



On the web at www.pstos.org • Facebook page at www.facebook.com/pstos

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.

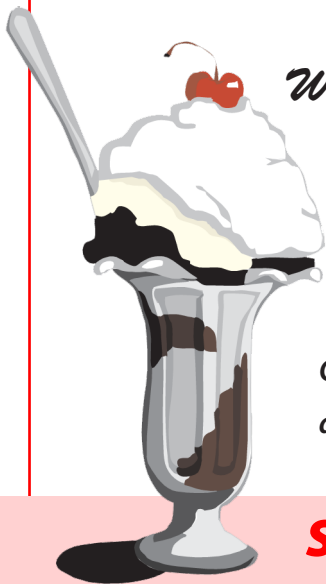
Volume 23 No. 1

January 2012

A Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society

Coming in February...

Valentine's Day Ice Cream Social



With **ANDY CROW**
at the **Kenyon Hall**
Wurlitzer

Followed by Open Console

*Create your own Ice Cream Sundae
at the Topping Table! Yum! Yum!*

Sat., Feb. 11, 1:00 PM

Kenyon Hall

7904 35th Ave. SW in West Seattle

ADMISSION – \$12 members – \$15 non-members
16 and under FREE

RESERVATIONS, PLEASE!

Reserve by Thurs, Feb. 9
with Barb Graham at

206-525-7859 (leave message with number in your party)
or Email barbara@pstos.org

*We need to know
how much ice cream
to purchase!*



We're so pleased to welcome ANDY CROW back to the console following his successful hand surgery! Andy has been a theatre organ fixture in the Pacific Northwest for many years and it's wonderful that we'll once again enjoy his delightful arrangements.

Congratulations and welcome back, Andy!

Drive Directions to Kenyon Hall

From I-5 take Exit 163 to the West Seattle Bridge. Cross the bridge and drive up the hill to the first lights at 35th Ave. SW. Turn left at the lights. Drive south about 30 blocks. Kenyon Hall is at 7904 35th Ave. SW, just south of Kenyon St. and 35th, on your left. The #21 Metro bus from 1st Ave. stops in front of the Hall. There is ample street parking.

PUGET SOUND PIPELINE

Vol. 23, No. 1 –January 2012
Published monthly by
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.

OFFICERS

President—Jon Beveridge, jon@pstos.org
Past Pres.—Bob Zat, bob@pstos.org
Vice President—Russ Evans, russ@pstos.org
Secretary—Joani Roughton, joani@pstos.org
Treasurer—Clint Meadway, clint@pstos.org

DIRECTORS

Micah Bisson, micah@pstos.org • Bob Buchholz, bobb@pstos.org
Jeff Snyder, jeff@pstos.org • Alain Rhone, alain@pstos.org

COMMITTEES

Organ Restoration & Maintenance—Bob Zat

Program Coordinating

Jo Ann Evans, joann@pstos.org • Joani Roughton, joani@pstos.org
Barb Graham, barbara@pstos.org • Ray Harris, ray@pstos.org
Jamie Snell, jamie@pstos.org • Bob Zat, bob@pstos.org
Halie Dodrill, halie@pstos.org

Scholarship—Carl Dodrill, carl@pstos.org

Volunteer Coordination—Tom Blackwell

Development & Grant Writing—Tom Blackwell, tom@pstos.org

History & Archives—Tom Blackwell

New member processing—Doug Owen, 253-566-6734

Haller Lake keys—Bob Zat

Sunshine—Joani Roughton, 253-946-4400

Hospitality HLCC—Ellen Sullivan, 206-365-7554

NEWSLETTER & WEBSITE

Pipeline Editors—Russ & Jo Ann Evans, 425-485-5465
Pipeline Online Website—Tom Blackwell, tom@pstos.org

LIAISONS

AMICA & POF—Carl Dodrill • **Haller Lake Comm. Club**—Bob Zat
Paramount Theatre—Tom Blackwell • **Wash. Center**—Andy Crow

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:

PSTOS, Clint Meadway, Treasurer
9594 1st Ave. NE #453,
Seattle WA 98115-2012

PRESIDENT'S Message

2012 Greetings PSTOS Members!

I hope you all had a happy holiday season and have a fine new year.

Welcome to Alain Rhone, Jeff Synder, Bob Buchholtz and Russ Evans to the board for 2012.

PSTOS would like to thank Tom Blackwell, Barb Graham, Jamie Snell and Phil Hargiss, who left the board in 2011, for their dedicated service. They all did tremendous work for the good of our organization, particularly with the 2010 ATOS convention, and surely will continue to do so.

Since I am relatively new to PSTOS and the board, perhaps a bit of introduction would be appropriate for those members who don't know me. I am retired from The Boeing Company with 37 years as an electrical/electronics engineer. My non-profit experience is mostly with The Northwest Railway Museum (near Snoqualmie Falls), having been on the board of trustees for most of the past 30 years. And yes, I am a "real engineer," too—I drive the train as a volunteer.

The Holidays at Haller party at Haller Lake Community Club was well attended by about 100 people with everyone enjoying Dean Lemire's good music. Thanks to all the volunteers who made it a fun day.

Thanks also, to Jack and Mary Lou Bevcar, who provided an entertaining October home party at their residence in Kent. Last year they put on a fund raising event for the Kent Historical Society with a concert by Andy Crow. Thus they promote theatre organ music and non-profits beyond PSTOS.

ON TO 2012—

There are a number of ongoing organ projects that will continue as noted in now Past President Bob's previous message. And the Program Coordinating Team is working to provide us with entertaining events for 2012 and beyond. We hope to see you at the next event at Kenyon Hall in February.

Jon Beveridge, President



PSTOS Coming Events

▶ VALENTINE DAY ICE CREAM SOCIAL at Kenyon Hall

ANDY CROW will entertain at the Wurlitzer as everyone enjoys ice cream sundaes of their own making at the topping table.

Saturday, Feb. 11, 1:00 PM

▶ Australia's JOHN ATWELL in concert at Calvary Christian Assembly

John with his friend, Tony Fenelon, opened our big 2010 convention at the Paramount Theatre to a rousing ovation. This is one to be sure you have on your calendar!



Sunday, April 15, 2012

▶ SHARON STEARNES will bring the Pizza & Pipes experience to Haller Lake Community Club

Everyone enjoyed hearing Sharon at the Becvar home. We've asked her to return to do what she does best—play the music we all enjoyed at Pizza & Pipes! And yes, there'll be pizza, beer and other beverages, and dessert!



Saturday EVENING, June 9, 6:00 PM

▶ JONAS NORDWALL CONCERT and WORKSHOP at Bill Keller's home

Plan to attend a workshop from 10:30–noon, then enjoy a full concert at 2:00, all on Bill's fantastic 5-manual Allen! Watch for details.

Saturday, September 15

▶ Annual PSTOS HOLIDAY PARTY at Haller Lake Community Club

Plan ahead for the annual fun holiday extravaganza! Music! Food! Fun!

Sunday, December 2, 2012

Other NW Theatre Organ Events

For other theatre organ happenings in and around the region, check the websites of our fellow theatre organ groups:

► **Kenyon Hall in West Seattle**

www.kenyonhall.org or email
kenyonhall@earthlink.net

► **Bellingham's Mt. Baker Theatre Organ Society**

www.mountbakertheatre.com

► **Lincoln Theatre in Mt. Vernon**

www.lincolnthatre.org

► **Columbia River Theatre Organ Society**

www.croconline.org

► **Spokane's First Nazarene Theatre Organ Society**

www.sfntos.org

Your PSTOS 2012 Officers and Directors assume their new positions



The new 2012 PSTOS Officers and Directors were installed at the Annual Meeting Dec. 4th. Pictured in the back row, L to R are Alain Rhone, Micah Bisson, Directors; Clint Meadway, Treasurer; Jeff Snyder, Director; Bob Zat, Immediate Past President. Front row, L to R are Bob Buchholz, Director; Russ Evans, Vice President; Joani Roughton, Secretary, and Jon Beveridge, President.



The Paramount Theatre presents Trader Joe's Silent Movie Mondays—

This all-classic film series, *First Oscars*, is accompanied by live music from the historic Mighty Wurlitzer, one of the last three remaining organs of its kind to reside in its original environment, played by acclaimed organist Jim Riggs.

Interest in the Academy Awards has always run high, though not at today's fever pitch. The first ceremony was a black-tie banquet that drew 270 people to the Blossom Room of the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel and received little media attention. There were no "and the envelope, please" moments as the recipients were announced three months earlier – quite a difference from today.

The Academy's first president, silent

film actor Douglas Fairbanks, handed out the statuettes to winners, who included Janet Gaynor for Best Actress, for three different films including *STREET ANGEL*. German-born Emil Jannings won for Best Actor for two films including *THE LAST COMMAND*. Best Picture honors went to *WINGS*, the World War I drama directed by William Wellman. Even art direction had its own category, with *TEMPEST*, a lavish and beautifully produced Hollywood confection. While the films that won that year remain well regarded, many have virtually disappeared from sight. This silent film series First Academy Awards returns these statue winners to their original glory by presenting them once again on the big screen!



January 23, 7PM

TEMPEST, 1928

Starring John Barrymore, Camilla Horn.
Directed by Sam Taylor



January 30, 7PM

STREET ANGEL, 1928

Starring Janet Gaynor, Charles Farrell.
Directed by Frank Borzage



February 6, 7PM

LAST COMMAND, 1928,

Starring Emil Jannings, Evelyn Brent.
Directed by Josef von Sternberg



February 13, 7PM

WINGS, 1927

Starring Clara Bow, Charles 'Buddy' Rogers.
Directed by William A. Wellman



The PSTOS Program Coordinating Team works hard to bring you great events

Pictured are Ray Harris, Jamie Snell, Joani Roughton, Barb Graham and Jo Ann Evans at the most recent team meeting. Not in the photo are Bob Zat and Halie Dodrill. The team meets six or eight times each year to plan the programs you enjoy. Read the "Coming Events" column and you'll see they have been busy. Several additional fun events are on the drawing board but not yet finalized.

Members' input is more than welcome. Please send your ideas to any team member using the email address in the masthead on page 2. *Happy Musical 2012!*

Pages From The Past... 1916

The Robert Morton Unit Organ

Its history as published in *The Console Magazine*, 1966. Part one.

Truly one of the golden musical eras in the history of the world, theatre organs provided mass pleasure for millions of people during their relatively short and windy life span—encompassing a period roughly from 1914 to 1930—a total of only about 16 years.

But during those 16 years the medium of the motion picture was exploited to the extreme! Showmanship in its infancy was alive, dynamic, boisterous and flamboyant. Every theatre owner continually trumpeted his entertainment wares in any manner that could be dreamed up—and there were some wild dreams! Now very much sophisticated, (even most modern marquees, well lighted by fluorescent lamps, lack the glittering sparkle of the multi-colored Mazda lamps and seem dull) there seemingly is more concern over dedication to the principles of cash and candy—oh yes, and that something that is being shown on the screen this week in the auditorium.

Into this golden era the Robert-Morton unit organ arrived—about three years following the first big splurge made by Wurlitzer at the Seattle Liberty Theatre. But despite its tardy appearance, the instrument won acceptance and maintained a sales record that held it in second place throughout the remaining years that theatre organs were built and installed to provide music for silent films. This was achieved over strong competition from competitors such as Kimball, Kilgen, Marr & Colton, etc. Wurlitzer, it is acknowledged, was first in sales throughout the entire world during this period.

Morton organs were sold almost entirely within the limits of continental United States. Foreign sales were never made on a grand scale. Morton officials either did not care to enter this field, or possibly felt there was ample business in the U.S. Consequently there were few organs sold in Canada, a larger number went to Mexico and one, according to records, was installed in Panama. It has been rumored that several were shipped to Cuba, but no records have been found to substantiate this.

The greatest number of Morton pipe organs sold outside of the continent went to the Hawaiian Islands—Consolidated Theatres chain equipped most of their theatres with Mortons.



The Robert Morton Pipe Organ A History of the Company The Year 1916

In Berkeley, California, in the big building housing the American Photo Player company, business was good. Almost every new movie house across the vast American continent was installing a "Fotoplayer." True, other firms—Cremona, Seeburg, Wurlitzer, to name but a few—were also enjoying good sales, but the "Fotoplayer" undeniably was leader in its field. However, in the larger movie palaces, the theatres seating 2,000 and more, the trend to install pipe organs for film accompaniment was gaining sales for Moller, Austin and the recently new-on-the-scene Wurlitzer Company with its unusual horseshoe style console acquired when the Robert Hope-Jones Organ Company was bought out and consolidated into the North Tonawanda organization. Several large installations had been lost because the Fotoplayer was not adequate to furnish enough sound in the large auditoriums.

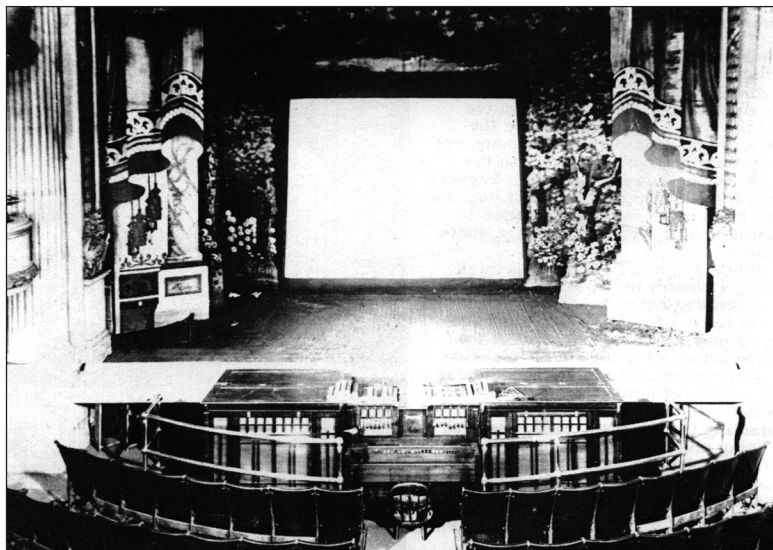
While this was something to think about, it wasn't really anything to get sick worrying over, there were bound to be a few large theatres opening up now and then, but most of the movie houses were the small "nickelodeon types" found in neighborhoods near homes and not downtown where the legitimate and vaudeville houses were attracting the crowds. Still, the idea of being able to offer a pipe organ had definite potential and Harry Werner made a mental note to look around for a possible organ

firm that he might contract to secure an estimate on building a theatre instrument to compete with Austin, Moller and the upstart Wurlitzer firms. Harry Werner was the head of the American Photo Player Company. It was his drive and enthusiasm that had established the Fotoplayer as the leading pit organ to be found in most American movie houses. It was to be his business acumen and the know-how of unit organ construction on the part of another man that would bring into being an instrument that soon would rank second in theatre sales throughout the United States.

The Second Man

In Southern California, in the newly laid out town of Van Nuys, the California Organ company was not so busy building classic and concert organs for churches and residences, and on occasion, making an installation of their instrument in a moving picture theatre. During the reign of Murray M. Harris, back in 1911 and 1912, there had been many notable installations of the classic and concert instruments in local churches and homes. Yes, and even in a great number of local theatres, Harris organs were installed for the enjoyment of early day moviegoers. A notable installation was the one made by Harris Company for Tally's Broadway Theatre, a concert instrument that all but enveloped the interior of the theatre. A four manual organ of about sixty ranks, pipework extended on either side wall of the theatre from the stage back to the entry arches into the auditorium. The sound of this instrument was actually

Pages From The Past...continued



Fotoplayer were bringing home the sounds of 'rustling paper' to American Photo Player coffers in 1916 with large installations like this one in the Odeon Theatre in New York State. Larger theatres, however, were putting in pipe organs to produce the needed sound for silent photoplays.

all around the patrons. A.E. Spencer, Harris superintendent and Stanley Williams, Harris voicer, made the installation.

Failure of the Harris company brought the Johnson Organ Company in as its successor. Johnson had been president of a San Francisco music company. He borrowed money and took over the Harris business which was then situated on Sichel Street in the eastern section of Los Angeles. It was at this time that land developers had opened much of the nearby San Fernando Valley and staked out what is now the town of Van Nuys.

To attract buyers for the land they had developed, the promoters offered tempting prizes to Los Angeles business houses to establish branch offices and factories there. They also built a large warehouse and eventually convinced the Johnson Company to move there and build its organs. This was done and many of the craftsmen moved their families out to Van Nuys and bought lots on which to build their homes.

The factory opened in 1913 in the 75,000 square-foot building. In less than one year, Johnson was ousted by the land developers, who took over operation of the organ building themselves under the name of California Organ Company.

Business was brisk for a time while the firm produced instruments that were installed in local school auditoriums, at a good discount price, and in several of the homes of the land executives. There were church installations, too, but not on the scale that Harris organs were erected several

years earlier. By 1916 the market for organs for local schools, residences and churches had been rather well saturated. The land promoter owners of the company were concerned about the future of the firm. Most of the employees had built homes in the area and this company was the largest in Van Nuys. Its weekly payroll

was very important to the economic life of the community. The only possible course was to increase the production of California organs. There were several avenues to explore. One was to continue classic organ production by increasing the sales force and advertising more frequently. California organs were fine instruments; more people must hear about them. The second avenue open to the firm was to change over to the production of the "noise machines" for the motion picture theatres. Right here in the factory was a man who was capable of building a so-called 'unit' organ that could be competitive to the Wurlitzer. That man was Stanley Williams. He had learned his organ building trade under the apprenticeship system in England. And his teacher had been none other than Robert Hope-Jones, controversial figure in the British Isles' organ world since he had added wires to an organ and moved its console outside the church edifice to prove that his system was indeed flexible and a radical departure from the staid, long-unchanged organ building art.

Stanley Williams could indeed build an organ that California could use to enter the up and coming theatre field.

There was one drawback to the idea. He was A.E. Spencer, the man in charge of production at California, superintendent of the firm. A.E. wanted no part of building noise boxes for movie theatres. The classic organ was the only fit instrument for man to listen to.

At this juncture, fate, as she does so

many times, stepped in and decreed that some change must be made. The opportunity for explosive expansion was there. All that was needed was something to act as a catalyst.

The catalyst was in the form of one of the self-made men of that era, who, through his extroverted personality, would not only be responsible for bringing the two companies together, but also would be responsible for a great part of the business the Robert Morton Company was to enjoy from west coast sources. This person was H.F. "Cocky" Charles.

Originally from the southern part of the state, Charles had been introduced to Harold J. Werner and offered a job with the American Photo Player firm. He was quite successful as a salesman of the Fotoplayer pit organs and shared with Werner the interest in locating a pipe organ builder who might be able to supply an instrument suitable to be placed in theatres. It was natural then that on one of his visits in the Los Angeles area he should learn of the California organ firm in Van Nuys and the limited amount of business being done. It is assumed, according to reports by men who were employed by California Organ, that he returned to Berkeley and told Werner about the Van Nuys facility and its potential. Whether he heard that Williams was qualified to build a unit instrument or just figured that the company was in a slack period and could be persuaded to enter the movie organ field has never been fully determined. But in either instance, Charles is credited for bringing the executives of both organizations together for what was to result in the birth of a new competitor in the relatively new business of providing a new type of pipe organ for a new entertainment medium.

Thus it was in 1916 that Harold J. Werner made the first overtures to executives of the California Organ company. The response was encouraging and a meeting was arranged. Initial sessions were somewhat stormy because A.E. Spencer, the superintendent of the California firm, was violently opposed to the proposed change. Classic instruments were still the only type he favored building. Later meetings were conducted at night after the factory had closed for the day and Spencer was not around.

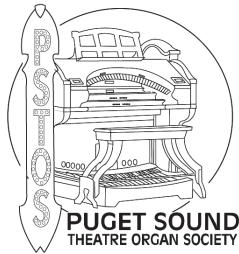
Part 2 will appear next month.

Holidays at Haller In Pictures

PUGET SOUND THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

Russ & Jo Ann Evans, Newsletter Editors
6521 NE 191st ST
Kenmore, WA 98028-3453

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Bothell, WA
Permit #287



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Nearly 100 revelers took advantage of good weather and the expectation of an afternoon of fun and great music to attend the annual PSTOS holiday celebration. No one was disappointed. DEAN LEMIRE, well-known to many from his years playing at pizza parlors in and around Portland, as well as at Oaks Park Roller Rink, presented an enjoyable variety of music including many holiday favorites.

The hall was decorated festively by a team of great volunteers, some of whom arrived at 10 a.m. to prepare the organ and set up for the event.

Thanks to everyone who attended. It was a fun day for all!



Russ Evans and Bob Zat at the front door



Dean Lemire presented a fun program of toe tapping music.



Ellen Sullivan and Barbara Graham masterminded the food and beverages.



Bob Zat and Ray Harris worked hard to illuminate the tree.



The setup crew enjoyed a break after several hours of hard work. At the back table are Russ Evans and Bob Buchholz. Front table, L to R, Ellen Sullivan, Barbara Graham, cheerleader Loretta Moore, Ray Harris, Luman Coad and Bob Zat. Behind the camera—Jo Ann Evans.



Outgoing President Bob Zat was emcee.



The beverage table at the back of the room was a popular spot.



PSTOS scholarship recipient Jesse Zylstra joined the party.