

**December Meeting - Lyn Larsen  
at the Carter residence  
December 4th at 3:00 P.M.**

**About the Artist...** Lyn Larsen began classical piano lessons at age 3 and began playing the organ at 7. After hearing George Wright play at the Rialto Theater in South Pasadena, California, his interest turned to the theatre pipe organ. Two years later, he made his concert debut, in 1964 at the Wiltern Theatre in Los Angeles. Since then, he has performed on virtually every important instrument in the United States, Australia, and England.

Among the highlights of his career are appearances at the Hollywood Bowl and an Organ Gala concert in London's Royal Albert Hall with Carlo Curley and the late Pierre Cochereau of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris.

He performed one of only two solo organ concerts ever given at Radio City Music Hall, in New York. Lyn was chosen to perform re-dedication concerts on many restored theatre organs, including the organs in the Chicago Theatre and Shea's Buffalo Theatre. In 1994, the American Theatre Organ Society named him Organist of the Year and he was inducted into their Hall of Fame - the youngest person to receive this honor.

As well as performing, Lyn is a consultant in the tonal design and layout of both new pipe organ installations and in the restoration of historic instruments all over the United States. He oversaw the installation and finishing of the 5-manual, 80-rank theatre organ (the largest theatre organ in the world) in the Sanfilippo Music Salon near Chicago, and was in charge of the restoration and expansion of the 4-manual, 73-rank Wurlitzer in the San Sylmar museum



in Sylmar, California.

**About the instrument...**The Lake Somerset Allen is a state-of-the-art digital theatre organ. It is commonly called a GW4 or George Wright four manual. The Carter instrument uses Version 7 of the Allen Renaissance Software which produces 33 digitally sampled theatre organ voices, tuned percussions and various toy-counter effects. This instrument has 16 channels of sound produced by 1600 watts using 16 one-hundred watt amplifiers driving 18 large speaker cabinets which speak through a grill opening high above the great room. These cabinets are the first produced by an organ manufacturer to reproduce digital organ sound. Ron and Donna converted their previous pipe solo chamber into two large solo and main divisions each measuring 8' wide by 23' deep by 8' high, all with double sheetrock and highly reflective paint.

In August of 2002, this instrument was professionally voiced to the room by theatre organ wizard Jonas Nordwall. This instrument continues to be tweaked by Ron with the DOVE software.

The Carter's also have a Kawai digital grand piano, model CP200, which has won several awards in both the electronic instrument and piano industry since Kawai introduced it in 2000.



**Please see Page 3 for program information and Page 4 for Allen Organ Studios announcement .**

**Directions to the Carters...** Go north on I75 to the Town Center Barrett Parkway Exit #269. Turn left and proceed west on Barrett Parkway crossing Cobb Parkway. Go several miles until reaching Burnt Hickory Rd. Turn right onto Burnt Hickory, go 2 miles and turn left onto Bob Cox Rd. Go another 2 miles and turn right onto Lake Somerset Drive the main entrance to Lake Somerset Subdivision. The Carter's live at 219 Lake Somerset Drive NW, Marietta, GA, 30064 which is the 8th house on the left. A red two-story with green shutters and green garage doors. If you get lost call 770-428-4809.

**Atlanta Chapter,  
American Theatre Organ Society**

P.O. Box 657  
Marietta, Georgia 30061-0657  
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[www.theatreorgans.com/georgia/atlanta/atos/](http://www.theatreorgans.com/georgia/atlanta/atos/)

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**California HERE WE COME!!  
Part 4**

**Observations of Attending the ATOS National Convention celebrating the 50th Anniversary of ATOS by Ron Carter.**

*(The opinions expressed are those of the writer only.)*

Well everyone, we left off with me en route to see WINGS at the Los Angeles Orpheum Theatre right in downtown LA. As we entered the main Business District the surroundings started to change dramatically. In fact it looked like a third world country! The streets were littered with trash, many old dilapidated buildings and homeless people everywhere. THEN in the distance one could see through the front of the bus the wonderful lighted Marquee of the Opheum Theatre. It was truly like a light in the darkness!

We all debussed and went into a clean, well lighted beautiful movie palace. I have been to the Orpheum at two previous ATOS Conventions and the theatre was in bad shape. But now it looked marvelous. The theatre has not gotten a complete restoration, but it has been re-lamped, cleaned up and touched up! What a difference! I was very impressed with the hundreds of non-ATOS members attending this program - many young professionals, many families with

**Closing Chord ... Henry McKinney** by John Tanner

You most likely do not know Henry but for those of us who went on the "Cave Crawl", Henry's was one of the first places we went. Henry passed away on Nov. 1, at age 83.

Every year for almost 30 years from about 1970 to 1998 there was this strange event around Chattanooga which came to be called the "Cave Crawl". Really, it was an organ crawl, usually starting at the Tivoli Theatre in Chattanooga. Then it would make its way over to Collegedale to the Home of Henry and Carolyn McKinney to visit and play their Wurlitzer Theatre organ. For many years they were the most gracious of hosts, and the visits to their home will always have many happy memories. Memorial contributions can be sent to:

Changed Lives Ministry  
P.O. Box 100  
Chattanooga, TN 37401

**2006 Dues Reminder**

According to our revised By-Laws, Article VIII, dues are payable on January 1st and shall be paid within the first two months of the year.

Please, pay your 2006 dues of \$35 (student \$17.50) and don't miss out on any of the wonderful things our chapter has to offer. New members joining during the last quarter of 2005 are deemed members for 2006 and we are pleased to accept early renewals during December. Those who have not renewed by the end of February may be dropped from the newsletter distribution list.

Please make check payable to *Atlanta Chapter, ATOS* and mail to:  
Wanda Carey, 4135 Brookwood Dr., Austell, GA 30106-1237.

children. Hundreds of them! All were coming to a BAD area but to a wonderful movie palace. There was true excitement in the air as I overheard many folks pointing to the wonderful auditorium decorations, the Proscenium Arch and organ grills. It was clear to me that this was the first time for many of them.

After a brief introduction by Nelson Page, organist Bob Mitchell was "helped" to the Wurlitzer console. Bob is in his 90's. At one time this gentleman was quite a musician and even headlined at the Orpheum with his singing group the St. Brendan Choirboys. But alas, I am afraid that Bob reached his peak years ago. I have told Donna that when it gets to the point that my playing is "painful" to others to please kick me in the pants and drag me off the organ bench! To say that the accompaniment to WINGS was a disappointment to my ears is an understatement. In fact it was quite sad. I heard very few registration changes, no dynamics and quite frankly I don't know if Bob even used the organ pedals. In my opinion it set theatre organ back a few years. Having seen my first full length silent film WINGS at the 1986 convention accompanied by Lyn Lunde on the Byrd Wurlitzer I expected the same type of

quality accompaniment and emotionally thrilling experience. I will never forget the audience at the Byrd actually sobbing at the end of this film. After just a few minutes I removed myself to the lobby and saw many of these young couples leaving. There was some bad press about the performance in the local newspaper. What is ironic is that Chris Elliot, an internationally acclaimed organist and protégé of Gaylord Carter, had originally been booked to do the program. An inside source told me that the Convention only wanted to pay Chris \$500.00 for his performance. He would have taken that for a regular convention program but this was a public concert! It was our and the public's loss. This just reinforces that when we sponsor a public concert on a theatre organ it HAS TO BE PROFESSIONAL and first class. I only remind everyone of the artists we retained for the FFOW here in Atlanta!

Ok, enough of the critic and I look forward to continuing the next installment for our January newsletter. I hope I can get through this review by next year's convention in Tampa! Just wait till you hear my comments about how poorly the Hollywood Bowl box dinner was handled!

**President's Message...**

Robert Frost wrote, "Knowing how way leads on to way, I doubted if I should ever come back." Thirty-six years ago I entered college and my six-year relationship with ATOE and the world of theatre organ faded away. In the decades that followed I enjoyed Bob Van Camp, Lee Erwin, Dennis James, Virgil Fox and Hector



Larry Davis at the Tanner Wurlitzer

Olivera at the Fox Möller. I read a newspaper article about a theatre organ in a warehouse off Piedmont Road in the zone where I was working as a paramedic, but it didn't occur to me to visit.

I never anticipated that the road of my life would bring me back but three years ago, motivated by an interest in the Strand Theatre restoration, I attended a silent film at Maple Avenue Methodist Church and met Ron Carter. At his invitation, I came to a chapter meeting at the Carters' home. There I saw and heard the

wonderful GW4, Ron allowed me a turn at the console, and my love for theatre organ was fully resurrected in one afternoon.

Since then, my association with the chapter – with all of you – has been a source of great joy, a lot of fun, and a profound sense of accomplishment. This December marks the end of my first year as president. I am grateful to

each one of you, for it is your contributions and your participation that have made this year one of our most successful ever. For me, this month completes a circle, as we return to the Carters' home to hear the incomparable Lyn Larsen at the great Allen GW4, in what will certainly be a very memorable meeting.

Have a Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas – whatever you celebrate – and most certainly have a Happy, Prosperous, and Musical New Year!

*Larry Davis*

**Return to the Pizza Parlor  
Rick McGee at the Mighty Wurlitzer**  
by Larry Davis



The room was filled with people, the Wurlitzer organ was playing, and Rick McGee sat at the console. No, it was not the Music Grinder in Marietta or the Excelsior Mill in Atlanta; it was the home of John Tanner and our November meeting. Rick describes the Wurlitzer as "six ranks, no Tibia, no Vox, no xylophone, no drums, no siren" (and we elected to forego the pizza). But with his creativity and skill, Rick took us back to a bygone era, opening with, "It's Gonna Be a Great Day." As in any pizza parlor, there was a request basket and a tip jar, and Rick met the first request for "something played like Bob Van Camp would have done it," with a memorable "Begin the Beguine." Later

came the pizza parlor standard "Colonel Bogey March" using the treble flute. The lineup of songs including a requested "Mickey Mouse Review," and Rick closed with "The Trolley Song," which brought extended applause and an encore: an exquisite rendition of "All Through the Night." Rick's first song turned out to be prophetic: it was a great day, enjoyed by all who were there.



**Lyn Larsen Program Information...**

Come enjoy the ATOS Annual Christmas party and concert featuring none other than Lyn Larsen! You don't have to bring a thing except your listening ears and appetite. All refreshments are being provided by the Carter's in appreciation to our wonderful Atlanta Chapter members and friends. And in carrying on the Carter tradition some great door prizes will be given at the conclusion of Lyn's program.

In respect to this Internationally acclaimed artist, NO video recording. Hand-held audio recording ONLY! NO mike stands! We expect this program to be standing room only. With seating for 70 on a first-come first-serve basis, please arrive early to get a seat. This program is not suitable for young children so we respectfully request that baby sitting arrangements be made.

*Donna & Ron Carter*



**ORGANISTS OFTEN INSANE? At Any Rate That Is What Noted Woman Neurologist Asserts**

Dr. Susan A. Price of Williamsburg, Pa., read a paper on July 12, 1915, before the annual meeting of alienists and neurologists at the Auditorium Hotel in Chicago (*The Diapason*, August 1915, page 2). She noted that the woman whose mind most frequently gives way is one whose work is amid the most uplifting music and whose thoughts dwell on all that is noble and good in this life and the next — the church organist.

“It might appear peculiar to the average layman, but it is a fact that insanity prevails among the church organists,” said Dr. Price. “I do not know what the cause is, but figures show that in nearly all institutions for the insane many patients are organists. The only cause I can assign for it is the fact that they as a rule devote all their time to religious matters.

“It has been noted frequently that the young woman organist, a model in a community, reserved and modest, retiring and active in church and Sunday school work, becomes suddenly careless in her habits and a menace to the community. She begins to show hatred to her friends, who try to reason with her. Also, she displays aversion to good habits.”

(From the *American Organist* - Submitted by Kenn Fields)

An article from the **Atlanta Constitution** dated June 29, 1913 regarding an event between Dr. Percy Starnes who was the city organist and the organ tuner. Just goes to show you don't want to upset the organ tuner!

**DR. PERCY J. STARNES RECEIVES BLACK EYE...**

**Atlanta's Organist Attacked in his study by Geo. LaMarche, Organ Tuner.**

Dr. Percy J. Starnes, Atlanta's organist suffered a black eye Saturday rather than injure his hands, and thereby deprive Atlanta citizens from enjoying his concert at the Auditorium this afternoon. The black eye came as a result of an attack by George E. LaMarche, of 30 Crescent Avenue. The organ tuner, as Dr. Starnes told the

episode, to a Constitution reporter, the affair was evidently caused by La Marche being sore at Dr. Starnes for having written the Austin Organ Company at Hartford, Conn., reporting La Marche's alleged inability as an organ tuner, two weeks ago.

"I was in the midst of a rehearsal Saturday afternoon," Dr. Starnes said, "when I found that I had to go to my study for a piece of music. When I stepped outside this man La Marche was waiting for me. He was evidently crazy, for he walked up behind me, and struck me at least a dozen times. I defended myself as best I could, but made no effort to return the blows, for I realized that I needed my fingers for my recital Sunday afternoon."

"I reported the matter to Chief

Beavers. That fellow La Marche must be either crazy or else angry at me for having reported him to the company which he represents here." Chief Beavers put some of his best men on the case last night, but at an early hour this morning La Marche had not been found.....

Watch for a series of articles on Atlanta's Theaters and the organs that were in them....

Although Atlanta had a rich history of theatres and organs, most of the theatres are long gone and largely forgotten. The Fox and its Möller are the only ones remaining, and you would be surprised as to where some of the organs ended up. So stay tuned for the beginnings of these articles.

*John Fanner*

**INTRODUCING THE LYN LARSEN SIGNATURE SERIES ALLEN ORGAN**

With SPECIAL GUEST LYN LARSEN Saturday, December 3, 2005—11 AM until Noon

Hear Lyn discuss his concept, samples and design for this new organ. Audio excerpts and visual aids will be available as there is not an LL-324 Organ in Georgia.

Special Theatre Organ pricing on this one day only.

Allen Organ Studios, 3321 Chamblee Dunwoody Road, Atlanta - 770-455-6885

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

- **December 4, at 3:00 P.M. Meeting/Christmas party...** Lyn Larsen at the Carter residence
- January 5, Evening, John McCall and Larry Davis playing for the Grand Opening of the restored Capitol Theatre in Macon, GA.— Tentative, time not set. Call John McCall at 229-560-7540 for details.
- January 7, 2006, 2:00 P.M... Richard Morris, organ & Scott Thornburg, trumpet at Spivey Hall
- January 20, 2006, 8:15 P.M... Hector Guzman, organist, at Spivey Hall
- **January 29, 2006, 3:00 P.M.... John McCall** at the Reddish Residence
- **February 12, 2006, 3:00 P.M.... Organ Crawl to Capitol Theatre in Macon, GA.** Watch for details.
- March 5, 2006, 3:00 P.M... Paul Jacobs, organist, at Spivey Hall
- April 1, 2006, 2:00 P.M... Bradley Hunter Welch, organist, at Spivey Hall
- April 29, 2006, 2:00 P.M... Hector Olivera, organist, at Spivey Hall