



PUGET SOUND PIPELINE

Volume 29, Nos. 5-6 • May – June 2018

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2018 Series

THEATRE ORGAN POPS



From Charlotte, NC

SCOTT FOPPIANO

SCOTT FOPPIANO hails from Memphis, Tennessee, where at an early age he began music studies, both piano and classical organ, and began his playing career at the church of St. Paul the Apostle. He also began playing the Mighty Wurlitzer organ at Memphis' Orpheum Theatre while still in high school. He entered the NC School of the Arts and holds Bachelors and Masters of Music degrees in organ performance. He continued private study with the late William Whitehead and Tom Hazelton.

Acclaimed as a theatre organist and silent film accompanist, he has played and recorded numerous theatre pipe organs in the U.S. and overseas. He has been a featured artist for American Theatre Organ Society national conventions, as well as for the American Guild of Organists and Organ Historical Society.

He has held positions on the administrative boards of both the A.G.O. and A.T.O.S. at local and national levels. He now resides in Charlotte, NC.

**An afternoon of your favorite pops music
played on the 3-manual 25-rank**

**Kimball-Wurlitzer
Theatre Pipe Organ**

Calvary Christian Assembly
6801 Roosevelt Way NE ▪ Seattle

Saturday, June 23, 2 PM

ADMISSION

(For those who are not series subscribers)

PSTOS members \$20 – Non-members \$25

Age 16 and under FREE with adult

Tickets at the door, or online at

www.pstos.org

Drive Directions: IMPORTANT! The Calvary parking lot is now operated by Diamond, but **parking is free for those attending these events.**

SOUTHBOUND I-5—Take exit 171 toward NE 71st St/NE 65th St, merge onto 6th Ave NE. Take a slight left at NE 71st St, continue onto NE 70th St. Turn right at Roosevelt Way NE, destination will be on the right.

NORTHBOUND I-5—Take exit 171 for WA-522/Lake City Way toward Bothell. Take a slight right to NE 73rd St, then the first right onto Roosevelt Way NE. Destination will be on the right.

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Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization furthering the appreciation, restoration, and use of the historic Theatre Pipe Organs of the 1920s, through education.

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- Secure!
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Paramount Wurlitzer console comes home after a complete Ken Crome rebuild

By Phil Hargiss, photos by Jamie Snell and Jim Welch

One of the chapter's best-kept secrets is that for more than fifty years, PSTOS members have been maintaining the Seattle Paramount Theatre's original Wurlitzer Publix 1. Starting about ten years ago, we have progressed from mere preservation to meticulous restoration of the organ, with the goal of returning it to a good approximation of new (or in some respects, better than new) condition. This effort has proceeded slowly but steadily, with little publicity, led initially by Tom Blackwell, and currently by Phil Hargiss.

By this time last year, the organ was sounding as good as it ever has; but the console, in spite of being renovated a generation ago, was becoming increasingly unreliable. After a great deal of consultation, STG agreed to finance a complete console rebuild by Ken Crome, comprising structural repairs, cosmetic restoration, and technical upgrades. While the console was away, we altered our restoration schedule to prepare for upgrading the organ's control system to Uniflex 4000, which included rewiring some not-yet-rebuilt percussions and traps, and assembling circuit boards off-site for installation mostly in the middle of the night, after *Hamilton* performances.

The console returned to the theatre barely two weeks before this season's first silent movie, looking absolutely gorgeous. After an anxious period of troubleshooting, the organ debuted April 2 as Donna Parker accompanied *The Patsy*, starring Marian Davies. The organ behaved flawlessly, and both the audience and the organ crew were ecstatic. There are still some loose ends to tie up, but the organ is now within sight of becoming a first-class concert instrument. It's probably time to start thinking about letting the rest of the world in on our secret.



Mike Wallace, Phil Hargiss and an unidentified helper look over the wrapped console



Checking it over



Pedalboard missing, but isn't she gorgeous!



A closeup. What a birthday celebration for a 90-year-old lady!



The console rolls off the truck at the Paramount's back loading door

PSTOS

Coming Events

2018 series

THEATRE ORGAN POPS

Calvary Christian Assembly

SCOTT FOPPIANO

Saturday, June 23



DAVE WICKERHAM

Saturday, October 6



More 2018 events

Special Bonus Event Sat. July 22

Carpool to the Leavenworth home of DAVID JOHNSTON. See/play his restored 2/10 Kimball from Seattle's Embassy Theatre, and an amazing collection of memorabilia. *Limited to 20!*

Reservations - joann@pstos.org



Sat., Aug. 11
BRETT VALLIANT

Returns to the Pacific NW to play Merlyn Johnson's Tacoma Residence 3/30 Wurlitzer-Morton

Sat., Sept. 8, 1:30PM

MARTIN ELLIS

Returns to West Seattle's KENYON HALL and its 2/17 Wurlitzer



Sun., Dec. 2

Holidays at Haller

Annual festive Christmas celebration
Food! Fun! Music!



You're invited to the Paramount Theatre's 90th Birthday Celebration

IT'S FREE, but do reserve, please.

Free Music Program May 21, 7:00pm

SHOW DIVINE AT 9TH & PINE (original billing used March 1, 1928) celebrates the 90th birthday of The Paramount Theatre featuring popular songs from 1928 performed by Tedde Gibson on the Mighty Wurlitzer with selected sing-along numbers led by local vocalists.

Special thanks to the Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society

Visit www.tfaforms.com/4656440 to RSVP



Haller Lake Community Club's

Spaghetti & Silent Movie Night

Featuring Sharon Stearnes at the Wurlitzer

Saturday, May 19, 5:00 pm

Spaghetti dinner by Chef Paul

Served from 5:00 to 6:30



ADMISSION to movies is by donation (to help pay Sharon)

SPAGHETTI DINNER \$9 per person

Gilbert & Sullivan Society Triumphs With "Cox & Box" and Wurlitzer

Review by Jamie Snell

The evening of April 7 at Haller Lake Community Club saw a remarkable and possibly unprecedented theatrical event: a production of the 1866 comic operetta "Cox and Box" accompanied by the Mighty Wurlitzer! The 50-minute show, with music by Arthur Sullivan and libretto by F. C. Burnand (predating Sullivan's collaboration with W. S. Gilbert), was proof positive that the theatre organ is as viable as an orchestra, amply justifying the alternate term "unit orchestra."

This performance, an adaptation as a radio play, was produced by long-time Seattle G&S chief Mike Storie and directed by Christine Goff. It starred Richard Hodsdon as Mr. Cox, Jon Palmason as Mr. Box, and William J. Darkow as Sergeant Bouncer, with KIRO-FM celebrity Dave Ross as the radio announcer, Morgan Duterte, Hollis Heron, and Carol Sue Janes as the Haller Sisters (singing tongue-in-cheek commercials), Curtis Takahashi on sound effects, and our own Tyler Pattison at the HLCC 3/10 Wurlitzer.

The show has a typically preposterous Gilbert-and-Sullivan-esque plot: The title

characters unwittingly inhabit the same flat, Cox by night and Box by day, allowing landlord Bouncer to collect double rent. The two inevitably cross paths one day; a round of verbal sparring ends when they realize they've been duped. More sparring ensues when they discover that Cox is engaged, though unhappily, to the same woman with whom Box had ended an unhappy engagement by feigning suicide; that kerfuffle is resolved by the arrival of a letter from the lady saying she's decided to marry a Mr. Knox! Finally the men realize they're long-lost brothers, and all is well.

To all appearances the audience of about 140, mostly G&S fans, were delighted with the show, and not least with Pattison's solid organ performance and the successful blend of singers with the Wurlitzer. A number of audience members, intrigued by the organ, stayed for a demonstration and tour of the pipe chambers. Producer Mike Storie commented that with this successful melding of G&S and theatre organ, the future looks bright for further such productions, perhaps "Trial By Jury" next...stay tuned!

Tedde Gibson Displays Versatility at Calvary

Review by Jamie Snell, photos by Jeff Snyder

The 100-plus attendees at Tedde Gibson's April 14 concert at Calvary Christian Assembly were treated to a memorable display of this artist's remarkable versatility and repertoire, ranging from pops standards to religious, ragtime, film score transcriptions, classical, and more. Gibson is a native of Tacoma and is a well known organist in the Pacific Northwest; he now lives in the Washington, DC area.



Following PSTOS President Bob Zat's introduction, Gibson opened the program with Jacob Gade's classic 1925 tango "Jalousie." He did not hold back on showing off the organ at its fullest in the minor section, nor its sweetest in the major section, and the 3/25 Kimball-Wurlitzer never sounded better. That was followed by several religious tunes, including "Nearer, My God, to Thee," alternating with selections from film scores, including the themes from *Mamma Mia* and *Titanic*. Also included was the rarely-heard ragtime tune "After the Cakewalk" by the African-Canadian composer Nathaniel Dett; Gibson introduced this number by explaining how the "cakewalk" originated in the South as a way for slaves to covertly mock their owners through dance. The artist concluded the first half with a swing rendition of the 1953 Strayhorn/Ellington jazz classic "Satin Doll," to rousing applause.

After the audience had partaken of intermission cookies and coffee, the program resumed with a medley of "somewhere" songs, including "Somewhere" from *West Side Story* and the theme from the 1980 film *Somewhere in Time*. Following that were several

church-related songs such as "Oh Happy Day," whimsically including "Get Me To the Church on Time" from *My Fair Lady*, interspersed with popular classics including "The Girl From Ipanema" and Gershwin's "Strike Up the Band," and a transcription of Debussy's famous piano movement "Clair de Lune," from his 1905 *Suite Bergamasque*. Sustained applause brought Gibson back to the console for an encore of "Bring Him Home" from the musical *Les Misérables*.

This concert showed only one aspect of Tedde Gibson's versatility, which seems to have no bounds. For three other examples: (1) The previous evening he conducted a two-hour workshop at CCA entitled "Gospel Music, Orchestral Transcriptions, and More – on the Theatre Organ." Gibson covered hymn introduction for congregational singing, registration for

gospel music (including how to make a pipe organ sound like a Hammond!), adding interest by varying harmonic and rhythmic patterns, letting the phrasing of sung words influence musical phrasing, and several other topics. (2) The previous Monday, Gibson performed at the Seattle Paramount Theatre's 4/20 Wurlitzer, accompanying the 1925 silent film *A Woman of the World* starring Pola Negri – quite a thrilling musical feat. (3) In addition to his concert and teaching work, Gibson holds down three church organist positions near his home in the DC area – all different denominations, each with its own musical liturgy – as well as being active in the regional theatre organ world.

Many thanks to Tedde Gibson; to everyone in PSTOS who again went the extra mile to make this concert happen; to Greg Smith for keeping the organ in top condition; to AGO Seattle and the Seattle Theatre Group (owner of the Paramount) for reciprocal promotion; to several nearby retirement homes for bringing their residents; and to Calvary Christian Assembly for continuing to welcome PSTOS.



Tedde engaged the audience with his stories

AGO Programs

Coming in May and June

Friday, May 18, 12:10 p.m.

David Lim plays a recital on the Brombaugh organ at Christ Episcopal Church, 310 N K St, Tacoma, WA 98403. Donation at door. Mr. Lim is Director of Worship and Music Ministries at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Bayport, Minnesota

Friday May 25, 7:30 pm

Flenton organ recital honoring Carole Terry. Featuring performers: Dr. Kimberly Marshall, Joseph Adam, Robert Huw Morgan, and Rose Whitmore at St. Mark's Cathedral 1245 10th Ave E, Seattle, WA 98102. No charge

Saturday May 26

UW symposium, hosted by Epiphany Parish, 1805 38th Ave, Seattle, WA 98122 (no charge to attend)

10:00 am Keynote featuring Kimberly Marshall

11:15 am "Women in Music Panel", featuring guest artists and Dr. Carle Terry Moderated by Professor Donna Shin (UW)

12:15 pm Lunch break in the Epiphany Parish Hall

2:00 pm Chamber concert featuring Dr. Terry's University of Washington colleagues and students

3:30 pm Organ Masterclass, jointly led by Drs. Carole Terry and Kimberly Marshall

5:00 pm Dinner break off-campus

7:30 pm The University of Washington Baroque Ensemble Concert, featuring selections from J. S. Bach's Brandenburg Concertos

9:00 pm Reception

Sunday May 27, 5:00 pm

Festive Choral Evensong at Epiphany Episcopal Church, 1805 38th Ave, Seattle, 98122. Trinity Sunday and Recognition of Dr. Carole Terry, Artist-in-Residence. Sung by the Epiphany Choirs & Choristers, no charge.

Monday June 11, 7:00 pm

AGO member recital on the Reuter organ at University Presbyterian, 4540 15th Ave NE, Seattle, WA 98105. Installation of new officers and board members, dessert reception and Used Music Exchange. Open event, no charge.

Friday June 15, 12:10 p.m.

Mina Choi, organist, plays recital on the John Brombaugh pipe organ at Christ Episcopal Church, 310 North K Street, Tacoma, Ms. Choi is Organist at Doylestown (PA) Presbyterian Church, and University Minister/Chapel Music Director and Adjunct Faculty at La Salle University in Philadelphia. Donation at door

PAGES FROM THE PAST... 1981

Reprinted from Magnolia News, October 7, 1981

'Ron' Baggott relives fame

By Anita Weier



When Mitzi Gaynor opens at the refurbished Paramount Theatre in Seattle Tuesday, she will be playing second fiddle to Renaldo Baggott and a marvelous pipe organ.

Baggott, who played the organ when the Paramount opened as the Seattle Theatre on March 1, 1928, will launch Gaynor's performance with a seven-minute opening number of the type he used to play in the days when stage shows, silent movies and orchestras combined to present fantastic shows for a 50-cent admission fee.

The 77-year-old Magnolia man who plays the organ at the Church of the Ascension readily recalls his college days at the University of Washington where he began to play the organ at the Liberty Theatre in Seattle.

A fine arts major in college, he managed to perform six days a week from noon until 10 p.m., every hour and a half, for 45 minutes per show.

"My first class was at 8 a.m. and I had all morning classes except one. The afternoon class was Harmony and Counterpoint, and I managed to commute to that one. I had to buy a car because I developed motion sickness on streetcars. I would be sick by the time I got to the theatre," he related.

After working his freshman year at the Liberty, the Wenatchee boy who had started piano lessons at the age of nine because "music was part of me," switched to performing at the Neptune Theatre in the University District, which, like the Liberty, was a Jenson-Von Herberg theatre.

There he worked from 7 to 11 p.m., six

nights a week, through his sophomore and junior years.

It was at the Neptune that he met Donovan Moore, also a student at the university, who was playing at the Liberty and would drop over to the Neptune in the afternoon to prepare for music classes.

The two young men started "playing around with duets." The organ bench was large enough for two. "One afternoon while we were playing, we heard someone in back but did not pay attention until Mr. Von Herberg came up and asked how long this duet-playing had been going on. We told him we did it just for fun and he said, 'It's commercial.'"

He had another theatre in Ballard, the Baghdad, with a sizable organ, and we began to do duets there as 'Ron and Don.'

In 1928, when the Paramount was about to open, the duo was called on by a placement service representative who asked if they would try out.

Their tryout proved successful and they began to participate in shows that typically began with a newsreel accompanied by a pit orchestra. "Then there would be a six-to-eight-minute organ specialty, a spotlight type of performance, to give the members of the orchestra time to get on stage for the stage show," Baggott recalled.

The Paramount stage show would go on for 50 minutes, with acts like the Marx Brothers, Ray Bolger, the Paul Whiteman Orchestra, and Bing Crosby as one of the Rhythm Boys.

Then Ron and Don would play accompaniment to a silent movie, with a third organist providing relief.

"We did the background and other sound effects when necessary, such as bird calls when birds were on the screen," he explained.

The time total of the newsreel, organ presentation, stage show and feature movie was about two and one-half hours—all for a price of little more than half a dollar.

Wages were good, however, and when Paramount Publix Theatre Corp., a branch of Paramount Studios which operated several theatres as well as the Seattle version, asked Ron and Don to go to the Portland Paramount, "We couldn't afford not to take it. I pulled out of school in my senior year, after years of trying to fit in classes," Baggott said.

They played in Portland six months and then in San Francisco six months.

"Then we were offered a sizable contract by Fox Theatres, so for two and one-half years we alternated between the Fox in Philadelphia, the Fox in Washington, D.C., and the Fox in Brooklyn, the largest theatre in New York at the time," he stated.

Since sound pictures had started to come in when the pair was in Seattle, they merely performed their organ specialty—from seven to nine minutes of everything from popular music of the day to popular classics—at the other theatres.

"We did stunts as well. In Seattle we once took two octaves of tuned sleighbells and Sandy Balcom—who later formed the Balcom and Vaughn Pipe Organ Company—placed the 24 bells and flashing lights under theatre seats. When we played "Moonglow," the bells would ring under the seats as we played. People in the seats would scream with laughter. Or just scream.

"We played the "Anvil Chorus" at the finish of our presentation, and had an anvil hooked up electrically so it would spark. One of us would play and the other would beat that anvil," he said.

On Halloween 1928 in Seattle they played on a small stage console backstage while the main console came up out of the pit on an elevator, with no one on it while the music played. "There were spooky colors and dancing lights. It was eerie," he related.

In 1933, a combination of the Great Depression and talking motion pictures brought his glamorous world to an end, and Baggott came back to Seattle to sell insurance, as did his partner Don Moore.

PAGES FROM THE PAST... *Continued*



Ron & Don opened the Seattle Theatre (now Paramount) in 1928

Asked whether the change bored him, Baggott responded, "I wasn't bored. I was scared to death I wouldn't be able to make a living. A few college business courses were my only background for selling personal lines of insurance."

But the versatility that had served so well

in one career succeeded once more, and the former musical star formed R.A. Baggott Associates, Inc., in 1939, a business the erect, dignified man continues to operate with partner James R. Chatterson, a Queen Anne resident.

In 1941 he went into the Army, where

he worked in the special services division in San Francisco, arranging for other people to entertain overseas. He also married Elizabeth Rabel, "a Queen Anne girl."

The two settled in Magnolia after the war.

He began playing the organ at St. Paul's Episcopal Church at the foot of Queen Anne Hill and later switched to playing at the Episcopal Church in Magnolia, the Church of the Ascension, where he has played the organ for more than 30 years.

Baggott plays for Sunday service and practices with the church choir, spending eight hours a week on those duties as well as tending to his insurance business five hours a day.

His daughter, Nancy Baggott, lives on Queen Anne.

"Twelve years ago a group of organ buffs asked me to do a concert. I was reluctant but my wife influenced me. The concert was at the Paramount but it was not public, just for the American Theatre Organ Society, whose members are rebuilding the Wurlitzer there now.

"My wife was so pleased that she felt we could preserve the major orchestral tones of an organ, so we got our friend Sandy Balcom to help us plan a combination organ for the church—strictly classical that would include outstanding orchestral [theatre organ] tones. When I lost my wife three years ago I had this organ built for the church as a memorial.

Baggott is looking forward to his appearance at the Paramount October 13 [1981]. "I hope to have the organ and myself in shape," he said.

No time to waste—truly the rip-roaring '20s!

Recollections of Ron Smith, pipe organ installer.

Larry Chase and Terry Charles are quite right about Wurlitzer's lack of tonal finishing on-site. During the 1960s I worked as an installer for Aeolian-Skinner. One of their old-time installers, and a real character, was Laurence Mogue. I had the privilege of working with him several times. He first worked for Skinner in the teens, then went to Estey, then most of the '20s for Wurlitzer and finally back to Aeolian-Skinner. During our coffee breaks and lunches, I pumped Larry unmercifully for stories about his experience with Wurlitzer. His comments, as I remember them thirty years later, may be of interest re this subject.

Larry said the Wurlitzer experience was like a whirlwind. He was in his 20s and full of energy. He said he and his crew would arrive at a theatre only a few days before its opening. They would be installing the organ amidst the dust and dirt of contractors rushing to finish the building in time for its opening.

He would not even have time to take a hotel room, he would usually just sleep on the chamber floor, get up early the next morning and keep on working to get the organ ready for the theatre opening. When I asked him about tonal regulation, Larry just laughed! As I recall, he said, "We just nailed the shutters shut and tuned it up in time for the opening!"

Larry also told me that many Wurlitzer installations were so rushed that the installers did not properly secure the wind-chests and pipe-racks, and that many other details were overlooked in the hurry to install the organs. He said he complained to the Wurlitzer company about these problems and they put him in charge of a crew that went back to the theatres and tidied up the installations.

He said though, that he was well-paid, that he drove a new Stutz-Bearcat nearly every year and lived high on his time off. But he told me that he invested heavily in the stock

market and lost nearly everything in the 1929 crash. When the Wurlitzer work dried up, he went back to Aeolian-Skinner. I'm sure he's now working in that big organ chamber upstairs!

I, too, had some time with Dan Papp at the Paramount in NYC. I told Dan that I had been told Jesse Crawford did the tonal finishing at the Paramount. Dan said the tonal regulation was done by himself and Eddie Heffler. (Heffler did the actual installation; Papp arrived later, according to Ben Hall.) He indicated that Jesse Crawford did no actual work, but definitely guided the progress of the finishing by consulting each day with Dan and Eddie. Dan said Jesse was very firm in what he wanted, and that what he wanted usually made good sense.

Diaphones forever!

Ron Smith