

Pine Piper Newsletter of The Pine Tree Chapter of The American Theatre Organ Society.

Happy Fall!

We start off on a sad note as we note that St Louis Fox Theatre Organist, and "Gadget Man" Stan Kann passed away Sept. 29th. ATOS President Ken Double has this message viewable on the ATOS website:

Stan Kann (1924-2008)

For the thousands of us who love the sounds of the theatre pipe organ, Stan Kann and the St. Louis Fox were, in a phrase, as inseparable a combination as Hoover and vacuum cleaner. Stan Kann passed away Monday morning, September 29, 2008. He was enjoying his second long tenure as house organist at the Fox Theatre on its thrilling 4/36 Wurlitzer, which he played for the last time two days before his death.

He passed away at St. Louis University hospital due to complications following heart surgery.

Born in St. Louis, he began playing the organ at age four. His formal music training included piano lessons at the Soldan High School; he received a degree in classical organ from Washington University in St. Louis.

A trip to Radio City Music Hall and the chance to hear that Wurlitzer organ moved him to contact the ownership of the St. Louis Fox, and ask about the opportunity to repair the then-silent musical behemoth. He and a group of friends got the organ playing, and Stan became house organist for 22 years, a tenure that ended in 1975 when he moved to Southern California.

In addition to performing at the Fox Theatre, Kann also was music director for several local St. Louis television programs in the 1950's, and was "discovered" by comedian Phyllis Diller. Kann's bumbling, stumbling persona, and his collection of antique vacuum cleaners became the basis for a series of national television appearances that made him a famous comedic character.

He appeared on talk shows with Dinah Shore, Mike Douglas, Merv Griffin, and dozens more, a part of his career that was highlighted by a record 77 appearances on The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson. His first appearance with Carson was to have been an eight-minute segment, which ended up running 14 hilarious minutes, leading to a regular spot on that famous chair to the right of Carson, the King of late night talk show television.

Kann returned to St. Louis in 1998 for hip surgery and decided to remain "home," thus resurrecting his love affair with the Fox Theatre and its Wurlitzer.

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“There is no doubt that everybody who knew him could tell a wonderful, and funny Stan Kann story,” said ATOS President/CEO Ken Double, “but what I will never forget about being with Stan in St. Louis was not just his celebrity status, but how everybody truly loved the man. Dinner at an outdoor café would bring literally dozens and dozens of well-wishers who just wanted to say ‘Hello’ or tell him how much they enjoyed The Fox. We could hardly eat dinner for the wonderful disruptions of his fans. He might not have been as famous as the Arch, but it was close. All of St. Louis loved Stan Kann.”

Said Mary Strauss, who along with her late husband saved The Fox Theatre, “St. Louis has lost a goodwill ambassador, and The Fox has lost its best friend.” Stan Kann was 85. There will be more on this much-loved theatre organist and his career in the January-February issue of The Journal.

(September 30, 2008) Ken Double

More information is available on the Saint Louis Chapter's web site: <http://www.sltos.org>

Ed. Note: I grew up watching Mr. Kann in his many appearances on talk shows with his various off-the-wall gadgets, in their sometimes questionable state of functionality. Those with a fast connection will enjoy this appearance with Bill Cosby: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AbPuC2-IJJ4> "Stan Kann The Gadget Man" at his finest!

Stewart Entertains at Loranger.

Stewart Schuster played the Wurlitzer for a pancake breakfast at the school on Saturday 9/27. Edith had this to say about the event:

Thanks to Stewart it went very well. Mr Lloyd Crocker the principal of Loranger saw and heard the organ for the first time. He started the job in Sept 07. Apparently George Shabo is planning to take the 4th graders to see and hear the Kotzschmar sometime this year and maybe something might happen.

Although the turn out for the pancakes was pretty meager in my opinion, we had several people with the usual comments about they never knew it was there, etc.

One young man might show up at a meeting. I passed out several of our blue folders.

As I feared, there was one cypher-right when Stewart started it up. Open diapason D3. Stewart went up in the chamber and removed the pipe, placed a plastic cup in the hole and went about his job. The music sounded quite good, actually. Everett stopped in between his morning errands with his Mother.

For a rather unplanned event, I was pleased and so grateful to Stewart and Bill.

We had to move the piano and six stacks of folders that were right in front of the console garage. We did not invite anyone to come on stage or play it-too much other stuff around. In all, a very satisfying effort.

The Keith Taylor 2/9 (maybe more) Wurlitzer

The builders have been busy. After insulation is applied, the interior walls will be sheathed with 3/4" plywood, then that covered with blue board, coated with a skim coat of hard plaster. The plywood, aside from stiffening the building, will give me places to attach supports and rack boards for Bourdons etc, without having to look around for wall studs.

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Hopefully ...before too long I can start putting things back together instead of always taking them apart! Each chamber will be fourteen feet wide, eleven feet deep and 14' ceilings in the middle of the building.

Keith

Chapter Meeting October 12, with A.M. Work Session.

Here is the information I have to date regarding Sunday. Does anyone else care to help out?

Many thanks, Jim

Sunday October 12, 2008 (9AM to 2:30PM)

Clean up will begin at 2:30 to prepare for the 3PM meeting

- Re-leathering pneumatics (only 270 remaining)

1. Jim- all day
2. Dwight- all day
- 3 Bill 11AM
4. Edith 11AM
5. Everett 11AM
6. Charles- all day
- 7.
- 8.

James W. Martin

101 Poland Road

Milton Township, Maine 04219

207-364-3114

Upcoming Events

The *Phantom* returns with Scott Foppiano, Friday, October 24th. The ever popular *Christmas with Cornils, A Kotzschmar*

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Christmas, is sure to delight concert goers and put them in the holiday spirit! *Kids, Kartoons and Kotschmar* is a family favorite. Don't miss Dame Gillian Weir, March 10 and Ray Cornils joined by the DaPonte String Quartet for the annual *Bach Birthday Bash*, April 14 at 2 and 7:30. See below for details.

Upcoming Concerts

Date	Event	Event Type
October 24, 2008	Halloween Silent Film Night	Silent Movie
December 23, 2008	Christmas with Cornils, A Kotschmar Christmas	Classical concert
February 8, 2009	Kids Kartoons and Kotschmar	Concert
March 10, 2009	Celebrity Concert	Concert
April 14, 2009	Bach Birthday Bash	Concert
April 14, 2009	Bach Birthday Bash	Concert

The Red, White, Blue and Ragtime Spectacular

The Red, White, Blue and Ragtime Spectacular is a collaboration of two incredible musicians. It all started during an informal jam session in Wichita, KS. Organist Dave Wickerham was the featured artist at the concert. Ragtime pianist, Dick Kroeckel, was in the audience. By pure coincidence, Dick was seated at the grand piano and Dave sat down at the Little River Studio Mighty Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ. Within a very few moments, those lucky listeners in attendance were mesmerized as the two musicians melded their talents. As Dave put it, what he and Dick discovered was "pure serendipity"! **Now it's your turn to join the fun!**

**Knight Auditorium, Babson College
Saturday, November 15, 2008 - 7:30 PM
and**

**Shanklin Music Hall
Sunday, November 16, 2008 - 2:30 PM**

Tickets are available through EMCATOS

<http://www.emcatos.com/PipeOrganPopsAndSilentsInTheHouse/Events/Tickets/tickets.html>

Chapter Meeting Sunday October 12, 3:00 PM at The Loranger School.

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