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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  
 Volume 12 No. 12, / Volume 13, No. 1 December 2001 / January 2002

Plan now for a great time  
 at the annual PSTOS  
**Christmas Party** ★

**Sunday, Dec. 2, 2PM**  
 Haller Lake Community Club  
 12579 Densmore Ave. N.. Seattle



**Featuring...**

- Tacoma's famous "Ladies In Red" toe-tapping saxophone quartet
- Don Wallin with holiday music on the club pipe organ
- Great food!
- Angel's and Devil's Punch!
- Sweets supplied by PSTOS
- Drawing for valuable gifts



**THE LADIES IN RED** are an engaging saxophone quartet performing toe-tapping tunes from ragtime to swing! They have been featured at Seattle Folklife Festival, Emerald Downs Racetrack, Victorian Music Hall, Gig Harbor Maritime Festival, Super Mall of the Northwest, Gateway Center Plaza, Commencement Bay Jazz Society, Federal Way Coalition of the Performing Arts fundraiser, Pierce County AIDS Walk, Proctor Street Farmers Market, and at numerous retirement communities.

**DON WALLIN** needs no introduction, having been a regular at Tacoma Pizza & Pipes for many years. A well known local organ teacher, he also plays for numerous events in the Tacoma/Seattle area.

PSTOS welcomes both Don and The Ladies In Red! We look forward to a fun holiday celebration!

Please bring a plate of non-sweet finger foods for our famous Holiday Feast! Beverages and dessert furnished by PSTOS.

**Mark your calendar now!** Catch up with your friends, and launch your holidays with an enjoyable celebration.

**Admission \$5 per person.**

**Admission includes five tickets for the drawings. Additional drawing tickets may be purchased.**

A brief membership meeting with election of 2002 officers will precede the party.

**DRIVE DIRECTIONS:**

**Northbound I-5:** Use Exit 174 onto NE 130th St., turn left over freeway one long block to 1st Ave. N.E. Turn left (south) one block to 128th\*. Right on N.E. 128th three odd blocks to Densmore. Left on Densmore, clubhouse is on the right. Parking both front and rear. **Southbound I-5:** Use Exit 175 onto N.E. 145th, turn right one block to 1st Ave. N.E. Left (south) through N.E. 130th to N.E. 128th. Continue where underlined above.

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December 2001 – January 2002  
Published monthly by  
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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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**Pipeline Online Website**

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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.

# President's Message



Another WOW! for JONAS NORDWALL and the fantastic Johnson Theatre Pipe Organ! Jonas played an outstanding concert for us on November 10th. Thanks, Jonas!

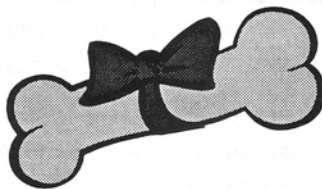
We also thank Bonnie and Leif Johnson for so graciously opening their home to us. With such a shortage of pipe organ venues in our area, we are indeed fortunate to have had this opportunity. (We'd like to do it again and again!!)

OWEN CANNON, our PSTOS scholarship recipient, played two selections for us during the program. One was a medley from *My Fair Lady*. The second was an outstanding performance of the famous Widor Toccata. He certainly is a credit to us. Good work Owen! He tells me he has access to theatre organ music...does this mean we'll hear some Roaring Twenties music next time, Owen?

Don't forget our annual Christmas party. Unique entertainment has been planned—you won't want to miss it. Please join us at Haller Lake Community Club on Sunday, December 2nd.

Since this is the last issue of the *Pipeline* this year, I'll take the opportunity to wish you all Happy Holidays. Until 2002...

—Barbara Graham



Joining Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society is quick and easy! For a one year membership, send a \$15 check payable to PSTOS together with your name(s) as you would like them to appear on your name badges, your address with complete 7-digit ZIP code, and your email address to Norman Miller, Treasurer, 2644 NW Esplanade, Seattle, WA 98117-2527.

# PSTOS Coming Events

**Annual PSTOS****Christmas Party**

Another happy holiday event with great entertainment and marvelous food.

Haller Lake Community Club.

Sun., Dec. 2, 2 pm

**Valentine's Party**

A fun February event. Special entertainment! Plus organ music.

Date and venue TBA.

**St. Patrick's Day Celebration**

Jointly sponsored by PSTOS and HLCC.

Haller Lake Community Club

Tentatively set for March 17th

**Summer Social**

Another summer music event at the home of Russ and Jo Ann Evans.

Saturday, July 20, 2PM

**England's Chris Powell**

The only U.S. concert for Chris' 2002 world tour! A great young organist.

More details forthcoming.

Venue and time TBA.

September 8, 2002

# OTHER Events of Interest

**Metropolis**

German silent movie from 1927.

Wurlitzer accompaniment

by Dennis James

Paramount Theatre, 9th & Pine, Seattle

November 26, 7PM

**The Three Ragtimers**

Dan Grinstead, Hokum W. Jeebs, Eric Shoemaker, four big performances!

Hokum Hall in West Seattle

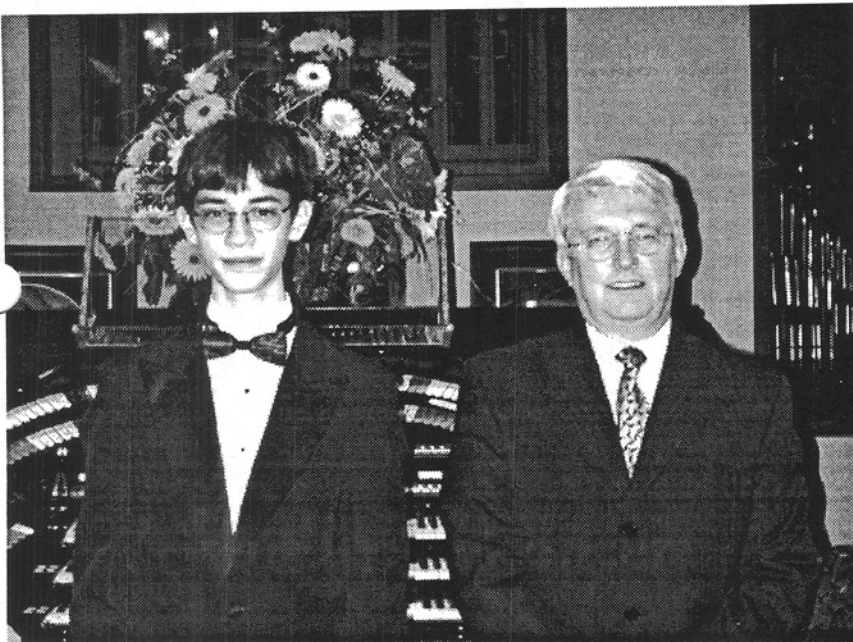
Nov. 23-24, 8PM

Details & reservations: [www.hokumhall.o](http://www.hokumhall.o)

## JONAS NORDWALL concert was outstanding!

And OWEN CANNON, our scholarship recipient, demonstrated his accomplishments to much applause.

If you weren't at the Johnson mansion on November 10th, you missed a truly outstanding event! Jonas Nordwall once again demonstrated his virtuosity as he presented a wide range of music from orchestral transcriptions, to finger-busters, to Gershwin, to several classical numbers. The Wurlitzer, though having had very little maintenance in the past year, performed flawlessly and sounded magnificent. Jonas is, perhaps more than nearly any other organist, totally at home on the instrument, and featured most all its resources...including the beautiful brass trumpets at ceiling level speaking directly into the balcony. Nobody sleeping there!



OWEN CANNON and JONAS NORDWALL

Owen Cannon, our PSTOS scholarship recipient, played a number in each half. Both he and Jonas arrived early in the day and spent several hours together, going over Owen's numbers, and working out registrations. Owen's teacher, knowing he would be performing for a theatre organ group, had worked with him to learn a medley from My Fair Lady. Between Owen's fine musicianship and the registration help provided by Jonas, it was a very enjoyable addition to the program.

In the second half, Owen, barely 17 years old, showed his stuff by performing the famous Widor Toccata. Even those claiming not to especially enjoy the classics had to be impressed.

Jonas publicly gave high marks to Owen's accomplishments at such an early age.

Thanks to Jonas for again providing such a marvelous day for theatre organ aficionados.

And thanks to Owen for making the trip from Pendleton to perform for PSTOSers.

## Attention all Hobbyist Organists!

Here's your chance to  
receive help from a top  
theatre organist...

And all for just \$5.00!

Don't pass this one by....

Begin practicing NOW!

The ATOS Hobbyist Competition was established to help all hobbyist organ players become more familiar with the theatre pipe organ. Every entrant will receive helpful written comments from the judges and the \$5 entry fee will help raise funds for the Young Theatre Organist Competition as well as the Hobbyist Competition. Your taped entry will be judged on the following: Accuracy and Clarity, Registration, Phrasing and Dynamics, Use of Theatre Organ style technique and resources, and General Musicality. Entries will be heard and judged by two internationally known theatre organ concert artists!

The competition is open to all non-professional organist members of ATOS ages 22-105! The entrant will not have held any engagement as an organist for which he/she received compensation. The entrant may not have marketed tapes/CDs for commercial release. The entrant must not have received artist compensation for a concert appearance. All entries must be played on a theatre pipe organ. Sorry, no electronic instruments, please. Entries will consist of TWO arrangements submitted on one cassette tape. The two selections of choice must not exceed a combined length of six minutes.

To receive a copy of the full requirements as well as where to send your entry, please phone Jo Ann Evans, 425-485-5465, or email at [rj.evans@verizon.net](mailto:rj.evans@verizon.net).

## PAGES FROM THE PAST...

Yakima's Capitol Theater has interesting history.

As reported in *Marquee*, the Journal Of The Theatre Historical society, 1973. From the Bill Bunch archives.

In the early 1970s, Yakima's Capitol Theatre was approved for listing on the Washington State Register of Historic Places. Designed by noted architect, B. Marcus Priteca, plans for the theater were begun in 1918, and the theater opened as the *Mercy* on April 5, 1920, with a Schubert production of the operetta, "*Maytime*." Over the years the theater has been known also as *Loews*, and later the *Capitol*.

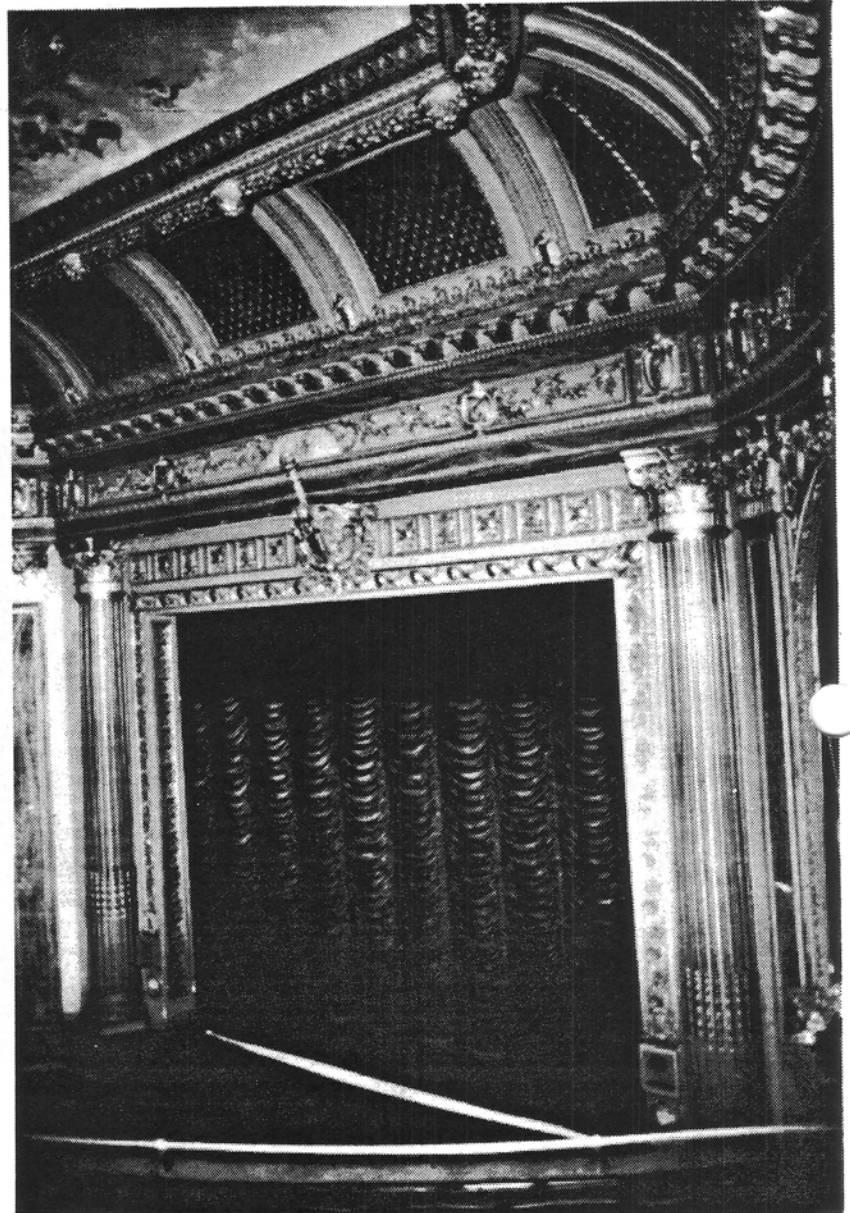
The theater was designed in the Beaux Arts style — a little Classicism, considerable French and all rather quiet and restrained. Anthony B. Heinsbergen was the decorator, using baskets of fruit, sheaths of grain and grasses reflecting the agrarian background of the area. The theater seated just under 2,000.

As with all Priteca designs, an up-to-sate system of heating and ventilating was provided. "In the summer," states the opening night program, "the [furnace] will be shut off and ice placed on the air washer, insuring a temperature much cooler than the outside atmosphere." Dimensions of the stage were 100 feet wide by 40 feet deep—the width being the standard specified by both Orpheum and Pantages circuits—which made the stage excellent for almost any type of entertainment. A fully roped working stage was included. On stage left an animal room was provided for vaudeville acts with live animals as well as a property room. Beneath the stage were fourteen dressing rooms, the musician's room, the musical library—the theater once maintained a full-time orchestra—a stage worker's room and two chorus rooms.

At the time of opening, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday were reserved for road shows and carefully selected motion pictures. Thursday through Sunday was devoted to the Pantages Circuit on a two-a-day schedule.

Vaudeville, first presented by the pantages Circuit, later by Loews, continued as long as programs were available. Later the theater housed the Yakima Community concerts, presenting touring symphony orchestras, pianists, singers, as well as the Yakima Symphony. During the 1960s the Broadway Theatre League presented touring stage offerings until the almost total demise of road productions. The Metropolitan Opera National Company made stops at the theater in 1966 and 1967. Yakima was the smallest city played on their entire tour and the Met was amazed to find that it had such adequate theater facilities.

In 1973 [when this article was written], most of the Priteca-Heinsbergen decorations were still intact in the auditorium—the only known one of the early



"Priteca-Greek" interiors to survive. It was also an excellent example of what such men as Alexander Pantages. Frederick Mercy and Priteca had in mind when they created buildings of such excellence. In this case it served its community well.

The *Capitol Theater (Mercy Theater)* pipe organ was Wurlitzer OPUS 389. It was a Style 210 (2 manual-9 ranks) and left the factory in January 1921.

[It was virtually the same as the Jack and Mary Lou Becvar Wurlitzer presently in Kent, when originally installed in the Seattle Blue Mouse Theatre.]

In 1941 Balcom & Vaughn removed the organ, enlarged the console to three manuals, and installed it in the Tacoma Rollerboard skating rink. The skating rink along with the organ were totally destroyed in a fire on August 11, 1975.

## A letter from the past—part 4

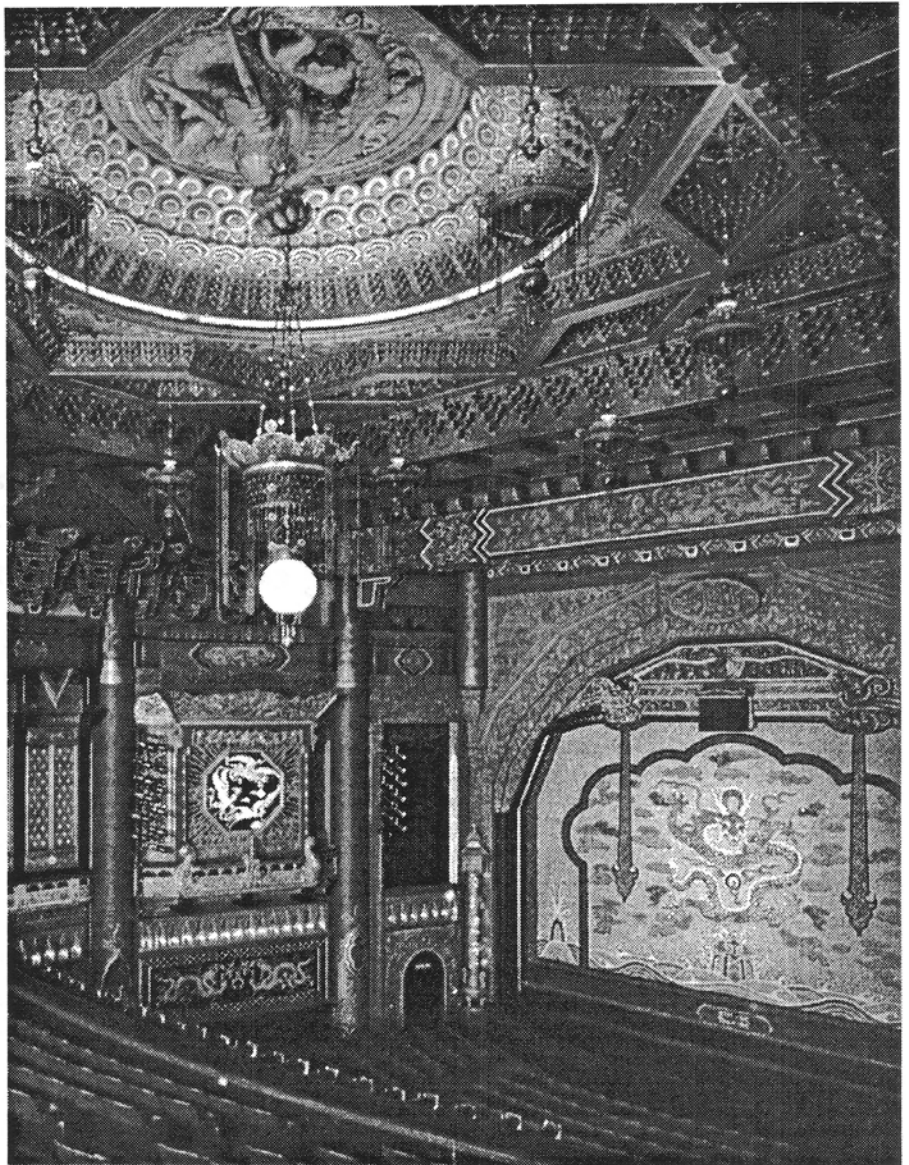


The September 1965 issue of *Console* magazine carried a lengthy article entitled, "Seattle, Cradle of the American Theatre Pipe Organ." Former Seattleite Dick Simonton, [shown left holding a 16' Vox Humana pipe, circa 1960's] one of the founders of ATOE [now ATOS], immediately upon reading the article, wrote a fascinating 12-page letter to the *Console* editor in which he shared numerous recollections of and interesting trivia about Seattle theatres and organs during the early years. Our last segment of Dick's letter is reproduced here for your enjoyment. —From the Wm. Bunch archives.

The Fifth Avenue theater in Seattle certainly has a fabulous interior, and if the Chinese in Hollywood had an auditorium to match its forecourt, it couldn't do better than have one like the Seattle Fifth Avenue. Someone said it was copied from a famous joss house, whatever that is. Ben Hall's book, *"The Best Remaining Seats,"* has a beautiful interior photograph of it.

In those days the show was over by 11 PM and every night Betty Shilton had her broadcast over Radio Station KOMO. The microphones were permanently suspended from the ceiling. I knew the doorman and so if I happened to be downtown, I would stop by the theater and say hello to Betty. She was a most congenial person and always gave a kid like myself a hearty welcome. Betty played requests and her program was very popular in those days prior to network radio. As the microphones were placed high in the theater, we could converse in low tones at the console without being heard. On more than one occasion as I would be standing by her while she was playing the requests, she would lean over and say, "Hey, kid, how does that go?" At which point I would hum the melody of the thing she had been requested to play and Betty was a good faker and she could carry it off to perfection giving it all the embellishment necessary. Fortunately I had a good memory for tunes and could usually come up with the right melody at the right time.

Betty Shilton now [1965] lives in Brooklyn and is organist for a religious institution. Several years ago Ben Hall took me over to where she lives, in this religious home, and she also plays the organ in their chapel and for their broadcasts. Ben had talked to her about the Seattle days and she remembered



The interior of Seattle's beautiful 5th Avenue Theatre

me and my visits to her during her broadcasts. I was so pleased at being remembered by her and Ben drove me to Brooklyn and we sent word up to her that we were in the lobby, but she would not come down. Perhaps she wants me to remember her as she was in the Seattle days, and not 35 years later.

## PUGET SOUND THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

Russ & Jo Ann Evans, Newsletter Editors  
6521 N.E. 191st  
Kenmore, WA 98028-3453

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*Best Wishes from your PSTOS Board of Directors  
for Happy Holidays and a wonderful New Year!  
We hope to see you at many events during 2002!*



## **ATOS announces criteria for 2002 Scholarship Program for Young Organists** **Please let us know about young organists who might qualify!**

The American Theatre Organ Society offers several scholarships for young organ students age 13 through 22 (as of July 1, 2002). Donna Parker is Chairperson for this program. Following is information from her.

"We feel this program enhances the purpose and goals of ATOS. It will give some students the opportunity to study with professional theatre organ teachers, and college students a chance to further their music degree program in organ performance, which may include classical studies. Contact the colleges and schools in your community and make them aware of our scholarship program. Send us the names and addresses of your schools. Your library will have a list of the music departments.

So many young people are unaware of the theatre organ. Encourage young members to join and have the fun of being part of the theatre organ world.

Interest in the scholarship program was great in 2001. Students are eager

for financial assistance and are working hard to obtain their particular goals in the music world.

Each year our program will be reviewed and is subject to revision.

Recipients of scholarships in 2001 are eligible to apply for a scholarship in 2002 if the student shows exceptional progress—at the discretion of the committee.

Monies granted in category "B" may be applied toward an approved theatre organ workshop.

Applications must be submitted by April 15, 2002, and following review of the committee members, recipients will be awarded their scholarships."

There are two categories in the ATOS Scholarship Program for 2002.

Category A is for students working toward a college organ performance degree, and provides a \$1,000 William B. Warner Memorial Scholarship. Applicants must be full-time music students at an institution of higher learning and

specializing in the study of organ performance. Candidates' names must be submitted by the school department head or designated representative.

Category B is for organ students studying with professional theatre organ teachers. Ten \$500 ATOS Scholarships are available in Categories A and B. Candidates' names must be submitted by their professional theatre organ teacher.

We ask our loyal PSTOS members to help in identifying young people who might qualify for these scholarships. We all want to see the theatre organ survive and that means involving the young, both as organists and as interested supporters.

Talk this program up to everyone you know....both young musicians and teachers.

Full details are available from Barbara Graham, 206-525-7859, [bxgraham@email.msn.com](mailto:bxgraham@email.msn.com), or Jo Ann Evans, 425-485-5465, [rj.evans@verizon.net](mailto:rj.evans@verizon.net).