



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 22, No. 10

October 2011

A Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society



Coming Saturday afternoon, October 8th, in Kent...

Three Cameo Performances at the Unique Becvar Home



Jamie Snell

Jamie, our own PSTOS past president and accomplished musician, has played theatre organ for many years, and will entertain at the Becvar Wurlitzer with popular favorites.



Halie Dodrill

Halie has played for PSTOS events, AMICA conventions, and plays piano regularly for her church. She will play favorite pop music, and will join Jamie in several piano/organ duos.



Sharon Stearnes

This is the actual photo that hung on the wall at Tacoma Pizza & Pipes the night it burned. The glass shattered from the heat, and the photo had begun to burn and curl when the fire was put out. Sharon had the photo re-framed and treasures it as a memento of her many happy years playing at Pizza & Pipes.



Sat., October 8, 2PM

Home of Jack & Mary Lou Becvar

11617 SE 285th, Kent

There is NO CHARGE!

This special event is courtesy of the Becvars.

MANY PSTOS THANKS TO JACK & MARY LOU!

Jack & Mary Lou's remodeled home provides "surround sound" for the 3/19 Wurlitzer. The pipes are located in two chambers on the lower level and speak up through a large opening in the center of the dramatic main level music room where the console is situated.

Driving and parking directions are on Page 6

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Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society
6521 NE 191st ST
Kenmore, WA 98028-3453

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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AMICA & POF—Carl Dodrill • Haller Lake Comm. Club—Bob Zat
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 \$20 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:

PSTOS, Clint Meadway, Treasurer
9594 1st Ave. NE #453,
Seattle WA 98115-2012

PRESIDENT'S Message

October greetings to all.

The chapter activity for this month will take place at the home of Jack and Mary Lou Becvar and feature their 3/19 Wurlitzer. There is no charge for this event as Jack and Mary Lou want to host PSTOS members and will underwrite the program. Thank you Jack and Mary Lou. Three PSTOS members will provide the music for the day and I want to thank Halie Dodrill, Jamie Snell, and Sharon Stearnes for their willingness to share their talents for our enjoyment. Please check elsewhere in the *Pipeline* for all details related to this program including driving and parking directions.

If you missed it, September's program was hosted by Merlyn Johnson at her beautiful Tacoma residence. Merlyn's Wurlitzer-Morton-Kimball had a total rebuild undertaken by Ed and Patti Zollman and from all accounts the instrument looks beautiful and sounds marvelous. Patti Simon-Zollman was the featured artist and utilized the resources of the organ in a grand manner. Patty was joined by PSTOS member Micah Bisson at the piano for several piano-organ rags. Thank you Merlyn for opening up your house and to all PSTOS members and volunteers who came early to prepare the house for the program then stayed late to restore it to its pre-program state.

I just finished reading the September/October edition of *Theatre Organ*, the bimonthly publication produced by the national ATOS. This magazine is full of articles, pictures, live performance and recording reviews, plus, for the person who is technically inclined, informative articles relating to the maintenance, and restoration of theatre organs. The historical articles and pictures are of particular interest because they open a door that allows us to see what has gone on before us and how important the preservation of the remaining instruments is plus thoughts on how we can engage a whole new and younger generation through innovative programming by exposure to the world of the theatre pipe organ. If you are not a member of the national organization, please consider joining. You too can then receive this informative publication and enjoy the articles and nostalgic looks back to a time when there were many



PSTOS Coming Events

► Home party with cameo performances by SHARON STEARNES, JAMIE SNELL, and HALIE DODRILL.

Jack and Mary Lou Becvar welcome PSTOS members to their unique Kent home.

Saturday, October 8, 2:00 PM

► DEAN LEMIRE will entertain at the Annual PSTOS HOLIDAY PARTY at Haller Lake Community Club



Dean is featured regularly at Portland's Oaks Park Roller Rink and played a terrific concert there for the big ATOS convention last year. Don your holiday finery and enjoy another fun holiday extravaganza! Music! Food! Fun!

Sunday, December 4

► Looking ahead to 2012—

Australia's JOHN ATWELL in concert at Calvary Christian Assembly

John with his friend, Tony Fenelon, opened our big 2010 convention at the Paramount Theatre to a rousing ovation. This is one to be sure you have on your calendar!

Sunday, April 15, 2012

more theatres with instruments for the public to enjoy. You will also be supporting an organization whose mission statement is to preserve, protect, promote and present a truly American musical art form.

In December the annual Holiday Party will be held at Haller Lake Community Club on December 4th. Don Lemire, who is featured at Portland's Oaks Park Roller Rink, will be the guest artist for this event. Dean played a terrific concert for the national ATOS convention last year.

This event also includes the annual general meeting and election of 2012 officers.

More information will be available in the next *Pipeline*.

Happy Halloween!

...Bob Zat, President

Other NW Theatre Organ News

Kenyon Hall in West Seattle

www.kenyonhall.org or email
kenyonhall@earthlink.net

Lincoln Theatre in Mt. Vernon

lincolnthatre.org

Columbia River Theatre Organ Society

www.croonline.org

Bellingham's Mt. Baker Theatre Organ Society

www.mountbakertheatre.com

Spokane's First Nazarene Theatre Organ Society

www.sfntos.org

Wurlitzer's war effort made news in 1943



The Rudolph Wurlitzer Co.

On Oct. 19, 1943 [58 years ago this month!] the huge Rudolph Wurlitzer factory brought home the "Win Cities" fourth E Award, by the first local "miracle of conversion" to gain the national spotlight. The plant "which means music to millions" and has carried the Tonawanda name around the world in its finest organs and automatic phonographs, successfully swung to making Signal Corps, Air Corps and Navy equipment — converting even its famed woodworking plant to the manufacture of key parts of transport planes. Wurlitzer workers met the problems of war like those of peace, setting both a production and ingenuity pace for the nation. The local plant won its renewal star on June 3, 1944. Wurlitzer's DeKalb Division also holds the Army-Navy E.

An interesting tidbit from
the Wm. Bunch archives.

Photo pictorial shows progress of the Spokane First Nazarene replacement console... See it on the PSTOS website

Yes! Go to the PSTOS website and check out photos showing progress and specifications of the replacement console for the Spokane First Nazarene Church Wurlitzer! Here's how: Go to www.PSTOS.org, click on the Facebook logo (bottom left on the opening page), then click on "Wall." The second paragraph tells news of the Spokane First Nazarene Theatre Organ Society. In that paragraph are links to access the new console specification and dozens of photos showing progress of the replacement console. You'll find it

very interesting, even mind-boggling!

The work is being done by Clint Meadway, with help from PSTOS members Terry Perdue and Russ Evans.

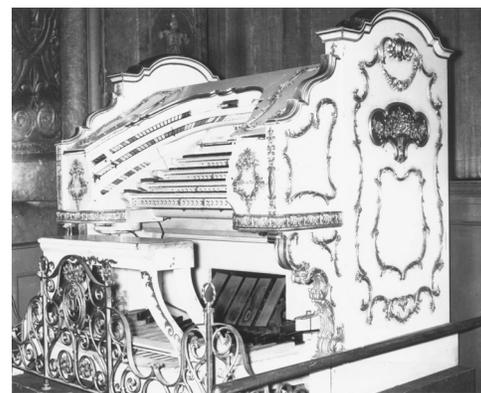
Ken Fuller, organist at the church, was in town recently, and shared his excitement about the project. Totally rebuilding a console requires hours and hours of time, the wiring alone is a massive undertaking as you'll see.

When the project is completed and installed, it's hoped another major concert may be planned there. *Ready for a Wurlitzer weekend, everyone?*

Paramount Wurlitzer Restoration Continues...

The Paramount Publix Team (so named for stock model description of the Paramount's Mighty Wurlitzer) is taking advantage of the down time leading up to January silent film series to perform major re-leathering and re-wiring work in the String chamber located on the lower "House Left" side. The primary windchest in this chamber still operates on its original 80+ year-old leather and has been a constant source of dead notes. Additionally, the 1920s cotton-covered wiring will be replaced since it is damaged and no longer meets current electrical code. The work began in August with five sets of pipes being removed from the windchest (Vox Humana, Viol D' Orchestra, Viol Celeste, Solo String and Dulciana) and placing them in temporary storage crates within the chamber. The windchest will then be tipped up on its side to facilitate removal and replacement of the approximately 600 leather pneumatic valves. This work will be completed using the same plan and methods used successfully in 2009 for the Upper Main chamber above. Also to be refurbished is the Chrysoglott harp with its 49 tuned metal bars struck by soft felt hammers. The Chrysoglott bar mounting bushings have deteriorated creating buzzing sounds on many notes and some of the pneumatic leather has become brittle causing a

popping sound when activated. The string chamber's three regulators were previously re-leathered in 2008 by area



organman Bob Otey.

The theatre's schedule continues to be busy this fall but fortunately a lot of the re-leathering and re-wiring work can be done in the home shops of crew members.

The Publix team includes: Tom Blackwell, Phil Hargiss, Russ Evans, Dave Luttinen, Larry Mayer, Barbara Graham and Bob Zat. New to the crew is Alain Rhone. Alain is a younger PSTOS member who many of you know from PSTOS events. He is musically inclined and works downtown, making visits to the Paramount a cinch.

Watch for work photos in the next issues of the Pipeline.

...Tom Blackwell
Paramount crew lead

Pages From The Past..

THEATRE MUSIC ...The Early Years

Excerpts from *Nickelodeon Theatres and Their Music*, by Q. David Bowers, published by Vestal Press, Ltd. and Bowers and Merena Galleries, Inc.

Don't Shoot the Piano Player

"Don't shoot the piano player, he's doing the best he can!" This piece of American wit is appropriate to early nickelodeon theatre music. During the early days of film exhibition in America, music wasn't important. The novelty of the action on the screen—workers leaving the Lumiere factory, ice floes in the Hudson River, horse-drawn carriages crossing the Brooklyn Bridge, or the spectacle of a pie in the face of a surprised lover—was satisfying in itself. Since many if not most pioneer exhibitions of films to paying audiences took place in vaudeville and stage theatres (most of which were equipped with pianos or had musicians on hand) it could have been that music was played to accompany films at an early date. When the first accompaniment occurred has not been recorded, but by the early part of the last century, the addition of a pianist, sometimes with a drummer, a singer, or a violinist in accompaniment, was viewed as a good drawing card.

An article in an early issue of *Moving*

Picture World entitled "Suggestions for Pianists" offered the following:

"Conscientious and thorough planning of one's music is necessary to the best picture playing. An unplanned program may prove satisfactory, for in this work the same as in anything else there are those for whom the rules do not apply; but the average pianist can do no better than plan his music. There are in every picture a few situations which stand out above all others in importance. These should be singled out for special treatment. The public, always ready to detect incongruities between music and picture, will forgive small errors of judgment if leading situations are played skillfully."

The *Cyclopedia of Motion Picture Work*, 1911, provided a suggestion for theatre owners who may have had difficulty obtaining a pianist, or who wanted to save on the salary of such an individual:

"An automatic piano may be rented or bought—\$800 will usually buy one—and the perforated strip music [music rolls] may be obtained from a music exchange or 'li-

brary' with daily or weekly charge at a price of \$1 to \$2.50 per month. The automatic piano may furnish the only music for an 'all picture' show or may be used early and late in the evenings to make the pianist's hours shorter and reduce the expense, besides being ready always to furnish music for a full evening when the pianist fails to appear."

Automatic Instruments

Automatic pianos, electrically operated and using perforated paper rolls, such rolls usually containing a program of ten tunes, were sold by the thousands to nickelodeon theatres. Typically, the theatre owner would place the piano down in the front, to the left or the right of the screen, flip a switch, and let it play nonstop from morning until night. The musical program had nothing to do with the character of the film being shown. No attempt was made to cue the melodies to the screen. In other instances, phonographs were employed. Due to their low volume of sound output, they were not as satisfactory as automatic pianos, but their low cost gave them a sales advantage.

Wurlitzer

33 YEARS LEADERS IN MUSIC

**BETTER
MUSIC
AT
SMALLER
COST**



**FOR
ALL
MOVING
PICTURE
THEATRES**

Have you investigated the Wurlitzer PianOrchestra?

The leading Nickelodeons are putting in this marvelous Automatic Orchestra. It furnishes better music than a regular orchestra of 5 to 25 pieces, is always "on the job," and cuts out the enormous expense of musicians. The money saved pays rent.

Easy terms, less than paid to musicians. We supply the U. S. Gov't. with musical instruments. Write for big 96-page catalog & testimonial booklet showing Wurlitzer PianOrchestras in leading Nickelodeons.

The RUDOLPH WURLITZER CO
World's Largest Mfrs. Automatic Mus. Insts.
NEW YORK CINCINNATI CHICAGO
25-27 W. 32d 117-121 E. 4th 266-268 Wabash

LEFT: A 1910 Wurlitzer advertisement invites theatre owners to investigate the PianOrchestra, noting that "the leading nickelodeons are putting in this marvelous Automatic Orchestra". It furnishes better music than a regular orchestra of 5 to 25 pieces, is always 'on the job' and cuts out the enormous expense of musicians." A 96-page catalogue and testimonial booklet showing PianOrchestras in use in nickelodeons was offered.

BELOW: The Sextrola, an attractive orchestration in a mission-style case, was billed as useful for moving picture theatres, dance halls, fine ice cream parlors, and cafes. So that mail of the North Tonawanda Musical Instrument Works would not be delivered in error to the nearby Rudolph Wurlitzer Company, the ad carefully pointed out: "Be sure and get the address correct."

... THE ...

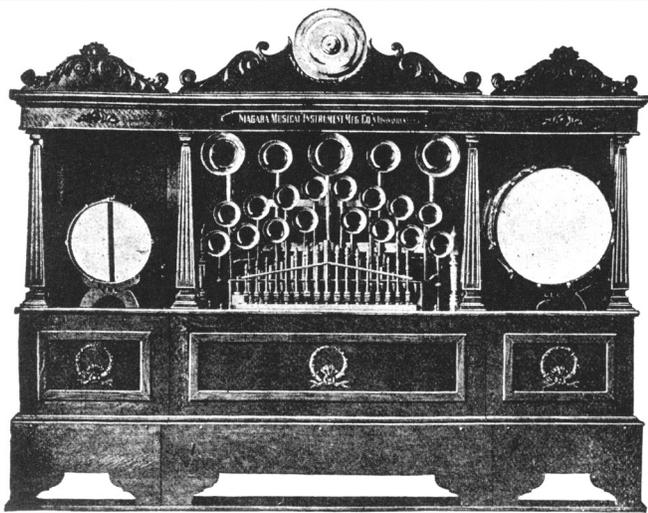
"SEXTROLA"



The best balanced Orchestration for its size and price on the market. Represents Stringed Quartette, Mandolin, Orchestra Bells and Piano. Twelve selections on music roll. Designed and built especially for Moving Picture Theatres, Dance Halls, Fine Ice Cream Parlors, Cafes, etc. Greatest money-earning musical instrument known. Never monotonous. Why buy ordinary player piano when you can get this instrument for about the same amount of money. Write us for prices, description and particulars by next mail. Be sure and get the address correct.

**North Tonawanda
Musical Instrument Works
NORTH TONAWANDA, N. Y.**

Pages From The Past...continued



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SIMPLEST in construction. EASIEST to operate. SWEETEST in tone. Furnish REAL BAND MUSIC. SAVE their COST the FIRST YEAR. Indispensable for

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Manufactured in Paper Played and Pinned Cylinder styles.

EVERY NIAGARA ORGAN GUARANTEED

Write for complete Catalogue D.

NIAGARA MUSICAL INSTRUMENT MFG. CO.
NORTH TONAWANDA, N. Y.

NEW and SATISFACTORY

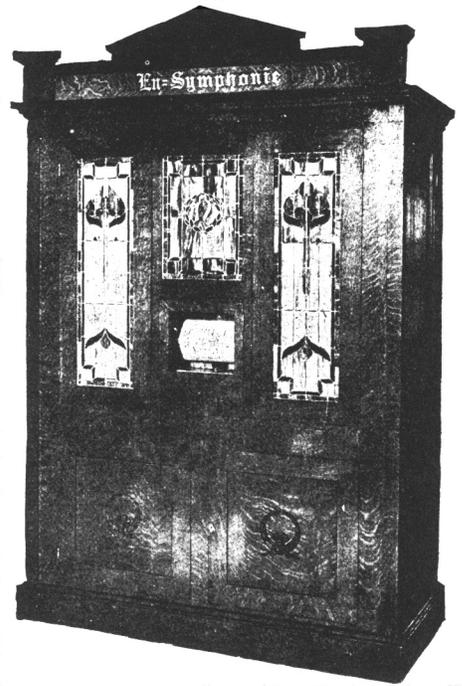
THE INSTRUMENT YOU HAVE ALL BEEN LOOKING FOR

—THE—
EN-SYMPHONIE

OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO MOVING PICTURE HOUSES

OPERATED BY STANDARD 65-NOTE PIANO MUSIC ROLLS

A Player Pipe Organ that plays like a full orchestra for use in M. P. Shows, Hotels, Restaurants, Bowling Alleys, and wherever orchestra music can be used.



EN-SYMPHONIE

Superior to any Automatic Musical Instrument made.

Sweet, rich tone. Operated by direct Atlacque. Simple and efficient.

Write for Catalogue E.

The Victor Auxetophone, a phonograph which employed compressed air to amplify the music, was used by some to overcome the volume problem, but still the machine was not a substitute for the piano, as B.J. Horgan, a Bostonian, may have found out. His classified ad in *Moving Picture World* indicates there may have been a problem: "I have several Victor Auxetophones for sale. Only used six weeks. These machines will fill your house. Also 1,000 new records."

Much louder, and often employed in downtown areas, were immense *orchestrions*, or automatic orchestras played by paper rolls, furnished by Wurlitzer, Welte, and others. Typically, such units consisted of an automatic piano, several ranks of pipes, xylophone, bells, drums, and other effects, all enclosed in a tall and imposing cabinet with ornate decorations. Some, such as the popular Wurlitzer PianOrchestra, of which hundreds were sold to theatres, featured an automatic roll-changing mechanism, whereby a program of 30 or more tunes could be played without repetition. Undoubtedly the lunch counter, haberdashery, or grocery across the street was grateful for this, for

the strains of music from such instruments drowned out just about every other noise on the street, save perhaps for the clanging of trolley cars. On the other hand, such music often became tiring after the novelty wore off. Some cities passed ordinances regulating music played on or into the streets.

Inside the theatre, many different types of instruments were used. In addition to simple electric pianos with paper rolls, more elaborate instruments featured pipes, drums, and other effects. In Chicago, the J.P. Seeburg Piano Company found that its large orchestrions, particularly styles G and H, were popular with theatre owners. Lyon & Healy, of the same city, marketed a line of theatre instruments, including a piano with bells and another instrument containing drums below the keyboard.

Photoplayers

Around 1912, a new breed of instrument, the *photoplayer*, became popular. No longer was the musical program left to chance. The photoplayer could be controlled by an operator, so that the marching

troops could step to "hurry-up music," while lovers embraced with the strains of a romantic ballad drifting through the air.

Basically, a photoplayer was an orchestrion or automatic orchestra in disguise. Specifically designed for theatre use to accompany films and to provide sound effects, photoplayers were built in a wide and low format, for installation in the orchestra pit just below the movie screen. Some in the trade called them *pit organs*. Unlike the typical coin operated orchestrion, the photoplayer was equipped with pedals, buttons, and other controls to enable the operator to supplement the music roll by adding extra effects as desired. Typically, a piano roll was employed, or a specially-scored orchestrion roll was used, which provided the music and turned ranks of pipes on and off and actuated the drums and percussion. Such novelty effects as the bird whistle, crockery smash, horses' hooves, tom-tom, fire alarm, auto horn, steamboat whistle, and the like were activated by the photoplayer operator, who pushed buttons, stepped on pedals, or tugged on rope pulls.

DRIVE DIRECTIONS to the Becvar Home

11617 SE 285th ST, Kent

FROM THE NORTH: Use I-405 (If traveling I-5, exit to I-405 at Southcenter) and take Exit #2A off I-405 to Hwy 167/Auburn southbound. From Hwy 167 take the 212th ST exit and drive east (212th becomes 208th) to 116th AVE SE. Turn South on 116th SE and continue to SE 258th ST. Turn left into the culdesac.

FROM THE SOUTH: From I-5 take Exit 142A onto Hiway 18, drive approximately 3 miles to Hwy 167 and turn north. Proceed north to the 277th ST exit, turn east and drive up the Hill (East Hill). 277th turns into 116th AVE SE. Turn right into the cul de sac at SE 258th ST. Becvar home is in the southeast corner of the culdesac.

PARKING IS AVAILABLE for quite a few cars, but is tight, and someone will guide you.

Car pooling is HIGHLY recommended.

PUGET SOUND THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

Russ & Jo Ann Evans, Newsletter Editors
6521 NE 191st ST
Kenmore, WA 98028-3453



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PSTOS Members Important in Pipe Organ Completion

You are invited to special dedication concert Saturday, November 5

PSTOS members assisted greatly in the rebuild and installation of the pipe organ just completed at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Issaquah. The project was directed by the Pipe Organ Foundation and volunteers for the Foundation included PSTOS members Barbara Graham, David Locke, Carl Dodrill, Halie Dodrill, and Bob Buchholz. Russ Evans rebuilt the regulators for the organ, Mark and Lynn Anderson did the stop tablets, and the organ incorporated windchests purchased from PSTOS that were brought from Tennessee due to the great efforts of Tom Blackwell, Phil Hargiss, and Dave Luttinen among others. Clint Meadway, PSTOS Treasurer, together with James Stettner provided important early consultation and work on the original installation of the instrument.

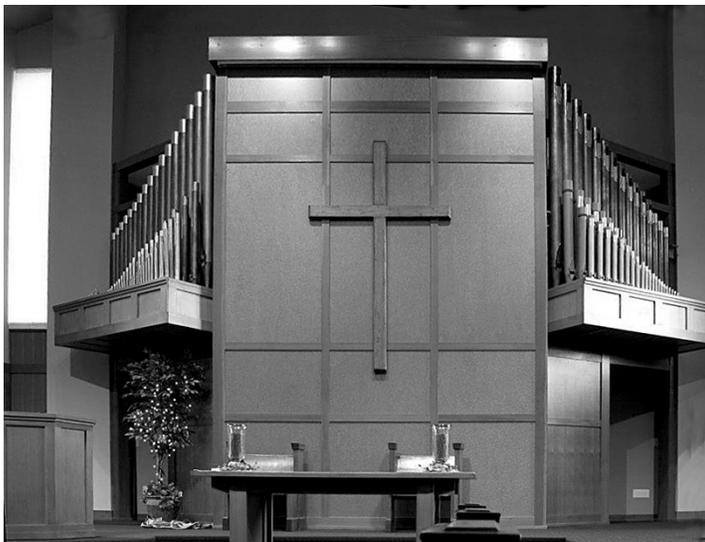
PSTOS volunteers for the Pipe Organ Foundation did a variety of tasks in rebuilding and assembling the instrument including releathering, wiring, pipe repair, pipe cleaning, and a number of related tasks. You can see them at work at http://www.pipeorganfoundation.org/volunteers/volunteers_covenant.html.

The organ as finally installed consists of 20 ranks of pipes, the

same number as are in the Seattle Paramount's Wurlitzer. Controlled by a Syndyne system and a three manual Reiser console, the instrument consists of Great, Swell, and Pedal divisions at the front of the church and an Antiphonal division at the back. The installation included pipework from a number of firms including Kimball, Tellers, Estey, Moller, Hinners, Austin, Stinkens, and Organ Supply. While most of the organ is classical, there are a number of reeds and strings and the Vox Humana with its tremulant is truly in theatre style. Rene Marceau provided technical assistance in assembling the instrument and in tonal finishing.

Dr. J. Melvin Butler, Canon Organist at St. Mark's Cathedral in Seattle, will play the inaugural concert at 7:00PM Saturday, November, 5. Tickets are not necessary and there is no admission fee. A free will offering will be taken. The address of the church is **22116 SE 51st Place, Issaquah WA 98029** and the phone is **425 392-5532**.

More information about the project can be obtained from Carl Dodrill (carl@dodrill.net; 206 788-7761) and from the Pipe Organ Foundation website, www.pipeorganfoundation.org.



Front of church sanctuary with organ pipes visible



Antiphonal organ at the back of sanctuary