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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. PSTOS is a Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society.

Volume 17,

A Chapter of American Theatre Organ Society

Add this fun event
to your calendar
NOW!

Annual PSTOS

Holiday Party



Zing! has been entertaining audiences all over (this part of) the world for dozens of weeks. Bob (on the left) is our baritone and in real life, CEO of a credit union. He's a wine lover, and joined us because one of his favorite wines is in our name. Jim, next one over, sings basically the lowest part. He has served as a clandestine agent for many of the alphabet agencies, but now is almost CEO of an IT firm secretly located in Bothell. Chuck, 3rd from the left, is our lead singer, or Pb as we affectionately call him. He is retired from NASA, but what floats his boat is past ownership of a marine insurance agency. On the right is PSTOS member "Dave" (not his real name!) "Dave" keeps us organ-ized by singing all the really high notes. "Dave" was in uniform for 30 years, but retired recently due to the day-to-day danger. He pipes up when appropriate.

We hope you will have fun with Zing!

And Merry Zing!mas...

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Sunday, December 3, 1:30 PM

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ADMISSION—A PLATE OF FINGER FOOD!

Those whose last names begin with A through J please bring SWEETS.
Those whose last names begin with K through Z please bring NON-SWEETS such as small sandwiches, deviled eggs, relish tray, appetizers.

Punch, coffee and tea furnished.

Drive directions on page 6 • Info—425-485-5465, or joann@pstos.org

A brief annual general membership meeting will precede the festivities, with election and installation of 2007 officers.

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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.

Joining Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society is quick and easy! For a one year membership, send a \$20 check payable to PSTOS together with your name(s) as you would like them to appear on your name badges, your address with complete 9-digit ZIP code, and your email address (optional) to:
Norman Miller, Treasurer, 2644 NW Esplanade,
Seattle, WA 98117-2527.

PRESIDENT'S Message



Hard to believe it's November already! That means our annual holiday party and annual member meeting is just a few weeks away. We've traditionally included a short business meeting and installation of officers at the start of the party, but this year we'll offer a few new items sprinkled throughout the event.

Some highlights include a 2006 PSTOS slide show retrospective of the year's events and activities, reports from each of our 7 new committees, plus Bob Zat's great new documentary video about the Paramount's Wurlitzer organ. This eight minute video was made to support our fundraising campaign for the organ restoration project and features some great shots of early Seattle theatre organs and organists from PSTOS archives as well as current shots of the Paramount's pipe chambers, console and even a short segment with Dennis James, Paramount House Organist.

Zing!

We're also thrilled to feature Zing!, one of the Northwest's top Barbershop Quartets. Zing! includes PSTOS member and tenor, Dave Luttinen. The group will perform a variety of holiday tunes and barbershop classics for us and with the busy holiday season, we're lucky to have them. In fact, they have another performance on the Eastside later the same evening!

Over \$11,000 raised!

Thanks everyone who participated in last month's benefit/fundraiser event at the Paramount, either as a volunteer or audience member donor. In the days following the event, the theatre received another anonymous donation of \$2,000 bringing our total raised to over \$11,000 which is simply awesome!!!

Speaking of the Paramount, don't miss the upcoming January series of three German Expressionist films. The Paramount's "Silent Movie Monday" series has built such a following that we can now enjoy some of the more unique and interesting films that don't often get screened in a typical theatre organ context. If you haven't been to one of the Paramount movies recently, come on down. Dennis does a great job and you'll enjoy yourself, guaranteed.

... Tom Blackwell, President

PSTOS Coming Events

◆ Annual PSTOS Holiday Party

Plan now to attend our gala holiday celebration with special entertainment, great food and socializing with all your PSTOS friends at Haller Lake.

Sunday, December 3, 1:30 PM

Paramount Silent Movie Monday series to feature German Expressionist Silents

The Paramount Theatre's winter Silent Movie Monday series brings an unusual group of three 1929 movies to Seattle during January. All films start at 7 PM.

On the 15th, *Diary of a Lost Girl* will play. The final collaboration between G.W. Pabst and Louise Brooks, the American silent film star whose look defined the Jazz Age, *Diary* is a lurid tale of a young woman's life. Brooks stars as Thymiane, a young girl whose life collapses when she is raped and made pregnant by her father's young assistant. After a reform school escape she ends up in a brothel, which, ironically, leads her to a salvation of sorts.

Second in the series on the 22nd is one of the most celebrated mountain films of all time. *The White Hell of Pitz Palu* was the first German film to play the giant Roxy Theatre in New York City. Leni Riefenstahl stars as a newlywed who gets trapped on a mountain ledge with her husband on their ill-fated honeymoon. Riefenstahl distinguished herself as an accomplished actress among Fanck's gang of mountaineers, and the critics were quick to single her out for praise: "The heroine, Leni Riefenstahl, is renewed and unexpectedly fresh, unexpectedly charming. A flowing free rhythm, breath-catching beauty, genuine alarm. Not blatant or manufactured, but sensed with authenticity."

One of the last films of the silent German Expressionist era, *Asphalt* will show January 29th and is a touching story of doomed love set against the backdrop of a modern, bustling city. A simplistic morality tale, the story follows a beautiful young woman who steals a precious stone from a jewelry store and her successful attempts to seduce the policeman who catches her. Soon he finds himself caught between his duty and the woman in which he is falling in love.

All films are accompanied by House Organist Dennis James on the Mighty Wurlitzer.

You'll find more information about these films on the web at www.theparamount.com Click on "Calendar."

Other NW Theatre Organ Events

◆ Kenyon Hall in West Seattle

Latest news can be found at:
kenyonhall@earthlink.net or on the
web at www.kenyonhall.org

◆ Lincoln Theatre in Mt. Vernon

Hear the Wurlitzer every Mon/Tue at
7 PM & Fri/Sun at 5 PM.

WANT TO PLAY THE LINCOLN THEATRE'S PIPE ORGAN?

*Imagine yourself sitting before the Mighty
Wurlitzer entertaining appreciative audiences
before the films. Contact the Lincoln's lead
organist, Gene Peden at 360-755-0805 for
details. Don't be shy. It's fun!*

◆ Columbia River Organ Club

For info and latest news go to
www.croconline.org

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Ranks are bourdon/flute, open diapason,
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Most pipes are boxed. Blower runs
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Originally from the Marguerite Theatre,
Anaconda MT, except relay/switch
stack from the Grand Theatre, Renton,
1924. A great project for the man who
already has too much to do! \$500.

For a detailed sheet, phone Richard
Warburton, 360-677-2254. Richard lives
in Skykomish and is not on the web.

From The MAILBOX

This interesting letter references back
to the Bremerton organ crawl of 2005,
with the editor's apologies to member
HARRY HARKNESS for its much
belated publication! Many thanks just
the same, Harry!

The Bremerton Organ Crawl to the
Masonic Temple, aka Center, and the
Bremerton Community Center with its
Wurli/Morton will be a nice trip on one of
Seattle's finest ferries.

I'm going to try to give a "pages from
the past" if you will bear with me. The Ma-
sonic 2/8 Wurlitzer was originally installed
in the Rialto Theatre in downtown Bremer-
ton. I know nothing about the Wurlitzer/
Morton at the Community Center.

When I was very young my mother took
me to the Rialto for a religious crusade.
It was First Mate Bob and the crew of the
Good Ship Grace out of Los Angeles. I'm
almost positive it was none other than
Loren Whitney as first mate Bob. The
Wurlitzer was used and much appreciated
by my mother and me.

How do I remember all this? I have no
idea, but pipe organ sounds were really
getting to me at a very early age, what with
all the day and prime time soaps using pipe
organs.

In my high school years I had always
dreamed of trying my hand at this instru-
ment but was too shy to ask the manager.

The organ was very rarely used over the
years. Then one day, as high school fresh-
men, my buddy and I were walking down-
town after classes. We were nearing the
Masonic Temple and noticed an old beat up
truck loaded with pipes, chests and what all.
A couple of men from Seattle's Balcom and
Vaughn were unloading the equipment. We
two fourteen-year-olds asked if we could
help unload. The "stuff" looked interest-
ing. "Sure," they said, and Rodney and I
carried arm load after arm load of pipes
inside the building at Fifth and Warren
Streets. The console had already been set in
place way up front in a tight corner of the
hall. In a sort of balcony at the other end of
the hall carpenters and installers were very
busy hollering at one another.

After I got home from Italy and WWII
I took piano lessons from a lady who had
played this very organ for silent movies
and she took me into the temple and sat
me at the console. She had brought along
very large sheet music scores for a couple
of very old movies and proceeded to show
me all the interesting notations those scores
beheld.

On another note, my very longtime or-
ganist friend in Bremerton is Joann Larsen
Gillis. She was playing the 2/7 Balcom
and Vaughn church installation on Pearl
Harbor Sunday at the then First Presbyte-
rian Church at 6th and Warren. A bank is
at the corner now and she still plays at the
church's new location, and is in demand at
the Bremerton Community Center organ.
Over the years I have told her about PS-
TOS, but guess she has never joined.

Sincerely, Harry Harkness



Late Breaking Paramount News...

An additional anonymous contribution
of \$2,000 came to the Paramount in the
days following the October 8th event. This
brings the total raised for the Restoration
Fund to over \$11,000!

This together with the substantial
amount raised at the earlier fund-raising
event propels the effort a long way toward
the total goal.

Deadline for Jan/Feb Pipeline

Please submit on or before Janu-
ary 5th, 2007, all articles of interest,
program and event details, news items,
letters to the editors, for sale postings
and/or other items for publication in
the combined January-February issue.
If submitting by email, Word attach-
ment is preferred, but email text is OK.

Email to:

joann@pstos.org

Or send printed materials by standard
mail to:

Pipeline Editors

6521 NE 191st St.

Kenmore WA 98028-3453

Phone:

425-485-5465

Pages From The Past..

Paramount Theatre Reopens Thursday With Lavish Show [1932]

Reprinted from a *Seattle Times* article published October 15, 1932

After being closed for several months the Paramount Theatre is to reopen its doors next Thursday with a program which includes a gripping motion picture, *Six Hours to Live* and a lavish Fanchon-Marco stage production, "Veils," Jules Buffano's Orchestra and Gaylord Carter, organist.

Warner Baxter, popular screen star, is to have the most powerful character role of his career in his latest Fox picture, *Six Hours to Live*, which opens the Paramount. Adapted from the original story, *Auf Wiedersehen*, by Gordon Morris and Morton Barteaux, this picture presents Baxter in the role of an international diplomat, standing firmly in the face of ruin and death, in defense of his country at a disarmament conference.

To the other nations gathered at Geneva, partial disarmament means merely a reduction in taxes for their burdened countrymen. But to Baxter's tiny republic, it means placing it at the mercy of powerful and unscrupulous neighboring states which covet its valuable resources. How he successfully combats a conspiracy to wreck

his country, although his mind is distracted by a romantic interlude with a beautiful girl, forms the central theme of the film.

Six Hours to Live, directed by William Dieterle, marks the screen debut of Miriam Jordan, beautiful young English girl recently recruited from the Broadway stage. She is said to be generously endowed with that illusive charm which distinguishes the more successful stars and studio executives are confident that this unusual vehicle will place her within the realm of stardom. John Boles has a featured role and figures very prominently in the denouncement of the story.

George Marion, Sr, well remembered for numerous unusual character roles, including his famous "Chris" in *Anna Christie*, is prominently cast.

Veils, lavish stage presentation direct from Grauman's Chinese Theatre in Hollywood, stars Zelda Santley, popular vaudeville and revue star. A bevy of beautiful girls are also to be featured in the show.

When is an A, an A?

Reprinted from U.S. News & World Report, June 26, 1989

In music, it appears that what goes up keeps on going up...

...much to the dismay of opera singers and owners of rare violins around the world.

The problem is one of standards, specifically the reference pitch by which members of an orchestra tune their instruments. Over the centuries, the pitch of a concert A, the note typically used for tuning, has crept up appreciably, leading to fears of strained vocal chords and warped Stradivaris as modern orchestras play musical works written in earlier, lower-pitched days. Pitch inflation has even spawned a bill in the Italian parliament to yank the tuning pitch down to the level of several centuries ago.

Luciano Pavarotti, Placido Domingo and Joan Sutherland are among the operatic luminaries who have declared their support for the proposed pitch change. Opera singers have long complained that when they sing a high F—in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, for example—pitch inflation has pushed the note almost a semi-tone higher than it was in Mozart's time. Modern singers train to perform at such a high pitch, but a lifetime of stretching for high notes can eventually take a toll on a singer's career.

Tuning has long been an exercise in anarchy. A tuning fork used for an 18th century performance of Handel's *Messiah* produced an A by vibrating at 422.5 hertz (Hz, or cycles per second). By the 19th century, however, some orchestras were tuning to an A as high as 460 Hz. The confusion was cleared somewhat by an international conference in 1939 that fixed the A at 440 Hz, but many modern orchestras continue to tune higher. In the 1940s, the Boston Symphony tuned to an A at 444 Hz. It now tunes to 442 Hz, as do the New York Philharmonic and the Chicago Symphony. The Italian proposal would push A down to 432 Hz.

Does a higher pitch cause music to sound "brighter?"

The seeming urge to push up the pitch bit by bit over the years is puzzling. The long-standing claim is that it increases the "brightness" of the music played. Brightness is one of the subtle qualities of a sound, collectively known as its timbre, that helps listeners distinguish between a trumpet and a French horn, for example, even though both instruments are playing at the same pitch with identical loudness. But to

Carol Krumhansl, a psychologist at Cornell University, the idea that a typical concert audience notices when the pitch is slightly raised is "all a myth."

How many people have "perfect pitch?"

Very few people, she says, have absolute pitch, or the ability to recall a particular note from memory. It's true that listeners typically consider a high pitch brighter than a lower one if the two notes are played consecutively. But concertgoers without absolute pitch have no such immediate reference points, so they should not perceive a piece as any brighter than if it were played slightly lower.

What's the difference? Those with absolute pitch probably would not enjoy a piece played a notch higher anyway, because such people usually find changes disconcerting. Conductor George Szell had such a good ear that "any deviation from 440 Hz would upset him terribly," say Norman Pickering, an acoustical engineer and French-horn player who was formerly with the Metropolitan Opera of New York.

Nor is there any evidence that raising the pitch of all the instruments in an orches-

Pages From The Past...continued

tra will produce a brighter overall sound. When pitch is raised on a violin by tightening the strings, subtle changes occur in the way the violin's wood amplifies the sound of the vibrating string and hence changes the timbre of the music produced.

Sometimes these changes will make an instrument's sound brighter, says Bill Hartmann, a physicist at Michigan State University who studies acoustics. But that doesn't necessarily mean the timbre will brighten across the board for the same pitch increase from tubas to piccolos. In fact, since instruments are specifically designed to sound their best at a certain tuning pitch—antique Stradivarius violins, for example, have been modified to accommodate the string tension and higher pitch of modern times—

raising the tuning pitch upward or lowering it to the Italian parliament's proposed 432 Hz would mean substantially reconfiguring all of the instruments in orchestras worldwide.

One reason for the allure of pitch inflation may lie more with musicians than the audience.

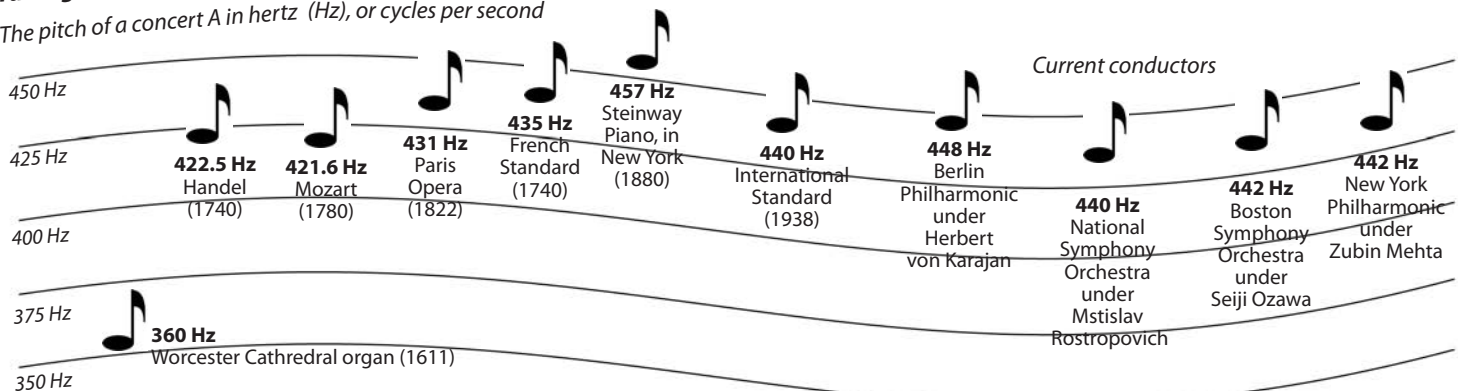
The sound of a musician who plays at a slightly higher pitch, or sharper, than the other musicians in an ensemble will stand out. Since people often associate rising pitch with increased intensity in everyday life—the squealing of breaks, for example—musicians who play slightly sharper than the rest of the instruments may sound more energetic, drawing attention to their

playing. Members of a string quartet, says Hartmann, often take turns playing slightly sharp during a piece so that each musician can enjoy the limelight during a performance.

Editors' note: As a special note of interest, the Wurlitzer factory custom voiced a small number of theatre pipe organs, on special order, destined for Australia. They were neither A-435 nor A-440, but were voiced on A-456 c.p.s., including specially voiced tuned percussions. Two of these instruments were sent to the Prince Edward Theatre in Sydney, model H, opus 875, shipped 8/12/24, and now known as the Marrickville Town Hall Wurlitzer, and the Metro Theatre in Perth, model F., opus 1728, now in a Perth suburb community hall and known as the Karrinyup Wurlitzer.

Tuning up through history

The pitch of a concert A in hertz (Hz), or cycles per second



A Short History of Pitch

In what key was Mozart's G minor Symphony written?

Yes, it's a trick question. We're so used to hearing the note A at 440 vibrations per second (vps) that it's easy to forget that this pitch was adopted comparatively recently.

The earliest accurate measurement of pitch dates to 1361. In that year the A on the Halberstadt organ was tuned to 505 vps. On other organs in the 16th and 17th centuries, A was tuned as high as 567 vps (higher than our modern C) and as low as 377 vps (about a modern F#). One can only shudder to think of what ensembles must have sounded like.

Then in 1619, at the suggestion of composer and theorist Michael Praetorius (1571 - 1621), a mean pitch of A at 424.2 vps was adopted throughout Europe. This pitch, almost a half step below modern pitch, was standard for 200 years. It was the pitch used by Handel, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.

So an accurate answer to our question about the key in which the Mozart G minor Symphony was written would have to be about F# minor.

From Sheet Music Magazine, September/October 1993

Drive directions to Haller Lake Community Club for the Holiday Party

12579 Densmore Ave. N., Seattle

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 a few blocks to Densmore. Left on Densmore, clubhouse is on the right. Parking both front and rear. Handicapped entry with elevator at rear of building.

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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Tacoma's Blue Mouse glows in its true love story

By Diane de la Paz, for the *Tacoma News Tribune* November 11, 2003

The blue neon mice are nice, but they're not what keeps this north Tacoma cinema warm.

No, the secret to longevity for the Blue Mouse Theater in the Proctor district can be heard in the "Hi!" and "Thank you, sweetie," at the ticket booth.

That's Susan Evans, Blue Mouse manager and projectionist. She's been here almost nine years; her theater has been here 80.

Wait a second, now, while she darts into the projection room. Daughter Stephanie, 16, takes her place at the window while Evans turns the theater lights down for the evening's screening of "Pirates of the Caribbean."

In a flash, she reappears with a morsel of Mouse history. It fits in with the theater's biography, which has included stores of death, rebirth and true love.

The Mouse's plush seats are all donated, Evans said. When the Tacoma South theater closed, its manager called to say, "You can have the seats if you can take them out of the floor." In she went with "my kids—three of my staff kids and two of my own," to remove 417 seats in nine hours.

With those new-used seats filling up on Friday night, Evans is clearly in her element. "I love the people," she said. "They're like my family." Fans who gather for "Rocky Horror Picture Show" rituals every Saturday at midnight call her "Mama." Other memorable Mouse moments, Evans said, have come when Tacomans rented the theater for weddings and children's plays.

Yet the Mouse was lacking accommodations for patrons in wheelchairs. So

a screening of the silent classic *Phantom of the Opera* with Christopher McKim on organ, raised money to put in a handicapped accessible restroom.

Tickets to the fund-raiser were \$35 and included an etched Blue Mouse wine glass, "with wine in it," Evans said. That is an unusually steep price for the Mouse, where regular movie tickets are \$4 for adults and \$3 for seniors and kids. Treats are refreshingly cheap, too, with the Mighty Mouse combo of large popcorn and two sodas for \$7. That doesn't spell much profit for the theater; it does mean people pack the Mouse on weekends—little and big kids, little old ladies and gents, young couples.

"It's family friendly for us," said Annie Alvord, who brought her husband and their daughters to see "Pirates." She likes the fact that the Mouse isn't "one of those mega-theaters. It's small and intimate. We can stroll the streets, have dinner, window-shop, before the show."

When the Blue Mouse opened in 1923, it was named after a lounge in Paris where silent movies were being shown. Around 1980, the theater's name changed to the Bijou – the jewel, in French. Later, a group of local activists strove to preserve the distinctively Tacoma gem. In 1993, when it looked as if the theater would be converted to an office building, the group swooped in, did five months of restoration work and reopened it in February 1994. It remains a jewel of the Proctor District, with Dale

1922 photo from Tacoma Public Library S. Sound Photo Album



Chihuly-designed neon mice scampering around the marquee.

Inside the Mouse, chatter and laughter, not pre-movie commercials, fill the theater before the curtain rises. Evans turns the sound down to normal on the previews, which come to her set at earsplitting volume. Then, as the feature starts, she readjusts.

Mouse moviegoers come out for a cinematic experience as well as a community experience. Since it's a second-run theater, the Mouse sometimes shows movies that are already out on video. Even those pictures, such as "The Full Monty," have seen good turnouts, Evans said.

She has other ideas for theater improvement after the handicapped-accessible restroom is finished. "My next goal is to get a better sound system in here," she said.

Located at
2611 N. Proctor St.

Thanks to Doug Owen
for sharing this article.

