
The WINDSHEET



Newsletter of the NORCAL THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY
PO Box 27238, Oakland, California 94602-0438 510/644-2707

www.theatreorgans.com/norcal

August 2007



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 membersto 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.

Shingle Springs Shindig a.k.a. Sierra Chapter Picnic



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 peppy 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 coach horn and gave us a welcome, Pete delivered a little bit of the history of his organ,

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to NorCal TOS:
Harry Hoyt of San Pablo, CA
Marc H. Sosnick of San Francisco, CA
Carol Zerbo of Rocklin, CA

DONATIONS

NorCal gratefully acknowledges generous donations from:
Harry Hoyt, Kevan Lesch*, Don Ravey*, Bill Schlotter* and Neal Wood*.

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

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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



EDITOR'S RAVINGS

Last month we published one member's thoughts on the topic of what style(s) of music should be included in a Theatre Organ concert. Herewith is a differing opinion from another member, **Dave Goggin**. I don't intend to continue this as a sort of debate, because musical tastes are wholly subjective and I believe that all are valid. I do tend to draw the line at *HipHop* and *Rap*, which do not fit my definition of music, but that's a story for another time. But, always eager to present *balanced* content to our membership, and considering that both letters were carefully thought out and well written, I thought that both views deserve to be heard. Goggin's letter follows:

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“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

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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 tremos on all the time’ and that ‘Crawford’s key to success ... [included] playing ... with heavy TO-style tremulants.’ But *should* the tremos 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 tremos 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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judgment of when to use tremors and when not to, not parroting Wright or Crawford.

"When organists play with the tremors 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 tremors 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' tremors.

"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 glittering 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.

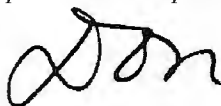
"None of these are 'really heavy' or 'churchy.' And they are just as crowd-pleasing and fun as tunes by Romberg or Kern.

"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

[Published with permission. Emphasis in the original. Ed.]



**OPEN
CONSOLE**
Hosted by
Chris Nichols



This is an opportunity for NorCal members and their guests to try their hand at playing the Chapter's Wurlitzer at the Berkeley Community Theatre. When the theatre is available, these sessions run from 1:00 to 5:00 PM. The next scheduled dates are:

Sunday, August 19, 2007

Sunday, September 9, 2007

Open Consoles are informal and our genial host, **Chris Nichols**, ensures that any NorCal member feels comfortable. He lends help and support to anyone who needs it. Depending on how many members are present, each has one or more 15-minute sessions at the console.

Important: Call the NorCal 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.

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

NorCal Theatre Organ Society
4/42 Wurlitzer Unit Orchestra
Berkeley Community Theater



Rank	Model	Year	Notes	Rank	Model	Year	Notes
1	100	1910		11	100	1910	
2	100	1910		12	100	1910	
3	100	1910		13	100	1910	
4	100	1910		14	100	1910	
5	100	1910		15	100	1910	
6	100	1910		16	100	1910	
7	100	1910		17	100	1910	
8	100	1910		18	100	1910	
9	100	1910		19	100	1910	
10	100	1910		20	100	1910	
21	100	1910		22	100	1910	
23	100	1910		24	100	1910	
25	100	1910		26	100	1910	
27	100	1910		28	100	1910	
29	100	1910		30	100	1910	
31	100	1910		32	100	1910	
33	100	1910		34	100	1910	
35	100	1910		36	100	1910	
37	100	1910		38	100	1910	
39	100	1910		40	100	1910	
41	100	1910		42	100	1910	

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, postpaid. Please allow 3 to 4 weeks for delivery.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday, Aug. 15, 7:55 PM – *Stanford Theatre* – Silent Movie: *Speedy* (Harold Lloyd), accompanied by **Dennis James**.

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.

Wednesday, Aug. 29, 9:10 PM – *Stanford Theatre* – Silent Movie: *That's My Daddy* (Reginald Denny), accompanied by **Dennis James**.

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

Wednesday, Sep. 12, 8:55 PM – *Stanford Theatre* – Silent Movie: *The Navigator* (Buster Keaton), accompanied by **Chris Elliott**.

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

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 Schlotter
6203 Elderberry Dr
Oakland, CA 94611-1621

(Allow several weeks for order processing and delivery)

OTHER VENUES

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

<www.castrotheatre.com>

Grand Lake Theater, 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>

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

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, 300 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@lafetra.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 web site—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

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 27238, 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.