
The WINDSHEET



Newsletter of the NOR-CAL THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY
PO Box 27238, Oakland, California 94602-0438 510/644-2707

www.theatreorgans.com/norcal

April 2004



Hartzell's 'Blue Barn', Lodi—and—Ironstone Vineyards, Murphys

Jonas Nordwall presents two concerts in two venues—

Morton Madness, Tenth Edition—Saturday, April 17 - First Performance at 1:00 p.m.

A Nor-Cal and Sierra Chapter Special Event—Tickets & Maps available from Jack O'Neill (see below)

\$45 (Indoors at Hartzell's) \$40 (outside patio at Hartzell's)—Plus a Dinner at Ironstone Vineyards

For those with long memories, **Jonas Nordwall** holds a special place in Nor-Cal history as the artist who gave the inaugural concert of our then-new Berkeley's Community Theatre Wurlitzer. If there was ever a concert that expressed the delight of an artist in exploring an instrument's capabilities and showing off its range of voices—that was one. This gifted artist revealed much of the marvelous musical capability that the long hours of work undertaken by club members and then refined by professional organmen had brought to our community. We now have another opportunity to join with Sierra Chapter members and hear this fine artist reveal the distinct character of two very different Morton's, the Hartzell's installation in Lodi that is based on the original Castro Theatre instrument, and then the larger-scale

Alhambra Theatre-based instrument installed in a fine listening room at Kautz' Ironstone Vineyards.

For those who need a refresher on our artist's background, and what he has brought to other organ venues, we offer the following capsule summary of this remarkable artist's accomplishments in no particular order: For over three decades **Jonas** has toured the world presenting concerts in theatres, churches and performing arts centers. Based in the Pacific Northwest, **Jonas** serves as organist for the First United Methodist Church in Portland, Oregon. He has performed as soloist with several symphony orchestras, and has appeared on national television including the Today Show, Good Morning Australia and most recently the HG Network playing the Lavine estate's Wilcox Wurlitzer at Gig Harbor, Washington.

As a boy he took up playing keyboard instruments, moving to studies of organ and piano while in grade school. Pursuing musical study throughout his education, he eventually graduated from the University of Portland with a Bachelor of Music degree in organ performance. Somewhere along the line, the opportunity to take up the challenge of theatre organ presented itself because, during his college days, Jonas played many weekend intermissions at both the Oriental and Paramount Theatres in his native Portland, Oregon. Later, he had a 10-year tenure as the Senior Staff Organist for the Organ Grinder Corporation and produced many memorable recordings in both the Portland and Denver locations. To date, he has released over 25 recordings that reflect a variety of organ stylings and the character of many different instruments.

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As his career developed he gained world-wide recognition as an adept theatre organ stylist, and received the ATOS Organist of the Year Award at the 1987 ATOS National Convention. Those who sign up and go will hear a gifted artist bring out the distinct character of these two very different instruments, each in a fine setting.

What distinguishes Morton Madness—and this is the tenth such that Nor-Cal and Sierra chapters have combined to produce—is the opportunity to get to know other members of both our chapters. I've always gone on this day trip in the company of other chapter members, and the opportunities to enjoy a bit of fellowship along the way make the travel times pass effortlessly. So when you sign up with Jack and get your tickets, make a few calls to other members to see if you can arrange to share the day with other members who might not otherwise think this concert is one they might be able to attend.

The Mysterious Organist

by Leon Fletcher

John Roland Redd became one of the world's most famous organists. But he was not who he led his audiences to believe he was.

He was an African-American born in Columbia, Missouri, on September 16, 1921. His mother, Doshia, was of Creole descent. His father, Ernest Redd, was pastor of the largest black church in Columbia. On that church's organ, John demonstrated that he was a child musical prodigy.

In the 1940's, **John** moved from Missouri to Southern California and worked as a pianist with several jazz groups. He changed his name to "**Juan Rolando**" and presented himself as Mexican. He played in various Los Angeles clubs and on the radio show "**Chandu the Magician**."

His Myth

Then **John** changed his name again—to **Korla Pandit**.

Now he claimed that he was born in New Delhi, India. He said that his father was a member of one of India's leading families. He maintained that his parents had sent him to study in England, and later, to the University of Chicago, where he supposedly enrolled when he

was 13 years old.

In public, at least, he almost always wore a Naru jacket and a white turban with an oval jewel dangling just above his forehead. He said that attire portrayed the real him.

His TV Career

Shortly after California's first TV station, KTLA, Los Angeles, went on the air in September, 1947, **Korla** was selected to play organ to fill in between the many programs that were of irregular lengths.

Soon he had his own TV program. It was telecast three times a week, from 1949 to 1952. The opening line of his shows was, "Favorites of yours and mine, played on the heartstrings of time."

During his more than 900 TV shows he never spoke. His reason, he said: "I was speaking the universal language of music and that goes beyond all borders and languages."

But he often had his announcer deliver bits of **Korla's** pseudo-Eastern religious aphorisms: "Music is the golden union of east and west." "You're a mind with a body, not a body with a mind." "Music may not save your soul, but it will cause your soul to be worth saving."

On most of his shows he played a Hammond B-3 electronic organ. Often he'd play the organ with his left hand and a piano with his right hand.

He made at least 25 recordings. In 2000, two years after his death, Dejavu Records released a CD with 19 selections from his early recordings, including some of his own compositions—such as Turkish Dance and The Hypnotist.

In the 1980s, when I talked with **Korla** at a private party in Scotts Valley, he stared at me intently, spoke just above a whisper, seemed shy, solemn. But then, when the host asked him to play the home organ, he moved smartly to the organ bench, sat, begin to play, and instantly projected his distinctive public image and vitality.

Open Console

for members will be held on both Sunday, May 2 and Sunday, May 23 from 1-5 PM. at Berkeley's Community Theatre. In addition,, June 13 is tentatively scheduled. **IMDOR-**

TANT: Call the Nor-Cal voice mail at (510) 644-2707 on Sunday morning to confirm theatre availability. *If there will be Open Console, enter via the back stage door at 1930 Allston Way.*

New Member

Larry D. Marietta of Berkeley, who we mis-identified in the last issue, is welcomed to the ranks.

Dean Cook
Contributing
Solo Swinger



For Nor-Cal TOS's March public Wurlitzer Unit-Orchestra Show, veteran southern California Theatre Organist **Chris Gorsuch** made his long-overdue Bay-area premiere. *Just One of Things* was the appropriate Console-raiser, which made use of the Berkeley Wurlitzer's gorgeous strings, played un-tremmed with Harp against Xylophone accents, displaying manual jumping, and a 'neat-o' pair of bright red socks!

Establishing great audience rapport with his warm personality, **Chris** moved on to Roger Eaton's arrangement of *Zing! Went the Strings of My Heart*, played at a more relaxed tempo than one usually associates with this tune. Nice! *Musetta's Waltz* was well orchestrated with a Harmonic Flute intro that featured one of this instrument's niftier devices: the tremolos for this rank and the Brass Trumpet, when drawn on the Great Manual, can be set to engage when the manual key is pressed into 2nd Touch, giving a "delayed vibrato" effect.

This artist also showed his command of this instrument's vast combination system, elegantly stair-stepping gradually softer-to-louder massed string/vox combinations. A medley from *Guys and Dolls* was given a wonderfully Big-Theatre Organ treatment, a highlight of which was a full-on Hammond-type jazzy, raggy flute chorus, complete with disappearing and re-appearing tremolos. Didn't know this organ HAD Leslie Speakers!

The big finale took full advantage of this Unit-Orchestra's "throb factor". **Mr. Gorsuch** claimed to be "uncomfortable" in the key of "B", but you couldn't prove it by his arrangement of Billy Strayhorn's *Lush Life*, that was, in a word, "lush"! the first half closed with selections from the score to a never-produced Australian film, *Fantasy* [sic] with music by the very American Theatre Organist Lyn Larsen, for which Mr. Larsen wrote his haunting melody, *Open Your Heart*; one of five motifs Chris presented from this rarely-heard score.

Another bit of 'Larsen-y', *Organ Stop Boogie*, opened the second half. Lyn composed this 'pedal-walker' during his years as Staff Organist at the old Organ Stop Pizza on 7th St. in Phoenix, AZ. A Patsy Cline hit was next, *Walkin' After Midnight*. Self-described as "tassel music", this version obviously had Miss Cline walkin' in the red-light district, an impression helped in no small measure by Berkeley's Community Theatre lighting crew, who turned the theatre's stage into a veritable brothel!

Fritz Kreisler's *Liebesfreud* was full of Viennese-style ritards, cute 2nd touch Glock accent, and a flowing rhythm as infectious as a bottle of Mexican drinking water. *I've Got The World On A String* was "sung" *ala* Tony Bennett, and scored extra points for playing the verse, which this reviewer had never heard before. The relaxed "swing" feel at about 70 beats-per-minute, and the Pedal Cymbal against High-Hat in Accompaniment 2nd Touch were nice touches to a very attractive arrangement.

A huge medley closed the main show, *A Tribute to George Wright* which featured an astonishing number of some of Mr. Wright's legendary arrangements, connected by Vibraphone segues *ala* radio-broadcasts.

Two encores followed: *Dizzy Fingers*, and for contrast, a nice laid-back number this reviewer did not recognize.

Mr. Gorsuch's musicianship, warm personality, humor, and relaxed manner ensured that the good-sized crowd left the Theatre with a rosy glow that only a First-Class Artist with a First-Class organ in a First-Class venue can generate.

Kudos again to the lighting crew for

their imaginative effects, and to all Nor-Cal officers for introducing the Bay Area to this wonderful San Diego master of the Theatre Organ.



Future Board Meetings

April 13 - Neal Wood
phone (415) 861-7082

June 8 - Don Siefert

All members are encouraged to attend. Please contact the meeting host so that there can be sufficient chairs and refreshments.

Editor's Notes

Bob Shipley
Editor



We are happy to receive contributions to this publication to share with Nor-Cal.

Next Windsheet Deadline: April 24. Contact me: by email bshipley1@atmc.net, by phone (650) 968-3290, or by US mail 1734-9 W. El Camino, Mountain View 94040.



[Publisher's Note] Bob is vacationing on the east coast, but his laptop is with him. Much of this issue came from Bob, via email. Other portions came directly from the contributors. An effort was made for Bob to see the end product before printing, but his travel back to the Bay Area may prevent that before our printing deadline. *fel*

NOR-CAL TOS Events

Berkeley Public Concerts
Walter Strony - May 9

Morton Madness
Jonas Nordwall - April 17

Other Chapters' Events

'**Fabulous Fox Weekend**' — an ATOS Regional convention in Atlanta May 28-30, 2004

<www.theatreorgans.com/atlanta>

ATOS Convention in Milwaukee, July 1-7, 2004 (dates include pre-and after-glows)

<www.atos.org>

'**Desert Winds featuring the Magnificent Seven**'

Phoenix's Valley of the Sun Chapter event. November 26-28, 2004. Info:

<<http://www.bargainsail.com/desertwinds/dwframeset.htm>>
or call Don and Leota Reasor
623-877-0635

Other Venues

Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, May 16 at 3:00 pm **Hector Olivera** in concert on the magnificent Aeolian-Skinner. A variety of music, appropriate to the Cathedral setting. Program shown at: <<http://www.gracecathedral.org/calendar/detail.php?eid=241>>.

Grant Union High School, 1400 Grand Avenue, Sacramento. Sunday, May 2 - 1:00 PM **Tom Thompson** plays the Grant Union George Wright Memorial Theatre Pipe Organ. Tickets \$8 at the door.

Arlington Theatre, 4/27 Robert Morton, 1317 State St., Santa Barbara (805) 692-0939

Bay Theatre, 4/54 Wurlitzer, Pacific Coast Hwy. and Main St. Seal Beach, CA. (562) 431-9988. <www.baytheatre.com>

Castro Theatre, 4/22 Wurlitzer, 429 Castro, SF, CA. Intermission music played daily by **David Hegarty** or **Warren Lubich**. (415) 621-6120 <www.castrotheatre.com>

El Capitan Theatre, 4/37 Wurlitzer, 6338 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, CA. **Rob Richards, John Ledwon & Ed Vodicka** play preview music 30 minutes prior to film. (800) 347-6396 <www.elcapitantickets.com>

Grand Lake Theatre, 3/18 Wurlitzer, 3200 Grand Ave., Oakland, CA. Intermission music: **Warren Lubich** (Fridays) & **Kevin King** (Saturdays) (510) 452-3556
<www.renaissancerialto.com>

Nethercutt Collection, 4/74 Wurlitzer, 15200 Bledsoe St., Sylmar, CA. Concerts are free, but reservations are required. **Jelani Eddington** performs June 18 at 8PM, June 19 at 2PM and 8PM. Reservations taken starting 9AM on May 18. Phone (818) 367-2251
<www.nethercuttcollection.org>

Old Town Music Hall, 4/26 Wurlitzer, Check website for details and events.(310) 322-2592
<www.otmh.org>

Paramount Theatre, 4/26 Wurlitzer, 2025 Broadway, Oakland. Public tours on first and third Saturdays of month at 10AM. (510) 465-6400
<www.paramounttheatre.com>

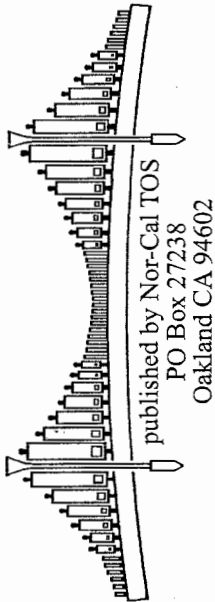
Towe Auto Museum, 3/15 Wurlitzer, 2200 Front St., Sacramento, CA. Free Sunday concerts with Museum admission (exception, Sierra Chapter concerts.) March 21 - **Jim Brown**, April 18 - **Bert Kuntz**, May 16 - **Dave Sauer--all at 2PM.**

Bay Area Gourmet Meals

Angelino's Restaurant, 3/13 Wurlitzer, 3132 Williams Rd., San Jose. **Dean Cook** Thursday-Sunday. **Silent Movies** 4PM—call for reservations: **April 18**, "Tillie's Punctured Romance" **Dean Cook** accompanies on the Wurlitzer.

Bella Roma Pizza, 3/16 Wurlitzer, 4040 Alhambra Rd., Martinez, CA. **Dave Moreno**, Tue., Wed, Sat.; **Bob Reichert**, Thu. & Fri.; **Kevin King**, Sun. (925) 228-4935

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NOR-CAL THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY, Inc.

A Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society

ATOS is dedicated to promoting the tradition of the theatre pipe organ and public understanding and appreciation of the instrument and its music, and shall aid in any way possible the preservation of theatre organs through rehabilitation of instruments and fostering the arts of playing, building, voicing and maintenance. If you would like to join us, please write or call: **Mr. John O'Neill at (510) 632-9177, PO Box 27238, Oakland, California 94602-0438.**

Your Name: _____ Your Spouse's Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Occupation: _____

Dues are \$40 National ATOS and \$20 Nor-Cal (\$60 total) per year. Spouse and children living at home may be included in your membership. We hope you will join us to help preserve and enjoy these great instruments.