

Old Dominion Theatre Organ Society

Minutes of the Annual Meeting

October 5, 2014

1. The first Annual Meeting of the Old Dominion Theatre Organ Society, held at the home of Jim Reinhart, was called to order by President Charles Hague at 4:15 PM EDT. In attendance were 14 Primary Members, one Associate Member, and four guests.
2. Jim Reinhart welcomed everyone and introduced Charles Hague. The text of Charles' remarks follow:

Welcome to this first Annual Meeting of the Old Dominion Theatre Organ Society!

First, let me thank Jim and Lynda Reinhart for their hospitality.

I see there is a quorum present so I call this Annual Meeting to order.

I'd first like to recognize some very special guests in our audience; Bob and Sally Mooney. Would you please stand and let's give Bob and Sally a rousing Old Dominion welcome!

In February, an opinion piece was published in the Richmond Times-Dispatch asking the question "Can the Landmark's organ be saved?" A few weeks later, I was privileged to become acquainted with Bob, a member of the CenterStage Board of

Directors. Since that time we have talked regularly every few weeks. Bob will be heading the fundraising to renovate the Altria Theatre organ and has shown a special interest in the instrument.

Since getting to know Bob, let me answer the question posed in the Op-Ed, "Can the now Altria organ be saved?" The answer is a resounding YES it can be saved, YES it will be saved, and it will be better than ever! Bob, ODTOS is ready to help in any way we can. Thank you for all that you do for Richmond and the performing arts!

Let me take a few minutes – and it will be a very few – I'm as anxious to hear Ken play as you are – to review the short history of the Old Dominion Theatre Organ Society (ODTOS).

Based on research, thank you Times-Dispatch digital archives, the Virginia Department of vital statistics, and several friends including Dick Barlow who is celebrating his 88th birthday today, we learned that April 9, 2014 marked the 100th anniversary of the birth of Harold Leslie Warner, Jr. As you may know and can see in this poster of a C & P advertisement from the mid-1950s, Harold, William Spencer Jones, and other volunteers, saved the beautiful Altria Wurlitzer Theatre organ in 1950 when the City of Richmond could not afford the \$30,000 estimated to restore the instrument. I'm certain that \$30,000 is well over \$500,000 in today's dollars. Harold and the volunteers worked for two years restoring and organ. Their efforts gave us the excellent records we still enjoy by Reginald

Foort, also known as Michael Cheshire, Eddie Weaver and others.

Some of you here today were fortunate to actually meet and know Harold. From research and discussions with some of his friends, Harold exemplified a number of qualities that I hope will be the foundation of our Chapter; friendliness, dedication, and humility.

Earlier this year, a Virginia House Joint Resolution was written commemorating the 100th anniversary of the birth of Harold. Delegate John O'Bannon introduced the legislation and guided it to passage by both houses of our General Assembly as House Joint Resolution 395.

On April 9, Jack Hardman traveled to Richmond to accept the resolution, shown here, on behalf of the American Theatre Organ Society (ATOS).

Meanwhile, our American Theatre Organ Society President, Ken Double, suggested that Virginia needed a theatre organ Chapter. Although there had been several very successful chapters in Virginia, they had become inactive.

On May 19, the ODTOS web site began operation. With help from many, eleven ATOS members had joined the fledgling Old Dominion Theatre Organ Society by June. I am pleased to report that we now have 30 members and growing.

On June 25 our first election of officers was held by conference call and on July 8, our Chapter Charter was presented during the ATOS National Convention in Indianapolis.

Your officers immediately began work on the business aspects of the Chapter. On September 3, we received our certificate of incorporation as a Virginia non-stock, nonprofit corporation. On September 18, Bylaws were adopted enabling us to apply for 501(c)(3) status - that is, tax exempt. We are awaiting approval from the Internal Revenue Service.

Thank you to all who have helped bring us this far especially our officers: Bob Gulledge, Vice President; David Hipkins, Secretary; and Wendy Wurlitzer, Treasurer.

So what's next? That's where you come in. We want ODTOS to be an organization that serves its member's needs. To that end, we will conduct a short survey asking you to tell us what ODTOS should be doing.

For me, there are three items that immediately come to mind.

1 - Adding to our membership and spreading the joy and excitement of theatre organs especially among younger generations.

2 - Helping CenterStage raise the funds needed to renovate the Altria Theatre organ.

And 3 - Finding and enabling the new talent needed to play these incredible instruments.

Thank you for electing me as your first president and for all you

have done to bring us to this point. Our work has only begun but I am confident we will succeed! Thank you!

3. In other business, Bob Gullledge announced that the 1925 “Phantom of the Opera” silent film will be shown as a fund raiser for the Byrd Theatre organ on October 24 at 7:30 PM at the Byrd. Michael Britt will accompany the movie on the Wurlitzer.

Bob Mooney discussed CenterStage, the renovation of the Altria Theatre, and future plans to renovate the Altria Theatre organ.

4. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Charles L. Hague for
David L. Hipkins, Secretary