The Rochester Theater Organ Society (RTOS) is happy to be hosting the 2026 ATOS Convention and wishes members a wonderful week of theater organ music.

2026 ATOS Convention Info

A Welcome from our Chairpersons…

On behalf of ATOS (American Theatre Organ Society) and RTOS (Rochester Theater Organ Society), welcome to the 2026 Annual Convention website. This year's Convention has brought together some of the best touring Theater Organists on the finest Theater Organs in the area. Welcome to the land of Wurlitzer. When this website first went live, we told you the economy, declining number and increased age of our membership will force this convention to be different than the past and to please work with us to keep this tradition going as it must evolve. So, let's summarize what has changed:

- The overall convention is shorter and more compact. Hopefully, this will save you a night or two on your hotel charges. However, there is very little free time.
- The Dinner Buffet and Awards Presentation is included in the general price as time limitations forced it to be one of our meal stops on our day in Buffalo.
- Buses are the most expensive part of the convention resulting in the need for staggered shuttles to local concerts. There will be two shuttle groups, A and B and you will be assigned to one or the other. The runs will be alternated so that Group A will leave early for some events, and later for others. Group B will be the opposite. The wonderful people at Rochester Broadway Theater League will have the concession area and bar open at the arrival of the first group of shuttle busses and the start of a concert. It will also be open while you wait to board the second group of shuttles after a concert. The Russell Shaner Piano will also be played and enjoyed while you wait. Our famous "Yellow Shirt" volunteers will be on hand to guide you and answer any questions.
- The full color multipage magazine that you are used to will not be printed this year. A trifold guide will be distributed to you at registration outlining times of concerts, events and bus departures. The website contains information on the Organs, Venues and Organists as the brochure did in the past. (Any last-minute changes will be posted on the website) You can access this live anytime and a download link will be available for you prior to the convention for a PDF version if you prefer to have it locally on your phone and/or tablet.
- We have been unable to find volunteers willing to take on the task of running the record shop, so unfortunately there will not be one this year at the convention. However, we have added a Buy and Sell option to the Facebook group 2026 ATOS Convention. We hope everyone uses this for relevant exchanges and we can keep it running for you even after the convention.

Great organists, wonderful organs at venues thriving in their communities, we look forward to seeing you all here the first full week of July.

Chris Van Stean and Bob Bower
2026 ATOS Convention Committee Chairpersons

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Clemens Performing Arts Center, Elmira, NY

The building now known as the Samuel L. Clemens Center for the Performing Arts opened December 21, 1925 as Keeney's Theater, a 2,362- seat vaudeville/movie house designed by architect Michael J. DeAngelis of Rochester, New York. The opening movie was The Ten Commandments and the organ was premiered by S. L. Stambaugh of Chicago. In 1952 the auditorium was "modernized" which included removal of the box seats and a name change to the Elmira Theater. It closed in 1976 as plans to widen State Street threatened the theater with demolition.

The wider street required the removal of the original entrance, lobby, and about 600 seats of the upper balcony. A new entrance and lobby were then built at the southeast corner of the building. The theater reopened in its new role in October 1977 with seating capacity reduced to 1,650 and improved acoustics. Phase I of Clemens' next renovation came in 1999-2000, involving building improvements and an upgrade of the "new" lobby. In 2007, the theater closed for Phase II, a one- year period of auditorium restoration by Evergreen Studios and expansion of the stagehouse. As part of the restoration the box seats that had been removed in 1952 were reconstructed as original. The theater is now in regular use as the home to Broadway musicals, classical concerts and a wide realm of popular entertainment for the Southern Tier of New York State.

Clemens PAC Marr & Colton/Wurlitzer

The organ at the Clemens Center has undergone several trials by water and subsequent renovations. This has resulted in an instrument quite different from its debut in 1925. The organ originally built by Marr & Colton was three-manuals with 20 ranks. Unification was limited with seven of the 20 ranks being on three "straight" ventil chests. Following the silent era it saw limited use until flood waters submerged the console and blower in 1946. In the 1950s Vandalism and an air conditioning installation that decimated the echo chamber took its toll. Then, in 1960, Lauren Peckham (David's father) and others began the daunting task of restoring the organ. A replacement M&C console was obtained and the organ was somewhat playable by 1963. It was used occasionally until 1972 when another flood destroyed the second console. Eventually funds for the organ were obtained and members of the 1960s team began rebuilding again.

A four-manual Wurlitzer console was obtained, an English Post Horn was added and the organ was again playable by late 1977. The stop unification was expanded in 1978 and an electronic memory combination system was installed. Next came another round of water damage to the relay and chests in the main chamber in 1982. Insurance provided funds for a number of improvements that included the replacement of damaged chests, installation of a Z-Tronics relay and numerous additions to the pipe rank complement including a 12- note Wurlitzer wood Diaphone from Rochester's 1914 Regent Theater that was donated by the Rochester Theater Organ Society.

In 2007, the theater closed for Phase II restoration and expansion of the stagehouse. This time funds were also included for the pipe organ. While there were several protracted efforts over the years, there had never been a complete overhaul of the entire instrument. The removal of the "old" Clemens organ took place in March 2007. In this incarnation, all Marr & Colton manual chests and most regulators in the Solo chamber were replaced with Wurlitzer chests. The number of ranks increased from 22 to 31.

A new 20-horsepower blower, a custom built muffler box and new larger-diameter static wind lines were installed. During the next several years nearly every component of the organ was rebuilt in David Peckham's shop. Gary Phillips rebuilt the remaining 14 Wurlitzer regulators and the console was repaired, expanded and professionally refinished. The 1985 Z-Tronics relay system was expanded and a new Z- Tronics memory system was added. More recently the long silent echo chamber has been restored and expanded from three non-unified stops to five ranks. The overall effect is nothing short of ethereal, and it remains as perhaps the only working Echo division in an original movie theater installation.

Today, the Clemens Center organ is the realization of the lifelong dreams of a gifted organist and organ builder. It is a near perfect melding of originality, carefully selected additions and a bit of modern technology brought together in a beautifully restored theater. It is truly the jewel of the Finger lakes

4/31 Rank Analysis

MAIN CHAMBER (Audience Left)

8' Vox Humana	61 pipes
10 2/3' Tibia Clausa	90 pipes
16' Diapason Phonon	85 pipes
16' Concert Flute	97 pipes
8' Oboe Horn	61 pipes
16' Tuba Horn	73 pipes
8' Viol D'Orchestre	85 pipes
8' Salicional	73 pipes
8' Viol Celeste	73 pipes
8' Clarinet	61 pipes
8' Salicional Celeste	73 pipes
8' Stopped Flute	85 pipes
16' French Horn	12 pipes
32' Bombarde Harmonics**	32 notes
8' Krumet (Prepared for)	61 pipes
Chrysoglott	49 notes
Marimba Harp	49 potes
Piano*	85 notes
Vibraphone*	37 notes

* Unenclosed

** The 32 Bombard Harmonics is formed from three independent mutation ranks for notes 1-12, then C-13 up plays the 16' Diaphone and Tuba at 32' pitch. The Main Tibia also plays at 10 2/3' for notes 1-12. Basically, this is a 32' pitch mixture replicating the overtones of a 32' reed.

Z-Tronics relay/combination system

SOLO CHAMBER (Audience Right)

8' English Post Horn	61 pipes
8' Trumpet	61 pipes
32' Solo Tibia Clausa	109 pipes
8' Kinura	61 pipes
8' Orchestral Oboe	61 pipes
8' Saxophone	61 pipes
8' Vox Humana	61 pipes
16' Gamba	85 pipes
8' Quintadena	85 pipes
16' Gamba Celeste	85 pipes
16' Horn Diapason	85 pipes
4' Harmonic Flute	61 pipes
8' French Trumpet	61 pipes
Glockenspiel	30 notes
Xylophone	37 notes
Chimes	
Toy Counter/Effects	

ECHO CHAMBER (Ceiling, Rear)

8' Flauto Dolce	61 pipes
4' Flauto Dolce Celeste	49 pipes
8' Gemshorn	61 pipes
8' Gemshorn Celeste	61 pipes
8' Vox Humana	61 pipes

Brett Valliant

Brett Valliant, a native of Wichita, Kansas, discovered his passion for music at an early age. He began piano lessons at four and later pursued organ studies at Wichita State University.

Launching his professional career at just eleven, Brett was performing concerts nationwide by age fifteen. His career has since taken him across the United States and internationally to Europe, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

He has performed for the American Film Institute and at national conventions of the American Theater Organ Society (ATOS) and the American Guild of Organists (AGO). After years of substituting for Charlie and Lew at Organ Stop Pizza, Brett joined the musical staff in 2015. In 2021, he was named Organist of the Year by ATOS

West Herr Performimg Arts Center

Established in 1930 as a Masonic Temple for the Northeast, the West Herr Performing Arts Center (WHPAC) in Rochester, New York, has evolved into a vibrant cultural hub. Today, it features the 2,500-seat West Herr Auditorium Theater, a premier venue for touring Broadway shows. The center also includes former ceremonial meeting rooms, soon to be restored into versatile performance spaces. With its stunning architectural design, this historic landmark is prominently located at the corner of East Main and Prince Streets, serving as the gateway to Rochester's Eastern district. The complex is owned and operated by the Rochester Broadway Theater League (RBTL).

From the beginning of its transition to an entertainment space, the Auditorium Theater was the site of numerous touring productions, featuring some of the biggest names in the entertainment business. A number of notable productions took place over the earlier years, and in 1957, an all-volunteer, not-for-profit group calling itself Rochester Broadway Theater League (RBTL), was formed to bring such productions to Rochester. In 2004, RBTL undertook a major renovation to the Theater that included the replacement of all the seats (for a capacity of 2,464), new carpeting throughout, upgrades to existing restrooms, as well as the addition of new restroom facilities on the lower level. At the same time, RBTL relocated its business offices and box office from its original downtown location to on-site. Today, the West Herr Auditorium Theater is home to a full season of touring Broadway (the M&T Bank Broadway Season) and also hosts live concerts and a number of comedy, drama, community and family events each year.

The Auditorium and Wurlitzer Organ

The West Herr Auditorium Theater is the home of a magnificent Wurlitzer 4/23 (opus 1951) theater organ. The console rises from the orchestra pit, and the sound of 1,619 pipes, trumpets, clarinet, saxophone, drums, shimmering strings, or marimbas emanates from the filigreed proscenium arch surrounding the main stage. The Rochester Theater Organ Society (RTOS) was formed in 1964 to rescue this organ from the luxurious downtown RKO Palace Theater, just before that 2916-seat, luxurious 1928 movie house fell to the wrecking ball of urban renewal in the mid-1960s. RTOS website: https://rtosonline.org/rtos-wurlitzer-2/. Originally installed in Rochester's RKO Palace Theater and premiered in December of 1928. As built the organ was a four manual, 21 rank instrument. A complete history of the RTOS and Opus 1951 Wurlitzer is available on the RTOS website https://rtosonline.org/rtos-story-introduction/.

RTOS-Grierson Wurlitzer - Opus 1951

As currently installed the instrument has 23 ranks (a second Vox Humana and Post Horn have been added). Originally installed in Rochester's RKO Palace Theater and premiered in December of 1928. As built the organ was a four manual, 21 rank instrument. As currently installed the instrument has 23 ranks (a second Vox Humana and Post Horn have been added).

Wurlitzer Opus 1951 was installed in the RKO Palace theater prior to the theater's opening in 1928. Similar in specification to the Empire Wurlitzer (originally installed in the Empire Theater, Leicester Square, London, England), the RTOS-Grierson Wurlitzer includes a 16' Tube Mirabilis. Subsequent to its relocation to the West Herr Performing Arts facility, it has been modified to include a Vox Humana and English Post Horn as well as a piano and Vibraharp. Over the years, chests have been rebuilt as time has permitted.

Major maintenance phases regarding the console have occurred. These include in 1972 when the secondary actions were professionally recovered. In the 1995-1997 period, the console was removed and professionally overhauled including pedal and keyboard adjustments, blow-box actions recovered, and the shell totally refinished. (The secondary action pneumatics were not recovered since they had been redone in 1972). In 2025, in preparation for the 2026 ATOS Convention, the console was removed from the theater and the combination system's pneumatics were recovered, new stop contact blocks installed and the stop actions regulated.

4 Manuals/23 Ranks

MAIN CHAMBER (Audience Left)

16' Flute / Bourdon	97 pipes
16' Gamba	85 pipes
16' Diaphonic Diapason	73 pipes
8' Viol D'Orchestre	85 pipes
8' Viol Celeste	73 pipes
8' Violin	73 pipes
8' Violin Celeste (TC)	61 pipes
8' Clarinet	61 pipes
8' Vox Humana	61 pipes
8' Tibia Clausa	73 pipes
Chrysoglott**	49 notes
Bird**	

SOLO CHAMBER (Audience Right)

16' Diaph. Horn Diapason	85 pipes
16' Tibia Clausa	97 pipes
16' Tuba Mirabilis	73 pipes
16' Tuba Horn	73 pipes
8' Quintadena	61 pipes
8' Solo String	61 pipes
8' Kinura	61 pipes
8' Oboe Horn	61 pipes
8' Orchestral Oboe	61 pipes
8' Brass Trumpet	61 pipes
8' Brass Saxophone	61 pipes
8' Solo Vox Humana*	61 pipes
8' English Post Horn*	61 pipes
Glockenspiel/Bells	37 notes
Tuned Sleigh Bells*	25 notes
Chimes	25 notes
Piano (MIDI) ***	85 notes
Harp / Marimba**	49 notes
Chrys/Vibraphone* **	49 notes
Xylophone **	37 notes
Bird**	
Toy Counter/Effects	
Z-Tronics relay/combination system	

* Added to original specification
** Unenclosed

Nathan Avakian

Nathan Avakian is an internationally acclaimed composer, producer and entertainer who brings bold, contemporary sound to film and live performance. His work encompasses a wide spectrum of genres from cinematic, orchestral, and choral music to electronic, pop, rock, and jazz. Recognized for his innovative approach to the theater organ, Nathan has redefined the instrument for modern audiences through multimedia performances, unique collaborations, and original compositions.

Nathan's fascination with the pipe organ began at age four with a visit to the Portland Organ Grinder, a restaurant featuring popular music played live on a theater organ with all of its mechanics exposed. He studied with Donna Parker for nine years beginning at age eleven. Jonas Nordwall was another influential teacher and mentor. Since winning the American Theater Organ Society Young Organist Competition in 2009, Nathan has produced three genre-blending albums and performed over 200 concerts across the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and Thailand.

As fifteen-year resident organist and composer for the International Youth Silent Film Festival, Nathan created music that inspired young filmmakers around the world. He helped pioneer the festival's expansion to include regional competitions across North America, Europe, Asia and Australia. Nathan's cinematic scoring work has been featured in films, web series, and podcasts including Tiffany Day: The Gratitude Tour, Apotheosis, The Creative Quarantine Sessions, Makers Who Inspire, and the I Am A Creator documentary series from Kit. He has also composed original theater organ scores for five historic silent films for Thanhouser Company Film Preservation and several silent shorts by contemporary filmmakers.

Nathan has a growing collection of piano and organ compositions to his credit including a reharmonized arrangement of The Star Spangled Banner and At The Square, a solo organ piece commissioned to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Jersey Journal publication in 2017. In 2020 he started a songwriting business with his sister Claire called Passing Notes, writing and producing personalized songs for customers and their loved ones.

Nathan also works as a freelance theatrical lighting designer. In 2014 he received a B.F.A. degree in lighting design from Purchase College, State University of New York.

For more information about Nathan's music, visit www.avakianmusic.com.

Ben Forsthoffer

Ben Forsthoffer's passion for the Theater Organ started at the age of 5 when he first heard the Wurlitzer pipe organ at Radio City Music Hall in New York City. Years later, he heard the pipe organ again at a family gathering and then began to learn to play the theater organ. Ben was a student of world-renowned theater organist Jelani Eddington, whose style and elegance is undeniably reflected in Ben's playing. Ben is also a classical and jazz pianist, which heavily influences his uniquely novel style, grounded in technically flawless playing and traditional theater organ technique.

Ben has begun to make his way across the concert circuit making a name for himself at a very young age. He has performed at numerous prestigious venues including the Fox Theater in Atlanta Georgia, The Rochester Broadway League Theater in Rochester New York, the Loews Jersey Theater in Jersey City New Jersey, and many more. His focus and determination for music is driven by his pure enjoyment and dedication. He is currently in his sophomore year of college and balances school with music.

Mark Herman

Mark Herman is a distinguished American theater organist who has performed hundreds of solo concerts and silent film presentations across the United States and internationally. He received the prestigious American Theater Organ Society's Organist of the Year award in 2012, becoming the youngest recipient in the society's history.

Featured on American Public Media's Pipedreams and at conventions for various organ societies, Mark has toured internationally in Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland, and the UK. His work has been showcased on television and in films, including a notable 2019 organ cameo with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Renowned for his period-authentic film scores, he composed and recorded new scores for The Criterion Collection's Harold Lloyd Blu-ray release in 2019.

Mark studied theater organ with John Ferguson and classical piano with Christine Freeman. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theater Arts/Management from DePaul University. Residing in Los Angeles, he is the President of Herman Organ Company, leading a talented team in the museum-quality restoration of theater pipe organs. He is also a sought-after organ consultant and an Allen Artist, showcasing new Allen Organs in the U.S. and abroad.

Donnie Rankin

Donnie Rankin was born in Ravenna Ohio and was immediately immersed in music. After hearing his great-grandfather Don Sr. play the electronic organ at home, Donnie first took an interest in the theater organ at the age of three when he heard the sounds of the Wurlitzer at the Civic Theater in Akron, Ohio.

After building a musical foundation in the school band, at age 12 Donnie's family acquired their own organ and he began taking formal lessons. Classical piano training followed at age 16, and his budding talent quickly blossomed into first rate musicianship.

Since then, Donnie has won several competitions and awards, including being named the Overall Winner of the American Theater Organ Society's Young Theater Organist Competition when he was 18. After his win in 2007, Donnie began a 5 year journey studying with noted organist Jelani Eddington.

In the course of his career, Donnie has performed for several ATOS annual conventions as well as several chapters, and has played for theater organ audiences around the world, including appearances in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. In addition to performances, Donnie has presented playing clinics as part of the ATOS Summer Youth Adventure and at Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. His work as an organist and percussionist have been broadcast on countless stations including NPR, and BBC 2. In 2023 Donnie was named the American Theater Organ Society's Organist of the Year.

Donnie resides in Ravenna, Ohio where he runs a piano studio outside of his normal working hours. He remains on call as an organist at Cleveland's Playhouse Square, and the Akron Civic Theater.

RMSC, Eisenhart Auditorium

The idea for the Eisenhart Auditorium, located on the site of the former private Columbia School was born about 1969 as the school prepared to vacate the property and move elsewhere. Located in Rochester's prestigious East Avenue Preservation District, the Rochester Museum and Science Center (RMSC) was expanding its campus in the early 1970s to incorporate portions of the school property which was adjacent to the museum property. Acquired through the generosity of Mr. M. Herbert Eisenhart, the former president of Bausch & Lomb, the included former gymnasium/ auditorium was remodeled into a 400 seat multi-purpose auditorium and exhibition facility which opened in 1974.

Eisenhardt Wurlitzer

As plans for the new facility evolved, RTOS member Don Hall, the first Director of the RMSCs state-of-the-art Strasenburgh Planetarium realized that the new Eisenhart Auditorium would be an ideal home for a theater organ. Coincidentally, in the early 1970s several RTOS members had purchased Wurlitzer Opus 1492, a 3-manual 8-rank 'special', originally installed in 1926 in the Capitol Theater, Worcester, MA. Brought to Rochester, it languished in storage for several years. Don approached the RMSC and RTOS with his idea. All parties agreed and RTOS bought the organ.

It is now increased to 12 ranks with the addition of two ranks of strings and a 16' Quintadena from the former Eastman Theater Austin and the Vox Humana from Wurlitzer Opus 44, plus piano. The pipework was re-regulated in the mid-1990s by Clark Wilson and Brant Duddy to make the most of the Eisenhart's acoustics. The resulting sound is that of a nicely voiced mid-sized studio instrument.

In the winter of 2025-2026, a Z-Tronics combination and MIDI interface were added to the previously installed Z-Tronics relay system.

The organ is used on a regular basis for open console sessions for RTOS members, silent film festivals and other community and social events. For two seasons in the late 1990s, all RTOS concerts were held at the Eisenhart while the console of the 4/23 was being refurbished. RTOS is pleased to welcome the YTOC to what is often referred to as "The RTOS Living Room".

Eisenhart Wurlitzer Specification

RMSC Eisenhart Auditorium, Rochester,
NY (1978)
Wurlitzer Opus 1492 (1928)
3 manuals/12 ranks

MAIN CHAMBER (Audience Left)

16’ Flute / Bourdon	97 pipes
16’ 8’ Viol Celeste*	85 pipes
8’ Viol Celeste*	73 pipes
16’ Diaphonic Diapason	73 pipes
Chrysoglott	49 notes

Z-Tronics relay/combination system

*Austin
**Originally in Main

SOLO CHAMBER (Audience Right)

16’ Quintadena*	85 pipes
8’ Violin**	73 pipes
8’ Violin Celeste (TC)**	61 pipes
8’ Tibia Clausa	85 pipes
8’ Clarinet**	61 pipes
8’ Trumpet	61 pipes
8’ Vox Humana	61 pipes
8’ Krumet	61 pipes
Glockenspiel/Bells	30 notes
Chimes	25 notes
Piano (Unenclosed)	85 notes
Xylophone	37 notes
Toy Counter/Effects	

Declan Poole

Declan is one of the UK's youngest theatre organ performers. Originally learning to play the piano at the age of 8, he took an interest in the theatre organ during a visit to the Tower Ballroom, Blackpool when he was around 13 years old. This led to Declan moving his attention away from piano as he began to study theatre organ, using an electronic organ at home and the Wurlitzer at the Royalty Cinema, Bowness-on-Windermere as his practice instruments.

Following sponsorship from the American Theatre Organ Society (ATOS), Declan began to study the finer points of theatre organ performance with Kevin Grunill at the Astoria Centre, Barnsley. After only six months of professional tuition, he won the ATOS U.K. Young Theatre Organist of the Year competition.

Since then, Declan has performed in concert at many of the UK's major theatre organ venues such as: the Opera House and Tower Ballroom – Blackpool; Troxy – London; New Victoria Centre – Howden-le-Wear; East Sussex National – Uckfield and the Pavilion – Bournemouth. To date he has played over 50 of the UK's theatre organ installations.

In 2024 Declan was a recipient of the Cinema Organ Society's Ian Sutherland award, which is presented periodically to young organists who demonstrate outstanding talent and potential. In 2026 Declan was the ATOS Youth Contest winner.

Declan's concert programs are a varied mix of popular music, including many theatre organ favorites. His interest in the theatre pipe organ is not just restricted to playing them as he is actively involved in the restoration and reinstallation of several instruments.

Young Artists Entry

Marco Ramirez

Marco Ramirez is an organist from rural Maricopa AZ. He is an organist at Epiphany Lutheran Church in Chandler as well as St. Anne Roman Catholic Parish in Gilbert, filling in at other churches where needed. A versatile musician, Marco is also a certified Yamaha music educator and teaches a studio of 34 private piano students and one theatre organ student at the East Valley Yamaha Music School in Chandler.

As a student, Marco is pursuing a bachelor's degree in Music Learning and Teaching from Arizona State University with just a few semesters left. He currently holds a Beginning Piano Pedagogy certificate from Mesa Community College and recently won the 2025 Maricopa Colleges Artist of Promise award for his composition for string quartet titled Feline Fantasie. He is a longtime member and recently elected vice-president of the Valley of the Sun Chapter ATOS in Phoenix and regularly plays for local events.

Marco has attended a few of the Summer Youth Adventures and has had a passion for theatre organ from a young age when he started to go to Organ Stop Pizza weekly to hear Lew Williams, Charlie Balogh, Brett Valliant, and Glenn Tallar. Marco also works for South Mountain Organ Works of Mesa, AZ learning from Mark Mackeben and assisting in digital and pipe organ repairs around the valley. He hopes to one day assemble his collection of over 20 ranks of pipes, including the famed Beast in the Basement from Leon Barry and other pipework from the late Bill Carr and Tom Fizzell. He enjoys busking with his portable Marco Polo brand reed organ in downtown Phoenix, playing bassoon in the community band, collecting flashy organ shoes, collecting plants, and spending time with his seven cats and four snakes.

Young Artists Entry

Jack Morton

Jack's passion for the theatre organ started at the age of 10 after seeing YouTube videos of Robert Wolfe at the Thursford Collection. In the summer of 2019, his parents took him to visit the collection to hear a theatre organ for the first time. In 2021, he visited the Astoria Centre in Barnsley where he was able to finally play a theatre organ for the first time.

Jack had classical organ lessons from 2021 to learn the basic playing techniques of the organ but taught himself theatre organ stylings on the side. In 2024, Jack and his organ teacher came to a mutual agreement to part ways after Jack's playing style shifted closer towards the theatre organ. He has now been teaching himself theatre organ techniques, along with guidance from several other organists.

His biggest influence in the theatre organ world is Simon Gledhill, a true master of harmony. Jack has been lucky to hear Simon many times in concert and has received some guidance from him. He is also influenced by organists Lyn Larsen, Jelani Eddington, and many others. In 2025, Jack took part in the UK Young Theatre Organist of the Year competition and was announced as the runner up. He was also awarded the inaugural Len Rawle Memorial Trophy for his involvement in the theatre organ outside of playing.

Outside of playing, Jack enjoys working on theatre organs. He is currently aiding the COS with the renovation of the Wurlitzer console from the Troxy Theatre in Stepney, as well as the complete restoration of the Ex-Ritz Nuneaton Compton in St John Vianney RC Church in Clayhall.

Riviera Theater, North Tonawanda, NY

Billed as the "Showplace of the Tonawandas", the Riviera Theater was built during the year 1926, by the Yellen Family. The architects Leon H. Lempart and Son drew the plans, which were patterned after the Italian Renaissance. The interior artwork was painted at the Rochester Studio of Willard M. Lusk, by Ferdinand Kebely.

Opening night, Thursday, December 30, 1926 of the new 'TWIN CITIES RIVERA' (as it was spelled then) was a 'gala event' in the Tonawandas. Advance reservations for opening night cost $1.00. Present on this special evening, were the Mayors of both Tonawandas. From the stage, Mayor James P. Mackenzie of North Tonawanda, praised the President of the Ownership Corporation of the Theater, Henry Henshel, and the Theater's Manager, James J. Kelly. Messages of Congratulation of the Grand Opening were received from then Governor Alfred E. Smith, and famous movie producer Cecil B. Demille.

Featured on the screen, were the silent films "Upstage" starring Norma Shearer, "The Mona Lisa", in Technicolor, a short comedy, and the weekly newsreel. Organist Fred Meyer accompanied the films and soloed at the Mighty Wurlitzer. The stage featured vaudeville and musical events, as well as magic shows.

Over the years, the "Riv", as it's come to be known, changed ownership many times. Private ownership as well as big-name companies such as Shea's and Dipson held reign over the theater. As the silent film era fizzled out due to the advent of the "talkies", the Mighty WurliTzer became silent and fell into disrepair, with only occasional organ concerts as its primary function.

Since our visit in 2019, considerable development of the facility as occurred. Pictured to the right is a new Lobby entrance to the left side of the marque. The new lobby includes a refreshment area as well as rest room facilities.

Riviera Wurlitzer - Opus 1526

Occasionally the organ might be the one factor that rescues a theater from the wrecking ball! Such is the case with the jewel of North Tonawanda. From its opening on December 30, 1926, Wurlitzer Opus 1524 was prominently featured. Over the years theater organ minded people played a significant role in the continued existence of the building. Due to its closeness to the Wurlitzer factory the organ received extra attention and was often used by the company to demonstrate a medium-sized organ in a mid-size theater to prospective customers.

With its unique console featuring painted murals, done by an artist from Wurlitzer's band organ division, Opus 1524 was originally a 3/11 style 235. During the 70s and 80s numerous questionable additions were made causing it to lose much of its signature sound. In 2010 Clark Wilson was engaged to help create a more cohesive sound with the components that had been added to the organ. What Clark did was to recommend removing several ranks to create a more balanced sound. Damaged pipes were repaired. The Trumpet rank was replaced with a more appropriate sounding set and installed in the solo chamber. The original Oboe Horn rank was moved from the solo chamber to the main chamber to provide balance and contrast. Newly added percussions were moved from the orchestra pit to the stage. Along with tonal finishing, the ending sound of the 3/16 instrument is gorgeous in the theater.

MAIN CHAMBER (Audience Left)

16' Open Diapason	85 pipes
16' Concert Flute	97 pipes
8' Oboe Horn	61 pipes
8' Clarinet	61 pipes
8' Viol D'Orchestre	85 pipes
8' Viol Celeste	73 pipes
8' Concert Flute Cel (TC)	49 pipes
Master Chrysoglott	49 notes

SOLO CHAMBER (Audience Right)

16' Harmonic Tuba	85 pipes
8' Solo String	73 pipes
8' English Post Horn	61 pipes
8' Trumpet	61 pipes
8' Tibia Clausa	73 pipes
8' Orchestral Oboe	61 pipes
8' Kinura	61 pipes
8' Vox Humana	61 pipes
Master Xylophone	37 notes
Master Glockenspiel	37 notes
Tuned Sleigh Bells	25 notes
Cathedral Chimes	25 notes
Drums, Percussions & Effects	
Misc. Sound Effects	

Dave Wickerham

Dave Wickerham was born in Encino, California in 1962. He began playing the electronic organ at the age of four and had his first pipe organ experience at age ten. His musical education started at age seven.

When he moved to Arizona in 1976, he became Associate Organist at the famous Organ Stop Pizza Restaurants in Phoenix, Mesa and Tucson. While in Arizona, he continued his musical studies with Roseamond Crowley, one of the few remaining descendants of the Louis Vierne line of organists. He attended the University of Arizona in Tucson on a full scholarship, pursuing classical organ studies for six years with Dr. Roy Johnson.

In 1984, Dave moved to the Chicago area to become Staff Organist at Pipes and Pizza in Lansing, Illinois. In addition to his performance there, he concertized frequently, as well as ministering musically and serving at various churches.

August of 1990 found the Wickerham family – Dave, his wife and two young children – moving to Wisconsin, where he was one of the featured Staff Organists at the Piper Music Palace in Greenfield, a position he held for 10 years.

In the spring of 2000, Dave ushered in the new millennium with a limited special engagement, as a featured organist at "Roxy's Pipe Organ Pizzeria," part of a $26,000,000 expansion phase at the FIESTA Casino and Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada. The Wickerham's, Dave, Rhonda, and now three great kids, spent two years there before returning back home to Wisconsin in August of 2001… For the next three years, Dave resumed his position at the Piper Music Palace and was also the Principal Organist at Williams Bay Lutheran Church in Lake Geneva, WI. He enjoys concertizing frequently to many audiences including various chapters of the American Theater Organ Society.

In April of 1999, he took great pleasure being a feature artist in Melbourne, Australia for the convention of the Theater Organ Society of Australia for which he received rave reviews. He returned "Down Under" for a six-week concert tour in Australia and New Zealand during the summer of 2003 and 2012, as well as October/November of 2015.

Dave also enjoys recording and has recently "sold out" his fourth CD "Sounds of Music" recorded on the famous 5 Manual, 80 Rank Theater Organ at the Sanfilippo Residence in Barrington, IL. There are NEW recording projects that are soon to be completed and released as well as additional video concerts.

After seven years as Organist – Curator with the legendary Milhous Collection in South Florida, Dave and his youngest daughter currently enjoy living in Upper Michigan in the historic town of Crystal Falls. Dave has three grown kids, two married with children of their own. So, with six grandchildren and concertizing, there are many opportunities for travel.

Aaron Hawthorne

Aaron Hawthorne is an in-demand silent film and concert organist from North Lanarkshire, Scotland, with a Master of Arts degree in Music from the University of Glasgow. He is well-known for his accessible and engaging organ recitals, concerts, and silent film accompaniments, performing throughout the UK, mainland Europe, and the USA.

Aaron started his career as an organist at Motherwell Cathedral and has continued to hold positions as principal organist at various churches in the Diocese of Motherwell. Aaron has also been a house organist at Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum in Glasgow since 2017, as part of a team who play for the daily lunchtime organ recitals there.

Aaron's passion for theater and cinema organs began during a family trip to the Tower Ballroom in Blackpool when he was in his early teens.

In 2019, Aaron's talent was recognized on the international stage when he won the Young Theater Organist Competition at the American Theater Organ Society's annual convention in Rochester, New York. This followed his win of the UK title two years earlier. A few months after this achievement, he received the Ian Sutherland Award from the Cinema Organ Society, an award given to a player who "shows outstanding talent and promise as a theater organist."

Aaron has also been involved in several organ preservation societies including the Cinema Organ Society and the Scottish Cinema Organ Trust. In addition to his work as an organist, Aaron works as an Arts Development Officer for the local authority of North Lanarkshire Council, with a remit for Music, a role in which he advocates for the accessibility of community arts.

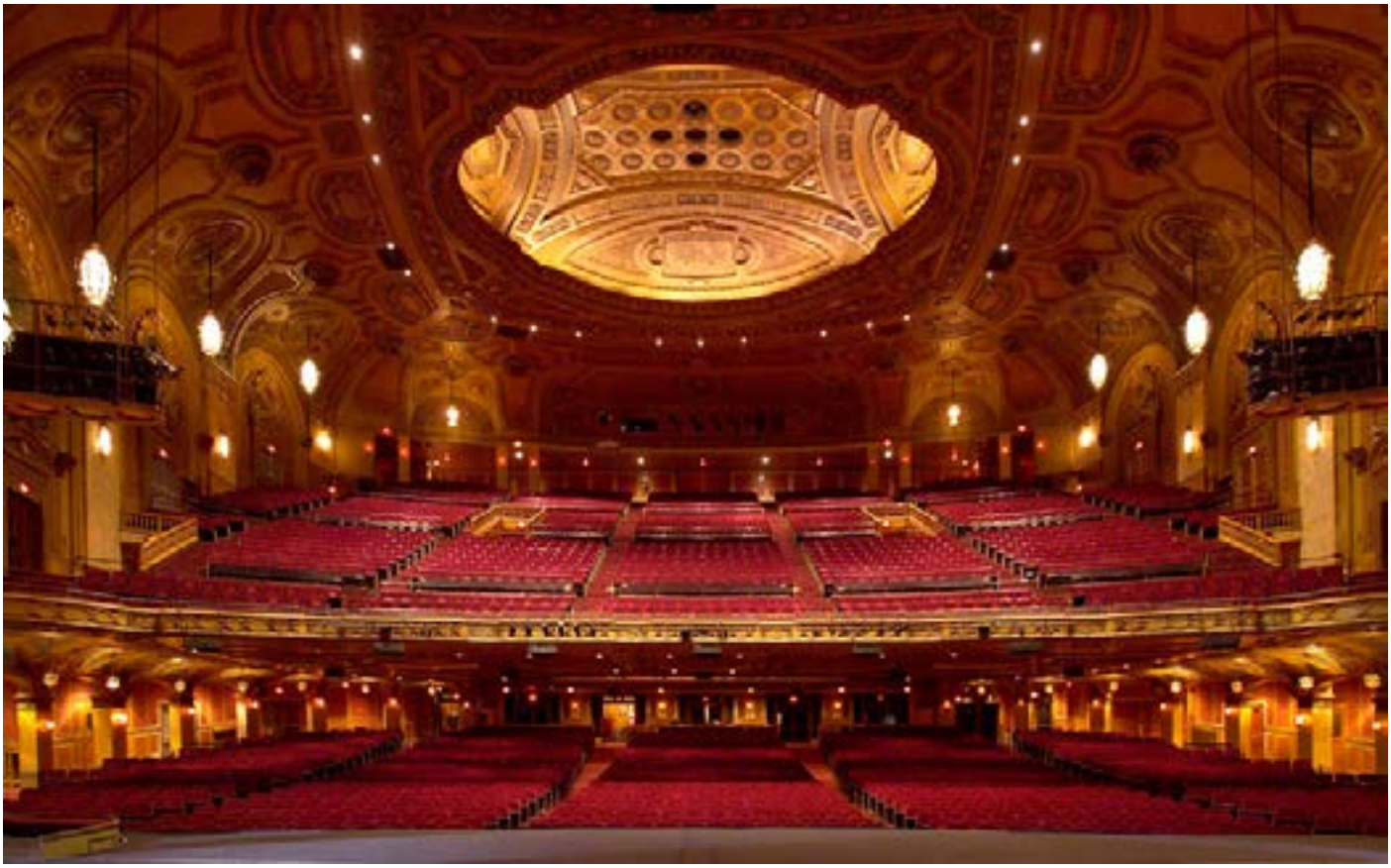
Aaron has completed five UK tours of silent films, including "The Phantom of the Opera" (1925) in 2021, "Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror" (1922) in 2022,"The Hunchback of Notre Dame" (1923) in 2023, and mixed tours in 2024 and 2025. These performances have been praised for engaging new audiences with the magic of silent films and the unique sound worlds of the pipe organ.

Shea's Performing Arts Center, Buffalo, NY

Opening on January 16, 1926, it had seating for 4,000 patrons and was one of the largest theaters in the country. Long before the Loew's "Wonder Theaters", the lettering above Shea's double bronze doors proclaimed this theater to be "The Wonder Theater." With an initial budget of $1 million, Michael Shea wanted his masterpiece to rival other show houses in the major cities across the country and spared no expense; consequently, the building costs quickly escalated to almost $2 million. Chicago architects C.W. and George I. Rapp designed the building; world-renowned artist and designer Louis C. Tiffany designed the interior. The Rapp brothers used the finest furnishing companies to outfit the building.

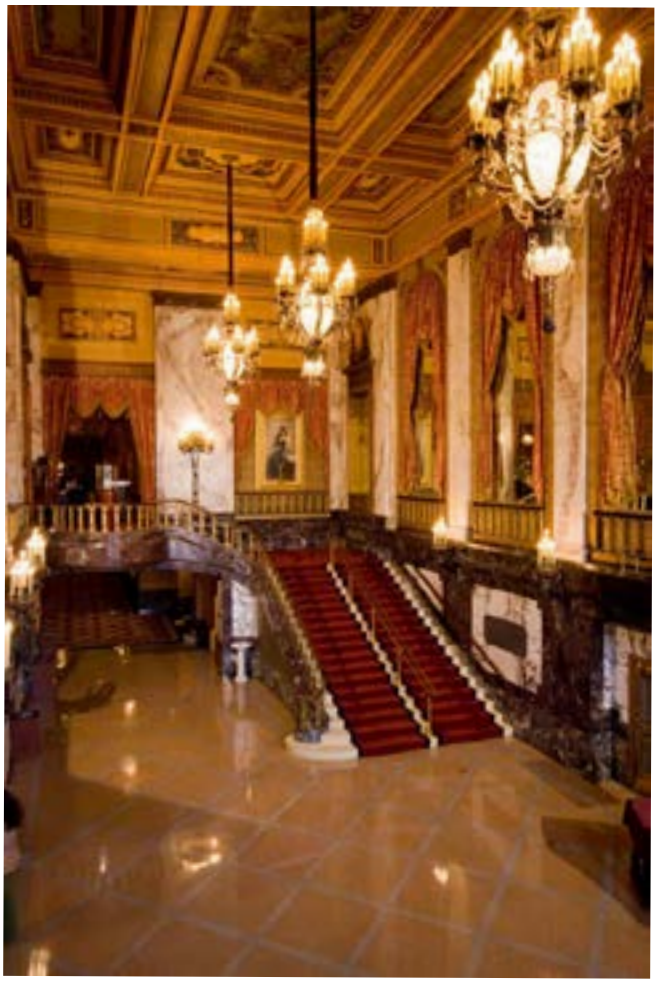
The terra cotta exterior, Czechoslovakian crystal chandeliers, and marble staircases created a look of opulence-meant to resemble the baroque opera houses of Europe from the 16th and 17th century. Tiffany gets the credit for the amazing ceiling detail and the massive chandeliers, in a Spanish Baroque Revival style with a modern American adaptation. Newspaper reports boasted that 7,000 electric lights were used to illuminate the front entrance. Two orchestra pit elevators, one for the orchestra and one for the organ console fronted the stage.

As the first vaudeville stop after New York City, many of the brightest stars of the era graced its stage. Organist Lloyd G. Del Castillo was at the console on opening night. Cab Calloway and George Burns performed on opening night, as well as at the 50th anniversary grand reopening in 1976 when the theater was saved by the "Friends of the Buffalo!" Other notable organists included Jesse Crawford, Ann Leaf, C. Sharpe Minor, Albert Hay Malotte and Henry Murtaugh. The theater was wildly successful in its first three years of operation. It was leased to the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation which became the Paramount Corporation, it was also part of the Famous Players-Lasky vaudeville circuit.



The theater was one of the first in the country to be air conditioned, the invention of a local engineer, Willis Carrier. But everything began to change in October 1929 with the nations wide depression. Michael Shea passed away in 1934 and his wife and daughter sold their interest in the business soon after. Slowly the grandeur faded as the orchestra was discontinued in 1940, and the organ went silent shortly thereafter.

Struggling through the 1950s and 60s, eventually the theater was acquired by the Loew's Corporation, then by a private investor who leased back to Loew's. Suburban flight and minimal maintenance took its toll until sadly, in 1974 the City of Buffalo foreclosed for back taxes owed. Then Curt Mangel entered the picture. Hired as the theater engineer, he founded the "Friends of the Buffalo" which became the driving force to save the theater. Thus began the long road to restoration and profitability. Today, following many years of painstaking labor and many millions of dollars, Shea's Buffalo is arguably one of America's finest and most spectacular theaters.painstaking labor and many millions of dollars.



Shea's Wurlitzer - Opus 1206

Shea's Wurlitzer pipe organ was delivered November 30, 1925 at a cost of $68,500. The theater open January 16, 1926, and is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2026.

The 4/28 Wurlitzer organ installed in Shea's Buffalo Theater is the first example for several Wurlitzer unique features. The organ utilizes a 30 horse power blower and is designated as Opus 1206. These include the capitals on the corners of the console, later found on several other instruments. They include the Strand Theater in Madison, Wisconsin and the New York City Hippadrome as well as about half-dozen other instruments delivered in the later part of the 1920's. Shea's instrument has another first in respect to the tuned tympani (found on only seven other factory-built instruments). (re: Page 155 David Junchen's book "The Wurlitzer Pipe Organ An Illustrated History")

The installation is contained in four chambers, two stacked on each side of the stage. All pipes are contained in the chambers except for the 32-foot extension to the Diaphonic Diapason, with six pipes located on each side adjacent to the chambers. Blower wind pressures are 15 and 25 inches. The Shea's organ was built for power, with three Tibias on 15" wind, a large-scale Vox Humana on 10" wind, and a Solo Brass Trumpet and Orchestral Oboe both voiced on 12" wind. Ten ranks extend to 16' and the 32' Diaphone octave sits unenclosed outside the swell openings. It was the first organ to contain the 13-note Tuned Timpani (later featured in the Fox Special instruments) and even had an authentic locomotive bell that was pneumatically tipped to play. The Bass Drum was so large that it couldn't pass through the chamber door. After routine use was stopped in the 1940s the organ deteriorated during the Loew's years. Interest in the 1960 by theater organ enthusiasts presented as part of the 1964 ATOS Convention and sporadically thereafter.

After extensive repairs to the organ in the early 1980s, the organ was officially rededicated at a concert on August 27, 1984, by Lyn Larsen with Jack Bethards and the Shea's Buffalo Orchestra on stage. Also, in 1984 an ATOS chapter (Buffalo Area Chapter -ATOS) was formed to present the mighty Shea's Wurlitzer and sponsored a series of concerts for a number of years. In recent times it has been used primarily for intermissions during theater events. In 2018, following an inspection of the organ, it was determined that a number of issues should be addressed to prepare it for the 2019 ATOS convention.

Since 2019, David Peckham has continued to restore organ components as time permits, keeping the organ available for performance. An extensive restoration effort has been underway in such a manner to permit the instruments frequent use during touring show presentations. Convention attendees this year will have a chance to see this beautifully restored picture palace and experience one of the world's finest theater organists performing on the Cadillac of Wurlitzers-truly a blockbuster combination.

FOUNDATION CHAMBER (Upper Left)

32' Diaphonic Diapason	73 pipes
–	32' octave unenclosed
16' Tibia Plena	85 pepes
16Tibia Clausa	85 pipes
8' Vox Humana	61 pipes
4' Harmonic Flute	97 pipes

BRASS CHAMBER (Upper Right)

16' Tuba Mirabilis	88 pipes
16' English Horn	73 pipes
Master Xylophone	73 pipes
Tuned Tympani	37 notes
Train Whistle, Train Bell	97 pipes

MAIN CHAMBER (Lower Left)

16' Tuba Horn	85 pipes
16' Horn Diapason	73 ppes
16' Clarinet	73 pipes
16' Concert Flute	97 pipes
8' Viol D'Orchestre	85 pipes
8' Viol Celeste	73 pipes
8' Open Diapason	61 pipes
8' Salicional	61 pipes
8' Dulciana	73 pipes
Chrysoglott	49 notes
Cathedral Chimes	25 notes
Grand Piano (unenclosed)	85 notes

Large scale Bass Drum, Snare Drum, Field Drum Chinese Gong, Cymbal, Crash Cymbal Tambourine, Castanets, Chinese Block Sand Block, Tom-Tom, Triangle, Two Bird Whistles, Misc. Sound Effects

SOLO (Lower Right)

16' Solo String	73 pipes
8' Trumpet	61 pipes
8' Brass Saxophone	61 pipes
8' Tibia Claus	73 pipes
8' Gamba	73 pipes
8' Gamba Celeste	73 pipes
8' Orchestral Oboe	61 pipes
8' Quintadena	61 pipes
8' Kinura	61 pipes
8' Vox Humana	61 pipes
Glockenspiel	37 notes
Marimba/Harp	49 notes
Sleigh Bells	25 notes
Sleigh Bells	25 notes

Richard Hills

Richard Hills is widely acknowledged as one of the very few musicians to have bridged and mastered the divide between the classical and theater organ worlds. Having studied with William Whitehead at Rochester Cathedral he went on in turn to the organ scholarships of Exeter College Oxford, Portsmouth Cathedral and Westminster Abbey where his teachers included Rosemary Field and David Sanger. He now combines a freelance solo career with continuo, choir-training and teaching work and is the Organist of St Mary's, Bourne Street, a central-London church noted for its Anglo-Catholic Liturgy and fine musical tradition.

Richard's career in the theater organ world has been equally prestigious. He has numerous prizes and awards to his credit, both in Great Britain and in the USA, where he was named 'Organist of the Year' in 2010 by the American Theater Organ Society. He has appeared many times as a soloist on national and international TV and Radio in programs as diverse as BBC Radio 3's 'Choral Evensong' and BBC Radio 2's 'Friday Night is Music Night', and he made his solo debut at the BBC Proms in 2013. He returned again to the Proms as a soloist during the 2015 season. Richard's appearance at the 2019 ATOS Convention at Shea's Buffalo was a highlight of that event.

His many recording credits include, most recently, a disc of British music made on the magnificent dual-purpose Compton organ of Southampton's Guildhall, which earned a five-star review in Choir and Organ magazine. Richard is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists and a strong supporter of the work of the UK's Cinema Organ Society, to whom he serves as Musical Adviser.

Capitol Theater, Rome, NY

Capitol Theater – 2025

The construction of the Capitol was the conception of the Kallet Brothers (Myron J. and Joseph S.) who were involved in motion picture theater management in Rome as far back as 1920 with their acquisition of the Carroll Theater at 114 E. Dominick St., which they renovated and re-named The Strand Theater. In 1922, the Kallets purchased the Star Theater on N. James St., and planned to demolish the block in 1926 to erect a new movie theater much larger in capacity. These plans ultimately fell through, but with the assistance of M. E. Comerford of the Comerford Amusement Co. movie theater chain, the Kallets procured the property at 216-224 W. Dominick St. in 1927.

Capitol Theater – 1928

What visitors to the Capitol saw during the theater's first decade has dramatically changed since. Originally designed with a Spanish-Moroccan theme, the interior of the Capitol was painted in tones of terra-cotta, brown, gold, blues and red. The lighting system, including the theater's trademark octagonal dome, was on a three-color lighting system that could be controlled by projection booth or on stage in combinations of red, yellow and blue light. Bejeweled lighting fixtures flanked the ceiling and walls, while the mezzanine foyer was decorated with mirrored fixtures with lighting effects that gave one the feeling of being on a Spanish patio in Old Spain.

In February and March of 1928, the site was cleared, and construction was begun on the new Capitol Theater—a 2,000-seat edifice which was to become Rome's first run movie house. Designs of the Capitol were drafted by Leon R. Lempert, Jr. of Buffalo, NY., whom the Comerfords used frequently. Lempert, also no stranger to Rome (he and his father had designed the Washington Street Opera House and the Lyric Theater), designed the building to the then state-of-the-art standards of both luxury and safety. A Thanksgiving 1928 opening was planned, but a Pennsylvania steel strike held up construction, and the actual opening occurred on December 10, 1928, with Joseph Kallet as the Managing Director of the theater.

Opening as Rome's first theater with the ability to play the new sound movies, the initial program included a newsreel, two Vitaphone shorts, and the First National feature, Lilac Time, starring Colleen Moore and Gary Cooper. The Capitol's impressive seven-rank Möller theater organ was used that night to provide entrance and exit music, to accompany the newsreel, and to lead the audience sing-a-long. (Though Lilac Time had no dialogue, it was released with a track of music and sound effects.)

Theater styles changed rapidly over the next decade. In 1939, a mere 11 years later, Capitol received a modernistic face-lift that is preserved to this day. The plasterwork stayed the same, but new paintwork in modernistic geometric designs in hues of yellow, green, orange, red, gold and silver flank the Capitol walls and ceiling. Modernistic lighting fixtures, made by the Moe Bridges Lighting Co. of Milwaukee, WI, replaced the original sconces and chandeliers, and are still lit to this day. A green and gold herringbone patterned wall fabric lined the walls of the auditorium and mezzanine. For the mezzanine foyer, chairs and sofas were created especially for the Capitol by famed furniture-maker Warren McArthur.

With the seating re-configured in the orchestra section in the 1950s, and some seat removal in the '80s to accommodate handicapped patrons, the house now seats 1,788.

In 2003 the Capitol's original Möller theater organ was put back into working order and the following year a series of silent films with organ accompaniment was initiated. Since that time world-renown silent movie musicians such as Dr. Philip C. Carli, Avery Tunningley, Bernie Anderson, Dennis James, and Robert Israel have accompanied movies from the console. The Capitol's 1952 projectors continue to serve their purpose well, and since 2007 a pair of mint-condition, water-cooled 1965 Ashcraft carbon arc lamps have taken their place in the booth—helping to make the Capitol a prime destination for classic movie lovers.

(A more comprehensive look at the history of the Capitol Theater is available at their website: https://www.rome-capitol.com/150851-2/)

Capitol Theater - Moller

Opening in December 1928, the Möller Style 70 Theater Organ installed at the Capitol Theater is one of the last original Möller installations in the country. It was installed with 7 ranks, although the specification and preparation at installation were for an 11-rank instrument. Local volunteers brought the organ back to life in the 1960s and added some low-pressure pipework in an effort to "fill in" the prepared-for ranks. The organ is often played before many shows and has a starring role over three days for the annual "Capitolfest" film event every August. That weekend features a curated selection of rare or just-restored silent films and early sound films, and several organists provide scores for nine or more silent films–an authentic experience in a vintage theater.

The specification shown below is for the final 11 rank specification with the optional ranks indicated.

Chamber One

16' Tibia
16' Viole D'Orchestre
8' Viole Celeste
8' Kinura

Chamber Two

8'Diapason
8' Tuba Harmonic
8' Vox Humana

Prepared Ranks

8' Viole (Solo String)
8' French Trumpet
8' Clarinet
8' Flute

David Peckham

The RTOS 2026 ATOS Committee wishes to acknowledge David Peckham's many contributions to theater organ and to this convention. David, during the past few years has been maintaining many of this convention's instruments including the Capitol Theater's 3/7 Moller, Shea's Buffalo's 4/28 Wurlitzer, the Clemens Center's 4/31 Marr & Colton/Wurlitzer and the Society's 4/23 Wurlitzer, in addition to his own residence instrument.

David Peckham has been performing as a theater and concert organist for more than 40 years. One of his first performances was on the RTOS Mighty Wurlitzer in 1974 when he played for its 10th Anniversary Gala at age 13.

Raised in a musical family in Breesport, NY (near Elmira), he credits his parents with giving him a musical background and says: "I was going to concerts, apparently, before I was born". David began studying piano at age 8 then classical organ as a high school student with Albert Zabel in Elmira, NY. He went on to graduate from the University of Rochester where he studied liberal arts and organ with David Craighead at the Eastman School of Music. Upon graduation, he returned home to join his family's pipe organ service business and currently cares for over 50 instruments across New York State and northern PA including the RTOS-Grierson 4/23 Wurlitzer.

David has performed on nearly every major theater organ in the USA as well as tours of Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom. He has played for several conventions of the American Theater Organ Society and was honored to be named "organist of the Year" at the 2016 ATOS convention held in Cleveland, Ohio. Then, in 2019, David received the ATOS "Award of Technical Excellence". He has also created scores for several silent films, a process utterly dependent upon fluid improvisation and that marvelous nexus of an audience reacting to a film. These skills will be front and center for the 2026 ATOS Convention as he accompanies the silent film "That's My Daddy", a 1928 release starring Reginald Denny and Barbara Kent.

He has been organist and choir director at the First United Methodist Church in Horseheads, NY since 1985. He has also been organ curator and resident organist at the Clemens Performing Arts Center in Elmira, NY for many years. Dave is the father of three grown children. He and wife Cathy reside in Horseheads, in a renovated farm house to which they recently added a large addition to house their collection of musical instruments along with his long- planned home theater pipe organ. He has recorded four CDs, most recent, No Remaining Seats was performed on the RTOS-Grierson Wurlitzer organ.

ESTMIM, Syracuse, NY

The Empire State Theater and Musical Instrument Museum (ESTMIM) is located within the Art and Home Building at the New York State Fairgrounds, Syracuse, NY. The Museum has on display various instruments including brass horns and stringed instruments. Antique phonographs and mechanical machines help to tell the complete story. This museum, celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2026, includes movie theater exhibits of film and slide projection equipment and rare surviving examples of architectural artifacts from the golden era of the movie palace.

Today, the ESTMIM Wurlitzer is located in the Empire Theater of the Art and Home Center building along with a collection of mechanical musical instruments. The organ including its console continues to operate utilizing its original mechanical pneumatic relay system.

The Empire State Theater and Musical Instrument Museum has a website that tells their entire story. To learn more, visit their website: https://syracusewurlitzer.com/.

ESTMIM Wurlitzer

ESTMIM includes a collection of mechanical music instruments which includes the 1928 Style 235 3/11 Wurlitzer Opus 1143 from the former RKO Keiths Theater in downtown Syracuse. The organ was relocated to the current location in 1966 and installed in the Art and Home Building's Empire Theater.

Detail Specification for Wurlitzer Opus 1143, Style 246

Main Chamber

16'Diaphonic Diapason
8' Clarinet
8' Viol d'Orchestra
8' Viol Celeste
8' Salitional
8' Concert Flute
8' Vox Humana
16' Piano

Accompaniment Second Touch:

8' Harmonic Tuba*
8' Tibia Clausa*
8' Clarinet
Cathedral Chimes*
Xylophone*
Triangle*
Solo to Accomp.

Tremulants:

Main
Solo*
Vox Humana
Tuba*
Tibia*

Solo* Chamber

16' Harmonic Tuba*
8' Tibia Clausa*
8' Orchestral Oboe*
8' Kinura*

Effects:

Bird*
Train Whistle*
Horses Hoofs*
Fire Gong*
Surf*
Auto Horn*
Door (or Telephone) Bell*

Great Second Touch:

16' Tuba Profunda*
8' Tibia Clausa*
Solo to Great

Wind Pressures:

Tibia, Tuba, Percussions, Relays,
Swell Shades 15" wind
Vox Humana 6" wind
Remainder of organ 10' wind

David Marsh

David started playing the organ when he was fourteen years old. Inspired by a video of Rosemary Bailey on the Roland Atelier, David decided to take up the instrument. An interest in the theater organ became apparent throughout the years and he began pursuing it.

Professionally, David has also enjoyed a career in music education, including teaching Advanced Music Theory at Villa Park High School in Orange County California and has been a piano teacher since 2016.

David has also served as the Director of Operations for Soli Studios Music, Inc and Executive Assistant for the Los Angeles Organ Company. David also currently serves as the President of the Orange County Theater Organ Society, which maintains the 4/37 Wurlitzer at Plummer Auditorium in Fullerton, California.

When he is not working, David can be found playing the organ in his home, spending time with his dog Miles, and has recently taken an interest in gardening. However, he recognizes that perhaps his talents do not reside in the garden and might be better served in music.

Master of Ceremonies

Ken Double

A 34-year former radio and television sportscaster, who at age 8 started taking organ lessons in his hometown, Chicago, Ken Double has enjoyed a second career focused on his love of the music of the theater pipe organ.

As a sportscaster, Ken broadcast NBA and major college basketball, NHL, IHL and AHL hockey, the worldwide broadcast of the Indy 500, and more. His experience on the air was a plus on stage in his "second" career, making music on the mighty theater pipe organ.

Since retiring from broadcasting in 2008, Ken has performed concerts on the great theater pipe organs around the world including 8 tours of Australia; helped establish the Long Center Theater Organ Society in Lafayette, Indiana where he has performed 41 annual summer concerts; spent ten years as the national President of the American Theater Organ Society; and since 2016, has performed on Mighty Mo, the iconic Möller pipe organ at the Fox Theater in Atlanta, the city he has called home since 2009. Ken is currently a consultant for the Balboa Theater in San Diego as it looks toward Season Two of Monday Night Silents, a new annual series of silent film presentations featuring the great Wonder Morton pipe organ.

July of 2026 will find Ken again acting as the Master of Ceremonies, this time for the ATOS annual convention hosted by RTOS in Rochester, Buffalo and surrounding areas in upstate New York.

Concert and recording artist, administrator, promoter and fundraiser, broadcaster and entertainer, Ken Double has enjoyed, as he says, "getting paid to have fun – TWICE!"

Area Eateries

The 2026 ATOS Convention hotel is located at the intersection of I-395 and Jefferson Road. A number of eating places are located along Jefferson Road in a two-mile area, mostly to the west of the Double Tree Hotel. A couple are within immediate walking distance, while many will take less than 10 minutes by car. If time permits, a number of very nice places are within less than 30 minutes from the hotel.

ATOS 2026 Eating Locations			
Name of Resturants Near Hotel	**Miles**	**Phone Number**	**What kind of food**
Bistro 252	(inside the Hotel)	(585) 475-1510	Breakfast Buffett
Trellis Restaurant & Lounge	(inside the Hotel)	(585) 475-1510	American Cruisine (Dinner)
Dairy Queen	(Across the Street)	(585) 475-1141	Ice Cream
Five Guys	(Across the Street)	(585) 272-1811	Burgers
Burger King	(Across the Street)	(585) 484-1497	Whoppers
Grand Super Buffett II	(0.2 mi)	(585) 424-7188	Chinese and Sushi Buffett
Hyderabad Biryani House	(0.2 mi)	(585) 413-0263	Indian Cuisine
Jimmy Johns	(0.2 mi)	(585) 494-7827	Quick Sandwiches
The Original Steves Dinner	(0.2 mi)	(585) 471-5129	Breakfast Menu
Super Crab Juicy Seafood	(0.3 mi)	(585) 685-8288	Seafood, noted for Seasoning
Cheesy Eddie's	(0.3 mi)	(585) 730-5653	Known for Cheesecakes
White Rabbit	(0.3 mi)	(585) 471-8512	Desert Experience
Youko's Sushi	(0.4 mi)	(585) 8674002	Japanese and Sushi
Salvatore's Old-Fashioned Pizzeria	(0.4 mi)	(585) 427-5555	Pizza take out
Wendy's	(0.4 mi)	(585) 981-9271	Hamburgers
Shack Shack	(0.5 mi)	(585) 510-5841	Classic American food
110 Grill Restaurant	(0.7 mi)	(585) 340-6030	Allergy friendly
Panera Bread	(0.7 mi)	(585) 272-7410	Bread, Soups, sandwiches, Salads
BJ's Restaurant & Brew House	(0.8 mi)	(585) 537-1444	Deep Dish Pizza
Long-Horn Steak house	(0.8 mi)	(585) 272-9695	Grilled Steaks
McDonald's	(0.8 mi)	(585) 334-0178	Big Macs
Olive Garden	(1 mi)	(585) 292-0590	American-Italian Cuisine
Blaze Pizza	(1 mi)	(585)775-0735	Pizza
Phillips European	(1.7 mi)	(585) 272-9910	French Bistro, pastries
Texas Roadhouse	(2 mi)	(585) 424-5777	Hand-cut Steaks
Holal Bites	(2 mi)	(585) 319-4525	Authentic, fast - Casual Halal Cuisine
Taco Bell	(5.3 mi)	(585) 272-0440	Pizza
Char-Steak & Lounge and Hattie's Rooftop Bar	(5.6 mi)	(585) 241-7100	Steak House

Credits

ATOS 2026 Convention Committee

Bob Bower Co-chair
Chris Van Stean Co-chair
Ken Wilson, Registration
Ken Dorner, Secretary/Treasurer
Richard Neidich, Artist Relations
Nancy Wildoner, Venue Coordinator
Tim Wagner
Shawn Gorden

Registration Staff, Ushers and Greeters

John Allen
Tom and Jan Brewer
Marie Bower
Sandra Glantz
Terry Hin
David and Geri Speck
Tim Wagner

Rochester Theater Organ Society Officers

Christine Van Stean, President
Bob Bower, Vice President
Bob Hunter, Treasurer
Ken Wilson, Secretary

Board of Directors

Gary Brumbaugh
Shawn Gordon
Ted McWharf
Richard Neidich
William Porter (ESM liaison)
Greg Spring
Brian Volkmar
Tim Wagner

Bus Captains

Sandra Glantz
Bob Hunter
Bruce Kolka
David and Geri Speck
Greg Spring
Tim Wagner

Master of Ceremonies

Ken Double

Organ Preparation and Maintenance RTOS

Bob Bower – RTOS Crew Chief
Andrew Magin – RTOS Eisenhart Crew Chief
Andrew Moore
David and Cathy Peckham
Kevin Scott
Brian Volkmar

Elmira

David & Cathy Peckham

Rome:

David & Cathy Peckham, John Paul Fiscoe, Phil Williams, Ray Tucker

Syracuse:

Dale Abrams, Michael Olbrych

North Tonawnda:

Al Leteste, Joe Momot, Tom Doll, Bob Becker, Kevin Taylor, Clark Wilson, Glenn Tallar

RTOS 2026-2027 Season

The Rochester Theater Organ Society was founded in 1964, prior to the closing and demolition of the RKO Palace theater, the original home of the Society's Wurlitzer. The Society is readying for it 63rd season of eight events a season . To encourage young organits at the Eastman School of Music, we host those students interested to participate in our annual "Eastman Bunch" program where we invite the previous year's winner of the ATOS Young Organists Competition to participate as well. Below are the Society's initial plans for next season.

RTOS 2026-2027 Season Schedule

Date	Venue	Artist	Theme
September 13	Eisenhart Auditorium	Clark Wilson	3/12 Wurlitzer 100-Year Celebration Featuring the Wurlitzer Factory Movie and Buster Keaton in "The General"
October 25	West Herr Auditorium	Donnie Rankin	Spooky Halloween Movie
November 15	West Herr Auditorium	David Marsh	Program to be Announced
December 13	West Herr Auditorium	Jared Goldinger	Holiday on the Pipes
January 17	West Herr Auditorium	Nathan Avakian	At the Movies
February 28	West Herr Auditorium	Ken Double	Program to be Announced
April 4	West Herr Auditorium	Eastman Students	Eastman Bunch XVIII
May 16	RIT Performing Arts Center *	Mark Herman	RTOS Debut Concert at RIT PAC
June 27	West Herr Auditorium	Juan Cardona	Theatre Organ Goes South of the Border!

* New Venue; pending completion of Barton organ installation.

Doors open at 1:15 PM. Concerts start at 2:00 PM.

Non-Member Admission $15/person (12 & under and students w/ID are FREE)

Venues

Eisenhart Auditorium, 657 East Ave., Rochester, NY 14607
West Herr Auditorium Theatre, 875 E. Main St., Rochester, NY 14605
RIT Performing Arts Center, 250 Lomb Memorial Dr, Rochester, NY 14623

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