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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 24, No. 12

December, 2013

A Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society



DECK THE HALLS!

SPECIAL HOLIDAY PROGRAM!

RING THE BELLS!

With **PETE EVELAND**

at the Mighty Wurlitzer

Haller Lake Community Club
12579 Densmore Ave. N. • North Seattle

Welcome the season in a big way!
*Join your PSTOS friends for a special afternoon
of favorite holiday music, singalongs, dessert,
beverages, and merriment!*

Sunday, December 8

1:00—PSTOS Annual Meeting and
election of 2014 officers

2:00—Program

*Refreshments—Holiday sweets,
angel's & devil's punch, coffee, tea*

ADMISSION

PSTOS Members \$10 • Non-Members \$15
Age 16 and under FREE



Hailing from the midwest, Pete has enjoyed numerous musical experiences including organist/pianist/calliope player on the Mississippi Delta Queen, organist for the Cincinnati Bengals and the Cincinnati Stingers hockey team, staff organist for the Wurlitzer Organ Co., and more. In August he performed for PSTOS at the Evans' home and received rave comments! Pete excels playing ragtime and pop music of all types. *Don't miss this special event... a great way to launch the holiday season!*

**Drive directions
are on page 6**

PLEASE help us plan food and beverages!

Let us know if you will attend and how many in your party

Email joann@pstos.org or phone 425-485-5465, leave message

DEADLINE for reservations—Friday, December 6

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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.*

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Paramount Theatre—Phil Hargiss
Washington Center—Andy Crow
Calvary Christian Assembly—Jeff Snyder
AGO—David Locke

JOINING PUGET SOUND THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY IS QUICK AND EASY!

*For a one year household 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, your email ad-
dress (optional) and your phone number to:*

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

OR...you may now securely join PSTOS or renew your membership ONLINE!

Go to: www.pstos.org
Click on "Join PSTOS."
Secure!
No checks!
No stamps!
A few clicks and it's done!



PRESIDENT'S Message

Greetings PSTOS members,

As I write this month, leaves and branches have been blowing around my backyard. November seemed to blow right in and October was swept away in quite a hurry. December is right around the corner.



I sure hope you are planning to come to Haller Lake on December 8 to hear Pete Eveland. Those of us who heard Pete play the Evans' Wurlitzer are anxious to hear him bring the Haller Lake organ to life. Be sure to come to the annual meeting beforehand, too. It will be a fun afternoon to start off the holiday season.

One of the questions the board has been discussing is what it means to be a member of PSTOS. We all have reasons for initially joining and reasons why we renew or don't renew our membership. The purpose for our discussion has been to figure out ways to involve our current members and attract new members. Some of our discussion focused on ways to promote membership, but much of our discussion revolved around the activity of the programming committee. Thankfully we have an active, organized, and hard-working group that plans a variety of entertaining and quality programs for PSTOS members to enjoy. The programming committee and the board discussed many ideas at the last board meeting ranging from things we haven't done in several years like organ crawls and a tour of an organ workshop to things we've never done before like promoting the use of the Paramount's Wurlitzer in non-traditional ways. As we know, however, especially with all volunteer organizations like PSTOS, ideas will never go anyplace without people like you and me to explore them and find creative ways to make them come to life.

If you have an idea for programming, how to attract or involve new members, or just want be more involved, please send me an email or talk to me or a board member at the annual meeting. We want to keep PSTOS strong so future generations can enjoy both the art and the sound of the theatre organ.

...Jeff Snyder, President

PSTOS Coming Events

► **Note date & venue change!** **Annual Holiday Program featuring PETE EVELAND at Haller Lake Community Club**

Pete performed five years on the Mississippi River's "Delta Queen," played for an Ohio NFL team, and performed in his own restaurants. Now a PNW resident, he's excited to be a PSTOS member and to play for our events.



Sunday, December 8, 1:00 pm

► **LOOKING AHEAD TO 2014— Plan now to celebrate Valentine's Day with DONNA PARKER**



Ever a favorite, Donna returns to entertain at Haller Lake Community Club with her always enjoyable program of pops and special Valentine's Day music.

Sunday, February 9, 2014

► **"Lazy Hazy Crazy Days of Summer" with RAY HARRIS and JO ANN EVANS at the Evans Wurlitzer and piano**

Ray and Jo Ann will again entertain with a social afternoon of music, smiles and food.

Sunday, July 20, 2014

► **JONAS NORDWALL at the Merlyn Johnson Wurlitzer in Tacoma**

What a combo—Jonas and Merlyn's magnificent Wurlitzer!

Saturday, September 13, 2014

► **DAVE WICKERHAM returns by popular request**

The CCA organ will be back online and sounding better than ever. Can't wait!

Sunday, October 19, 2014

Calvary Christian Assembly

More NW Theatre Organ Happenings

Kenyon Hall in West Seattle

www.kenyonhall.org or email
kenyonhall@earthlink.net

Lincoln Theatre in Mt. Vernon

www.lincolnthatre.org

Columbia River Theatre Organ Society

www.croonline.org

Bellingham's Mt. Baker Theatre Organ Society

www.mountbaketheatre.com

Spokane's First Nazarene Theatre Organ Society

www.sfnatos.org

Oregon Chapter ATOS, Portland

www.theatreorgans.com/oregon/ocatos/ocatos2.htm

Nominating Committee report

The PSTOS Nominating Committee, chaired by Past President Bob Zat, presents the following slate of officers and directors for 2013, to be voted upon at the upcoming December Annual Meeting:

President—Jeff Snyder

Vice President—Russ Evans

Past President—Bob Zat

Secretary—Alain Rhone

Treasurer—Jon Beveridge

Directors, two-year terms:

Ray Harris and Terry Perdue

Directors completing the second year of a two-year term:

Gil Drynan and Bob Buchholz

Where does your
money go?

From The MAILBOX

Pipe Organ Encounter—Technical provides a rare opportunity for young people to learn about pipe organ building and repair. Through our scholarship program PSTOS made it possible for Jesse Zylstra to attend. Following is a complete report.

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for your support of the POE Technical 2013 event held in Tacoma in July. Please enjoy the following report which was sent to The American Organist magazine detailing the event. It was an excellent week with a very fine group of students.

Thank you for your part in making this event a success.

Sincerely,

Shari Shull, Director, POE Tech 2013

Nineteen students from ten states, Japan, and France arrived at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington, on Sunday afternoon to participate in the POE Technical event. The Tacoma AGO Chapter collaborated with the Paul Fritts Organ Shop and the Martin Pasi Organ Shop to present the POE Tech week that included hands-on organbuilding and visits to 12 pipe organs.

Dr. Paul Tegels, Pacific Lutheran University organ professor, presented the opening concert at PLU, demonstrating the Brombaugh positive and the Fritts Concert Hall organ, opus 18. Following the concert, Bruce Shull, organ shop coordinator, unveiled the portative organ prototype that he designed for the POE Tech. Bruce's announcement that the students would build one of these instruments during the week was met with amazement from the audience and excitement from the students. The first evening concluded with the students playing the two PLU instruments.

On Monday, time at the Fritts Shop included each student gluing up a wooden pipe, demonstrations of woodworking machines, and pipe voicing. PLU organ professor emeritus, David Dahl, gave a PowerPoint presentation of slides and musical examples titled, "A European Organ Odyssey." The day concluded with Naomi Shiga demonstrating the Fritts organ, opus 8, at University of Puget Sound, and David Dahl demonstrating the Brombaugh organ at Christ Church Episcopal, Tacoma.

Time at the Pasi Shop on Tuesday included each student making action parts for the portative organ. Demonstrations of pipe metal casting, sawmilling logs, metal pipemaking, tuning and temperaments filled the day. Organs by Schlicker

and Kilgen at Trinity Lutheran Church in Tacoma were demonstrated by Dr. Jonathan Wohlers. Students played the organs in the evening.

Wednesday was our Seattle day. A visit to St. James Cathedral began the day with a demonstration of the Rosales and Hutchings-Votey organs given by cathedral musician, Joseph Adam. Dr. Mel Butler, cathedral musician at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, demonstrated the Flentrop organ in the nave and also the Fritts Chapel organ, opus 22, and the Pasi continuo organ, opus 8.

The POE Tech students and chaperones visited the Seattle Center and the Space Needle for some sightseeing in the afternoon. The group continued on to Lynnwood, Washington, where Dr. Carole Terry, organ professor at University of Washington, gave a concert on the Pasi Organ, opus 4, at Trinity Lutheran Church.

A return to the Fritts Shop on Thursday gave the students time to complete their wooden pipes following a voicing demonstration. Other demonstrations included computer CAD design, reed pipemaking and woodturning.

A visit to the Wurlitzer theatre organ at the Lavine home in Gig Harbor gave the students a different view of highly specialized organbuilding and an opportunity to hear and play a large theatre organ.

Dr. Dana Robinson, organ professor at the University of Illinois, demonstrated the Fritts organ, opus 7, at Paul Fritts' home. After the demonstration, students and staff enjoyed a pizza dinner. A drawing was held for the completed portative organ that the students had been building all week. One lucky student won the portative organ, and during the week all students made a wooden organ pipe to take home.

The evening ended with Amadeus on the big screen. The entire POE Tech event concluded on Friday with Sandra Tietjen and Shari Shull demonstrating the Fritts organ, opus 30, located in the Tietjen home.

The POE Tech students were a congenial group, interacting well with each other by taking turns playing the organs they visited, and working together in the organ shops. It was an exciting week for the students, many of whom asked if there might be a POE Tech offered every year.

Special thanks go to the planning team and the following organizations and individuals for their support: National AGO, Tacoma AGO Chapter, Seattle AGO Chapter, Olympic Peninsula AGO Chapter, Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society, Al and Betsy Buck, David Dahl, Paul Fritts, Martin Pasi, Bruce and Shari Shull.

Pages From The Past..

Organ player Sybil Rubini brought reel sound to the silent screen

This article about a 1920s Seattle theatre organist, written by *Seattle Times* staff writer Don Duncan, was published January 12, 1986.

Back in the 1920s, when Mary Pickford was the girl next door and Douglas Fairbanks the supreme swashbuckler, Sybil Rubini added a missing ingredient to silent films – sound.

Fingers and feet flying on big theatre organs, she wrapped audiences in a blanket of music suited to the herky-jerky shadows and subtitles that flashed on the silver screen.

With what she calls “pathetic” music, she evoked lumps in the throat. With slapstick tunes, she inspired peals of laughter. And with heavy minor chords, she sent shivers of fear throughout the theatre.

When poor imperiled Pauline was tied to the railroad tracks, a train bearing down on her, Rubini heightened tension to the breaking point, always, of course, ready to switch to hearts-and-flowers when the hero performed his rescue and the grateful damsel melted in his arms. “If we were lucky, we had cue sheets,” says Rubini, digging into her old files to show what they looked like. “The cues told us how long we’d have to play romantic music; and then how long we’d have to switch to a chase scene. And of course, every movie had a main musical theme. But a lot of the time, we just improvised.

“You had to keep alert all the time, watching the screen with one eye and keeping the other on the stops so you wouldn’t pull the wrong one and produce a sound that wasn’t appropriate.”

Rubini did it well, playing in the Colonial, State, Palace Hip, Egyptian, Strand and Fremont. Most of the time, her employer was John Danz.

Often she played almost continuously through the night, stopping between shows only long enough to run to some downtown eatery, such as Mannings, for a cup of coffee and a doughnut before resuming her work.

“At the Colonial,” she says, “we had regular customers, like the man who always came in about midnight, sat in the front and took off his shoes. By the time he was ready to leave he had kicked his shoes under a seat a few rows away. He’d make an awful fuss until an usher found them”

Several times, Rubini filled in on one of the really big theater organs around town,

reveling in the spotlight, all eyes on her as the organ rose out of the orchestra pit and her fingers danced lightly over the keys.

The pay wasn’t much – \$25 for a seven-day week. But to Rubini, who had learned to play a theatre organ by borrowing against a life insurance policy to finance a three-month class advertised in a Seattle newspaper, it was the fulfillment of a dream – a dream that began when she

making business on Beacon Hill, played the piano for fashion shows around town and once performed for three weeks with a singer friend on KXA radio.

Unfortunately, “Leah and Sybil” couldn’t find a sponsor.

Rubini is now 93 [in 1986], her hearing isn’t what it was and she looks even smaller than the 5 feet she claims. But she bounds around her little north end apartment with



took her first piano lessons as a child in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and was honed when she was a starry-eyed movie buff in the very first class to enter Seattle’s Lincoln High School.

She hoped the job would last forever, that she’d always be playing music to match the actions of leading men such as debonair John Gilbert. But a movie called “The Jazz Singer,” starring Al Jolson, ended the dream. Audiences heard Jolson sing, and never again would they be satisfied with subtitles.

The Roaring ’20s were about to become the Depressed ’30s. Rubini, whose husband, Stanley, was a barber, set up a dress-

remarkable vigor.

From an old chest, she extracted sheet music from her performing days, along with photographs of Lon Chaney that appeared on theater marquees more than half a century ago.

“Oh, how I did love Lon Chaney,” she said. “I played for his ‘Phantom of the Opera’ and ‘The Hunchback of Notre Dame.’ Those took real organ work.”

As she talked, she edged closer to a highly polished, double-manual organ in her living room. The question hung between us. OK, “Can you still play it?”

Rubini sat down and her fingers glided over the keys. “You’re Nobody ‘Til Some-

Pages From The Past...continued

body Loves You..." She slipped as easily as a sled on show into "When I Grow Too Old to Dream" and then into "Whispering," polishing off the impromptu concert with that old Walter Donaldson-George Whiting standard, "My Blue Heaven."

For a brief moment, she was back 60 years. The only thing missing was the man in the front row, looking for his shoes.

Editor's note: After reading this article, curiosity arose about what eventually happened to this 93-year-old lady! A little digging unearthed the following 1999 obituary.

Sybil Rubini, 106, Former Silent-Movie Organist

By Carole Beers, Seattle Times Staff Reporter

Sybil Ella Rubini, a former seamstress and silent-movie organist, wanted to live long enough to say she had lived in three centuries.

On the go and stylishly so since the beginning, she almost made it.

Mrs. Rubini died May 24 [1999] of pneumonia. She was 106.

With fresh lipstick, a bright outfit and a carefully coiffed wig, she celebrated her last birthday in September with a televised bash at Leena's Cafe in Shoreline.

She ate lunch there daily. She walked over from the apartment where she had moved with her Wurlitzer organ after her husband of 49 years, barber Stanley Rubini, died in 1976.

Mrs. Rubini went into an assisted-living facility just two months ago.

Born in 1892 in Council Bluffs, Iowa, she grew up there and in St. Joseph, Mo. She studied piano as a girl.

She came to Seattle by train with her family, lived in the Fremont neighborhood and attended Lincoln High School. Her father ran a horse-drawn cartage business.

At age 16 she met sailor Sig Tafil at the Luna Park amusement center in West Seattle. Their marriage ended in divorce, and she married his brother, Paul Tafil, who

later died.

She used the insurance money from his death to take organ lessons. She began to play for silent films at Seattle theaters, including the Paramount. She used cue sheets, playing a theme for every movie, including "Phantom of the Opera." But she also improvised.

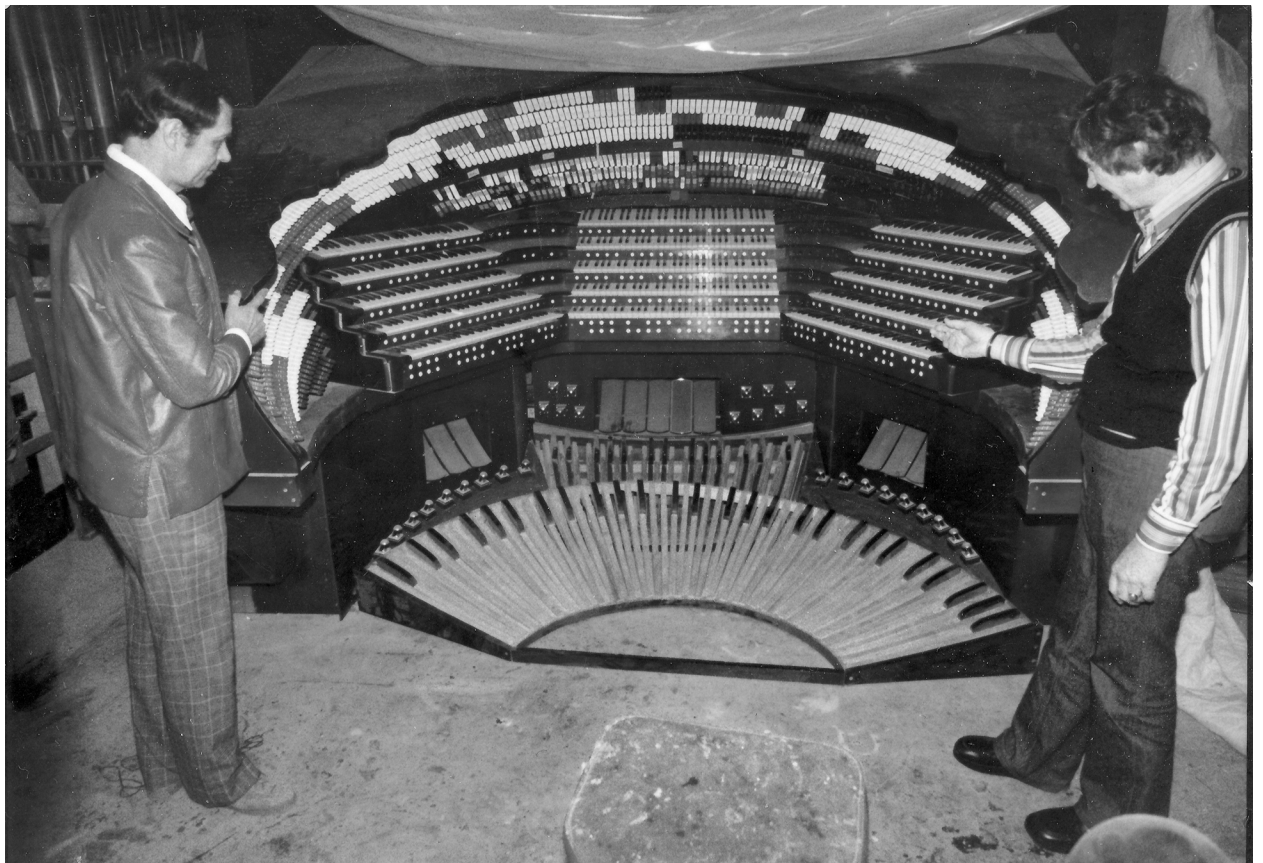
"You had to keep alert all the time, watching the screen with one eye and keeping the other on the stops so you wouldn't pull the wrong one and produce a sound that wasn't appropriate," she once said.

She married Rubini in 1928, after the advent of "talkies."

Mrs. Rubini sang with a friend on local radio in the 1930s, worked as a dressmaker on Beacon Hill, and played for fashion shows including those at Frederick & Nelson department store. Later, she treated her grandchildren to lunches there.

She worked as a nursing assistant during World War II, then threw herself into volunteer work with women's auxiliaries, including that of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

We have a long way to go, but we're making progress!!!



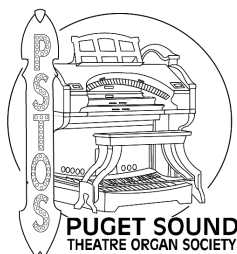
**Drive directions to
Haller Lake Community Club**
12579 Densmore Ave. N. • North Seattle

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 parking and an 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) continuing through N.E. 130th to N.E. 128th. Continue where underlined above.

PUGET SOUND THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

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A Tribute to PSTOS member Clyde Hunnicutt, who will celebrate his 96th birthday December 22!



Clyde Jefferson Hunnicutt, Jr. was born in Phoenix, Arizona on Dec. 22, 1917. He grew up in Phoenix and when he was about seven his family moved to Trinity Heights, Texas, a suburb of Dallas. He showed an early interest in music, and soon after they moved, his dad took him to the Palace Theatre in Dallas to hear the organ. When they were seated and the lights were down he said to his dad, "I don't see any organ." Then the beautiful console with pearl trimmings came up in the spotlight, and Clyde was hooked on the theatre organ from that moment on to this very day.

Clyde graduated from Trinity Heights high school, and soon after that the family moved to Malvern, Arkansas due to his dad's work as a salesman for an oil company. They lived on his grandfather's forty-acre farm and Clyde helped out, milking cows, tending the garden, and the like. During that time a local piano teacher, Mrs. Higgins, gave him free lessons because she was so impressed with his talent at the keyboard, and his dad bought him a Baldwin seven-foot grand piano. After a few years they cleared some timber on

part of the farm and built a house, dug a well, and Clyde moved in. In 1941 he married his lifelong sweetheart Edna-Earle Ware.

Clyde got his first job as a musician playing the Hammond organ at the El Co Nell Roller Rink in Little Rock. The organ was in the center of the rink with the skaters going around it, and the speakers suspended above. Following several moves Clyde and his wife ended up in Phoenix, Arizona, where Clyde played a number of Hammond organ jobs. He had a job for several years at a nightclub with a large circular bar. He designed and built a rotating platform for the Hammond in the center of the bar that allowed him to converse with the customers as it turned. During WWII Clyde also worked as an airplane mechanic in Litchfield Park, a west suburb of Phoenix.

Clyde moved to jobs as a musician in several cities, including Decatur, Illinois and for two seasons a skating rink in Canadarago Lake, New York. Eventually they moved to Renton, WA on top of a hill overlooking the Boeing plant, and Clyde worked at Boeing as an aircraft mechanic for a few years. When his doctor advised him to move to a warmer climate, the family moved back to Phoenix, and Clyde continued his career as a Hammond organist. He and his wife had three kids, Clyde Mason, Carol, and Tim, who grew up mainly in Phoenix.

Clyde and his wife finally moved to the Seattle area where they lived with his daughter. About eight years ago his wife moved to a care facility and Clyde moved to his own apartment in Federal Way, where he continues to live. He enjoys playing his own high-end digital piano with many orchestral voices, rhythm accompaniments, and other features. Clyde is a loyal member of a theatre organ club which enables him to play a variety of instruments and demonstrate his chops as an organist, which are still quite fine. He also gives occasional concerts in the area and delights his audience with his special arrangements of classic big-band standards. We wish him a happy 96th birthday this December 22!