



METROLINA ORGAN Quarterly

A publication of Metrolina Theatre Organ Society
www.theatreorgans.com/nc/metrolina
www.carolinatheatre.net

Annual Membership Meeting and Holiday Dinner

Friday, January 4, 2002 at 6:30 p.m.

at Gwen & Charlie Clayton's

306 Riverton Road, Matthews, N. C. 28105 704 . 821 . 9891

Beneath the tallest and most luminous tree in Union County, we will gather once again to celebrate the memories of the old, and the opportunities of the new year. Gwen and Charlie Clayton extend their customary warmth and hospitality, and you are welcome to bring the covered dish of your choice — meat, vegetable, salad or dessert. Please call Gwen or Charlie at

704.821.9891

not later than January 2.



The business meeting this time will be minimal, since the election of board members will be by mail in mid-January. This plan has several advantages:

- Every member in good standing will be able to vote.
- We will ask for nominations from the membership, including nominations of oneself.
- Nominees will be asked to submit a paragraph describing their interest in Theatre Pipe Organ and in the mission of **MTOS** (see Page 2), and a biographical sketch.
- There will be ample time to consider the choices.

A letter will go out the first of January soliciting nominees. All nominations must be received by January 15, so that ballots can be mailed out by January 20.



Directions

From Charlotte, go east on Monroe Road, through Matthews. At the stoplight in Stallings, turn right onto Potter Road, go about two miles and turn left onto Nelson Road. (Nelson comes just after the Weddington city limits sign.) Almost immediately turn left again onto Tree Hill Road. Riverton is the second street to the right. No. 306 is at the end, straight ahead across the cul-de-sac.

From Independence Blvd. east bound, turn right on Ridge Road, about half a mile beyond Highway 51. Then keep straight through the light in Stallings, and you will be on Potter Road.

From Providence Road south bound, turn left on McKee Road. Turn right at the dead end at Pleasant Plains Road, and right again at the next light (Potter Road).

If you have convenient access to I-485 (the outerbelt freeway) it will save some time. Just head toward Matthews, and get off at the Monroe Road exit. Go east to the stop light in Stallings, and turn right onto Potter Road.





Carolina Theatre

The theatre has been temporarily closed by the city, pending a review of safety issues. A copy of the Study commissioned by the City to evaluate the condition of the building, has been acquired by the Carolina Theatre Preservation Society. It appears that the City is reluctant at this time to allow any use of the theatre.

Next year, 2002, is the 75th anniversary of the building. **MTOS** is planning to collaborate with CTPS, and with the Museum of the New South, on several events during this gala year. March 7, 1927 was the opening night for the theatre.



Mission

The Mission of **MTOS** is to acquire and maintain a theatre pipe organ, and to work together with other interested parties to preserve and restore the Carolina Theatre to house the instrument and make it available to the community.

The public frequently is unaware of the work of arts organizations. This is particularly true for attempts to restore historic properties, and theatre organs are all but unheard of. Charlotte stands out in its indifference to these matters. One of our major goals then is to increase our visibility, and to promote the cause of the Theatre Pipe Organ.

Our seven-week Silent Film Series last summer, in the Carolina Theatre with Larry Jones at the organ, brought in over a thousand people, including many young people who found it to be an amazing new experience — an appreciation for the feel of a real theatre.

MTOS is currently in negotiations with the Charlotte Film Society and the Manor Theatre to arrange the showing of silent films, possibly next spring. We'll keep you posted on developments.

In the meantime, we are looking for more membership involvement in promoting our cause. The Board seeks your input into all these areas and activities. All of our members need to come on board and help with the things that must be done.

Please think seriously about these matters, because there will be a survey accompanying the dues form, which will go out in January.

Financial

MTOS has worked on a couple of events with Ri-Ra, the popular North Tryon Street Irish bar: the St. Patrick's day celebration in March, and the Oyster Roast in October. Our members' help on these occasions yielded more than \$1,000 for our treasury.

(Our current cash balance is \$5,874. Financial reports are available on request).



Raleigh

The new Meymandi concert hall in Raleigh, a part of the renovated Memorial Auditorium complex, was built with space provided for a concert organ. Dr. James Moeser, the new Chancellor at UNC-Chapel Hill, is on the planning committee for the instrument. It sounds strange, but the new head of the Chapel Hill campus is a noted organist, and a former head of the AGO. The question arises then, will Raleigh be ahead of Charlotte in the organ competition.

The Belk Theatre in Charlotte's Performing Arts Center has had a pipe façade at the rear of the orchestra shell since the building opened in 1992. It was built by Casavant, together with a movable platform for the whole organ, at a cost of \$160,000. They are real pipes, but they have neither wind nor context. Nine years is a long time to wait, but then the Biltmore House waited 102 years before any sound emanated from the grand display pipes in the Banquet Hall. In 1999 a Skinner organ (Opus 248, 1916) was installed behind the Hutchings pipes. "Finally, the long-silent façade pipes were connected to speak as a noble pedal voice." [OHS *Organ Handbook*, 2001]





Ron Rhode in Bristol

by Don Macdonald

Take a sunny clear Fall afternoon in the Tennessee mountains with just a hint of seasonal chill in the air, combine it with an hour or two spent in the splendidly refurbished Paramount Theatre in the company of internationally known theatre organist Ron Rhode and the East Tennessee Children's Choir, and you have the makings of a delightful musical experience of consistently high quality throughout.

PTOS President Buddy Boyd opened the proceedings by inviting the audience to join in the singing of "The Star Spangled Banner." Then as the gleaming white three-manual console rose slowly into the spotlight, Ron Rhode, on his second appearance at the Paramount, launched into "I've got a Feeling You're Fooling," a show stopper from the film "Broadway Melody of 1936" written by the prolific team of Arthur Freed and Nacio Herb Brown. In the treatment of his opening number, Ron set the tone for the remainder of his recital in that he avoided the timeworn formula of unremitting full organ for up tempo playing, electing rather to feature some of the more unusual softer registrations. Aspiring theatre organists would do well to emulate Ron's judicious use of both tonal and nontonal percussions to provide ornamentation and accents when musically appropriate, but never to excess.

As on previous occasions, Ron drew his inspiration for several of his numbers from the films and singing stars of the 1930s. The fast paced "At the Codfish Ball," was featured by Shirley Temple in a film called "Captain January," and the concert waltz, "A Heart That's Free" was sung by Universal's young singing star Deanna Durbin in the film "One Hundred Men and a Girl." Switching to a classical mode, he presented Sir Edward Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance No. 4 in G," which became popular in Britain during World War II when a patriotic chorus was added to it under the title, "Song of Liberty."

Ron surprised many in the audience with a salute to cowboy singer Gene Autry who introduced not only "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer" but other Christmas songs as well, such as "Here Comes Santa Claus."

During the second half of the concert, the East Tennessee Children's Choir, with an additional 30 members, took their place in the spotlight under the direction of Beth Perkinson McCoy, with pianist Ann Jones. From their stately first song, "Jubilate Deo" they moved on confidently to present a variety of choral numbers, featuring the lyrical soprano voices in the opening segment of "How Can I Keep From Singing?" and the well performed "Velvet Shoes" accompanied by Ron Rhode. The rhythmic "Haida" with its hand clapping accents was followed by the peaceful "Nativity Carol" and the lively "Music is My Life."

The concert concluded with the audience and performers joining together in the singing of "Come Ye Thankful People, Come," "We Gather Together," "America the Beautiful," and "God Bless America." Ron Rhode compli-

mented the young choral singers on their performance, adding that it was a pleasure to work with such fine young musicians. He mentioned again that the Paramount and its Wurlitzer were the best kept secret in the Southeast.

Chet Rataski, Crew Chief at the Paramount, reports that extensive work has been done on the organ during this past year. All the manuals were removed and the keys mechanically adjusted for first and second touch, all contacts were cleaned, and new pistons were inserted, giving 10 pistons for each division and 15 generals. The organ now stands effectively at 17 ranks.



Website

An elaborate history and photographs of Charlotte's Carolina Theatre are on the **MTOS** website at

[<www.carolinatheatre.net>](http://www.carolinatheatre.net)

The site also contains a 25-minute video excerpt, mde by Michael Johnston at the Indianapolis convention. Two versions are available, to accomodate most internet setups.

MTOS members attending the convention include: Don Schoeps and wife, Frances and Bill Gay, Michael Johnston, John Apple; also Dr. Paul Abernethy from Burlington

This website has received critical acclaim from many visitors from around the country. Please check it out and give us your comments.



Video Available

A 20-minute video made by Chris Pittman on the history of the Carolina Theatre is available from **MTOS** for \$20. It is narrated by former WBTV anchor Bob Inman. Scott Foppiano plays during much of the video on a home theatre organ installation in Michigan. Contact John Apple.



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Scott

Long time **MTOS** member Scott Foppiano is now living in Charlotte, and is Organist and Choir Master at Plaza Presbyterian Church. Welcome back. It's good to have you among us.



Piedmont

PTOS has an informative writeup in the Chapter News section of the November/December 2001 issue of *Theatre Organ*, page 79. They report progress in Greensboro, Burlington and Bristol.



MTOS dues – \$15.00 per year – are tax-deductible, and are payable January 1 each year. If you have not paid, please send check, payable to MTOS, to the return address below.

John Mitchener

The annual Richard and Betty Peek Recital at Covenant Presbyterian Church will be held on Sunday, February 3, 2002 at 4:00 p.m.

The organist is John Mitchener, Professor of Organ at the School of the Arts in Winston-Salem. This is an opportunity to hear a highly regarded recitalist play one (or two) of Charlotte's finest instruments.



St. Vincent de Paul

The newest pipe organ in town is the Wicks 2/15 recently installed at St. Vincent de Paul, the Roman Catholic parish on Park Road at Old Reid Road.

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