

# RTOS Blower

Official Newsletter of The Rochester Theater Organ Society Inc.



## 2001 ATOS Theatre Organist of the Year Jelani Eddington Returns to Rochester

During the years that Jelani Eddington has given concerts, he has easily established himself as one of the most prominent and sought-after artists on the concert circuit. Jelani has performed in most of the major concert venues throughout the US, has toured extensively abroad, and has received numerous awards and recognitions, including his selection as the ATOS Theatre Organist of the Year in 2001.

Jelani was born in Muncie, IN and grew up in a very musical family. Between the interests of his mother, a professional music teacher of many years, and those of his grandmother, a well-respected piano instructor, it was no surprise when Jelani demonstrated an inclination toward music at a very early age.

Shortly after beginning piano instruction at the age of four, Jelani began studying classical piano under the direction of his grandmother. At the age of eight, a trip to hear the 4-manual 42-rank Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ installed in the Paramount Music Palace in Indianapolis introduced to the sounds of the theatre pipe



### Jelani Eddington

Auditorium Theatre  
885 E. Main St

**Sunday, November 13, 2016**

**2:30 PM**

*(Doors open 45 min early)*

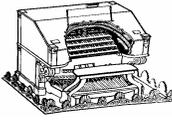
organ. Soon thereafter, he began to pursue classical organ lessons and ultimately began studying theatre organ under the direction of John Ferguson.

At the age of 13, Jelani won the ATOS Young Theatre Organist Competition, prevailing over competitors ages 13-21 from the US, England, Australia, and New Zealand. Jelani remains the

youngest competitor ever to win this title.

Jelani went on to graduate Magna Cum Laude from Indiana University in 1996, and later received a Juris Doctor degree from the Yale Law School in 1999, after which time he was admitted to practice law in New York and later in Wisconsin.

During the course of his concert career, Jelani has been featured at numerous national and regional ATOS conventions, and has toured extensively throughout the world. He has also produced and marketed over 30 theatre organ albums on some of the best-known and most dynamic instruments in the country. In 2014, Jelani became the first—and to date only—musician to have a video of his theatre organ performance go “viral.” Within a few short weeks, Jelani’s performance of John William’s *Star Wars Symphonic Suite* was viewed on YouTube over 1 million times in more than 200 countries around the world. As of 2016, that video has earned more than 2.2 million views worldwide.



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

PO Box 17114  
Rochester, NY 14617  
Concerts & Info: (585) 234-2295  
<http://www.rtosonline.org>

**MEMBERSHIP CHAIR**

Ken Veneron  
48 N. State St.  
Nunda, NY 14517  
(585) 468-1052  
423rtos@rochester.rr.com

Membership (from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31)  
Full: \$65.00

Associate: (50+ miles from Roch): \$45.00  
Student (age 18-24 with ID): \$35.00

**BLOWER EDITOR**

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Tim Schramm  
(585) 339-8546  
posthorn8@aol.com



**A LETTER FROM YOUR PRESIDENT**



The 2019 ATOS National Convention will be centered in Rochester and will, of course, feature our own Mighty Wurlitzer! The first step was to find a Rochester hotel which had adequate facilities for the 350-400 attendees expected. A contract was signed in late September with the downtown Radisson Hotel—what a great site from which to watch the downtown Fourth of July fireworks! Russ Shaner (convention co-chair) and Mike Kinerk (ATOS Convention Coordinator) worked long and hard to negotiate the contract terms—my sincere thanks to both.

We are already preparing for the February Eastman Bunch concert. Interested students are “trying out” the organ on selected evenings. The Theater is very busy, so we must coordinate times carefully. The liaison with Eastman is Thomas Gaynor. His help is essential for a successful program. Thank you Thomas!

Our fundraising effort is bearing fruit, or should I say green paper. We have passed the half way mark! If you can help, please send a check to Ken Veneron, 48 N. State Street, Nunda, NY 14517-9655. You can also find Ken at the membership table in the theater lobby during concerts.

Election time is here again. This year we will elect three Directors. We thank David Higgs and Greg Spring for agreeing to run for another term. We also thank John Lukes for his desire to join the board. Please look over the info on page 3 and cast your ballot using the enclosed form.

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

**Shopping on Amazon?**

To direct your support to RTOS, Type: [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) in your web browser and enter “Rochester Theater Organ Society” as your charity.



**Do you use Facebook?  
Help us publicize RTOS:**

- Visit the RTOS Facebook page ( *Rochester Theatre Organ Society*) and ‘Like’ us.
- Post the concert posters on your Facebook page.

Visit the RTOS website frequently for the latest news and information. find us at:  
[www.rtosonline.org](http://www.rtosonline.org)



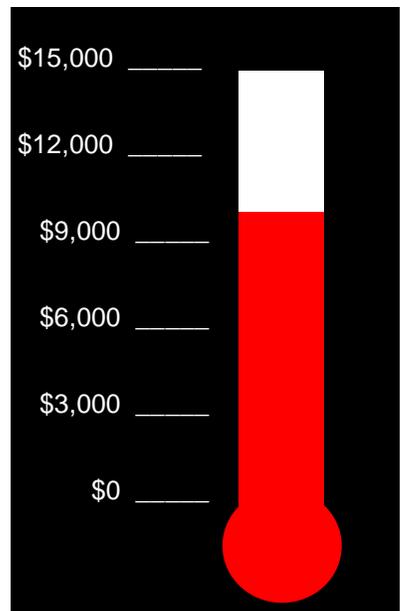
**RTOS 2016 FUNDS  
DRIVE UPDATE**

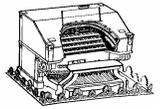
Thank you to everyone who has contributed to date. As of October 20th the total amount received stands at:

**\$9,906.00**

Help RTOS keep the music playing in Rochester by sending your contribution to:

Ken Veneron  
48 N. State Street  
Nunda, NY 14517-9655





## 2016 RTOS Election for Directors

### Summary

This year's election is for three Directors to a two-year term ending in the year 2018.

- Present Directors **David Higgs** and **Greg Spring** are running for re-election.
- RTOS member **John Lukes** is a new candidate for Director.
- Directors **Tim Schramm**, **Rick McCutchan**, and **Robert Bower** will serve the remaining year of their current term.

The Officers elected last year will serve the remaining year of their current term.

### Voting Procedures

Details are on the Ballot. Write-in(s) are acceptable and space is provided on the Ballot for this purpose.

Ballots must be received by the Election Teller before 10:00PM on Saturday, Dec. 3, 2016 to be valid. A ballot box will be available in the Auditorium Center lobby during the Sunday, Nov. 13th concert, or you may mail ballots directly to the Election Teller Gary Brumbaugh, 64 Pen Creek Drive, Webster, NY 14580.

We urge all eligible members to cast their ballots for the candidates of their choice.

### Voting Eligibility

All Regular 2016 and Honorary Members are asked to vote on the Official Ballots that are mailed with their copy of the *Blower*. New 2017 Regular members, and all Associate, Student, and Complimentary members will receive the biographies and voided ballots since they are ineligible to vote in this year's election (the reason for dummy ballots for members ineligible to vote is because of postal regulations that require identical pieces and weight in each piece in the mailing).

### David Higgs



David Higgs is chair of the Department of Organ and Historical Keyboards at the Eastman School of Music. A native of New York City, he held his first position as a church organist at age 10 and has demonstrated his affection for theater organ music at the '*Eastman Bunch*' concerts. Professor Higgs has been a key player in the collaboration between RTOS and the ESM and avidly supports greater collaborations between the classical and theater organ communities.

STATEMENT: I have a long term goal of developing a certificate in Theater Organ Performance for the ESM organ curriculum and making RTOS an integral element in its execution and success. The futures of both the theater and the classical organ can be enhanced by developing a closer relationship between them.

### John Lukes



After hearing great things about RTOS and the RKO Palace Wurlitzer for years (as an ATOS Northern California and Sierra chapters member), John was thrilled that Eastman Kodak moved him here in 2004. He has been a member of RTOS since. John regularly attends RTOS concerts and participated in recent bus trips.

STATEMENT: I am ready to help RTOS build its membership, contribute to the preservation of our two excellent Wurlitzer organs, and to extend the legacy of RTOS well into the future.

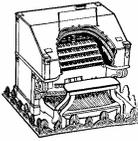
### Greg Spring



A lifelong resident of East Rochester, Greg first became a RTOS member in the late 60's, along with his parents. He was taught to play the organ by Dottie White and Don Scott, and worked with Ken Veneron on the Eastman House Organ. Greg is currently RTOS Librarian.

Outside of RTOS, Greg has served as a union president, a media director for East Rochester schools, and an Actors Equity Inc. accredited lighting and audio engineer. He has also served on the Board of Deacons, and is currently serving as Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees and Chair of the Finance Committee at the First Baptist Church of East Rochester.

STATEMENT: I want to do everything I can to increase membership, and find alternate resources for funding, such as advertising, grants, and sponsorships.



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

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Rochester, NY 14692  
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Paul Law, *President*  
Ted McWharf, *Vice-President*  
Christine Van Stean, *Secretary*  
Ken Veneron, *Treasurer*  
Bob Bower, *Director*  
David Higgs, *Director*  
Rick McCutchan, *Director*  
Tim Schramm, *Director, Programs*  
Greg Spring, *Director*  
Russ Shaner, *Past-President*

**RTOS EVENTS**

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

Jelani Eddington	Nov 13	2:30PM
Tim Schramm Christmas show	Dec 11	2:30PM
Eastman Bunch	Feb 26, 2017	2:30PM
Artist TBA	Mar 19, 2017	2:30PM
Scott Foppiano	May 28, 2017	2:30PM
Artist TBA	Jun 18, 2017	2:30PM

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

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

**Open Console**

*Sundays from 11:00 AM to 4 PM*

Nov 6    Dec 18

*“Open Console” is when members are given a time slot to play one of the Society’s theater pipe organs. Come to play, or enjoy the sound.*

**UPCOMING REGIONAL EVENTS**

**Riviera Theatre & Organ Preservation Society**

**Tim Schramm** Wednesday, Nov. 2, 7:30 PM—\$10.00  
**Jelani Eddington** Wednesday, Dec. 7, 7:30 PM—\$10.00  
(3/15 Wurlitzer) 67 Webster St, N Tonawanda, NY  
Box Office: (716) 692-2413. Info: <http://www.rivieratheatre.org/>

**Empire State Theatre & Musical Instrument Museum (ESTMIM)**

**John Ledwon Dec. 18, 3:00 pm**  
(3/11 Wurlitzer) 581 State Fair Blvd., Syracuse (315) 687-3580  
<http://www.empiretheatre.org/index.htm>

**Kingston Theatre Organ Society (KTOS)**

**Jelani Eddington** Fri., Nov. 11, 7:30 PM (\$25 Cn, \$20 Cn Sr.)  
**Dave Wickerham** Fri., Nov. 11, 7:30 PM (\$25 Cn, \$20 Cn Sr.)  
Kingston Korean Church 89 Kirkpatrick St., Kingston, ON, CA  
(3/28 Kimball) Info/ticketing: <http://ktos.ca/>

**Toronto Theatre Organ Society (TTOS)**

Concerts at: Casa Loma, 1 Austin Terrace, Toronto ON, CA  
(4/21 Wurlitzer) Tickets: (416) 492-6262 email: [box-office@ttos.ca](mailto:box-office@ttos.ca)  
Info/ticketing: <http://theatreorgans.com/toronto/>

**Binghamton Theatre Organ Society**

**Jim Ford / Phantom of the Opera** Sat, Oct 29, 7:30 PM - \$20  
**Jim Ford / Chicago** (1927-silent) Sun, Dec 18, 2:00 PM - \$20  
236 Washington St, Binghamton, NY. Box Office (716) 692-2413.  
Info/ticketing: <http://www.binghamtontos.org/>

**BOB BATTAGLIA: “STAGE DOORMAN TO THE STARS”**

*by Russ Shaner*

Robert “Bob” Battaglia recently passed away following a long illness at the age of 82. He was a familiar face at the Auditorium stage door which he tended until his recent illness. He also sold tickets at the front lobby box office for RTOS concerts.

Born in Florida, Bob began ushering in theaters at age 14 in the 1940s before moving to New York City in the 1950s where he managed theaters for the RKO chain.

Bob came to Rochester in 1978 and became

Director of Events for the Mason’s Temple Civic Center, a job he held until the complex was sold and RBTL assumed management of the Auditorium in the early 1990s. Unemployed at age 59, he was forced to accept public assistance until his pension came. Bob soon returned to the Aud as an RBTL volunteer. There he created a position for himself, manning the stage door where he provided a ‘touch of class’ for the performers of the shows because (in his words) “they deserved it.”