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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 22 No. 4

April 2012

A Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society

2012

Music! Music! Music!

From Melbourne, Australia...

JOHN ATWELL



*Another afternoon of
entertaining music
from Pop to Rock, Old to New,
Fun to Serious!*

Showcasing...

Calvary Christian Assembly's

3-Manual 19-Rank

Kimball-Wurlitzer

Theatre Organ

Sunday, April 15, 2:00

Calvary Christian Assembly

6801 Roosevelt Way NE, Seattle

Enjoy refreshments following the program.

ADMISSION

PSTOS Members \$15 • Non-Members \$20

Age 16 and under FREE

JOHN ATWELL has been entertaining theatre organ audiences worldwide for 40 years, and presents a broad variety of music. In June 2010, John, with his good friend Tony Fenelon on piano, played the opening concert of the American Theatre Organ Society's annual convention at Seattle's Paramount Theatre. More recently he completed a theatre organ concert tour of England. John is one of the house organists at the Regent Theatre, Melbourne, home to the 4/36 Wurlitzer originally installed in the Paramount Theatre, San Francisco.

Now retired from his full-time career as a medical research scientist, John is able to spend more time with music. He has a doctorate in immunology, has published numerous scientific papers and has several patents. "However," he says, "retirement does not necessarily mean having more time on your hands. I think I need to go back to work full-time for a break!"

The **CALVARY ASSEMBLY ORGAN** was originally installed in 1942 and was based on a 2-manual 12-rank Kimball from Centralia's Liberty Theatre. In 1970 it was rebuilt and enlarged with the addition of a Wurlitzer Style 215 "Special," formerly owned by Lorin Whitney and installed in California's Hollywood Theatre. The combined Kimball-Wurlitzer instrument has a total of 19 ranks, 1327 pipes, plus two sets of chimes, marimba and chrysolott.

Drive directions

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

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

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Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society
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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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LIAISONS

AMICA & POF—Carl Dodrill • **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:

PSTOS, Clint Meadway, Treasurer
9594 1st Ave. NE #453,
Seattle WA 98115-2012

PSTOS Coming Events

► Australia's JOHN ATWELL in concert at Calvary Christian Assembly

John with his friend, Tony Fenelon, opened our big 2010 convention at the Paramount Theatre to a rousing ovation. This is one to be sure you have on your calendar!

Sunday, April 15, 2012

► SHARON STEARNES will bring the Pizza & Pipes experience to Haller Lake Community Club

Everyone enjoyed hearing Sharon at the Becvar home. We've asked her to return to do what she does best—play the music we all enjoyed at Pizza & Pipes! And yes, there'll be pizza, beer and other beverages, and dessert!



Saturday EVENING, June 9, 6:00 PM

► Rising young star NATHAN AVAKIAN to play at Merlyn Johnson's home

Nathan has wowed audiences everywhere he has played. An ATOS Young Organist Competition winner, he is in high demand. Mark your calendar! Seating is limited.



Sat., July 14, 1:00

► JONAS NORDWALL CONCERT and WORKSHOP at Bill Keller's home



Plan to attend a workshop from 10:30–noon, then enjoy a full concert at 2:00, all on Bill's fantastic 5-manual Allen! Watch for details.

**Saturday,
September 15**

► Annual PSTOS HOLIDAY PARTY with Portland's MIKE BRYANT at Haller Lake

Our annual holiday extravaganza! Music! Food! Fun! A great time for all.

Sunday, December 2, 2012

Your Program Planning Team is busy working on fun events for your enjoyment!

All those enjoyable events you see in the list above don't just happen! Nosiree! The PSTOS Program Planning Team meets nearly every month to hammer out all the details of each event. And that detail list is long!

The goal is to have six programs annually, with a few fun extras sandwiched in along the way. Of those six programs, two are usually full concert events featuring nationally recognized organists.

Because the Chapter organ is installed at Haller Lake Community Club, the team plans for two programs there each year, one being our Holiday Party.

PSTOS members always enjoy the more casual programs held at homes, and in 2012, there will be two such events—one at Merlyn Johnson's home (Tacoma), the other at Bill Keller's (Olympia).

Once the calendar is roughed in, the work begins. Each program is assigned to an Event Coordinator who begins with an Event Planning Sheet (designed by one of the best organizers ever—Barbara Graham). The Event Coordinator begins working down the checklist:

- **ARTIST**—Who? What is the fee? Do we have a bio? Who will house the artist? Transportation?
- **VENUE**—Is it reserved? How much is the hall rent? Instrument description? Drive directions?
- **FOOD/BEVERAGES**—Menu. Who will plan/purchase/serve? Who will help?
- **AUDIENCE**—Max number? Do we need reservations? If so, who will take reservations?
- **ADMISSION PRICE**—What are the total costs? How many will attend? What is our "break even point?" What, then, should ticket prices be? Do we need printed tickets?
- **PROGRAM DAY**—Who will set up? Who will emcee? Will there be an intermission? Who will clean up and close down?
- **PIPELINE DEADLINE**—What is the last date for submitting info to the Pipeline?

And that's not all. There are always overlooked details, bumps in the road.

How can YOU help? You may volunteer for any of the above tasks by contacting Program Coordinating Team members listed in the left column of this page.

Most of all—You may help by ATTENDING AND SUPPORTING EVENTS!

Other NW Theatre Organ Events

◆ Kenyon Hall in West Seattle

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

◆ Lincoln Theatre in Mt. Vernon

The Wurlitzer is usually played Mon/Tue/ Fri/Sat at 7PM and Sun at 5PM. If there is a live performance, the organ may not be heard. Check lincolnthatre.org

◆ Columbia River Theatre Organ Society

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

◆ Bellingham's Mt Baker Theatre www.mountbakertheatre.com

◆ Oregon Chapter ATOS, Portland www.ocatos.org

◆ Spokane's First Nazarene Theatre Organ Society

Quarterly meetings are held in March, June, September and December featuring the newly refurbished 1914 Seattle Liberty Theatre Wurlitzer. For up-to-the-minute news and events calendar, go to www.sfnatos.org

From The MAILBOX

A message to PSTOS from Haller Lake Community Club...

Thank you to all the PSTOS members who came to our Pizza and Pipes Night on March 10th. We really appreciate your support. Everyone had a great time listening to Sharon play your organ.

Thank you as well for advertising our event in your Pipeline.

We also really appreciated Bob Zat setting up and then closing the organ.

Marita Nieman,

Haller Lake Community Club

Plan a Portland Getaway!

Hear young Donnie Rankin put
Cleveland High School's 3/24 Kimball
through its paces!

Donnie Rankin in Concert

A Young Persons Perspective



American Theatre Organ Society's 2007 Young Organist Competition winner presents a young person's perspective on the theatre organ

Guest artist, singer and pianist
Hannah Feely



May 4th 7:00 PM

Cleveland High School Auditorium

3400 SE 26th Ave
Portland, OR 97202

Tickets at the door adults \$12.00 students \$5.00

Tickets Online at www.brownpapertickets.com

More information at www.ocatos.org

Presented by the Oregon Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society

Donnie Rankin is fast becoming one of the nation's top young theatre organists. You'll enjoy his program. Plus, there's lots to see and do in and around Portland. Make it a fun weekend!

This event is sponsored by our fellow Oregon Chapter of ATOS.

Pages From The Past.. 1916

The Robert Morton Unit Organ

Its history as published in *The Console Magazine*, 1966. Part four.

Part 4 of a continuing history of the Robert Morton theatre pipe organ.

The Pantages Organs

Of particular interest in this history is the Pantages Theatre circuit and its association with the Robert-Morton pipe organ. The Pantages chain used Morton pipe organs exclusively.

It would be gratifying, indeed, to state that Alexander Pantages selected Morton pipe organs because of their superior qualities. To a degree this was true. But it was also an undeniable fact that the price of the instruments was perhaps the deciding factor. This facet, combined with the hard sell tactics of one of the outstanding personalities of the firm, was paramount in securing for the Robert-Morton Company the exclusive theatre organ contract for all Pantages Theatres.

Alexander Pantages was a showman. He started in show business in the gold rush towns in Alaska, and through his business acumen and flair for showmanship was to build one of the great theatre chains in the United States. He was the lively competitor of the famed Orpheum and Junior Orpheum circuits of theatres.

The man primarily responsible for placing Morton organs in Pantages houses was the epitome of fabulous 1920s self-made men—Henry “Cocky” Charles.



Henry “Cocky” Charles

Pantages had started building new, elaborate theatres and was to reach out as far as Kansas City, then finally to the east coast with the Newark Pantages. In 1919 the first plans were drawn for this lavish house which was to be erected at the northwest corner of Seventh and Hill Streets in downtown Los Angeles. The theatre magnate made this his headquarters. The organ designed by Williams for this theatre was a two-manual, 16-rank instrument. Installed under the stage in divided chambers, the main organ was fully unified and the solo organ was straight, such as was found in the classic and concert instruments. Each chamber had eight ranks.

This design was used in the Seattle, San Diego, Kansas City Pantages houses, and perhaps others that were constructed during the 1917-1924 period. After reorganization of the Morton Company, Pantages was well into the period when he constructed larger theatres and the four manual instruments that went into his San Francisco and Fresno theatres were built at that time.

The task of selling the theatre magnate Robert Morton organs was not merely a matter of dropping in to see him; other firms were desirous of having at least part of the business and were sending their sales people to interview Pantages. And in those days salesmanship encompassed lengthy poker sessions, hard liquor and at times, the services of pretty girls to land fat contracts.

Mrs. Mary Charles tells of her husband’s bout with Pantages which resulted in him landing the full contract for all theatres in the chain:

“Werner had told me that Henry was planning to go after the Pantages contract. He said that if my husband would bring back the complete deal, he, Werner, would buy me the finest seal skin coat I would ever have on my back, plus a \$2500 diamond ring.

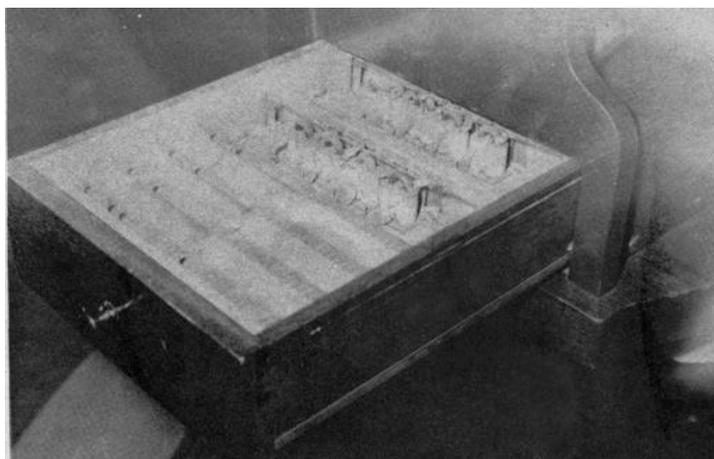
“This was incentive on the grand scale and Henry really dug in to get the business. He played cards with Pantages and his bunch for three days and nights and talked a good business deal, too. At payoff time it cost Henry between \$2500 and \$3500, but he had the contract for installing organs in all Pantages Theatres.

“When Werner came around, he said, ‘Mary, by golly, anybody that would go out and have a good time at my expense and pay money out to boot is not deserving of his wife having that diamond ring and seal skin coat.’ And I never did get it!”

Combination Pull-Out Drawers

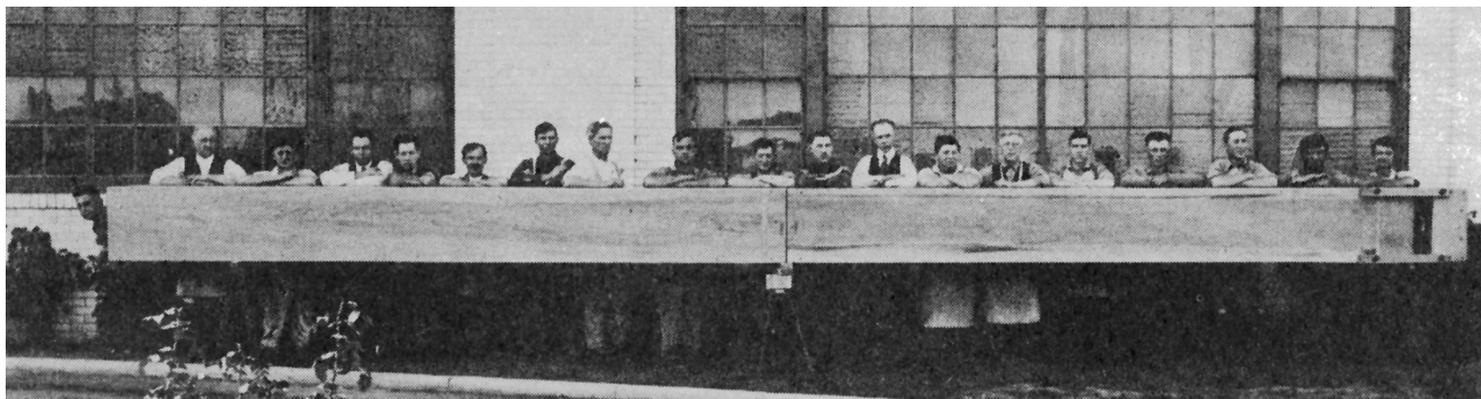
One of the features of every large Morton pipe organ was the pull-out drawers containing the combination changes. The drawers – there were up to six on the largest consoles – were used in place of setter boards and were far more convenient for the organist. Changes were possible within few minutes and could be made by the artist without another person to help, or getting up from the key desk and going to the setter board location, either at the side or rear of the console, or in a special room, to make the desired setting changes.

The pull-out drawer development resulted from a joint effort by Stanley Williams, Morton superintendent, and Paul Carlsted, head designer for the firm. Another firm, believed to be the Bennett Organ Company, used the same idea for some of their models. It is not known if the pull drawer idea was copied very long. Much later, in 1966, the Rodgers Organ Company of Portland, Oregon, had adapted the idea in the form of a large tray installed under the lower manual on one of their models. The tray slid out and had a series of small switches in place of the pull bars used in the Morton combination drawers. Only the larger Morton instruments were equipped with the special drawers.



Combination drawers were placed on large Robert-Morton consoles, some having a drawer for each division of the organ.

Pages From The Past...continued



Thirty-two foot Open Diapason pipe, on display in the Morton factory driveway, was the largest pipe constructed for the 85-rank Morton installed in the University of Southern California Bovard Auditorium in 1921. Pipe was 31' 3" long. Note man peering from left end of pipe.



Henry "Cocky" Charles and Harold J. Werner, center, watch as one of the Miller brothers signs the contract for a three manual Morton for their new California Theatre on Main Street in Los Angeles. About 1918.

Executives worked along with installers

During the early days of the Morton firm, executives did as much work as any of the regular employees. Carlsted recalls that after he designed the layout for the floor frames of the four manual Morton sold to the Princess Theatre in Hawaii, he joined the crew that traveled over and installed the organ. Many times one of the top men in the factory would go out on an installation. They were busy, but never too busy to help set up one of their own organs.

Each style of organ produced at Van Nuys had detailed drawings for every part, including the amount of decorative ormolu that was to be placed on consoles. For many years after he left the firm, Carlsted retained these drawings. Finally, in the late 1950s, he was cleaning out his garage and came across all the drawings he had saved when the firm closed. It was much like all others connected with an enterprise that had long gone out of existence – in all the time he had held onto the drawings, no one had evinced an interest in them. They were of little value any more and so the excellent sets of drawings were taken out back and thrown into the incinerator to be burned. It is indeed fortunate that Carlsted did not take all his drawings; some he left in large draftsman binders. These were handed out to various people who bought, or were given

items in the factory during the liquidation period. They have been kept intact so that they can be used to build a complete Robert Morton organ.

One of those who joined the Morton Company during the last months Stanley Williams headed the factory as superintendent was Hubert C. Ferris, who became known over most of the United States as the Morton "Set Up Man."

Prior to joining Morton, Ferris was the Pacific Northwest representative for the Estey Organ Company. He was a member of the AGO and an accomplished organist. He presented many concerts in the area, which also helped him sell Estey organs.

At the factory, Ferris was active in all departments under Williams and frequently went out to set up new instruments. One of his favorite instruments was the huge Elks' Temple Morton in Los Angeles. Ferris serviced the organ weekly for many years. After the demise of the Morton firm, Ferris continued organ work in the Southern California area with a good number of service contracts.



A Morton Style 75 installed in 1921 in the Lois Theatre, Toppenish, Washington. Both pipe organ and Fotoplayer to the left of the organ console were installed by C. M. Balcom of Seattle. Fotoplayers often were used when patronage was slow to avoid the expense of an organist.

The final part of this interesting series will appear next month.



American Theatre Organ Society
2012 National Convention
Los Angeles • July 2–July 8, 2012
Marriott LAX Hotel
Birthplace of ATOS!

Hosted by
Los Angeles Theatre Organ Society

For complete information:
www.atos.org/conventions/2012

OVERVIEW

PUGET SOUND THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

Russ & Jo Ann Evans, Newsletter Editors
6521 NE 191st ST
Kenmore, WA 98028-3453

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Artists

Simon Gledhill
Tony Wilson
Dave Wickerham
Chris Elliott
Jelani Eddington
Mark Herman
Jerry Nagano
Walt Strony
Chris Gorsuch
Tony Fenelon

Main Venues

Pasadena Civic Auditorium
5/28 Möller
Balboa Park
4/73 Austin
Balboa Theatre
4/24 Wonder Morton
Plummer Auditorium
4/33 Wurlitzer
San Gabriel
3/17 Wurlitzer
Barnum Hall
3/19 Wurlitzer
Trinity Church
4/24 Wurlitzer

Preglow Venues

Trousdale Castle
3/25 Wurlitzer
Crystal Cathedral
5/413 Ruffatti
Old Town Music Hall
4/22 Wurlitzer

Afterglow Venues

Nethercutt Museum
4/73 Wurlitzer
Avalon Casino
4/15 Page

Please visit our website
www.atos2012registration.webs.com

Preglow (optional)

Monday, July 2—All Day

Multiple groups of 150 will tour three pipe organ installations including the private studio Trousdale Castle, the magnificent Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, and the Old Town Music Hall in El Segundo.

Artists at installations will be Lyn Larsen and Chris Elliott at the Trousdale Castle, TBA at the Crystal Cathedral and Tony Wilson at the Old Town.

Convention

Tuesday, July 3rd

Morning—Registration and Record Shop Open, Young Artists
Afternoon—Registration and Record Shop Open, No-host Reception
Evening—Opening Concert, Pasadena Civic Auditorium (*Walt Strony, Mark Herman, Möller*)

Wednesday, July 4th

Morning—Meetings and Seminars at the Marriott
Afternoon—Allen Organ Extravaganza
Evening—Hollywood Bowl with Fireworks and LA Philharmonic Orch.
Including box dinner

Thursday, July 5th

Morning—Balboa Park, San Diego (*Dave Wickerham, Austin*)
Noon—Box lunch, Trinity Church (*Jerry Nagano, Wurlitzer*)
Afternoon—Balboa Theatre, San Diego (*Jelani Eddington, Chris Gorsuch, Wonder Morton*)
Evening—Open

Friday, July 6th

Morning—Plummer Auditorium (*Chris Elliott, Wurlitzer*)
Afternoon—San Gabriel Auditorium (*Tony Fenelon, Wurlitzer*)
Evening—Awards Banquet, Marriott (*optional event*)

Afterglow #1 (optional)

Saturday, July 7th

Morning/Afternoon—Lunch, tour of Nethercutt Museum, Concert (*Simon Gledhill, Nethercutt Wurlitzer*)
Evening—Free Time

Afterglow #2 (optional)

Sunday, July 8th

Morning/Afternoon—Excursion boat tour to Catalina Island, lunch at the Galleon Restaurant, tour and organ demo at the Avalon Casino