

# VOX CATOE

September 2005

P.O. Box 667 Lyons, Illinois 60534 / Online [www.catoe.org](http://www.catoe.org)

**The Newsletter Voice of the Chicago Area Theatre Organ Enthusiasts**

## September Social

Join CATOE at 2pm, Saturday September 10th, at The Beautiful Sound 6475 Joliet Road, Countryside, IL 60525. Ken Double will present a program, and all members are encouraged to bring along treats and snacks to share. The doors will open at 10am, the program begins at 10:30am.

Ken Double began organ lessons at the age of eight, and while on a high school field trip, was bitten by the theatre organ bug.

His first public performance was in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and began his professional theatre organ career. In addition to organ performances, Ken is an accomplished sports broadcaster.

Known as "The Voice of the Aeros", Ken will continue broadcasting Houston AEROS hockey games, on News Talk 1070 KNTH, and on their website: [www.aeros.com](http://www.aeros.com).

Ken played for CATOE in February, and wowed the audience at the console of a "Beautiful Sound" Allan organ. If you missed Ken's social earlier this year, you should plan on attending this event. You will definitely be amazed.



## Iron Horse to Iron Mask

With the success of previous silent films like Clara Bow's "Wings" and Buster Keaton's "The General", CATOE proudly announces another Silent Classic at the historic Arcada Theatre in St. Charles.

Join Jay Warren Sunday, September 25th, at the Geneva -Marr & Colton theatre organ for this rare presentation of the Douglas Fairbanks, 1929 classic "Iron Mask".

The Arcada theatre is under new management, and this is the perfect way for CATOE members, and silent film lovers to show our support for the Arcada.

The theatre doors will open at 2pm for this 2:30pm film.



Look for the flyer included with this issue of the VOX for more details about this CATOE presentation.

## Balaban & Katz - The Book

Thanks to Arcadia Publishing and the Balaban and Katz Historical Foundation, movie theatre lovers will have a new book to add to their collection.

"The Chicago Movie Palaces of Balaban and Katz" will be published this fall, just in time for holiday gift giving. Author, David Balaban, named after his grandfather, one of the five Balaban brothers who ran Balaban and Katz, grew up on stories of his grandfather and uncles' movie theaters. David's grandfather managed the Uptown, Riviera and Norshore Theaters in the 1920's and was Director of Theater Operations for B and K when he died suddenly in 1949.

"The Chicago Movie Palaces of Balaban and Katz" traces the company's history through vintage images contributed by the Chicago Historical Society, the Theater Historical Society of America, the Balaban and Katz Historical Foundation, the Chicago Transit Authority and CATOE's very own John Peters.

John recently met with David Balaban to offer fact checking and provide historical photos for the book. Peters says that he has reviewed the proof for the book and it contains many rare and never before published images; many from his own B&K archive.

The Balaban and Katz Theater Corporation perfected the "movie palace" concept in Chicago, creating an extremely popular past time that contributed greatly to Chicago's cultural identity. The Balabans started in the movie theater business in 1908 by leasing the 100-seat Kedzie Nickelodeon on Kedzie Avenue. Balaban brothers Barney and A. J dreamed of operating 5000 seat Movie Palaces so, in 1916, they joined friends Sam and Morris Katz to form the Balaban and Katz Theater Corporation.

Their mission was to offer an un-rivaled theater going experience with the finest live performances and service, they built hundreds of ornate theaters, such as the Chicago, the Uptown, and the Oriental, filling them with fine furnishings, antiques, and artwork. Sadly, only a few of these gorgeous theaters still stand today. This book will be a tribute to those theatres as well as a history of the B & K company.

Visit [www.balabanandkatzfoundation.com](http://www.balabanandkatzfoundation.com) for info.

## Majestic - Shubert - LaSalle

Recently CATOE President, John Peters and CATOE Vice President, Bob Boin toured the ongoing construction at the LaSalle Theatre in Chicago.

CATOE friend Lew Raizin, President of "Broadway in Chicago" which operates the theatre, has been in frequent contact with CATOE about the theatre, as well as CATOE's mission to return the Oriental Wurlitzer to it's home at Ford Center for the Performing Arts - Oriental Theatre.

The initial site reports are very positive about the renovation and restoration of this historic theatre. The lobby areas are being expanded along with the addition of new restrooms and service areas.

The LaSalle Bank Theatre opened as the Majestic Theatre in 1906 and was Chicago's first million-dollar-plus venue and the city's tallest building at the time. A hot spot on the vaudeville circuit and later host to such luminaries as Harry Houdini and Lily Langtry, the Majestic closed during the Great Depression and was shuttered for 15 years. Much of the original design was retained when the theatre was remodeled and reopened in 1945, except for it's original Bennett theatre pipe organ.

The theatre has been host to such favorites like Carousel, South Pacific, and Guys and Dolls. More recent production highlights include the Chicago premiere of Rent, the Tony-Award winning Sweet Smell of Success and the pre-Broadway, world premieres of Billy Joel and Twyla Tharp's Movin' Out and Monty Python's Spamalot.

## Baker Console Removed

CATOE has learned that the owners of the Hotel Baker in St. Charles have removed the Geneva organ console from the "Waterfront Restaurant" in order to accommodate more customer seating.

CATOE has been assured that the console is in safe storage and can be reinstalled if the need arises.

CATOE members will continue to monitor the situation and have offered assistance in any way. CATOE is ready to suggest alternate considerations to insure that the organ will play again.