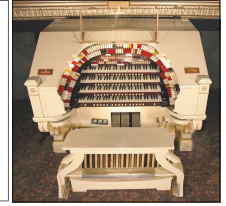


# RTOS Blower

Official Newsletter of the Rochester Theater Organ Society, Inc.



## John Lauter to Feature “Music and the Movies” at the West Herr Auditorium Theatre

Detroit native John Lauter began his organ, piano, and music studies at age 14. He studied with Marie Connors, Frank Rossi, Betty Mason, Fr. Jim Miller, and Gary Reseigh.

John made his public debut playing at the Redford Theatre at age 16. Hundreds of movie preludes later, he can still be heard there. John has presented concerts in Detroit, Grand Rapids, Boston, San Francisco, Phoenix, Denver, Wichita, Chicago, Cleveland, Atlanta, Lexington KY, Thomaston CT, Rochester and Syracuse NY, Toronto and Kingston Ont.

John was a featured performer at the 1995, 2009, and 2016 conventions of the American Theatre Organ Society. In July of 2010, John was invited to England to present concerts at Tywyn Wales and at the Saltaire complex in Bradford, that performance being the final concert of the 2010 Cinema Organ Society's convention. Lauter was the sole American presenter.

John was on the Fox Theatre staff from the reopening in 1988 until 2011 when organ preludes for shows were discontinued. He was Staff Organist of the Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor for 17 years. In 2010, John was heard on the radio playing the Fox Theatre's



### John Lauter

West Herr Auditorium Theatre  
885 E. Main St.

Sunday October 15, 2023  
2:00 PM

(Doors open 45 min early)

**NOTE: New Earlier Start Time**

massive Wurlitzer organ on NPR's "Prairie Home Companion". Host Garrison Keillor said of Lauter: "The man has unerring taste".

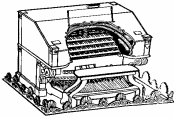
As a silent film score composer and performer, Lauter has scored over 35 feature films. John has accompanied films at the Redford Theatre in Detroit; Baldwin Theatre in Royal Oak; Palace Theatre in Marion, OH; Ritz Theatre Tiffin, OH; Public Museum in Grand Rapids; Toledo Art Museum's Peristyle Theatre, and Casa Loma in Toronto.

The Henry Ford Museum IMAX Theatre contracted John to compose, perform, & record a silent film accompaniment for an IMAX short subject film that was shown before every presentation at that institution for many years.

Lauter was the organist/accompanist for the Unity Church of Lake Orion from its inception in 1997 until 2013. He has provided many area churches with musical services over a 30+ year period. John is currently the pianist with the 18-piece Swing City Big Band.

John lives in Farmington Hills, Michigan with his wife Amy. They are the parents of Benjamin and Maryanna.

This will mark John's third appearance before RTOS audiences. He performed first at the Auditorium Theatre in December of 2008. Then in April of 2010, he played a jazz themed program at the Eisenhart Auditorium. There, he was joined by Eastman School professor Bob Sneider on jazz guitar and Allan Ward on drums. RTOS'ers who participated in the 2016 bus trip to Erie, PA heard John at the Dennis Unks residence organ. We are pleased to have John return to the West Herr Auditorium to inaugurate our 2023-2024 concert season!

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

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

**MEMBERSHIP CHAIR**

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(585) 690-5479  
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Membership (from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31)  
Full: \$75.00

Assoc.: (50+ miles from Roch): \$55.00  
Student (age 18-24 with ID): \$45.00

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Visit the RTOS  
website at:

[www.rtosonline.org](http://www.rtosonline.org)

**Watch RTOS on YouTube!**

Our YouTube channel is growing!  
Look us up and click [Subscribe](#) to  
see videos of complete concerts,  
chamber tours and more on your  
phone, computer or TV.

[youtube.com/@Wurlitzer1951](https://youtube.com/@Wurlitzer1951)

**JUST \$1**

Help RTOS keep the music play-  
ing. Just a \$1 donation at each  
concert pays for the Blower.

**PRESIDENT'S LETTER**

I'm looking forward to the new season, with up-  
and-coming artists as well as those we have enjoyed  
in past years. In an effort to increase membership,  
we continue to offer community presentations to  
introduce new people to the theatre organ and to  
RTOS. We just recently presented to groups in the  
Webster and Parma-Hilton Recreation Centers.

Gary Brumbaugh and I would like to talk to you if you participate in  
groups that invite speakers.

Each fall we offer NEW members the fall programs free with a  
new membership for the next year. Now is the time for new  
members to sign up. As the best musical bargain in town, RTOS  
memberships are only \$75 a year for a member and a guest. To  
encourage concert attendance by younger people, children  
accompanied by adults are free, and high school and college  
students are always free with school ID.

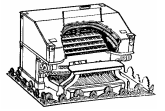
We continue to look for volunteer help in presenting our  
programs, as well as help on projects we are working on that  
include preservation of our historical materials, fundraising, and  
marketing. It would be great to have volunteers help us document  
materials, inventory materials, and scan materials! We are always  
looking for fundraising ideas and marketing opportunities. We will  
also need help in the future with our plans to host the ATOS 2026  
Convention here in Rochester. Our volunteer "yellow shirts" were  
a real asset in the 2019 convention! If you have an interest in  
sharing your skills to benefit RTOS, please call or email me.

On a recent cruise around the British Islands, I met people  
from Buffalo and Pennsylvania who often visit our area. I gave  
them my business card and encouraged them to check our  
website for program dates. Our conversation started around the  
Buffalo Bills – but I switched it to theatre organ to encourage them  
to visit us while in the area! My contribution to marketing!

Congratulations go to RBTL on their announcement of the  
recent purchase of the entire building adjoining the theatre and  
their new alliance with the West Herr Automotive Group. The  
naming rights deal gives our home a new name, "*The West Herr  
Auditorium Theatre and Performing Arts Center*". We wish them  
all the best as they embark on their journey to restore and update  
the building to its former glory by the building's 100th anniversary  
in 2030. This ambitious endeavor will create a true performing  
arts center for the Rochester region!

I'm looking forward to greeting everyone on October 15th as  
John Lauter returns with a movie music themed program that will  
include two silent films. Please don't forget that our concerts will  
now begin a half hour earlier, at **2:00 PM**. We don't want you to  
arrive late!

—Chris Van Stean ([cvs250@gmail.com](mailto:cvs250@gmail.com))



## IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR RTOS MEMBERSHIP

Yes, it's that time again to renew your membership. All Full, Associate, and Student memberships expire at the end of December, so we hope that you will take this opportunity to renew before the busy holiday season is upon us!

A renewal card is included in this issue of *RTOS Blower*. Membership fees for 2024 remain the same as 2023! You may renew by sending your payment by mail to the address printed on the enclosed card, or you can renew at the membership table at an upcoming concert. You can also renew online by going to the RTOS website:

[www.rtosonline.org](http://www.rtosonline.org)  
and clicking 'Membership'.

Now is a good time to bring friends, relatives and neighbors into the RTOS family by purchasing a gift membership for them or encouraging them to join. New members who join before or at the October 15th concert will enjoy free admission to the October and December concerts as well as all concerts in 2024!

Please note the free pass on page 4 that current members may use to bring two guests to the October concert.

## FREE PARKING! (AT LEAST FOR NOW)

We have been informed by RBTL that they will not be charging for parking behind the theatre for our concerts. It's not known if this policy is permanent or temporary.

## OCTOBER CONCERT WILL FEATURE TWO SILENT FILMS

John Lauter has chosen "Music and the Movies" as the general theme for his October 15th RTOS concert. To accentuate the theme, John will accompany two silent films during the concert.

Buster Keaton will star in the 1920 classic silent "*One Week*", a hilarious romp that features some harrowing automobile antics and a spinning house.

The second film is titled "*The Hunter*", and is a 20 minute 1997 silent film made in Michigan, for which John wrote the music score and performed it on the film.



## RBTL REVEALS PLANS FOR NEW PERFORMING ARTS CENTER AND AUDITORIUM UPGRADES

BY - RUSS SHANER

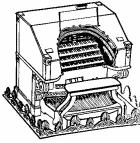
Following many years and several failed attempts to build a new structure, last March the Rochester Broadway Theatre League (RBTL) announced that it has now officially acquired all of the former Temple Civic Center building on East Main St. The entire complex will be restored/renovated into a multi-purpose performing arts center.

The building was purchased from the local Masonic organization in the 1980s by the Saucke Construction Co. In the early 2000s, RBTL purchased the portion of the complex containing the 2500 seat Auditorium Theatre from Saucke Construction who continued to own and operate the western portion of the building that was formerly the Masonic Temple Civic Center. The many Masonic lodge rooms, offices, dining rooms, etc. became a mixed-use space with multiple tenants under Saucke's ownership.

On August 22nd, RBTL held a press conference and CEO Arnie Rothschild announced that it has created a major partnership with West Herr Automotive Group. West Herr was granted naming rights for the complex in return for investing an undisclosed sum towards the renovation and expansion of the property. The official name is now "*The West Herr Auditorium Theatre and Performing Arts Center*". Arnie further announced that a multi-million dollar, multi-phase plan is being developed to complete upgrades by 2030 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the building's opening. While details are sketchy, the plan is to provide the Rochester area with a first class performing arts facility that will be a magnet for all aspects of the regional arts community. The photo rendering above provides a hint of the wonderful things to come. Upgrades will include improved theatre entrances and accessibility including elevator access to theatre balconies, revamped dressing rooms for show casts and improved lighting for the theatre.

Since the installation of the RTOS-Grierson Wurlitzer in 1966, we have been fortunate to have had three outstanding landlords. We salute RBTL and their new alliance with West Herr Automotive Group. As we look forward to many more years there, we wish them every success as they move forward with this major undertaking.





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Organ Society**  
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Rochester, NY 14617-0114

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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

Christine Van Stean, *President*  
Bob Bower, *Vice-President*  
Ken Wilson, *Secretary, Membership*  
Robert Hunter, *Treasurer*  
Russ Shaner, *Past-President, Programs*  
Gary Brumbaugh, *Director, Publicity*  
Christopher Haag, *Director*  
Ted McWharf, *Director*  
Brett Miller, *Director*  
Richard Neidich, *Director*  
Greg Spring, *Director*  
William Porter, *ESM Liaison*

**RTOS 2023-2024 CONCERTS**  
West Herr Auditorium Theatre, 885 E. Main St.  
*All artists and dates subject to change. Please check out our website for latest information.*

<b>John Lauter</b>	<b>Oct. 15</b>	<b>2:00 PM</b>
Tim Schramm	Dec. 10	2:00 PM
Alex Jones	Jan. 07	2:00 PM
Mark Herman	Feb. 11	2:00 PM
Ben Forsthoffer	Mar. 03	2:00 PM
EBXV & Ian Fraser	Mar. 24	2:00 PM
Jerry Nagano	Apr. 14	2:00 PM
Walt Strony	May 19	2:00 PM

**Open Console**  
Rochester Museum & Science Center  
Eisenhart Auditorium, East Ave. & Goodman St.  
*Sundays from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM*  
Oct 8 Nov 12 Dec 3  
**NOTE: Date changes for October and December**

**UPCOMING REGIONAL EVENTS**

**Binghamton Theatre Organ Society (BTOS)**  
236 Washington St, Binghamton, NY  
607-773-1495; <http://www.binghamtontos.org/>

**Upcoming:** Oct. 22 @ 2:00 pm, Nathan Avakian featuring *International Youth Silent Film Festival* entries.

**Upcoming:** Nov. 26 @ 2:00 pm, Dennis James accomp. Buster Keaton in 1923 comedy *Our Hospitality*

**Riviera Theatre & Organ Preservation Society (RTOPS)**  
(3/15 Wurlitzer) 67 Webster St, N Tonawanda, NY  
716-692-2413; <http://www.rivieratheatre.org/>  
Nov. 30 @ 7:00 pm Christmas Concert with Joe Momot.  
An evening of Christmas tunes along with a Christmas sing-a-long! **Free Admission!** (Donations accepted)

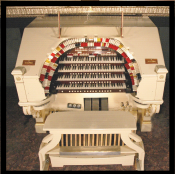
Please visit the websites for these venues for the latest information for their 2023- 2024 concert seasons.

**The Rochester Theater Organ Society**

You are invited to attend an upcoming concert on the RTOS Mighty Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ as a guest of:

RTOS member, please print your name  
THIS BOX MUST BE FILLED IN FOR COUPON TO BE VALID!

This coupon provides **Free** admission for two adults  
*Adult accompanied children 12 & under and students with ID are free.*



**John Lauter    Sunday, October 15, 2023**  
**2:00 PM**

West Herr Auditorium Theatre,  
885 E. Main St, Rochester, NY  
Box office opens @ 1:15 pm,  
**Performance @ 2:00 pm**

Name:  
Address or  
Email:

THIS BOX MUST BE FILLED IN FOR COUPON TO BE VALID!

RTOS member: Clip or copy coupon. Please, one coupon per member.  
Valid for concert admission only. Coupon has no cash value.

**4/23 MAINTENANCE**  
*BY - RUSS SHANER, 4/23 CREW CHIEF*

I am happy to report that the RTOS-Grierson Wurlitzer 4/23 continues to be among the best maintained Wurlitzers anywhere.

Some of us who did much of the maintenance for many years are growing older. Roger Wood, one of the early members who helped install the organ in 1966, along with several others including Kevin Scott, Bob Bower and Rick McCutchan still help keep the organ in great shape.

In recent years David Peckham has taken over much of the work including tuning before each concert along with major rebuilding tasks. During the summer he addressed problems with the main (audience left) Chrysoglott and made major adjustments to the console keyboards. Close listeners will notice the improvements to the chrys, while our artists will greatly appreciate the improvements to the keyboards.