't be that fun to go to if you couldn't see the artist that is performing on the stage. We have a new light board, as well as controls for the older lights up in the projection booth. There is also a spotlight that needs operated for the shows. Currently for concerts, TJ Casteron handles this duty, but there are times when he can't make it over from Canada to run the lights for a show. Interested? Please let TJ, or

any Board member know. We will be glad to show you the ropes!

**SOUND BOARD.** When a microphone is used, someone needs to man the sound board. The sound board sits in the recording row at the rear of the auditorium. Again, if you are interested in helping with sound, please see a Board member.

**MAINTENANCE CREW.** When we have a show, there is garbage, and the restrooms need to be checked. Can't forget to stock the toilet paper and paper towels! Someone drop some popcorn? We need help with making sure it gets cleaned up as soon as possible. We have the supplies to keep everything clean and stocked. We are in great need of help with making sure everything is taken care of.

**CLEANING CREW.** Once an event is done, there is the process of cleaning the theatre, restrooms, and lobbies. Many hands will make this a light task. As with the maintenance items, we have the tools necessary to clean the theater, but we are lacking the involvement of enough members. A crew of around six people would make cleaning the theater after an event a much easier task! Please consider helping out in this area.

There are many more areas where help is needed. Ticket printing, light bulb changing, weeds pulled, walls painted, and more. The list goes on, and it sounds daunting, but it doesn't have to be. As the saying goes, many hands make light work. There has always been people to

pitch in and help with various items. Now, we are asking if it is your turn to help out.

*Volunteers* helped pull the organ out of the Fisher Theatre. *Volunteers* helped install the organ in the Iris Theatre. *Volunteers* helped operate the Iris Theatre. *Volunteers* helped remove the organ from the Iris Theatre. *Volunteers* helped fix the Senate Theater and install the organ here many years ago. Since that time, it is the *VOLUNTEERS* that have kept this organization going. It is also *volunteers* that are on the Board of Directors that have a strong passion for the Fisher Wurlitzer and its home. We are now looking for more volunteers to help with the operation of our theater. Many more rentals are coming up, and we are now getting several phone calls regarding using our theater even more. Now is the time to step up and help out. No job is too big or too small to help out with. We will make sure to find a position that you can help out in.

More information on volunteering for any of the many jobs at the theater can be found by contacting any Board member. All Board members and their e-mail addresses are located on the front page of this Newsletter. This is *your* organization. Please help it last for many generations to come by stepping in to fill one of the many positions.

On behalf of the rest of the Board of Directors, I thank you for continued support of DTOS!

# Our First Rental Event—A Success!

Connie Masserant, DTOS Board of Directors



Many Directors and members turned out to help with our first rental event on Saturday night, September 22, which was a fundraiser for Dragon Films of Detroit.

The fundraiser was a variety show with twelve different acts that ranged from musical groups and rap, to karate exhibitions from a youth group. Attendees, as well as our own volunteers, enjoyed the show. We heard a lot of positive feedback from the patrons, who stated they would like to return for

other events as well as movies.

I was interviewed by one of Detroit's Council Women, Brenda Jones. She was very interested in our theater and what we had planned for the community. She promised to do what she could to increase awareness of our renewed presence at the theater.

Dragon Films were so pleased with our theater that they have chosen us to premiere their film in November.



Let me remind you all again that we need volunteers to make these events possible. Please contact ei-

ther Michael Fisher, Event chairman or myself, Connie Masserant, to sign up to volunteer.

## UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE SENATE THEATER

October 13—The Graystone Stompers—7:00 p.m.

October 19 & 20—The Rocky Horror Picture Show—Doors at 9:00 p.m.

October 21—Stephen & Rose Warner at the DTOS Wurlitzer—3:00 p.m.

November 2-4—rental event (to be announced soon)

November 18—Melissa Ambrose-Eidson at the DTOS Wurlitzer—3:00 p.m.

December 2—Fr. Andrew Rogers at the DTOS Wurlitzer—3:00 p.m.

Please note that our regular organ concerts are included in the price of your membership. Rental events may have a ticket charge that is not included in your membership.

The regular organ concert series is listed on the last page of this Newsletter.

Visit the Detroit Theatre Organ Society on the web at [www.dtos.org](http://www.dtos.org)

# Rentals! Rentals! Rentals!

## Michael Fisher, DTOS Rentals Chairman

We have a busy couple of months coming up at the Senate!

October 13th, the Graystone Stompers will perform 1920's-style music on our stage. Come hear this unique sound that reined ballrooms and theaters back in the heyday of the Senate Theater!

October 19th and 20th, the DTOS is hosting two nights of the cult classic film, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show!* We are expecting a good crowd both nights. Doors on both nights open at 9:00 p.m.

The 9:30pm pre-show features the L'anse-Cruise High School Performing Arts students performing

a "season appropriate" spoof on the TV classic sitcom, *The Addams Family*. The movie will run at 10:00p.m. both nights. Lots of advertising efforts and coordination is underway to make this a financial success for DTOS, as well as create a sense of community awareness. We are hoping for crowds that haven't graced the Senate in years. Please come out and support us in whatever capacity you can. We need lots of help!

November 2nd, 3rd and 4th, a rental event is anticipated featuring a "variety show" reaching out into the metro area focusing on area children. Plans are unfolding for this event even

as you read this newsletter.

Finally (as of now) Dragon Films have booked our theater home to premiere their new film "Act of Vegance".

I am also working with two other potential clients for events in the near future. As you can see, we continue to advance in level of awareness as a unique venue available for all sorts of events and shows.

We hosted our first rental event on September 22. Dragon Films rented our facility to host a variety show. It was a pleasant event due to all the help that we had from our membership and the kind patrons that attended. Certainly we

are on the "learning curve", but we are fast learners!

All these events require help. We would love for each of you to come and volunteer at any and all of these and future rentals. Call or email me, Michael Fisher to find out how you can help. Don't wait for me to call you! My contact information is on the front of the Newsletter.

It is fun to participate. Come on out and give it a try! We have jobs for everyone, no matter your capacity.

Stay tuned for more great shows!

### UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE REDFORD THEATRE

October 5 & 6—Three Stooges Festival

October 19 & 20—Halloween Double Feature with  
The Bride of Frankenstein & Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man

October 26—Midnight show—Evil Dead

October 27—8pm—Halloween Silent Movies with Tony O'Brien featuring  
The Haunted House & The Cat and Canary

November 2 & 3—An American in Paris

November 16-18—Since You Went Away (Fri. & Sat. 8:00p.m., Sun. 2:00p.m.)

November 30-December 1—A Christmas Story

All of these great films are shown Friday and Saturday evenings at 8:00 p.m. as well as Saturday afternoon at 2:00 p.m. (unless otherwise noted)

Organ overtures start thirty minutes prior to each show time.

Sit back and enjoy the movies under the Redford's star-lit sky!

Visit the Redford Theatre on the web at [www.redfordtheatre.com](http://www.redfordtheatre.com)



DETROIT THEATER  
ORGAN SOCIETY

*Over 50 Years of Entertainment!*

### Detroit Theater Organ Society

David Calendine, Editor  
DTOS Newsletter  
6424 Michigan Avenue  
Detroit, MI 48210-2957

Phone: (313) 894-0850  
Concert Hotline: (313) 894-4100

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.DTOS.ORG

### Remaining 2012 Concert Series

October 21—Steven Warner

November 18—Melissa Ambrose-Eidson

December 2—Fr. Andrew Rogers

All concerts are held at the  
Senate Theatre, located at  
6424 Michigan Ave.  
Detroit MI 48210-2957

Doors open at 2:00 p.m.,  
Concerts start at 3:00 p.m.



photo: Lance Luce



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