


APRIL 2020

Newsletter of the NorCal Theatre Organ Society
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P. O. Box 625, Berkeley, CA 94701-0625

Berkeley Community Theatre
1930 Allston Way, Between Milvia Street &
Martin Luther King, Jr. Way

MAY 24 CONCERT CANCELLED

The May 24 concert was to feature Justin LaVoie at the NorCal Wurlitzer. By mutual agreement between Justin and NorCal the concert has been cancelled due to the COVID-19 virus.

NEXT NORCAL EVENT

Due to the COVID-19 virus, all Berkeley schools have been closed until the fall semester. This, of course, includes Berkeley Community Theatre and any other possible concert venue.

Your NorCal Board of directors will keep you posted as to the next NorCal event via both our website and the next issue of the Windsheet.

BERKELEY COMMUNITY THEATRE TO BE CLOSED FOR CONSTRUCTION

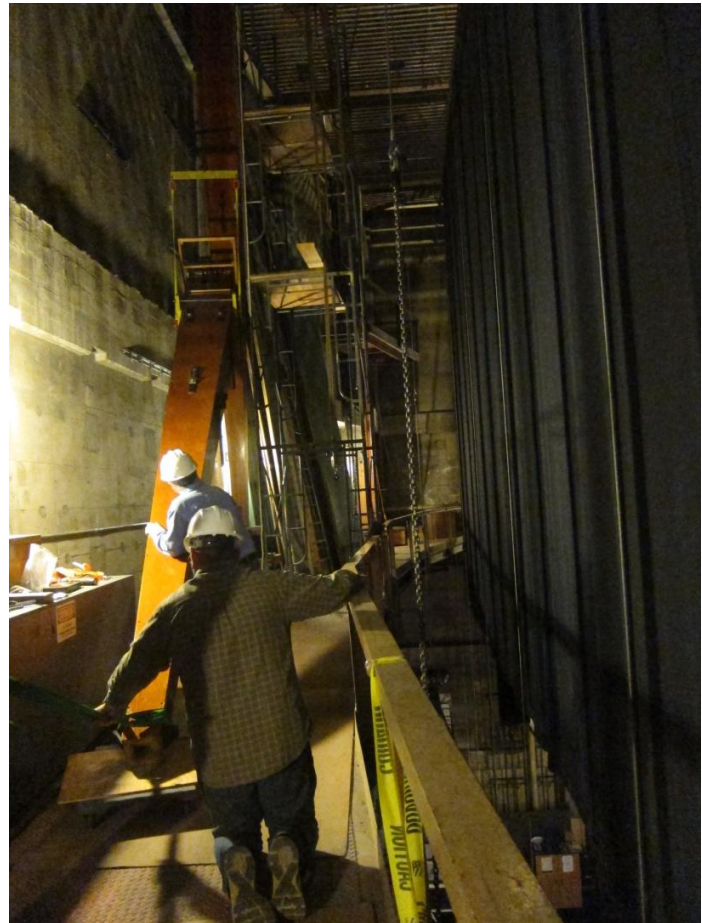
Construction work is scheduled to start Monday, June 15 and finish in August 2022. During this two-year period, NorCal will have no access to the building. Your NorCal Board of Directors has been working with Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) staff and BUSD's construction manager to assure protection of NorCal's Wurlitzer during construction.

What is being proposed for the building? The building was completed in 1950. It is in three parts: the main auditorium and its stage-house; the little theater to the west; and the classroom wing to the east. NorCal's Wurlitzer speaks into the 3,500 seat main auditorium. No work is planned for the main auditorium but a considerable amount of work will be done within its stage-house. The classroom wing will be almost totally reconstructed. Little or no work will be done on the Little Theater.

Construction in the auditorium stage-house will include seismic strengthening and replacement of the stage rigging. The seismic work will include a new transverse shear wall toward the back of the stage.

The classroom wing work will include seismic strengthening and a reconfiguration of the interior spaces including changing floor levels.

How will this affect NorCal and our Wurlitzer? None of the construction work will affect the pipe chambers, the unenclosed percussion area, or the blower room. However, work in the stage house has required NorCal to completely remove the 32-foot diaphones, their blower, and their regulators. The most arduous portion of this task (removal of the resonators) was completed before the building was shut down by the virus. The NorCal organ crew has been able to make arrangements with BUSD to enter the building and complete the removal process.



The next to last diaphone comes down safely

In the mean time, the 32-foot diaphone resonators have been moved to a secure storage location. In addition, another secure location has been rented for storage of our two consoles.

CHAIRMAN'S WIND LINE

A lot has transpired since our last edition of the *Windsheet*. The COVID-19 epidemic has added another complication for us, in addition to the modification of the Berkeley Community Theatre. As noted above, the 32-foot Diaphone resonators have been removed from the theatre and placed in storage. This difficult task was accomplished by the NorCal organ crew under the direction of Ted Hubbard. Ted fabricated custom steel fixtures to use with the electric hoist to lift the resonators. We sincerely appreciate Ted's excellent work! As this edition is being mailed the organ crew will be working to move the two consoles from the theatre to storage, another large task.

Prior to the epidemic we were looking forward to holding our usual summer picnic at Kevin King's excellent 3/20 studio Wurlitzer. When the Oakland Paramount Theatre completes the installation of its new Uniflex computer relay and the installation of its original console, we hope to have a member concert or concerts there. We'll publish any updates.

This past week, Chris Nichols was able to forward URL's for live Wurlitzer theatre organ concerts by Mark Herman at the Nathan Barr studio in Los Angeles and Simon Gledhill at the Opera House Theatre in Blackpool, England. Prior to the epidemic, the Dickinson Theatre Organ Society telecast concerts which can still be seen at <https://tinyurl.com/tf7d3o3>. Check out these concerts for a reprieve from the present quarantine.

Buddy

NORCAL WEB SITE

NorCal Webmaster Chris Nichols has reconstructed the NorCal web site which is now up and running at the old address. Many thanks to Chris for his heroic efforts!

NOR-CAL OFFICERS FOR YEAR 2020

As reported in the last issue of the *Windsheet*, your board of directors currently consists of Rudy Frey, Chris Booras, Ted Hubbard, Neal Wood, and Art Woodworth. At their February 8 meeting the following officers were elected:

Rudy Frey – Chairman
 Chris Booras – Vice Chairman
 Ted Hubbard – Treasurer
 Art Woodworth – Secretary

DAVID GRAY CONCERT

On January 12, 2020, NorCal had the pleasure and honor of welcoming David Gray back to Berkeley Community Theatre. I always find it a challenge to put a concert experience into words for those who were not there. This time I am especially at a "loss for words" for several reasons.

First of all, that concert was likely one of the last concerts that David will perform. He announced that he is putting organ concert work aside for the foreseeable future. We can only hope that at some point in time, he will miss it enough to reconsider. Such talent needs to be shared with the world.

Second, rarely do I come to the conclusion that a concert is, for lack of a better word, "perfect." Generally, many of the concerts I attend offer great music sprinkled with the occasional piece that seems like "filler" or something that was simply okay. Thus was not the case with David's concert. As I stood in the wings, stage right, listening, I was captivated by every note. Every selection, in my opinion, was brilliantly arranged, flawlessly played, and was theatre organ music at its highest level possible. I will resist commenting on specific pieces since I would quickly run out of superlatives. Let it be known that this concert event was a rare and special moment in time.

Lastly, little did we know at that time, that this would be the last concert on our NorCal 4/41 Wurlitzer for two years (or more) as other details in this Windsheet will explain. Had we all known of the situation quickly developing at BCT, we might have had an even bigger audience for this stellar event. Sadly, sometimes in life we don't take time to appreciate what we have until it's gone. I look forward with anticipation and hope to the time I may again do a concert write-up for a NorCal Berkeley concert.

-Kevin King



David Gray

David's Playlist:

1. Forty Second Street
2. The Boy Next Door
3. Nickel in the Slot
4. Taking a Chance on Love (played for Jim Riggs)
5. Someday My Prince Will Come
6. Singing in the Bathtub
7. Sicilienne (from "Suite for Organ" by Maurice Duruflé)
8. Medley from "Anything Goes" – music by Cole Porter
 - a. Anything Goes

- b. You're the Tops
 - c. All Through the Night
 - d. Blow Gabriel Blow
 - e. I Get a kick out of You
 - f. Anything Goes
9. Dambusters March

INTERMISSION

- 1. The Moldau (by Bedřich Smetana)
- 2. Dance of the Ostracized
- 3. Saint Louis Blues Twist (John Seng arrangement)
- 4. Oblivion (a tango by Hector Piazzola)
- 5. Twelfth Street Rag (as arranged by Sidney Torch)
- 6. Hallelujah (by Leonard Cohen)
- 7. 1812 Overture (Peter Tchaikovsky)

About *The Moldau*: This was David's premier of his transcription of this orchestral work by Czech composer Bedřich Smetana. It is a musical journey down the river which merges with the Elbe River which discharges into the North Sea. Your editor was blown away by David's orchestral treatment at the NorCal Wurlitzer.

OPEN CONSOLE SCHEDULE

Due to limitations on access to BCT and the COVID-19 virus there will be no open console sessions at BCT until some date in fall of the year 2022. These will be deeply missed by those who have participated and we thank Chris Nichols for hosting them. It is hoped that we will be able to arrange open console sessions at other venues once we hear the "virus all clear."

CLOSING CHORD

Donald Siefert was a close friend to your editor and his late wife, Evelyn. He was best man at our wedding and introduced us to theatre organ. Don was very involved in the multi-year process of changing the BCT swell shades from the original vertical orientation to the present horizontal. Don and I met at UC Berkeley where he was studying electrical engineering and I was studying civil engineering. In our college days, Don and I would get together Sunday afternoons to go over our homework. He would try to explain electricity to me and I would try to explain statics and dynamics to Don.

Richard Dick Cencibaugh was the main organist at Warnors Theatre, Fresno for most of the last 60 years.

Phil Maloof – *The following is excerpts from a recent post by Walt Strony.*

I just learned from Bob Maes that "Uncle Phil" Maloof passed away this afternoon.

I met Phil one night while playing at Organ Stop Pizza many years ago - perhaps 1979. As I was talking to the audience, I could see someone wearing a flashing red badge. Of course, it was Phil wearing a Coors' beer badge. He was so turned on by the theatre organ from that evening, that he soon bought the NY Roxy Kimball console and began assembling a pipe organ for his Classic Hotel in Albuquerque. He invited me there many times to

visit. Eventually, he talked Kay McAbee into moving to Albuquerque and that's where Kay spent the rest of his life.

Soon thereafter, Las Vegas called. Phil bought a house there, and purchased the Chicago Stadium Barton console, combining it with parts of the former Granada Barton from Kansas City, KS (originally from Newport News, VA.) Soon thereafter, I moved to Las Vegas to manage an Allen dealership, and to play at Roxy's Pipe Organ Pizzeria - a restaurant the Maloof family had opened in the Fiesta Casino. The organ he'd had in Albuquerque was moved to Las Vegas and was expanded/modified and stayed there for a couple years.

Eventually, the Maloofs sold the casino and the new owners didn't want to be in the organ/pizza business. Phil bought the organ back from them, and built another addition to his house for it.

Over the years, I played numerous a-list parties (which included many famous stars and Las Vegas celebrities on the guest list) and other events for Phil, the last time being on his 80th Birthday. I also played the organ for the TV show "Jay Leno's Garage", when Jay came to visit Phil and did a show about his collection.

Over the years, Uncle Phil engaged virtually all of my colleagues to come to the house and make recordings using his Uniflex playback system. Kay McAbee, Simon Gledhill, Chris Gorsuch, Jim Riggs, Yours Truly, and numerous others laid down tracks. If you look above the consoles, you will see a TV screen showing the keyboards. The notes on those keyboards lit up as the organ played back those tracks. Phil liked to watch that, because he didn't play.

I lived about a mile from Phil, and regularly remember seeing him drive one of his many classic cars by my house daily as I read the morning newspaper. He will be missed. This is a sad day. RIP Phil.

OTHER VENUES

All of these venues are currently closed to the public due to the COVID-19 virus. LISTED PLAYING TIMES ARE FROM BEFORE THE SHUT DOWN. Their opening dates cannot be known at this time but will likely be announced on their web sites. Please note that the days/hours may change.

Grand Lake Theatre - 3/17 Wurlitzer. 3200 Grand Avenue, Oakland. Intermission music played by **Gordon Pratt** (Fridays) and **Bob Reichert** (Saturdays); **Bill Coale** Relief Organist. (510) 452-3556. www.renaissancealto.com

Paramount Theatre - 4/26 Wurlitzer. 2025 Broadway, Oakland. Public tours on first and third Saturdays of the month at 10:00 am, excluding holidays and holiday weekends. No reservations are necessary for these tours. Tours begin promptly at 10:00 am at the Box Office entrance on 21st Street near Broadway. The tour lasts about two hours and provides a full and informative view of the Theatre. Cameras are allowed. Admission is \$5.00 per person. Children must be at least 10 years old and adult chaperones are

required. Please note that some areas of the tour are not wheelchair accessible. www.paramounttheatre.com

Stanford Theatre - 3/21 Wurlitzer. 221 University Avenue, Palo Alto. See their **Silent Film Schedule**. The organ is played before and between films by **Bill Taylor, David Hegarty, or Jerry Nagano**. (650) 324-3700. stanfordtheatre.org

California Theatre, San Jose (Fox Theatre) - 4/21 Wurlitzer & 2/10 Wurlitzer. 345 South First Street. The 2/10 Style 216 Wurlitzer lobby organ is played before all scheduled performance. <http://sanjosetheaters.org/theaters/california-theatre/>

California Theatre, Pittsburg - 3/10 Robert Morton. 351 Railroad Avenue, Pittsburg. The 3-manual console is now playing. <http://www.pittsburgcaliforniatheatre.com/>

Palace of the Legion of Honor - 4/63 E. M. Skinner. Lincoln Park, San Francisco Presidio. Concerts Saturday afternoons at 4:00 pm. See legionofhonor.famsf.org and scroll to "visit/upcoming events."

MEMBERS LOBBY ON LINE

The members lobby no longer exists and will probably not be added to the current web site.

ABOUT NORCAL THEATRE ORGAN 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 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,

NORCAL THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY CONTACTS:

Please see the NorCal website at norcaltos.org for current & recent past Windsheets in [.pdf](#) format along with an up-to-date Calendar of Events.

You may reach NorCal directly at NorcalTOS@outlook.com.

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Dues are \$20 for NorCal TOS only. For an additional \$50 you may also join National ATOS (\$70 total) per year for full voting memberships in both NorCal and ATOS as well as your subscription to *Theatre Organ* magazine, the six times a year glossy journal of ATOS. Spouse and children living at home may be included in both NorCal and ATOS memberships. We hope you will join us to help preserve and enjoy these great instruments!

HOW OFTEN DO WE PUBLISH THE WINDSHEET?

We publish whenever we have an event scheduled rather than monthly.

GET YOUR WINDSHEET BY E-MAIL!

Would you like to receive your copy of the Windsheet by email? It will be in full 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 Chair, Neal Wood at the address shown below.

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