


October 2025

Newsletter of the NorCal Theatre Organ Society

www.norcaltos.org

P. O. Box 625, Berkeley, CA 94701-0625

Berkeley Community Theatre

1930 Allston Way, Between Milvia /Street &

Martin Luther King, Jr. Way



KEVIN KING



PARAMOUNT WURLITZER

PARAMOUNT THEATRE OAKLAND

October 18, 10 am

Theatre Tour and Mini Concert

By Kevin King

Admission Fees: \$10.00 per adult, ages 18 and up, \$5.00 per person ages 8-17. The theatre does **NOT** accept cash. Only debit or credit cards are accepted for payment. Please note that some areas of the tour are not wheelchair or ADA accessible. The theatre does NOT have an elevator. Stairs are required to reach some areas along the tour route. - Cameras are welcome. Food and drinks are NOT allowed.

The Paramount is located at 2025 Broadway between 20th and 21st St's in Oakland. Public transportation is convenient via the 19th Street Bart station. Parking is available at the City of Oakland's Telegraph Plaza Garage located at 2100 Telegraph Avenue (at 21st Street). Entrance to the lot may be accessed via Telegraph Avenue. The garage is directly across the street from the Paramount Theatre's Box Office and 21st Street entrance. Arrive early, as the tour begins promptly at 10:00 AM from the 21st Street Box Office entrance. The Mini Concert & Organ Demo by Kevin King starts at 11:30 am. **Kindly RSVP to Chairman Booras if you plan on attending:**

christopher@scooplight.com

NorCal Theatre Organ Society (NorCal TOS) is a 501(c)(3) non-profits educational organization

HISTORY OF THE PARAMOUNT ORGAN

The Oakland Paramount's original Wurlitzer, Opus 2164, was the last of twenty 4 manual, 20 rank "Publix 1" model theatre organs built by Wurlitzer. It was installed in 1931. In the 1950's it was removed and placed in storage. In 1960, the Paramount's original Wurlitzer was purchased by Edward and Steve Restivo and installed in Ken's Melody Inn, a pizza restaurant in Los Altos, CA.

In 1970, Paramount was unable to meet its operating expenses, and lost ownership of the theatre. After a couple ownership changes, the theatre was transferred to the City of Oakland. It became the home of the Oakland Symphony Orchestra in 1972. Movie theatre furnishings such as the candy counter and popcorn machine were removed and the theatre underwent a million dollar restoration of its original Art Deco design.

The spectacular restoration of the theatre and the presence of the Oakland Symphony Orchestra, motivated J. B. Nethercutt, owner of Merle Norman Cosmetics, to donate another Wurlitzer, Opus 1123 to the theatre in 1974. Ironically, it was the first Publix 1 model Wurlitzer produced in 1925 and was originally installed in the Capitol Theatre in Detroit.

Bill Klinger from Schoenstein Pipe Organs restored the organ. It was enlarged from 20 to 27 ranks with additional pipework donated by Preston Fleet of San Diego. The console from the Capitol theatre was restored by Edward M. Stout III and Richard Taylor from Quality Pipe Organ Service. The

"new" organ premiered in November 1981, with 27 ranks.

In 1978, Opus 2164, the Paramount's original organ was sold again to three partners known as PMP Inc., who had it moved, rebuilt and installed by Ken Crome, in a 500 seat pizza restaurant called the Paramount Music Palace, in Indianapolis, Indiana.

In 1995 the owners of the Paramount Music Palace, received a lucrative offer for the valuable commercial land on which the restaurant stood. They closed the restaurant and sold the Wurlitzer and the land.

Once again, the organ moved. In 1999, It was installed in another large pizza restaurant in Ellington, Florida, where it played until that restaurant closed in 2010.

In 2019, NorCal Crew Chief, Bill Schlotter bought the original Oakland Paramount Wurlitzer (Opus 2164) and had Chrome Organ Company restore the original "waterfall" style console to its original gold finish with stop tabs for 27 ranks. He then donated the console to the Oakland Paramount theatre. After a 75 year absence, the theatre has its original Wurlitzer console playing once again!

ABOUT NORCAL

THEATRE ORGN SOCIETY

NorCal Theatre Organ Society is a Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society (ATOS). "ATOS is dedicated to promoting the tradition of the theatre pipe organ and public understanding of the instrument and its music, and shall aid in any way possible, the preservation of theatre organs through their rehabilitation and by fostering the arts of playing, building, voicing, and

maintenance.” If you would like to join us, please contact our

Membership Chairman, Neal Wood.

woodshed523@icloud.com

Normally Nor-Cal dues are \$20. Per year. However if you join now, they will not be due until we return to having concerts.

For \$70 (Special rate of \$25 for students younger than 24) you can join ATOS, the International organization for a year. With a full voting membership plus six bi-monthly issues per year of the *Theatre Organ Journal*.

HOW OFTEN DO WE PUBLISH THE WINDSHEET?

Until we return to a regular concert series, we will publish as copy accumulates.

GET YOUR WINDSHEET BY E-MAIL!

Would you like to receive your copy of the Windsheet by email? It will be in color, it will be wrinkle and tear-free, It will arrive sooner, and you will save NorCal the cost of postage and envelopes! If so, please contact our Membership Chairman, Neal Wood at: woodshed523@icloud.com

Neal has served as Membership Chairman longer than any other officer has served in NorCal. His membership list is maintained on a computer. Neal would like to retire as Membership Chair and will give the computer with the membership files to anyone who would like to succeed him and he will explain his procedures. Neal's email address is above and his telephone number is:

415 515-4030

A BRIEF UPDATE ON OUR WURLITZER AT THE BERKELEY COMMUNITY THEATRE

For the first time since the organ was shut down before the pandemic and theatre reconstruction, the crew connected the Center Theatre console at the work party on September 6th, and Kevin played it. There are still ciphers and other discrepancies to be corrected, before the organ can be seriously played, but it was an exciting work party!

OTHER VENUES

Grand Lake Theatre - 3/17 Wurlitzer, 3200 Grand Avenue, Oakland. Intermission music played by Gordon Pratt and Bob Reichert Fridays and Saturdays. (510) 452-3556. www.renaissancerialto.com

Oakland Paramount Theatre - 4/26 Wurlitzer 2025 Broadway, Oakland.

Kevin King has played the organ for the Art Deco Ball, for a private PIXAR event and for the Speaker's Series at the theatre. So far, the organ has not been featured by the Paramount for any of it's public events. www.paramounttheatre.com

Stanford Movie Theatre - 3/21 Wurlitzer 221 University Avenue, Palo Alto. Open Thursday through Sunday, featuring classic films made prior to 1940.

Silent films accompanied by **Dennis James** on specific Fridays through Sundays:

Oct 3, 7:30 pm Tumbleweeds

9:15 pm Purple Sage

Oct 4, 3:00 pm The Covered Wagon

7:30 pm The Big Trail

Oct 5, 3:00 pm The Iron Horse

7:30 pm The Big Trail

Oct 21, 7:30 pm Winning of Barbara Worth

Oct 22, 7:30 pm The Wind

Oct 23, 7:30 pm Greed

Stanfordtheatre.org

(650) 324-3700

California Theatre, San Jose 4/21 Wurlitzer (auditorium) & 2/10 Wurlitzer (lobby). 345 South First St., San Jose, CA. The lobby organ is played prior to other musical events <https://sanjosetheaters.org/theaters/california-theatre>. (408) 792-4111

California Theatre, Pittsburg

3/10 Robert Morton.
351 Railroad Ave., Pittsburg, CA
<http://www.pittsburgcaliforniatheatre.com>

Oroville State Theatre 3/16 Wurlitzer (former Sacramento Towe Auto Museum organ) 1489 Meyers Street, Oroville.
<http://www.oroVILLEstatetheatre.com>
(530) 538-2470

NORCAL THEATRE ORGAN
SOCIETY CONTACTS

Chairman: Chris Booras

43241 Giovanni Terrace
Fremont, CA 94539
(510) 366-7140
christopher@scooplight.com

Membership Secretary: Neal Wood

523 Corbett Ave
San Francisco, CA 94114
(415) 515-4030
woodshed523@icloud.com.

Vice-Chairman: Judson Owens

1730 Virginia Street
Berkeley, CA 94703
(510) 848-8714
jud.owens@gmail.com

Program Chairman: Gordon Pratt

P O Box 2785
San Lorenzo, CA 94580
(510) 303-6809
aznme2@webtv.net

Treasurer: Ted Hubbard

1973 La Corso Court
Walnut Creek, CA 94598-2214
(828) 606-7721
effertapjh@hotmail.com

Board Member: Kevin King

Tuning and Chamber Maintenance
(510) 910-1059
musicbarn20@gmail.com

Secretary: Rudy Frey

2050 Willow Way
San Bruno, CA 94066-1704
(650) 933-2513
RudyFrey@currently.com