

***THIRD SUNDAY OF MAY, THE 17TH, ON THE MCKOON ALLEN 3/17 AT 3:00 PM  
FEATURING GENE STROBLE***

**About the artist...** L. EuGene Stroble is a rare Floridian who was actually born in the Sunshine State. A native of Jacksonville, Florida, some of his earliest memories are of his mother telling him stories about the Florida Theatre and late Jimmy Knight at the console.



Gene says: "My fascination for the Theatre Organ caught fire as my mother described the console rising from the pit and the thrilling sounds of the pipe organ."

As a birthday present someone gave Gene an LP (phonograph record) of the great Paul Mickelson playing Sunday School songs and choruses on the Lorin Whitney Robert Morton pipe organ.

He says: "I must have worn the grooves all the way through to the other side playing that record. I was entranced as only a nine-year old could be by the exciting sounds and effects I heard on that disc! I remember he played "Onward Christian Soldiers" as if it were a Sousa march, complete with drum cadences and piccolo solo. I was already spellbound by the Hammond organ I had heard at church, but this was something else again, and I was captivated by the sound of the Theatre Organ from then on. I just had to get my hands on one."

Gene began playing keyboards at such a young age that he does not remember a time that he could not play.

"I gave my mother quite a start! When I was around three years old she had decided to take piano lessons and had bought an old upright. One day she was cooking in the kitchen and she heard someone playing a song on the piano in the living room. Thinking a neighbor had sneaked in to surprise her, she went to see who it was. It was not a neighbor, it was me!"

Gene began playing church organ while in the U.S. Army. "I had just completed my military training and was to leave on a Monday for Viet Nam. I attended chapel services on that Sunday. At the close of the service the chaplain made a humorous, but impassioned plea, 'Our fine organist is leaving the military at the end of this week. I have been asking you, and the Lord, for months to help in finding a replacement. Now, I wish no one bad luck, but if you are an organist, or you know of an organist, and you do not tell me on your way out of the chapel this morning, then you had better watch that last step!' Not thinking I had a chance, I volunteered on my way out, and much to my surprise, I found that a full bird colonel chaplain can change things with a few phone calls!"

Since then, Gene has been a church organist, organ

teacher, and traveled extensively as a concert artist/product specialist, and technical writer for the Lowrey Organ Company. Gene graduated with a Bachelor of Music Education degree from Brewton-Parker College in Mount Vernon, Georgia.

"My experience at BPC had a profound impact on my life." Gene says, "I had the privilege of attending the school twice; years ago, when I got out of the military, and again much later, after I made a decision to go into teaching. I was fortunate to be twice under the choral direction, and the influence, of Hildegard Stanley, who was continuously the chair of the music department there, and for this I am grateful."

In 1989 he began a whole new career as a public school music educator.

More recently he has completed this "netnovelet" of historic fiction about the silent film era and Theatre Organs, which grew out of stories he wrote for the children he teaches.

He relates; "I remembered, that as a child, how much I loved hearing my mother's stories about the 'old-timey' days, and today's children are no less fascinated by those same kinds of stories! So the circle came full around and it was my turn to be the story teller. I interviewed, researched, wrote, and read the stories to my kindergarten through sixth grade students and 'The Glorious Sound' was born!"

Gene completed his Masters degree in Education from Valdosta State University in June of 2000, Gene is busy. He teaches public school music at St. George Elementary School in Charlton County, Georgia, while serving as bi-vocational Minister of Music at River Road Baptist Church in Hilliard, Florida, where he lives. He is the vice-president of NORFLATOS, the North Florida American Theatre Organ Society of the greater First Coast and Jacksonville, Florida area, and frequently plays concerts on his traveling Mighty Magical Music Machine Theatre Organ.

**About the organ...** The McKoon's Allen is a "custom" 3/17 with audio channels expanded from the original four, bringing the total to six . . . also, it has a second external MIDI unit to go along with the original; allowing for twice as many sounds for the artist to use and to choose from.

***Directions to the new McKoon  
residence on page 3.***

**Atlanta Chapter,  
American Theatre Organ Society**

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**STRAND ORGAN  
PROJECT UPDATE**

*By Ron Carter,  
Strand Project Chairman*

Several of us continue working each week on the Robert Morton and Wurlitzer components. The swell shade actions are almost complete with only the primaries and valves in two of the four actions left to do. Slug continues refinishing the large 16' flute pipes with repairs to cracked and split wood.

I was able to get a front page article with photos in an April issue of the Marietta Daily Journal hoping this might generate interest and some donations. We still have about \$7,000 in the bank but need another \$40,000 to complete our project!

The Strand Film series was an outstanding success. Thanks to Larry Davis, Phillip Allen and Rick McGee for playing several of the pre-shows and sing-a-longs. The audience reaction to the organ pre-shows has been extremely complimentary. You ain't seen nothing until you have seen 375 patrons stand up in the Strand auditorium to do the chicken dance led by organist Phillip Allen! The organ display and PowerPoint organ tour also was a big hit with the kids and the parents. Thanks Phillip and Mandy for this very professional PowerPoint presentation. This just shows that people are craving for good clean entertainment and yearn for the movie experience of years past.

We try to recreate this true movie experience with the whole presentation (raising and lowering of the grand curtain, introduction of the film, organ pre-show, sing-a-long). BUT we need the support of the entire chapter. I was disappointed that more Atlanta Chapter members did not support the film series with their attendance!

Thanks by the way to Paul and Janis Beavin, Larry Davis, Rick McGee and Mr. and Mrs. Paul Lanegger who gave up several of their afternoons to staff our information table for three of the matinees.

The Strand is proving to be a wonderful venue for the theatre organ. However, we need donations and we need help at the warehouse. Don't just be an arm chair participant. Get involved!

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**STRAND RETURNS  
TO ITS ROOTS.  
THEATER RECREATES  
CLASSIC EXPERIENCE  
WITH MUSICAL ORGAN**

*By Ashley Hungerford  
Reprinted with permission from the  
Marietta Daily Journal*

**MARIETTA** — Before there were classic stars like Fred Astaire, Humphrey Bogart, Audrey Hepburn and Joanne Woodward, the star of the silver screen was the organ.

The organ provided all the sound, emotion, drama and humor to a film before "talkies" — films with synchronized dialogue — became popular in the late 1920s.

"The organ was designed to elicit emotions of the audience," said Ron Carter, secretary of Friends of the Strand.

In a return to that classic time in film history, organizers at the Earl Smith Strand Theatre want to create a classic movie watching experience, including the organ.

Starting Thursday, the Strand is returning to its roots with April Movie Mania, featuring three distinctive movie lineups. The newly renovated Strand Theatre first opened in the 1930s as an art-deco movie theater.

Thirty minutes before each show, an organist will entertain patrons with Broadway hits. "It's just a different experience going to see a classic movie

in a classic theater; It's electrifying," Carter said. "We did not want the Strand to be a mall Cineplex. There's a uniqueness to the theater."

About 10 minutes before the show begins, the audience will be invited to join in with a sing-along.

Audiences should know most of the words to songs such as "Take Me Out to the Ballgame", and "Old McDonald." But for those unfamiliar songs, Carter said they've converted the original slides from Atlanta's Fox Theatre into PowerPoint so people can see the words.

A warning to those not willing to participate, ushers will be looking for audience members to pull on stage to sing.

Earl Reece, executive director of the Strand, said Carter has taken the lead on making sure the theater is filled with music.

"He's determined to make the younger generation aware of what going to the movies use to be, and should be now," he said.

Carter said the Strand did organ sing-alongs with some of the movies shown in February, and the crowds loved it. "We got such a positive response and we wanted to continue doing it" he said. "People are craving a simpler approach to things ... we want to use the organ as much as possible."

Right now, there's a digital organ inside the theatre; however, the Atlanta Chapter of the American Theater Organ Society is working on restoring a pipe organ to bring to the Strand.

Carter is the Chairman of the effort to bring a real pipe organ to the Strand.

The restoration, done entirely by ATOS volunteers, costs around \$75,000. Carter said the group is still about \$50,000 short of their goal. The group would have needed more than \$250,000 to have a professional restore the organ.

The group has acquired two pipe organs and they're taking the best pieces from each to build a hybrid, Carter said. A Robert Morgan organ came from the old Capitol Theater in Atlanta. The second, a Wurlitzer pipe organ, came from a pipe organ at the Lucas Theatre in Savannah. Both organs are older than the theater — Capitol (1926) and Lucas (1925).

Just as it was important to save the

*(Continued on page 4)*

## *Alder-MAN of the Hour!*

Our April meeting took place at Roswell United Methodist Church, Roswell, GA., on Sunday, April 19, 2009 at 3:00 pm.

We were welcomed by our Vice-President (President-of-Vice??), Phillip Allen. Announcements of upcoming events were followed by a personal introduction of the artist. Tom Alderman is no stranger to this group.

Tom welcomed us and explained that the Möller five-manual was unavailable due to electrical problems with the three-phase current – only two phases were operational and that would not power the blower. This led to the program being moved to the chapel and use of the recently installed Allen custom three-manual featuring several ‘organs’ and about fifty-eight ranks. This change gave no visible or audible indication that this was not always the planned location – professionalism at its best!

A well-balanced and musically interesting program was offered showing the sonic and historical sounds of this versatile instrument – something for everyone:



First up was the Fanfares from the Overture to Die Meistersinger (Wagner) featuring the full romantic voices of a Skinner styled American Classic design and featuring the reeds. Next, the Prelude to a Te Deum (Charpentier) offered a display of the softer voices. Then, two arrangements of works by J. S. Bach - Sheep May Safely Graze (Bach, J. S. – arranged by Virgil Fox) and Now Thank We All Our God (Bach, J. S. – also arranged by Virgil Fox) showcasing the Modern Romantic and orchestral sounds of this flexible instrument.

A new organ was unveiled for the next selection – the Prelude and Fugue in g minor (Bach, J. S. – Eight Little Preludes and Fugues) and featured sampled ranks of an Arp Schnitger organ of 1695.

A return to the American Classic school and the Nocturne to

Incidental Music from the Shylock Suite (FauËe, G.) and the Nimrod from the Enigma Variations (Elgar, E.) showcased the smooth ensemble of this instrument.

Gabriel’s song from the film The Mission – (Morricone, Enrico) was next and showcased the solo stops and soft ensembles – and a bow to music from films.

The theatrical nature of the instrument with heavier tremulants and percussions provided for a very entertaining Maple Leaf Rag (Joplin, S.) – this was a theatre organ program, after all!

To wrap up an already grand program, the Toccata from Symphony V (Widor, C-M) featured samples from the great Cavaille-Coll of Sainte Sulpice, France and even demonstrated the sampled room reverberation and acoustics hidden away in this Allen.

A very great thanks to Tom for his versatility and unabashed musicianship. We will come back whenever you will have us!

All comments and observations provided courtesy of **Biz E. Body**, a completely unbiased ear — remember, the walls and pews have ears!

### *Directions to the new McKoon residence, 18 Sherwood Drive, Newnan, GA - Phone 770-251-4284*

- From Atlanta, take I-85 south. Be cautious of construction areas in Coweta County.
- Take Exit 51 (GA-154) and turn right onto Sharpsburg McCollum Road (GA-154).
- Go about 0.6 mile and cross the railroad crossing.
- Turn left onto US-29/GA-14 at the traffic light.
- Go about 7.3 miles and turn right (West) onto Phillips Street, which is about 0.3 mile past the 3rd traffic light after turning left onto US- 29. It is slightly hard to see on the right.
- Phillips Street becomes Sherwood Drive (about 0.2 mile) at the traffic light.
- At the fork, stay to the right.
- The street winds around and 18 Sherwood is a grey stucco house on the right .

Park anywhere before you get in front of the house. It is on a curve that is not a good place to park directly in front of the house. Driveway of the house will be open for parking for those who have trouble walking.

**Thanks for the Strand Theatre  
Organ-Project Donations**

**FRIENDS (up to \$99)**  
Sam E. Jacobs

**PATRON (\$250 to \$499)**  
John and Judy Bergey

*Additional Sponsorship Levels Available*

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**DIAMOND CIRCLE (\$10,000 +)**

**ORGAN-NAMING RIGHTS AND WORLD-CLASS  
CONTRIBUTOR (\$100,000 +)**

**Don't forget !!!**

- Register for the **54th Annual Convention of ATOS in Cleveland, Ohio, June 30 — July 6, 2009**. Special rates available only until June 9th.
- **Mt. Bethel United Methodist Church** annual **SPIRIT OF AMERICA** Patriotic Performance at 5 pm on Sunday, May 24. **Special guest artist is Larry-Douglas Embury, artist in residence at Atlanta's Fox Theatre**. The concert, under the direction of Mr. Ira Pittman will also feature the 100-voice Chancel Choir, Children's Choir, Handbell Choir, Orchestra, soloists, and special audio-visual effects. Immediately following the performance will be a free Ice Cream Extravaganza in the Fellowship Hall. The concert is admission-free, but an offering will be taken.

**Upcoming Meetings & Events (Mark your Calendars)**

- **May 17, 3:00 pm, Meeting, "Third Sunday of May the 17th on the McKoon Allen 3/17" featuring regional theatre organist Gene Stroble from Jacksonville, Florida at the new residence of Bob McKoon.**
- May 17, Larry Davis playing the 4/32 Forker Memorial Organ for the Manasota Theatre Organ Society
- May 24, 5:00 pm, Patriotic Concert at Mt. Bethel United Methodist Church, Larry-Douglas Embury, organ. Admission-free, but an offering will be taken.
- **No June meeting — Attend the ATOS convention in Cleveland, OH, June 30 — July 6**

*(Continued from page 2)*

Strand, Carter said it's important to bring in an authentic pipe organ.

"To know where we're going, we have to know where we've been," he said. Plus, he said there is a difference in sound quality.

"Even though technology is close, it's still not a 100 percent true to the sound," he said.

Carter said they had to modify the building to accommodate the organ. The Strand has never housed a pipe organ.

Two 25-foot chambers were built on

each side of the stage. Right now, they each house six large speakers for the digital organ, but soon they'll house more than 1,500 pipes.

The pipes range in size from the size of a pencil to 16 feet long. Together, the pipes make an array of sounds including a rain, cowbells, horse hooves and a whistle.

Carter hopes to have the finished product installed at the Strand sometime later this year.

April Movie Mania includes three series of movies, the Oscar winner series, the action lover series and the

spring break staycation series. During the spring break staycation series, Carter plans on doing a video tour of the organ to teach children how it works. He said they might also have parts from the organ for people to see and touch.

Tickets for each movie range from \$4 to \$7 and can be purchased at the Strand's box office on Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., by calling 770-293-0080 or by visiting [www.EarlSmithStrand.org](http://www.EarlSmithStrand.org). The box office is also opened two hours before the show.

**Atlanta Chapter, ATOS - Membership Application**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Do you own an organ? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, description \_\_\_\_\_

Meetings are held monthly, usually on the 3rd Sunday afternoon. Annual membership dues \$35 (Student \$17.50). **Please make check payable to Atlanta Chapter, ATOS**. Mail this application and your check to: Wanda Carey Fields, 413 Concord Road SW, Smyrna, GA 30082-4509