

NEWS

Resurrected theater organ makes beautiful music

Concert is set for Jan. 25 at the organ's new Franklin High School residence

By Jackie Cedarholm

The amazing sounds of the Queen Anne High School theater organ will once again resound during the Franklin High School Music Department Winter Concert.

Organist Tedde Gibson will play the organ, both as the audience is arriving and during the performance at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 25 with the Franklin High School Concert Band under the direction of Robert Pitzer. Admission to the concert at Franklin High School, 3013 S. Mt. Baker Blvd., is free.

The story of the organ that migrated through Queen Anne to Franklin High School began in 1925, when vaudeville was a primary form of entertainment and flappers were all the rage.

A large theater organ, built by the W.W. Kimball Company in Chicago, was shipped to Everett to be installed in the new Everett Theater.

The organ boasted nine separate sets of pipes, each set providing orchestral sounds such as flute, violin or tuba, and even percussion. All of these sounds were necessary in the days of silent film to create background music for the stories acted out on celluloid.

When sound was added to the movies a few years later, the organ fell into disuse. In 1953, it was purchased from the Everett Theater by the Queen High School Associated Student Body with \$10,000 from their fund—money which had to be spent or it would be absorbed into Seattle School District's general fund.

The Kimball organ was installed in the Queen Anne High School auditorium as a golden memorial to everyone who had been connected with the school for the last 50 years.

The organ was played in the school auditorium until the building closed its doors for good in 1981. At that point, the auditorium was razed and the high

school remodeled into an apartment complex. After the school closed, the organ was put into storage where it suffered severe water damage.

When Franklin High School was remodeled, the auditorium was built so that it would be large enough to house the organ. Balcom & Vaughan Company, who installed the instrument in the Franklin High School auditorium in 1990, rebuilt the organ.

It now has 10 ranks of pipes and the organ's "toys" include real instruments: marimba, xylophone, glockenspiel, snare and bass drums, tom tom, castanets, tambourine, triangle and chimes. The organ also includes a 32-note pedal bar.

Members of the Puget Sound Theater Organ Society would like to see increased use of the organ for students and the public, including concerts by well known professional performers and to accompany silent films. Students are invited to apply to the society's scholarship fund to receive organ lessons and training in organ maintenance.

The Puget Sound Theater Organ Society is paying Gibson to perform. Clinton Meadway, a society member, is donating his tuning and maintenance work to prepare the organ for the performance.

Information: Jackie Cedarholm at 282-5680.

Jackie Cedarholm is a 1941 graduate of Queen Anne High School, a member of the Queen Anne Historical Society and a member of the Puget Sound Theater Organ Society.



Photo by Jackie Cedarholm

Organist Tedde Gibson practices on the Queen Anne High School theater organ that is now housed at Franklin High School. Gibson will play the organ during a free concert with the Franklin High School Concert Band at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 25. Information: 282-5680.

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