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NOVEMBER 2018

Newsletter of the NorCal Theatre Organ Society  
[www.norcaltos.org](http://www.norcaltos.org) (510) 644-2707  
P. O Box 625, Berkeley, CA 94701-0625

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



**WALTER STRONY IN CONCERT  
AND BILL SCHLOTTER MEMORIAL**

**Sunday November 18, 2018**

**2:30 PM, Berkeley Community Theatre, Berkeley**

**Enter through Stage Door at 1930 Allston Way**

What more can we say other than “Walter Strony in Concert!” Walter has played many concerts for NorCal and Sierra Chapters as well as at numerous ATOS national conventions. He has made numerous recordings, including a recording on the NorCal Wurlitzer. His past concert venues include Radio City Music Hall, Wanamaker’s in Philadelphia, and the Sanfilippo Music Room in Barrington, Illinois.

This will be NorCal’s first concert since we lost our Organ Crew Chief, Bill Schlotter. We are told that Walter will play his spectacular arrangement for theatre organ of the “Victory at Sea” Suite by Richard Rodgers. One of Bill’s favorites, the suite is made up of themes Mr. Rodgers wrote for a television documentary series on the role of the U. S. Navy in World War II.

Walter has performed twice at New York’s Radio City Music Hall, the world’s largest fully functioning theatre pipe organ. He has appeared at many ATOS national conventions and has presented a number of memorable concerts here at Berkeley.

In addition to his fine reputation as a concert organist, Mr. Strony is well known for his many recordings. His first CD

"Phoenix" was rated 10/10 by CD Review - the highest rating given by this prestigious publication. He has recorded over 31 albums with his most recent CD (2013) being recorded on the Aveni Wurlitzer in Gates Mills, Ohio - an instrument that he designed. As an author, he is well known for his book "The Secrets Of Theatre Organ Registration," which has become the standard reference book on this subject. He is currently working on its expanded 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.

Walter is the only living organist to have been twice voted "Organist of the Year" by ATOS - in 1991 and 1993. In 2011, he was inducted into the ATOS "Hall of Fame." He has performed with the Calgary Symphony, Allentown Symphony, El Paso Symphony, and Symphony Silicon Valley.

In addition to musical performance, he works as an organ consultant, most notably for instruments built by the Allen Organ Company. In collaboration with Allen Organs and the ATOS, he and four other artists recorded a five-DVD instructional video entitled “The Art of Playing Theatre Organ.”

**And:** If you would like to know more about Walter, just check out his extensive entry in none other than Wikipedia!

**WALTER’S CONCERT WILL BE A  
“NORCAL MEMBERS ONLY” CONCERT.**  
**Members’ Admission:** \$15.00 on the day of the concert. Members can order tickets in advance of concert day for themselves and their guests from Membership Secretary 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,” if any.

**GEORGE WRIGHT MEMORIAL CONCERT  
ALEX JONES AT THE MIGHTY WURLITZER**

**Sunday November 11, 2018**

**2:00 PM, Grant Union High School**

**1400 Grand Avenue, Sacramento**

Alex Jones was named overall winner of the 2017 Youth Theatre Organ Competition at the 2017 ATOS National

Convention in Florida. Originally from London, Alex is currently studying for a Masters in Organ Performance Literature at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York in the studio of Professor Edoardo Bellotti.



*Alex Jones*

In 2009, he gained a scholarship place to study at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester, UK and was junior organ scholar at Manchester Cathedral. More recent activities have included a week-long concert tour of Holland featuring performances at the Grote Kerk in Zwolle and the Eindhoven Muzeiksaal. He has also performed in major UK venues including St. Paul's Cathedral, Royal Festival Hall, Westminster Central Hall, and St. John Smith Square, London and in other cathedrals around the UK. He appeared as a guest speaker at Southbank Centre's "Pulling out the Stops" festival celebrating the re-inauguration of the Royal Festival Hall organ. He has also recently given performances in Rochester as part of the EROI 2016 Festival and made his debut as a theatre organist performing at the Auditorium Theater.

In 2017, he was awarded the Runner-Up Prize at the West Chester University International Organ Competition and has received numerous scholarships and donations toward his further studies in the US. Alex currently holds the position of Organist at the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation in Rochester, New York.

### **NOMINATIONS FOR NORCAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The NorCal TOS Bylaws require the Board of Directors to consist of at least five people who are Active Members of the Chapter. As of January 1, 2019 there will be three vacancies on the Board. According to the Bylaws: Members may suggest in writing to the Nominating Chairperson the names of Active Members for consideration: OR they can nominate an Active Member in writing including each nominee's consent and agreement to serve to the Nominating Chairperson not later than November 10 and signed by no fewer than two Active Members. The Nominating Chairperson is:

Neal Wood  
523 Corbett Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94114

### **BRETT VALLIANT CONCERT**

Our NorCal June 24<sup>th</sup> concert at BCT featured an artist new to our chapter - Brett Valliant from Wichita Kansas. He presented a wonderful concert. I very much enjoyed Brett's style and selection of pieces. There was wide variety throughout. This I appreciated since some artists either play mainly one genre of music, or try wild, out-of-this-world selections that may (or may not) work on theatre organ. As an example, here are just a few of his notable selections: In the Mood, Bali Hai, Stardust, Finlandia, Maple Leaf Rag, plus a broad collection of movie music; and even the Toccata from Vidor's 5th Organ Symphony and the Overture to The Thieving Magpie by Rossini. This just names a few. Each piece, from light and fun to complex and serious was played with polish and style. As a side note, Brett played an all



*Brett Valliant*

-classical program at the recent ATOS convention in southern California. He was featured at the Wilshire Boulevard Temple 4/64 Kimball. I was fortunate enough to be in attendance and was again impressed with his ability to master all types of music. Brett was also a pleasure to work with throughout our preparation time during his visit to Berkeley. I hope to hear him play again soon.

- *Kevin King*

#### **Brett's Play List**

"Vanessa"

"In the Mood"

"Chances Are"

"Clarinet Polka"

"Bali Hai"

"You Raise Me Up"

"Blue Prelude"

Toccata from *Fifth Organ Symphony* by Vidor

Overture to *The Thieving Magpie* by Rossini

#### **Intermission**

"Rock Around the Clock"

"Pietro's Return"

"Stardust"

"Hey Feller" from *Showboat*

"Memories" from *Cats*

"Atlanta G. A."

*Medley of Movie Themes:*

Star Wars  
 Star Trek  
 Jurassic Park  
 E. T.  
 "Somewhere Over the Rainbow"  
 "The Grizzly Bear"  
 "The Lord's Prayer"  
 "Finlandia"

**Encore**

"Maple Leaf Rag"

**DAVID GRAY CONCERT**

Thanks to Geoff Hansen and Sierra Chapter for setting up this wonderful concert at Hunter Hall in Rio Vista. David made use of all the resources of the Hunter Hall Wurlitzer. Your Editor thought his piano transcription of the "Gypsy Song" from the opera *Carmen* was particularly outstanding, presenting all the Romany fire of the music.

**David's Play List:**

*Three by Richard Rogers:*

"The Lady is a Tramp"  
 "Manhattan"  
 "Thou Swell"

"Horse Box"

"Body and Soul"

*For Jim Riggs' two daughters:*

"Love Goes Where My Rosemary Grows"  
 "Georgia on My Mind"

*Big Band Medley:*

"A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square"  
 "Tuxedo Junction"  
 "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree"  
 "Goody Goody"

*From West Side Story:*

"Tonight"  
 "Maria"  
 "Something's Coming"  
 "I Feel Pretty"  
 "America"  
 "There's a Place Somewhere"

**Intermission**

"Horse Guards at Whitehall"

"Skye Boat Song"

"I'm Beginning to See the Light"

From the film *Shall We Dance*:

"Shall We Dance"  
 "They All laughed"  
 "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off"  
 "Promenade"  
 "They Can't Take That Away from Me"  
 "Fascinating Rhythm"  
 "Shall We Dance"

"Gypsy Song" from the opera *Carmen* – piano solo

"People"

**Encore**

"Says My Heart"

**MINI-CONCERT AND PICNIC AT KEVIN KING'S STUDIO**

A small but congenial group gathered at Kevin King's residence in Walnut Creek on Sunday August 5. After a bring-your-own picnic in his lovely back yard, we retired to his organ studio for a mini-concert by Kevin followed by open console.



*Our host, Kevin King*

**Kevin's Play List:**

"I'm In Love for the Very First Time"  
 "I've Got It Bad and That Ain't Good"  
 "Something's Got to Give"  
 "Josephine"  
 "More Than You Know"  
 "On a Little Street in Singapore"  
 "It's Bad for Me"  
 "How Long Has this Been Going On"  
 "Love Me or Leave Me"

During open console we heard from several guests including Gordon Pratt, Craig Browning, Bob Reichert, Art Woodworth, Jeff Porto, Mark Putterbaugh, and Mike Doering.



*Kevin King's Studio*

## CHAIRMAN'S WIND LINE

The *Windsheet* is carrying a Eulogy to Bill Schlotter, so I will not elaborate here beyond acknowledging that I miss a very good friend of 33 years. Bill was an extremely capable mechanical engineer who also had very good business sense.

We often have ATOS visitors at our work parties and open console sessions. They come from all over to see, hear, and play our Wurlitzer. Their interest in coming is a testimony to the quality of our Wurlitzer and the dedication of our organ maintenance crew. In September, Dr. Johnathan Kleefield from New York visited. He played beautifully, including selections from the "Sound of Music". He toured the chambers and was lavish in his praise of the organ.

In October, Heath Wooster, a former ATOS Young Organist Winner from Melbourne, Australia, now an advertising executive doing business in Silicon Valley, stopped in and played the organ beautifully. Heath competed in the Young Organists' Competition at the 1998 ATOS convention in Berkeley.

When Bill Schlotter was crew chief, NorCal undertook the restoration of a water damaged 5-rank main chest from the Oakland Paramount Theatre of the Arts. Since Bill's unfortunate passing, Kevin King has guided our organ crew through the remaining work. We're happy to announce that the restoration of the chest was completed September 29<sup>th</sup>!



## ATOS NATIONAL CONVENTION HONORS ED STOUT, DICK TAYLOR, BILL COALE, AND KEN CROME

The recent ATOS National Convention in Pasadena honored four people intimately involved with NorCal TOS:

**Ed Stout and Dick Taylor** jointly received the 2018 ATOS Hall of Fame Award., the highest honor bestowed by ATOS. Their contributions to Northern California theatre organs, including NorCal's instrument at BCT, are legendary and greatly appreciated.

NorCal member **Dr. William Coale** was named ATOS Member of the Year for his significant contributions to ATOS including his biography of George Wright.

And professional organ builder **Ken Crome** was given a plaque naming him an Honorary Member of Los Angeles Theatre organ Society for his donation of time and services toward organ preparation for the convention. Ken is no stranger to NorCal as he restored both of NorCal's Wurlitzer consoles.

These honors are reported in detail in the September/October 2018 issue of Theatre Organ Magazine.

## NORCAL AND SIERRA CHAPTER MEMBERS AT ATOS CONVENTION IN PASADENA



*Photo by Peter Beames*

## NEW MEMBERS

Jane Centers, San Jose

Alan Hackett, Sunnyvale

Sandra Speier, Palo Alto

## OPEN CONSOLE SCHEDULE

Chris Nichols will host open console sessions at Berkeley Community Theatre on the following Sundays from 1:00 to 5:00 pm:

*November 4 and December 9, 2019*

*January 13 and February 17, 2019*

These sessions run from 1:00 to 5:00 pm. Enter through the stage door at 1930 Allston Way, Berkeley. These events are a very social open house for NorCal members (both players and listeners) 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 see and 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.

## CLOSING CHORD

**William O. Schlotter Jr. Feb 18, 1942-July 5, 2018.** Bill grew up in a military family. His grandfather was a "doughboy" in the First World War. His father and brother were graduates of West Point. His father was a Colonel who served in WWII and Korea. His brother was a Major in the Army. Bill attended Piedmont High School and was active on the stage crew. He served in the Army during the years of military conscription, which were in effect when he was of military age. He could have entered West Point, but elected instead to attend the United States Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, New York, from which he graduated with a degree in Mechanical Engineering in 1967.



*Bill Schlotter at the Center Theatre console*

Bill worked for several commercial shipping companies, working his way up to become the Chief Engineer of the "Chevron Washington," a 600 foot long double hulled tanker ship operated by the Chevron Oil Company. It was a turbine-electric powered ship with many complicated systems for carrying raw and finished oil products. He represented the company during the original design and construction of the ship and stood by it during several overhauls throughout its life. His ship hauled crude oil from Alaska to refineries in Richmond and El Segundo, CA, and various finished products up and down the California coast and to Hawaii. As a mariner, he was alternately at sea and at home for 3 month periods.

As NorCal Crew Chief, Bill directed a volunteer group of from 8 to 12 members in the restoration and installation of our 41-rank Wurlitzer, which is one of the largest to be installed in any theatre. Radio City Music Hall, in New York, has the only larger original Wurlitzer theatre installation. (Our Rosewood Wurlitzer console came from the Center Theatre in Radio City.)

Bill paid for the original Devtronix Organ Control System (computer relay) for our organ and for the commercial overhaul of our Toledo Paramount Publix-1 console by the Crome Organ Company, then in Los Angeles. Bill frequently utilized his long-bed  $\frac{3}{4}$  ton truck in the movement of parts large and small to support the overhaul of the Berkeley organ, including moving the large Toledo console to and from Los Angeles.

Bill added the Wurlitzer Bombard from the Metropolitan Theatre in Boston, which he purchased specifically to donate to NorCal. He negotiated with various suppliers of parts and services, such as tuning and voicing, and worked with professional organists to design the specifications for the overhaul of both of our consoles. He was constantly purchasing and donating a wide array of hardware and material required for the installation of our organ.

Some of Bill's innovations at Berkeley include: 1) The reinstallation of the shutters in horizontal position to better direct sound down from the chambers, 2) Thermostatically controlled constant temperature regulation of the chambers to maintain tuning, 3) Filters in the blower room door to insure that air reaching the blowers is clean, 4) An air pressure regulator mounted on the bottom of the orchestra lift to provide constant wind pressure to the consoles as the lift rises and lowers, 5) Two

movable console platforms, one with multi-colored lighting which can be coordinated with stage lighting, 6) The successful installation of our 32 ft Diaphones high on the back stage wall, 7) and the installation of two 20 HP wind blowers and a separate 5 HP blower just for the 32 ft Diaphones.

Bill served terms as Chapter Chairman and as ATOS National Convention Chairman. These NorCal-hosted conventions were attended and enjoyed by many, and were very financially successful for NorCal. Over the years he helped NorCal to become an internationally known concert venue.



*Bill and the crew standing in the tone chute above the grille during the process of changing the swell shades from standing vertical to lying horizontal*

At the time of his passing, Bill was directing the NorCal crew in the restoration of a water damaged 5-rank pipe chest from the Oakland Paramount Wurlitzer. Bill left an endowment to the Paramount for improvements to the organ for: adding Bombards, restoring the Wood Diaphones, providing an up to date computer relay system, and having the Crome Organ Company restore and return the original Oakland Paramount "Waterfall" console to the Paramount Theatre. This original Publix-1 console was the last one to be built by Wurlitzer in 1931.



*Bill and the NorCal organ crew hard at work as usual*

Bill suffered from heart disease for many years and had a pacemaker installed five years ago. Last year he was preceded in death by his brother and sister-in-law, who also lived in Oakland. Their passing was a blow to him. He is to be interred in Arlington National Cemetery with his parents and brother. In Bill's memory, the NorCal Board of Directors has struck a brass plate which will be attached to the low "C" Bombard in his memory. He will be sorely missed.

*-Rudy Frey, NorCal TOS Chairman*

## OTHER VENUES

**Grand Lake Theatre - 3/17 Wurlitzer.** 3200 Grand Avenue, Oakland. Intermission music played by Gordon Pratt (Fridays) & Bob Reichert (Saturdays). (510) 452-3556.

[www.renaissancerialto.com](http://www.renaissancerialto.com)

**Paramount Theatre - 4/26 Wurlitzer.** 2025 Broadway, Oakland. Public tours on first and third Saturdays of the month at 10:00 am.

**Friday November 30: "Thunderball."** Doors open and Wurlitzer at 7:00, Feature Film at 8:00. (510) 465-6400.

[www.paramounttheatre.com](http://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](http://stanfordtheatre.org)

**California Theatre, San Jose (Fox Theatre) - 3/10 Wurlitzer.** 345 South First Street. Style 216 Wurlitzer lobby organ played before all scheduled performance.

<http://sanjosetheaters.org/theaters/california-theater/>

**California Theatre, Pittsburg - 3/10 Robert Morton.** 351 Railroad Avenue, Pittsburg. Temporary 2-manual console. Played before selected shows, usually by Dave Moreno.

<http://www.pittsburgcaliforniatheatre.com/>

**Palace of the Legion of Honor - 4/63 E. M. Skinner.** Lincoln Park, San Francisco Presidio. Concerts reinstated.

See [legionofhonor.famsf.org](http://legionofhonor.famsf.org) and scroll to visit/upcoming events.

## HOW OFTEN DO WE PUBLISH THE WINDSHEET?

We publish whenever we have an event scheduled rather than on a set schedule.

## MEMBERS LOBBY ONLINE

For NorCal members only, there is a link near the bottom of our website home page to take you to our "Members' Lobby." A password is required to enter the lobby. Members who need the

password should contact Neal Wood. His e-mail and phone number are at the bottom of this page.

## 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 Neal Wood at: [woodshed523@icloud.com](mailto:woodshed523@icloud.com).

## 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, building, voicing, and maintenance. **If you would like to join us, please call or write to:**

Mr. Neal R. Wood  
NorCal TOS Membership Chair  
(415) 861-7082 or [woodshed523@icloud.com](mailto:woodshed523@icloud.com)  
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.

## 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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## NORCAL THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY CONTACTS:

- Please see the NorCal website at [norcaltos.org](http://norcaltos.org) for current & recent past Windsheets in [.pdf](#) format, an up-to-date Calendar of Events, and a list of organ parts available.
- You may reach NorCal at [NorcalTOS@outlook.com](mailto:NorcalTOS@outlook.com).

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