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MARK HERMAN CONCERT NOVEMBER 8

Play List:
“Top Hat, White Tie, and Tails” - Irving Berlin
“Poodle in the Park” - S. Wiley
“My Romance” – Richard Rogers
Selections from Peter Pan – Jule Styne
“I’m Flying”
“Distant Melody”
“I Won’t Grow Up”
“Never Never Land”
“Two Cigarettes in the Dark” – Lew Pollack
Medley from Snow White:
Overture
“Some Day My Prince Will Come”
“One Song”
“Hi Ho, Hi Ho, It’s Off to Work We Go”
“I’m Wishing”

INTERMISSION

“Seventy Six Trombones” – Meredith Willson
“Someone to Watch Over Me” – George Gershwin
“Jarvis” – Mark Herman
“Londonderry Air” – Traditional
Selections from Showboat – Jerome Kern
“Make Believe”
“Cotton Blossom”
“Life Upon the Wicked Stage”
“Why Do I Love You?”
“Bill”
“Make Believe”
“Can’t Help Lovin’ That Man”
“Old Man River”

ENCORE – “Back Bay Shuffle” – Shaw/Hendricks

Mark Herman Concert Review by Jim Riggs

Tina and I went to Mark Herman's program at Berkeley Community Theater yesterday and simply had a terrific time. From opening number to closing encore, Mark demonstrated a technical command and attention to musical detail that is in diminishing supply nowadays. His performance was relaxed, ideally suited to the instrument, in total control and made for a thoroughly delightful Sunday afternoon's musicale.

After the obligatory up-tempo opener ("Top Hat, White Tie and Tails"), Mark settled into Music Mode and presented us with a portrait of artist and organ that revealed the myriad capabilities, composed power and exquisite subtleties of both. Rather than review the individual numbers in Mark's program, I'd prefer to give my general impressions of the concert as a fellow musician.

First (and, perhaps, foremost) is Mark's maturing ability to approach arranging from a fully integrated position. All elements contribute to the whole: pedal notes are integral to the harmonic voicing of the left hand and all that relates directly to the melody and secondary notes of the right hand. And, of course, the notes deliberately left out are equally as important as those played. And all of it MOVES and is in sync with the rhythmic and melodic contours of the piece.

This is how a unit organ wants to be played. Being a "thick" instrument by nature, it requires economy in all things: distillation of a piece's melody, harmony and foundation down to its essence (with minimal or zero note doubling), registrations that support the arrangement's musical statement without that egocentric "Listen to me NOW!" quality that is so very distracting and, then, not allowing the self (the organist) to get in the way of either the organ and/or the music, letting both speak for themselves. It's a delicate and highly subjective thing to achieve and Mark accomplished it with a reassuring "sitting back in the saddle" (a Mike Coup quote) type of console demeanor that put the entire audience at ease.

Mark's selections highlighted the BCT organ's remarkable ability to blend, registrationally speaking. He wisely chose not to include too many hard-driving selections—a difficult choice when confronted with such vast, meticulously regulated and fully operational resources. Rather, the majority of the program consisted of pieces set squarely in the middle of the
tempo/volume scale, leaving plenty of room on either side for the quiet and the bombastic, the reflective and the pulse-quickening, making those variations that much more effective and dramatic.

From his own comments (and as evidenced by the highly musical results) Mark takes his inspiration largely from orchestral sources, rather than from the output of other organists. This serves him very well and will continue to do so in the years to come because the result is theatre organ music that is light, playful, ever-changing and full of inventiveness. Mark has always been "one to watch," but as he enters this relatively new "musical casking" period I expect to hear him become even more his own man; taking that which his instructors and mentors gave him and further making it his own, carving out a unique stylistic niche---something this art form needs badly.

It was a completely enjoyable afternoon, featuring a highly capable and delightfully creative artist playing one of the world's superlative theatre organs. (BTW, much credit to the BCT crew for accepting no less than the best.) Bravo BCT! Bravo Mark!

HUNTER HALL EVENT OCTOBER 17

Saturday October 17 was a great day at Hunter Hall in sleepy Rio Vista. The day started out with some rain and stayed cool. We had about 45 at The Hall, mostly AMICA members with a good showing by NorCal ATOS. Some came from afar as Santa Cruz. (I didn't know that had a saint for that! (A Dave Kelsey line.))

We started with background music provided by a well restored Welte grand piano with a great selection of fox trot and ragtime rolls. As the day's MC I, then introduced The Hall and the instruments; and described the decor and especially the Wurlitzer. We then played three recordings on the organ via the new Uniflex relay (thank you Chris). This was followed by an abbreviated presentation of the Wurlitzer factory newsream (no gardens or goldfish). We then presented Dave Moreno accompanying Laurel and Hardy's "Habeas Corpus" a Halloween comedy. The crowd enjoyed it. We then opened up the organ for open console and had a few good organists take the bench. Dave played a lot more and showed off the unique sounds of the Wurlitzer. Did you know that the Wurlitzer has a typewriter effect? Even Geoff played! I gave a few thin people chamber tours. We ended the day at about 8:30.

The entire meeting was fueled by a very successful pot luck dinner, featuring some of the best food I've had in a while. We had about 45 at the event at 510 -644-2707 to make certain that the food was still good and that the event is still on.

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NEW MEMBERS

NorCal welcomes the following who recently joined:

Mr. Don Van Creveld, Redwood City
Mr. Jared DiBartolomeo, Pleasant Hill
Mr. Ken Eaton, South San Francisco
Mr. Jerrel Ellison
Mr. Stephen Franaszek, Kensington
Mr. Steve Lamina, San Rafael

Mr. Robert Lindquist, Livermore
Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Luscher, Union City
Ms. Ann L. Mariposa, Oakland
Ms. Linda J. MacVey, Oakland
Mr. John Plut, Daly City
Mr. Jaime Recarens, Nevada City
Mr. Gary Schneider, Alameda
Mr. Robert L. Thomas / Mr. Frederick Hodges, Hayward
Mr. Vernon P. Bickel, Clearlake

CHAIRMAN'S WIND LINE

Seasons' Greetings and happy holidays! It seems hard to believe the year is already over. We started our fall concert season with our old friend (relatively speaking) Mark Herman (a wonderful concert, I might add), and will begin the new year with newcomer Zach Frame at the Annual Business Meeting this month.

Weekly organ work parties on Saturdays and frequent open consoles on Sunday afternoons continue at BCT – if you've never been, why not make it your New Year's resolution to stop on by?

In local organ news, progress continues on the Robert Morton pit organ at the California Theatre in Pittsburg, thanks to Tom LaFleur, Dave Moreno, and others – I can't want to see the final results. Speaking of Robert Morton, the rare Morton pit organ in Hunter Hall (home of Geoff Hansen and friends) is now starting to make music, again thanks to Dave.

Last month, I had the pleasure of joining Sierra Chapter for their Christmas party at the Fair Oaks Clubhouse. Good company, mighty Wurlitzer music, and fresh, free-range chickens – what else could one ask for?

And while not an official NorCal project, NorCal Crew Chief Bill Schlotter and Vice Chairman Roy Powlan, in conjunction with the Oakland Paramount Theatre of the Arts, have taken the first steps to enable the acquisition of the original Paramount Wurlitzer console and its return to the Theatre. This is an exciting development indeed, and we wish them great success in the coming year!

Best wishes for 2016,

Tom Madsen

CLOSING CHORD

We are sad to have to report that former NorCal Board Member Fay Cooley recently lost her husband, Richard.

OPEN CONSOLE SCHEDULE

Chris Nichols will host open console sessions at Berkeley Community Theatre on January 10th and February 14th, both Sundays. These sessions run from 1:00 to 5:00 pm. Enter through the stage door at 1930 Alston Way, Berkeley. They are a very social open house for NorCal members and their guests. Most of those playing are amateurs but some are definitely professionals. Chamber tours are available. Here is a chance for you to play (and/or hear up close) one of the best (and biggest) Wurlitzers in the world! Please be sure to call the NorCal answering machine the day of the event at 510-644-2707 to make certain that the event is still on.
COMING NORCAL EVENTS

Sunday, April 3, 2:30 pm: Concert Artist TBA at Berkeley Community Theatre

OTHER COMING EVENTS

Blue Barn at Harmony Wynelands Vineyard, 9291 East Harney Lane, Lodi
July 3-8 (Sunday through Friday), ATOS National Convention, Cleveland, Ohio

CLASSIFIED

Allen organ for sale. Older classical style instrument 'fixed' by John Nelson with a Leslie speaker so it can play theater style as well as classical. Main speakers are internal. Contact Fay Cooley at coolfay@sbcglobal.net.

CLOSING CHORD

We are sad to have to report that NorCal member and former NorCal board member Fay Cooley lost her husband, Dick, in August.

OTHER VENUES

Grand Lake Theatre - 3/18 Wurlitzer. 3200 Grand Avenue, Oakland. Intermission music played by Warren Lubich or Gordon Pratt (Fridays) & Bob Reichart (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. Stanfordtheatre.org

Palace of the Legion of Honor – 4/63 E. M. Skinner. Lincoln Park, San Francisco Presidio. Saturdays and Sundays, 4:00 to 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.

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

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 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 nealwood@pacbell.net.

NORCAL RECORDINGS FOR SALE

See the NorCal web site for 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.

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NorCal Web Site. Current & recent past Windsheets in .pdf format, up-to-date Calendar of Events on line, and list the CD’s available: norcaltos.org