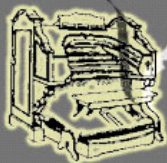


# THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

## 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.



## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

TOSI President,  
Father Gus Franklin

While we had all the components in place for it to occur in accordance with our Bylaws, the election of a TOSI President and Vice-President did not happen, as such! Evidently the pay and perks (\$0 in each case of course) were insufficiently attractive to provide us with more than one nominee for each office. Section 4.3 of our Bylaws permits the Board, without further action, to declare, "those nominated and qualified" to be elected. So that is precisely what happened. I continue as President and Al Haker of St Louis is our new Vice President. Many of you know or, at least, have met Al, possibly at one of our Annual Membership Meetings or at one of the St Louis Chapter's "Party on the Pipes" extended weekends. He is the force behind the maintenance and continued operation of the pipe organs in the St. Louis Fox Theatre, St. Louis Scottish Rite Temple, St. Louis City Museum, and the Lincoln Theatre in Belleville, Illinois. If you don't yet know him, you will find him to be a truly great guy and very active in the theatre organ world. Yes, he even attended the Radio City Music Hall show.



Work continues on the updating of our website, albeit at a snail's pace. Obviously everyone involved is a volunteer, and all have found themselves with overly packed schedules during the past few months. Some of the work that has been accomplished does not yet appear on the site, but it will be there soon. Now with easier access ([www.TOSInternational.com](http://www.TOSInternational.com)) and an invitation soon to be suggesting – to what will likely be a partially new audience – that they access the site, it is imperative that we get this done sooner rather than later; and we will.

That invitation is a result of Jack Moelmann's purchasing a two-year individual sponsorship of the ATOS Theatre Organ Radio for himself and for TOSI. Yes, both Jack and TOSI will be among the sponsors of this ATOS project. As a result, both

Jack and TOSI will have many mini-spots during the programming. Thus, suggesting to the listeners that they visit our website is a given.



You will recall that our membership brochure, as well as our website on the "The TOSI Story" page, lists ways in which we propose to implement our mission. Then near the conclusion we state, "Hence, TOSI is clearly complementary to all other such groups and is in competition with none of them. Additionally, we will aggressively pursue cooperative ventures with other theatre organ organizations around the world and work closely with them in a spirit of unity." That stands as it is! We are not competing with anyone, certainly not with ATOS, nor will we have any plans to do so in the future.

Again, I continue to 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. Now if anyone has such suggestions or ideas and has contacted a Board member, they have never trickled down to me. Your Board is being totally honest in seeking your input. Please let us hear from you. As always, thank you for your continued support and for your help in being on the lookout for new members.

Most sincerely, *Gus*

## SAINT LOUIS IN THE NEWS

City Museum Organ on KSDK(NBC)  
Saint Louis Today Program



There was very little advance notice from KSDK as to when a segment on the City Museum organ was to be aired, however, you can see it via the internet by typing in this URL address: <http://www.ksdk.com/news/article/255498/78/City-Museum-Organ>

Chris Soer and Al Haker, did the Saint Louis Theatre Organ Society proud. Note that when the video starts, you'll have to first watch a brief commercial Museum story on page 3.

## MEET OUR NEW VICE PRESIDENT MR. AL HAKER OF ST LOUIS MO

My interest in theatre organs goes back to listening and watching Stan Kann play the Wurlitzer at the Fox Theatre in St. Louis when I was in high school in the late fifties. I had a couple of George Wright albums that I wore out. Other priorities, such as raising a family and working as a Postal Inspector, sidetracked organ pursuits until 1992 when I joined the St. Louis Theatre Organ Society. I became a member of the Fox Lobby Organ Crew. When I retired from the Postal Service in 1999, I had more time to learn how these mechanical marvels work. Before long, I became the organ curator at the Fox, maintaining both organs there. I also maintain the Lincoln Theatre Organ in Belleville, IL, and keep the Scottish Rite Kimball in St. Louis running. Then came the City Museum challenge, designing, installing and maintaining the Wurlitzer there. I have been in TOSI almost from the beginning. I live in St. Louis with my wife, Carol. I have two children and one adorable granddaughter.



## THE SAINT LOUIS FOX THEATRE LOBBY ORGAN

by Alan Haker

The original organ in the Fox lobby was a Möller installed in 1928 and in place when the theatre opened in 1929. It was a three manual twelve rank organ with an Artiste roll player. According to sources, it was never played for shows. The problem was with the roll player. The musician's union would not allow the organ to be used with the player unless an organist was present and paid. It is not known if the organ was used without the player. The organ was removed sometime in the late 40's and installed in the First Baptist Church of Mount Vernon, Illinois. It is still there today. It has been greatly modified by Wicks, the last changes made in 1992. The Wicks Organ Company still services the instrument.

The present organ is a two manual Wurlitzer, Opus 1222. It started life in 1925 as a Style D with six ranks on a single manual wind chest with all the standard offsets, percussions and toy counter. It was installed in the Majestic Theatre in East Saint Louis, Illinois. The style D has a Tibia, Open Diapason, Salicional, Trumpet, Vox



Humana, and Concert Flute. Sometime while still in the theatre, two more ranks were added, a 49 note Clarinet, a 49 note Orchestral Oboe, and a Marimba. The additions had black cap magnets while the original organ had metal caps. It was removed in the 50's from the theatre and finally ended up in the hands of the St. Louis Theatre Organ Society (SLTOS) in the '70's. It was being installed in the Kingsland Theatre in South St. Louis. The ownership of the theatre changed abruptly and what was in the Kingsland has to be gotten out very quickly. The Kingsland was subsequently destroyed and is now the site of an Aldi's Market. The Majestic building still exists but it is a hulk with trees growing out of the roof.

When the Fox was refurbished in 1982, it was proposed by SLTOS that an organ be placed in the lobby organ chambers. The members at that time worked very hard to see this project to completion but it turned out to be a slow process. During this time, three ranks were added; a Wurlitzer Brass Trumpet and a two rank String Celeste. The Marimba was not installed because it would not fit and is now in the St. Louis City Museum organ. The original relay was replaced with a Petersen Orga-Plex relay. By 1992, the organ was complete enough to be played for shows.

Since 1992, several additions were made to improve the organ. Reconditioned Wurlitzer keyboards and a new back rail were installed. A separate regulator and tremulant was added for the Tibia rank. A larger blower (from 3hp to 5hp) was installed. The author learned the inner workings of the Wurlitzer organ with the help of the late Joe Barnes and many others.



The organ console is on the third floor of the lobby area. The Main chamber is immediately next to it. The Solo chamber and the Percussion/Bass (unenclosed) chamber are on the fourth floor just above the console. All three chambers speak out into the lobby. The organist is in the worst place to hear the organ because the sound has to come back from the other side of the lobby. Microphones and a speaker next to the console were added to help the organist with the sound. It can be turned off if the organist wishes.

SLTOS volunteer organists play the organ for almost every show an hour beforehand and during intermission. The organ is played for over two hundred shows a year. It is also used periodically for daytime tours when the auditorium organ (the 4/36 Wurlitzer) cannot be raised because of a shows extended stage use.



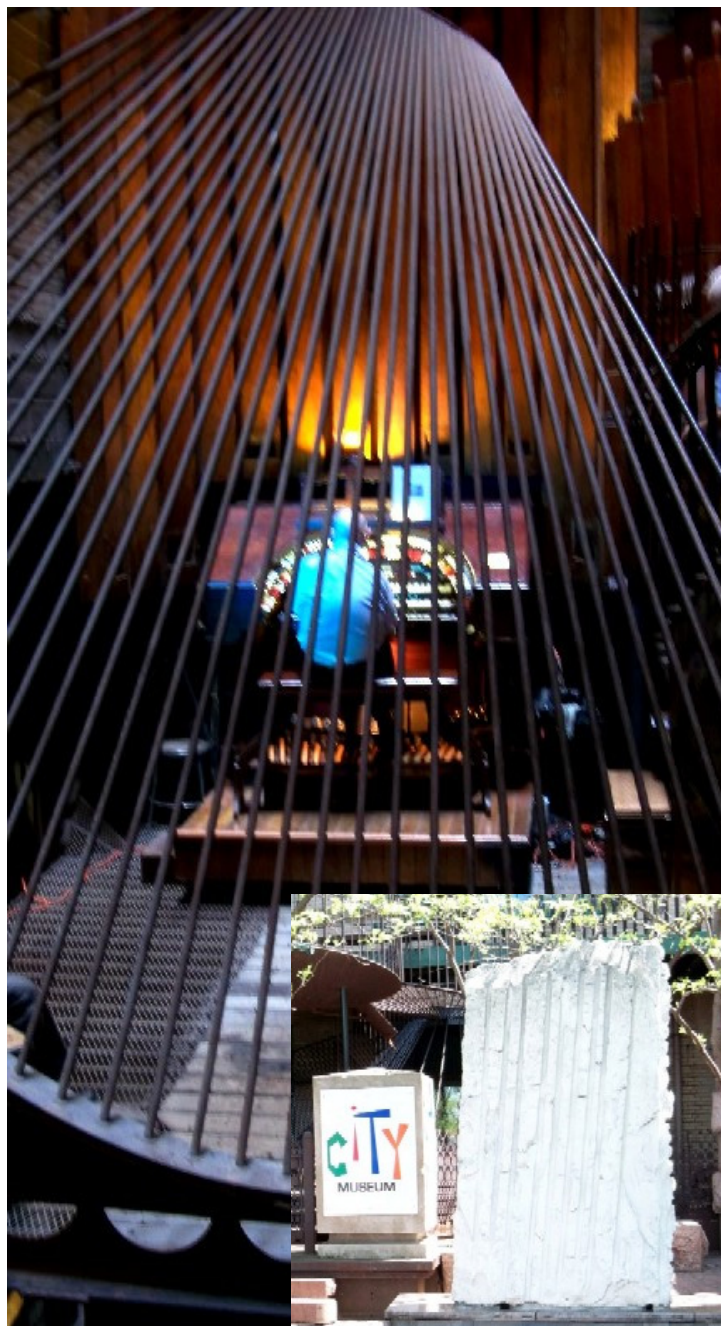
SAINT LOUIS THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY  
AT THE CITY MUSEUM, SAINT LOUIS MISSOURI  
You have a Theatre Pipe Organ. Where do you put it?  
A place where people can see it.

*The Saint Louis City Museum was just the place.*

The Wurlitzer Pipe Organ at the City Museum started out as an accumulation of parts that had been gathered by the Saint Louis Theatre Organ Society (SLTOS) for placement in another theatre in Saint Louis, the Granada. That project fell through (literally, the roof of the theatre caved in). That was in the mid-1980's. The organ sat in one of our member's garage until the late Steve Crowe contacted the City Museum owner, Bob Cassilly. That was in October, 2005. Mr. Cassilly liked the idea and SLTOS began preparations for installing the organ in a part of the museum that is known as "The Enchanted Caves". The Caves are a 10 story atrium in the middle of the museum. The first 2 floors are a labyrinth, hence the name "Caves". The remainder is open with chutes and slides and a skylight on the roof. The organ console would be in the Caves between the second and third floors. The pipe chambers would be in the museum on the third floor with glass rear walls that made the pipe work visible and the organ would speak out into the Caves. SLTOS members started moving parts from the garage into a workshop in the museum. This began in January of 2006. Missing parts were obtained from other sources and some parts in storage were sold to help defray the cost of the installation. After sitting in storage for so long, everything had to be refurbished. Meanwhile, museum staff constructed the chambers and did many other heavy lifting projects for us. We replaced the Peterson electrical relay that had been purchased in the '80's for the Granada with a more modern PC based relay, a Uniflex 2000, that could record organists playing and then play it back like a MIDI. After 17 months of designing, moving, cleaning, installing and generally trying to keep from going insane, the organ played from the computer relay in August 2007. The console still had to be completed with new stop tabs and key regulation. The first public performance was on October 26, 2007 for the museum 10th anniversary party with Stan Kann and Ken Iborg playing. The percussions and 16 foot pedal pipes still had to be installed in the caves. This was done in January, 2008. The SLTOS had their club meeting at the museum in February, 2008 and all played wonderfully. Then in June, welders set some of the pedal pipes in the Caves on fire and they were destroyed. There was also water damage to the percussions below. The rest of the organ was unscathed and still played. The damage was repaired and pipes replaced by the end of September. Organists come from time to time to play and the museum staff play the organ from the computer almost on a daily basis. There are plans to add another set of pipes along with a piano and marimba. Any theatre organ person knows that these projects are never done, only on hold until more enthusiasm is generated and more funds are available.

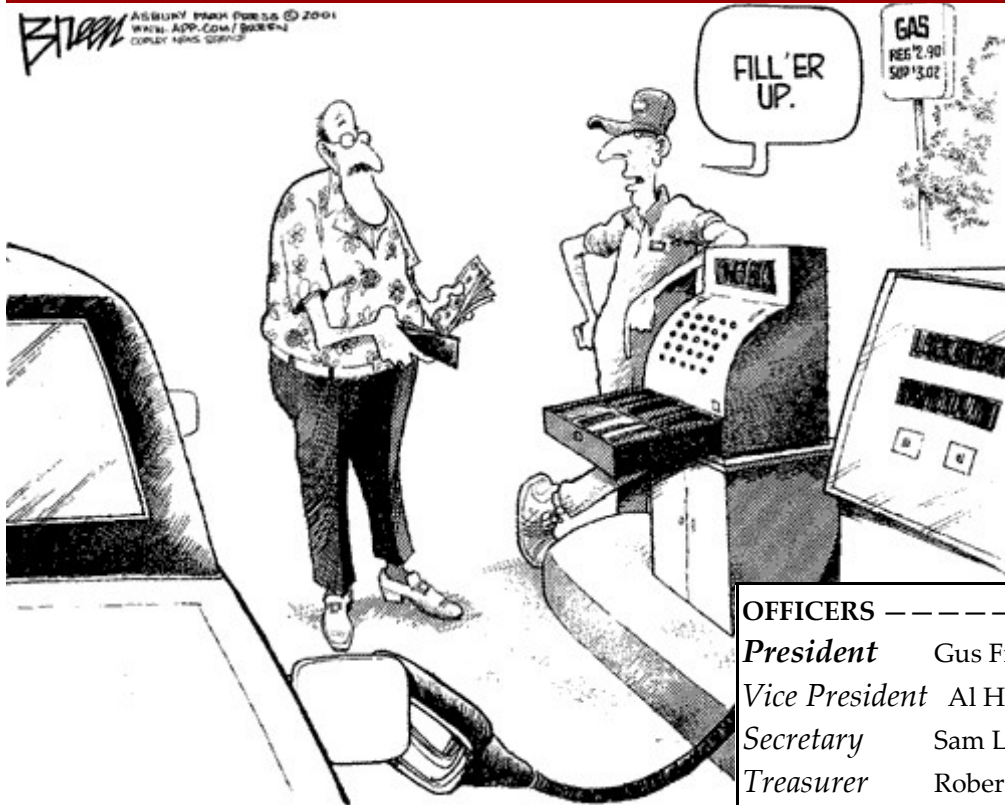
The nucleus of the organ was Wurlitzer Opus 839, 15 rank Style 260 from the Rivoli Theatre in New York City. The

console, seven ranks of pipes and most of the chests and regulators are from there. That organ was not complete when SLTOS received it in trade for the Kimball console and some pipework from the Saint Louis Theatre. Some of the pipe work and chests we used from the storage were from Gus Brummer and the Ruggeri restaurant organ that Stan Kann played in the '60's. We used a Kimball Pedal Bourdon and chest and the chimes from the Saint Louis Theatre. We had to purchase a blower (Spencer), VDO and celeste (Gottfried violins), xylophone (Robert Morton), chrysoglott (Wurlitzer) and a bass drum and made a post horn from a donated oboe. Also donated was the Wicks small diapason. We used a Kilgen Open Diapason instead of the Wurlitzer Diaphonic Diapason.



# Theatre Organ Society International TOSI News

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Will we ever get a break.  
Fuel prices continue to  
climb.

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