

*November Meeting - Rick McGee
at the John Tanner residence
November 20th at 3:00 P.M.*



About the artist....

Rick McGee's Piano studies began at age seven and he was a Church organist from age ten. Interest in theatre organ began in 1970. Rick would go to the FOX on Saturday mornings to listen to Bob Van Camp practice. While Bob went to have breakfast, Rick stayed in the theatre and played Mighty Mo until Bob returned. He joined the Southeastern (later Atlanta) Chapter, ATOS in 1973, having served as treasurer and president.

Rick joined the staff of Music Grinder Restaurant in the late 1970's and continued there until the location closed. He was on staff through three versions at the same location – Music Grinder Pizza Emporium, followed by Ruby Red's, then Showboat Pizza. When Showboat's Wurlitzer was installed in the Excelsior Mill in Atlanta, he was on staff there.

Some of the instruments in which Rick was involved in rebuilding/restoring:

- Music Grinder/Ruby Red's
- Showboat Pizza – Rebuilt and refinished console/assisted in installation.
- Page – Winn Sound Warehouse (all three times/locations) – console/installation/maintenance.
- Tivoli Theatre – Chattanooga, TN – rebuilt/refinished console and piano.
- Gordon Johnson residence – rebuilt and restored manuals for Wurlitzer.
- Stephenson High School – New stoprails/manuals/other console modifications.
- Ron Carter residence Wurlitzer – stoprails and

- manuals redone/enlarged/retrofitted.
 - More projects in the wings waiting completion
- Appearances (some of them anyway):**
- Concert to present Showboat Wurlitzer to Atlanta Chapter
 - Programs at the Alabama Theatre, Birmingham, AL
 - Performances at the Tivoli, Chattanooga, TN for Organ/Cave Crawl events
 - Silent film Ben Hur at Callanwolde (Aeolian organ in Candler mansion)
 - A number of chapter meetings at a variety of locations and an even wider variety of instruments
 - AGO year-end bash at Excelsior Mill
 - Organist for Locust Grove Baptist Church for 34 years, now at Rose Lane Baptist in Marietta
 - Currently working as a contractor to IBM

About the instrument... John Tanner's Wurlitzer organ opus 1826 was shipped from the factory on 1/13/28 to the First Baptist Church in Bamberg, South Carolina. It had continuous service until the early 90's when it was replaced with a new organ.

Evidentially this organ was played by a very shy organist and was never driven past full crescendo very many times, and due to the lack of any pollution in the air, and most important no leaks in the organ chamber, this organ remained in good condition.

In fact, the pipework for the organ was in almost mint condition. The chamber was very hard to get into so it remained safe until its removal.

Unlike most church model Wurlitzers, the Console is a nice oak horseshoe style console that looks just like its theatre counterparts. It does not have the side

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NOTICE...

Our Atlanta Chapter, ATOS annual business meeting will be held during the November gathering at John Tanner's home since we have a major guest artist at the December Christmas program.

The Board of Directors has nominated Tom Robertson as Chapter Secretary. Additional nominations, if any, will be accepted at this business meeting. The election will be held at that time.

**Atlanta Chapter,
American Theatre Organ Society**

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770-428-4091

www.theatreorgans.com/georgia/atlanta/atos/

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Chapter President – Larry Davis
Vice President – Bucky Reddish
Treasurer – Wanda Carey
Secretary –
Newsletter Editor – Elbert Fields
Contributing Editor – Ron Carter

*Ads or announcements for this newsletter:
Contact Elbert Fields at 770-435-7340 or
e.fields@mindspring.com*

**California HERE WE COME!!
Part 3**

***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 Donna and I spending Abby's inheritance in the Book Store at Disney Hall! Well almost. But before we knew it, all of the conventioners had departed for the Los Angeles Cathedral and Donna and I were left behind. It was about a 6-block walk from Disney and since we hadn't had breakfast we stopped in a neat little park which had a coffee shop. After some nice warm muffins and coffee we got to the Cathedral to hear the last half of Jonas Nordwall's program.

The acoustics and this instrument are first class and Jonas really showed it off. However, after Disney anything would have been a let down. One of the highlights of Jonas's program was his accompanying a soprano soloist from his church. Just PLAIN wonderful.

From there we boarded the buses to Plummer Auditorium. This is the auditorium of a California HS that is first rate. It houses a very nice and superbly installed original 4/37 Wurlitzer. This program featured the Young Artist competition

From the Sandow Family

Dear Members of ATOS,

Thank you for the beautiful floral arrangement [see October newsletter page 5 for photo] and for providing organists at Mom's funeral. You have been an important part of Mom & Dad's lives and we appreciate your support at this difficult time.

God bless,

Jane Sandow Jones

and last year's young artist winner Mark Herman (who was just here this past summer for an Atlanta Chapter program).

I usually look to these programs with a bit of trepidation not knowing the caliber of the upcoming young artists. But let me tell you as far as theatre organists are concerned we are in good hands. There were two this year, both from Great Britain. David Gray was born in Glasgow, Scotland and when he came out onto the stage he looked to be no older than 10 or 11!! I understand he is 14, but sure don't look it! But this kid could play and I mean play like a professional. He also was very funny and had an excellent console demeanor.

Ian House was the second contestant, Ian lives in Bristol, England. I remember hearing Ian at last year's convention and he has made great progress in his playing ability. BUT SERIOUS SERIOUS SERIOUS this kid is. If Ian will just loosen up a bit he will go far. After both of these young organists played, a vote was taken by the Judges and David Gray was the winner. You will be seeing more of this young man.

After a rather long trip back to the hotel, I hit the demo rooms and record shop while Donna lounged around in the hotel. Again, problems with the Hotel Restaurant almost made me late catching the bus and this is a Hilton Hotel! They just did not have their act together and had allowed staff to take off for the 4th of July knowing that ATOS had booked the hotel. Donna decided to relax at the hotel.

I went to the Orpheum theatre to

see and hear the silent film Wings accompanied by 90-year-old Bob Mitchell. Since I had done this several times myself and it was the first real feature length silent I had ever experienced (1986 ATOS Convention in Richmond, Virginia), I was curious to see what Bob would do with the accompaniment. And folks, that is a story that I will treat you to in the next issue. It ain't what you think it's going to be!

Welcome New Member

Jim Buttram
770-973-5468
225 Shawnee Trail
Marietta, GA 30067
jamesbuttram@att.net

Change of Address

Gordy & Linda Johnson
678-290-0151
758 Friendship Church Rd.
Powder Springs, GA 30127-4468
jlogan758@aol.com

Lynne Hart
(Was Mr. & Mrs. James A. Hart)
404-241-2360
3936 Rockey Valley Dr.
Conley, GA 30288-1410
lynnejhart@juno.com

President's Message...

I come to this Thanksgiving month profoundly grieved at the loss of two wonderful ladies of our chapter: Tillie Sandow and Liz Fields. Their passing and that of others this year who have been such a large part of this chapter makes me clearly aware of what we should all be thankful for this



Larry Davis at Fair Oaks UMC

particular Thanksgiving and that is our friends. Many of you have known each other for a very long time and have shared many experiences and a lot of music together. Be grateful for those years. James Thrower used the term, "True Friend," recently, and many of you have true friends in the Atlanta Chapter. Make the most of those friend-

ships while you can. Those of you who are new or relatively new, as I am, no doubt agree with the author of a note that came to me earlier this year, who said, "The Atlanta Chapter is the *friendliest* bunch of people I have ever had the pleasure to come in contact with!" You can build a lifetime of friendships and caring among this group of won-

derful people.

There is one more thing to be grateful for, and here I will quote the great violinist Isaac Stern, "You should get up every morning and say thank God, thank whomever you want, thank you, thank you, for making me a musician."

Happy Thanksgiving and stay in touch.

Larry Davis

From the Fields Family

Dear Friends,

Thank you for the beautiful flowers at the Fair Oaks UMC homecoming service in memory of our beloved Liz. [see photos below] We are grateful to Larry Davis for being organist at her funeral and homecoming and to Wanda Carey for stuffing and mailing the October newsletter for me while Liz was in the hospital.

ATOS members' loving concern, visits, food, prayers and help during Liz's hospitalization and passing to her Heavenly home are sincerely appreciated.

Claire Fields Kuhl & Elbert

Closing Chord... By Larry Davis
Elizabeth "Liz" Fields
1931-2005

When Donna Carter introduced her colleague Liz Fields to the world of theatre organ, Atlanta Chapter members could not have known the wealth of knowledge and experience that she would bring with her. But they soon learned and not long after she joined, she was elected Secretary of the Chapter. In that position she contributed immeasurably to our success



during the past few years and, through her indispensable involvement with the Fabulous Fox Organ Weekend, she made a significant contribution to the worldwide theatre organ world and to the history of theatre organ.

Liz passed away on Friday, October 7, from complications of a stroke, attended by her husband Elbert and her daughter Claire. We will miss her not only her contributions as an officer, we will miss her friendship, her humor, her insightful but always positive reviews as "The Listener," and her encouraging and optimistic personality.



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panels that box in lower portion of the console, which rather gave the church models a box type look.



The organ contains 6 ranks of pipes, two of which go to 16' pitch, plus chimes and was prepared for a harp.

The organ is playing all on original leather and through the original relay. A Glockenspiel has been added to the swell manual. The tremolo has been adjusted to give the organ a more "theatre" sound. Don't let it being a former church organ fool you. It looks, sounds, smells, and is every bit a



REAL Wurlitzer Pipe organ. And is (at this time) the only "playing" Wurlitzer in the state.

Directions to John Tanner's

From Atlanta take I-20 eastbound, cross I-285 (or if you are coming around 285 get on I-20 eastbound. Take the Turner Hill Exit - 4th exit out I-20 past 285 about 8 miles) Turn left onto Turner Hill go to the 4th traffic light approx. 3 miles and turn right onto Pleasant Hill Road. Go about 2.5 miles. The Sierra Highland Subdivision will be on the left. Turn left onto Sierra Passage. Go to Boulder Cove about 0.1 miles and turn left. 1761 Boulder Cove is the first house on the right. Park along street or in the driveway.

Telephone 770-918-1116

Ron Reseigh, House Organist at a Milwaukee Pizza Restaurant, came to town and wowed the Atlanta crowd with a hot, hard driving style of organ playing no doubt inherited from his organist father and honed by several hours a day at the console in the pizza parlor.

Many members who have long convention attendance records have had the opportunity of hearing young artists on the rise, a Gledhill, an Eddington, a Wickerham start very young and chart the maturity of playing over a long years span. I do not have all that long a convention attendance record and cannot chart many artists from their first performances. I did, however,

hear this one many years ago when he was a novice angling for spots to sub for the pros at the local pizza venue. Even then



he was all hot-and-bothered, rock-em sock-em, powerhouse punch style and you knew a great entertaining organist was in the works.

Well, my goodness, have

things progressed nicely in the intervening years. The old punch is still there in grand fashion but along with it now is a subtlety of style, a romance, an artistry not heard before.

The first half featured renditions of *In The Mood*, *No Name Rag*, *My Romance*, *Bumblebee Rock*, *The Sound of Music*, *Chicago*, *Unforgettable*, *The Colonel Bogey March* and *Star Wars*.

Ron's beautiful arrangement of *Unforgettable* was dedicated to the memory of Liz Fields.

Brave is the organist who throws open the floor to audience requests but that is exactly what took place in the second half (some would say foolhardy

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when the room is full of theatre organists who will cheerfully load you up with knuckle busters like *Dizzy Fingers*, *Rollercoaster*, *Powerhouse* or *Victory at Sea*.) But that's exactly what he did (and exactly what they did too). We were then treated to a wide-ranging medley of difficult showstoppers among them *Chattanooga ChooChoo*, *High Hat*, *Entertainers Rag*, *The Stars and Stripes Forever* and *Rollercoaster*.



If you were not in attendance you missed a great one. We are all looking forward to Rick McGee at John Tanner's Wurlitzer and Lyn Larsen at Ron Carter's Allen GW4. I can't imagine another chapter anywhere in the country that enjoys a better show than Atlanta ATOS. You should be there. Ya'll come.

Fred Boska.

Bucky conveys his special thanks to Randy and Betty Anderson, Mike Knight and James Thrower, without whom the Ron Reseigh program would have not been such a success. Bucky also wants you to know the Cobb County Voicing Authority now voices Thomas organs.

The Imperial Theatre Mighty Wurlitzer... by Larry Davis

On Friday, October 7, Ron Carter, Larry Davis and Mike Mixon met with the Imperial Theatre's Executive Director Lara Plocha, Technical Director Trey Maxwell, and Paul Brewer, president of the theatre board of directors, to explore the possibility of returning the recently-acquired Wurlitzer organ to its original home in Augusta. Prior to the meeting, Trey took Ron, Larry and Mike on a tour of the chambers and the under stage area. The chambers are dry and secure and Ron's assessment is that with the removal of the sound equipment currently in front of the grill area, they will easily house the organ at its current 11-rank size.

At the meeting, Larry presented a brief history of the organ, information on the Atlanta Chapter and ATOS, and some of the issues involved in transferring the organ to the theatre for their use. There were some exciting moments during the meeting. The first was when Larry brought out the new Junchen/Weiler Wurlitzer volume and located the

Imperial Theatre Wurlitzer in the opus list. Subsequently, when Ms. Plocha expressed her plan to refer to the organ as the Imperial Theatre Mighty Wurlitzer, Mr. Brewer recalled the term "Mighty Wurlitzer" from his childhood in Richmond, VA. Larry and Ron simultaneously said, "The Byrd Theatre." While Mr. Brewer reminisced on his childhood visits to that theatre, Larry located a photograph of the theatre and organ in the Wurlitzer volume, which thrilled Mr. Brewer. The dramatic height of the meeting may have occurred when Larry brought out several of the pipes from the organ, back in their home theatre for the first time in decades.

With respect to the reinstallation plan, Mr. Brewer acknowledged that our requests were very reasonable and asked us to proceed to set up a lease agreement with them according to the terms we had presented. The theatre has acquired free storage in a museum warehouse to house the organ until it can be installed. They plan to exhibit the console in the lobby to generate community interest. They have ex-

plored the changes they will need to make to be able to house the organ once again, and are very optimistic about the early success of a fund raising campaign for this instrument.

While discussing the prospect of moving the console to the theatre for display so it will be there over the peak holiday season, Ms. Plocha said that the theatre has a truck that might work – and will it ever! It is a 24 foot truck with a lift gate – exactly what is needed to move the entire organ in one trip. The theatre plans to make the return of the organ a well-publicized "happening" in Augusta, with television coverage.

That those associated with the Imperial are excited is evidenced by this note from Board President Brewer: "I truly enjoyed meeting you last week. The enthusiasm exhibited by the three of you demonstrates the passion you have for this project! I'm thoroughly pumped too. This is a real coup for us and I look forward to getting started on the project."

Better Than the Regal...

At the conclusion of Ron Carter's presentation of the silent film *Sunrise* to a sold-out Sacred Heart Cultural Center in Augusta on October 7, I approached a group of young people who were in attendance. I asked them what they thought, and all of them were effusive in their enthusiasm. But the most memorable comment came from a 10-year old who said, "I loved it. That was great. *That* was

better than the Regal." High praise indeed, especially for a film that, except for a brief segment, contains no adventure sequences. *Sunrise* is a film of love, betrayal, intrigue and suspense and as a result the musical accompaniment to this film is indispensable to a successful screening. Ron Carter rose to the highest level of artistry that he has yet achieved and the program was evidenced by the extended standing ovation that he received at the conclusion. Before the program, Ron, in a very moving and appropriate tribute, dedicated his performance of this love story to Liz Fields. The event was covered by a local television station in their next-day news and evening was a great success for the Cultural Center, for silent film, and for theatre organ.

Larry Davis

**RON CARTER TO PERFORM AT THE ALABAMA THEATRE
IN BIRMINGHAM ON NOVEMBER 13th at 2 PM CST.
*AN AFTERNOON AT THE MOVIES!***



This will be a different kind of chapter program. The entire program will consist of film clips of famous films from the 30's to present day where the background music became just as popular as the film. Ron will accompany a short film clip from the film on Bertha the mighty Alabama Wurlitzer using the music from the film itself!



Upcoming Meetings & Events (*Mark your Calendars*)

- November 13, 2 P.M. CST... Ron Carter plays for Alabama Chapter at the Alabama Theatre—Afternoon at the Movies
- **November 20, 3:00 P.M. Meeting...** Rick McGee at the **John Tanner** residence
- **December 4, at 3:00 P.M. Meeting/Christmas party...** Lyn Larsen at the **Carter** residence
- January 7, 2006, 2:00 P.M... Richard Morris, organ & Scott Thornburg, trumpet at Spivey Hall
- **January 15, 2006, 3:00 P.M....** John McCall at the **Reddish** Residence
- January 20, 2006, 8:15 P.M... Hector Guzman, organist, at Spivey Hall
- 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

Atlanta Chapter , ATOS - Membership Application

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State/ZIP _____ E mail _____

Do you own an organ? _____ If so, description _____

Annual membership dues \$35 (Student \$17.50). Please make check payable to *Atlanta Chapter, ATOS*. Meetings are held monthly, usually on the 3rd Sunday afternoon. Mail this application and your check to: Wanda Carey, 4135 Brookwood Dr., Austell, GA 30106-1237.