


NOVEMBER 2015

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



Mark Herman in Concert Berkeley Community Theatre 2:30 pm, Sunday November 8

Enter through Stage Door at 1930 Allston Way

NorCal is pleased to welcome Mark back to Berkeley Community Theatre!

Attendees at the 2015 ATOS National Convention heard Mark at the Colonial Theatre in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania (3/24 Wurlitzer). Those at the 2014 convention heard Mark and David Gray perform a most remarkable and marvelous concert at Warren Performing Arts Center, Indianapolis, Indiana featuring both the Arts Center's 3/18 Barton theatre pipe organ and an Allen T321Q-SP digital virtual theatre pipe organ.

Born in 1987, Mark Herman is one of America's busiest young theatre organists, performing over 30 concerts and silent film presentations each year across the US and abroad. In July of 2012, he was named the American Theatre Organ Society's Organist of the Year and is the youngest person ever to receive the prestigious honor.

He studied theatre organ with the late John Ferguson of Indianapolis, who is recognized worldwide for his skills as a teacher. His classical piano studies were with Christine Freeman of Fort Wayne, Indiana. He earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Theatre Arts/Management from DePaul University in Chicago.

Mark currently resides in Los Angeles, where he is President and Tonal Director of the Los Angeles Organ Company, the Allen Organ dealer for the Greater Los Angeles Area. He is in demand as a voicing specialist and tonal consultant for Allen Organs and is proud to be an Allen Artist, showcasing new Allen Organs in the US and beyond.

THIS WILL BE A NORCAL "MEMBERS ONLY" CONCERT.

Members' Admission: \$15.00 on the day of the concert. Members can order their tickets in advance of concert day from Treasurer Neal Wood for \$12.00. (See bottom of last page to contact Neal.)

Concert Special: Join NorCal for \$20.00 and you and your guest will attend the concert as our guest! You will be joining at the "Friend" level and your year-long membership includes your partner and children under 18, if any.

Did you show up on October 11? If so, you will receive free admission to Mark's concert.

ABOUT OCTOBER 11. NorCal had to cancel John Atwell's concert due to the inability of the US government to issue John a visa in time for the concert date. The officers and directors of NorCal Theatre organ Society sincerely regret our failure to notify our friends and members of the cancelation. **Did you show up on October 11?** If so, you will receive free admission to Mark's concert.

NORCAL HALL OF FAME LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP FOR JIM RIGGS

The NorCal Board of Directors established the "NorCal TOS Hall of Fame" at their August 8 meeting. Membership in the hall includes a lifetime free membership. They also elected NorCal's own **Jim Riggs** as the first honoree. Jim will be officially

inducted at the January 17, 2016 Annual Business Meeting. More about Jim in the next Windsheet.

BERT ATWOOD MEMORIAL SERVICE

Bert's memorial service was held at his and Ann's beautiful home on the shore of Clear Lake on June 29. Many NorCal members were present. Kevin King presented a program of music on Bert's beloved GW-4 Allen organ ("Gigi"). Chris Nichols photos.



In the Living Room – Kevin King Playing “Gigi”



The Service Was Held on the Dock

Bert lived a full and interesting life. He leaves the following quote:

Life is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body. Rather, it is to slide in broadside – thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming: “Wow! What a Ride!”

EDITOR'S IMPRESSIONS/HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PHILADELPHIA CONVENTION

At least 19 NorCal members attended the ATOS national convention based in Philadelphia. The Doubletree Hotel was conveniently located on South Broad Street, just a few blocks from City Hall and Macy's. Macy's was originally Wanamaker's Department Store and contains one of the largest pipe organs in the world. The day before the convention your correspondent dropped by the store just before the noon concert and checked out the area around the console. Presently an organ staff member came by who invited me and two other organ enthusiasts to sit inside the railing right next to the console during the concert. What a thrill!



Rudy Lucente at Macy's/Wanamaker Console

The next evening the convention featured an after-hours concert there with Peter Conte at the console of the 6/463 “American Symphonic” style instrument. The 28,667 pipes give it an amazing combination of beauty and power. The first stop of the convention was a visit to Longwood Gardens, a former DuPont family estate. It is a huge botanical garden with such a large green-house/conservatory that it even had lawn. Jonas Nordwall presented a very appropriate concert on the 4/146 Aeolian organ.



Colonial Theatre

We were bused to a number of locations with multiple visits to the Colonial Theatre in Phoenixville, PA (3/24 Wurlitzer which for some years played at "Pizza and Pipes" in Fresno) and to Dickinson High School in Wilmington, DL (3/66 Kimball).



David Peckham at Dickinson

We went to several other very nice venues, mostly in smaller theatres featuring very nice smaller instruments. The banquet was at Sunnybrook Ballroom in Pottstown, PA. This was a famous stop on the big band circuit, with a huge dance floor (up to 800 dancers). In recent year a United States theatre pipe organ (first one I ever heard or saw) was installed. Organist Dick Smith played very danceable music. While only one couple got up and danced to his playing, at least they were NorCal members!

The afterglow was a trip to Atlantic City and its giant convention hall where we heard both the Boardwalk Hall Ballroom 4/55 Kimball and the Boardwalk Hall Arena Midmer-Losh 7/449. It contains 33,114 pipes.



Some of the NorCal Contingent at the Banquet



Atlantic City Boardwalk Hall Arena

OPEN HOUSE AT KEVIN KING'S

Kevin King hosted NorCal and Sierra Chapter in his backyard organ studio on July 26. His Wurlitzer pipe organ now boasts 1,424 pipes, 378 notes of tuned percussions, and 46 un-tuned percussions/traps/effects. Kevin's tuning and tonal finishing are superb resulting in a beautiful musical sound in the room. He played a short concert including:

Phantom Regiment
It's All Right With Me
Again
It Had To Be You
Love Me or Leave Me
Tijuana Taxi/Spanish Flea

Later in the afternoon we heard short mini-concerts from Mark Putterbaugh, Jerry Nagano, Dave Moreno, and Richard Hills. Richard was heard via computer playback from a visit earlier in the summer. Thank you Kevin for a wonderful afternoon!



Kevin at the Console



Kevin, Rosie, and Carol Zerbo

NEW JIM RIGGS RECORDING

While at the Philadelphia convention, your Editor bought a copy of Jim Riggs' latest CD, "First Time Out." Recorded in 2013, it is the premier recording of the Macy's Greek Hall Wurlitzer. The instrument is a Wurlitzer 2/8 Style 190, a typical size and specification for the vast majority of theatre organs installed during the silent movie era. It operates on its original relay and switches. It takes a real musician to keep the music from "sounding all alike" on these smaller instruments. Jim tells your correspondent that making the recording was both a challenge and fun. He re-set the combinations for each number as there are only 20 pistons on the console. This helped him work wonders varying his registrations. The playlist has a lot of variety, starting with "Wake Up and Live" and ending with "Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye." My copy spends a lot of time in my car's CD player so I can listen to it a lot.

If you would like a copy, you may contact Jim at willardpugh@gmail.com. The price is \$20 post-paid within the continental USA.

END OF AN ERA – CASTRO THEATRE WURLITZER REMOVED

After 32 glorious years, the Castro Wurlitzer was removed in late September. It has been replaced temporarily by a three manual Allen digital organ with a double speaker system whose output is reported to fill the house nicely.

CLOSING CHORD

We are sorry to report that Gary Miller's dad passed on recently.

DONATION IN HONOR OF NORCAL

NorCal Member Bob Wilcox recently made two generous donations toward the ATOS Young Artists Fund, one in honor of NorCal chapter and the other in honor of Sierra Chapter.

OPEN CONSOLE SCHEDULE

Chris Nichols will host open console sessions at Berkeley Community Theatre on the following dates, all Sundays:

November 15

December 20

January 10

February 14

These sessions run from 1:00 to 5:00 pm. Enter through the stage door at 1930 Alston Way, Berkeley. They are an open house for NorCal members and their guests. They are very sociable and give you a chance to get better acquainted with other NorCal members and also hear a great variety of music in an informal setting. Everyone has a different style of playing. Most of us are amateurs but some are definitely professionals. Chris will ensure that every NorCal member feels comfortable and will provide help and support anyone who needs it. Each person playing usually gets two 15-minute "sets." Chamber tours are available. Here is a chance for you to play (and hear up close) one of the best (and biggest) Wurlitzer in the world!

COMING NORCAL EVENTS

Annual Business Meeting and Concert. Sunday, January 17, 2016 at 2:00 p m. Our artist will be the rising young star Zack Frame. Zack plays at the Pied Piper Pizza in Greenfield, near Milwaukee.

OTHER VENUES

Grand Lake Theatre - 3/18 Wurlitzer. 3200 Grand Avenue, Oakland. Intermission music played by Warren Lubich or Gordon Pratt (Fridays) & Bob Reichert (Saturdays). (510) 452-3556.

Paramount Theatre - 4/26 Wurlitzer. 2025 Broadway, Oakland. Public tours on first and third Saturdays of the month at 10:00 am. (510) 465-6400. 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 **Dick Taylor, David Hegarty**, or **Jerry Nagano**. (650) 324-3700. www.StanfordTheatre.org

Palace of the Legion of Honor - 4/63 E. M. Skinner. Lincoln Park, San Francisco Presidio. Saturdays and Sundays, starting at 4:00 pm. Free after museum admission. **David Hegarty** plays an **Organ Pops Concert** on the first full weekend of each month. Other artists play classical concerts other weekends. (415) 750-3600. <http://legionofhonor.famsf.org/organ-concerts-0>

Visalia Fox Theatre - 4/22 Wurlitzer. 300 West Main Street, Visalia. (599) 625-1369.

NORCAL WEBSITE

We now have copies of the current and recent past Windsheets on our web site. They are in [.pdf](#) format, which requires that your computer have a copy of the free Adobe Acrobat Reader.

We also have an up-to-date Calendar of Events online, and under the Recordings page the CD's we have available.

Be sure to visit our website: www.NorCalTOS.org

MEMBERS LOBBY ONLINE

For NorCal members only, there is now a link near the bottom of our website home page to take you to our "Members' Lobby." A password is required in order to view any of the Members' Lobby. Members who need the password should contact Neal Wood. His email and phone number are at the bottom of the last page.

GET YOUR WINDSHEET BY E-MAIL!

Would you like to receive you 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 nealwood@pacbell.net.

NORCAL RECORDINGS FOR SALE

NorCal's latest recording is *Tom Hazleton, The Concert Experience*. This recording contains two CDs and is the entire concert Tom performed on the NorCal Wurlitzer at the Berkeley Community Theatre on November 5, 2005. Tom's comments to the audience and his descriptions of the music are included between the selections. This two CD recording is available for \$25.

And for your holiday gift-giving, don't forget *A Unit Orchestra Christmas* featuring Jonas Nordwall at the NorCal Wurlitzer. This CD recording received a 5 Stars out of 5 Stars rating from *Theatre Organ* magazine. It is available for \$20.

See the NorCal web site for other available recordings of our Wurlitzer. They will all be on sale at our next concert or may be ordered from our Treasurer, Neal Wood at

nealwood@pacbell.net.

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 or 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
(514) 861-7082 or nealwood@pacbell.net
P.O. Box 625, Berkeley, CA 94701-0625

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.

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