

Visit our web site at [www.pstos.org](http://www.pstos.org)

# 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 19 No. 5

May 2008

A Chapter of American Theatre Organ Society

**President's Message is appearing on the front page this month.**

## PSTOS volunteers undertake massive work to restore many 80-year-old parts in the Paramount's historic Wurlitzer

**Organ must be ready for the 2010 ATOS International Convention!**

Hello everyone,

Your PSTOS technical crew has been spending a lot of time at the Paramount Theatre to begin restoration of the Publix 1 Wurlitzer's "String" chamber. The String was selected because it is relatively easy to access and has lots of working room. First up was removal of three regulators for rebuilding by Bob Otey of Kent, WA. These regulators (similar to bellows) were still operating on their original 1927 leather which had deteriorated badly. Also removed for rebuilding were three "offset" windchests which supply air to the largest string pipes in the chamber: Viol d'Orchestra, Viol Celeste, Solo String and Dulciana. These offset chests were transported to Russ Evans' home workshop where he is carefully restoring them. The ATOS Endowment Fund grant received last summer requires that all restoration work be done using original

materials and natural adhesives and Russ is doing a terrific job.

During our survey of the instrument several years ago, we noticed that the walls of the String chamber have suffered water damage to the plaster on the East wall. Fortunately the damage did not affect any of the organ components. After we removed the offsets chests and pipe supports, the theatre's operations staff began work to identify the source of the water leak, remove all the original plaster, re-seal the underlying brickwork and then reapply new hand-troweled plaster.

A specific challenge is to complete all of the work in time for the upcoming silent movie series beginning June 2! It was decided to defer work on the 5-rank manual windchest until after the movie series completes June 23. Many PSTOS volunteer hours have been contributed by Mark Baratta, Russ Evans, Phil Hargiss, Eric Helgeson, Dave Luttinen, Larry Mayer, Dan Warner and Bob Zat. More volunteers are needed. Please contact me if you would like to help out.

Lastly, a hearty THANK YOU to Raymond Lavine and Barbara Hammerman for their continued generosity and support of PSTOS. The recent Donna Parker concert held at their home on April 13 was thoroughly enjoyed by all and netted over \$4,000 for the Paramount Restoration Fund, bringing our total raised to just over \$30,000.

...Tom Blackwell



Tom Blackwell & Larry Mayer show off 80 years of organ soot following removal of the three regulators



Bob Zat finishes plastic-wrapping pipe crates and chests so that plaster repair work can begin



Phil Hargiss removes wiring from an offset chest



Russ Evans releathers and rebuilds parts in his home shop

## PUGET SOUND PIPELINE

Vol. 19, No 5 – May 2008  
Published monthly by  
Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society  
6521 NE 191st ST  
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.

### OFFICERS

President—Tom Blackwell, 206-784-9203  
Past Pres.—Clint Meadway, 1-877-843-0953  
Vice President—Ray Harris, 425-774-1773  
Secretary—Joani Roughton, 253-946-4400  
Treasurer—Bill Keller, 360-888-5118

### BOARD MEMBERS

Tom Roughton, 253-946-4400 • Bob McCutcheon, 425-743-0565  
Dave Luttinen, 206-963-3283 • Phil Hargiss, 206-524-8799

### COMMITTEES

Development & Grant Writing—Barbara Graham  
History & Archives—Tom Blackwell  
Organ Restoration & Maintenance—Bob Zat  
Programs Planning—Ray Harris  
Promotions & Media Relations—Clint Meadway  
Scholarship—Carl Dadrill & Norman Miller  
Volunteer Coordination—Dan Warner  
New member processing—Doug Owen, 253-566-6734  
Haller Lake keys—Bob Zat  
Sunshine—Joani Roughton, 253-946-4400  
Hospitality HLCC—Ellen Sullivan, 206-365-7554

### NEWSLETTER & WEBSITE

Pipeline Editors—Russ & JoAnn Evans, 425-485-5465  
Pipeline Online Website—Tom Blackwell, 206-784-9203  
Nat'l Magazine Reporter—Jo Ann Evans

### LIAISONS

AMICA & POF—Carl Dadrill • Haller Lake Comm.Club—Bob Zat  
Paramount Theatre—Tom Blackwell • Wash. Center—Andy Crow

### 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:

Bill Keller, Treasurer, 9914 Hampshire Ct. SE,  
Olympia, WA 98513-4241.

## ORGAN OPEN HOUSE May 18, 24

The Pipe Organ Foundation is pleased to announce the completion of a rebuilt II/13 pipe organ for Blessed Seelos Catholic Church in New Orleans, a parish where 40% of the congregation is hard of hearing or deaf. This church had a devastating fire in the sanctuary in 2003 and then was struck by both Katrina and Rita. The rebuild represents more than 3,200 hours of labor by approximately 25 volunteers. It will be available to be seen and heard from 2-4:30 PM on Sunday, May 18 and 2-4:30 PM Saturday, May 24. Pipe Organ Foundation Historian James Stettner did the tonal design of the instrument, and Foundation Board member David Locke will be demonstrating it. There will be open console time as well. The organ and the Foundation shop are located at 4488 West Mercer Way, Mercer Island. Everyone is cordially invited to attend! Questions to Carl Dadrill, 206 236-3492.

[www.pipeorganfoundation.org](http://www.pipeorganfoundation.org)

## PSTOS organists to entertain at Haller Lake's annual chili cookoff June 22nd.

Originally begun by PSTOS, *Chili Palooza* has become an annual community event sponsored by the Haller Lake Arts Council. It's a competitive cook-off and just 30 tables are available for chili cooks. Registrations will be accepted until May 20, or until all spaces are filled.

Download all the forms from the website below, and you, too, can be a prize-winning chili cook!

Clint Meadway and Jo Ann Evans will entertain on the PSTOS Wurlitzer during this event. Entertainment schedule will be published in the June Pipeline.

## ATOS to present Adult Organ Camp for hobby organists August 11-13

This special event, expected to draw participants from across the country, will be presented by Patti Simon and Charlie Balogh, and will be held at Wurlitzer Manor in Gig Harbor. How convenient is that?? What an opportunity this will be to get together with other hobbyist-level organists, learn from two fine professionals, and have an opportunity to actually sit down and play the magnificent 4/48 Wurlitzer!

More details will follow in *Theatre Organ*, and in future Pipelines.

## Other NW Theatre Organ Events

### ◆ Paramount Theatre *Silent Movie* Mondays June Series to be a Douglas Fairbanks Festival

All movies accompanied by Dennis James at the Paramount's original 4/21 Wurlitzer

**Monday, June 2, 7PM**

*When the Clouds Roll By* (1919)

**Monday, June 9, 7PM**

*Mark of Zorro* (1920)

**Monday, June 16, 7PM**

*Robin Hood* (1922)

**Monday, June 23, 7PM**

*The Gaucho* (1927)

### ◆ Kenyon Hall in West Seattle

Latest news can be found on the web at [www.kenyonhall.org](http://www.kenyonhall.org) or by email at [kenyonhall@earthlink.net](mailto:kenyonhall@earthlink.net)

### ◆ Lincoln Theatre in Mt. Vernon

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

### ◆ Columbia River Organ Club

For info and latest news go to  
[www.croconline.org](http://www.croconline.org)

### ◆ Bellingham's Mt Baker Theatre

The Mt. Baker is closed for a few months for upgrading the heating and air conditioning system. Watch this column for reopening date and events.

## Mechanical Music Festival coming to Leavenworth

PSTOS member, Mark Baratta, encourages everyone to enjoy a leisurely drive over Highway 2 to Leavenworth the weekend of August 15 – 17 to take in the Mechanical Music Festival. Sponsored by AMICA (Automatic Musical Instrument Collectors Association) and COAA (Carousel Organ Association of America). This will be a fun nostalgic look back at how we were entertained a century ago. There'll be band organs, street organs, music boxes, other small instruments, and a player piano!

For information, contact Bill Mote at 206-226-3918, or by email at [bandjrest@worldnet.att.net](mailto:bandjrest@worldnet.att.net)



## A full house welcomed DONNA PARKER to Wurlitzer Manor's 4/48 Wurlitzer on April 13

Proceeds will benefit Paramount Wurlitzer upgrade project, refer to coverage on the front page

Once again a warm Wurlitzer Manor welcome was extended to theatre organ aficionados as they gathered to enjoy another unique presentation, this time by internationally recognized DONNA PARKER.

Attendance at Wurlitzer Manor is limited

these days to about 100, and the house was full.

Donna played music in a broad range of styles, including things to please all ages and musical preferences.

Donna has had a busy playing schedule

the past several years, substituting frequently at Organ Stop Pizza in Mesa, AZ, playing several-week holiday stints on the east coast with Rob Richards, doing a 6-week concert tour of Australia and New Zealand in 2007, plus many individual concerts across the U.S.

A highlight of the afternoon was her presentation of one of her students, NATHAN AVAKIAN. A beneficiary of PSTOS scholarship support in the past, Nathan is proving himself a worthy recipient. Just 16, he has the stage presence of one much older and more experienced. His playing is outstanding. As both his teacher and his mentor, Donna has good reason to be proud.

Donna resides in Portland and has recently begun driving to the Seattle area monthly to teach a few students. She is teaching Kat Brightwell, the most recent PSTOS scholarship recipient, plus several others. If you know anyone who might like to have some special training, please contact Donna at [donna\\_parker@comcast.net](mailto:donna_parker@comcast.net) and she'll be happy to discuss your personal journey to achieving musical excellence!

Thanks, Donna, for a wonderful afternoon of music!



**ABOVE:** Donna, with her student Nathan Avakian, and host Raymond Lavine, after a wonderfully successful afternoon.



**ABOVE:**

Donna enjoyed having the support of both her daughter Bethany and her mother, Portland residents, who came to enjoy the music and the ambience.

**LEFT:**

Donna is seated at the Wurlitzer console in the warm and welcoming music room of Wurlitzer Manor. The room houses a large collection of fascinating music nostalgia...photos, instruments and other artifacts.

# Pages From The Past..

## Theaters Gained Splendor Here As Film 'Royalty' Grew in Fame

This article, written by Byron Fish, is re-printed from *The Seattle Times*, publication date unknown. It was part of a series about Seattle's one-time prominence in the entertainment world.

**B**Y the First World War, the "Photo-play" had become a full-length feature and Hollywood had established its first royal stable of stars.

William Farnum, Mary Pickford, Constance and Norma Talmadge, the Gish sisters, Charles Ray, Clara Kimball Young, Wallace Reid, Bessie Love, Lon Chaney, Fatty Arbuckle, Charlie Chaplin and Thomas Meighan were names to draw an audience without benefit of stage acts.

It no longer was fitting that the images of such national heroes and heroines should be projected in plain little halls. The motion-picture theater took on a splendor of its own.

One that had been ahead of its day was The Melbourne, in Second Avenue at the spot now occupied by Oregon City Woolen Mills. Eugene Levy built it in 1912.

The Melbourne, renamed The Rex ten years later, had a balcony and could seat nearly 600 persons, or double the capacity of earlier movie theaters.

**T**HE opening of The Melbourne also marked the beginning of a by-product from Seattle's theatrical energy. To play the theater's organ, Levy brought a young, promising musician from Spokane, Jesse Crawford.

To meet the Crawford competition, other exhibitors signed up Oliver Wallace, and Albert Mallotte, best remembered for setting "The Lord's Prayer" to music.

These men, and other outstanding organists who were featured, thereafter influenced an informal "school" whose disciples went triumphantly throughout the rest of the United States.

The city couldn't have become a spawning ground of theater organists, of course, unless the theaters were here. The show houses were being built by the

movie men, who were following the pace of the early vaudeville kings.

Claude Jensen and John von Herberg bought The National, in Pike Street between Third and Fourth Avenues, in 1910. They also got The Alhambra, where Best's is now, and changed it from a stage theater into a movie house.

Some Alaskans started The Alaska at Second Avenue and Seneca Street. It later became The Strand, and Jensen and Von Herberg added it to their string, along with The Rex.

**T**HEATER swapping went on like a game of musical chairs. James Clemmer and his son, from Spokane, got The Dream at First Avenue and Cherry Street, built The Clemmer in Second between Pike and Union Streets, and finally The Winter Garden.

John Hamrick, whose first theater was on Queen Anne Hill, gathered more in the suburbs and moved into the downtown area with The Colonial—although he sold it in 1916 to another man who had begun collecting theaters in 1913, John Danz.

Danz still has The Colonial, which apparently has lasted the longest of all under its original name. He also runs the Sterling chain, some 30 theaters in half a dozen towns.

About 1915 there appeared the first of Seattle's colossal theaters to go with Hollywood's new "colossal" pictures. The Liberty seated 1,700 persons. When Jensen and Von Herberg took it over, they installed a tremendous [Wurlitzer] pipe organ and Oliver Wallace.



The Liberty was followed by The Coliseum, equally big and also a Jensen and Von Herberg house. The team swept into the lead on seating capacity and consequent booking advantages.

As the 1920s began, John Hamrick stayed in the race with two smaller but cozy theaters, The Blue Mouse and The Music Box. He forged ahead in 1926, with one of the first sound motion-picture installations in the United States.

By  HIS MARK

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

Byron Fish (1908-1996) was a life-long writer/editor/book author whose articles were a regular feature in *The Seattle Times*. Byron signed his writings with the special identifying "mark" shown above.

The date of this article is not known. Reference is made to The Alhambra having been located "where Best's is now," and to John Danz "still having The Colonial." If anyone can guesstimate the date of publication from any hints in the article, please email the editor at:

joann@pstos.org



# Pages From The Past...continued

## Opening night for a splendid theater

By Ross Cunningham

Re-printed from *The Seattle Times*, Tuesday, January 13, 1976.



**I**T WAS a balmy evening — September 23, 1926—and the town was jumping with excitement: The new and splendid Fifth Avenue Theater was opening its Chinese-motif doors to the public. (Adults, 65 cents; children 25.)

Fifth Avenue between Pike and Seneca Streets was jammed with people for the kleig-light display, too many for the theater's seating capacity. But streetcar fares were off for the evening, and taxicabs were running there for free, too.

Superlatives had advertised the event as a grand Mardi Gras. The orchestra pit would "fly," so it was proclaimed, and Oliver Wallace would perform on the "ascending" Wurlitzer organ.

**THE** opening-night film was Cecil B. DeMille's "Young April," starring Joseph Schildkraut, but that wasn't all. The Fanchon and Marco live stage show, with gay music and lovely girls, would begin its long Seattle run — and Eddie Peabody with his banjo was being billed for a new-future attraction. The mood of the wall-to-wall crowd on Fifth Avenue was a happy one, with many there only to take part in the festivities.

After all, Clara Bow was playing at the Liberty Theatre on First Avenue in Sinclair Lewis' "Mantrap," which was advertised as about the "Little Tease of the Timberlands"—a fitting role for Clara Bow. Who really preferred to see Joseph Schildkraut in "Young April?"

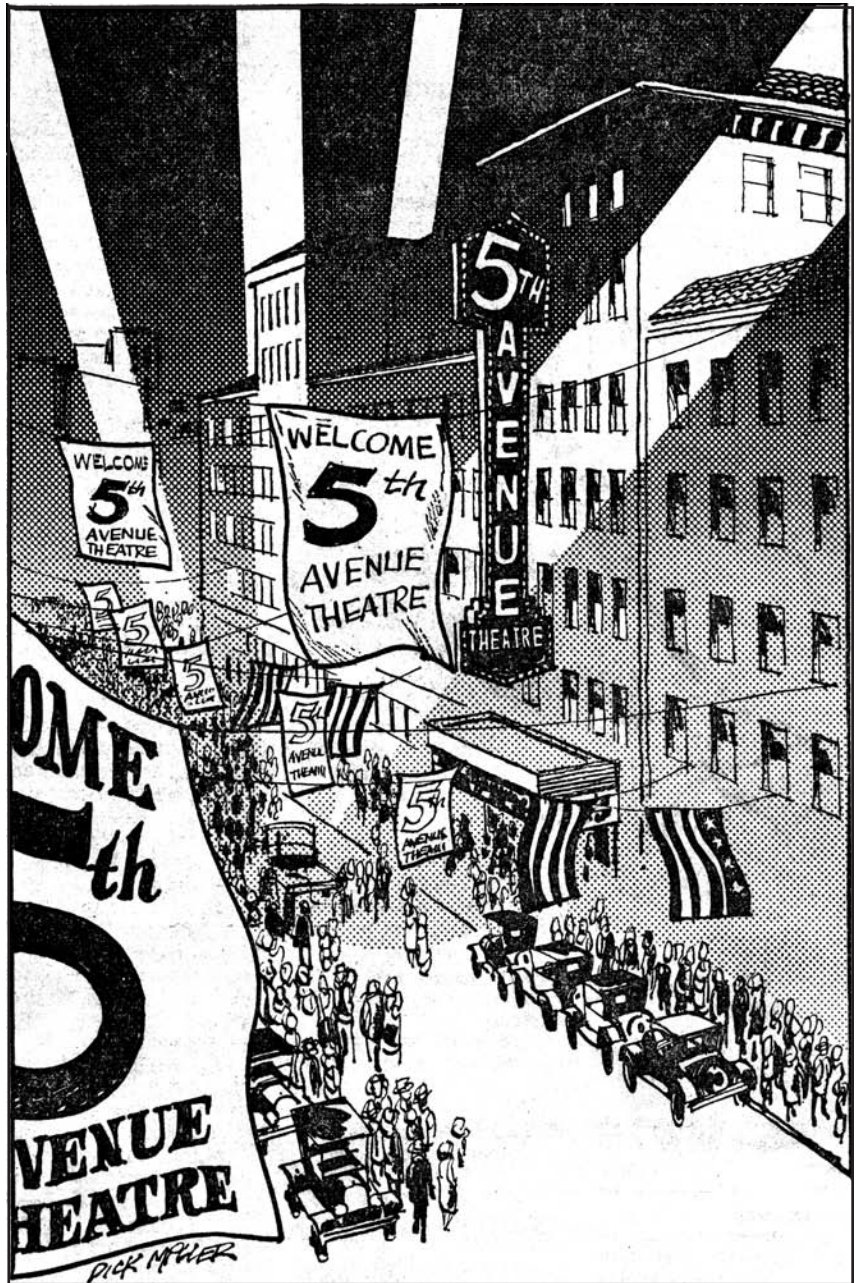
The crowd had a lot to talk about. On that very day, Gene Tunney had whipped Jack Dempsey for the world's heavyweight title, and the St. Louis Cardinals had won the National League pennant by beating the New York Giants, 6 to 4.

**DIGNITARIES** moving around to see and be seen included city officials, who also on that same day had announced a cut in taxes. And there was verbal jousting with them over when the city was going to get rid of the streetcars, eliminate overhead utility wires, get more payrolls, and modernize the Municipal Charter. (Doesn't anything ever change?)

Citizens who worked the box-office line-up and got inside the theater expressed delight at its decor: "A Chinese palace of staggering magnificence...legends and symbols inspired by ancient Chinese temples...graceful scrolls...rich hangings...beautiful carpeting...and the breathtaking inside dragon dome with its wondrous lighting...and deeply upholstered seats, especially so in the loges (at 15 cents extra)."

**MUCH OF THIS** splendor remains to be seen today in the Fifth Avenue Theater, somewhat time-worn and tattered, but still worth the price of admission to view as a reminder of the handiwork or artisans a half-century ago, work that would be hard put to duplicate today.

Reports recur that better use could be found for the



space occupied by the theater and office building owned by the University of Washington. That would be a pity indeed, although efforts are afoot to save the theater or some of its ornaments.

Maybe the real pity is that foresight wasn't exercised only a few years back when the city's Opera House at the Seattle Center was contemplated.

Maybe the Fifth Avenue, Coliseum or Paramount Theaters could have been converted, sparing the threat of the wrecking ball that has been so efficient lately in knocking down old Metropolitan Tract structures across the street from the Fifth Avenue Theater.



## A packed house gathered at Haller Lake Community Club for "Piano, Pipes & the Roaring 20s"

A gratifying 158 people reserved for this March 9th event! Ray Harris and Jo Ann Evans teamed up at the piano and Wurlitzer to present a full afternoon of favorite music from the 1920s, including dance tunes, ballads, novelties and several sing-a-longs. Dave Luttinen did a great job as emcee. "Ice cream scoopers," Russ, Roland, Phil and Marv, kept folks entertained as they served goodies.

A short movie, "Farewell to the Fox," detailing the closing and ultimate demolition of the San Francisco landmark, brought tears to many. (Thanks to Jack Becvar.)

Many thanks to all who attended!

### PUGET SOUND THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

Russ & Jo Ann Evans, Newsletter Editors

6521 NE 191st ST

Kenmore, WA 98028-3453



Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Bothell, WA  
Permit #287

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



#### CLOCKWISE from top left:

Emcee Dave Luttinen, Ray and JoAnn make merry;

Kat Brightwell (PSTOS scholarship student) and Betty Emanuel model their 1920s attire;

In costume – sort of – for "The Shiek of Araby";

Look what the rental piano bench yielded for the "rain medley!"

A full house of revelers gathered for ice cream sundaes and 1920s music; Russ Evans, Roland Lindstrom, Phil Carothers and Marv Remillard had a great time serving ice cream.

