
The WINDSHEET



Newsletter of the NOR-CAL THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY
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www.theatreorgans.com/norcal

April 2006



MORTON MADNESS

April 8, 2006

Harmony Wynelands (Lodi) Ironstone Vineyards (Murphys)



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Jim Riggs will be the featured artist this year, at both vineyard venues, Hartzell's Harmony Wynelands near Lodi and Kautz's Ironstone Winery in Murphys.

Tickets are \$45 for both concerts and dinner. They are available from **Jack O'Neill**, PO Box 2741, Oakland, CA 94602, Tel. 510/632-9177, or by ordering online from the Sierra Chapter ATOS web site:

<www.sierrachapteratos.org>

Hartzell's Harmony Wynelands is about a two-hour drive from San Francisco. Patio tables are available at Noon for picnic lunching, but no cooking, please. **Jim Riggs'** concert begins at 1:00 PM.

The Kautz Ironstone Vineyard is about a 90-minute drive from Harmony Wynelands. Kautz Winery tours and wine tasting begin at 4:15 PM, Buffet dinner is at 5:30 PM. **Jim Riggs'** second concert is at 7:00 PM.

The tradition of *Morton Madness* began in 1995 with the concept of presenting one artist playing two concerts on the same

day on two identical specification Morton theatre organs in picturesque settings in the Central Valley and Sierra foothills.

Since the beginning, the *Morton Madness* event has been the product of the cooperative effort of the Nor-Cal and Sierra Chapters of ATOS (American Theatre Organ Society).

The date of the event, has varied each year from March to May, according to the availability of the artists.

IN STOCKTON the next day APRIL 9

If the *Morton Madness* experience on April 8th leaves you eager to hear more of **Jim Riggs'** organ wizardry, you can enjoy hearing him score the silent film *King of Kings* the following day in Stockton at the Bob Hope Theatre.

More information is available at the Sierra website (see first column).

YOUR PUBLISHER GOOFED

In the last issue, we published an obituary for a Dear Friend of Theatre Organs, **Bill Brown**. Unfortunately, the photo used was that of a *very* alive **Ralph Wolf**, another great supporter.

I know neither of these friends personally. The mistake is unfortunate, and Thank you **Tom De Lay** for pointing the error out to me. See Page Two for the notice as it should have been. [Pub.]



Tom Hazleton suffered a massive heart attack and passed away in his sleep at home in San Diego on Monday, March 13, 2006.

Tom studied at San Francisco State University, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and was a student of **Richard Purvis** at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco.

Hazleton was one of a select few concert artists who are equally proficient on both classical and theatre pipe organs. He was named 'Organist of the Year' in 1986 and inducted into the 'Hall of Fame' in 2003 by the American Theatre Organ Society.

Tom was organist and associate minister of music for thirteen years at the Menlo Park Presbyterian Church, as well as professor of organ at the University of the Pacific in Stockton. Before retirement, he was affiliated with the Allen Organ Company for more than twenty years.

A VERY SAD NOTE

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IN MEMORIAM



Bill Brown

On February 2, 2006 the Theatre Organ world lost a great friend. **Bill Brown**, at age 80, died following a lengthy illness, in Phoenix, Arizona. He was at home, with his family and close friends around him.

Bill Brown had a profound effect on many people in the world of Theatre Organ. He was a founding member of the American Theatre Organ Society (ATOS). He was responsible for starting and/or furthering the careers of many of today's top organists, including **Lyn Larsen, Ron Rhode, Walt Strony, Lew Williams.**

Bill was an innovator and major player in the Theatre Organ revival movement. He made it possible for the general public to hear beautifully installed instruments at his highly successful Organ Stop Pizza restaurants in Phoenix, Mesa, and Tucson.

His goal was always to have the best organists playing the best possible instruments.

He was a major benefactor to many pipe organ rebuilding/restoration projects such as the Orpheum Theatre in Phoenix; New Mexico Military Institute (his alma mater); and the Curtis Memorial Organ at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

He also acquired and protected New York's Center Theatre Organ. That console now lives with 'us' at Berkeley along with some of the very rarest of Wurlitzer ranks. He was definitely a major cornerstone in these circles and truly a class act.



Tell Everyone About Our
— FIRST TIME —
FRIENDS 4 FREE

CONCERT REVIEW DAVID PECKHAM

at
Berkeley, February 12,
2006

—by Frank Bindt

We of the theater organ persuasion seldom stop to realize how most fortunate we are. We have, at our 'beck and call', a treasure trove of world class organists. One would be hard put to attempt selecting any individual from the group as being superior. Each has a particular style, with something to offer, and the message comes through, loud and clear. Collectively, they provide us our musical nirvana.

Our artist [today] was none other than that Ticonderoga Tiger (actually, he's from Horseheads, NY), **David Peckham**, here to entertain us and, incidentally, escape from the Nor'easter back home. His approach to console congress is something else. He is the consummate prestidigitator. Using only two hands, he plays music on four manuals, turns the pages, makes lightning stabs at some tab or other, while double pedaling and engaging the 2nd touch on two of the manuals. As I watched all this, I thought of the remark of my Appalachian friend, "My eyes bugged out like a tromped on toad!"

Mr. **Peckham** brought the console up from the pit with the rousing *Radio City March* and followed that with the Overture to **Leonard Bernstein's Candide**. In a softer mood he played *Pure Imagination* from the *Willy Wonka* film and then the *Baby Elephant Walk* by **Henry Mancini**, in the spirit of the '60s. After the intermission, the era of the '70s was evoked with *Ease On Down the Road* from the movie version of *The Wiz*.

With a nod to Valentine's Day, just two days later, we were treated to a medley of *You Gotta Have Heart, Two Hearts in Three Quarter Time* and *My Funny Valentine*.

Following a rendition of *That Old Black Magic*, David played another spirited **Leonard Bernstein** composition, *America from West Side Story*.

For his encore, encouraged by a standing ovation, he played *This Joint Is Really Jumpin'*.

I don't feel the competence to remark on some particular rank's solo, or presence in a particular registration. Be assured the whole organ was used. His choice of songs ran the gamut from the liturgical *The Prayer* to *The Producers on Broadway*. There was a *Lord of the Rings* medley, and

that damn mouse sneaking up on me with a broom, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*. If there had to be a favorite, I think my pick would have been *For All We Know*.

Mr. **Peckham** handled malfunctions of the lighting and public address system with aplomb, at one point he picked up a red-safety cone to use as a megaphone. **Rudy Vallee**, where were you when we needed you?.

OPEN CONSOLE

—hosted by Chris Nichols

This is an opportunity for Nor-Cal members to try their hand at playing the Chapter's Wurlitzer at the Berkeley Community Theatre. When the theatre is available, these sessions run from 1 to 5 PM. The next scheduled dates are Sunday, **April 23rd**, and Sunday, **May 21st**, 2006.

Open Consoles are informal and our genial host, **Chris Nichols**, ensures that any Nor-Cal member feels comfortable, and he lends help and support to anyone who needs it. Depending on how many members are present, each is given one or more 15-minute sessions at the console.

IMPORTANT

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



EDITOR'S
RAVINGS

I think it is a concern common to just about every newsletter editor: is the publication meeting the expectations of its readers?

Newsletters usually don't generate much feedback, either positive or negative. But without feedback, the editor has only his/her own personal taste to serve as a guide. Good or bad, that taste is almost surely not going to reflect the needs and desires of a diverse audience of readers.

So, I want to solicit your feedback on the content of the Windsheet. I will welcome your letters and email (I prefer

(continued on Page Three)



LEW WILLIAMS will play Berkeley on MAY 7th, 2:30 PM

It was just over a year ago that Nor-Cal members were looking forward to enjoying a wonderful concert on our then 4/35 Wurlitzer at Berkeley Community Theatre played by one of our favorite American artists, **Lew Williams**, of Mesa, Arizona. Just weeks before the concert we were stunned to learn that Lew had suffered a broken thumb in the avoidance of a freak auto collision and would be unable to play for us.

Now, fully recovered, **Lew Williams** will star in our final concert of the 2005/2006 season on Sunday, May 7th at 2:30 p.m. at the Berkeley Community Theatre.

Lew's previous performance at BCT was in January of 2002 and we are eagerly looking forward to his postponed return.

A native of Lafayette, Louisiana, Lew majored in Organ Performance at Texas Christian University. He graduated with a Bachelor of Music and the Performer's Certificate in Organ (only the second organist in the school's history to win the latter distinction). He went to the Conservatoire de Musique in Geneva, Switzerland, where he studied organ improvisation with **Pierre Segond**, and he received his Master's degree from Southern Methodist University.

While at SMU, **Lew Williams** won the Southwestern Regional Competition of the American Guild of Organists (AGO) and subsequently represented the four-state region at the National Convention's Organist Competition. Scarcely two-weeks later he played his first theatre organ concert for the American Theatre Organ Society (ATOS). In 1988, he won the title of Young Organist of the Year.

Lew has played numerous concerts across the United States, England and Australia. He has many AGO and ATOS convention appearances to his credit.

Since 1979 Lew has been associated with the Organ Stop Pizza restaurants in Phoenix and Mesa, Arizona. Currently he April 2006

performs on the 4/75 Wurlitzer at Mesa's Organ Stop in Mesa.

Of his several CDs, two are on the Mesa organ: *Rhapsody in Blue* and most recently, *Give My Regards to Broadway*. Other recordings include *At Last* (Alabama Theatre, Birmingham, 4/22 Wurlitzer), and *Live at Pasadena Civic Auditorium* (5/29 Moëller).

Lew Williams has endeared himself to ATOS members around the world with his unique upbeat registrations, recreation of big-band era arrangements, his witty humor and audience rapport.

(Editor's Ravings continued from Page One)

these to telephone calls, please), especially those with constructive suggestions for improvements.

The most helpful format would be to rank various regular features as to their importance to you, such as concert announcements, Board business, concert reviews, local events calendar, out-of-area events calendar, Chairman's message, Editor's message, organ history features, organ technical articles, humor, short biographies of Nor-Cal members, short biographies of famous artists or other prominent people in the theatre organ world, details about our Nor-Cal 4/37 Wurlitzer and its maintenance, items for sale ads, and anything else that you would find interesting.

In addition, feel welcome to complain about any aspect of this newsletter. Its sole purpose is to communicate with Nor-Cal members. In effect, it is your newsletter.

If the membership responds to my solicitation, I, and the Publisher will endeavor to shape future content according to your preferences.

DONATIONS

We have been some remiss in recent months about acknowledging generous gifts from our members. We especially thank:

- Mr. & Mrs. Bert Atwood
- Mr. Chris Nichols
- Mr. William Schlotter

for their gifts of cash and many of the supplies we need to keep our Wurlitzer Theatre Organ at the BCT in top shape.

Windsheet

CHAIRMAN'S WINDLINE



Hello Nor-Cal members! I hope all of you were at the recent Berkeley concert featuring **Ron Reseigh**. If not, you missed something special. I have been a fan ever since he played here at Berkeley for the young organist competition back in 1998. At that time he was still in high school, and needed help putting his tie on back stage before he played. Even then, he was showing amazing talent (he was the overall winner that year). I do believe when I was his age then, in high school, I was still trying to figure out the difference between the black keys and the white keys! At least I had figured out that the red colored tabs usually make things louder. Anyway, what a concert! He kept us all tapping our feet from start to finish. Most striking to me is his ability to take a slow number and weave together all the subtle colors and textures in the organ, tab by tab, bringing the musical dynamics up from a whisper, to a stirring plateau, then back down to a single voice or two. If we weren't friends I think I might 'accidentally' break his fingers.

I would like to thank all of you who regularly attend and support the concerts at Berkeley. I also want to apologize for the lack of heat in the auditorium. Briefly, our wonderful Nor-Cal member and friend, **Judson Owens**, has retired as the theatre manager. He is the person who originally came to Nor-Cal members telling us that he had a wonderful theatre in need of an organ. At this point things are in a state of change due to his retirement and as a new manager begins to run the theatre. It's a big, wonderful, complex, and highly technical building to run. Hopefully things will come together with new people in place. The best advice, as always, is to dress as you would for Donner Summit when you come to Berkeley (dress in layers), so that you can be comfortable. See you all at **Lew Williams'** concert, May 7th, if not sooner.

AVAILABLE

Hammond R182 (c. 1971), 2 manual, and pedal electronic organ. From estate of mother. FREE, if you come get it. Jackie Meiers (650) 793-3569.

The Little Organ That Just Won't Quit!

—Dean Cook, The Solo Stringer

In the heart of the Silicon Valley, nestled in a strip mall a stone's throw from the famous *Winchester Mystery House*, resides a Theatre Organ installation that continues to beat the odds. Angelino's Restaurant has had as colorful a history as its 3/13 Wurlitzer Unit Orchestra. Built in 1928 by the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company for the Rialto (later renamed Venetian) Theatre in Racine, WI, it missed the heavy use associated with earlier vintage instruments.

It was removed from the theatre in 1964 by **Fred Hermes**, noted Midwest T.O. enthusiast and owner of the 'Basement Bijou' 5-Manual Ex-*Paradise* Wurlitzer.

When the organ was purchased by Mr. **Hermes**, most of its ranks were installed in the *Paradise organ*; the remains were stored. [ATOS Historian Tom De Lay informs us that only the 3m console at Angelino's is from the Venetian Theatre in Racine. The rest of the 8-rank organ was broken up for parts.—pub.]

In 1967, **Steve Restivo** and his Father, owners of the Melody Inn, Los Altos, CA (home of the ex-Oakland Paramount Publix 1 Wurlitzer), purchased the remains of the Venetian organ which became the 'heart' of an organ) to open their second establishment in San Jose. 'The Thundermug' opened in 1972, sans Wurlitzer, but with a Baldwin electronic, played while the pipe organ installation proceeded. The instrument made its debut in 1973, after nine months of installation. Additional ranks, chests, tremors and offsets were added from various sources. Replacements and additions brought the instrument up to 13 ranks,

'shoehorned' into a single, very small chamber. Speaking into a dining room that seats no more than 75 at most, the organ has 'presence' to spare.

In 1985, **Roy Dawson** and **Steve Restivo** sold the restaurant to **Ali Mohammed**, a classically trained chef from Kurdish Iran. Two-years later, he sold the restaurant to two brothers of Iranian/Jewish extraction, **David** and **Habib Tabibian**, who remodeled the place in 1990, and changed the name from 'The Thundermug' to 'Angelino's'. Gone was the old 70's funk, replaced by a more modern appearance that was designed to be more in keeping with the image of a contemporary Italian Restaurant. **Habib** left the partnership in 1989, replaced by a third brother, **Shawn**. Yet another **Tabibian** brother, **Rami**, joined the roster of owners a year later, and **Shawn** left soon after that. In 2000, **David Tabibian** sold his interest to **Rami**, making him sole owner until 2003, when... (to be continued)

UPCOMING EVENTS

These are well covered elsewhere in this issue.

OTHER VENUES

Angelino's, 3/13 Wurlitzer, 3131 Williams Rd., San Jose, CA. Fridays & Saturdays, 6 to 9 PM. **Dean Cook** or **Don Croom**. 408/243-6095

Bella Roma Pizza, 3/16 Wurlitzer, 4040 Alhambra Ave., Martinez, CA. **Dave Moreno**, **Bob Reichert**, **Kevin King** at the console. 925/228-4935

Castro Theatre, 4/22 Wurlitzer, 429 Castro St., SF, CA. Intermission music played daily by **David Hegarty** or **Warren Lubich**. 415/621-6120 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

Palace of the Legion of Honor, 4/63, EM Skinner, Lincoln Park, SF Presidio, SF, CA. Saturdays & Sundays from 4:00 to 4:45 PM. Free after Museum Admission. **David Hegarty** or **Keith Thompson** play an Organ Pops Concert on some weekends, other artists play classical concerts on other weekends. 415/750-3600 www.legionofhonor.org

Paramount Theatre, 4/26 Wurlitzer, 2025 Broadway, Oakland, CA. Public Tours are on 1st & 3rd Saturdays of the month at 10 AM. Nominal Admission. 510/465-6400

Stanford Theatre, 3/21 Wurlitzer, 221 University Ave., Palo Alto, CA. Silent films with organ accompaniment by various artists on Saturdays. 650/324-3700 www.stanfordtheatre.org

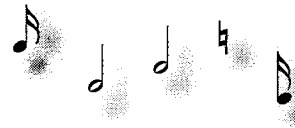
Towe Auto Museum, 3/15 Wurlitzer, 2200 Front St., Sacramento, CA. Free Sunday concerts with museum admission. (Exceptions, Sierra Chapter Concerts) www.sierrachapteratos.org

Visalia Fox Theatre, 4/22 Wurlitzer, 300 Main St., Visalia, CA. 559/625-1FOX (1369)

OTHER CHAPTERS

Sierra Chapter ATOS, Sacramento, CA. www.sierrachapteratos.org

Silent Film *The Black Pirate* (1926), **Douglas Fairbanks**, 3/15 Wurlitzer accompaniment by **Bob Salisbury**, Friday, May 19th, 2006 at 8:00 PM. Towe Auto Museum, 2200 Front St., Sacramento, CA



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.