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# The WINDSHEET



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

www.theatreorgans.com/norcal

July/August 2004

## Jonas Nordwall premiers the Visalia Fox Wurlitzer



California now has another restored theatre venue in which one can hear the sounds of the theatre organ in concert on a regular schedule. A near-capacity crowd journeyed to hear Jonas Nordwall give the premier concert of the newly-installed Wurlitzer in the restored Visalia Fox Theatre on the evening of Saturday, July 24. At least six Nor-Cal members joined others from the Sequoia, Los Angeles and Santa Barbara chapters, plus a host of local folks for the concert on the Wurlitzer that had been previously installed at the Ruth Villemain Dresser home in Malibu. Jonas was reported to have given a fine performance, as always.

The Visalia Fox, now restored and enhanced to serve as a performing arts center, retains its East Indian atmospheric décor, but has been enhanced for live performance. Organ chambers are on the second level of what appear to be "buildings" that are to the right and left of the house, just forward of the proscenium.

The next scheduled performance in their organ concert series will be by Charlie Balogh on September 26. Call (559) 738-1700 for reservations, directions and more information on their concert season.

## CLOSING CHORD



Dave Quinlan a long-time chapter member was known for his organ styling that he served up in clubs and restaurants in various venues, mostly in the East Bay. In the 40's, he and Harvey Blanchard played piano-Hammond organ duo arrangements in Oakland's Century Club. He long held forth in the 615 Club in Benicia, which featured a 6-rank instrument from the El Campanile Theatre in Antioch. He was reported to be the first organist to play the Bob Denny installed Wurlitzer at the Ye Olde Pizza Joynt in Hayward circa 1960-61. In the late 60's early 70's he again played the same El Campanile Theatre organ when it was moved to Rudy's Supper Club in Vallejo. He also played the 3-manual, 14-rank Robert Morton at

the International Restaurant in Pleasant Hill—another Bob Denny installation.

Working out of his home, he was part of the organ crew for the pre-installation renewal of the BCT Wurlitzer components, re-leathering pneumatics that other crewmembers delivered to his home. A long-time member of ATOS and Nor-Cal, he played for the first ATOS convention held in Vacaville on an instrument installed by Jud Walton in Joe Chadburn's barn.

Quinlan had been living in a rest home the last five years and was out of active playing for the last 15 years or so. He was in his early 80's when he died. We give many thanks to Nor-Cal member Curt Wood who supplied the details for this article.

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## Concert in Review

Dean Cook, Nor-Cal TOS

'Solo Stringer'

Nor-Cal members joined by other Pizza Chompers enjoyed an afternoon of great Theatre Organ Saturday, June 6 at Martinez's Bella Roma Pizza, home of a 3/16 Wurlitzer Pipe Organ.

The kitchen was open, the soda (and other libations) was flowing, and Kevin King was in top form. "Puttin' on The Ritz" was the bouncy opener, with lots o' traps, rhythm changes, and a big rubato finish.

Two Gershwin tunes followed, an upbeat "Sweet & Lowdown", which included the verse, and a slinky "How Long Has This Been Going On?", full of breathy Tibia/Vox combinations, an exceptionally pretty Tuba solo melody line, and lovely chord voicing. The Bella Roma Organ has a very extensive "Traps" division, and Kevin is tops at melding them into the rhythmic underpinning of his arrangements to seem as if a live drummer were playing.

A cute version of "With Plenty of Money & You" by Harry Warren preceded a tune made famous by, if memory serves, Vaughn Monroe. "There...I've Said It Again," featuring this organ's seemingly endless variety of Tibia/Vox/String combinations. When you apply modern technology and an artist of the caliber of Kevin King, you can do some really nifty things to an instrument, like the Auto Rhythm unit with patterns created by Kevin. Far from the old Boom-Chicka-Boom units of yesteryear, this contemporary "Side-Man" actually animates the organ's traps, providing a "live" drummer for the artists' performance, and could be viewed as essential for the entertainment organist. (Some of us have to use digital units, or a real Human!)

Kevin gave us a taste of its capabilities with a quintessentially 70's number, "Love Will Keep Us Together", by The Captain & Tennille. Very good "Soft Rock" patterns with solid "fills".

A new tune for this reviewer was next, Henry Mancini's "Dreamsville." More Tibia/Vox/String combos, over a left hand of Flute and a lovely Diapason that sounds more "Horn" than "Open" to these ears, all supported by a light Piano on the after-beat, courtesy of Accompaniment 2<sup>nd</sup> Touch.

This Wurlitzer has a ton of tricks up its sleeve, and most of them must have turned up in "Constantinople", a "Puttin'

on The Ritz" clone. Trick couplers, Post Horn pizzicato, Latin percussions, transposer, and a bloody huge Gong made their appearance known.

According to Kevin, Duke Ellington wrote 911 songs and "Sophisticated Lady" was chosen, perhaps to show off Kevin's talent at hand-registration, using couplers to make large-content stop changes while actually moving the fewest number of stop keys...students, take note!

Porter's "It's Alright With Me" was followed by the first half closer. "Something's Gotta Give!" featuring a well-balanced Post Horn that rises above the ensemble without obliterating it.

Kevin opened the second half with two by The Tijuana Brass, "Spanish Flea", using the LOUD Exposed Xylophone and Accordion (every pizza organ should have one!), and, of course, "Tijuana Taxi", with lots of Auto Horn & Klaxon action.

Duke's "Do Nothing 'till You Hear From Me" followed, with a mellow Trumpet intro. A Harry Warren tune that wound up as a Warner Bros. Cartoon theme was next, "The Girlfriend of a Whirling Dervish".

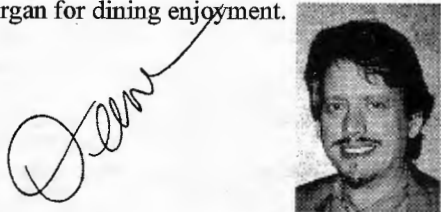
But, Duke soon made another appearance, with a sexy "Mood Indigo", and "Lullaby In Rhythm", in a relaxed Two-Beat.

The perennial Pizza Parlor favorite, "Take the 'A'-Train", with the Bella's Lionel Train making its circuit around the dining room—until it hit a miniature house and de-railed! Engineer Dave Marino soon got things back on track, and no lives were lost in the disaster.

Arlen's "Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea" was followed by "We'll Be Together Again" in a relaxed 4-Beat, and our afternoon was brought to it's "official" finish with a sprightly "Josephine."

Open Console followed for those brave enough to try this WurliTzer's rather intimidatingly unified console, sans Combination Action.

**O**ur thanks to Bella Roma's staff & management for opening the restaurant to Nor-Cal, and for continuing to remain one of the two last such places on the West Coast to present live Theatre Organ for dining enjoyment.



## Master Organ

### Builder

Leon Fletcher  
Guest Contributor

**T**o follow up on this column's article of last month about Bach, here are a few bits about a friend and colleague of his--the famed organ-builder Gottfried Silbermann (1683-1753). They worked together, exchanged ideas, even chided each other.

Today, it would be fashionable to say that Gottfried was "home schooled." He learned how to work with wood from his father, a craftsman-woodworker; his older brother, Andreas, built organs and taught him much.

The two brothers had an agreement: they'd not built organs in the other's territory. Andreas worked in Strasbourg, Gottfried stayed in his home area, Saxony; that kept them about 150 miles apart.

To learn still more about organ building, Gottfried went to Paris for two years to study with a leading French organ builder, Theyry (sometimes spelled Theiry).

Gottfried was just 28 years old when he received his first commission to build an organ. It was for a small instrument—one manual and pedal, 15-stops—for his home town, Frauenstein. He built it "at cost"—taking no fee for his work, obviously realizing that would help expand his reputation.

It did. He went on to build 45 organs and uncounted numbers of harpsichords, clavichords, forte pianos, and pianos.

Some say that the "most important feature of (his) instruments is their distinctive sounds." Organists and listeners lauded the "silvery sounds" of his organs. Mozart said, "These (Gottfried Silbermann) instruments are magnificent beyond measure."

Most of his organs looked almost identical. However, each was especially designed for the acoustical characteristics of where they were played.

At age 40, Gottfried successfully petitioned the first king of Prussia, Frederick I, to be designated the "Honorary Court and State Organ Builder to the King of Poland and Duke of Saxony."

#### His Impact in the United States

**O**ne unnamed online writer says that Silbermann laid "the foundation of European organ-building in America."

Today, Gottfried's legacy lives on in the United States. Examples include the organ

in the Zion Church, Spring City, PA—a small, one-manual organ built in 1791 by David Tannengerg, a student of one of the Gottfried's pupils.

Another organ in our country with a Gottfried heritage is at the University of Michigan—that instrument is closely modeled after one of his original instruments. It even has a hand-pumping station, still used instead of electricity for some recitals.

And a third organ in the United States which Gottfried influenced is in the Hebron Lutheran Church, Madison, VA. That organ is still used occasionally, even though it was built about in 1800. All of it is reportedly original, including its bellows.

When Gottfried died in 1753, at age 70, he was building his largest organ—a 3-manual, 47-stop instrument, designed for what is now known as the Trinity Cathedral, in Dresden.

To keep it safe during World War II, it was dismantled and placed in storage; it was reassembled in 1971.

In a medieval castle in Frauenstein, Gottfried's home town, there's a highly regarded museum containing many of the papers of his original specifications, contracts, and letters. There's also a full-sized working exhibit that shows the operation of bellows, stops, keys, and pipes.




## Chairman's Windline

Don Siefert

I have heard many good reports on both the Atlanta weekend and the convention in Milwaukee. It is unfortunate that too many events diluted the convention attendance. The approximately 250 that attended the convention were treated to many excellent concerts. I would have liked to attend at least one of the events.

There were as many Sierra Chapter attendees as there were Nor-Cal attendees at the June Kevin King concert at the Bella Roma in Martinez. I can only assume the location of the venue was the cause. Those that missed the concert missed a fine performance by one of our own members. The late publicity was possibly a contributing factor.

The board is working to improve the timeliness and quality of inputs to the *Windsheet* editor and publisher. It sent suggested changes to the format.

Bob and Frank have given the board a time line so the information reaches the membership in time to plan to attend.

Previously we left everything up to Bob and Frank and just plain made their task extremely difficult, and in spite of the obstacles they produced a fine product.

I encourage all to look at the section of coming events and mark your calendars. Artists put in a lot of effort to prepare and a large crowd is what makes the effort worthwhile.




## New Member

We welcome Paul-Wesley Bowen of San Jose to the ranks of Nor-Cal TOS.

## Donations

We thank Darrell K. Luehr of Lincoln, Nebraska, Harold & Patty Schneringer of Concord, and Ledr. Philip S. Wickstrom of Yountville—for their donations which will help us in our efforts to preserve the theatre organ and and present it in performances in our community

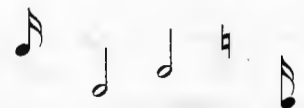
## Editor's Desk

Our July-August issue, as you can see, lacks an announcement of the next chapter event. We hope that we have few occasions where what we report fails to include the news of our next opportunity to gather as a club. We are not publishing a deadline for the next *Windsheet*, but encourage you to send me material as soon as possible for inclusion. Contact me by email, by phone (650) 968-3290, or mail me at 1734-9 W. El Camino, Mountain View, CA 94040.



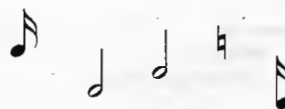

## Board Meetings

August 10 - at Kevin King's. 3106 Sheffield Ave, Oakland. Phone 510-532-9345. All members are encouraged to attend. Please contact the meeting host so that there can be sufficient chairs and refreshments.



## Nor-Cal TOS Coming Events

2005 Morton Madness—  
Tom Hazleton, April 9, 2005.



## Other Chapters Coming Events

**Visalia Fox**—**Charlie Balough**, September 26, 2004. Call 559-738-1700 for more information/schedules/reservations.

### **D**esert Winds featuring the **Magnificent Seven**

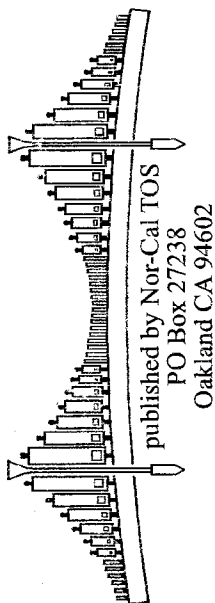
Phoenix's Valley of the Sun Chapter event. November 26-28. Info: <<http://www.bargainsail.com/desertwinds/dwframeset.htm>> or call **Don and Leota Reasor** 623-877-0635

## Other Local Venues

**Castro Theatre**—4/22 Wurlitzer, 429 Castro St., San Francisco. Intermission music played daily by David Hegarty or Warren Lubich. (415) 621-6120 <[www.castrotheatre.com](http://www.castrotheatre.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](http://www.renaissancerialto.com)>

**Angelino's Restaurant**—3/13 Wurlitzer, 3121 Williams Road, San Jose. **Dean Cook** plays Thursday, Friday and Sunday. **Silent Movies** on Sundays at 4:00 PM—call for reservations: **August 22**, "Mark of Zorro", **Dean Cook** accompanies on the Wurlitzer.



### 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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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.