

The Lloyd E. Klos Legacy

For Hector Olivera's third RTOS concert on October 28, 1978, Lloyd wrote the article below about "Mr. Blackpool", Reginald Dixon, for the back cover of the program. Reprinted here, it is a fitting tribute to complement today's artist, also from Great Britain.

A.T.O.S. Hall of Fame Organists; No. 2 Reginald Dixon



"Good morning to you from Reginald Dixon at the tower Ballroom, Blackpool, where for the next 30 minutes I'll play you a program of light music".

Thousands of times between 1934 and 1970, Britons heard the above greeting over the wireless, accompanied by the lilting strains of "I Do Like to be Beside the Seaside", as Reginald Dixon began another broadcast.

"Mr. Blackpool", as he was affectionately known, was born in Sheffield, England in 1904. A talented pianist at an early age, he won a gold medal award, and at 14, was organist at his local church. A few years later, he became involved as a cinema organist; playing theatres in Chesterfield,

Sheffield, Birmingham, Dudley and Preston.

In 1930 came his big break. He won an audition for the post of organist at the prestigious Tower Ballroom in Blackpool. This resort is the equivalent to our Atlantic City, and the tower complex has two 3/13 Wurlitzer organs, the other being in the Empress Ballroom.

In 1932, Reggie began recording the Tower Wurlitzer. The organ then was a two-manual affair, and though the records sold well, it became apparent to the Tower management that an organist of Dixon's talents and stature needed a larger, more versatile instrument. Therefore, in 1934, a 3-manual, 13-rank Wurlitzer organ was installed. The accompanying picture shows him at the console of that instrument.

The new-organ meant more prestige for Reggie as the British Broadcasting Corp. inaugurated a long run of programs, interrupted only by Reggie's World War II service. Though the very capable Ena Baga substituted for him, it was a banner day when "Mr. Blackpool" returned to the Tower's console.

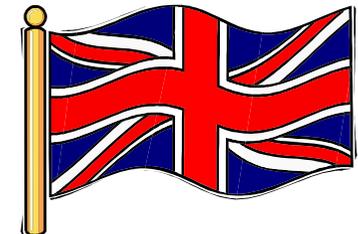
Reginald Dixon's breezy, personable approach to his work served him in good stead, whether he were playing a quickstep for 3,000 dancers on the Tower Ballroom's floor, or a march over the BBC. It was with much sadness that British audiences learned of Reginald Dixon's retirement in 1970. He hasn't been forgotten, however, being elected to the ATOS Theatre Organists Hall of Fame in 1974.

Front cover design and historical text by Russ Shaner

The Rochester Theater Organ Society

Proudly Presents

Richard Hills



Auditorium Theatre

Sunday, March 19, 2017 - 2:30 pm



TODAY'S ARTIST—RICHARD HILLS



RTOS is thrilled to welcome Richard Hills to the Auditorium Theatre for his second performance on the RTOS - Grierson 4/23 Mighty Wurlitzer. He first entertained the RTOS audience in January 2001 when he performed on the 3/12 Wurlitzer at the Eisenhart Auditorium. His return to Rochester in May of 2014 to play the 4/23 was a highlight of the season.

Richard Hills, FRCO is one of the very few musicians truly to have bridged and mastered the divide between the world of the classical organ and that of the theatre organ. Having commenced classical organ studies under William Whitehead at Rochester Cathedral, he became Organ Scholar at Exeter College Oxford, studying with David Sanger. Further organ scholarships followed at Portsmouth Cathedral, where he studied with Rosemary Field and at Westminster Abbey.

Richard now pursues a freelance career and is Organist at St Mary's, Bourne Street, London. His career in the theatre organ world has been equally prestigious. He has numerous prizes and awards to his credit, both in the UK and in the USA, where he was named 'Organist of the Year' in 2010 by the ATOS.

Richard has appeared many times on national and international TV and radio, including solo appearances on programs as diverse as Radio 3 Choral Evensong and Radio 2's 'Friday Night is Music Night', and has several recording credits. His most recent solo recording was made on the magnificent dual-purpose Compton organ of Southampton's Guildhall.

When not on the bench, Richard serves as Musical Advisor to the Cinema Organ Society and maintains a practical interest in organ building. He has a particular interest in the music and playing of Quentin Maclean, legendary organist of the Trocadero Elephant & Castle in the 1930s.

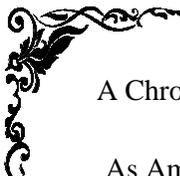
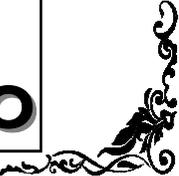


CELEBRATE MEMORIAL DAY WITH RTOS

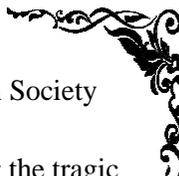
Sunday, May 28 at 2:30 PM

STARRING

SCOTT FOPPIANO



THE RTOS STORY



A Chronological History of the Rochester Theater Organ Society

2002 - RTOS SOLDIERS ON

As America began 2002 with a renewed spirit following the tragic events of the previous year, so did RTOS. Longtime member Dick Boyer rejoined the board as a Director as newly elected President, John E. Grierson took over the reins from Ken Evans.

2002 also saw a landmark change for our flagship organ. Originally having 21 ranks of pipes, when the organ was revived in the RKO Palace in 1960 the Brass Saxophone pipes were missing. In the late 1960s these pipes were temporarily replaced by a Post Horn rank. Also during this period a solo Vox Humana rank was added making the organ a 4/22. In the 1990s a replacement Brass Sax pipe rank was located and purchased. Several years of planning and hundreds of hours of hard work finally resulted in the return of this important original voice to our Mighty Wurlitzer. The organ officially debuted as a 4/23 on October 19, 2002 with **Len Rawle** doing the honors.

The year's musical roster would include five returning artists and four newcomers. Milwaukee's **Ron Reseigh** led us off in January, this being his first of four RTOS appearances, the last being in 2009. First timer **Carol Williams** headlined our February concert. Known more today for her classical organ appearances, Carol has recently relocated to the east coast following a long stint as resident organist on the Ausitn organ at Balboa Park 's famous Spreckels Organ Pavilion in San Diego, Ca. **Jonas Nordwall** joined us in March for his sixth trip to the Auditorium. In addition to a busy schedule as a concert and church organist in the Portland, OR area, Jonas is a major mentor in the ATOS efforts to encourage and develop the next generation of theatre organists. Next up was well-known Phoenix area organist **Lew Williams**, here for his 5th RTOS appearance. Organist/ technician Clark Wilson closed our 38th concert season on May 18th.

Season #39 was kicked off by Australian organist **John Giacchi** in his debut RTOS performance. Currently a lawyer, John still performs 'down under' but seldom tours in the USA. Another import, our old friend **Len Rawle** hopped over from England in October for his eighth and, to date, last RTOS appearance. Still active in British theatre organ circles, Len has not visited the USA in recent years. In November, RTOS Honorary Member **David Peckham**, who first played for RTOS in 1974 at age 13 was back for his ninth concert performance. As of this writing, David holds the all-time record for RTOS appearances having played here fourteen times. Rich Lewis rounded out 2002 on December 14th. Currently residing in Jacksonville, FL, Rich is organist and musical director at a church there.

