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PUGET SOUND PIPELINE

Published monthly by Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society, a non-profit organization furthering the appreciation, preservation and use of the Theatre Pipe Organs of yesteryear. PSTOS is a Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society.

Volume 17 No. 5

May 2006

A Chapter of American Theatre Organ Society

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now available 24-7 on
Internet Radio**
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Coming May 7...

IT'S SHOW TIME!

With a wonderful afternoon
of your favorite

Toe Tapping Music from the Big Band Era!

Featuring ANDY CROW at the

WURLITZER with

HENRY REED'S

Good Times Band



ANDY CROW is well known throughout the entire Pacific NW for his skill at both the piano and pipe organ, and is excited about this chance to play with the band! The 5-member **GOOD TIMES BAND** plays wonderful music from the great Swing Era, with Henry playing bass guitar, and Anne Gillette, the piano. The sax man plays tenor, alto and soprano sax. The brass man plays pocket trumpet, flugelhorn, and sings. The drummer sings as well. The group plays frequently at senior centers, weddings, and church functions. But they rarely have a chance to play with a theatre pipe organ! *This will be a fun day for everyone!*



Admission—\$10 per person, under 18 free

Please bring a small plate of your favorite cookies to share. All beverages furnished.

Sunday, May 7, 2-4 PM

Haller Lake Community Club
12579 Densmore Ave. N., Seattle

DRIVE DIRECTIONS –Northbound I-5, use Exit 174 onto NE 130th St., turn left over freeway one long block to 1st Ave. NE. Turn left (south) one block to 128th. Right on NE 128th a few blocks to Densmore. Left on Densmore, clubhouse is on the right. Parking both front and rear.

Southbound I-5, use Exit 175 onto NE 145th, turn right one block to 1st Ave. NE. Turn left (south) through NE 130th to NE 128th. Continue where underlined above. **New handicap parking and elevator at rear entrance.**

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

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Paramount Theatre—Tom Blackwell • Wash. Center—Andy Crow

Listing of non-PSTOS events in the Pipeline

PSTOS, upon request, will list non-conflicting non-PSTOS theatre organ events in the "Other Events" column of the two Pipelines immediately preceding the event, providing Pipeline editors receive sufficient prior written notification. Venue, artist, type of event, date, and contact information will comprise the included information.

Advertising in the Pipeline

Classified-type ads for member-owned electronic, electric, or pipe organs, and/or pipe organ parts, will be published at no charge. Please limit copy to include brief description, contact name and phone number. Prices will not be listed. Ads may be edited for content and length. Mail ad copy to address above. Other advertising is not accepted.

Joining Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society is quick and easy! For a one year membership, send a \$15 check payable to PSTOS together with your name(s) as you would like them to appear on your name badges, your address with complete 9-digit ZIP code, and your email address (optional) to:
Norman Miller, Treasurer, 2644 NW Esplanade,
Seattle, WA 98117-2527.

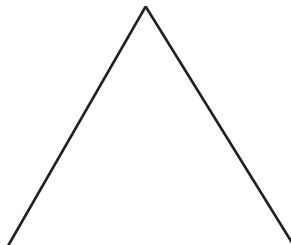
PRESIDENT'S Message

Organs, Instruments and Audiences...

All three are needed to make PSTOS go. Our new committee structure addresses this fact and we have new momentum in each area.



ORGANISTS



INSTRUMENTS

AUDIENCES

We took a big step toward building our capacity in Instruments by holding our 2006 Organ Maintenance Boot Camp at Haller Lake on Sunday, April 23. This informative event, organized by Organ Restoration & Maintenance Chair Mark Baratta, was chock full of interesting technical information and hands-on work. A more detailed description and photos of the event are included elsewhere in this issue.

One of the new projects for PSTOS members is Roosevelt High School. As reported previously, the Pipe Organ Foundation, headed up by PSTOS member Carl Dodrill, was instrumental in generating alumni interest, lobbying the Seattle School District and most importantly, raising the needed funds to include organ chambers in the school's new auditorium. The original 1940 Moller concert organ will be reinstalled and the new chambers are large enough to accommodate additional theatre pipe ranks and percussions. This installation presents a unique opportunity to expose young people to the pipe organ and PSTOS members will be very involved in assisting the Pipe Organ Foundation with the reinstallation effort. If you would like to get involved, contact Carl at carl@pstos.org.

Have you visited your PSTOS website lately? We now have over 800 pages of

PSTOS Coming Events

◆ The Big Band Sounds of HENRY REED & His GOOD TIMES BAND with ANDY CROW and the PSTOS Pipe Organ!

It's back to the days when music was music—an afternoon of the wonderful rhythmic songs of the Big Band Era! Haller Lake Community Club.

Sunday, May 7, 2 PM

◆ MARK ANDERSEN to be featured at a WURLITZER HOME PARTY at Jack & Mary Lou Becvar's Kent residence



The Becvars welcome PSTOS members to hear MARK ANDERSEN perform on their 3/19 Wurlitzer, and enjoy a fun summer picnic.

Saturday, June 24

◆ SUMMER SIZZLER at YELM!

Once again we'll hear Father Terence's exciting 3/16 Robert Morton and enjoy the famous Church Ladies' Buffet Lunch! Artist TBA. This is always a great event. Mark your calendar!

Sat., Aug. 12

Northwest Theatre Organ facts and photos, many of them contributed by PSTOS members. Do you have historic photos to share? If so, please contact History & Archives Chair Bob Zat at bob@pstos.org. We'd love to add them to our website.

It's never too late to sign-up for discuss@pstos.org. As a member of this new e-mail discussion group, you get late breaking news and announcements. Any PSTOS member can sign-up. Simply e-mail webmaster@pstos.org and ask.

That's it for this month. Hope to see you May 7 at Haller Lake for SHOW TIME with Andy Crow at the Wurlitzer and Henry Reed's Good Times Band.

...Tom Blackwell, President

Other NW Theatre Organ Events

◆ Kenyon Hall in West Seattle

Latest news can be found at:
kenyonhall@earthlink.net or on the
web at www.kenyonhall.org

◆ Lincoln Theatre in Mt. Vernon

Hear the Wurlitzer every Mon/Tue at
7 PM & Fri/Sun at 5 PM.

◆ Columbia River Organ Club

Latest news can be found at
www.croconline.org

◆ Mt. Baker Theatre, Bellingham



Australia's outstanding
NEIL JENSEN in a
wonderful afternoon of
Wurlitzer Pops. Definitely
worth the drive!

Sunday afternoon, May 28

Info: billcharles1@yahoo.com, or phone
Eileen Parker, 360-392-3686

◆ Theatre Organ Cruise to Alaska featuring internationally famous WALTER STRONY, July 23-30

7-Day Alaskan

Explorer, departs July
23 for Juneau, Sitka,
Ketchikan, Victoria.

Enjoy special concerts
and workshops by the
inimitable Walt Strony

playing a beautiful Allen theatre organ.
Organized by PSTOS members Gary
Marks & Ryan Dye, owners of North
Pacific Organ & Sound in Redmond,
this will be a special vacation indeed
for all theatre organ aficionados. For
brochure and details contact Denise
Vogel, www.azumanotravel.com
1-800-395-5578



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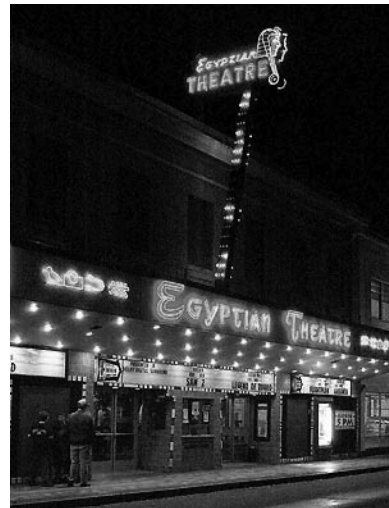
◆ [http://www.live365.com/stations/
tremmedtibia](http://www.live365.com/stations/tremmedtibia)

Oregon's last remaining original theatre organ installation saved!

Egyptian Coos Bay Theatre purchased by city, to become performing arts center



The Egyptian
Coos Bay Theatre
closed late last year
and its future was
uncertain. The the-
atre contains Ore-
gon's last remaining
original theatre pipe
organ installation.
In February 2006,
the City of Coos
Bay announced
it had purchased
the theatre and it
will operate as a



performing arts center. The theatre's original Mighty Wurlitzer will be saved and restored by a team led by Rick Parks and Eric Schmiedeberg of Salem.

The historically significant Egyptian Coos Bay Theatre opened on November 18, 1925 and features many elaborate decorations including hieroglyph murals and Egyptian figures plucking the strings of lyres. With the discovery of King Tut's tomb by Howard Crater in 1922, Egyptian style captivated the nation.

Other than the Ada/Egyptian Theatre in Boise, Idaho, the Coos Bay Egyptian is the Northwest's sole remaining example of the colorful Egyptian-revival style.

Organ Maintenance Boot Camp Boots Up!

Fourteen students sign in for Theatre Organ Restoration 101

Fourteen PSTOS members and friends took time out from a beautiful Seattle spring day to learn about wind chests, electromagnets, pneumatics, fish glue, and other mysterious things at the recent PSTOS Organ Maintenance Boot Camp. After some introductions by yours truly, Tom Blackwell gave a detailed presentation about the instruments PSTOS is currently involved with. We learned there are many opportunities for PSTOS maintenance volunteers to help restore these instruments and to keep them playing.

This was followed by Russ Evans' masterful explanation of how a Wurlitzer pipe organ wind chest operates, what goes wrong with them, and how we can fix them. To help folks

Continued on back page with more details and photos...

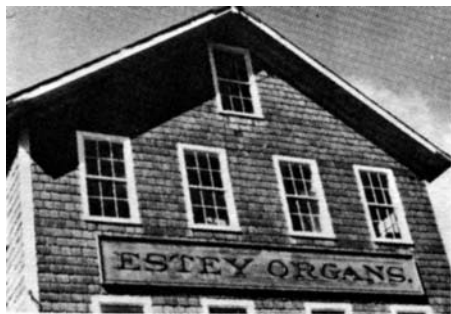


Instruction began with an overview of some basic theatre organ mechanical principles.

Pages From The Past..

Estey Organs — A Great Tradition

As published in *Vestal Press House Organ*, Spring 1979



The famous Estey factories in Brattleboro, Vermont. Many magnificent machines for homes and public places were built in these simple buildings.



Of all the many reed organ manufacturers who once graced the American scene (something over 250 makes were available in the 1800s) the name of Estey looms large. They managed to stay in business for over 100 years, and went out of business only about 1959. They would have been gone much sooner, had it not been for their work in pipe organs which quite obviously provided the mainstay of business during the 1920s.

All too frequently, all the records and papers of such a concern are destroyed and lost forever to future historians. However, by a rare stroke of luck, Reed and Mary Van Gorder of Flemington, New Jersey, got to the place practically as the records and photos of a century were just about to be shoveled into a furnace! They filled a big Buick car with a huge pile of literature and photos. This is no definitive history, but rather a nostalgic glimpse back over the years to see some of the work of this famous organization, and we're indebted to the Van Gordons for making this material available to all of us.

We're not certain of the dates of most of these pictures, nor how long the various models were in production. But we're certain that the "Drawing Room Organ" is the most typical item with which most readers will associate the term "reed organ." This case was available in 5 styles featuring different numbers of reeds, with prices ranging from \$200 to \$270.

The big "pipe top" instrument, with its magnificent Victorian cabinetry, surely must have been the "top of the line" at the time of its introduction.

From the rather drab-looking shingled buildings in Brattleboro, Vermont where this firm was headquartered, [pictured above] some truly magnificent pipe organs were outshopped, as they say in railroad terminology. The home of Mrs. L. R. Wilson at Irvington-On-Hudson features one of these instruments, complete with roll-playing feature, as did the home of no less a personage than the great Henry Ford who ordered #1318 for his home, Fairlane, near Dearborn, Michigan, where the great River Rouge car factories were built in the early part of the 20th century. This console

is especially interesting because it has no depth; it appears to have been constructed to fit into a panelled wall. The "Model T" was at the height of its glory when this picture was taken, and the famous "Jitney" provided the wherewithal for the employment of New England organ builders as well as chassis assemblers on the production lines of the then-burgeoning auto industry!

While Estey is not considered to be a "theatre organ," at least one big instrument was built, for the Capitol Theatre in New York — a splendid example of the opulence in a movie-house construction of the period.



The wonderful carvings on this beautiful piece of furniture would do justice to a magnificent organ console or piano case, yet it's merely a roll-playing unit. The bench is no doubt designed to hold music rolls.

For the residence which could not boast of a musician capable of playing the organ by hand, special key-desks were built containing only roll-playing mechanisms, with no expense spared to hand-craft the cabinets in the highest degree of perfection as fine furniture.

Organists refer to the Estey consoles with push-buttons instead of stop-tablets as the "typewriter," and it's obvious that the idea never caught on regardless of how meritorious its designers might have thought the scheme. As far as we know, this is the only firm which ever pursued this method of control.

The Estey Minnette is an interesting aberration of the usual form of the pipe organ, in that it took on the shape of a large grand piano. It became possible to build



This pipe-topped reed organ has more facade than it does instrument, and probably represents the acme of perfection of this particular design.

Pages From The Past...continued



ABOVE—Estey was not noted for theatre organs, but they didn't ignore the field, either. This is New York City's Capitol Theatre, which boasted an Estey instrument.

BELOW—This console fitted with a roll player was built for auto magnate Henry Ford for his home, "Fairlane," near Dearborn, Michigan. It carried number 1318. Note that it has no depth to the case, evidently it was designed to fit into a panelled wall.



In 1908 John Q. Clemmer purchased an Estey pipe organ for his DREAM THEATRE, 701 First Ave., Seattle. It was the first pipe organ ever to accompany silent films. Admission in 1908 was 10¢!



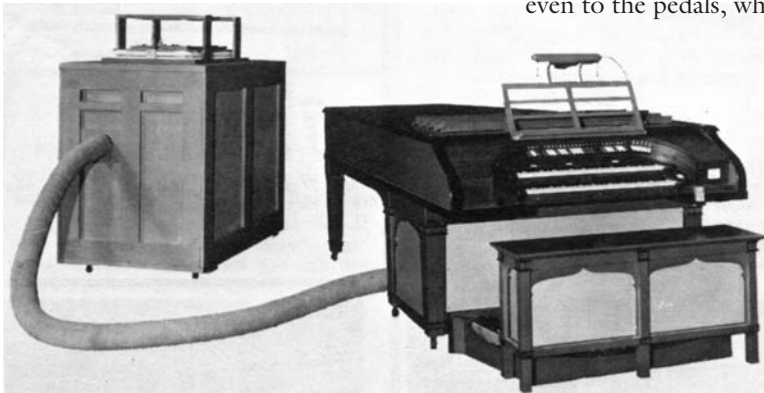
this way when it was discovered that placing one pipe inside another resulted in a note an octave or more lower than either pipe individually would produce; this in turn reduced length and space requirements to manageable proportions.

The Minuette was also built in upright console fashion where floor space was at a premium; in the picture at right, the doubled-pipes are apparent.

As the end grew near, the Estey Company produced a variety of small instruments of the reed type, obviously to try to compete with the more popular piano. A Spinnet version was styled very much like a piano, even to the pedals, while the "Melodeon"

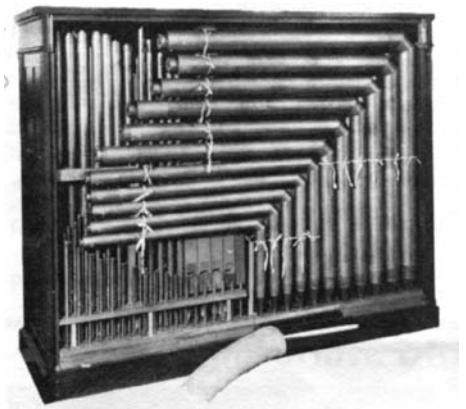
probably attempted to capitalize on the desires of those who appreciate antiques, but who don't want all the hassles of an old instrument.

Alas, Estey is no more, but in the over-100 years while it lasted, Jacob Estey's efforts brought joy, pleasure, and musical enjoyment to many. And his legacy continues as reed and parlor organs continue to attract the interest of many who enjoy finding these instruments and restoring them to their once-pristine condition.



LEFT—The "Minuette" organ shaped like a grand piano, had an enormous blower and reservoir.

RIGHT—The "Minuette" was also built in upright form, made possible by the "pipe-within-a-pipe" construction which sounded an octave lower than the single pipe alone. This back view shows the compact pipe arrangement.



Organ Maintenance Boot Camp...

Continued from page 3

understand the complex inner workings of Wurlitzer wind chests, he brought along many visual aids, including The Thing — his beautifully-made, clear-sided wind chest with a half-dozen pipes, along with its own separate mini-blower and regulator. Russ packed a lot of great information into a relatively short presentation — even the most grizzled veterans picked up a thing or two.

After lunch, and a brief impromptu recital by member Ray Harris, it was time for a tour of the PSTOS chapter instrument. Crew lead Bob Zat started us at the console, showing how a combination action works. We then toured the chambers and learned about recent developments (like the new clarinet rank) and future plans. Then down to the basement to see the relay system and blower, and to discuss the pros and cons of replacing the Marr & Colton relay system with a solid state relay.

For the final event of the day, Russ Evans very patiently taught the neophytes in the audience (including yours truly...) how to re-leather a primary pneumatic. It looked easy when he did it, but turned out to be more than a little challenging. With Russ's help and

PUGET SOUND THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

Russ & Jo Ann Evans, Newsletter Editors

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encouragement, we were able to build some re-leathered primaries for use in future repair work.

Thanks to all who put together this event, particularly to Russ Evans, Bob Zat, and Tom Blackwell, and also to Barb Graham, Dan

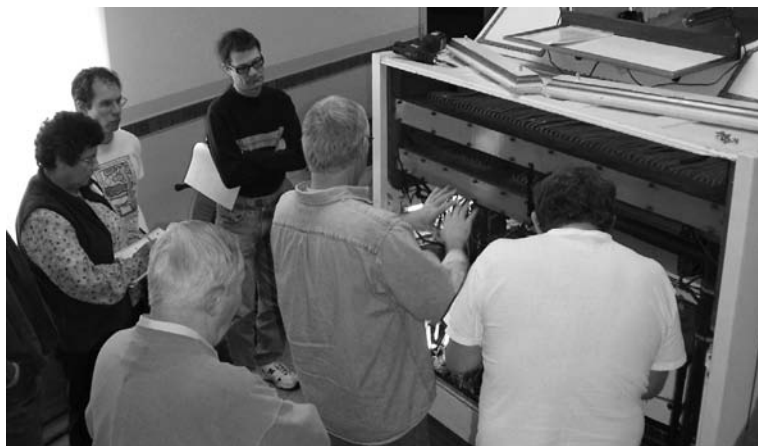
Warner, and Dave Luttinen, who helped with setup and cleanup.

And for those who missed the event, watch the Pipeline for future workshops.

- Mark Baratta, Organ Maintenance Coordinator



Russ Evans demonstrates the inner workings of a Wurlitzer wind chest, using The Thing, a see-thru working model he built as a teaching tool.



Bob Zat explains the workings of a combination action, the system enabling the organist to preset various stop combinations for instant call-up.



The tedious process of re-leathering the many small bellows-like parts was demonstrated by Russ, followed by hands-on practice by all.



Everyone toured the pipe chambers with Bob Zat as guide. Ray Harris gets a new perspective of what's behind the chamber shutters.