Chris Elliott (next NorCal program) at BCT
2:30 PM, Sunday, March 9, 2008

See Lead Article of the February 2008 issue of The Windsheet. Remember to change your clocks; Daylight Savings Time sprung ahead the night before this concert.

It is Morton Madness Time Again — Two Great Organs at Two Wineries
Two Concerts with RON RHODE as the Artist
April 12, 2008 marks the 14th Annual Event at
Harmony Wynelands in Lodi, CA & Ironstone Vineyards in Murphys, CA

NorCal TOS joins with the Sierra Chapter of ATOS starting at 1 PM for the first concert in Lodi then traveling to Murphys for dinner and the second concert.

Ron Rhode is beginning his 34th year as one of the most popular theatre organists. He received “Top Rating ’0/’10’ from CD Review Magazine on two of his many recordings; he was awarded “Theatre Organist Of The Year - 1989” by the American Theatre Organ Society. He has played virtually every major theatre organ installation in the world.

Ron is a native of Illinois, where he began his musical career on the piano. He quickly advanced to classical pipe organ, and in 1968 held his first theatre organ job playing for roller skating. In 1973 Ron moved to Phoenix, Arizona, to start a long association with the Organ Stop Pizza restaurants. In 1975 Ron moved to Mesa, Arizona, where he held the Featured Organist post and played for pizza patrons until November, 1986. In July, 1988, Ron again joined the staff as Associate Organist until his retirement in 2000. In Phoenix, he has been the Featured Organist for the Orpheum Theatre Silent Sunday Series, a silent movie series, since its inception in May, 1999.

Since leaving the pizza parlor on a regular basis, Ron has completed a Bachelor of Education degree in Early Childhood Education at Arizona State University, and in 1995 he earned a Master of Elementary Education degree from Northern Arizona State University. He is currently a Media Specialist at Roosevelt Elementary in Mesa, Arizona. In addition to teaching, recording, and concertizing, Ron is the organist for the Church of the Beatitudes, U.C.C., in Phoenix, Arizona.

Although Ron is held to the classroom through the week, he still
finds time to maintain an active concert and recording career. He continues to perform professionally across the United States, Canada, England, and Australia. He is a favorite at American Theatre Organ Society national and regional conventions. He has more than twenty recordings to his credit.

Tickets are $50 per person for the day (includes Gourmet Buffet Dinner and wine); they are available from Neal Wood, 523 Corbett Ave., SF 94114 [415/861-7082]. Orders for tickets must be Post Marked no later than April 5, 2008. Neal Wood will have driving instructions. More information is available at: SierraChapterATOS.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Sunday, March 16, 2008, 1:00 to 5:00 PM
– Berkeley Community Theatre – Open Console for NorCal members. (see Pg. 3)

Saturday, April 12, 2008, 1:00 PM
through Dinner — Morton Madness XIV — Joint Program NorCal & Sierra Chapters ATOS
— Harmony Wynelands, 9291 Harney Lane, Lodi, CA
— Ironstone Vineyards, 1894 Six Mile Road, Murphys, CA (See Article on Page One)

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

THE ORGANS

Both organs are Robert Mortons of nearly identical specification on paper. Their manufacture dates are 1922 for the Wynelands instrument and 1927 for the Ironstone Winery instrument. There were huge changes in Theatre Organs made only five-years apart. According to Organ Historian, Tom De Lay, their rehabilitation makes them today quite unlike they were originally. The vast difference in room acoustics at the two venues makes these on paper similar instruments totally different in sound.

The Harmony Wynelands Instrument (to the right with console inset) began life in San Francisco’s Castro Theatre. After an intervening owner, who replaced the two-manual console with a three-manual one, Bob Hartzell purchased it in 1987. Hartzell’s son, Mark, designed the ‘Blue Barn’ to house it. This ‘Blue Barn’ in the middle of a vineyard is hardly a barn inside, but a wonderful organ studio, 30-ft wide x 60-ft long with a 30-ft high beam ceiling, and it includes guest quarters for visiting artists.

The Ironstone Vineyards instrument (below with console inset is in a nearly 4,000 ft² room with 5th floor picture windows overlooking the valley below; its original home was the Alhambra Theater in Sacramento. When the theater closed it went to a Baptist Church in Stockton. Bob Hartzell bought it when the church no longer wanted it. John Kautz later bought it for his winery and built the Alhambra Music Room to house it and provide banquet space.

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.