

PUGET SOUND PIPELINE

Our 2022 Wish List

- End of Covid
- Theatre Organ concerts again
- No need for masks
- Residential Theatre Organ programs
- In person ATOS conventions
- Fireworks on New Year's Eve
- Hugging

Happy New Year!

PUGET SOUND PIPELINE

Vol. 33, Nos. 1 - 2, Jan. - Feb. 2022

Published by
Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society
 10002 Aurora Ave N, Suite 36 #516
 Seattle, WA 98133-9329

Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization furthering the appreciation, restoration, and use of the historic Theatre Pipe Organs of the 1920s, through education.

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<http://www.pstos.org/membership/new-member.htm>

PRESIDENT'S Message

Greetings PSTOS members and friends...

The PSTOS board wishes you a Happy New Year! As we welcome 2022, remember all of our dreams can come true if we have the courage to chase them. Our PSTOS year begins as a blank page, and the board and various committees will be working hard to make it exciting and full of Theatre Organ music, while realizing the current state of the COVID pandemic with its variants could thwart our best intentions.

We wrapped up 2021 with an in-person holiday program at Haller Lake Community Club, which was the first time in three years we have been able to celebrate the holidays at the facility. I want to thank Sawyer Best, Mason Jones, Tyler Pattison, Jo Ann Evans, Jamie Snell, and Paul Van Dyck for their sharing of talents to make the program a success.

In August PSTOS held an event at Haller Lake Community Club, utilizing the Chapter's 3/10 Wurlitzer and HLCC's venerable upright piano. This was the first time we had been back in the building in three years. Water damage followed by extended repair work, and then the lockdown, contributed to our absence from the building. The program planning committee put together an event featuring three up-and-coming young organists, Estelle McMaster, Sawyer Best, and Mason Jones. Tyler Pattison,

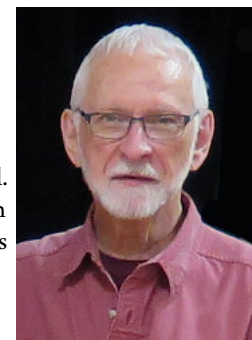
Jo Ann Evans and Jamie Snell were on hand to contribute to the talent pool as well.

The PSTOS program planning committee is working to secure artists and dates for 2022 so we can continue pipe organ programs utilizing the 3/25 Kimball-Wurlitzer at Calvary Christian Assembly. PSTOS has invested substantially into making the organ a concert quality instrument. Through the vision of Russ Evans and Greg Smith, and with the help of many others, the organ is a wonderful resource that needs to be shared.

Listings of PSTOS programs will be included in the Puget Sound Pipeline, and email blasts will follow, keeping everyone up-to-date with events for this year. Your continued support of the organization is so vital and very much appreciated. It is because of your membership and support of events that we are able to present Theatre Organ programs.

Wishing everyone a prosperous, safe, and healthy 2022.

Bob Zat, President



In Memoriam Wally Stevenson



Wally passed away Christmas night 2021. A PSTOS member for many years, he was one of the original founders of the Seattle Chapter of ATOE in approximately 1953, and was one of the first Seattle residents to install a theatre pipe organ in his home.

He was concert artist at the Mt. Baker Theatre in Bellingham, and was featured organist for the 1997 and 2003 PSTOS Christmas parties at Haller Lake Community Club.

Wally began studying piano at the age of 4, and by age 7 was already being asked to play engagements. He continued piano studies in the Puget Sound area for the next 20 years, participating in master classes and private lessons with E. Robert Schmitz. In the early 1940s, he began playing organ and had an opportunity to work briefly with Ethel Smith. His varied performance work included church services, night clubs, and over 6000 hours of touring performances with the USO and United Nations Council, WWII.

In the early 1950s, Wally began an organ teaching practice and also played daily for shows at the Rivoli (former State) Theatre in downtown Seattle.

In 1953, Sandy Balcom and Bill Bunch installed a 6-rank Wurlitzer in his West Seattle home. The instrument provided many years of enjoyment until 1967 when it was sold.

In 1968, Wally semi-retired from organ playing to join the growing data processing profession but continued teaching a small group of private organ students. In 1986, Wally started his own software design and consulting firm which he operated for ten years. In 1996, he returned to theatre organ performance and made many appearances at Northwest venues.

Haller Lake Party Brings Holiday Cheer

By Jamie Snell, photos by Jeff Snyder



L to R, back: Jamie Snell, Tyler Pattison; Front: Sawyer Best, Jo Ann Evans, Mason Jones

Theatre organ fans from the Puget Sound region were excited to assemble at the Haller Lake Community Club on December 5 for an afternoon of holiday music, performed by six local artists on the PSTOS 3/10 Wurlitzer and the club's piano. This was our first yuletide event since 2018: the planned 2019 event was canceled due to water damage, and the planned 2020 event was canceled due to the pandemic. Adding to the anticipation, the performers included two younger players demonstrating their pipe organ chops: Mason Jones and Sawyer Best. So the audience of about fifty, all masked and vaccinated, had heightened expectations; they were not disappointed!

The program opened with long-time active members Jo Ann Evans at the organ and Jamie Snell at the piano, playing two songs: the Hawaiian holiday tune “Mele Kalikimaka,” and the children’s favorite, “Santa Claus is Coming to Town.” PSTOS President Bob Zat then took the stage and gave his usual upbeat welcome and introductions.

Next at the organ was Mason Jones, playing the youth hymn “I’m Trying to Be Like Jesus,” followed by Sawyer Best with the 1943 Bing Crosby hit

Our resident emcee, Bob Zat “I’ll Be Home for

Christmas” and “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas” from the 1944 film *Meet Me in St. Louis*. Mason then returned, this time at the piano, for a duet with Sawyer on the 1953 Eartha Kitt hit “Santa Baby.” This humorous song concerns a Christmas list addressed to Santa Claus, asking for extravagant gifts such as sables, yachts, and decorations from Tiffany’s; as Sawyer noted, it has been included on lists of both the best and worst Christmas songs ever written. Adding to the effect, in the middle Mason jumped up from the piano to the organ, played a few phrases with Sawyer, then quickly got back to the piano to resume the duet. The audience was duly amused!



Mason Jones, left, bows to Sawyer Best after their humorous duo rendition of the 1953 hit by Eartha Kitt, “Santa Baby”

For a different mode of humor, Tyler Pattison took the Wurlitzer bench to accompany the silent film *The Night Before Christmas*, based on the Clement Moore poem. This is one of the oldest Christmas movies ever made, a 1905 product of the Thomas Edison studio, just nine minutes long. It includes scenes of Santa reviewing his list of children, putting checkmarks for the nice ones and crossing off the naughty ones; the children nestled all snug in their beds on Christmas Eve, but then having a raucous pillow fight; Santa’s animated reindeer pulling the sleigh to a rooftop, he awkwardly climbing down the chimney, and the family enjoying a haphazard Christmas morning. Audience laughs were in good supply.

Jo Ann next returned to the organ to perform “We Need a Little Christmas,” from the 1966 musical *Mame*, and the 1954 Frank Sinatra hit “The Christmas Waltz.” Then, to the audience’s surprise, Jo Ann’s friend Paul van Dyck came to the piano for duets of two classics: “Jingle Bells” and “Let it Snow.” Paul is a long-time PSTOS member and still plays piano and

organ, despite being legally blind. His unexpected appearance added to the joy of the occasion.

Jamie then took the organ bench to play four more holiday standards: “Winter Wonderland,” popularized in 1934 by Guy Lombardo’s band; Gene Autry’s 1949 hit, “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer”; “White Christmas,” Irving Berlin’s 1942 song, of which the Bing Crosby recording became the best-selling single of all time; and “Sleigh Ride” by Leroy Anderson, popularized in 1949 by Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops. In lieu of sing-alongs, sadly not possible with masks, the audience was invited to participate in “Sleigh Ride” with hand claps simulating a horse whip, and a horse whinny at the end.

Tyler rounded out the program with three selections: an original medley on “Frosty the Snowman,” including a jazzy variation (“Frosty the Blues Man”) and a classical one (“Frosty the Baroque Man”); Nat King Cole’s 1946 hit, “The Christmas Song” (AKA “Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire”); and finally, an improvisation on the traditional English carol, “We Wish You a Merry Christmas,”

including quotations from several classical organ works.

The program concluded with a random drawing of ticket numbers, conducted by President Bob, the ten winners of which each received one of the decorative poinsettias from the tables. As the audience drifted out, holiday cheer and high spirits were on full display.

Many thanks to everyone who helped to make this event a success, including the musicians for their fine performances; Bob Zat, for M.C. and I.T. proficiency, as well as preparing the Wurlitzer, which never sounded better; Jo Ann Evans, for coordinating the musical program, creating promotion, and taking reservations; Ellen Sullivan, for artful decorations, as always; Terry Perdue and Treasurer Jon Beveridge, for handling tickets and checking vax cards; Jeff Snyder, for photographic prowess; and numerous volunteers who helped with setting up and putting away tables and chairs, opening and closing the console cover, tidying up, and many other vital tasks.

2022 DUES ARE DUE!



Your support is so important to help ensure the survival of PSTOS. Surely 2022 will see a return of concerts, social events, and programs. Be sure you're on the list to receive that important news!

Please click the link below to quickly and safely renew your membership!

THANK YOU!

<https://www.pstos.org/membership/renewal.htm>

AGO Programs

Classical organ events for your enjoyment

Sunday Jan. 9, 2022 5:30 pm

Organ Vespers for the Baptism of Our Lord in the chapel of Epiphany Parish 1805 38th Ave, Seattle, WA 98122. Music of Bach, Pachelbel, Mendelssohn and Samuel Scheidt.

Friday January 14, 2022, 7:30 pm

Organ concert at St. Mark's Cathedral, 1245 10th Ave E., Seattle 98102, featuring organists Michael Kleinschmidt and John Stuntebeck at the Flentrop organ.

Sunday January 23, 2022, 3pm

organ dedication concert: Aaron David Miller plays the new Ortloff organ at St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church 722 N. 145th St., Shoreline, WA 98133. No charge to attend.

Sunday Jan. 23, 2022, 5 pm

Prelude to Evensong. 30 minute organ recital by Naomi Shiga on the Noack organ in the nave of Epiphany Parish 1805 38th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98122

Sunday Jan. 23, 2022, 5:30 pm

Choral evensong at Epiphany Parish 1805 38th Avenue, Seattle, WA

Friday Jan. 28, 2022, 7:30 pm

Dr. Robin McCabe, professor of piano at UW presents the solo piano version of Modest Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition" at Epiphany Parish, 1805 38th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98122.

Sunday Jan. 30, 2022, 2:00 pm

Faculty organist Wyatt Smith plays the 31st annual Schneebeck Organ Recital on the Fritts organ at Kilworth Chapel, University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, WA. Music by Mendelssohn Clérambault, Paulus and Sandresky. This concert is offered both in person and livestream at: <https://pugetsound.edu/academics/music/schneebeck-live>

Sunday Feb. 6, 2022, 4:30 pm

Choral Evensong at St. Mark's Cathedral 1245 10th Ave E. Seattle 98102

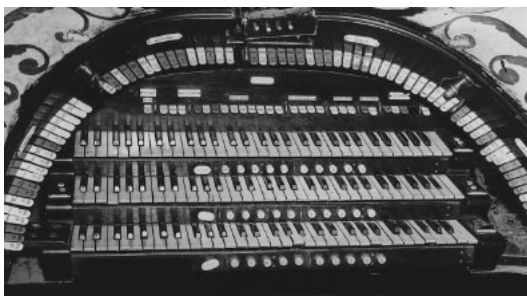
Sunday February 13, 2022, 3:00

Concert by Mark Brombaugh on the Fritts organ at Lagerquist Hall, PLU campus, Tacoma. \$17/10/5. Mask and proof of vaccination required to attend.

PIPE ORGAN TERMS EXPLAINED

We're introducing a new Pipeline column to help demystify the jargon used to talk about pipe organs. If there are terms you've heard and would like to know their meaning, please let us know by sending an email to joann@pstos.org

1 – MANUAL



The Seattle Liberty Wurlitzer has three manuals

MANUAL is the organ name for a keyboard.

Organs usually have at least two manuals of 61 keys, played with the hands, plus a pedalboard of 32 pedals, played with the feet. These numbers include both white and black keys/pedals. Many larger organs have three, four or even more manuals. Why? Because more manuals allow the organist to set up a different sound on each

manual, and quickly switch between manuals for variety in orchestration.

When numbers such as 3/13 or 4/48 are used to describe an organ, the first number tells you how many MANUALS, and the second, how many RANKS. Therefore, 4/48 means 4 manuals and 48 ranks of pipes.

2 – RANK

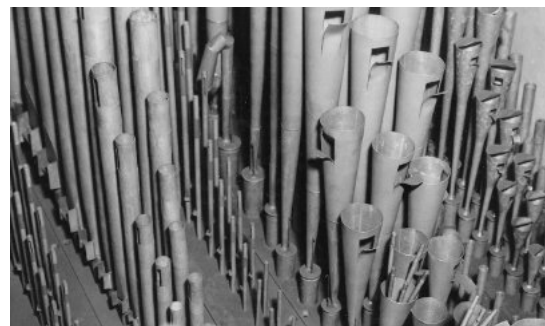
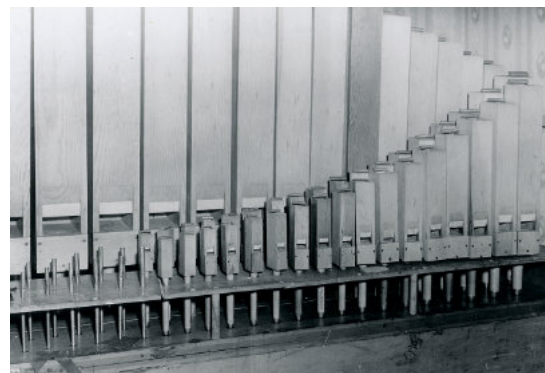
RANK refers to one set of pipes, all having the same timbre or tone color.

Each pipe in a rank is a different length, producing a different pitch. The largest pipe produces the lowest pitch, and the smallest, the highest pitch.

The pipes of most ranks are designed to reproduce the character of an orchestral instrument, i.e., flute, clarinet, trumpet, tuba. For instance, clarinet pipes sound surprisingly like a real clarinet.

A rank often has additional pipes to extend its range, both up and down.

The pipes may be square and made of wood (top right), or round and made of metal (bottom right).



PAGES FROM THE PAST . . .

Excerpts from "The Console," September 1965

The Seattle Story, Part 2 – THE LIBERTY THEATRE

There had been silent motion pictures in the city before the famed Liberty Wurlitzer was installed and set the pace for all America. The Kimball installed in the Colonial Theatre, also in 1914, was a 27-rank instrument, according to the informative classification records released by Engine M. Nye of Seattle.

One of the world's cosmopolitan centers, so to speak, Seattle was blessed with a great variety of theatres. From the early days of the famed silent era through the construction period of the great picture palaces, theatre patrons have been able to enter temples far more elaborate than the Chinese emperors ever dreamed of – palaces that would do honor to the greatest kings of Europe – and Egyptian edifices any of the pharaohs would have been astounded to see. In one instance even King Neptune might have been happy to hold court in a theatre named in his honor, the Neptune Theatre, a neighborhood house. Some of these cinemas have been destroyed. Others, the Orpheum, for example, are soon to be razed [1965]. Some of the larger theatres will remain as long as the need for a motion picture house exists. And within their walls, where they are still installed, the pipe organs are almost certain to remain, since the rebirth of the theatre organ is enjoying mushrooming popularity.

Mention of the Liberty Wurlitzer is made in an article published in *Theatre Organ World* and

Orchestra presided over by a "Master of the Organ" named Henry Murtagh. Duly investigating the interior of the theatre, Barrie was held spellbound by the sound he heard. He writes: "As to Henry Murtagh, he seemed part of the unique instrument, so well had he applied himself to the mastering of its complexities. As I sat listening in the balcony, I thought Henry Murtagh the most fortunate musician in America. For the next three weeks, most of my days were spent as close as I could get to the console behind Henry Murtagh's back.

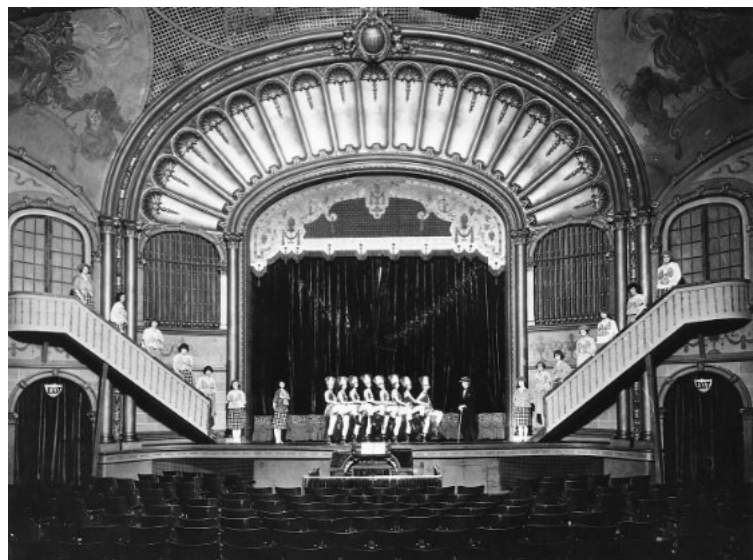
"In those days the picture theaters were very dark and organists did not take bows. Therefore I felt reasonably unselfconscious sitting there so many days of the week. I think I must have mentally photographed every tablet, every shade of tone, every "effect" of that, to me, magnificent instrument. I well remember how long I was puzzled by the tones produced by



the console of one of these instruments and try for myself. I had already formulated some ideas – somewhat vague and dreamlike – and I was determined to go exploring. Incidentally, the organist of the Alaska Theatre, also in Seattle, was known to pay visits to the Liberty Theatre and to sit there very much lost in himself. He afterwards told me years later that each time, after leaving the Liberty for "his organ" at the Alaska Theatre, it was like crossing over from Heaven to Hell. And the name of this unhappy organist – he was a little chap – was Jesse Crawford."

What made the Liberty Theatre unique was the fact that, until it was built, motion picture theatre were converted legitimate and vaudeville houses. The Liberty was the first structure of its kind designed expressly as a motion picture house. It was also the first motion picture theatre for which the Wurlitzer Company was consulted about acoustics and proper placement of a pipe organ. Wurlitzer engineers were able to plan their installation and the final result made organ history.

At the opening of this theatre, patrons jammed the sidewalks and Seattle police detailed special squads of officers to maintain order during the first week the theatre was open. For three weeks the crowds were phenomenal and one of the outstanding features was the great Wurlitzer. This organ also became the demonstrator for the North Tonawanda firm, and theatre men from all over the world came to see and listen to it. As it has been stated, the success of this



Liberty Theatre interior, with Wurlitzer console visible lower center

written by Eugene Stuart Barrie. Barrie was visiting relatives in Seattle in 1914 when he saw an announcement outside the newly opened house about the Wurlitzer Hope-Jones Unit

the Second Touches – of course the "why" and "how" of this secondary tone-production was a complete mystery to me.

"I had one obsession – I must somehow get to

PAGES FROM THE PAST . . . *continued*

installation was the turning point in the fortunes of the Wurlitzer Company. The Liberty Theatre organ proved to theatre owners and operators just how much they needed a Wurlitzer. As one owner was to write later: "There are times when the pictures are not so good, but with our music (i.e., the Wurlitzer) they go over big!"

LIBERTY WURLITZER HAD BUILT-IN CURFEW CONTROLLER

As a teenager in Seattle, Dick Simonton met Johnny Von Herberg, son of one of the owners of the Liberty Theatre. The two had full run of the theatre and its Wurlitzer before the house opened and after it closed at night. The two boys couldn't stay and noodle on the three manual instrument too long after the last show at night because the organ had an exclusive

built-in curfew control. The "automatic" controller worked in this way:

When the blower was installed, the most economical way to power it was with a 500 volt direct current motor. The source of power was from the overhead catenary line (trolley wire) of the local streetcar line. Electricity flowed feely all day while the streetcars moved about the city, but, recalls Simonton, he and Johnny Von Herberg had to be out of the theatre and on their way home on the last car passing the front of the house at night, for after going to the end of the line and discharging the passengers, the motorman and conductor ran the train back to the car barn. When the last car was in, the main generator switch was pulled and all power ceased until the next morning when it was time to start running the trains again. Because it was a long walk home, in the dark, and possible parental anger to encounter as well, the two boys

did not fail to meet the curfew restriction. Installed in 1914, the Liberty Wurlitzer was a three-manual 17-rank organ and was installed over the proscenium. Owners of this theatre also operated the Portland Liberty with its big four-manual Wurlitzer. This organ is now [1965] owned by the Granada Organ Loft Club in Seattle and is installed in the old Granada Theatre, a neighborhood house. The instrument is used for concerts and accompaniment of silent pictures. Gaylord Carter, famed LA ATOE member, has played several Flicker Fingers shows there.

The Liberty closed with silent films in 1929 and reopened the following year with "talkies." The wonderful organ was never played publicly again. It was maintained by Simonton and Gordon Blanchard until 1935. The theatre was finally razed in 1955 and the Wurlitzer was removed and installed in the gymnasium of Pacific Lutheran University, Parkland, WA. The organ sold for \$1500.



The decorated console of the 3/17 Wurlitzer at the time it was being removed when the theatre was closed and slated to be razed. This instrument was responsible for the great success enjoyed by Wurlitzer, and is the reason Seattle is credited as being the "Cradle of the American Theatre Pipe Organ."

One of the early Wurlitzer Hope-Jones Unit Orchestras, the console has but a single stop rail. Notice that the Hope-Jones horseshoe design changed very little through the years. This very famous Wurlitzer found a happy home in Spokane's First Nazarene Church.



The left photo above depicts Christmas at the Liberty, possibly the first year after it opened judging by the vehicle parked in front of the building. Snow is visible on the street. Note the wreath and garlands hanging from the Liberty sign.

The photo on the right was taken more recently, long after the theatre was razed and the property was turned into a parking lot. Some of the same architectural details of the adjacent buildings can be seen in both photos.