

PUGET SOUND
THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

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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 14 No. ~~2~~ 5

May
February 2003

PSTOS proudly presents the wonderfully talented...

Jonas Nordwall and Tony Fenelon

In a spectacular Duo Program of

Pipes and Piano Pops



At The Magnificent
4/48 Wilcox Wurlitzer
and **Grand Piano**

Gig Harbor, WA

SATURDAY, May 3, 2PM

Proceeds from this event will benefit
the PSTOS Scholarship Fund, presently
providing classical organ training for
young and talented Daniel Goltz



JONAS NORDWALL, a native of Portland, possesses unique talents as a concert organist. Equally adept at both classical and popular music, he rarely needs printed scores, improvises freely without losing the identity of the music, is truly a master organist. He is organist for Portland First United Methodist Church, and the Oregon Symphony Orchestra. He has recorded over 15 theatre organ albums. For 10 years he was senior staff organist for Portland's Organ Grinder Restaurant. He has performed for numerous national ATOS conventions and in 1987 was chosen ATOS Organist Of The Year. Regarded as one of the nation's top theatre organists, Jonas' creative arrangements and clever stylings always entertain and impress.

The musical credits of Australia's **TONY FENELON** could easily fill several pages. A gifted child prodigy, early training in the classics gave him the foundation to later become a spectacular theatre organist. He has nineteen recordings to his credit, is a regular soloist with the Australian Pops Orchestra, received ATOS Organist Of The Year award in 2002. He has completed over a dozen major international concert tours throughout Australia, England, Canada and the U.S. He is currently under contract to Roland International and spends time in many countries concertizing on the Roland Atelier. Whether pop music, favorite standards, light classics, Broadway, or traditional classical music, Tony does it all and is always in high demand.



Paid PSTOS Members and their guests \$15
All others \$20

**Use the enclosed pink TICKET ORDER FORM to
order your tickets TODAY!**

Seating is limited. All ticket sales will be handled by mail, with no door sales.
For questions or last minute ticket inquiries, please contact Norman Miller at
colmiller@attbi.com or phone 206-784-7154

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

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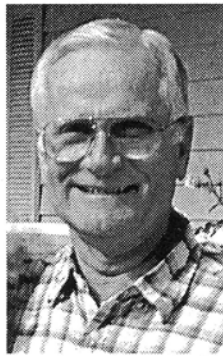
Listing of non-PSTOS events in the Pipeline

PSTOS, upon request, will list non-conflicting non-PSTOS theatre organ events in the "Other Events" column of the two Pipelines immediately preceding the event, providing Pipeline editors receive sufficient prior written notification. Venue, artist, type of event, date, and contact information will comprise the included information.

Advertising in the Pipeline

Classified-type ads for member-owned electronic, electric, or pipe organs, and/or pipe organ parts, will be published at no charge. Please limit copy to include brief description, contact name and phone number. Prices will not be listed. Ads may be edited for content and length. Mail ad copy to address above. Other advertising is not accepted.

PRESIDENT'S Message



Teddy Roosevelt said, "Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing." I believe that preserving the theater organ for future generations is work worth doing. Besides, we can have a lot of fun doing it.

Tom Blackwell works hard keeping our website interesting, informative and up to date. If you haven't visited in a while, drop by www.pstos.org and get "organized."

Tedde Gibson has given PSTOS the three manual console from his Marr & Colton to rebuild and install at Franklin High School, pending the school district's approval. Does anybody know where the 2nd Avenue "swimming palace" organ came from? One list we know of says "a theater back east." Got something more specific, let us know!

Speaking of Tedde Gibson, he stepped in at the last minute to substitute for Dennis James at the Paramount on March 31 and accompanied *Wings* to a full house. Here is Tom Blackwell's impression of the event:

"The silent movie tonight at the Paramount was great, but not for the reasons I expected. I arrived at the theatre around 3:30PM today for the pre-show setup and was surprised to find Tedde Gibson at the console practicing to *Wings*. (I learned later that this was his first-ever viewing of the film.) Dennis James had missed his plane out of Florida and the theatre contacted Tedde to see if he could play. HE DID AN ABSOLUTELY MARVELOUS JOB! His arrangements and modulations were interesting and very appropriate to the film. Everything held together and the audience was extremely appreciative, giving him

Continued Page 3, Column 1

PSTOS Coming Events

Tony Fenelon and Jonas Nordwall Duo Concert at the Wilcox Wurlitzer Home in Gig Harbor

What a special event this will be! It may well be YEARS before you have another opportunity for such a musical experience. Get your tickets now!

Saturday, May 3, 2PM

A Two-For-One Special!

Visit St. Columban Church in Yelm to enjoy Father Terence's fine theatre pipe organ and have lunch. Then on to the Bill Keller home near Olympia to hear and play Bill's spectacular Custom Allen Theatre Organ.

Saturday, June 21st

Summer Social & Program— Mystery Guest at the Wurli!

Jack & Mary Lou Becvar home in Kent. A program on their 3-manual Wurlitzer.

Sunday, July 20

Home party!

Ray & Muriel Whelpley home, Bellevue. Another opportunity to hear and play a beautifully restored Wurlitzer!

Saturday, Aug. 9

AMICA Convention, Portland

(Automatic Musical Instrument Collectors' Association) Let's charter a bus or even a train car! Hear Jonas Nordwall at the Oaks Park Rink and many other terrific programs. Full information coming in the May Pipeline.

August 20-24

Big Autumn Event at Haller Lake Community Club

Sunday, October 5

RAGMATAZZ with Ragtime Pianist BOB MILNE & Organist JONAS NORDWALL at Gig Harbor

Sunday afternoon, November 9

Annual PSTOS Christmas Party

Sunday, December 7

PRESIDENT'S Message,

Continued...

hearty applause before intermission and a standing ovation at the end. GREAT JOB, TEDDE!"

It is good to remember that theatre organs were designed to replace orchestras in accompanying silent films. Most theatre patrons did not go to the theatre specifically to hear the organ. There would have been complaints if the piano were used instead, but people would not have stopped going to see vaudeville and the movie. Your Board has been corresponding with folks in Australia, Denver and New York as to how to get more people to hear the theatre organ. A common thread is "the organ AND..." We will work to present organ and movies, vocalists, instrumentalists, drummers, dancers, etc., so that we can attract and infect more folks with our love of this magnificent musical instrument.

FOR SALE Organ Stuff

Small pipe organ for sale

4-rank organ from Margarite Theatre in Montana. Intact as it was originally installed. No alterations. Good organ for "first organ person." Room for five more ranks on relay/switch stack. No cut cables. Metal pipes boxed. Most offset pipes mitered to 8 feet. Very reasonable. For information please contact Richard Warburton at 360-677-2254

Coming June 21st
More-Than-A-Home-Party
Don't miss it!

Plan now to attend Bill Keller's *More-Than-A-Home-Party* planned for Saturday, June 21st!

The day will begin with a visit to St. Columban Church in Yelm, to see, hear, and play Father Terrence's Robert Morton theatre pipe organ. And once again we'll enjoy the wonderful buffet lunch planned for us by the ladies of St. Columban, heralded by their famous dinner bell! And a real bargain it is for just \$7 per person.

After enjoying the Robert Morton, and the wonderful lunch, we'll drive on to the lovely home of Bill and Carol Keller in a semi-rural setting just a few miles away. Bill has an outstanding custom Allen theatre organ installed in a room that beautifully accentuates its sound. An easy organ to play, it's one for all to enjoy—practice up and have your music with you!

All the details, detailed drive instructions and reservation information for the lunch will be in the next Pipeline. Get it on your calendar now and reserve the day. It will be worth the drive through the countryside.

Remember, Saturday, June 21st for "**More-Than-A-Home-Party!**"

Other Northwest Theatre Organ Events

Simon Gledhill Concert at Portland's Cleveland H.S., Friday, May 2, 7:30PM

Sponsored by Portland Chapter, ATOS.

HOKUMHALL HAPPENINGS, 7904 35 AV SW, West Seattle, 206-325-6500

The Hokum Show, 8PM Saturdays, 3PM Sundays.

Music, magic, silent films, vaudeville, and the Wurlitzer with Professor Hokum W. Jeebs and friends. Hokum Hall in West Seattle. 206-325-6500, on the web at www.hokumhall.org

Hokum Hall Silent Movies, Fridays 7 & 9PM, Saturdays 2PM

Kids, Koko and Kar Krashes, May 2, 3

Oz before Judy!, May 9, 10

A Buster Keaton feature, College (1927), May 16, 17

Disney before Mickey, early animations from the Disney studio, May 23, 24

HISTORIC EVERETT THEATRE, May silent movie schedule

Organ accompaniment by Dennis James. Info at 425-253-6766.

The Iron Horse, Mon., May 5, 7PM The building of a transcontinental railroad. 1924.

A Dog's Life and The Pilgrim, Sun., May 11, 2PM Charlie Chaplin as a tramp. 1918.

PIPE ORGAN Terminology

SWELL SHADES?

Well, 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. Moving the expression pedal causes these shutters to pivot, one by one, allowing more or less sound to escape from the chamber.

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

The shutters in the Gig Harbor home can be seen all the way across both chambers, and when fully opened, allow maximum volume to enter the music room. Even when the shutters are completely closed, a surprising amount of sound manages to escape.

Pages From The Past..

Thirty years ago in 1973, the following article was published in *Marquee*, *The Journal of the Theatre Historical Society*

CAPITOL THEATRE, Yakima, considered for purchase by the city...

The City of Yakima is considering the purchase of the Capitol Theatre, designed by noted architect, B. Marcus Priteca. The city's application to the Washington State Register of Historic Places has received approval specifying that the theatre has made significant contributions to the cultural scene.

Plans for the theatre were begun in



1918 by Frederick Mercy for an adequate building to house touring theatrical attractions. Through the foresight of Mr. Mercy, the Pantages Vaudeville Circuit—playing a split week of four days in Yakima, three in Walla Walla—was made available to local audiences. The population of Yakima was then 20,000.

The theatre opened as the Mercy on April 5, 1920, with a Shubert production of the operetta *Maytime*. Since that time the theatre has been known as Loews and most recently as the Capitol.

The theatre 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 theatre seats just under 2,000.

As with all Priteca designs, an up-to-date system of heating and ventilating was provided. "In the summer," states the opening night program, "the

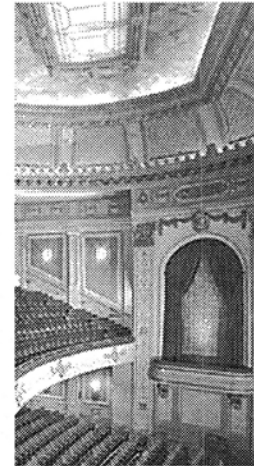
[furnace] will be shut off and ice placed on the air washer, insuring a temperature much cooler than the outside atmosphere." Dimensions of the stage are 100 feet wide by 40 feet deep, the width being the standard specified by both Orpheum and Pantages circuits, which makes the stage excellent for almost 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 are fourteen dressing rooms, the musicians room, the musical library—the theatre 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. For forty years the theatre has 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 here 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 theatre facilities.

It is almost incredible, but most of the Priteca-Heinsbergen decorations are still intact in the auditorium, the only known one of the early "Priteca-Greek" interiors to survive. It is 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 has certainly served its community well.

Marquee applauds the City of Yakima for considering the merits of municipal ownership for the theatre.

The story continues—the theatre was saved, then almost immediately it was destroyed by fire!

The ongoing story of the Capitol Theatre can be found at www.capitoltheatre.org
Excerpts appear below.

Over the years ...the theatre had slowly turned into a shabby shell of its former glory. By the early 1970s, the Mercy family was looking to sell the historic building. Concerned that it may be razed for another parking lot, the Allied Arts Council and local citizens convinced the City of Yakima to purchase the building for a complete restoration, for use as a community arts center. The building was placed on the National Register of Historic Sites and the sale moved forward.

On the hot, summer evening of August 19, 1975, just days after the

Pages From The Past...continued

Work was completed, tragedy struck. An electrical short sparked a fire that destroyed everything but the stage house, fly gallery, basement, dressing rooms, steel balcony supporters and most of the façade. In a matter of hours, Central Washington's only performing arts facility and a precious part of its cultural heritage was gone.



Remains of the fire curtain after the fire. Rebuilding the theatre was a rallying point for the people of Yakima. A

nonprofit group was formed, and raised over \$700,000 in local contributions. Additional funds from the City, grants, and an insurance settlement allowed for a complete restoration coinciding with the rebuilding.

The reconstruction brought together the best of the theatre's grand old style with newly constructed necessities. Historical duplicates of the theatre's ornamentation were created in fiberglass using molds cast from other theatres created by Pretica. Where this wasn't possible, new models were constructed from pictures taken for the historical registration process.

The restoration efforts truly came full circle when Heinsbergen came out of retirement to once again paint the theatre's ceiling mural. Not content to simply reconstruct his initial work, he set out to create his greatest masterpiece. At 83 he painted the murals on canvas in his California studios and accompanied them to the theatre where he retouched the seams. The Capitol Theatre had been one of his first creations and sadly his last. Heinsbergen passed away shortly thereafter.

On November 4, 1978, just 733 days from the start of the reconstruction, a completely restored Capitol Theatre opened its doors. Governor

Dixie Lee Ray and local dignitaries dedicated the theatre to the "continued vitality of the performing arts in Yakima." The air was filled with the familiar strains of *Thanks for the Memories* as Bob Hope entertained the sold-out crowd. It was the beginning of a "brand new life for a grand old lady."

Today, the Capitol Theatre is home to the productions of numerous local organizations such as the Yakima Symphony Orchestra, Town Hall and Community Concerts. Annual attendance at the Capitol Theatre exceeds the population of the City of Yakima!

When in the Yakima area, stop by and take a look at what a smaller city can accomplish with dedication and hard work.

And what about the theatre's Wurlitzer?

On January 31, 1921, the Wurlitzer factory shipped a two-manual nine-rank organ, a Style 2120, Opus 389, to the Mercy Theatre (later renamed the Capitol).

In 1941, Balcom & Vaughan enlarged the console to 3 manuals and moved the instrument to the Tacoma Roller Bowl Skating Rink where it remained for 34 years. A fire in 1975 completely destroyed the organ.

The Home Party at Carl and Halie Dodrill's home was a great success!

About 40 PSTOS members drove to Mercer Island to enjoy a fantastic afternoon at the home of Carl and Halie Dodrill. Enthusiastic music lovers and aficionados of old time automatic roll players, the Dodrills have a most interesting collection of restored such instruments to view, play, and enjoy.

An Aeolian player organ, with pipes located in chambers beneath the floor as well as un-shuttered around the room, graces their living room. The wood pipes installed horizontally on the ceiling not only make an "audio statement" but a visual one as well. And a handsome one, at that!

Carl's interesting presentation of the histories of their various instruments added to the enjoyment of the day. Halie Dodrill and Jo Ann Evans played several duo numbers on the Aeolian organ and the lovely Steinway player grand piano, and Open Console followed.

Young Chris Kollar, amazed everyone with his renditions after only a few months of classical study with David Dahl. Go for it, Chris!

Folks also visited the workroom of the Pipe Organ Foundation and observed what this organization is doing to preserve no-longer-used pipe organs and to put them back into service in facilities that cannot afford a pipe organ in the usual way.

A review of such a day would be incomplete without a comment on the marvelous food provided by all those in attendance! Such an array, and all so tasty.

The Home Party idea so far has been a big hit. The next such event will be a "two-fer" with a visit to St. Columban Church in Yelm to see, hear and play Father Terence's Robert Morton installed in the social hall, then on to the lovely home of Bill Keller and his custom Allen Theatre Organ. This on June 21st.

A hearty PSTOS "Welcome" to these new members

Scott Bosch • Tacoma
Gene & Bev Foster • Tacoma
Marvin and Lucille Lemke • Issaquah
Bob Macneur • Lake Oswego OR
Bob McQuigg • Seattle
Elaine and John Richards • Kenmore
Myrthalyne Thompson • Federal Way

AND a warm welcome to two returning members

Jay Gerlings • Lynnwood
Tedde Gibson • Seattle

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Russ & Jo Ann Evans, Newsletter Editors
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Don Wallin is installing an exciting "new" Theatre Pipe Organ for Merlyn Johnson in Tacoma...watch for its inauguration!

A new theatre organ installation is well underway in the Tacoma home of Walter and Merlyn Johnson. This very neat, tidy, and unusual install is in the capable hands of Don Wallin, longtime organist at Tacoma Pizza & Pipes.



First, some history on this instrument. The Robert Morton factory shipped Opus 2891 to the Indian Theatre (later named the Antlers Theatre) in Roseburg, OR, in 1924. A flute, tibia, trumpet, violin and vox

humana were the original ranks. In 1944 the organ was moved to the Roseburg First Methodist Church and a diapason and dulciana were added. Everything went fine until the early morning hours of August 7, 1959.

A parked truck loaded with 2 tons of dynamite and 4-1/2 tons of Car-Prill (a mixture of ammonium nitrate fertilizer and oil) caught fire and exploded in downtown Roseburg, leaving a crater fifty-two feet in diameter and twenty feet deep. Thirteen people were killed and 115 injured, and a 30 block radius of downtown Roseburg was in shambles. The First Methodist Church was virtually destroyed but the Robert Morton organ managed to survive.

Leonard Vernon of Astoria, OR, a longtime pipe organ enthusiast, bid on the salvage job, was awarded the organ, and spent two weekends hauling the organ to Astoria, a round trip of 600 miles.

Mr. Vernon, after an extensive home remodel, began the installation and added three Gottfried ranks—clarinet, kinura and post horn—plus a chrysoglott from the Hollywood Theatre Wurlitzer in Portland. The first

program on the Vernon organ was played by Bill Blunk in 1960. Over the years there were many visitors who enjoyed this instrument, including Don Baker, "Tiny" James, Leonard McClain, Dick Simonton, Ben Hall, Fred Pillsbury, Everett Nourse, Paul Quarino and Dick Schrum.

The Johnsons purchased the organ within the last two years and set about to plan for its installation. They own a large motor home and had built a "motor home size garage" attached to their home. This garage provided a huge head start in planning for chamber space. As a result, about half the garage was walled off.

Don Wallin has made great progress in the installation. New ranks to be added to the theatre portion of the organ are a tuba, a new "brassless" sax, an orchestral oboe and very likely a second tibia. The Morton console will be replaced with a new 3-manual console, with electric stop actions in addition to a solid state relay.

The theatre voices will speak through shutters into a mixing chamber that will contain a straight (classical) division as well as tuned percussions and then into the living room area.

Don Wallin is progressing steadily toward completion of this fine installation. The inaugural event is eagerly awaited!

TICKET ORDER FORM



Jonas Nordwall and Tony Fenelon

In a spectacular duo program of

Pipes and Piano Pops

Saturday, May 3, 2PM

Wilcox Wurlitzer Home • Gig Harbor



LIMITED SEATING! Order your tickets NOW!

General admission \$20 • Paid PSTOS Members and their guests \$15

PLEASE CHECK ONE

- A stamped self-addressed envelope is enclosed—**
Please mail my tickets AND driving directions.
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We're unable to process phone orders. Orders received without a self-addressed stamped envelope, or received within 6 days of the concert, will be held to be picked up immediately before the program. Ticket orders will be filled in the order received.