
The WINDSHEET



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

www.theatreorgans.com/norcal

June/July/August 2005

John Lauter Sunday August 14, 9:00 AM Castro Theatre Castro Street near Market, San Francisco

We have a special treat for members and their invited guests—an opportunity to hear a superlatively voiced Wurlitzer in its landmark setting, the San Francisco Castro Theatre. Those hardy souls among you who can rise early on that Sunday will enjoy a concert by John Lauter. John is an artist whose return will be particularly welcomed by those who have heard his previous performances on this instrument. A \$4 donation from each person attending will be collected at the door.

Doors will open at 8:30 AM, with the performance starting promptly at 9 AM, so that we can hear a full concert and be out and off to new adventures while the Castro staff prepares for the day's film program.

Detroit area theatre organist **John Lauter** began lessons at age 14, after hearing veteran theatre organist **Lee Erwin** in concert at the Royal Oak Theatre. Lessons with other area teachers followed, notably **Betty Mason** and **Gary Reseigh**. John made his public debut at the Redford Theatre at age 16.

Since those early days John has presented concerts in Chicago, namely at the Oriental theatre, VanDerMolen residence, Krughoff residence, the 19th Hole restaurant and the St. Mary of the Lake seminary auditorium in Mundelein, Illinois.

Lauter has been featured in programs at the Paramount Theatre in Denver, the Castro Theatre in San Francisco, the Richard Knight auditorium of



Babson College in Boston, the Organ Stop in Phoenix, the Rialto Theatre in Joliet, Illinois, and the Ohio Theatre in Columbus. John spent three years playing at 'Theatre Organ Pizza' and Pipes' in Pontiac, Michigan. At home in Detroit, John has presented seven concerts for the Detroit Theatre Organ Society, and many concerts and silent film programs at the Redford theatre.

The Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor, Michigan featured John as staff organist for 17 years, during the course of which he accompanied such silent film classics as 'Metropolis', 'The Birth of a Nation', 'The Phantom of the Opera', 'It', 'Robin Hood', 'Greed', 'The Cabinet of Dr. Calgari', 'Nosferatu', 'The Gold Rush' and many others.

The Detroit Fox Theatre's 1988 grand re-opening found John playing before 'The Ultimate Event', **Liza Minelli**, **Sammy Davis Jr.** and **Frank Sinatra**. Lauter has played at the Fox ever since, for both film performances and live shows.

In preparation of the opening of their new IMAX theatre, the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn contracted John to compose and record a silent film accompaniment to a silent film collage featured in a specially produced IMAX short subject shown before each feature there.

John is the organist for the Unity Church of Lake Orion, and is also in demand as a pianist at local Detroit restaurants. John makes his home in Farmington Hills, Michigan with his wife Amy, and son Benjamin and daughter Maryanna.

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When emailing, include ATOS in the subject line. Otherwise, if you are unknown to the recipient's computer, its SPAM filter may divert your mail.

Remembering BILL LORDGE

by Pat Davis



Nor-Cal lost a valued friend and member when Bill Lordge died suddenly on June 30 from a heart problem. His friendly outgoing personality and his enthusiasm for the club will be missed.

Bill Lordge entered the world of Nor-Cal Theatre Organ Society when Nor-Cal hosted the convention in Oakland July, 2003. As Jan LaFetra said, "Bill was a person who filled holes. He would find something that needed doing and he would do it!"

He helped Frank with mailing of the Windsheet. He attended board meetings and was constantly looking for ways to increase membership and interest in the organization. The 'First Timers 4 Free' was his idea. He not only instigated it but would arrive an hour early to each concert to sign up new people. As a retired teacher, he was trying to work out the logistics for a 'youth concert'. During our commutes to the Berkeley concerts he would constantly bounce ideas for ways to fill the empty seats. "I just want to do what I can to help keep the club alive" he would say—and come up with another suggestion: some far-out, some viable. Hey, if the group folded, how could he hear that wonderful music!

He recruited members of his Santa Clara Mercedes-Benz club who brought their beautiful cars, along with his own, for display. Then he collaborated with Warren Lubich to do the same for his Packard car group and it made for an impressive

showing and an expanded audience.

Though Bill had been a member of ATOS for many years, had attended most conventions and followed the Organ Circuit in his many travels world wide, he had not joined Nor-Cal until 2003. I met him during registration and we clicked as friends. We spent much of the convention together on bus rides, meals and concerts and discovered many similar interests: old cars, trains, theatre, travel etc. When the convention ended we agreed to keep in touch. That was the beginning of a close and intense friendship until his death.

Bill had many passions but his love of majestic Pipe Organ Music topped the list. As we sat in the darkened theatre I would notice many times the beauty of the music would move him to tears. He was enthralled to the depths of his soul.

He was a theatre junkie. We attended SF theatre productions and held season tickets for two community theatres. Bill loved old classic movies. We watched films like 'Random Harvest', 'Casablanca', 'Somewhere in Time', often with a box of Kleenex between us on the sofa.

Another passion was old cars. As my guest at car shows and classic car club events, he charmed everyone, and seemed to know more about what was under the hoods than most of the old die-hard macho car enthusiasts. He won a prize at one event identifying 'obscure car parts.' One of his projects was having an old Greyhound bus converted into an eight-passenger motor home complete with kitchen and bath. He lived in Mexico while the work was being done and was planning to 'get a gang of compatible folks together, share expenses and follow the hood ornament across the country.' It now sits, not quite finished, in his back yard.

We went on Senior Citizen bus tours and train excursions. By the time we got to the destination he knew half the people on board. He never met a person he didn't like and the feeling was mutual. Once Bill and I were the only 'gentiles' at a Jewish Chanukah party and Bill was given a 'lifetime invitation' for all future celebrations. He could fit into virtually any situation with grace.

As a descendent of the Castro and Berryessa families, he was an avid student of California history. An environmentalist, he studied nature and supported many projects including the Will Rogers Institute that is involved with the Monterey Aquarium.

Bill's life was amazing. In his youth, Bill worked his way through San Jose State College teaching driver education and driving a school bus. After he got his degree he taught History in middle school for many years until his retirement. He remained active in a Retired Teacher's Association and scores of fellow educators were at his memorial service.

He spent several months hitch-hiking across Europe. He rode trains in India, and traveled all over the world encountering incredible adventures. He was a full Commander in the Coast Guard Reserves, retired. I was thrilled to be his 'date' at a very formal 'full dress' Admiral's retirement dinner. It was obvious he was held in very high regard in that prestigious company. Uniformed Coast Guard representatives gave military honors at his service—complete with Taps.

Bill had many successful real estate ventures and thought nothing of shelling out \$22,000 for three weeks in Antarctica or dining in style in pricey restaurants, but insisted on keeping his printer set in 'draft' mode to save ink. He was a delightful living paradox.

Bill, as the Irish Ballad says, "we hardly knew ye". On August 19th he would have celebrated his 66th birthday. His ashes are scattered at sea over Monterey Bay as he wished. May a bit of his enthusiasm for life and for Nor-Cal remain for us all. Bill would have been pleased that among the floral tributes at Bill's memorial on July 7th was a beautiful colorful spray from Nor-Cal.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome to the ranks. **Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth J. Shirey** of Sunnyvale, **Mr. Alan R. Shy** of San Francisco, **Paul MacVey** of Ames, IA, and **Linda MacVey** of Oakland, CA.

Nor-Cal TOS Member Badges

Nor-Cal has a great looking badge featuring the pipework Golden Gate Bridge along with the club name and your name—all engraved on a blue background plastic badge stock and complete with an attached clothing grip clip. The badges cost \$9 and can be ordered through Jack O'Neill, PO Box 27238, Oakland, CA 94602-0438. Tell Jack how you want your name to appear. Badges will be mailed to you in 2-3 weeks from receipt of order.

Next Board Meeting

Tuesday, August 9, 2005, 7:30 PM, at Harry's Hofbrau restaurant, 14900 E 14th St., San Leandro. The restaurant is located near the 150th street exit off of I-580, or take the Hesperian, exit from I-880 and head West toward the foothills to 14th St.

All members are encouraged to attend.

Editor's
Console
Bob Shipley

Bob



With this issue we're passing the editor's eyeshade and sleeve garters to ~~Don Ravey~~ who is even now showing his editing skills and enthusiasm—he's made important contributions to this issue. Now, as I say good-bye, I thank all of you for making my tenure so pleasant. And as for Don—he's a great guy to work with. Contact Don by email: <ravey@alum.mit.edu>, by phone (650) 573-8027, or mail him at 127 Chukker Ct., San Mateo, CA 94403-1306

Ron Rhode's May 1 concert on the BCT Wurlitzer

By Bob Shipley

I arrived late, thanks to downtown Berkeley's very busy Sunday traffic scene and the concomitant search for parking, to hear our artist, Ron Rhode put the finishing touches on his opener *Entry of the Gladiators* a march by Julius Fucik that was a popular number played by circus bands. A good opener, it combined a warmth of tone possible on the organ with the vigor inherent in a march.

Ron then took a few minutes to explain a bit about how **Lew Williams**, our scheduled artist, had to give up his engagement, what happened, and that Lew will likely be back in action shortly—in fact, he let the audience know that Lew was on the program for a BCT public concert in May of next year.

Ron stayed in the vein of oldies, next playing Irving Berlin's *When the Midnight Choo Choo Leaves for Alabam'* in a bouncy arrangement. Next *I'm Confessin' (That I Love you)*, a 1930 tune popularized and recorded by **Perry Como** in the mid-'40's was the lead song of a medley of tunes in a similar romantic/balladic vein that included *Twilight Time*. Ron's arrangements were

tremens-on, full and lush, and with even the solo voices well integrated into the overall ensemble sound, making for a consistent romantic mood.

Ron explained that for a recent recording venture on the Sanfillippo organ, he'd concentrated on working up selections by **Victor Herbert** and went into a short discussion of how Herbert's work and career contrasted with that of Herbert's contemporary, **Sigmund Romberg**, whose work he had explored for a previous recording, *Deep in the Heart*. He then played *American Girl*, a march and two-step of 1896 that was characteristic of the era when concert bands, such as the Sousa band, would perform popular music that was intended for all occasions. There is no doubt that Ron's strong oom-pah beat of his arrangement was characteristic of the times and that when offered as a two-step, would keep the most uncoordinated of dancers moving to the music.

Ron introduced his next selection, *You Turned the Tables on Me* as a cartoon song, and his arrangement did have the up-tempo, jazzy feeling of music that accompanied the Warner Bro's animated shorts in the late '30's. And no, Ron didn't interpolate toy counter effects to suggest what might have been happening on the screen, but kept it (along with the verse of the tune) in the spirit of a dance number played by a '30's orchestra.

Ron gave a smooth reading to a **Victor Herbert** waltz, *Kiss Me Again*, the 3/4 beat not overemphasized in this refreshing reading on the Wurlitzer.

Ron's next piece was *Pietro's Return*—a lively circus gallop as I noted it—with a chorus in which the melody is played on the pedal clavichord. In Ron's introduction he'd said that this tune was from the accordion literature. I spent a happy half-hour searching the internet to try and find the correct spelling of the tune and in the course of it learned much of how the accordion came to be popular in this country. To summarize, the tune is by the Italian composer **Pietro Deiro** and was introduced to America by his older brother, **Guido**, whose smash-hit vaudeville act also popularized the now-standard piano accordion in this country.

Ron next played a medley of waltzes by **Emile Waldteufel**, *España Waltzes* with a light and balanced registration that enhanced the familiar melodies, followed by *The Rose of the World*, a 1908 song by **Victor Herbert** from the operetta *Rose*

of Algeria, that received a programmatic, dramatic reading particularly in the introduction. Next, a 1911 tune, *My Beautiful Lady* that featured a verse in a sort of tango rhythm, then turned into a very danceable waltz in the chorus. He wound up the first set with *The Doll Dance*, the piano novelty.

Ron opened the second half with the **Simons** and **Whiting** tune *Hello Baby*, noting this was a tune performed with great success by **Ruth Etting**. Then *Dust on the Moon*, a song by Cuban composer **Ernesto Lecuona**, mostly famous for the *Malagueña* portion of his *Andalucia Suite*, followed by *When the Moon Comes over the Mountains*, a peaceful tune with a simple melody. Then *I'll See You in C-U-B-A* a 1920 tune by **Irving Berlin**, which Ron rendered with an introduction on the piano, a sort of minor key verse, then a more languid major key chorus. *Fit as a Fiddle and Ready for Love*, a tune from the movie *Singin' in the Rain* was a jazzy interpretation of this 1932 offering by **Hoffman, Freed and Goodheart**.

You Don't Know Me a 1956 tune composed and recorded by **Eddie Arnold** was interpreted by Ron so as to respect its country music roots. *On the Trail*, from Grofé's *Grand Canyon Suite*, was a faithful transcription, where Ron slowed down the celeste solo in mid-piece to allow the organ's percussions to speak distinctly to recreate this imitation of a music box. Ron's encore started with *Teddy Bear's Picnic*, and he brought the lift down with a hot little number that we'd love to have identified.



Upcoming Events

August 6 (7:00 PM) 79th Anniversary of Monterey State Theatre, Monterey—*Wizard of Oz* with (very likely) **Jim Riggs** Public event.

August 14 (9:00 AM)--**John Lauter** at the Castro Theatre, San Francisco. Chapter Event.

September 3 (8:00 PM)--Monterey State Theatre, Monterey--**Tom Hazleton**—1925 *Phantom of the Opera*, **Lon Chaney**. Public event.

October 22 (9:30 AM)--**Dave Hooper** at the Grand Lake Theatre, Oakland. Chapter event.

October 29 (8:00 PM)--Monterey State Theatre, Monterey—**Dennis James The**

General Buster Keaton. Public event November 13--**Tom Hazleton** at the BCT, Berkeley. Public event.

April 8, 2006--**Morton Madness**.

May 4, 2006--**Lew Williams** at the BCT, Berkeley. Public event.

Other Venues

Arlington Theatre, 4/27 Robert-Morton, 1317 State St., Santa Barbara, CA. (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>

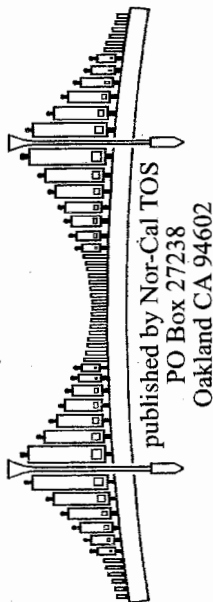
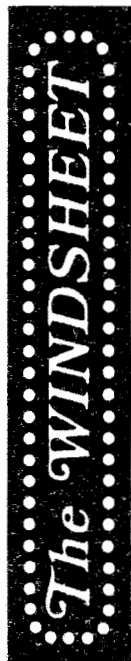
El Capitan Theatre, 4/37 Wurlitzer 6338 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, CA. Rob Richards, John Ledwon & Ed Vodicka play preview music 30 minutes prior to film. (800) 347-6396

<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

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



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. Neal R. Wood at (415)861-7082 <nealwood@pacbell.net> , 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.