



PUGET SOUND PIPELINE

Volume 33, Nos. 7 - 8 • July – August 2022

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Live Theatre Organ is back!

Ken Double *plays Theatre Organ the way you like it!*



Ken Double is known for playing the kind of music theatre organ fans thoroughly enjoy — up-tempo and toe-tapping! His theatre organ performance history includes playing opening public concerts at Lafayette's Long Center, Manual High School's Wurlitzer, Anderson Paramount's Page, and Warren Performing Arts Center's Barton, all in Indiana. He has played many concerts worldwide, and has numerous recordings to his credit. He is Past President and CEO of ATOS. We're eagerly anticipating another enjoyable afternoon of bouncy popular favorites on CCA's fine 3/25 Kimball-Wurlitzer.

**SAFETY FIRST –
masks please!**

CCA has ample space
for Covid distancing



Don't Miss It!
ADMISSION

PSTOS Members \$20 • Non-Members \$25

Age 16 and under FREE with adult

Calvary Christian Assembly's
3/25 Kimball-Wurlitzer

Sat., August 27, 2:00 pm

Calvary Christian Assembly
6801 Roosevelt Way NE
Seattle 98115

Drive directions

NORTHBOUND I-5

Take exit 171 for WA-522/Lake City Way toward Bothell
Take a slight right at NE 73rd St
Take the 1st right onto Roosevelt Way NE
Destination will be on the right

SOUTHBOUND I-5

Take exit 171 toward NE 71st St/NE 65th St
Merge onto 6th Ave NE
Take a slight left at NE 71st St
Continue onto NE 70th St
Turn right at Roosevelt Way NE
Destination will be on the right

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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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PRESIDENT'S *Message*

Greetings PSTOS members and friends...

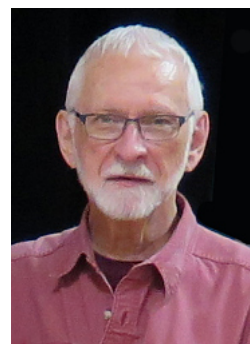
Summer is finally here, and by the time you read this newsletter the 4th of July will be behind us leading us into August, which will see our first in-venue solo Theatre Organ concert in over two years. But first, from July 3 through 7, the ATOS convention will take place in San Diego— five days filled with organ music played on Wurlitzers, Robert Mortons, and the 4-manual 80-rank Austin at the Spreckels Organ Pavilion, Balboa Park, San Diego. Artists, including Jonas Nordwall, Dave Wickerham, Jerry Nagano, Jelani Eddington, Walt Strony, Mark Herman, and Clark Wilson, will grace the keyboards of these instruments located in very interesting and exciting venues.

Following the convention from July 17 through 23, the ATOS Summer Youth Adventure will be held in Detroit, Michigan. PSTOS is proud to have three local young artists attend this adventure. They will have the opportunity to work with instructors Jelani Eddington, Donna Parker, Jonas Nordwall, and guest instructor Lance Luce. Wonderful news from Jonas Nordwall, the Summer Youth Adventure Director: ATOS has been gifted an unspecified amount of money from an estate, to be used specifically for ATOS youth programs. This endowment covers ALL of the expenses for all ATOS youth activities over the next few years. The funds cover all transportation, lodging, meals, and any additional fees associated with registration or the events themselves. This means that our three young artists will have all expenses paid!

Saturday, August 27 at 2pm, Ken Double will kick off the PSTOS Concert Series playing the 3-manual 25-rank Kimball-Wurlitzer installed at Calvary Christian Assembly, or CCA as we like to say. PSTOS invested considerable time and resources to bring this organ up to concert performance level, including additional ranks of pipes, installation of a complete toy counter and tuned percussions, and a whole new computerized relay and stop action system.

Fast forward to Saturday, November 12th at 2pm, Dave Wickerham will once again perform for PSTOS on the CCA instrument. We are excited to welcome Dave back to the Pacific Northwest after a four-year hiatus. Dave has an impressive theatre organ background, concertizing extensively throughout the U.S. and Australia, and it will be a thrill to once again hear him in a live performance venue. The sanctuary of the church is quite spacious and includes a balcony, so there will be sufficient seating with space to accommodate social distancing. COVID protocols will be in place and PSTOS will follow the latest guidelines that will be determined as the concerts near.

I want to thank every one of you for your continued support of PSTOS and hope to see your smiling faces at the upcoming concerts.
 Bob Zat, President



Open Console at the Evans Residence

The organ studio at the residence of Russ and Jo Ann Evans in Kenmore was a happy place on the afternoon of Sunday, June 12. About a dozen attendees assembled for the open console event, at which Jo Ann Evans and Jamie Snell played the Evans' mighty 3/18 Wurlitzer and Halie Dodrill played the grand piano. Tunes included "Love Is Here to Stay" and "My Romance" (Jo Ann), "You'll Never Walk Alone" and a five-song medley from The Sound of Music (Halie), "Carolina in the Morning" and "Danny Boy" (Jo Ann and Halie duo), and "Sway," "Laura," and "Stardust" (Jamie). The organ sounded best-ever, and Jo Ann gave a



bonus demonstration of the toy counter, including train and bird whistles. Following the music, everyone socialized while enjoying coffee and cookies, and a good time was had by all. Many thanks to Jo Ann for organizing, Russ for organ prep, and all the volunteers who helped with setup and cleanup, notably Terry and Marie Perdue.

Coming to CCA

Sat., November 12

**Dave
Wickerham**



We are excited to welcome Dave back to the Pacific Northwest after a four-year hiatus. Always a favorite, Dave has an impressive theatre organ background, concertizing extensively throughout the U.S. and Australia, and entertaining at pizza restaurants in Arizona, Illinois, Michigan, and Las Vegas. He served for seven years as organist-curator with the legendary Milhous Collection in South Florida, and was Organist in Residence at Crystal Theatre in Crystal Falls, Michigan, a performing arts center housing a 3/21 Moller theatre organ. Dave was a featured organist for our own 2010 ATOS convention, and has toured Australia/New Zealand four times playing to sold-out houses in all the major cities.

Don't miss it!

PIPE ORGAN TERMS EXPLAINED

We hope this new Pipeline column will help demystify the jargon used to talk about pipe organs. If you'd like to know the meaning of other terms you've heard, please let us know by sending an email to joann@pstos.org

6 – SWELL SHADES

They're not "swell window coverings!"

The word "swell" in organ terms means "an increase in volume or loudness."

"Shades," also called "shutters," permit the organist to regulate loudness or softness.

On an electronic organ, moving the volume pedal makes the sound louder or softer in a way similar to changing the volume control on a radio.

The pipes of a pipe organ, however, always "speak" with the same volume. There is not a way to adjust the amount of air blown into each pipe to make it softer or louder.

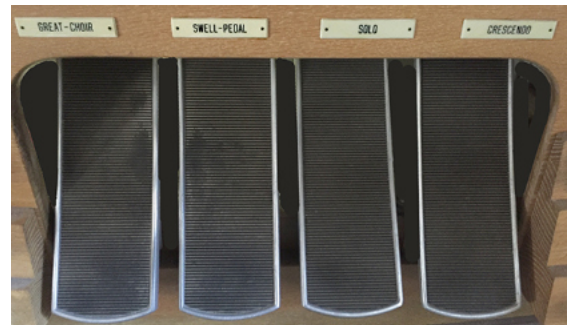
To enable expression, or loud and soft playing, pipes are installed in pipe chambers (small rooms) which contain the sound. Large openings, resembling windows with no glass, face toward the audience side of the room. Into these openings are installed large, thick, moveable wood shutters (occasionally glass) resembling oversized Venetian blind slats. As an organist moves the swell (expression) pedal with his foot, these shutters pivot, one by one, allowing more or less sound to escape from the chamber.



One small set of swell shades. The pipes in the chamber behind are visible between the partially opened shutters.

Multiple expression pedals on larger instruments indicate multiple pipe chambers, each with its own set of shutters. This allows the organist, as an example, to open the shutters on the chamber containing the clarinet when playing the first passage of *Rhapsody In Blue*, while keeping the shutters closed on the chamber containing the accompaniment voices. This allows the clarinet to be featured as the dominant instrument without being overpowered by other voices.

Swell shoes, or expression pedals, on a console for an organ with three chambers. The rightmost pedal is a Crescendo, which activates additional ranks as it is opened more.



The shutters in theaters are often located behind decorative screens that allow the sound to escape, but visually obscure the utilitarian appearance of the shutters in work.

Even when the shutters are completely closed, a surprising amount of sound manages to escape.

The ATOS San Diego Convention Was Enjoyable For All

Report by Jamie Snell

Yours truly was privileged to attend the 64th annual convention of the American Theatre Organ Society, this year in San Diego, July 3-7. It was a success by any standard, though on a smaller scale than most – only nine performances over five days, and only three venues. The original plan had included one more venue, but it was unavailable due to construction. One of the venues (the outdoor Spreckels Organ Pavilion, with a 4/46 Austin) was used for just one concert; the other two (Trinity Church, with a 4/24 Wurlitzer, and the Balboa Theatre, with a 4/23 Morton) hosted the other musical events; conveniently, the Balboa is a short walk from the convention hotel (the Westin Gaslamp), so much less bussing was needed than at most conventions.

Sunday, July 3 (Overture Day) began with a visit to the Museum of Making Music in Carlsbad, with guided tours of the exhibits. This was an extraordinary display of many varied musical instruments, ranging from centuries old through the present – stringed, blown, percussion, and all manner of electronic types. The museum included a hands-on section, where visitors tried out historically unique keyboards, a Theremin, and other unusual instruments. Following the Welcome Reception at the hotel bar, attendees made the short walk to the Balboa for the Harold Lloyd silent film, *The Freshman*, accompanied by Clark Wilson in his usual consummate style.

Monday, Independence Day, the convention officially opened with a concert by Mark Herman at Trinity Church, featuring a medley from the Disney film *Snow White*, and another of Rodgers and Hart favorites. In the evening, buses took us to the Spreckels Pavilion, one of the few outdoor pipe organ venues in the world, for a concert by Jelani Eddington, including medleys of Ella Fitzgerald and Gershwin classics, and appropriately, *The Star-Spangled Banner* and marches of the five U.S. armed forces branches.

On Tuesday there were just two concerts, both at Trinity: The first featured the inimitable Jonas Nordwall, with an eclectic mix including pops (such as “Yankee

Doodle Dandy”), light rock (“We’ve Only Just Begun”), and classical (excerpts from Saint-Saëns *Symphony No. 3*). Shortly following was an artist known to few in the audience: Ryoki Yamaguchi, who had flown from Japan just for this convention. His humility was matched by exquisite playing, including medleys from Disney films and from *The Sound of Music*, a group of Strauss waltzes, and, to everyone’s amusement, the 1960s Japanese love song “Sukiyaki.”

In the evening the ATOS Annual Meeting and Members Forum took place, presided over by the new Board Chairman, Tedde Gibson. The agenda included reports on proposed by-laws revisions; ways to support the chapters more effectively; progress on bringing the financial records up to date following a lapse; outreach efforts to build membership as the pandemic fades; update on the archive collection, recently moved from the University of Oklahoma to the Organ Historical Society; status of *Theatre Organ*, including delivery delays; and the Summer Youth Adventure. There was spirited discussion, including a few moments of drama.

many in the audience knew. The afternoon was free time for attendees to explore the city, and for a few who signed up early, an open console event at a local member’s residence. The evening event was the Mel Brooks film *Silent Movie*, superbly accompanied by Juan Cardona.

Thursday, the final day, began with a concert by Jerry Nagano at the Balboa, featuring medleys from *Brigadoon* and favorites by Richard Rodgers and Richard Whiting. The afternoon was devoted to the Awards Luncheon, at which Tedde Gibson presented the 2022 awards. The closing concert of the convention was that evening, originally scheduled to be played by Walt Strony; a few days earlier he had gotten Covid and was unable to perform; Ken Double graciously agreed to substitute, and played a fine concert. At the start he announced that Strony had only a mild case and was recovering; as a tribute, he and Mike Bryant first rehearsed the audience in saying the phrases “We miss you! We love you! Get well!” which it then recited as Bryant recorded a video to send to Strony. Double’s concert included a medley

dedicated to “Places I Call Home,” a medley from *The New Moon*, and a surprise vocal solo (accompanied by organ playback) of “Hard-Hearted Hannah” to open the second half.

Overheard comments from attendees through the week were uniformly positive about the convention – the performances, venues, organs, logistics, food, etc. Ken Double’s indomitable style of announcing was just as always. Regret was expressed that there was no youth competition, due to insufficient numbers, but there was confidence that interest

will be restored soon. Many thanks to the conference organizer Rosemary Bailey and the Theatre Organ Society of San Diego for putting on a first-rate convention. For more information, see www.atos.org and the forthcoming issue of *Theatre Organ*.



Dave Wickerham at the Balboa Theatre

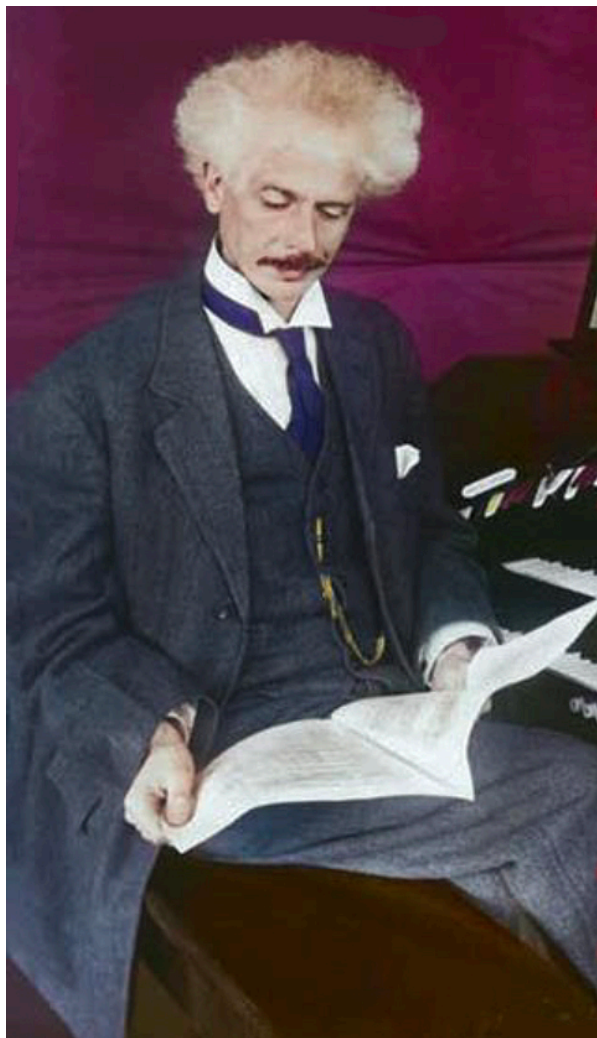
Wednesday’s two musical events were both at the Balboa Theatre, starting with a concert by Dave Wickerham, in top form, including Joplin rags, medleys of *The Wizard of Oz* and Mancini, Gershwin, and John Williams favorites, and a hymn dedicated to Wickerham’s late wife, Rhonda Sue, whom

PAGES FROM THE PAST . . .

The Unit Orchestra Incarnatus Est – Part 1

Rochester's Hope-Jones Legacy

By JONATHAN ORTLOFF • Re-printed from the April 2018 edition of "The Tracker," and Melbourne Theatre Organ's July newsletter



Western New York can rightly be called the cradle of the Unit Orchestra, having been the locale where Robert Hope-Jones ultimately settled after immigrating to the United States from England in 1903. After a final failed venture of his own, his 1911 move to and influence on the Rudolph Wurlitzer Manufacturing Company in North Tonawanda, outside Buffalo, would cement the proliferation of the unit organ.

There are three instruments in Rochester that preserve the legacy of Hope-Jones: the largest surviving instrument bearing a Hope-Jones nameplate, a large Wurlitzer theater organ, and an essentially-unaltered Wurlitzer church organ. Equally lauded as a brilliant genius as he was derided an untrained, pernicious vandal, Hope-Jones's impact on modern pipe organ building

cannot be ignored. Perhaps no other organ builder in history has so completely re-shaped the pipe organ: in a single patent in 1890 Hope-Jones re-imagined the organ in a single stroke, presenting a whole system for its construction and control using novel forms of key and stop action, coupling, expression, tremulant, and console design.

Throughout his career, his mechanical innovations would be matched by tonal developments: pipework voiced on exceptionally high wind pressure, exaggerated scales both gargantuan (Diaphone, Phonon Diapason, Tibia Clausa) and miniscule (Viole d'Orchestre, Kinura), complete enclosure, and unification of voices. The basics of his low-voltage electrical control and action are still in use in every electric-action organ today.

After arriving in the United States, Hope-Jones had little trouble finding, but much trouble keeping, prominent positions with Austin and Skinner. The final straw for Ernest Skinner was a contract the company had taken over from an earlier failed venture of Hope-Jones's, a new organ for Park Church in Elmira, New York. There, the organist John Dalby Peake,

had requested a new type of console, with stops arrayed in a curved fashion around the player. Thus, the horseshoe console had its incarnation, and bore a Skinner nameplate, controlling a thoroughly Hope-Jonesian specification, complete with Tibia Plena and Diapason Phonon.

When Skinner "suggested he go elsewhere," Hope-Jones secured financial backing in Elmira, and hung out his shingle.

HOPE-JONES ON HIS OWN HOPE-JONES ORGAN COMPANY OPUS 2 FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH, 1908

The Hope-Jones Organ Company's first instrument, built in 1907 for the New York State School for the Blind in Batavia, New York, represented a sea change in organ building. It

was the first true unit organ in which all ranks played at multiple pitches on multiple manuals, with 38 registers extended out of just twelve ranks. In order to accomplish such unification, two mechanical innovations were necessary: a windchest that could activate each pipe in the organ independently of the others, and an electric relay to control it.

With his background in electrical engineering, Hope-Jones handled the latter brilliantly. For the former, he turned to his long-time right-hand man, Joseph Carruthers, who designed an electropneumatic unit chest that mimicked the attack obtained by a slider chest—a feature Hope-Jones recognized as valuable. With little alteration, this chest was used through the entirety of Hope-Jones's, and Wurlitzer's, production.

With the Batavia instrument, the limits of conventional organ building were thrown off, and a new design ideology was born. It was a paradigm shift the likes of which the profession had not seen since the introduction of sliders to the blockwerk.

The firm's Opus 2, built in 1908 for the First Universalist Church in Rochester, was one rank larger than the Batavia instrument, and more extensively unified. Its 13 ranks were divided into three sections: the main expression chamber containing ten ranks, an unenclosed section comprising of the Tibia Clausa and Diapason Phonon, and a separate expression chamber in the basement for the Tuba, speaking via a concrete tone chute and through perforated canvas panels in the bottom of the organ case, painted to look like wood.

Hope-Jones recognized the value of good publicity; consequently, the company regularly funded elaborate dedicatory events, hiring big names to open new instruments. Opus 2 was dedicated on October 6, 1908, by none other than Edwin H. Lemare, who would later publicly deride the Hope-Jones unit system.

In the intervening 110 years, the organ has been the subject of two major programs of work. A rebuild in 1937 by Wurlitzer fully enclosed the organ, replaced the combination action in the console, added Chimes, and swapped the original Cornopean for a narrow-scale capped Trumpet. A tag on a Tuba pipe, dated July 1937, stating its 12" wind pressure suggests this stop

PAGES FROM THE PAST . . . *Continued*

may have been revoiced at that time as well.

An ill-fated rebuild by a local firm in the 1990s ruined the original electropneumatic relay and caused irreversible, but not fatal, damage to the windchests. The pipework happily escaped harm.

In its survival, Opus 2 stands as the largest—and one of just two—extant Hope-Jones organs, the other being a six-rank residence organ in Portland, Maine. Now sympathetically cared for, the organ still gives a good account of what Hope-Jones was after.

Don't be fooled by the stop list and the horseshoe console: Opus 2 is not a theatre organ. In fact, excepting the organ's most exaggerated stops—Tibia, Phonon, Tuba—the pipework is fairly traditionally voiced, and of great Romantic beauty. Even the three loud stops are more colorful than their later theatre counterparts, particularly the Tibia, which has a decided sweetness.

The organ's most virtuosic pipe construction and voicing is found in the Violes d'Orchestre which possess all the keenness of theatre examples at about half the volume. These are color stops, adding a sheen to registrations without stridency. The fact that the Viole is not available at 2' pitch, which Hope-Jones included in other instruments obviating, he said, the need for mixtures, perhaps reflects their softer voicing. Other unexpected sounds are the Gedeckt, a delicate spotted metal chimney flute, and the organ's quietest voices, the Dulciana and Unda Maris: for Hope-Jones, it really wasn't just the Tuba Mirabilis, the Diaphone, and 50" pressure.

WURLITZER AT THE MOVIES WURLITZER OPUS 1951 RKO PALACE THEATRE, 1928

Under the continuing weight of contracts let at a loss, the Hope-Jones Organ Company failed in 1910. Within three months, Hope-Jones had signed a ten-year contract with Wurlitzer to head the "Hope-Jones Organ Department." Initially attracted to the lucrative residence organ business, the company soon began pursuing the emerging theatre market.

While setting up the organ department for the Wurlitzers, Hope-Jones was charged with drawing up specifications for the first stock-model Unit Orchestras. The theatre organ had been born.

Over the next two decades, prestige for Wurlitzer would come in building organs for nearly every prominent picture palace in the country, including the Times Square

Paramount, Fox theaters in Detroit, St. Louis, San Francisco and Brooklyn, and the 58-rank twin-console job for Radio City Music Hall in 1932.

To be sure, large instruments were not Wurlitzer's bread and butter; the neighborhood Bijou might be lucky with five or six ranks. In fact, out of roughly 2,500 organs produced, Wurlitzer built only 93 four-manual instruments, and just three five-manual organs. The rest were two and three manuals, mostly smaller than ten ranks.

In 1928, Wurlitzer was at the top of its game. Though production had slowed a bit from the one-organ-per-day frenzy of 1926, 1928 was truly a banner year in terms of large, glamorous instruments in prestigious locations. The aforementioned quartet of 4/36 Fox organs, the wild and unique 4/34 Mayan fantasy at Detroit's Fisher Theatre, the still-extant 4/26 at the Brooklyn Paramount, Jesse Crawford's 4/21 recording organ at the New York Paramount Studio, three four-manuals to Australia, and the last five-manual, at Chicago's Paradise Theatre were just some of the bright lights of 1928.

Back in Rochester, Grierson designed Opus 1951 from the ground up rather than picking one of Wurlitzer's stock models. Though his design was fairly standard in terms of what ranks were present in a 21-rank organ, several unusual features give this instrument a character of its own. Six ranks of strings, four of them celesting pairs, and including a rare 16' Gamba on 15" pressure provide a lush chorus unmatched in most organs this size.

On the other end of the tonal spectrum, 8' tone is particularly weighty: each chamber's Tibia is the larger "solo scale," on 15" pressure; there is the usual massive Diaphonic Diapason with its rumbling 16' wooden Diaphone bass, and a peerless 15"-pressure Tuba Mirabilis, perhaps the finest example of this Wurlitzer stop.

The organ's rarest feature is the extension of the Mirabilis into a thunderous wooden 16' Bombarde of gargantuan scale, one of only 24 sets the company made. The omission of a second 8' Vox Humana to pair with the Solo Tibia was unusual, but not unprecedented. Nearly unprecedented, however, is the placement of the three chorus reeds in the Solo chamber. Typically, the Tuba Horn would be in the Main, with the Trumpet and Tuba Mirabilis in the Solo. Only one other Wurlitzer organ is known to the author to have all three in one chamber.

The console, Wurlitzer's stately "Empire"

design, teemed with Grierson's signature as well. Sub Octave, Unison Off, and Octave couplers for each manual perhaps reflected Grierson's classical organ training; only a handful of Wurlitzer theatre organs were so specified. For the third manual, he specified an Orchestral division rather than the usual Bombarde, and fitted it out accordingly, as almost a secondary Great, with unusually-complete unification, including both Tibias to 2-2/3' and 2' pitches.

Tradition holds, perhaps apocryphally, that because of the size and import of the instrument, its proximity to the Wurlitzer factory, and the company's relationship with Tom Grierson, Wurlitzer sent a pair of voicers to Rochester to finish the organ at the Palace, a luxury afforded to precious few theatre organs. Whether or not Opus 1951 was a beneficiary of same is unknown for sure, but it has always been regarded as a particularly fine-sounding Wurlitzer theater organ.

After a successful career with Mr. Grierson at the console, the organ was largely forgotten until the late 1950s and early 1960s with the founding of the Rochester Theatre Organ Society. When the Palace was demolished in 1965, RTOS bought the organ and moved it to the Auditorium Theatre, then part of the large Masonic Temple, displacing Skinner Opus 711, now installed in Ascension Episcopal Church across town. Since then, an English Horn and a second Vox Humana have been added to the instrument. In 2006, the unification was re-specified by English theatre organist Simon Gledhill, and a digital relay and combination action replaced the original Electro-pneumatic equipment. Clark Wilson performed remedial tonal finishing.

With its weighty bottom and sumptuous, not overly pushed strings, this organ is at its best in soaring ballads, torch songs, or orchestral transcriptions. While it can certainly get up and go for up-tempo numbers, it is not as light on its feet as some other organs of similar size. That being said, its immediately recognizable signature sound is one of the most satisfying, room-filling theater installations in the country. Mammoth swell shade openings and largely-open grilles provide almost no impedance for its 23 ranks to saturate the room. *No Remaining Seats*, a recording made in 2005 by David Peckham when the seats were removed from the theatre for replacement, presents the organ in a unique acoustic, with nearly five seconds of reverberation.

Continued next issue.