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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. 9

September 2007

A Chapter of American Theatre Organ Society



Send Summer out in style with two great West Seattle venues!

Wear your Hawaiian shirts to the...

Lajko Lanai & Kenyon Kauwela



PATRICK LAJKO's impressive Digital Pipes home installation with Wurlitzer console and 16 sets of Conn pipe speakers, some mounted en chamade!



Then to Kenyon Hall to hear TOM ROUGHTON at Kenyon's Mighty 2/12 Wurlitzer

Open console following at both venues.

Saturday, Sept. 8

Lajko home, 4017 - 39th Ave. SW, 1:30-3:00

Kenyon Hall, 7904 - 35th Ave. SW, 3:30-5:00

**Be sure to wear your
Hawaiian shirt
or muumuu!**



**No charge for this event, but your \$5 donation to the
Kenyon Hall Music Education Fund gets you a tasty root beer float!**

DRIVE DIRECTIONS: From I-5 take exit 163A (if Southbound) or Exit 163 (if Northbound) to merge onto W Seattle Bridge. Continue on Fauntleroy Way SW. Drive through 35th Ave. and immediately turn slightly right at SW Genesee St. Drive 3 blocks and turn right at 39th Ave SW. Arrive at 4017 39th Ave SW. Park on 39th and come up the stairs (sorry, railing not installed yet). OR enter the dead-end alley on Andover between 39th and 40th, drop people off, then turn around, drive back out, and park on the street. (From the alley, there are NO STAIRS so walkers, wheel chairs and those with problems with stairs will have no difficulty getting to the yard, deck, house and organ.)

From Patrick Lajko's to Kenyon: Drive south on 39th Ave SW one block to SW Dakota St. Turn left at SW Dakota St. Turn right at 35th Ave SW. Arrive at 7904 35th Avenue SW. Park on the street in any available spot.

Getting back to I-5 from Kenyon Hall, drive north on 35th Ave SW for 2.3 mile. Turn right at Fauntleroy Way to get to the W. Seattle Bridge.

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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

President Tom Blackwell is on vacation this month.

"Summer Organ Adventure" was an outstanding event!

Over 70 members and friends, from as far south as Oregon and as far north as Bellingham, attended the Triple-Play Day. Arriving in Centralia at 10:00, folks had the chance to explore the Fox Theatre where Fred & Eva Beeks have donated and installed their 3/7 Wurlitzer for the use of Opera Pacifica. Several members played the instrument, which sounds very nice in the large auditorium.



Eva and Fred Beeks with the Wurlitzer they donated and installed at the Centralia Fox.

Folks then drove to Yelm for a no-host restaurant lunch, and on to St. Columban Church to hear ANDY CROW perform on Father Terrence's 3/16 Robert Morton. Andy demonstrated the instrument's many voices and features before playing a program of favorite pops. Meanwhile, members indulged their sweet tooth (teeth?) at the dessert buffet table served by "the church ladies."

Andy invited everyone to his Olympia home to hear his newly installed 2/12 Wurlitzer, formerly belonging to member Fran Solberg, now deceased. Andy is justly proud of both the appearance and the sound of the instrument in his home. It was a joy to hear!

It was an outstanding day for theatre organ aficionados!



Standing, Henry Cannon, new member Kat Brightwell and her mother, with Kate Ostrom and friend, seated, listen as Andy explains details of his organ installation. The console tucks perfectly into a recess in his front wall.

PSTOS Coming Events

◆ Ken Double at the Paramount Theatre Wurlitzer

"Old Time Radio Hour" will pair Ken with players from "Radio Enthusiasts Puget Sound" for a nostalgic afternoon! A not-to-be-missed event! See page 6.

Sunday, November 18

Other NW Theatre Organ Events

Some notices are omitted this month due to lack of space.

◆ Paramount Theatre *Silent Movie Mondays Fall Series* to feature Charlie Chaplin

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

Monday, Sept. 10, 7PM

The Floorwalker, The Fireman and The Vagabond

Monday, Sept. 17, 7PM

One A.M., The Count and The Pawnshop

Monday, Sept. 24, 7PM

Behind the Screen, The Rink and Easy Street

Monday, Oct. 1, 7PM

The Cure, The Immigrant and The Adventurer

From The MAILBOX

Dear PSTOS scholarship supporters,

I extend my personal thanks and gratitude to all of those who have helped me along on my journey into, and through, the theatre organ world! I would especially like to thank the members who helped make my recent trip to Chicago a real possibility. I also would like to thank the scholarship committee for selecting me as the recipient of the scholarship this year!

For those of you who do not know, in July I attended the first annual "Theatre Organ Adventure" for young organists. It was held by ATOS in Chicago. During this camp I received a lot of training in various aspects of the theatre organ, not just how to play it. I had the chance to learn about the technical aspects, and also the history of the theatre organ. I enjoyed all of it immensely!

We also had the special chance to visit the Rialto Theatre in Joliet. We had dinner in the lobby, and then had a chance to play the amazing 4/27 Barton there. This was my first "real" chance to play an organ in a theatre, and I enjoyed it so much! I look forward to playing the organ in the Seattle Paramount sometime soon, as it promises even more!

On the last day of the trip, we had the amazing opportunity to visit the "Victorian Palace". Words can not describe this house. In fact, I don't even think it falls under the category of "house." "Palace," as its name implies, is much more fitting. Just the music room is jaw dropping. It hosts an 80 rank, 5 manual organ, as well as maybe a dozen of so player pianos and other instruments! Throughout the house are hundreds of other musical machines, I couldn't believe it. The owner also has a full size, fully restored, and in working condition, steam train. It even has a short track! I wonder if he wants to adopt a son? (me).

The entire trip had a great influence on me, and I hope to do it again next year! And to all of the people who made this possible, my thanks go out to you!

Sincerely, Tyler Pattison

FOR SALE Organ Stuff

FOR SALE—Aeolian-Skinner French Horn, ten-inch wp. Little used. Originally ordered by Dick Symington, we opened the original box from the factory. Contact Fred Beeks, 360-299-4597, fredeva@verizon.net

Brand new ATOS Chapter established in Spokane, features the historic Seattle Liberty Theatre Wurlitzer

The Spokane Nazarene Chapter of ATOS held their first official meeting recently with about 30 attending. After the introduction of officers and board members, Pres. Ken Fuller talked about the mission of the Chapter and the role the Seattle Liberty Wurlitzer, now located at the church, will play in that mission. Ken played a brief program, then it was open console with five or six participants doing a fine job. This was no easy task as there is presently no combination action and all 137 stop tabs have white labels with hand written stop name and pitch, awaiting the new stop tabs. We heard some interesting sounds!

Ken promoted the upcoming PSTOS programs quite vigorously. As Immediate Past President of PSTOS, I extended a personal invitation to all members of the newest ATOS chapter to join us whenever they are able. Ken gave a solid thank you to Tom Blackwell for his work on the Spokane website and several members had actually visited the site today and were quite pleased with it. Way to go, Tom.

These are fun folks, many of them have spent untold hours of volunteer time to help restore the now 3/23 instrument to its original 1914 glory. For the record, the organ was a 3/20 when installed at the Liberty (all strings were two ranks). A Post Horn, Dulciana and Flute Celeste have been added, and the original Echo Vox is being added to the Main. So, it will shortly be a 3/24 which is where it will likely remain.

By the time the 2010 convention rolls around this will be a primo venue. I hope we can take advantage of the first successful theatre installation by Wurlitzer.

Visit the website at sfntos.org

...Clint Meadway

Your PSTOS Board of Directors encourages your support of this enthusiastic fledgling ATOS Chapter by becoming a member. Annual membership is just \$10.

Send your check payable to SFNTOS to:

SFNTOS, c/o Ken Fuller
2830 W. Holyoke
Spokane, WA 99208

Jack & Mary Lou Becvar receive Honorary Lifetime Membership Award at August event

Long overdue, the PSTOS Honorary Lifetime Membership Award was presented to Jack & Mary Lou Becvar in a surprise ceremony at the August event at their home. It reads, "With grateful appreciation for your many years of dedicated service to PSTOS, for sharing your many talents and skills, for opening your home and sharing your Wurlitzer Pipe Organ with PSTOS members, for your willingness to serve in a variety of capacities on the PSTOS Board, for the hundreds of hours invested in preserving the Paramount Theatre Wurlitzer and other Northwest instruments, and for your consistent and diligent work for the good of the organization, this award is presented in recognition of your invaluable contributions toward the betterment of PSTOS over a period of many years."

Congratulations, Jack & Mary Lou!



Jack and Mary Lou Becvar accept their Honorary Lifetime Membership Award presented by President Tom Blackwell

The Member Cameo Extravaganza was attended by nearly 50 members and friends. Performers included Roger McNair who got some very sweet sounds from the instrument, Tom Roughton who plays regularly at Kenyon Hall to an appreciative crowd and found this audience to be equally appreciative, Ron Hemmi who entertained with some nice things from his long playing background, Eric Shoemaker who ended his set with a clever "duo" using both the player piano and Wurlitzer, and Jo Ann Evans whose final number ended at almost the exact moment the organ blower overheated and stopped! Those attending enjoyed a great variety of styles, both of playing and types of music.

Make-it-yourself strawberry and/or blueberry shortcakes on the deck/patio were a great hit, enhanced by the warm sunny day.

Many PSTOS thanks to the Becvars!

Pages From The Past..

The fourth and final article in a series about Clyde M. “Sandy” Balcom—Mr. Pipe Organ on the West Coast—and the firm he built, Balcom and Vaughan Pipe Organs.

Needless to say, the success of the Balcom & Vaughan firm remained in the hands of its leader with a vision—Sandy Balcom. Sandy never said “no” to an organ installation, having worked and finished instruments for the world’s greatest artists. He personally tuned and regulated for Edwin H. Lemare, Clarence Eddy, Alexander Schreiner, E. Power Biggs, Claire Coci, Virgil Fox, and a great host of others including Marcel Dupre.

An installation of which he was particularly proud was done in 1937 for KNX at Columbia Square in Hollywood. It was a “creamy” theatre instrument of 11 ranks mostly coming from the Capitol Theatre (originally the Legion) in Walla Walla. This was Wurlitzer Opus 1516 and was a two-manual 8-rank F model. Three Gottfried ranks were added to the Hollywood installation, which had since been removed.

Mr. Balcom WAS the firm. Besides the 750 instruments built in his own right, he installed 168 for other builders, among them Kimball, Reuter, Estey, Morton, Wicks, Casavant, Aeolian, Kilgen and others. He firmly believed the work being done at that time was the finest ever. The best materials from all over the world were constantly being gathered to result in a better product. The electro-pneumatic wind chest, on the unit principle, was based on Kilgen designs but with several improvements, and employed an individual leather pouch valve and magnets for each note. Although Pitman chests had been constructed, the standard electro-pneumatic chests were preferred, and were successfully tested performing on pressures of 2 inches and up. The Principal and Flute chests normally had double top boards provided with tonkantzelle (expansion chambers) under each pipe. Relays were usually built with each organ, for it would be a very small unit without couplers or accessories. These were built and completely wired in the plant.

Sandy Balcom, and the faithful men around him, represented a unique scene of dedicated workmen who dedicated their lives to



ABOVE: Tuning pipes at Bothell United Methodist Church.

LEFT: Sandy with a new console in the shop.

BELOW: Hamming it up in a pipe chamber.



their love of the pipe organ. It was not uncommon to see these very same men who built the organ at the dedication programs, often played by prominent organists from this country and abroad. A very proud moment came when Fernando Germani, after a program played on the 1962 organ at West Seattle Congregational, remarked to the firm’s president, “This is the most interesting 2-manual I’ve played throughout my entire American tour.”

A great deal of the pipe work was exposed in a free standing



Pages From The Past...continued

manner. Little zinc was used, but a great deal of varying percentages of tin (Principals of 95% in display, occasionally), and much copper was used in Flutes and Principals, both polished and unpolished.

The firm's 1965 large 3-manual at St. Edward's Church, Seattle, was dedicated in January before 1700 people (with 400 more turned away) by Dr. Robert Baker, who found much of interest and delight in the instrument. So the firm went on to more successes, and continual improvement in techniques, voicing practices, and dedication, the better to serve the west coast purchasers with the finest materials available for pipe organ construction. With little thought of self, the awards which came only pointed up to greater things ahead. In 1959 the Richfield Oil Company honored the whole plant on their TV series, *Success Story*, and it was several times featured in the rotogravure section of the *Seattle Sunday Times*. Mr. Balcom was honored by the American Guild of Architects for superior execution and design, and also served as secretary and on the national board of the Music Dealers' Association for several years.

This, then, is a story of one man's vision carried to unexpected results in the many instruments which stand as a lasting memorial to the consecrated work which was done over a half-century. Balcom and Vaughn's strength was due to the foresight and consideration of Sandy. It was he who gave to a church a vision of one day owning a pipe organ. He rose from dust boy at Ehlers to the president of several organizations, a prominent Rotarian, church member in good standing, held in high esteem by all who truly knew his ideals over many years.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The author and publication date of this series of articles, from the PSTOS archives, is unknown.



ABOVE: Sandy poses at the console of an electronic instrument

BELOW: In work mode, complete with coveralls, Sandy could crawl around in a chamber with the best of them!



A deep friendship, developed over many years, existed between Sandy (left) and Ron Baggott. Here they are shown at the console of Ron's church organ, over which he presided for decades.

Ron, together with Don Moore, opened the Paramount (then Seattle) Theatre in 1928 as the Ron and Don Duo.



PSTOS and the Paramount again partner to sponsor a benefit for the Wurlitzer Restoration Fund

Always a big hit, Ken will perform for the third time for PSTOS. A polished radio announcer, an accomplished vocalist, as well as a top-notch theatre organist, Ken will bring you a wonderful afternoon of great music. Not to mention a trip down nostalgia lane with the reenactment of old time radio programs by Radio Enthusiasts Puget Sound, a group of highly talented and skilled actors, accompanied by Ken!

To get your tickets and avoid waiting in line at the theatre, send your check for \$20 per ticket to Tickets, c/o Tom Blackwell, 9717 Dayton Ave. N., Seattle WA 98103-3127

PUGET SOUND THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

Russ & Jo Ann Evans, Newsletter Editors
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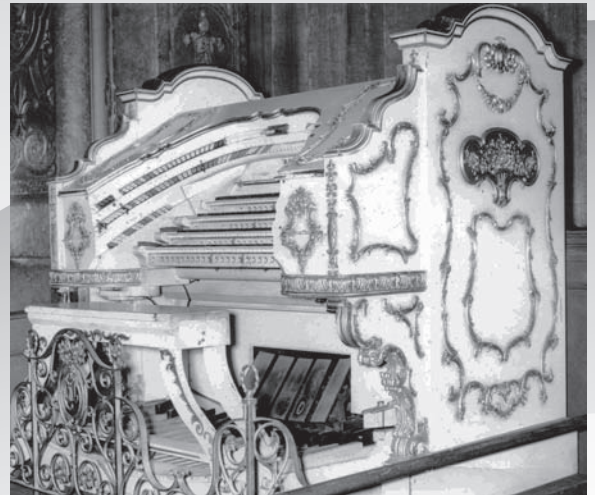
Coming to the Seattle Paramount November 18th

Old Time Radio Hour

A Benefit/Fund Raiser for the Paramount Theatre's Original 1928 Mighty Wurlitzer Restoration



**Featuring
KEN
DOUBLE
At the
WURLITZER**



**With Reenactment of famous
Old Time Radio Programs**

**By members of
Radio Enthusiasts Puget Sound**

Paramount Theatre, Sun., Nov. 18. 1:30, Tickets \$20

All proceeds will benefit the Paramount's Wurlitzer Restoration Fund



Sponsored jointly by PSTOS and Seattle Theatre Group (Paramount Theatre)

