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# The WINDSHEET



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Newsletter of the NORCAL THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY      BERKELEY COMMUNITY THEATRE      www.norcaltos.org  
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August 2011

## ABOUT THIS WINDSHEET

## Mini Concert & Open Console at the Grand Lake Saturday, August 13<sup>th</sup> 9AM, 3200 Grand Avenue, Oakland, CA 94610

**W**indsheets generally come out before major concerts, but with the BCT still closed to us, no concerts have been planned, and Open Consoles have been cancelled.

**G**ordon Pratt will play a mini-concert followed by Open Console on **Kevin King's** Grand Lake 3/18 Wurlitzer organ.



Early Gordon Pratt thanks Tom & Sherry Ginn

I haven't tried to put one out anyway because this summer has been especially hectic with us — primarily because Frank has been 'out of action' since March 31<sup>st</sup> with a major leg problem and thus I have been doing double duty around our house.

This is an opportunity not only to hear Gordon, but to play this 18 rank, Wurlitzer yourself. We last heard this instrument in 2006, and Kevin continues to work on this fine instrument, so it will be exciting to hear what has been done.

Now Frank is recovering very well and the Fall season for NorCal is looking more promising, so look for a full Windsheet in September.

Gordon is well known to NorCal members as our Program Chairman and he hosted the Open Console at the Grace Baptist Church last June.

— Jan La Fetra

**N**ote the early hour - 9 AM, which is necessary in order for the Theatre to start its regularly scheduled movies.



## Chairman's Windline Chairman Bill Coale

**A**n Update on the BCT: -Replacement of stage lighting and wiring is proceeding extremely well.

-In addition, the lighting project should be wrapped up by the end of October. Great news all around!

**A**nother major project that deals with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance, is a bit more complicated.

modification of the current scene shop, one small area of which will become an elevator lobby for handicap access.

-Lighting circuit capacity will be doubled, and 400 individual dimming circuits will be available.

At this stage, we really don't have a good handle on the scope of the project, let alone when it might be completed.

-Stage lighting instruments will be state of the art, and should provide a much higher level of lighting to the stage.

As a result of this, we are still in a 'holding pattern' regarding the 2011-2012 concert season, at least in its "normal" fashion.

-The lighting contractors specialize in only doing theatre work, and are excellent at their craft.

## 14<sup>th</sup> Annual George Wright Memorial Concert

-Workmanship is top-notch, and the contractors are interacting with our crew chief **Bill Schlotter** in a most positive way.

Grant Alumni/Sierra Chapter Special Event  
Grant Union High School

1400 Grand Ave, Sacramento, CA  
**Sunday, November 13, 2011 at 2:00 PM.**

-Bill's knowledge has been helpful to the contractors, and the contractors have been amenable to accepting suggestions from Bill.

**Dave Wickerham** at the Mighty Wurlitzer.

General \$10, Grant Alumni & Sierra Chapter \$8, Students FREE

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## P. W. Bowen, Grace Baptist Church, June 12, 2011

– Art Woodworth

San Jose's Grace Baptist Church again welcomed NorCal to hear their Robert Morton theatre pipe organ, originally from the Liberty Theater in downtown San Jose. NorCal Member P. W. Bowen presented a great concert demonstrating the instrument's many capabilities.

P. W. opened with a slightly syncopated version of "Humoresque" by Antonin Dvorak which smoothly turned into Felix Arndt's "Nola" and back again several times. He followed this with the big band number "Tuxedo Junction" in honor of NorCal Member **Bill Brooks** who, along with **Dave Moreno** and **Steve Restivo**, have, over the years, been restoring the organ to its original in-theater specification.

"Little Girl Blue" began with a very R-M sounding big combination followed by plaintive reed solos. P. W. used full church

anthem combinations for a joyous "Rise Up, O Men of God," ending with the unenclosed 32-note wood diaphonic diapason which had been added since our last visit. Through the thoughtful layout of the four new chests, all fit handsomely in the back of the choir area with the requisite pipes arranged diaphonically in a two row fore and aft arrangement.

"Up a Lazy River," in the style of the *Inkspots* featured the sound and spirit of a drawbar Hammond on the second chorus. P. W. followed it with a gospel style "Let It Be" by Paul McCartney of **The Beatles**. "We Three, My Echo, My Shadow, and Me" by Arthur Tracy (who billed himself as "The Street Singer") continued with some of the Hammond sound.

The ever-exotic "Quiet Village" cast its spell, showcasing P. W.'s signature footwork. A romantic "Stella by Starlight" was lush with string choruses and full combinations. "Birth of the Blues" was full of jazz riffs.

Your writer's understanding is that one of the goals of the developers of what became the theatre organ was to create an organ able to do a better job of playing arrangements for the organ of classical orchestral music. P. W. demonstrated this to a "T" with a very orchestral arrangement of the "Going Home" theme from Dvorak's 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony ("From the New World"). According to Wikipedia, this theme was inspired by traditional African-American spirituals.

In complete contrast was the lively theme

from the movie "A Shot in the Dark." P. W. followed this with a dreamy "When You Wish Upon a Star." His closing number was "I'm Beginning to See the Light," done in a real stomping big band style, in honor of **Bill Brooks**.

This was a delightful afternoon of great musicality. After the concert, the church graciously provided light refreshments while NorCal members and guests tried their hands (and feet) at the Robert Morton.

## Piano and Pipes Ragtime Trio on July 30<sup>th</sup>

– Frank La Fetra

**Bill Coale**, plus **Jack & Chris Bradshaw** gave a delightful concert at **Wendell Jacob's** lovely home and outstanding home Theatre in Davis, proving once and for all that *Theatre Organ and Jazz Piano* make a great combination. (The program was sponsored by Sierra TOS and West Coast Ragtime Society Youth Program.)

Jan and I thoroughly enjoyed the mixture of popular rags, cakewalks, marches and novelty numbers performed by our own Chair, **Bill Coale** along with the well known Ragtime Artists, **Jack & Chris Bradshaw**. Plus, Bill used his great voice to sing 'Sarah Dear'. All in all it was well worth the trip to Davis.

We both felt this would make a great program for the BCT in the future.

Playlist:

Palm Leaf Rag  
Bohemia Rag  
Black & White Rag  
Bink's Waltz – **Bill Coale** solo  
Castle House – **Bill Coale** solo  
Georgia Grind  
Sarah Dear – **Bill Coale** vocal  
Sedalia Stomp  
Dill Pickles  
Cleopha  
Peaches & Cream  
Pearl of Harlem  
Temptation Rag  
Chili Sauce  
S' Louis Rag  
Charcoal  
Margery

## Sierra Chapter's Organ is Moving

As most of NorCal members know, Sierra Chapter's *Mendenhall Wurlitzer*, formerly at the *California Automobile Museum*, lost its home and needed to find a new home.

According to **Carol Zerbo**, Sierra's Chair, one of the criteria for a new home was that it would be used regularly and be an expected part of the show. "Play the audience in, play at intermission, play the audience out, play a concert, play a silent movie".

This is the reason the Board of the Sierra Chapter voted unanimously to donate the *Mendenhall Wurlitzer* to the *State Theatre Arts Guild in Oroville, CA*. The organ will be restored and installed in the historic *Oroville State Theatre*.

It has a champion in Sierra Chapter members **David** and **Linda Dewey** who also belong to the *Mt Shasta Chapter ATOS*. David's vision for the organ is a theatre pipe organ devotee's dream: "an organ in a theatre whose audience appreciates its value as a part of their entertainment experience."

## Mark Your Calendars

Program Chairman Gordon Pratt is working on a Picnic tentatively scheduled for September 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup>, likely in the Sacramento Area.

He is also hoping to have a NorCal concert (probably at the *Grand Lake*) on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. The artist has not yet been confirmed, but is a top attraction, so we can't name him at this time.

## ATOS Convention News

Since the Convention is covered in *ATOS Theatre Organ Magazine* far better than we have room for here, we will only mention that **Walt Strony** was named to the *ATOS Theatre Organ Hall of Fame* during the Convention. This is a well deserved honor, and we Congratulate Walt on this achievement.