

The WINDSHEET

Newsletter of the NORCAL THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY
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BERKELEY COMMUNITY THEATRE
Allston Way betw'n Milvia St & MLK, Jr Way



www.norcaltos.org

August 2011

ABOUT THIS WINDSHEET

Windsheets 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.

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 31st with a major leg problem and thus I have been doing double duty around our house.

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

— Jan La Fetra



Chairman's Windline

Chairman Bill Coale

A n Update on the BCT:

—Replacement of stage lighting and wiring is proceeding extremely well.

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

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

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

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

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

Mini Concert & Open Console at the Grand Lake

Saturday, August 13th 9AM, 3200 Grand Avenue, Oakland, CA 94610

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

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.

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

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



Early Gordon Pratt thanks Tom & Sherry Ginn

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

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

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

14th Annual George Wright Memorial Concert

Grant Alumni/Sierra Chapter Special Event
Grant Union High School

1400 Grand Ave, Sacramento, CA

Sunday, November 13, 2011 at 2:00 PM.

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 9th 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 30th

— 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
St 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 17th or 18th, likely in the Sacramento Area.

He is also hoping to have a NorCal concert (probably at the *Grand Lake*) on October 22nd. 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 Strongy** 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.