

DETROIT THEATER ORGAN SOCIETY

*Merry
Christmas*

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DTOS

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John Lauter Returns to the Senate

Sunday, December 6, 2015 3:00p.m.

The Detroit Theater Organ Society is pleased to bring John Lauter back to perform at the Senate Theater for our Christmas concert.

Detroit native John Lauter has been presenting theatre organ concerts for over twenty years. John made his public debut at the Redford Theatre at age sixteen. Lauter has been featured in concerts in San Francisco, Denver, Phoenix, Hudson WI, Chicago, Indianapolis, Cleveland, Columbus, Marion OH, Cincinnati, Tiffin OH, Detroit, Royal Oak, Ann Arbor, Lansing, Grand Rapids, York PA, Syracuse NY, Toronto and Kingston Ontario, Boston, Atlanta, and Thomaston CT. John was a featured performer at the American Theatre Organ Society's 2009 convention in Cleveland.

John spent three years playing at "Theatre Organ Pizza and Pipes" in Pontiac, MI. At home in Detroit, John has presented nine concerts at the Detroit Theatre Organ Society, and many concerts and silent film programs at the Redford Theatre. The Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor, MI, featured John as staff organist for seventeen years, during which John accompanied such silent film classics as "Metropolis," "The Birth of a Nation," "The Phantom of the Opera," "It," "Robin Hood," "Greedy,"

"The Big Parade," "Nosferatu," "The Gold Rush," and many others. The Detroit Fox Theatre's 1988 grand re-opening found John playing before "The Ultimate Event," featuring Liza Minnelli, Sammy Davis Jr., and Frank Sinatra. Lauter has played at the Fox ever since, for film and live shows. John has used the theatre organ in very traditional roles, as a solo and silent film accompaniment instrument, in addition to other unique combinations - with big bands, a Bluegrass-Fiddle band, and behind vocalists and instrumentalists. In preparation for the opening of their new IMAX theatre, the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn contracted John to compose and record a silent film accompaniment to a silent film collage featured in a specially produced IMAX short subject shown before each

feature there. In February 2010 John was a musical guest on NPR's popular "Prairie Home Companion" program. Host Garrison Keillor remarked "the man (Lauter) has unerring good taste." Lauter performed solos on the live broadcast and joined forces with PHC's "guys all-star shoe band" for some numbers. The show was performed live before 5,000 people and broadcast live into four million homes.

John is the pianist for the seventeen piece "swing City Big Band". During the day John is the curator of the Stahl Museum in Chesterfield Twp, MI. John lives in Farmington Hills, MI, with his wife Amy, son Benjamin, and daughter Maryanna.

Join us as John brings the sounds of the Christmas season to the Senate. Don't forget that intermission will be extended so that you can enjoy all of the Christmas goodies that will be served in the lobby.



The New Normal

Formation of the Fundraising / Marketing Committee Scott Smith, Chairman

Editor's Note: Due to a printing error, the following article from last month is re-printed here so that the article appears in full. My apologies to Scott for the printing error!

The passing of George Orbits marks the end of one era, and the beginning of another.

Not long before he died, George privately shared with me that he had poured a sizeable sum into the club over a fifty-year period. The figure in itself is daunting, even if you divide it fifty times. I have no doubt he was speaking the truth. His love for the instrument and the club cannot be overstated, and in that financial admission comes the proof.

In a way, we were kept in a comfort zone, like children cared for by a doting father. For the most part, club members were shielded from the problems associated with maintaining the theatre and its financial needs. Negative types might call it a benevolent dictatorship, but while George held some strong opinions (who doesn't?), he never became dictatorial. Above all, he was always mindful of a positive outcome that benefited the club, first and foremost. While he and I may not have agreed on everything, we maintained a mutual respect of each other.

Now we enter a new era; one of uncertainty. From where will our financial support come? Where is our safety net? Is this going to cost us more? Will we have to shut down during the cold

weather months?

The answer to these questions is simple: We're going to do it ourselves. In order to meet our current and future financial needs, a new committee has been formed and soon, the venerable Detroit Theater Organ Society will begin to operate under a new paradigm. You might ask: Who do we think we are? Do we know what we're doing?

The initial goal of staffing the top level of the committee was to have persons with either fundraising experience or business owners or both, and that goal has been met. With a variety of experience, the forming members are Lance Luce, Michael Fisher, Stephen Warner, and Scott Smith. While we don't claim to know everything about raising funds, we all have experience with maintaining the bottom line and seeking new ways to create revenue on a daily basis, be it for our own businesses, an arts group or a church or all. As time goes on, we'd like to see this become a multi-tiered committee that involves more than just the four of us.

One of the first questions people ask is "why not hire a professional fundraiser?" That's a valid question, but that hire does not come without hooks. Professional fundraisers generally want their money up front, which usually comes in the form of a percentage of the needed funding. That sum can be breathtaking, and there are no guarantees that they can perform any better than those hiring

them. In the past, I was assigned the task of interviewing a professional fundraiser for possible hiring. After explaining our project to him, he politely but firmly told me that our project was simply too small for him. However, he did want to be helpful and gave many tips that I've used over the years in numerous other applications. So, to sum things up, the hiring of a professional fundraiser to cure the club's woes, while enticing, seems highly unlikely.

Beyond dues, the club's old method of raising additional revenue was basically two-fold. First, members could send additional amounts of money along with their dues, and designate where they'd like it to be spent. Or not, if they chose to allow the board to spend it as they saw fit. Secondly, one could drop some cash into a basket in the lobby; a permutation on the donation basket passed during a church service. In this case, there was just one basket with a plastic shield over the top. These methods are certainly a nice way to raise small amounts, but generally come without any sort of accountability. That all needs to change. We will be establishing finite goals for projects and make ourselves accountable for how the money is spent, plain and simple. It's only fair to everyone.

Major gifts from generous members like George Orbits, Dave Brewer, Marvin Spear and others should not be overlooked here, but those are few

and far between. In the beginning, other members were generous with their time, their resources and their hard-earned money, but after those days passed, we became more complacent. It's human nature.

The use of the 501(c)(3) designation has been largely unused since 1989. That is a tremendously powerful tool in the hands of organizations that have them, but sadly, we have barely used ours since successfully receiving it just over 25 years ago. That's all going to change.

Many people think the answer is solely in grants. While it is true that grants are the answer for many things, they're not the answer for everything, and you'll find that granters are fairly specific about that for which they give. For organizations like ours, there are basically three different types of expenses. We have (1) operating expenses, (2) capital expenses and (3) performance expenses. In theory, our dues are supposed to cover all of them, but without a dramatic increase, they only really cover the concerts. For special performances utilizing extra performers or greater expenses, performance grants are available, and assuming we fit the requirements of a given granter, we might be able to cover all or part of our expenses with their grant. Capital expenses, as in the case of actual, physical needs (such as new bathrooms or marquee) can be all or partially covered under a capital grant, again depending on the



granter's wishes. Sadly, there are few grants available for operating expenses. That includes the lights, the gas, the phone and other mundane but necessary expenditures. I've never seen an engraved plaque on any wall anywhere recognizing an individual or corporation or foundation for paying the bills. While we should take advantage of whatever is available to us, we should not be reliant upon grants for continued operation for basic needs. Our goal needs to be to handle that ourselves. Otherwise, we'll become complacent again and we're back where we started.

What do others do? Churches? Museums? Arts groups? We'll be looking at all of them and "cherry picking" the most effective methods used by everyone else and creating those of our own.

Any expression of "need" is something shunned by

many, often feeling that it demonstrates weakness or mismanagement, and that can potentially lead to embarrassment for some. Our parents taught us that notion, and their parents before that. It seems logical, but is quite the opposite of the management of a successful nonprofit arts organization. The blunt truth is that we're all in the same boat on this. Live theatre, dance, music and any performance art is just taking it on the head. Even the mighty NFL cannot fill their stadiums anymore. We're experiencing a paradigm shift right now, where people turn to their computers or their phones (yes, I said phones!) for entertainment.

Of course, criticism of our efforts is inevitable, and we're prepared to handle that. Cries of "oh, how the mighty have fallen" are really demonstrative of naive types who fail

to understand what's going on out in the world, and keep their heads deeply planted in the sands of yesteryear. They also fail to recognize that we have responsibly supported ourselves for over fifty years, and while there have been bumps in the road, we always landed safely on the other side of them and kept going. Certainly we're not going to live in denial of the fact that the-times-they-are-a-changin', but we need to find creative ways to perpetuate ourselves and share the joy we feel from the tones of the Mighty Wurlitzer with the world.

Fundraising is a function of marketing, and to a degree, vice-versa. We hear the term "branding" a lot these days, and we are creating a definition of what and who we are and how we wish to be perceived right now. This creates a unified direction from which we can not only self-

identify, but to "sell our product."

So, what are club members to expect in the coming months and years? In a word: events. Lots of them. They will not all be the same, some will take place at the Senate, some will not, and some won't require you to leave home at all. We're going to mix it up, and the big thing is that it will be fun! As with local public radio and television stations, an overall financial goal will be determined and we'll all be asked to participate in attaining that goal.

Just some of the things we'll be talking about and acting upon in the future will be:

Auctions
Estate planning
Special concerts
And more!

So, come on...be a part of the music where the music is a part of you!



*The Board of Directors
of the
Detroit Theater Organ Society
wishes you
Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year!*

The Brewer Bash

Once upon a time, members and guests of the Detroit Theatre Organ Society were a more social group than today. Yes! It's true! Just ask any of the older members who have been around since the beginning. There were private parties, where playing members held small events for other members and guests at the theatre. It was considered very cool, very chic and if nothing else, very exclusive. The big Christmas dinner served annually in the lobbies of the theatre seems almost an impossibility of logistics today, but it happened. I was there!

One event in particular stands out, and it is one that did not take place at the Senate Theatre. It was at the Dearborn home of Richard and Joy Brewer, and their young son, David. What began as a simple neighborhood party became an unofficial annual club event. Held on December 30 of each year, this was the tee-totalers pre-New-Years party that was a mix of people as interesting as the pipes of the organ contained therein. While the invitations were hand-written in pencil on tiny pieces of note paper and passed to the invitees in person, anyone could attend and I never knew of anybody to be turned away.

Richard was a Ford engineer, and son David eventually was employed there as a drafting checker. Never ones to waste anything, the modest house and garage became a shrine to conservation and recycling long before it was

considered the right thing to do. Every Sunday evening (the day before Trash Day), David and his father would unashamedly scour the curbs of nearby neighborhoods for items worthy of repairing and recycling. Indeed, they never bought a light bulb ever, as lamps discarded for whatever reason often retained a working light bulb, and even if the lamp wasn't snagged by the trash-picking duo, the light bulb was! In the basement, dozens of old boxboard milk cartons lined countless shelves and held everything from electronic parts to hardware to toy wheels of every conceivable color, size and shape. Amongst the items of greatest interest in the basement of this modest home was a pedal-operated metal shear mysteriously acquired from the Henry Ford estate. The crowning jewel? The three-manual, eighteen-rank "Marr & Bartolitz," as David came to call it. As the name implied, there was a little bit of everything in the pipe organ, all selectively chosen, and those of us who helped remove it can testify that the level of craftsmanship in the building of the instrument was also reflected in the clever methods used to squeeze it in.

For nearly fifty years, this annual tradition, passing from parents to son without a bump or a change was as predictable as the sunrise. One could count on meeting up with an odd combination of people not seen at any other times, including neighbors,

Ford co-workers, DTOS club members, various other organ club members, friends of friends and other attendees whose home planet was never actually determined. Food and non-alcoholic drink were generously offered, and the pipe organ played well into the wee hours of the morning. A good time was had by all, followed by a non-alcoholic hangover the next day, not to mention some temporary deafness. Excuse me...WHAT did you say?

Little did any of us realize that the 2008 Brewer Bash would be the last. For all of its various discomforts, including excessive heat, blaring pipe organ and a cocophony of conversation, it had its own charm. Frankly, I've missed it, and I know others have, too, so we've chosen to do something about it.

The reborn Brewer Bash will be a tradition cast very much in the image of the old one. There will be music, there will be food, there will be conversation and there will

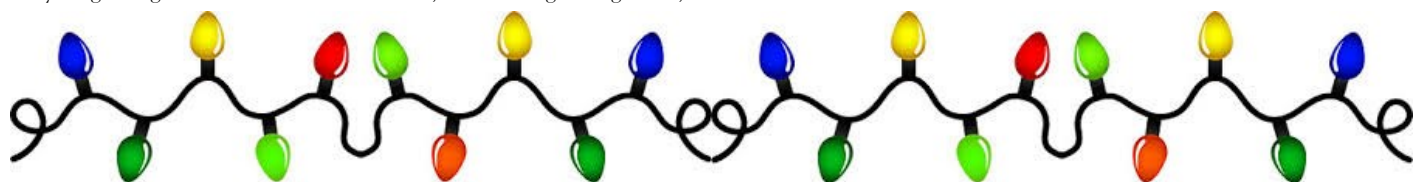
be fun. But in addition, there will also be other activities that you won't want to miss. Best of all, anyone can attend!

Unlike the previous Bash, this will be a ticketed event, priced low enough to encourage more attendees in the hope that you'll want to consider donating more toward any one of a number of projects during your visit. It will be, after all, just two days before the new year, and we want to encourage you to lighten your tax burden.

Tickets will be available at the December concert. Everyone presenting their ticket at the door will be automatically entered in a lottery, and there will be prizes given! If that isn't enough, there will be a silent auction that you won't want to miss.

So, come on...be a part of the music where the music is a part of you!

Scott Smith
Fundraising/Marketing
Committee



I ntermission Dessert Buffet for Christmas Concert

Dave Calendine, DTOS Board of Directors

It is time for the traditional Christmas dessert buffet at the Senate Theatre. Members are asked to bring goodies to share with everyone at John Lauter's concert on December 6. We would like to have cookies, brownies and

other fancy baked goods (finger foods only, please!). You are also encouraged to bring foods such as cheese and veggies for our friends and guests that can't have the sweet items. The coffee, Christmas punch (non-

alcoholic) and water are free that day.

The intermission will be extended so that there will be plenty of time to eat and renew friendships.

No need to make reservations. Just bring your favorite

goodies. Place them on the table in the concessions lobby before the show, and our Senate elves will make sure that everything is all set before the intermission.



UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE REDFORD THEATRE

December 4-5 – White Christmas

December 12 – 8pm – Christmas concert with Steve Schlessing and Friends

December 18 (8pm), 19 (2pm & 8pm) & 20 (2pm) – It's a Wonderful Life

January 8-9 – Close Encounters of the Third Kind

January 22-23 – The Big Sleep

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.

Visit the Redford Theatre on the web at www.redfordtheatre.com

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE SENATE THEATRE

Sunday, December 6 – 3pm – Christmas Concert featuring John Lauter

Saturday, December 12 – 8pm – Movie – Holiday Inn (1942)

Sunday, December 27 – 3pm – THE BREWER BASH!

Sunday, March 13 – 3pm – Scott Foppiano

Sunday, April 17 – 3pm – David Gray

Rest of 2016 concert series will be announced shortly.

Visit the Senate Theater on the web at www.dtos.org for the most up-to-date listing of events.



DETROIT THEATER
ORGAN SOCIETY

Over 50 Years of Entertainment

Detroit Theater Organ Society

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Concert & Movie Series

December 6 – John Lauter - 3:00 p.m.
December 12 – Roman Holiday - 8:00 p.m.
December 27 – Brewer Bash! - 3:00 p.m.



photo: Lance Luce



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