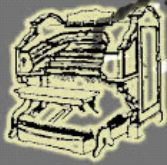


THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL



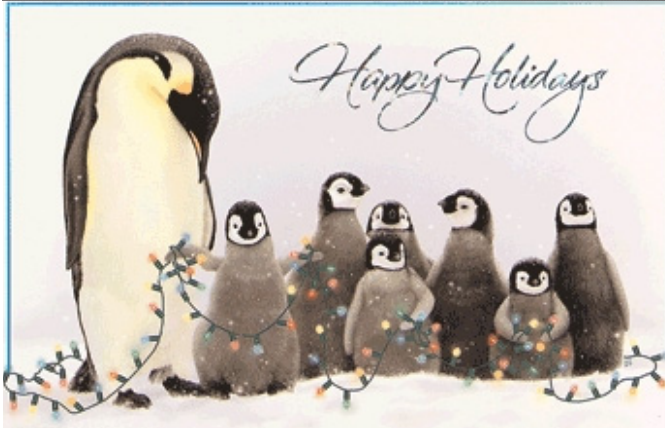
TOSI



TOSI NEWS

THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL (TOSI)
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The TOSI is a membership organization for public and charitable purposes whose aim is to promote and present theatre organ performance as an internationally recognized art form.



From everyone at TOSI, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Very Happy and Musical New Year.



NEWS FROM OUR FRIENDS AT ATOS

In 2010, ATOS will hold their convention in Seattle Washington. ATOS has posted the information on their web site. Included in this information is a promotional video. I have viewed the video and it is very well done. TOSI will have its annual membership meeting sometime during the convention.

To view the ATOS information, you can go to the www.atos.org site or go directly with this address:

<http://www.atos.org/conventions/2010/>



Jack Moelmann's own story of the "Radio City Music Hall" experience presented in three parts. *Part -1*

It was a little more than a year ago in August 2008, August 9th to be precise, that we held a gala organ program in Radio City Music Hall in New York City the likes of which has never been experienced in the history of the Music Hall or probably the theatre organ world either. The star of the show was the 4/58 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ, the largest organ ever built by the Wurlitzer Company for a public venue. The organ

was originally installed when the theatre opened in 1932 and has been featured many times during the years in conjunction with movies and stage presentations but to the best we could find out it has not been featured in a public concert such as this, at least not in recent years.

The organ was used in concert at the 2007 American Theatre Organ Society (ATOS) Convention in New York with Walt Strony presiding at the console. This event, as were other programs in the past featuring the organ, was not open to the public.

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Theatre Organ Society International TOSI News

Until a couple of months ago, the 4/36 Wurlitzer in the St Louis Fox Theatre had not been played publically since the death (near the end of September 2008) of the legendary Stan Kann. Auditions were held this past July for the position of "House Organist" there. Five individuals were selected to share that position. One of those organists is our own TOSI member, the inimitable Jack Moelmann. Now again, after a year of silence, the organ (either the 4/36 or, if the console is inaccessible due to requirements of various stage shows, the smaller lobby instrument) is being played regularly at the beginning of each of the tours of the theatre. Our "Congratulations" to all of the five house organists and, of course, especially to Jack.

Our TOSI Bylaws indicate that there is to be an annual meeting of the Board of Directors. We have previously attempted to have such a meeting at the time and place of one of our programs. Unfortunately, we did not have a majority of the directors present in Richmond, Virginia, during our program at the Byrd Theatre last March nor in Cleveland during the ATOS Convention in July. Since the costs involved for a personal, face-to-face meeting would certainly far exceed what individual directors could be expected to spend for it, we held a teleconference meeting a few days ago. In addition to dealing with the ordinary, but necessary, business, a few quite exciting ideas were discussed.

Certainly we are continuing discussions with some of our California-based members in the attempt to plan our first ever West Coast program. The Byrd Theatre in Richmond, Virginia, is evidently very interested in having us again sponsor a program there. It is quite likely that we will also have the opportunity to sponsor another East Coast program, but this time it is to take place at a location, which will be new for us. The plan to have a theatre organ component as an integral part of a cruise aboard the Queen Mary, as discussed at our Annual Membership Meeting last July, is still very much alive. Getting the



PRESIDENTS MESSAGE
TOSI President,
Father Gus Franklin

three components to converge to make this a reality has proven to be a bit trickier than was initially expected. However, the work to get this accomplished is very definitely still ongoing. Additionally, there has been a suggestion to attempt to have a program at the Saint Louis Fox Theatre showcasing that wonderful 4/36 Wurlitzer and utilizing the talents of the five new house organists mentioned above. We will be hearing more about this and about the other plans just mentioned, in our next newsletter, as the various arrangements for them take more definitive shape after the beginning of the New Year.

Our new Council member, Tom DeLay, suggested that we put the TOSI story on Facebook. This idea met with unanimous enthusiasm, and we expect that to become a reality in the very near future. Such exposure could prove to be quite beneficial to our mission.

We will again plan to have our Annual Membership Meeting during the ATOS Annual Convention, this time in Seattle and most likely near the beginning of that event. A suggestion to have a TOSI-sponsored social/mixer during the Seattle Convention was received with significant interest. This idea will soon be explored more fully.

As is my usual practice, I ask for any suggestions you may have for future programming and any other activities. Please contact any member of the Board to communicate your ideas. As always, thank you for your continued support.

On behalf on the TOSI Board of Directors, I take this opportunity to wish each of you a very Merry and safe Christmastide and a wonderful New Year.

Most sincerely, *Gus*

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I thought it was time to tell some of the “behind the scenes” things that went on that were associated with this event – and we stayed away from the word “concert” as that word frequently has a boring connotation associated with it.

It was in February of 2008 that I discussed the possibility of the Theatre Organ Society International (TOSI) doing a show at Radio City Music Hall with Nelson Page of the New York area and Gus Franklin, President of TOSI. This time the show would be open to the public. They said the costs would be prohibitive for TOSI to afford. I asked how much it would cost, thinking perhaps \$10,000 was a good figure and I could spring for that. Investigation proved me wrong. It was \$75,000 just to rent the four walls of the place for a day. Then there would be the cost for the stagehands, security people, lighting, sound, etc. I thought that wouldn't be too much because how much support does one need for an organ program - some type of basic lighting, a microphone, and an organ technician. I later found out that the “crew” was to cost in excess of \$43,000, all union people of course.

At first we thought of whom the organists would be to play in our production. Walt Strony was an obvious choice

since he played it the year before. Then Russell Holmes came to mind, and even perhaps playing the piano, then Dan Bellomy with perhaps a drummer, Gus Franklin to play with me on the second console during the Tribute to America, which we wanted to do as a finale which uses a short movie. Nelson Page would serve as the emcee. We would even build in an audience sing-a-

long. I talked to each of these guys and they were thrilled to be part of it. Another wild scheme was to use the Rockettes in a simple routine for a couple of minutes using their “canned” music. How simple could all that be? The Rockettes in a simple routine would add \$90,000 and forget the drummer, piano, and possible Hammond Organ, as that would cost mega-bucks also. As noted on the many TV and radio and newspaper ads the program was to cost \$118,182.44 payable to the Music Hall, a far cry from what I had originally thought.

I was going to pay for all of it and did, but the Music Hall indicated that they couldn't rent it to an individual. So

TOSI became the sponsoring organization, which was fine as they were going to be heavily involved in the production and advertising. We later found out that an individual could have rented the place but it just hadn't been done before.

Scheduling and coordination was taken care of by Nelson Page who had worked with the Music Hall people during the ATOS Convention. We befriended a lady in the Music Hall, Jennifer, who was sort of in charge of these types of events - not necessarily this kind of event - but events. Befriending didn't gain anything financially but they were very cooperative and ran everything “by the book”, theirs! We got a date which in show business is prime time: Saturday night at 8:00 PM. It would have been somewhat cheaper to do it on a Tuesday or Wednesday, but what the heck, Saturday seemed great.

Gus Franklin and I traveled to New York in the middle of June to meet with Nelson Page and Diane Walker of TOSI and the Radio City folks to work out details and get a clearer understanding of what we wanted to do. One of the other purposes was to give us a chance to try out the organ. After hearing about Walt's experiences at the convention, I thought it best to see just what were going to get into.

The meeting at the Music Hall was on June 25th. Down

payments had already been made; we were committed. (Maybe we should have been “committed” for going through with this!). There were plenty of seats in the room for the meeting, some 6,000 - the capacity of the auditorium. Nelson, Gus, Diane and I were there. The Music Hall had their event manager, sound, stage, lighting, and organ representatives. Very nice people, all of them. I felt it necessary to set the stage for them (not a pun). I explained that



Nelson Page—Jack Moelmann—Walt Strony—Gus Franklin—Lew Williams—Russell Holmes

this was going to be a unique program, something they had not experienced before. We were not there to make money but knew that we would lose money and lots of it. We were there to show off “their” organ, not ours, in a way that had not been done before. Years ago the organ had been amplified using microphones placed near the chambers. We wanted to do that again to bring out the sound from the pipes, which were generally buried. It was at that meeting that I found out that having the Rockettes perform would have cost an additional \$90,000. That took care of that!

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Prior to this meeting, I had told the Music Hall folks that the program would incorporate a couple of videos and use of their projection screens. One video would be a PowerPoint slide show for the sing-a-long and the other a short movie for the Tribute to America, both available by computer. They had two large LED screens, already installed from a previous show, that we could use for \$6,000. With an eight-minute sing-a-long and a six minute film clip for the Tribute, that equated to about \$430 per minute of screen use. To complicate it more, the PowerPoint slide show of the words to the songs had to be in a DVD or movie format. This meant that precise timing would be required by the organist during the performance rather than having an operator changing slides at the appropriate times. They also insisted on using their own computer equipment. I had quite a time making such a DVD and using that satisfactorily for the sing-a-long would be dependent on my being able to see the screens from the organ console. At the meeting - "Praise Be!" they said that we could use my computer and our operator, Gus, could change the slides and Russell could start the Tribute movie. That was a great relief!

I asked them about the cost of \$43,000 for the stage crew and other personnel and what it consisted of. They said stagehands, carpenters, prop people, electricians, security people, sound engineers, a projection screen operator, etc. I questioned the need for carpenters and prop people and told them that we had no scenery and weren't going to build anything. The union package is required as a minimum for each show but they indicated that they would be there to help us "load in the show". I said, "load in the show! At best we would each have a hanging bag with a tuxedo and a cell phone and that was the stuff for the show". You can bet I wasn't going to carry my own hanging bag in - they would!! I think I had to carry it out though - actually I wore it out!

I told them about our desire to use microphones on the organ. They wanted to put them "in" the chambers and that is a "no no". They can only be used outside the chambers to capture changes in volume. They said OK. As the meeting was coming to a close, I said that it would be great to try out the organ. The organ technician there announced that it would be impossible as some ductwork had been disconnected from the organ and it could not be turned on. That was very DISAPPOINTING for sure as that was part of the reason for the trip. I did get a chance

to sit at the console and look it over. Both consoles were equipped with "Howard Seats". They said that they had regular benches, which I insisted that we use instead of the Howard Seats. But for purposes of this visit, I sat on one of the dreaded Howard Seats and had my picture taken by Gus



Franklin while I was dressed in that famous Hawaiian shirt to be seen by millions in the months to come in various newspapers and magazines. For those of you who saw many of the newspaper articles about the upcoming program, that was the photo used. Little did anybody know that the organ was inoperable during that time. It is a good thing pictures don't have sound.

We knew we had to sell tickets, but what price to charge? I thought that \$10 was way too low for anything in New York City let alone Radio City. They get around \$100 for their Christmas Show. So we compromised at \$50, which sounded reasonable. We couldn't sell tickets; they all had to be handled through the local TicketMaster with their necessary fees associated with any transactions. We were given some 200 complimentary tickets, which we didn't give away, but sold through our channels. Many tickets were sold during the ATOS Convention in Indianapolis in July. I felt like my hotel room was a "box office".

During the time after the meeting with the Music Hall personnel, there was a lot of planning to do. I had another payment to make to them and needed to sign a contract. The contract was 23 pages long with more things that we couldn't do listed than I ever thought possible. Any posters or printed programs or any other printed public advertising had to be approved by them before it could be released. There was a complete appendix in the contract dealing with recording. Recording was not allowed unless they gave approval and no recording could be done by the audience under any circumstances. I wanted the program to be memorialized by video and audio recordings. I managed to get permission to have one video camera, which could not move from a fixed location and three audio recording stations in the auditorium. The recordings were made by volunteers from our organization. The penalty for the release of these recordings was \$23,000. The exception is duplication for archival purposes. I might add here, that after the show was over and we all came home and I reviewed the recordings that we had, I contacted the Music Hall and asked them how much it would cost me to post segments of the show on YouTube - a question I assumed to already know the answer. They wrote back and said that if I sent them a DVD of what I wanted to post, they would probably approve it and I could have license to post it. I thought it was silly to send them a copy of segments as they, the Music Hall management, were there at the show and would certainly know what went on. Oh well, they are posted and will be there for a long time. If you would like to see them, there are direct links on my web site, which is www.JackMoelman.com and can be found under "video gallery".

I started working on the details of the show. Dan Bellomy was getting weaker all the time from his prolonged illness and he and I realized that he couldn't be



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part of the program. My logical choice, in consultation with a couple of others, was Lew Williams who was very enthusiastic about being placed on the program to take Dan's place.

Knowing that we would only have the theatre for a day, practice time for five organists plus any staging considerations, microphone placement in the organ, audio and lighting testing, video rehearsals, etc., was going to require a rigid schedule. I worked out one, which basically gave each organist a total of two hours of time to do what they could with that massive instrument with its problems, dead notes, etc. I also developed complete staging notes to deal with lighting, microphones, curtain movement, schedule for intermission, and all of the little details involved. I also had to work on the computer PowerPoint program for the sing-a-long and Tribute movie. The organ has an electronic relay with an electronic combination action for the pistons. There are 99 memories on each console. Fortunately memory 8 was still there which contained the piston settings Walt used at the convention concert the year before. That would be the basis for many of our combinations, as we didn't have that much time to experiment. The organ crew assigned me a section of ten memories so I assigned each organist memory levels that they could use.

Concerning costs or potential budget, the \$118,182.44 to the Music Hall did include the projection screens but did not include the honorarium we paid to each organist (and they were most generous with the fee that they charged), hotel and transportation, insurance for the event, programs, advertising, etc., etc. Many TOSI folks volunteered their time and effort for this production. One was Allan France of New York who volunteered to be our official photographer. The many hundred photos, which he took, are also on my web site under the "photo gallery".

As it ended up, thanks to a friend of Bob Miloche and Nelson Page, a wonderful reporter with the Associated Press (AP), the world famous news wire service, wrote a wonderful article. The main thrust of the advertising that they would promote was "retired Air Force Colonel, lives a dream and spends most of his life savings to play the massive Radio City Music Hall Wurlitzer – the largest ever built by the Wurlitzer Company".

Within hours after the release of the article by the AP, a couple of weeks before the show, my phone started ringing. The first call was from the CBS Morning News who wanted to do an interview by phone on their morning show the very next day. I said certainly. Little did I know that was just the beginning. As it ended up we did a search of the advertising for the program, all free by the way, and found that it was in 537 newspapers, magazines, and TV and radio stations around the world. I really arrived in the publicity world when the program was highlighted on page 2 of the Tokyo News. I couldn't read a word of it! The only way I knew it was about me, was that it had that picture of me in my Hawaiian shirt at the console of the organ that wouldn't play made famous around the world which was taken by that eminent photographer Gus Franklin on June 25th using my digital camera.

The subsequent publicity involved CBS, NBC, ABC, CNN, FOX News, FOX Business News, the New York Times, the New York Post, National Public Radio (NPR), plus many, many other newspapers and local radio and TV stations. St. Louis hit it big time with their multi-media.

As we approached the show date, there was more and more news media interest in the show. As it ended up, the Music Hall admitted that there had never been that much publicity, let alone it being free, for any single event in their history. The organ world was also amazed that this kind of thing could happen with such exposure around the world. Who would have ever thought that the electronic display billboard at Madison Square Garden would be announcing our show and having my name and picture of the organ on their display for about three weeks. Publicity of that magnitude would have cost millions of dollars.

Another thing, which had to be designed, was the wording on the Marquee of the Music Hall, which cost \$3,000 but was fortunately built into the total amount. The Marquee is a wrap-around thing starting in front of the building and going around the side, a single row of spaces for 107 letters. I worked on it a few days and then developed the wording, which used every space except one. TOSI and Jack Moelmann were listed on the Marquee of the showplace of the nation as it is commonly called. The Marquee read: **"THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY INTL PRESENTS COL JACK MOELMANN & FRIENDS ON THE MIGHTY WURLITZER PIPE ORGAN - AUG 9"**.

Another interesting thing is that only the Music Hall can

sell things at a program. We could not solicit or have people pay for memberships, sell CDs or sell anything. They have to do it all. That was OK except they charge a commission of 30 percent. Our T-shirts, for example, were selling for \$30 and their cut would be \$9.00 each. The same held true with the CDs that we had for sale. But that's the way it goes in New York. In addition they got all of the money from the concession stand including a poster, which read, "Enjoy one of our frozen drinks, Moelmannttini, or a Pina Colada, or Margarita at \$12.00". (A Moelmannttini is a variation of a Martini I guess).

Speaking of T-shirts, a very artistic person who works for Nelson, designed most of our high profile publicity materials including posters and the famous T-shirt. A little over 100 of the T-shirts were made. They were all sold even before the beginning of the show. On the day of the show, the T-shirt was the costume for the day of the organists, crew, etc. Photos can be seen in the photo gallery and in media coverage of the weekend.

I designed a black and white program handout (which they had to approve) and sent Nelson 2,000 copies, which I had reproduced on my home copy machine. These needed to be



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folded. Nelson was very gracious in all of the event activities in volunteering his staff to help out.

Gus Franklin and I arrived in Newark, New Jersey, the Thursday before the Saturday night show. Nelson Page met us at the airport and he and Diane drove us wherever we had to go. Nelson would serve as the news media coordinator for the weekend. Things had been lined for interviews on Friday and it was going to be a busy day. We were told that we couldn't get into the Music Hall until Saturday but there was a possibility of getting in there Friday which didn't work out. Walt Strony, Lew Williams, and Russell Holmes had all arrived on Thursday, so we were all in town.

There is very high security around New York and especially the Music Hall. I had to develop access lists of who would be able to go in and when and why they needed to be there. Other than those directly involved with the program, no one else was permitted entry.

We did get in Thursday evening (and it didn't cost me anything extra!) primarily to check out the sound system and play the organ a little bit. We found out that they hadn't followed my instructions on the placement of microphones. They had installed some fifteen microphones, but about half of them were placed in the chambers. I immediately had them turned off as they would not be used under any circumstances. Lew Williams somehow got a friend of his into the theatre that evening. He was a sound technician who was able to work with the Music Hall sound guy in balancing out the microphones. Lew sat at the console and played a variety of things to check out the microphones. They really added a lot to the sound. I told the local sound technician that when the sound was to our satisfaction to put duct tape over the controls so those controls associated with the organ could not be adjusted. You can imagine how sound guys have to fiddle with sound level controls all the time. If the organ played softly, they would try to crank it up, and so on. While we were at the theatre, the manager of the complex came in to introduce himself and said that the CEO of Madison Square Gardens Entertainment, the ones who own the Music Hall and other venues, wanted to know exactly who this Jack Moelmann was because there was so much publicity about the upcoming event. Well, I told the manager who I was and in the same breath asked him who was the guy that was asking. Turn about is also fair play.

Friday was a series of interviews with various media personnel. I had done something when I left home that I had never done before and that was to call-forward my telephone at home to my cell phone. It proved very beneficial as news agencies were constantly trying to get a hold of me the entire time. While driving around I got a call from the management of the famous conservative talk show host Glenn Beck of Fox News. They wanted to do a live interview with me on their morning show. Nelson, being my publicity manager by that time, said to go for it. We were at Diane's house in New Jersey when they called, and I did the interview with him on my cell phone. We hit it off right from the start when I told him that I was a born and raised conservative Republican, much to the chagrin of Gus Franklin, but I was asked to talk on the show not Gus (who wouldn't have anyway!).

After that, we assembled all of the gang in front of the

Music Hall for interviews with Fox News, NBC and a couple of others as I recall. Unfortunately, the other artists were left in the background most of the time as I was the apparent center of attention. National Public Radio (NPR) showed up and did an interview also. By the way, any interviews with the news media in and around the Music Hall have to be coordinated with the publicity people of the their staff. That means that a representative from their office has to be there supervising the activity - such bureaucracy! Fortunately during the NPR interview and one other, I can't remember which it was, the supervisor of the Music Hall publicity coordinator was in charge and actually invited us into the auditorium and lobby for the interviews. The only condition was that photos could not be taken of the stage, which I thought was sort of a silly comment as this was a "radio" interview. While out on the sidewalk doing an interview, a young guy walked up to me and handed me an 8 x 10 picture of the choral group that I directed at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi, back in 1975; it was the Keesler Male Chorus (KMC). He was a member of that choral group at the time and was in the photo. He worked at Fox News and saw all of the publicity. It was quite a reunion and who would ever have thought that would happen in such a big city and on a busy street corner.

Part—2 Coming In the next issue...

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