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PUGET SOUND PIPELINE

Published monthly by Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society, a non-profit organization furthering the appreciation, preservation and use of the Theatre Pipe Organs of yesteryear. PSTOS is a Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society.

Volume 18 No. 3

March 2007

A Chapter of American Theatre Organ Society

Inside...

Portland Paramount Theatre loses its Wurlitzer [1978] Pg. 4

Theatre Organ happenings around the Sound Pg. 3

Help Wanted! Pg. 3

RAYMOND THEATRE may close due to funding shortage Pg. 3

TOM BLACKWELL new ATOS webmaster! Pg. 5

ATOS Liaison, DONNA PARKER, reports on recent ATOS Board meeting Pg. 6

Coming May 19 to Gig Harbor's Wurlitzer Manor. . .

★ Jim Riggs ★

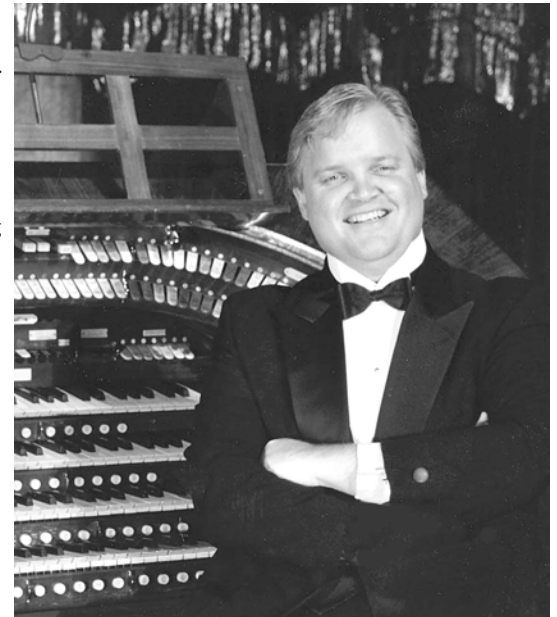
For over 25 years, Jim Riggs has been the San Francisco Bay Area's most visible—and most listened to—purveyor of music on the “Mighty Wurlitzer” pipe organ. Having regularly appeared at every major Bay Area movie house equipped with one, Riggs has entertained well over one million toe-tapping patrons. It's no wonder local media and emcees call him the “Wizard of the Wurlitzer”.

Riggs is now in his eighteenth year as House Organist at the fabulous Paramount Theatre in Oakland, an internationally acclaimed Art-Deco masterpiece and National Historic Landmark. (Please see www.paramounttheatre.com for more information.) He appears frequently at the Golden State Theatre in Monterey CA and the Fox Bob Hope Theatre in Stockton CA. He has appeared previously at Oakland's Grand Lake Theatre, the Castro Theatre in San Francisco and at the Stanford Theatre in Palo Alto.

Riggs' music features mostly Classic American Pop—the music produced between the wars. His programs highlight the great tunes of Gershwin, Porter, Berlin, Kern, Arlen, Warren and many more. His musical stylings are always orchestral and often evoke dance orchestras and big swing bands. If audiences walk into a theatre expecting the monotonous drone of the typical pipe organ, they're in for a big, uplifting surprise!

Riggs has several recordings released, with the latest—featuring unique duets with the Wurlitzer and vintage Ampico reproducing piano rolls—coming out in 2007. His music has been heard on National Public Radio in the USA and the BBC in the UK. Riggs was featured in the Public Broadcasting System's television documentary, *Pulling Out All The Stops—A History of the Pipe Organ in America*.

Jim lives in Pleasant Hill, California where he spends time with his two daughters, Georgia and Rosemary. He enjoys cooking and entertaining and collects vintage fountain pens and pencils, 78 rpm records, vintage autographed movie star photos and sheet music from the 1920s, '30s and '40s.



Mark your calendar now! Saturday, May 19, 2:00 PM
Details and reservation form will be in your April Pipeline.

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Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society
6521 NE 191st ST
Kenmore, WA 98028-3453

Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society is a non-profit organization furthering the appreciation, restoration, and use of the historic Theatre Pipe Organs of the 1920s, through education.

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Listing of non-PSTOS events in the Pipeline

PSTOS, upon request, will list non-conflicting non-PSTOS theatre organ events in the "Other Events" column of the two Pipelines immediately preceding the event, providing Pipeline editors receive sufficient prior written notification. Venue, artist, type of event, date, and contact information will comprise the included information.

Advertising in the Pipeline

Classified-type ads for member-owned electronic, electric, or pipe organs, and/or pipe organ parts, will be published at no charge. Please limit copy to include brief description, contact name and phone number. Prices will not be listed. Ads may be edited for content and length. Mail ad copy to address above. Other advertising is not accepted.

Joining Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society is quick and easy! For a one year membership, send a \$20 check payable to PSTOS together with your name(s) as you would like them to appear on your name badges, your address with complete 9-digit ZIP code, and your email address (optional) to:
Norman Miller, Treasurer, 2644 NW Esplanade,
Seattle, WA 98117-2527.

PRESIDENT'S Message

Many thanks to Lou Magor and special musical guests, Lori Eger and Patrinnell Wright, for their wonderful program at Kenyon Hall on Saturday February 10. What a generous sampling of fun musical selections they gave us. The ice cream sundaes weren't bad either. If you haven't been to "The Hall" before, check out their website for a calendar of upcoming programs: www.kenyonhall.org. They have great silent movies, classic films, grand piano, variety acts and best of all... the Mighty Wurlitzer. Kenyon Hall organists are: Tom Roughton, Andy Crow and Lou Magor, all PSTOS members.



Everybody Loves Raymond? The call has gone out from local Raymond, Washington residents for help in keeping their historic Raymond Theatre open. The theatre is owned by the City of Raymond but they are having trouble paying the bills. The community is getting involved and it is hoped that the theatre will remain open and be converted to a performing arts center. Many PSTOS members know that the Raymond Theatre opened in 1928 and still has its original 2/5 Wurlitzer. PSTOS has had programs there in the past, but it has been many years. To voice your support, contact Robert E. Jungar, Mayor City of Raymond, 230 2nd Street Raymond, WA 98577, or call (360) 942-4100. Be sure to mention the Wurlitzer. Your calls and letters will make a difference. More information on the Raymond Theatre can be found elsewhere in this issue.

On Wednesday February 7th I had the privilege of attending a special event to honor Jo Ann Evans, our multi-talented PSTOS Pipeline newsletter editor. Jo Ann was presented with the prestigious McMaster Award for her extraordinary contributions as a volunteer to the City of Kenmore. I had no idea of the magnitude of attractive and informative graphics materials Jo Ann has produced for the City of Kenmore including: historical brochures for the Kenmore Historical Society, City incorporation information, posters and promotional mate-

Deadline for April Pipeline

Please submit on or before March 15th all articles of interest, program and event details, news items, letters to the editors, for sale postings and/or other items for publication in the April issue. If submitting

PSTOS Coming Events

◆ JIM RIGGS at Gig Harbor's Wurlitzer Manor Sat., May 19

It's been a long time since we've had the chance to welcome Jim to a console here. He'll send you away tapping your toes! Don't miss this event. Ticket details coming in April.

Do you belong to ATOS? If not, support Theatre Organ 100%!

- As a member you'll—
- Receive 6 issues each year of *Theatre Organ*, filled with fascinating news and information
 - Support youth educational programs
 - Be eligible to attend national and regional conventions at which you'll visit premium venues, hear top organists, and see wonderful theatre organ installations;
 - And much more!



Join now! Membership information at
www.atos.org/membership

rials for the Arts of Kenmore. We are truly lucky to have Jo Ann doing our PSTOS Pipeline newsletter. We've been told it's one of the best newsletters in all of ATOS. Congratulations Jo Ann!

Kudos to Ray Harris, Paul Arndt and Alain Rhone for answering last month's call for help with audio archival. Each of these individuals has high-end audio equipment connected to their computers and they will be starting soon on archiving many tapes and LPs of Northwest organs and organists. The recordings, collected over a period of many years by Jack Becvar, Beth Adkinson, Russ Evans and others, were recently donated to PSTOS. We still need help typing in the jacket notes and track names from the LPs. If you have a computer and want to help, drop me a line at tom@pstos.org or call (207) 784-9203.

by email, Word attachment is preferred, but email text is OK. Email to: joann@pstos.org

Or send printed materials by standard mail to:
Pipeline Editors, 6521 NE 191st St., Kenmore WA
98028-3453. Phone: 425-485-5465

Other NW Theatre Organ Events

◆ Kenyon Hall in West Seattle

Latest news can be found at:
kenyonhall@earthlink.net or on the web at
www.kenyonhall.org

◆ Lincoln Theatre in Mt. Vernon

Hear the Wurlitzer every Mon/Tue at 7PM &
Fri/Sat/Sun at 5PM.

◆ Columbia River Organ Club

For info and latest news go to
www.croconline.org

◆ Paramount Theatre *Silent Movie Mondays* to feature Harold Lloyd Retrospective Series

All accompanied by Dennis James at the
Paramount's original 4/21 Wurlitzer

Monday, Apr 30, 7PM

Grandma's Boy and *Dr. Jack*.

Monday, May 7, 7PM

Why Worry and *Hot Water*.

Monday, May 21, 7PM

The Kid Brother and *Speedy*.

Friday, May 25, 7PM

The Freshman and *For Heaven's Sake*.

◆ Jeff Fox to play at Lincoln Theatre

Jeff will present the Lincoln's original
Wurlitzer in a program of favorites. The
public and PSTOS members are invited.
Admission by donation, which will go to the
Lincoln Theatre for the use of the facility.

Saturday, May 26, 12:30 PM

HELP WANTED

If you have experience with metal
machining, we need your help on a special
project for the Paramount Theatre. You
must have access to a milling machine
and other metal working tools to create
some special steel brackets for the Mighty
Wurlitzer's new (reproduction) music rack.
This rack is an exact copy of the original
glass & metal rack. The brackets must be
designed to allow the stage crew to easily
remove the rack without damage when they
stow the console in its garage under the
stage. Contact Tom Blackwell by e-mail at
tom@pstos.org or phone 206-784-9203.

Historic Raymond Theatre teeters on brink of closure due to budget squeeze. It houses one of just five Washington Wurlitzers still in their original theatres.

About 5,000 residents in North Pacific
County can expect a letter soon asking them
to open their wallets to help save the Ray-
mond Theatre from closure.

A movie house and performing arts venue,
the theatre is owned by the city. It has been
losing \$50,000 to \$60,000 a year for the last
few years due to declining attendance and the
expense of renting movies.

The city had planned to shut down the
theatre on March 31, but is allowing some
wiggle room to see what develops. The letter
writing campaign is being launched by com-
munity groups as a first step toward keeping
it open.

When the city was drafting its 2007-2008
budget, officials made the painful choice to
shut down the theatre. "It was something I
didn't want to do," said Mayor Bob Jungar.
"It was one thing that just had to be done.

"I'm keeping my fingers crossed that a way
can be found to keep the theatre open," the
mayor said.

Members of "Sunday Afternoon Live," a
nonprofit group that books five or six regional
acts each year, and the Willapa Harbor Cho-
rale protested the closure and told the City
Council that they had already booked con-
certs past the March 31 deadline. The council
relented and agreed to let the groups hold
their concerts, but the future of the theatre
past those dates remains unclear.

Several options are being considered,
including partnering with a local youth foun-
dation, establishing internships with Grays
Harbor College's off-campus continuing
education program, and using the nonprofit
Willapa Community Development Association
as an umbrella organization for the theatre,
making it easier to get grant money and in-
volve businesses throughout Pacific County in
the theatre's future.

Mayor Jungar says the city plans to cooper-
ate with area citizens while new ideas are ex-
plored, hoping to work out a situation to keep
it open as a movie theatre and as a performing
arts venue, and possibly other things that
would increase income and make it viable.

The Raymond Theatre has a 2/5 Wurlitzer
Style 150 "Special" (opus #1934) shipped
from the factory on August 17, 1928. The
instrument was removed in 1952 by Alden
Bice. After the death of Mr. Bice, the family
donated the organ back to the city of Ray-
mond and it was re-installed in the theatre.

Several good photos of the theatre and
the Wurlitzer can be viewed at
<http://www.pstos.org/instruments/wa/raymond/raymond.htm>

From The MAILBOX

We of the "old guard" helped put the
organ back in the Raymond Theatre. It had
gone to North Seattle when removed in
1952, and when returned to Raymond it was
placed in a store-front next to the theatre
for a period of time while funds were raised
to reopen the theatre. The asbestos had to
be removed first. We had a fund raiser in the
theatre with a Hammond organ brought
down from Aberdeen. There was a parade
in Aberdeen that day making it necessary to
roll the Hammond down the street to get it
to the truck. What a fun day that was! The
Hammond was actually used in the Aberdeen
Theatre, so we had to get it back to Aberdeen
that night after Andy Crow or Don Myers
played the benefit in Raymond.

The first organist to open the Raymond
Theatre was Laverne Little. She came down
to Raymond on a rainy night in a Model T to
play the first picture.

Mary Lou and I met Laverne when we
picked her up at a retirement home near
Haller Lake and took her to the Paramount to
play the organ with other silent movie organ-
ists.

... Jack Becvar

In Memory of MARK COCKRILL 1926 - 2006



Mark Cockrill, a PSTOS member for
nearly forty years, passed away December
14th at the age of 80, after a lengthy period
of failing health.

Mark served on the PSTOS board in
1974, and as President in 1975 and '76. He
and June, together with their handicapped
daughter Juanita, have always been regular
attendees at PSTOS events.

Born and educated in Montana, Mark
retired from Boeing after thirty years.

Sincere sympathy is extended to June and
all Mark's family and friends.

Pages From The Past... 1978

Portland Paramount Theatre yields aged pipe organ

By EARLY DEANE, *The Portland Oregonian*, February 22, 1978

You get what you pay for, Dennis Hedberg believes. Dennis, one of the partners in the Organ Grinder restaurant, says this about the price paid for the [Portland] Paramount Theatre Wurlitzer pipe organ.

Hedberg could have bought the organ for \$2,000 in 1955.

He and his partners three years ago bought the 1,400-pipe organ, whose thunderous and gentle music accompanied cowboy chases and tender romantic moments in the massive Paramount Theatre's silent movie era.

"You don't find these things just anywhere these days," Hedberg said.

The organ is being dismantled under Hedberg's loving supervision and will be sent by truck (at least 2-1/2 trucks, Hedberg said) to a new Organ Grinder restaurant under construction in Denver.

It is one of several organs listed as the second largest in the country. The title holder is the Wurlitzer in Radio City Music Hall, but Hedberg says that when he and his self-taught technicians are through transplanting parts from the cannibalized Liberty Theatre organ to the Paramount behemoth, the new organ will equal the Radio City installation.

Hedberg said the Organ Grinder restaurant in Denver is being designed to accommodate the organ, rather than pizza fanciers.

"But it would be impossible to duplicate the acoustics of this structure," Hedberg said of the vast Paramount Theatre auditorium. "There's nothing straight in here, everything is in curves – and that diffuses the sound.

"We have 200,000 square feet of space in our 82nd Avenue restaurant in Portland. "We're going to double that in Denver, but even with the special design of the building there, it will never sound the way it did in this great old theater."

An attempt to keep the organ at the Paramount "started too late," according to Jim Grenfell of Seattle, who works for the West Coast Theater Corp., which owns the theater.

A committee has been organized to preserve and restore the Paramount, but members were not aware that the organ was being moved, Grenfell said.

Hedberg is self-taught, as are his technicians.

"I play this thing a little bit," he said.



"And whatever I have learned about the operation and construction, I have learned by doing. You don't get this sort of stuff out of a book."

The Paramount Theatre organ is a "four manual, 20-rank Publix No. 1," built in 1927 and installed in the Paramount Theatre in time for its opening, March 8, 1928.

There are 70 pipes, each with a certain tone, in each of the 20 ranks.

When Hedberg is through with his surgery on the Liberty Theatre organ transplants, the pipe organ to be installed in the Denver restaurant will have 40 ranks, a total

of 2,800 pipes.

"It's going to be really something to hear," Hedberg said.

He plans to keep the organ pumping 72 hours a week, manned by a revolving team of five musicians.

"And that's a problem right there," Hedberg said. "There aren't a lot of organists around. Playing a cocktail lounge electric organ and playing one of these babies are two different things.

"One," he said, "is like playing 'Chopsticks.' The other is like playing Beethoven."

Pages From The Past...continued

Still Tickling The Ivories

By JON HAHN, *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, May 12, 1980

Every time I hear Thelma Barclay, I want to roller skate.

She plays the Mighty Wurlitzer theatre organ at Bellevue's Pizza & Pipes restaurant. And when she glides into a noon hour rendition of "Cruising Down the River," it brings back memories of the roller rink back home.

Thelma, who looks like a cross between Diamond Lil and Ma Perkins, has memories that go much farther back. She played piano accompaniment to Laurel & Hardy silent films at the Rose Bud Theatre back in Galesville, Wis.

"I got \$1 for each show that I played," she said. "That was a lot of money back then. I remember having each one of those dollars spread out on top of the dresser."

No one probably noticed the little black-haired Thelma, down in the piano pit of the darkened Rose Bud. Today, she's hard to miss, at center stage, every bit of her 5-foot-even frame bouncing in time to the music.

It's like a scene out of *The Wizard of Oz*...the tiny silver-haired lady in front of the garishly rococo organ, its gaping semi-circle console lined with glistening ivory keys and switches like a monstrous mouth about to devour Thelma.

She's memorized more songs than she likes to admit (she was around when many of the oldies-but-goodies were newies), but she admits a fondness for Barry Manilow, Stevie Wonder, the Beatles and Jim Croce. "About the only thing I don't like is hard, or acid rock. It's too loud and squeally. It's a different kind of loud than you get from a big organ like this one."

And Thelma knows from organs. She's chairman of the local chapter of the American theatre Organ Society, and she never goes anywhere without stopping to see and

play the local pipe organ. "When the International (Theatre Organ Society) had its convention in Europe, I even was allowed to play the organ at the Cathedral of Notre Dame," she said with no small amount of pride.



Theatre organ aficionados are considered a lower caste by organ purists, but the Thelma Barclays of the world blow a lot of dust off the organ's stuffy image. The theme from "Star Wars" or "Ice Castles" makes the 15-ton organ and all its 1,200-and-some-odd pipes come alive. It ain't Bach, but it's beautiful!

The old Wurlitzer in Bellevue had to be refurbished at considerable cost, but Thelma hasn't lost much of her wind since

she grew up in Wisconsin. After teaching school as a young woman, she married Glen Barclay, a golf course superintendent and designer. His work brought them to Seattle in the late 1940s to help build the Sand Point and the Seattle Golf and Country Clubs.

When her husband died suddenly, Thelma went to work full time, selling organs and pianos, so she could finish raising their two sons. One is now an electronics manufacturer and the other a physician. Through it all, Thelma has never stopped sharing her music with others. "I did more than 1,200 volunteer hours of music therapy back in Wisconsin, during and right after the war," she said. "And I was staff pianist at the local U.S.O. back in Madison."

She's never been quite able to resist a request to play anywhere...even at a private Lake Tahoe "club" she later found out was "one of those high-class shady houses." She plays for weddings, social gatherings, even funerals. And in her spare time, she plays the organ for herself and her two poodles in her small brick home "on the poor side of Clyde Hill."

If you want to see and hear Thelma, you'll have to go for lunch. She only plays from 12 noon to 1 p.m., Tuesday through Friday. Organ music at lunch sorta sounds like "Edge of Night," unless you get to hear Thelma.

She plays requests. Just don't ask her to do Pepperoni and Cheese.

[Editor's note: Thelma was a musical fixture in the Seattle area for many years. About 1990 Thelma suffered a stroke and her family moved her to a care facility near her son in Arkansas where she passed away in 1999. She is still fondly remembered by many who worked with her in PSTOS, and who enjoyed her music at Pizza & Pipes.]

PSTOS President, Tom Blackwell, appointed official ATOS webmaster

Members who visit the PSTOS website at www.pstos.org know what a comprehensive and outstanding site it is. In fact, it's been touted by many who know, both nationally and overseas, that it is the best organ-related website out there, anywhere.

Tom Blackwell has been nurturing the site for a number of years, and today it boasts over 700 pages of historic information

about northwest theatres and theatre organs.

His efforts have not gone unnoticed. Recently he was asked to do some "repairs" to the American Theatre Organ Society (ATOS) website. Soon he was asked to become its official webmaster.

Check it out at www.atos.org and see what he's been up to. Congratulations, Tom! What a feather in your cap!

It takes three things to have a successful theatre organ event—



The organist has invested years developing the skills to entertain you.

The organ maintenance teams must spend untold hours to be sure the organ will perform flawlessly.

And YOU, the audience, must be there to complete the triangle.

PUGET SOUND THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

Russ & Jo Ann Evans, Newsletter Editors

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Kenmore, WA 98028-3453



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ATOS Board meeting news from our PSTOS liaison, Donna Parker

To be put in touch with Donna or to learn more about any of these subjects, contact tom@pstos.org

Strategic Planning

The ATOS Board recently met for a strategic planning session to brainstorm ideas addressing the growth of ATOS looking forward, including membership expansion, capital fundraising, and marketing & promotion. Two outside consultants provided a great deal of insight into these areas.

Website Revision

A website task force will oversee the redesign and expansion of the www.atos.org website. Our current webmaster, Tom Blackwell, has been of invaluable assistance in providing insight into ways to improve the effectiveness of the ATOS website as a tool for marketing and promotion. We hope to be able to move forward with a redesign of the site over the coming few months.

New York Convention

Plans are moving along well for the NYC convention (July 1-5, 2007). A high priority for the convention is to secure corporate sponsorship for a gala event at Radio City Music Hall with a well-known celebrity Emcee. Registrations have already started to come in, and the board is pleased with the response to date.

Educators' Guide

The Education Committee is revamping the ATOS Educators' Guide, designed to aid ATOS Chapters and schools plan theatre organ demonstration programs. The Guide will conform with the National

Music Educators' guidelines, presenting the material in a visually attractive, media-oriented manner.

Youth Programs

The Youth Initiatives Committee is accepting applications for the *Youth Representative To The Board* position, as well as for the George Wright Memorial Fellowship. We are also very excited about the plans for the first-ever ATOS Summer Youth Adventure, to be held in Wheaton, Illinois July 20-23, 2007. Complete program details for this (and other) programs are on the ATOS website. If you know of any young people who would be interested in attending, please forward the information to them or ask them to contact me at their convenience.

American Organ Institute (University of Oklahoma)

Finally, one of the most exciting moments of the board meeting was a presentation by Dr. John Schwandt from the University of Oklahoma (Norman, OK). Dr. Schwandt recently accepted a full-time professorship at the University as chair of the organ department. He has created the "American Organ Institute," the purpose of which is to provide a broad-based education to students in the entire spectrum of the American organ, including the theatre pipe organ.

The President of the University and Dean of the Music School are entirely behind Dr. Schwandt and are providing

the resources necessary for him to make the program a great success. Plans for the AOI include the installation of one or more theatre organs at the University, in addition to a very significant symphonic classical instrument. Students will have the ability to study and even earn degrees in theatre organ. As Dr. Schwandt puts it, "no one will be allowed to graduate from the AOI without being able to play a good ballad and a march on the theatre organ!"

In the short time that Dr. Schwandt has been at the University, he has taken the size of the organ department from 0 to 10 students, and many more are already coming out of the woodwork for next year. The AOI is the first university setting to offer degree courses in the theatre organ since the 1920s, so this is truly an exciting endeavor. The ATOS board wholeheartedly supports Dr. Schwandt's efforts and will be exploring ways to work cooperatively with the AOI in the coming months and years.

Those are some of the highlights from our last meeting. Again, I would encourage you to share this information with your membership. It is difficult to condense into a few pages two days' worth of meetings, so if you have any questions about any of the above, please feel free to contact me. I always welcome your thoughts and input.

Best wishes,

Donna Parker

Director, American Theatre Organ Society
Liaison, Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society