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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 24, No. 6

June, 2013

**PUGET SOUND**  
THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

A Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society

*Coming in August...Mark your calendar!*

## SUMMER SIZZLER



*Enjoy the Becvar's 3/19 Wurlitzer and an afternoon of toe-tapping favorite tunes!*

**FEATURING not one, but TWO talented organists new to PSTOS audiences!**

**Sun., August 4, 2:30 PM**

Home of Jack & Mary Lou Becvar • 11617 SE 258th • Kent

**Refreshments • Admission \$5**



### Harvey Rossiter

Harvey came from a musical family and when only 12, played accordion in the family band. In 1953 he went roller skating in Everett, heard the pipe organ, and was hooked. He made a deal to clean the rink in exchange for time at the organ. Active in PSTOS in the late 1960s, he purchased one of the bonds for the Haller Lake Organ. He presently owns a Virtual Pipe Organ, a Hauptwerk 3/10 Wurlitzer. Harvey plays Saturday evenings at the Lincoln Theatre in Mt Vernon.



The basis of the Becvar instrument is a 1920 Style 210 Wurlitzer (opus 362) from Seattle's Blue Mouse Theatre. Jack & Mary Lou purchased the instrument in 1973 and added several pipe ranks and percussions. A three-manual Wurlitzer console originally from the Branford Theatre in Newark, New Jersey (opus 353) was acquired, and the original Blue Mouse two-manual console and relay was sold to St. David's Church in Shelton. Their home was remodeled and vastly enlarged to give the Wurlitzer "surround sound!" The pipes are located in two chambers on the lower level and speak up through a large opening in the center of the very dramatic main level music room where the console is situated.

**Watch your August Pipeline for DRIVE DIRECTIONS.**



### Pete Eveland

Hailing from the midwest, Pete has enjoyed numerous musical experiences including organist/pianist/calliope player on the Mississippi Delta Queen, organist for the Cincinnati Bengals and the Cincinnati Stingers hockey team, staff organist for the Wurlitzer Organ Co., and more. We welcome Pete to the Pacific Northwest, where he now resides with his family.

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VOL. 24, NO. 6-JUNE 2013

Published monthly by  
**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.*

## OFFICERS

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**Organ Restoration & Maintenance**—Bob Zat  
**Program Coordinating**—  
Jo Ann Evans, joann@pstos.org • Geri Cooper, geri@pstos.org  
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**Pipeline Editors**—Russ & Jo Ann Evans, joann@pstos.org  
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## LIAISONS

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## JOINING PUGET SOUND THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY IS QUICK AND EASY!

For a one year household 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, your email address (optional) and your phone number to:

**PSTOS, Jon Beveridge, Treasurer**  
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Click on the first topic.  
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A few clicks and it's done!



# PRESIDENT'S Message

Attending an event like “Viva Italia” at Haller Lake Community Club reminds me of what a great group of volunteers we have in PSTOS. Our program committee is a great team that works to make sure our events are organized, entertaining, fun, and well attended. Thanks to the committee for organizing “Viva Italia” and special thanks to Ray Harris and Sharon Stearnes for keeping us entertained.



Be sure to check out the PSTOS Coming Events column to see what's ahead for the remainder of 2013 and into 2014 and mark the dates on your calendar. There are several events coming up that you won't want to miss.

Behind the scenes several projects are going on. A few weekends ago Russ Evans, Bob Zat and I unloaded the Liberty Theatre console which is back in western Washington after 40 years in Spokane. It's our hope to see this historic console controlling our “Mighty Wurlitzer” at Haller Lake some time in the future.

A project that is moving along nicely is the chamber work at Calvary Christian Assembly. In last month's Pipeline you saw that Greg Smith and Russ had installed the toy counter and several tuned percussions from Ray Whelpley's collection. Since last month, chests have been installed and winded for four new ranks of pipes. Greg and Russ are planning relay and console work so that the next phase of this project can be started. Wouldn't it be fun to welcome Dave Wickerham back to Calvary when he comes in October of 2014 with all these new resources at his fingertips for us to enjoy?

I hope to see you this month at Silent Movie Mondays or at the fun afternoon at the Becvar's in August.

...Jeff Snyder, President

## LISTING OF NON-PSTOS EVENTS IN THE PIPELINE

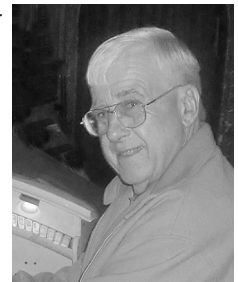
PSTOS, upon request, will list non-conflicting non-PSTOS theatre organ events in the “Other NW Events” column of the two Pipelines immediately preceding the event, providing Pipeline editors receive sufficient prior written notification. Venue, artist, type of event, date, and contact information may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

# PSTOS Coming Events

## ► SUMMER SIZZLER at the Jack & Mary Lou Becvar residence in Kent

Enjoy a fun summer afternoon at the fascinating home of Jack & Mary Lou Becvar. There'll be lots of toe-tapping tunes and great old standards played by two talented organists new to most PSTOS members. Refreshments will be served.

This will be a fun afternoon for all. Be there and get acquainted with **HARVEY ROSSITER** and **PETE EVELAND**



**Sunday, August 4, 2:30 PM**

## ► Scotland's young Wurlitzer Whiz Kid, DAVID GRAY, plays at Calvary Church



David will play in Seattle and Portland on the final leg of an Australia-New Zealand theatre organ tour. This is definitely a not-to-be-missed event!

**Sunday, September 15**

## ► Annual Holiday Program to feature PETE EVELAND at Calvary Church

Pete performed five years on the Mississippi River's “Delta Queen,” played for an Ohio NFL team, and performed in his own restaurants. Now a PNW resident, we're excited to welcome him to PSTOS and CCA. You won't want to miss this!

**Sunday, December 1**

## 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.



# Other NW Theatre Organ News

## Kenyon Hall in West Seattle

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

## Lincoln Theatre in Mt. Vernon

www.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.sfnatos.org

## Oregon Chapter ATOS, Portland

http://www.theatreorgans.com/  
oregon/ocatos/ocatos2.htm



**Cynthia 'Charlie' Davis**  
Tumwater

**Ben Panchot**  
Snohomish

**David and Carole Salyer**  
Edmonds

**Paul and April Van Dyck**  
Ryderwood, WA



## Trader Joe's Silent Movie Mondays

### International Films

### at the Paramount Theatre Mondays in June

*All movies accompanied by Jim Riggs  
at the Paramount's Wurlitzer*

### Doors open at 6:00, film at 7:00

In this series, International Silent Films, we will explore the beauty of silent films from France, Japan, and India. These international films portray historical stories and universal themes seen around the world.

#### June 10 - France

*The Passion of Joan of Arc/La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (1928) directed by Carl Theodor Dreyer.

#### June 17 - Japan

*Apart from You* (1933) directed by Mikio Naruse

#### June 24 - India

*A Throw of Dice* (1929) directed by Franz Osten from Germany with Indian actor/producer Himansu Rai.

### Summer Pipeline Schedule—

*Because of the National ATOS Convention the first week of July, the next Pipeline will be a combined July-August issue and will arrive in your mailbox about July 20th.*

# From The MAILBOX

Received from Clint Meadway in recognition of contributions of time and materials by two PSTOS members to the Spokane First Nazarene Church Wurlitzer project.

May 11, 2013

To the Editors...

The May article about the Seattle Liberty console omitted two important items. Co-Curator, PSTOS Honorary Life Member and SFNTOS Charter Member Russ Evans has contributed at least as much time to the upgrade project as I have. In addition, he has secured many of the materials needed for the project.

Russ also contributed many hours to refurbishing the replacement console.

Editorial license should not be used to excuse Russ from his most deserved recognition. Like Russ, I don't like the spotlight, so his reluctance is understandable.

Additionally, PSTOS member Terry Perdue devoted many hours to the replacement console project including the design and manufacture of electronic components to provide for Pedal and Accomp traps to play on either first or second touch. He also designed and built a pizzicato action for the soon to be installed Pedal 8' Tibia Clausa.

This is a ticklish situation, asking one editor to override the other. In payment Russ can make sure I eat my share of motel instant oatmeal on the next Spokane visit.

Regards,  
Clint Meadway, Co-Curator,  
Wurlitzer Hope-Jones #42

## Remembering Randy Rock • 1955 – 2013



**LEFT:** Randy was installed as a PSTOS board member in 1993. **RIGHT:** He was always ready for a good time wearing a bow tie.

We are saddened to learn of the untimely death of Randy Rock, former PSTOS board member and consummate master of ceremonies for numerous events during the 1990s. Randy could be counted on to appear at the Christmas party in his bright red sportcoat. Or was this the year for his bright green version? Or maybe he brought them both and would switch midway during the party.

Randy moved to Oregon in the early 2000s and became active in the Columbia River Organ Club.

He recently suffered a massive stroke, bringing his too short but creative life to an end. PSTOS sympathy is extended to his many friends and family.



Randy, always a lively and funny Master of Ceremonies, at the 1993 holiday party.

# Pages From The Past..1915

Nearly a century ago on January 4, 1915, Farney Wurlitzer made a proposal to S. L. Baxter of the Isis Theatre, Denver, Colorado, promoting the purchase of a 4-manual Wurlitzer for Baxter's new theatre. Following are excerpts from the agreement, and from letters between the two parties as the organ was being built.

*Following is the second of two parts. Information assembled and written by Roy Gorish.*

## **AGREEMENT—Made January 11, 1915**

between Wurlitzer and Samuel L. Baxter, of Denver, Colorado:

2. That the party of the second part will receive such Wurlitzer Hope-Jones Unit Orchestra, and pay to the party of the first part therefore the sum of Forty Thousand Dollars (\$40,000) as follows: \$10,000.00 down and balance in weekly payments, (not specified).

Rest is regular legal provisions.

10. Two-year guarantee of workmanship and material.

11. The said first party further agrees during the period of five years, not to install in any theatre, moving picture theatre or auditorium, in the city of Denver, Colorado, a Wurlitzer Hope-Jones Unit Orchestra of greater value than \$30,000. (This figure is crossed out and \$20,000 is added in ink.)

**FEBRUARY 10, 1915.** W. Meakin Jones to Samuel L. Baxter, in part: "You will be glad to know that the work is making good progress and so far everything is coming out very nicely."

Installation as follows: Foundation chamber behind proscenium grille across top of stage arch; Main Chamber on left wing; Tuba and Solo chambers on right wing (Tuba overhead of Solo); 32' Diaphone lying horizontal over false ceiling. Echo Organ above projection booth. All chambers except Echo have curved tone reflectors above them. Relays, blower, etc., in basement. Console in center of orchestra pit. Organ piano in right box (apparently an upright).

**FEB. 12, 1915** to Mr. Baxter: In talking with you in Denver, I explained that we were going to use a very large Bass Drum in our instrument. Upon my return to the factory, however, and our placing the order for an extra large one, I find that it is going to be difficult to get a very large drum made with the Automatic Tension device on it such as we are now using for our regular drums.

The advice of the maker is that we would get better results with a smaller Drum and use this Automatic Tension device, than we will with such a large one. We are of the same opinion, but since I explained to you that we were going to use such a

large Drum, I don't like to use a smaller size without explaining the reason for the change to you. I feel sure that your answer to me will be that you are leaving it to our judgment. Signed, Farney R. Wurlitzer.

**FEB. 12, 1915** to Mr. Baxter: I received a letter from Mr. Wells (salesman in charge of selling the organ and working for Knight-Campbell Music Co.) in which he stated that you were very anxious that we should include an Indian Tom Tom effect in the instrument. We have gone into this carefully and have found that we can add it and will do so. The one difficulty about adding any additional effects is that the console is so complete now that it is hard to find space for any additional effects. The console as arranged now will have 156 stopkeys, besides quite a number of toe pistons, etc. The Tom Tom is without a doubt, quite effective for some pictures and there will be no extra charge for our including this.

## **A SECOND MARIMBA HARP**

As I wrote you in my last letter about the question of the second Harp, we will only decide after we get it here. We have ordered it and will try it out. If it works out satisfactorily we will include it; if it does not, we will not. You may depend upon it that the question of the additional cost to us is not going to influence us in our decision, as we are most anxious to make your instrument as perfect and beautiful as we know how to make it, and that is our first desire.

## **MR. MURTAUGH POSSIBLE ORGANIST**

I was in Seattle recently and of course had a talk with Mr. Murtaugh. He found the specification for your instrument as we had drawn it so complete that he had practically no criticisms or suggestions to make. I also discussed with him the question of his going to Denver. Both he and his wife seem quite happy in Seattle and I am afraid unless we offer them an inducement of additional pay, it is going to be difficult to get them to go to Denver. Mr. Murtaugh is very anxious to play this instrument since it is by far the finest that we have ever built and finer than anything that he has played on. I did not get down to details with him as to the question of salary. As you know he now is getting a hundred, and I believe the

Seattle people would be willing to pay him even more. Would you be willing to make him an offer of \$115.00 or \$125.00? If you are willing, I will be glad to take the matter up further with him, or if you think it wiser



you could write him direct. Mr. Murtaugh is anxious that if he makes a change such as this, that he can rely upon it that you would keep him for a year. As far as his playing is concerned and also in other respects, I am sure he would satisfy you. In Seattle they are getting splendid results and I know that their success is due to the instrument and to the player. So much depends upon the man that plays the instrument. In Seattle, however they are getting 10¢ to 25¢ for their seats, and only change their pictures twice a week instead of daily, so that, of course, they have a larger chance for profit. The question as to whether you could now raise your prices from 5¢ to 10¢, I am really not able to judge. It is something you can judge better on account of the prevailing conditions in Denver. It does seem a pity that you are not able to get 10¢ for the show that you give, as it certainly is every bit as good, if not better than what they are giving in Seattle for 10¢.

I did not find it wise to take up the question with Jensen and Von Herberg in regard to taking Mr. Murtaugh away, and thought I would not take this up until a



# Pages From The Past...continued

little later on. I feel quite positive that even if they would not be willing to give up Mr. Murtaugh permanently, that I could arrange to bring him on for the opening and have you keep him for at least a month or two, as they offered to let me take Mr. Murtaugh down to San Francisco for a month if we really needed him, and providing we supplied them with another player temporarily. Will you please let me have your views on the question of the player so that I can take it up further.

## **SEATTLE LIBERTY WURLITZER A SENSATION**

The instrument in Seattle has certainly created a sensation. If you should happen to meet any of the picture men from Seattle, ask them what they think of the instrument because everyone I talked to was enthusiastic about it and were frank in their statements that they attributed the success of the Liberty Theatre to our instrument because the location of the Liberty Theatre is not as good as some of the other houses, but they certainly are getting the business.

I feel confident that it is going to result in considerable business for us in the Northwestern Territory.

With kindest regards to you and Mrs. Baxter, I am...

Yours very sincerely, Farny R. Wurlitzer

## **SIDELIGHTS ON THE ISIS WURLITZER**

by Roy Gorish

I am indebted to Mary Dobbs Tuttle of Denver for most of the following information. She played the Isis organ from its beginning to its very end. She once received a very nice writeup in "Variety" for being the only woman to have held a position as theatre organist in the same theatre for as long as she did.

From various sources who were immediately associated with the Isis organ as both audience and player, with whom I have had talks, I would like to fill out the story:

I knew of the Isis organ before I came to Denver. Its reputation was still alive in N.Y. as late as 1948 when I left there. It was one of the first places I visited on arriving in Denver. Curtis Street, even prior to the first World War, was the "Broadway of the West." No less than 15 theatres, and this is a very conservative estimate, both vaudeville and movie, were located in a three block section on Curtis.

The Isis was the largest theatre in Denver for years. Although hardly a large theatre according to those built during the 1920s, at its time, it was probably one of the very

largest devoted to moving pictures, seating some 2,000. Originally built for vaudeville and "flickers" in 1915 it became a full-fledged picture house with an organ, 40 piece orchestra, and stage productions.

In 1913, Mayor Spear started a drive to place an organ in the Civic Auditorium. Money was raised for a Hope Jones Unit Orchestra for the auditorium, but before the organ was contracted for, Mr. Spear lost his position in an election. During the new mayor's term, politics entered the picture, Wurlitzer lost out and E.M. Skinner was considered for the building of the proposed organ. However, the appropriated money somehow was spent, and the project was forgotten. The next election brought Mr. Spear back into office and with him the Civic Auditorium organ idea was revived. In 1917, Wurlitzer installed a 4/32 organ in the Auditorium.

I mention the above to emphasize Mr. Farny Wurlitzer's remarks in his letter to Baxter. Wurlitzer very badly needed a large organ as a demonstrator in this part of the country, and had counted on the Auditorium installation for this purpose. In order for a theatre owner from this part of the country to hear a big Wurlitzer, he had to travel east and there were few to hear after getting there. The train was the only way to travel in 1915, over such a great distance through the Great Plains, and the trip was enough to discourage prospective customers.

Therefore, when the opportunity arose to build the Isis organ, Wurlitzer went all out to make it a perfect installation, throwing in many things free to ensure themselves a good organ.

The organ shipped May 22 and officially opened August 4, 1915.

Carmenza VanderLezz, Wurlitzer's demonstrator, went to Denver to open the organ, and told about the official opening. The opening night was a gala affair with numerous local dignitaries present. A well-known classical organist residing in Denver was to start the ceremony. He arrived in tails with a large sash around his waist holding up a real sword. He strode down the aisle, unwrapped the sash, placed the sword on the top of the console, then bowed to his audience. He started to seat himself at the console, naturally stepping on the pedalboard. The result was disastrous. Every pedal stop was down, put in that position by someone doing last minute dusting (supposedly), and the organ gave forth with a thunderous roar! This was

prior to the day of starting the blower from the console and the organ had been turned on prior to his arrival. The vibrations blew out every light bulb in the theatre (the old electric bulbs of 1915 were very delicate) leaving the audience in total darkness for 20 minutes. When the lights were restored, the organist had vanished. A search of the theatre proved him no longer there. (Later he was found at home and his wife said he couldn't be disturbed because he was in bed with a headache.)

Carmenza said she took over at the console for the rest of the evening. What with the deafening roar, popping of bulbs and total darkness, she had to do some fancy playing to get the audience back in the right frame of mind.

The organ was a sensation for years and drew crowds to the theatre on its own merit. It was last played in 1939, and was eventually junked to make room for dressing rooms! The theatre was demolished sometime after 1955.



ROY GORISH, author of this story, was a charter member of ATOS. He holds the Isis marimba, a Deagan, made before they were building many harps for organs.



# Viva Italia... Molto Bene, Grazie!

Haller Lake Community Club was transported to Italy for an evening on Sunday, May 26 as PSTOS presented "Viva Italia! ...an Evening in Naples." About 75 members and guests enjoyed a sumptuous Italian dinner catered by Amante's Pizza, featuring three entrees and red and white wine. As attendees



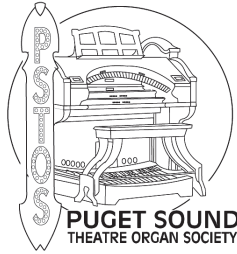
Sharon Stearnes at the console



Ray Harris and his magical digital accordion

## PUGET SOUND THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

Russ & Jo Ann Evans, Newsletter Editors  
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were served their dinners, Ray Harris strolled around the hall with his accordion, playing nostalgic songs including many with Italian themes, such as "Non Dimenticar" and "Arrivederci Roma." The accordion was actually a digital instrument with not only accordion sounds but saxophone, violin, Hammond organ, and many others, which he demonstrated to great effect. Following dessert of rainbow sherbet, Sharon Stearnes presented a multi-faceted concert at the 3/8 Wurlitzer-Marr & Colton, including standards like "In the Mood," and "Send In the Clowns," as well as medleys from The Sound of Music and Les Misérables, and concluding with a medley of patriotic songs in recognition of Memorial Day. A highlight was her vocal performance of "I Dreamed a Dream," artfully sung and

quite impressive, as anyone knows who has tried to play the organ and sing at the same time. Molte grazie to the performers and all who helped organize and put on this memorable event!

...Jamie Snell



The buffet table was a busy place



Servers Marv Remillard, Russ Evans, Jeff Snyder, Gil Drynan