Open Console in Oakland at the Grand Lake Theatre Wurlitzer Saturday, August 18th, 8:30 AM

Our Program Chairperson, Gordon Pratt, has arranged for us to have Open Console for members and guests on the Grand Lake Theatre's 3/18 Wurlitzer. Kevin King will lead-off the morning on the instrument he owns and maintains. The theatre is located at 3200 Grand Avenue, Oakland. This is a rare opportunity for our members to play another great Wurlitzer. Later arrival than 8:30 is OK, but the free 4-hour parking under the freeway does fill up. Parking meters are running elsewhere.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to NorCal TOS:

Harry Hoyt of San Pablo, CA
Marc H. Sesnick of San Francisco, CA
Carol Zerbo of Rocklin, CA

DONATIONS

NorCal gratefully acknowledges generous donations from:

**Harry Hoyt, Kevan Leach**, Don Ravey*, Bill Schlotter* and Neal Wood**.

* (to be matched by NorCal for the ATOS young organists' **Adventure summer camp**.)

On Saturday, July 21st, NorCal members joined Sierra Chapter TOS members at their invitation, and were graciously hosted at the Shingle Springs home of Dianne and Pete McCluer.

As most of us were arriving, Pete's poppy 3/19 Wurlitzer was featured, under the talented control of Jerry Nagano.

The day was warm, typical of late July in the Sierra foothills, near Placerville, but it was comfortable in the excellent music building that Pete built on his scenic property.

Chamber tours were conducted until the mini-concert began. I have never seen more organized and accessible pipe chambers, with a pathway to reach every chest and every pipe! Many of the guests admired the workmanship.

Then the concert began. Jerry played a varied and highly enjoyable selection of music on Pete's **Unit Orchestra**, which is rapidly growing to rival a full concert orchestra, at 19 ranks! The lively sounds coming from those chambers attested to the fact that they are not merely well constructed, but very effective.

Then the eating began. We could have fed another 50 people, at least!

Finally, after Craig Peterson, President of Sierra Chapter, got our attention with a blast from a church horn and gave us a welcome, Pete delivered a little bit of the history of his organ,

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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.
and the open console began, led off by "the owner," himself! Some of us may have been just a bit reluctant to follow such an act, but a number of us did. A few wrong notes were sounded, a few registrations may have been less than ideal, a couple of ciphers occurred (but where else would you find so many skilled technicians on hand to immediately unstick the errant valve?), but the main thing is that everyone had a great time!

More photos are posted on the web site: theatreorgans.com/norcal Click on the Photo Galleries button.

— Don Ravey

Upper Right—Richard Taylor, Kevin King, a Sierra member, Jerry Nagano, Craig Browning
Lower Left—Some Picnic Attendees
Lower Right—Art Woodworth

Photos by Don Ravey

"The theater organ: limitless musical possibilities for the new millennium.

"John Onia remarked that theater organ is 'supposed to be fun.' However, ‘fun’ comes in many flavors, and Mr. Onia’s dislike for classical pieces in our concerts seems misplaced.

"The theater pipe organ is the most flexible and versatile musical instrument ever devised. So it is a bitter and painful irony for those of us who struggle to promote organ music to a wider, more diverse, and, yes, younger audience that the theater organ has been pigeonholed into a narrow musical niche. Shouldn’t the world’s most flexible and versatile musical instrument be used to play the widest possible variety of good music? Where’s the spirit of adventure, endless possibilities, daring musical exploration, that this incredible instrument should be calling forth from both organists and audiences?

"Mr. Onia lauded the playing of George Wright and Jesse Crawford; both were undoubtedly great organists. But, the progress of art is more than copying the repertoire or tastes of ‘the greats’—no matter how great they may have been.

"Mr. Onia noted that for the most part ‘Mr. Wright had the tems on all the time’ and that ‘Crawford’s key to success ... [included] playing ... with heavy TO-style tremulants.’ But should the tems be on all the time? Were Crawford’s alleged keys to success in his era also our keys to success in our time and culture? The extensive use and deep voicing of theater tems are relics of the 1920’s when heavy vibrato in vocal and instrumental music was in fashion. Musical taste has changed; modern singers and instrumentalists are selective in their use of vibrato and tremolo. The key to success is a refined sense of musical

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Windsheet

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judgment of when to use trem and when not to, not parroting Wright or Crawford.

"When organists play with the trem off (in classical pieces but also marches, movie themes, etc.) I feel a sense of relief, knowing that, for a few minutes, my brain won’t be jiggled by a mechanical ‘wawawa.’ With the trem off, I can sense every expressive nuance of the music and detail of the pipes’ speech intimately and without distortion.

"Mr. Onia continued, ‘I bet the newbies only remembered the churchy stuff and will never come again. This is why classical, no-trem music should never be played during a theater organ concert.’ Hey, wait a minute! Does he mean to equate ‘churchy’ with no-trem classical? And how can we guess what newbies will do or remember? Maybe it’s the other way around, with newcomers thinking with dismay that theater organ music is about schmaltzy-titled songs and show tunes that few under 50 know or can relate to, played with inexplicably monotonous ‘soap-opera’ trem.

"Now that’s what makes me cringe.

"In any case, a couple random comments overheard at Paramount concerts 20 years ago should not be a basis for setting NorCal’s policy on program content.

"What ‘really heavy’ classical music did Mr. Wright omit, in his supposed efforts to present the theater organ as a ‘light, happy musical instrument’? The answer ventured by Mr. Onia: ‘... fugues ... toccatas ... Bizet ... Moussorgsky.’

"Well, what about Bach’s gigue fugue with its toe-tap-inducing energy? Dubois’ G major toccata with its driving rhythmic introduction and lilting center section, punctuated by rumbles of delight? Bizet’s ‘Toreador Song’ with its march-tempo heroism embellished with the blare of brass trumpets? Mussorgsky’s 3rd movement of ‘Pictures at an Exhibition’, a gripping whirlwind of notes?

"And Mr. Onia left a few other items off his classical blacklist: The symphonies of Dvorak evoking the romance of old Europe. The Strauss waltzes. The noels of Daquin. Scarlatti’s sonatas, pulsing with the flamenco rhythms and harmonies of Spain. The folksy Brazilian tangos of Ernesto Nazareth, Joplin’s contemporary and kindred spirit.

"None of these are ‘really heavy’ or ‘churchy.’ And they are just as crowd-pleasing and fun as tunes by Romberg or Kern.

"The theater organ’s potential for limitless musical expression doesn’t end there! Our concerts could also include a sampling of music reflecting the diversity and vitality of 21st century California. We could delight in transcriptions of classic rock, disco, and 80’s music, any of the variety of classic or modern dance pieces, any of the modern popular music of India, Japan, Africa, or the Americas, and selected works from before 1650, classical or otherwise.

"Friends, let’s hold the theater organ’s promise of limitless musical expression as our guiding star and follow it wherever it leads. Then we can be certain our newbie concertgoers will fall in love with the art form and become its newest advocates and champions.

— Dave Goggin

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FOR SALE

Custom Allen theatre organ, 3 manuals, 95 sampled voice cards, 6 cages, 48 amps and speaker systems. Sounds great! If interested, email Bill Keller at tibia8and2@comcast.net

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CONSOLE POSTERS AVAILABLE

For those who have missed the last concert or two, you may not know that NorCal has designed a high resolution, photo quality 24"x36" color poster with a close-up picture of our Center Theater console, with a complete list of all 42 ranks that can be played from that console.

It is really a stunning poster, suitable for framing or mounting. The black-and-white rendition above does not do it justice! We plan to have some available for sale at the CD sales table at public concerts, complete with protective mailing tube, for $20, including sales tax. If you want to order one of these before attending our next concert, please send your check for $25 to NorCal TOS, P.O. Box 27238, Oakland, CA 94602, and it will be mailed to you, postage paid. Please allow 3 to 4 weeks for delivery.

August 2007

Wind sheet
UPCOMING EVENTS


Saturday, Aug. 18, 8:30 AM – Grand Lake Theater, Oakland – Open Console for members & guests. (See Lead Article on Page One.)

Sunday, Aug. 19, 1:00 PM – BCT – Open Console for members & guests again! Call on Sunday morning to confirm the theatre remains available.


Sunday, Sep. 9, 1:00 PM – BCT – Open Console for members & guests. Call on Sunday morning to confirm theatre availability.


Sunday, Sept. 16 – Grace Baptist Church, San Jose – Artist: TBA

OTHER VENUES


<www.castrotheatre.com>

**Grand Lake Theatre**, 3/18 Wurlitzer, 3200 Grand Ave., Oakland, CA. Intermission music: Warren Lubich or Gordon Pratt (Fridays) & Kevin King (Saturdays). (510) 452-3556.

**Palace of the Legion of Honor**, 4/63 E. M. Skinner, Lincoln Park, San Francisco Presidio. Saturdays and Sundays from 4:00 to 4:45 PM. Free after museum admission. David Hegarty plays an Organ Pops Concert on the first full weekend of each month, other artists play classical concerts on other weekends. (415) 750-3600.

<www.legionofhonor.org>


**Stanford Theatre**, 3/21 Wurlitzer, 221 University Ave, Palo Alto, CA. (650) 324-3700. (See Upcoming Events to the left.) The organ is played before and between films.

<www.stanfordtheatre.org>

**Towe Auto Museum**, 3/16 Wurlitzer, 2200 Front St., Sacramento, CA. Free Sunday concerts with Museum Admission. Sierra Chapter presents silent movies on Friday night, four times each year.

<www.sierrachapterATOS.org>

**Visalia Fox Theatre**, 4/22 Wurlitzer, 309 W. Main St., Visalia, CA. (559) 625-1FOX (1369).

PHOTOS OF OUR CONCERT ARTISTS WANTED

NorCal wants to create a photo archive of artists who have played concerts at the Berkeley Community Theater. If you have taken such photos and would be willing to let us use them, please contact Frank La Fetra at frank@alafetra.com (please include the words [NorCal] in the Subject line) or call him at (408) 532-1044. We especially want pictures that include our console(s), and of course we are looking for in-focus, reasonably lighted shots where the subject is not blinking, etc.

In particular, we would appreciate any photos of our late friend, Tom Hazleton.

NORCAL WEBSITE

We now have copies of the two most recent *Windsheets* on our website—and in color! They are in .pdf format, which requires that your computer has a copy of the free Adobe Acrobat Reader.

We also have an up-to-date Calendar of Events online. Be sure to visit it! theatreorgans.com/norcal/

OTHER CHAPTERS

Sierra Chapter, Sacramento, CA

<www.sierrachapterATOS.org>

Mount Shasta Chapter TOS Contact Al Schoenstein

DSchoen940@aol.com

MEMBERSHIP BADGES

Have you admired the blue membership badges that many NorCal members wear to events? NorCal members can get them for $13 delivered by mail.

The badges are now totally engraved (no silk screening to rub off). Send your checks, how you want your name to appear, and the mailing address for the badge to:

Bill Schlott
6203 Elderberry Dr
Oakland, CA 94611-1621

(Allow several weeks for order processing and delivery)

NORCAL 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 call or write:

Mr. Neal R. Wood at (415) 861-7082 <nealwood@pacbell.net>, PO Box 27328, Oakland, California 94602-0438.

Dues are $20 for NorCal TOS only and an additional $40 for National ATOS ($60 total) per year for full voting membership and subscription to *Theatre Organ* the six times a year glossy journal of ATOS. 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.