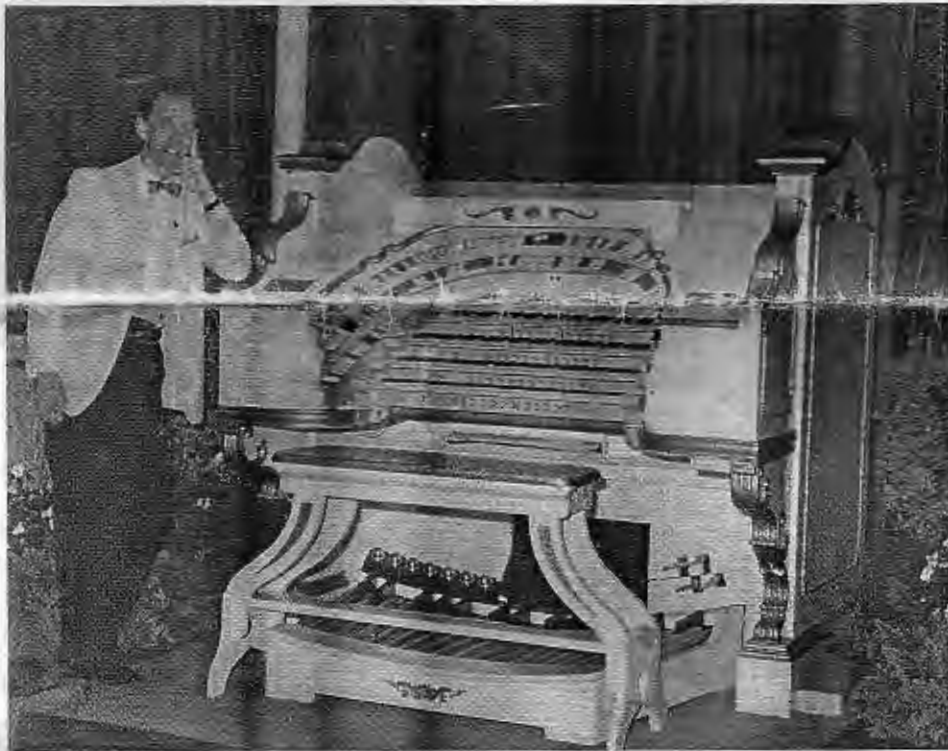


# The WINDSHEET



NEWSLETTER OF THE NORCAL THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY  
P.O. Box 27238, Oakland, California 94602-0438 • (510) 644-2707

www.theatreorgans.com/norcal  
May 2002



## Scott Harrison

The Grand Lake Theatre 3/18 Wurlitzer  
3200 Grand Ave., Oakland, CA  
9:30 AM, Sunday, April 5th

Scott Harrison will present our April members and guests concert. Doors will open at 9:15 AM. The concert will begin at 9:30 AM. A four dollar donation will be requested to defray concert costs.

Scott began playing the organ at the age of fourteen, later progressing to the piano at seventeen.

In 1986 he heard his first theatre organ when he was invited to a Theatre Organ Society of Victoria [Australia] club night held at the Moorabbin Town Hall in Melbourne.

In April of 1987 Scott was offered the position of City Organist for the then City of Moorabbin where he presided over the magnificent 4/21 Wurlitzer. This organ had been removed from the State Theatre in Melbourne, and at the time, was the largest Wurlitzer installation in the Southern Hemisphere. Scott remained at the Town Hall as organist until he moved to New Zealand in 1993. During his six years as Organist at Moorabbin, he also served 18 months as Resident

Organist at the Dendy Theatre, Brighton at T.O.S.A. Victoria's 3/15 ex-Capital Wurlitzer.

Combine both these appointments with running an electrical repair business, directing music for a large church, teaching music students and performing for various organ clubs around Melbourne and theatre organ groups overseas, and you have a idea how busy Scott is!

Scott last played for us in 1998 when he made a tour to the United States.

We don't get to hear the Grand Lake's fine Wurlitzer as often as we would like. We have to fit into the the schedules of the various theatres we visit. Kevin King, owner of the Grand Lake Wurlitzer; like Scott, is involved in a profession, outside of music. He teaches in the Oakland Public School District. In addition to maintaining his organ, he plays it for the theatre on Saturday nights. Kevin also plays Friday and Sunday nights at the Bella Roma Pizza Restaurant in Martinez. Kevin is one of the principals on the NORCAL Berkeley crew. He has winded our entire organ. He tonally finished it and does tuning and lighting for all public performances.

## Wurlitzer Pops Concerts

Last 2001-2002 Series Concert  
Richard Hills, June 30<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday 2:30 PM at the  
Berkeley Community Theatre  
1930 Allston Way

Federal Employer Identification Number 23-741594-7 • State Charitable Trust No. CT 45966 • State Organization Number D-072 6636 M12

<b>CHAIRMAN</b> Chris Nichols 135 Clipper St., #11 S.F. CA 94114 (415) 821-9769	<b>VICE CHAIRMAN</b> William O. Schlotter 6203 Elderberry Dr. Oakland, CA 94611 (510) 482-3183	<b>SECRETARY</b> Arthur J. Woodworth 600 Coventry Rd. Kensington, CA 94707 (510) 524-7452	<b>EDITORS</b> Rudy & Gail Frey 2050 Willow Way San Bruno, CA 94066 (650) 589-6683	<b>MEMBERSHIP</b> John H. O'Neill P.O. Box 27238 Oakland, CA 94602 (510) 632-9177	<b>PROGRAM</b> Gordon A. Pratt 15942 Via Cordoba San Lorenzo, CA 94580 (510) 276-8102	<b>TICKETS</b> John H. O'Neill P.O. Box 2741 Oakland, CA 94602 (510) 632-9177
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## CLOSING CHORD

Joyce Henningsen passed away Wednesday, April 3rd, after a long illness with Lou Gehrig's disease. Her husband Carsten passed away March 2nd, 1999. Joyce is survived by her son Carsten Henningsen Jr. of Oregon and her daughter Maryann of Hayward.

The Henningsens opened Ye Old Pizza Joynt at 19510 Hesperian Blvd. in San Lorenzo in 1958. In 1962 the Wurlitzer pipe organ from the State Theatre in Fresno was installed and later additional ranks and a 3-manual console from the San Francisco Warfield Theatre were added to it.

The restaurant became the first organ equipped pizza restaurant; an institution to Bay Area theatre organ enthusiasts and an inspiration to other entrepreneurs throughout the country. Through the hospitality of the Henningsens, many NORCAL Chapter meetings and several National Convention events have been held at Ye Olde Pizza Joynt.

We extend our sincere condolences to Carsten Jr. and Maryann.

## NEW MEMBERS

We welcome Roger Inkpen of Sunnyvale. Roger is the proprietor of San Jose Pipe Organ. One of the installations familiar to most west coast organ enthusiasts is the Robert Morton Organ in the Arlington Theatre in Santa Barbara, which was installed and is maintained by his company.

## OPEN CONSOLE

Open console for NORCAL members will be held Sunday, May 19th. Players should call the NORCAL voice mail at (510) 644-2707 in the morning to confirm theatre availability. If available, enter via the back stage door at 1930 Allston Way.

*Chris Nichols*, Chairman  
Open Console Host

The Morse Code:  
When you rearrange the letters:  
Here come dots!

## Kevin King

### in the National Media!

In the current April issue of the *Smithsonian Magazine* published under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution, the National Museum, on page 24, there is an article about theatre organs. A very nice color picture of Kevin playing the Martinez Bella Roma console is included. A brief quote of Kevin's explanation of what a theatre organist does is included, as well as the writer's own explanation of what she observed as Kevin played. The article was written by Mary K. Miller a writer and producer for the Exploratorium in San Francisco.

The museum has become aware of theatre organs because it now has a Wurlitzer in its musical instrument collection of the National Museum of American History. The organ, Opus 2070, a late style 190 (2/8) was originally installed in the Fox Theatre in Appleton, Wisconsin in 1929. The theatre was closed in 1959. Lowell Ayars, a music teacher and ATOS member, purchased it and installed it in his New Jersey home. Lowell died in 1992. Brant Duddy of ATOS arranged for Lowell's estate to donate it to the Smithsonian. ATOS helped raise \$80,000 or more for the installation of the organ in the museum. The installation is not yet complete.

## BOARD MEETINGS

Board meeting dates and locations for the rest of the year are as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Residence</u>
June 4th	Don Siefert
August 6th	TBA
October 1st	TBA
November 19th	TBA
December 8th	BCT Annual Membership Meeting

Members are welcome to attend board meetings but are requested to call the host ahead of time so that seating and refreshments may be coordinated.

Dormitory: rearrange letters:  
Dirty Room!

## Organ Nostalgia

### Editor's Introduction

The American Theatre Organ Enthusiasts, later to become ATOS, was organized in 1955 at Richard Simonton's residence in North Hollywood. NORCAL members present were: Frank Bindt, Gordon Blanchard, Tiny James, Bob Jacobus, and Judd Walton, (who was elected Vice-President).

Dick Simonton became interested in theatre organ as a youth, when he was growing up in Seattle. He worked for several organ firms before moving to Los Angeles and acquiring the Muzak franchise for southern California in 1940. His spacious home in North Hollywood was completed in 1952. Within a year the installation of two organs was begun in the home.

A custom built 65 rank Aeolian-Skinner organ was installed in chambers which opened into the the sloped-ceiling living room. The 4-manual draw-knob console was against the wall opposite the chambers. High on the side wall up near the ceiling was mounted a Positiv Division.

The home was on a sloping lot and the outside wall of the basement had curtained windows looking out at a stream which flowed into Toluca Lake. In the basement (which was reached via a circular staircase) was Richard's 63 seat "Bijou Theatre". At the back of the theatre was a projection booth equipped with several 35 mm commercial movie projectors. At the front of the theatre the movie screen was behind a red and white striped French curtain which raised vertically. Behind the movie screen was a single chamber containing 36 Wurlitzer and Hope-Jones ranks. The 4-manual black horseshoe console was custom built by Bill Bunch using the console shell, combination pneumatics and keyboards from the Hope-Jones Organ originally installed in St. Paul's Cathedral in Buffalo, New York. The console was in the style of those at Radio City Music Hall, but it had 3 complete curved stop

rails, with no partials.

Richard Simonton was an amicable host and evangelist for theatre organ who welcomed all who professed an interest in organs. Twenty five years ago, Rudy wrote to ask if it would be possible to see his theatre organ. In return, a written invitation for a Saturday evening was received. Fifty or more people in attendance were treated to a classical concert on the Skinner organ, followed by refreshments in a garden with a retractable roof. Following this intermission, guests were treated to a first run film in the basement and a short theatre organ interlude. (Richard Simonton was a member of the Hollywood Film Archives Committee.) This was a typical and often repeated Saturday evening occurrence at the Simonton residence. The theatre organ was featured at several ATOS Annual conventions hosted by Los Angeles Chapter.

When the following article came to our attention, it filled a gap in our memory and answered the question of what happened to the Richard Simonton Wurlitzer after he passed away.

### Former Simonton Organ

posted to the inter net by  
Jack Hardman

"Former Simonton Organ..." Reminds me of the house where we lived in New Jersey before selling the business and moving to larger quarters in Great Falls, Virginia. We lived in that house for nearly 30 years, but right up till we moved away, the old timers in town referred to our house as "the Volkening house" (never the Hardman house!)

Bob Pasalich [a member of LATOS who has a lot of inter net connections and spends a lot of time on the inter net Ed.], asked me to respond to your inquiries about "the former Simonton Organ...". So here's a quick rundown on what has transpired since its removal from the Bijou Theatre several years ago.

The organ was shipped in one large Mayflower van from

Hollywood to Great Falls. I did not keep the console Simonton used. It was sold to Mike Coup who shipped it directly to Wichita. Since I had been searching for an organ for a couple of years, and turned up nothing that seemed a close enough fit to my desires, I was beginning to think that I would have to piece together an instrument. So when Jasper made his first console available, I bought it. It had been restored and modified about 10 years earlier by Dave Junchen for what was to become Jasper's first organ installation in the music room of his residence in Barrington Hills. That room is now called the American Orchestration Room as I recall.

Junchen had installed Syndyne SAMs and a Trousdale relay. When I got the console, much of the relay had been removed for reuse in Jasper's new 5 manual installation in the Victorian Music Palace. Because so much of the Trousdale relay was missing, I chose to abandon what was left, and use a Rickman Uniflex relay because of its inherent flexibility and many features. The console has been repainted and will get its gold leaf trim when the restoration is otherwise complete. About 100 stop tabs were replaced to comply with Simon's [Gledhill? Ed.] specification. This also required practically every SAM to be position shifted to get the Division Separators in the right spots. Big job! Simon added a number of ranks to reflect current design concepts as well as his personal preferences. We also added the missing ranks like the 16' octave Solo Tibia that never existed on the Simonton installation. There are 18 sets of reeds including a Wurlitzer Vox Chorus (probably of dubious musical value). Right now we are cleaning each reed pipe, leveling the shallots, and polishing the reeds. Very time consuming. The complete restoration per se took just over 3 years. We took a year off when nothing was done during Mildred's illness (cancer), and we are now finally nearing completion of

installation phase. We are hoping to be ready for Clark Wilson to start tonal finishing this fall. Incidentally, our town of Great Falls, VA, is a residential suburb of Washington, DC, about 25 minutes west of the Smithsonian Mall. It is home to Great Falls National Park. While the falls don't exactly compete with Niagara Falls, they are pretty exciting, especially after a rain storm. The Potomac River drops some 70 feet over what is now named The Great Falls of the Potomac.

So there is a quick review of what's been going on with the organ.

<Jack@HardmanFamily.Com>

### Robert Ridgeway Sanfilippo Curator Responds to "mega-organ" debate

Part 1 of 2

I feel that I should respond to some of these postings in the "Theatre Organ List" on the inter net, regarding the "mega-organ" syndrome and try to clear the air on some misunderstood points.

Jasper Sanfilippo was born during the depression of Italian immigrants. He was not born into wealth or comfort. He took over the very small family nut shelling business upon the death of his father in 1963. Through years of hard work, mechanical engineering inventiveness (he has an office wall full of patents), and superb business acumen, he transformed what was a modest food processing activity into the second largest nut processing company in the world.

It was only on a chance vacation in the mid-70's with his wife and five children to California with trips to Disneyland and Knott's Berry Farm, that he became exposed to automatic musical instruments such as nickelodeons, orchestrions, and band organs. He began to collect them and soon discovered that he required more room in which to display them. He met the late David Junchen in 1983, after his new (and far too narrow) instrument display

room was already constructed. He asked David to find him a theatre organ and to install it in this less-than-ideal setting. David and his crew did so and the result was a fine initial instrument (formerly of the Tucson Organ Stop Pizza, and already a conglomeration of other instruments) captured on CD on Ron Rhode's "Collage" album.

Jasper discovered that he derived greater pleasure from this Wurlitzer theatre organ than any other items he owned and likewise saw how thoroughly visitors enjoyed it, too. As early as 1987 Jasper and David Junchen began formulating the ideas of a new music room and, to quote David: "build the greatest theatre organ that there ever was." Jasper gave David free rein (and to quote one wag, "a water-cooled check-book!") to fulfill this dream and Tom Hazleton and David prepared the specifications, as we now know them.

Over the next few years David acquired chests and pipework for this project from all over the country. None of this was in the form of smaller, individual organs "absorbed" into this new "mega-organ." David would find a chest here and a rank there until he had amassed, at the beginning of the installation, approximately 98 ranks of pipework and chests. There was a strange quirk about David (and I knew him for 30 years), he loved challenges... the harder the better. Certainly many of the chests in the present organ were in relatively fine shape when acquired, but a huge number of them were really in rough shape, and required excessive work to make them acceptable. There is no part of this instrument that was not refurbished, releathered, refinished, etc. but all of us who were involved with its restoration and installation felt that a few less "dogs" would have been fine with us. All regulators (there are 53) were recovered and their valves restored. All tremulants (there are 41) were recovered and refinished. Where certain stops were unavailable, David had them made

new by Meyer and Austin and Schopp, among others. He was able to borrow exquisite and rare E.M. Skinner ranks and have them duplicated. No detail was too small to attend to.

*To be continued in the June issue.*

## EDITOR'S CONSOLE

We are happy to hear that professional writer, educator, and NORCAL member Leon Fletcher, whose column has appeared in many issues of the *Windsheet*, has undergone successful surgery and is recuperating at home. We wish him a speedy recovery.

The next press date will be June 16th.

*Rudy and Gail Frey*

## SPECIAL EVENTS

**May 18, June 15, July 20 & Aug 10** Stockton Fox, Robert Morton Project Work Days. See March *Windsheet*, Pg. 3 for details or call Bob Hartzell, (209) 369-4184.

**May 5, Sun, 9:30 AM** sharp, Grand Lake Theatre, Australian, Scott Harrison plays for NORCAL. **San Sylmar Concert Series** Concerts are at 8 PM Fri evenings, 2 and 8 PM Saturdays. Admission is free, but reservations must be made by calling the San Sylmar museum at (818) 367-2251

San Sylmar Concert dates:!

**Jun 21&22**, Barry Baker

**Aug 23&24** Jelani Eddington, organ, & David Harris, piano

**Oct 11&12**, John Giacchi

## CONTINUING EVENTS

**Castro Theatre**, 4/22 Wurlitzer, 429 Castro at Market, SF. Intermission music played daily by David Hegarty, Warren Lubich, or Keith Thompson. (415) 621-6120.

**El Capitan Theatre**, 4/37 Wurlitzer, 6338 Hollywood Blvd, Hollywood, Rob Richards, John Ledwon & Ed Vodicka play preview music 30 minutes prior to the film. Phone: (800) DISNEY6. Website: <www.elcapitantickets.com>

**Grand Lake Theatre**, 3/18

Wurlitzer, 3200 Grand Avenue, in Oakland. Intermission music played Fridays by Warren Lubich and Saturdays by Kevin King. Phone: (510) 452-3556 for theatre schedule.

**Paramount Theatre**, 4/26 Wurlitzer, 2025 Broadway, in Oakland. Public tours on the first and third Saturdays of the month, 10 AM. Please call (510) 465-6400. Their web site is <www.paramounttheatre.com>

**Stanford Theatre**, 3/21 Wurlitzer, 221 University Ave., in Palo Alto. The organ is played by David Hegarty, Jerry Nagano or Bill Taylor half an hour before the film. Through June 13th, the 2nd of 3 installments of Cary Grant's films are being featured. For film schedules and information call (650) 324-3700.

**Towe Auto Museum**, 3/16 Wurlitzer, 2200 Front St., near Old Town Sacramento. Periodic Sunday concerts at 2 PM are free with \$6 museum admission. For details call (916) 442-6802 or log on to: <www.toweautomuseum.org>

## FOR SALE

**Moller Xylophone**, large scale 49 note **Robert Morton**

16' Quintadena with chest in excellent condition

Single rank chests

Magnets

**Trivo 8' Musette**, Wurlitzer replica **Wurlitzer Tuned Sleighbells**, 25 note complete set, no missing bells  
Ron Downer (415) 664-3860

## NOR-CAL WEB SITE

Don't forget to visit your Nor-Cal Web site periodically. It is updated regularly by our web master, Chris Nichols.

<www.theatreorgans.com/norcal>

Sierra Chapter Events Listing  
<SierraChapterATOS.org>

El Capitan Theatre, Hollywood  
<www.elcapitantickets.com>

Organ Stop Pizza in Mesa  
<www.organstoppizza.com>