

RTOS Blower

Official Newsletter of The Rochester Theater Organ Society Inc.



Walt Strony Opens 2017-2018 Season for RTOS

Walt Strony was born in Chicago in 1955, and began music lessons at age 7. His theatre organ teacher was Al Melgard, who for many years played Chicago Stadium's famous Barton theater organ. Walt made his public debut in 1974 at the age of 18 and quickly established himself as one of only a few organists equally at home playing both theatre and classical organ.

Walt has performed hundreds of theater organ concerts from coast to coast in the United States as well as in Japan, Australia, England, and Canada. He has performed at many conventions of the American Theatre Organ Society (ATOS), the Cinema Organ Society, and the American Guild of Organists.

Walt is the only living organist to have been twice voted "Organist of the Year" by ATOS (1991, 1993). In 2011, he was inducted into the ATOS Hall of Fame. He has performed with the Calgary Symphony, Allentown Symphony, El Paso Symphony, and Symphony Silicon Valley.

In July 2007, Walt performed the first solo organ



Walt Strony

Auditorium Theatre
885 E. Main St

**Sunday, October 15, 2017
2:30 PM**

(Doors open 45 min early)

recital to be presented in many years at New York's Radio City Music Hall during the ATOS 2007 Convention.

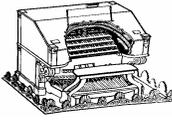
Walt has recorded over 30 albums. His first CD *Phoenix* was rated 10/10 by *CD Review* -- the highest rating given by this prestigious publication. His most recent was recorded on the former Vince Aveni Wurlitzer in Gates Mills, OH -- an instrument that he designed.

In June 2016, Walt was featured for the second time

in an evening concert performed on the famous Wanamaker Pipe Organ, the world's largest fully functioning pipe organ, on Wanamaker Organ Day held each spring at Wanamaker's, now owned by and known as Philadelphia's Macy's Department store.

Walt also works as a pipe and digital organ consultant-tonal finisher. His work in this area has taken him to both theatre and classical instruments across the country and around the world. In 2008, the Allen Organ Company commissioned him to design a new four-manual instrument - the Walt Strony Signature Series Organ. His book, *The Secrets of Theatre Organ Registration*, has become the standard reference book on this subject. He is currently completing work on a new expanded second edition, which should be available soon.

Walt resides in California's Gold Rush Country, located in the Sierra Nevada foothills. In his spare time, he enjoys traveling, fine dining, and collecting contemporary art and various interesting Art Deco items.

**Rochester Theater Organ Society
(Founded 1964)**

PO Box 17114

Rochester, NY 14617

Concerts & Info: (585) 234-2295

<http://www.rtosonline.org>**MEMBERSHIP CHAIR**

Ken Veneron

48 N. State St.

Nunda, NY 14517

(585) 468-1052

423rtos@rochester.rr.com

Membership (from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31)

Full: \$75.00

Associate: (50+ miles from Roch): \$55.00

Student (age 18-24 with ID): \$45.00

BLOWER EDITOR

Laura Finger

22 Blue Avocado Ln.

Rochester, NY 14623

(585) 298-9786

laurab78@rochester.rr.com

OPEN CONSOLE

Martin Ippolito

PO Box 17438

Rochester, NY 14617

(585) 266-6337

PROGRAM CHAIR

Russ Shaner

(585) 266-2854

r.shaner@rochester.rr.com

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Visit the RTOS website frequently for the latest news and information. find us at:

www.rtosonline.org

**A LETTER FROM YOUR PRESIDENT**

It has been a summer filled with pipe organ activities. First there was the 2017 ATOS Convention held in Tampa, FL where we heard several notable organs and saw our own **Alex Jones** win the Young Theatre Organist Competition. You will learn more about Alex elsewhere in this *Blower*. The, in July, I attended the Organ Historical Society conclave in Minneapolis-St. Paul and heard many marvelous organs played by world class organists.

In between these conventions, a group of investors and volunteers managed an organ transplant. The Eastman School of Music's organ department has dreamed of having access to a theatre organ for students who show interest in this genre. Our two Wurlitzers are located in very busy locations (Auditorium Theatre and the Rochester Museum and Science Center) and have only limited access for teaching and practice. Russ Shaner located a 7 rank organ in mint condition in Providence, RI (2/7 Wurlitzer, Opus 1584, style EX). After a visit to examine this instrument, five RTOS members agreed to buy it for \$10,000 and move it to Rochester - another \$9,000.

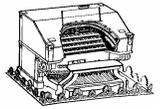
During July, a team of eight volunteers from Rochester, Providence, and Boston, plus two employees from Parsons Organ Company, descended on Linc Pero's home in the Providence area. In a day and a half, we disassembled the instrument which was housed in Linc's basement, packed it into a 26 ft. rental truck and the next day drove it to Rochester. It is now stored in my garage and basement while we search for a permanent home.

Now for the amazing coincidence - where was the original home of this instrument?? Let's work backward. Linc Pero purchased the organ in 1981, totally refurbished it and installed it in the basement of his home in 1993 where it was played regularly by friends and touring artists right up until the night before we began the removal. Prior to this location, it was in a church in Brockton MA. The original installation by the Wurlitzer factory was - drum roll please!! - the Liberty Theater on Driving Park Avenue in Rochester! The Liberty opened in 1927. The organ was sold and moved to the church in 1945. The Liberty closed in the late 1950s and was eventually razed.

We are now at the point where we must locate a suitable new home for the instrument. We are working with the management of such a site but no firm agreement has been made. Since our original five investors have emptied their piggy banks, independent funding for its relocation is required. We will eventually be seeking bequests, sizable donations, grants, etc. I am guessing that this will cost \$20,000 to \$30,000 but we will get a firm estimate in the near future. Let's look forward to an old friend coming home and providing music for many years to come.

In the meantime, I welcome you all to our 54th concert season. Russ Shaner and Tim Schramm are putting together a roster of great artists to play for us in the coming months. I hope you will be in the audience on October 15th as our good friend Walt Strony entertains us at the console of the RTOS-Grierson Mighty Wurlitzer.

Paul A. Law
paullaw342@gmail.com
585-755-4144



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALEX!



Many of you heard Alex Jones's stand-out performance as part of the *Eastman Bunch X Concert* last February.

Following the EB concert, and at the urging of Russ Shaner and Paul Law, Alex applied to enter the 2017 American Theatre Organ Society's 2017 *Young Theatre Organist Competition*. In April he was selected as one of three finalists and in July at the annual ATOS Convention held in Tampa, FL, was declared the winner.

Originally from London, Alex is currently studying for a Masters in Organ Performance Literature at the Eastman School of Music in the studio of Prof. Edoardo Bellotti. Shortly after arriving in Rochester in August of 2016, Alex contacted RTOS President Paul Law and asked if he could 'try out' our organ. Alex said that he was interested in theatre organs but had never actually played one. Paul took him to the Auditorium and Alex took to the Wurlitzer 'like a duck to water'.

Alex has already been invited to perform at several theatre organ venues around the U.S. and will play a full concert for the 2018 ATOS convention in Los Angeles next July. He will also be our special guest performer at the upcoming RTOS *Eastman Bunch XI* concert next February.

Alex joins Jonathan Ortloff to be the second ESM student and RTOS member to win the coveted ATOS competition, and both join ESM graduate David Peckham as stars in the realm of theatre organ. RTOS is privileged to have played a part in the nurturing of these gifted performers.

4/23 UPGRADES

Over the summer months RTOS organ crew members Roger Wood and Rick McCutchan completed two long-planned upgrades to the RTOS - Grierson Wurlitzer. In the main chamber (audience left) the 16' wood diapasons (part of the diaphonic diapason rank) were rewinded. Originally they received their air supply from the regulator that supplies the diapason and gamma ranks. Later placed on 'static' wind, they now have their own regulator which makes them much easier to keep in tune.

Over in the solo chamber the long planned tremulant has been installed on the English post horn rank. It will be interesting to see how much it is used. While some organists seldom if ever use the PH 'trem', others have told us it will be a worthwhile addition to the organ's 'tone palette'. Listen for it in the future.

This essentially completes all of the planned additions and upgrades to the organ. Thank you to Roger and Rick for spending part of your summer up in the very warm chambers.

TREASURER NEWS

by Ken Veneron

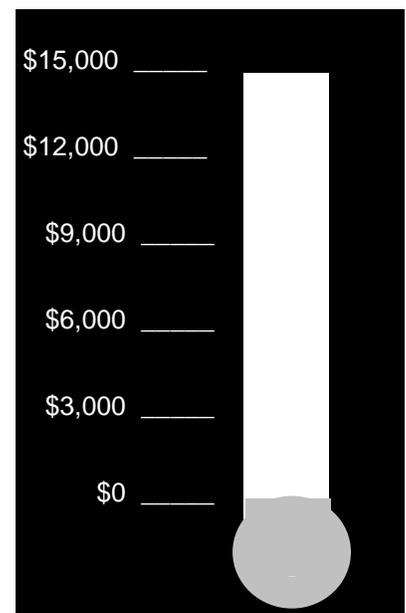
Copies of our Annual Report (8/1/16-7/31/17) will be available at the Membership Table if you'd like one.

Please note that all dues levels have been increased by \$10.00/year. In order to remain solvent, we needed to increase the dues. We accept cash, check, or credit cards at the Membership Table. You may also mail to us, or use a credit card online at www.rtosonline.com

RTOS ANNOUNCES 2017 FUNDS DRIVE

The 2017 drive to raise the dollars needed to keep RTOS solvent is now underway and will run through the end of December. This year the goal is again set at \$15,000.00. Donations will be accepted at the membership table at all fall concerts. There will also be donation boxes located in the lobby and you may add your donation when you renew your membership for 2018.

Donations may be mailed to:
RTOS Treasurer
48 N. State Street
Nunda, NY 14517-9655



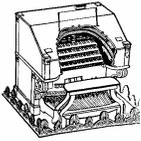
FOR SALE

Wurlitzer 30 note glockenspiel. Complete, in original / unrestored condition. Will require complete rebuild.

Wurlitzer xylophone. Complete, in original / unrestored condition. Will require complete rebuild.

Wurlitzer Glock bars - partial set. Make best offer for any or all. Local pickup only.

Paul Law
585-755-4144 or
paullaw342@gmail.com



**Rochester Theater
Organ Society**
P.O. Box 17114
Rochester, NY 14617-0114

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David Higgs, *Director*
John Lukes, *Director*
Rick McCutchan, *Director*
Tim Schramm, *Director, Programs*
Greg Spring, *Director*
Russ Shaner, *Past-President*

RTOS EVENTS

Auditorium Theatre, 885 E. Main St.
All artists and dates subject to change

Walt Strony	Oct 15	2:30 PM
Dave Wickerham	Nov 5	2:30 PM
Tim Schramm	Dec 10	2:30 PM
Open Console	Jan 7	11AM-4PM
Eastman Bunch XI	Feb 4	2:30 PM
TBA	March 4	2:30 PM
TBA	April 8	2:30 PM
TBA	May 27	2:30 PM
TBA	June 24	2:30 PM

Note: Artists and dates are subject to change
Check the RTOS website often for latest information on 2017-2018 dates and artists.

Rochester Museum & Science Center
Eisenhart Auditorium, East Ave. & Goodman St.

Open Console

Sundays from 11:00 AM to 4 PM

2017 Dates

Oct 22, Nov 12, Dec 17

2018 Dates

*Jan 7 (Aud. Theatre), Feb 11,
March 18, April 15,
May 20, June 17, July 15, August 19,
Sept. 16, Oct. 21, Nov. 25, Dec. 16*

"Open Console" is when members are given a time slot to play one of the Society's theater pipe organs. Come to play, or enjoy the music.



JUST \$1

Help RTOS keep the music playing. If each concert attendee drops a \$1 bill into a donation box at each concert it will cover the yearly cost of printing the *Blower* and Concert Programs.

UPCOMING REGIONAL EVENTS

Riviera Theatre & Organ Preservation Society (RTOPS)

(3/15 Wurlitzer) 67 Webster St, N Tonawanda, NY
Box Office: (716) 692-2413. Info: <http://www.rivieratheatre.org/>

Empire State Theatre & Musical Instrument Museum (ESTMIM)

(3/11 Wurlitzer) 581 State Fair Blvd., Syracuse (315) 687-3580
Info: <http://www.empiretheatre.org/index.htm>

Kingston Theatre Organ Society (KTOS)

Kingston Korean Church 89 Kirkpatrick St., Kingston, ON, CA
Info: (3/28 Kimball) Info/ticketing: <http://ktos.ca/>

Toronto Theatre Organ Society (TTOS)

Concerts currently held at: St. Andrew's United Church,
117 Bloor St. East, Toronto ON, CA. Check website for details.
Tickets: (416) 492-6262 email: box-office@ttos.ca
Info/ticketing: <http://theatreorgans.com/toronto/>

Binghamton Theatre Organ Society (BTOS)

236 Washington St, Binghamton, NY. Box Office (716) 692-2413.
Info/ticketing: <http://www.binghamtontos.org/>

Please visit the web sties for these venues for the latest information for their upcoming 2017-2018 concert seasons

2019 CONVENTION UPDATE

The 2019 Convention Planning Committee reports that plans for the ATOS convention to be held in Rochester June 30 - July 5, 2019 are progressing well. The contract has been signed for the host hotel (Radisson Riverside), the overall itinerary has been set, concert venues have been confirmed and artists who will perform have been selected. Currently, co-chair Paul Law and RTOS Director John Lukes are hard at work putting the budget together while Ted McWharf is addressing the bussing details and co-chair Russ Shaner is working on artist selection and a host of other details.

Some statistics: Current plans are for attendees to attend 16 concerts played on 11 pipe organs in 4 cities played by 16 organists. Added attractions will include visits to the Corning Glass Museum and Niagara Falls, NY.