
The WINDSHEET



Newsletter of the NORCAL THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY
PO Box 625, Berkeley, CA 94701-0625 510/644-2707

www.theatreorgans.com/norcal

February 2008

**March 9, 2008
2:30 PM at BCT**

Chris Elliott

Daylight Savings just started

Chris Elliott is one of today's prominent concert organists. Equally at home performing literature of the church or theatre, he is also sought after as a scorer of silent films.

NorCal is proud to present Chris in concert at the Berkeley Community Theatre on **March 9th, 2008 at 2:30 PM.**

A native of Santa Ana, Chris graduated with honors from Vanguard University of Southern California (formerly Southern California College), Costa Mesa. While still a student, he held church organ positions in several prominent Southern California churches. For nine years he was a guest artist for the summer noon organ recitals at the *Crystal Cathedral* where he also played weddings and coached with **Frederick Swann**. Other organ instructors included **Charles Shaffer** and, after moving to the San Francisco Bay Area in 1988, the celebrated organist and composer **Richard Purvis**.

In addition to his classical and church organ training, he was privileged to be mentored by several world-renowned theatre organists, being particularly identified for his association with legendary organist **Gaylord Carter**, the 'dean' of silent film accompaniment. He worked extensively with Mr. Carter, who proudly claimed Chris as his protégé. In 1995 at Carter's gala 90th birthday celebration and farewell performance at Oakland's



Paramount Theatre, Chris and Gaylord shared the stage in a moving performance that garnered several standing ovations. Excerpts from this event were featured in the *Pulling Out All the Stops: The Pipe Organ in America* seen on PBS television stations.

Chris tours frequently and his performance credits are far-ranging—from mighty Wurlitzers in the grandest movie palaces, to stunning silent film accompaniments, appearances at the *American Theatre Organ Society* and the *American Institute of Organ Builders* conventions, programs on *BBC Radio*, at the famed *Hollywood Bowl*, and before the *Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences*.

Chris has six solo recordings to his credit. *Theatre Organ Journal's* **Bob Shafter** said in reviewing *Shuffle Off to Buffalo*: "...the best of the best...this recording (will be) one of the few 'classics' in the theatre organ world. It gets the highest possible recommendation."

After a distinguished tenure of eleven years as Senior Organist and Associate Minister of Worship at the *Menlo Park Presbyterian Church*, Chris transitioned to a corporate career in 1999. He continues as the Principal Guest Organist at Menlo Park Presbyterian Church, where he performs monthly, and continues to perform solo organ engagements and silent film presentations all across the United States.

NorCal Theatre Organ Society (NorCal TOS) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational organization of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. Federal Employer Identification Number 23-741594-7 • State Charitable Trust No. CT 45966 • State Organization Number D-072 6636 NT20S M12

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2008 Annual Meeting, Concert, and Dinner

Despite chilly and damp weather, NorCal's Annual Members Meeting and concert was reasonably well attended. We were treated to a delightful concert by **Mark Herman**, who made a quick trip from Chicago and assured us that our weather is far better than what he left and would be returning to. Details on Mark's program follow these notes from the business meeting.

The appropriate officers reported on the business of NorCal in 2007. Our finances are in very good order, due in good measure to the generosity of some of our members who have contributed money, as well as materials and services, according to Treasurer **Ron Bingaman**. Our membership is slightly lower than last year, but Chairman and Membership Chairman **Neal Wood** presented yearly membership totals for several years, demonstrating how volatile and unpredictable they are. Crew Chief **Bill Schlotter** reported on last year's progress in bringing our instrument up to the level anticipated when we first acquired it, some 20 years ago. Plans were to expand it to 42 ranks of pipes. As of today, we have chests for 42 ranks, of which 41 have pipes in place, 40 of which are currently tuned and in use.

Their term limits having expired, two NorCal Directors, **Don Seifert** and **Mark Putterbaugh**, were thanked for their six continuous years of service. New Director **Laura Fay Cooley** was introduced and the other new Director, **Jan David Durbin**, was recognized, but unfortunately was not present, having come down with a flu virus at the last moment.

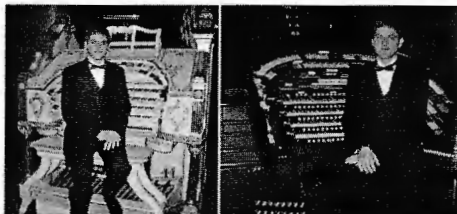
Chairman **Neal Wood** presented **Kevin King** with an Honorary Life Membership, in recognition of the many years (*decades*) of tireless service to NorCal. In addition to serving on the Board and having held the position of Chairman, Kevin was deeply involved in the construction of our Wurlitzer and is responsible for its tonal balance and ongoing tuning. It would be no exaggeration to say that the magnificent sound of our organ is due largely to Kevin's talent and hard work.

Several issues were introduced by members, including suggestions for enhancing the visual aspect of organ concerts; one being to return to the practice of lighting the chambers during at least one

song, calling the audience's attention to the true source of the tones they are listening to; another was to have one or more video cameras and a large-screen projector to enable the audience to see and appreciate the dexterity of the artist's hands (and feet). A proposal was also discussed relating to a documentary film project on the career of **Virgil Fox**, with a request that we consider allowing filming of someone playing our organ.

At the conclusion of the business meeting, nearly 30 of us shifted from the concert hall to the dining hall—Henry's Restaurant at the Durant Hotel in Berkeley, where we enjoyed a meal and much good socializing!

THE CONCERT



Mark Herman has a remarkable talent. He has not only developed a sure touch and precise execution, but his sensitivity to the emotional range and the possibilities provided by a large scale unit orchestra such as ours, is deeper than one would expect from someone not yet 21. His registrations were thoughtful and not overdone. He made use of some novel combinations that even those familiar with our organ were heard to remark on.

Both of NorCal's 4-manual consoles were used, alternately, during his program. Mark indicated that he enjoyed the nearly unique opportunity to switch back and forth between the *Toledo Fox* console and the *Center Theater* console.

Mark included two of his own compositions in his program. One was originally written to be used in a musical that his college roommate was writing—a *musical* for which no music had yet been composed!

Mark commented that perhaps the reason he plays and enjoys so much of the traditional theatre organ music, rather than more contemporary material, is that he is young enough that it is not at all stale to him. [...I haven't listened to it for 50 years.], said Mark. —*pub.*] Well, Mark, the way you play it, it isn't stale for us, either!

PLAYLIST

Console Up:

From This Moment On

— Cole Porter

First Half:

It Might As Well Be Spring

— Richard Rodgers (from *State Fair*)

Carefree

— Mark Herman

Medley of George Gershwin Songs

including *Swanee*, *Embraceable You*,

Nice Work If You Can Get It,

A Foggy Day In London Town,

Someone To Watch Over Me,

Of Thee I Sing, *Baby*

Button Up Your Overcoat

— DeSylva, Brown, Henderson

Love Walked Right In

— George Gershwin

It's De-lovely

— Cole Porter

Second Half:

Ghost Riders In the Sky

— Stan Jones

Valse Mirage

— Zez Confrey

The Nearness of You

— Hoagy Carmichael

Medley from *Babes in Arms*

including *The Lady Is A Tramp*,

Where Or When, *Johnny One Note*

— Rodgers & Hart

It's Good To Be Evil

from *Kleptomania*

— Mark Herman

Blue Moon

— Richard Rodgers

Caravan

— Duke Ellington

Dizzy Fingers

— Zez Confrey

Encore:

Zing Went the Strings of My Heart

— James Hanley

THE DINNER



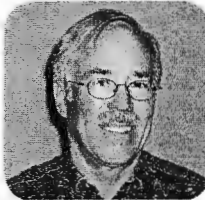


♪ A FINAL NOTE ♪

With sadness we report the deaths last December of NorCal members William R. Smith, Jr. of Sunnyvale, and Robert F. McDonald of Lafayette, who is survived by his wife, Peggie McDonald.

CHAIRMAN'S WINDLINE

It is Monday, the 1 day after our annual business meeting at the Berkeley Theatre.



Those of us who braved the weather and the cold were rewarded with a wonderful concert by Mark Herman. Both NorCal and Sierra Chapters brought hand warmers for the audience. Great minds think alike. Dinner at the Durant was a great time for members to get reacquainted. There was plenty of lively conversation at all the tables.

Many good suggestions were brought up by our members at the meeting. Those of us who are intimately involved with the organization and the organ tend to forget that the public is not aware that the Wurlitzer is a 43-ton acoustic musical instrument that requires a lot of effort to maintain and present. Providing additional information and education about the organ at concerts may help the public realize the treasure that lives within the Berkeley Community Theatre. Adding video to a concert is another great idea, worthy of pursuit.

But with all the suggestions that are brought forth, there is the reality that we need more support to bring these suggestions to fruition. As Kevin King mentioned in the meeting, the crew and board members are approaching maximum effort to sustain the organization. It is a truly a labor of love for the Wurlitzer organ and the music that comes from it, that drives these individuals. This labor of love is something, some day, we hope we can share with you.

Neal

Schoenstein & Company Open House in New Factory in Benicia

On Sunday, January 13, 2008, Jack Bethards, owner of Schoenstein and Company pipe organ builders, invited the public to see the bright and spacious quarters of his new location in Benicia. Schoenstein has been building pipe organs in San Francisco since 1877. The new plant is impressive and we were treated to some wonderful classical music played on their most recent instrument, which will be packed up and sent to its destination church within a few weeks, after two years of construction. A second, even larger instrument also occupied the 42 foot high erection room. Even in the unfavorable acoustics of the factory, the beautiful tonal quality was evident.

New Members

Please join me in welcoming the following new members to NorCal:

John Piro of San Bruno

Mrs. Dorothy Ramsey of San Bruno

Douglass & Annie Cleveland of Nampa, Idaho

OPEN
CONSOLE
Hosted by
Chris Nichols



This is an opportunity for NorCal 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 1:00 to 5:00 PM. The next scheduled dates are:

Sunday, February 17, 2008

Sunday, March 16, 2008

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.

EDITOR'S RAVINGS



I find myself again in a whimsical mood, so if this begins to sound just too silly for you, I won't mind if you move on to some more serious part of this edition of The Windsheet.

I may not be much of a music composer, but from time to time, I have a great idea for a title for a piece. Now all I need is to find someone to write the notes on the page to go with such titles as: *Andante Al Dente*, *Capriccio Cappuccino*, *Corral Chorale*, *Etude With An Attitude*, *The February March*, *Gelato Legato*, *Lemonade Serenade*, *Mondo Rondo*, *Pizza Pizzicato*, *Rap Rhapsody*, *Regatta Sonata*, *Schizo Scherzo*, *Suite Sixteen*, *Tangerine Tango*, *Under the Overture* and *Walt's Waltz*.

If you would like to submit your score for one of these great titles, please contact me. I'm willing to share the royalties.

Don

ECHO

The El Camino Harmony Organ (ECHO) club was established in 1958 as a venue through which home organ enthusiasts could meet and mingle together, and to provide an opportunity to perform in a group setting. ECHO meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month from 1:30 to 3:30 PM at *the San Carlos Adult Community Center*, 601 Chestnut street in San Carlos. Munchies are provided, attendance is free, all are welcome.

For more information, contact **Kevan Lesch** (650) 367-0786

kevan1955@hotmail.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, Feb. 17, 2008, 1:00 to 5:00 PM
– *Berkeley Community Theatre* – Open Console for NorCal members. (see Pg. 3)

Sunday, Feb. 24, 2008, 2:00 PM —
Jonas Nordwall on Theatre Organ Society San Diego's Wurlitzer at Trinity Church, 3902 Kenwood Dr., Spring Valley, CA. \$12 at door, under 16 FREE. Call 619/286-9979 (ask for 'Charlie') or 858/829-4105 (ask for 'Jeff')



CHRIS ELLIOTT
AT THE BCT MIGHTY WURLITZER

Sunday, Mar. 9, 2008, 2:30 PM
(Remember *Daylight Savings just began at 2:00 AM!*) – *Berkeley Community Theatre* – NorCal presents **Chris Elliott** in concert.

Sunday, March 19, 2008, 1:00 to 5:00 PM
– *Berkeley Community Theatre* – Open Console for NorCal members. (see Pg. 3)



KEN DOUBLE
AT THE BCT MIGHTY WURLITZER

Sunday, May 4, 2008 2:30 PM – *Berkeley Community Theatre* – NorCal presents **Ken Double** in concert.

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.

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.

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. The organ is played before and between films.

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.

SierraChapterATOS.org

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

OTHER CHAPTERS

Sierra Chapter, Sacramento, CA
SierraChapterATOS.org

Mount Shasta Chapter TOS
Contact Al Schoenstein
(DSchoen940@aol.com)

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/

Membership Badges

Have you admired the blue membership badges that many NorCal members wear to concerts? They are available for \$13 shipped prepaid to the member's address.

The badges are now totally engraved (no silk screening to rub off). Send your check and exactly how your name is to appear on the badge to:

Bill Schlotter
6203 Elderberry Dr
Oakland, CA 94611-1621

Donations

NorCal gratefully acknowledges generous donations from:

Charles Cramer
Chris Nichols
James Parker
Bill Schlotter
Neal Wood

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 625, Berkeley, CA 94701-0625.

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.