



# PUGET SOUND PIPELINE

Volume 32, Nos. 3 - 4 • March - April 2021 • [www.pstos.org](http://www.pstos.org) • [www.facebook.com/pstos](http://www.facebook.com/pstos)

**Coming soon to a venue near you . . .  
Music! Music! Music!**



Merlyn Johnson  
Residence, Tacoma  
3/25 Kimball-Wurlitzer



Seattle Paramount Theatre  
4/21 Wurlitzer



Calvary Christian Assembly  
3/25 Kimball-Wurlitzer



Haller Lake Community Club  
PSTOS 3/10 Wurlitzer



Evans Residence, Kenmore  
3/18 Wurlitzer



Kenyon Hall, West Seattle  
2/17 Wurlitzer

**Watch these pages for news as  
live Theatre Organ events return!**

# PUGET SOUND PIPELINE

Vol. 32, Nos. 3 - 4, March - April 2021

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**Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society**  
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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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## THE AMAZING 2021 VIRTUAL

# SUMMER YOUTH ADVENTURE

Even though we still live in challenging times, the American Theatre Organ Society is excited to present a virtual Summer Youth Adventure this year. We expect that many of our participants will already be well-versed in computer and phone technology and experienced in on-line education. Virtual learning will be the best way for everyone to enjoy the SYA this year.

We are creating a week-long Zoom event that will have the usual teaching, master classes and open console opportunities. More importantly, Zoom technology allows us to break into more small group teaching sessions, allowing more personal time among the teaching staff and students.

We will work to schedule simultaneous sessions for all four North America time zones. And, if there is interest from international students, we will do our best to accommodate those wanting to participate from other parts of the world.

Although we are fine-tuning our schedule, we are anticipating meeting between Sunday, July 11, 2021 and Friday, July 16, 2021. Some of the highlights of the week we have already discussed include:

- **Sunday, July 11** – a traditional get-acquainted party and jam session.
- **Monday, July 12 through Thursday, July 15** – teaching, master class and open console sessions.
- **Friday, July 16** – preparation for a Zoom Mini Concert beginning at 7:00 EDT (4:00 PDT). Students are encouraged to invite socially-distanced friends and family members to be their local audience.

In light of the special circumstances this year, we have reduced tuition from \$349 to \$250, and scholarships are available on an as-needed basis.

If a student does not have an organ or the technical equipment (computer, cell phone, and/or WiFi), we encourage them to contact their local ATOS chapter to facilitate access to an instrument and the necessary equipment.

The SYA is structured for all students from beginners to more experienced players. More information will be on the ATOS website and in upcoming issues of Theatre Organ.

This year's teaching team will be Jelani Eddington, Donna Parker and yours truly. We want to have a most creative SYA and look forward to having many participants.

Jonas Nordwall

## Haller Lake Wurlitzer Update

The last time we were able to use the Wurlitzer, before the water leak caused cancellation of our 2019 Christmas party, followed by the Covid lockdown, there was a problem with the organ. Sharon Stearnes was playing for the HLCC members, and the blower stopped.

Bob Zat, Greg Smith, and specialist Bob Otey have evaluated the problem, and learned that the variable frequency drive unit, which supplies 3-phase power to the blower, has failed.

The good news is a new drive has been ordered and will be installed by Bob Otey so that when we are once again able to meet at Haller Lake, our organ will be ready to go.

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## LETTERS

### *To the Editors*

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Hi Jamie,

I'd like to tell you how much I enjoyed the article in the January Pipeline about the series of fires in roller rinks, dance halls, and other amusement facilities that destroyed so many theatre organs in the early and mid-20th century.

Having grown up in Seattle I remember many of the buildings, but I didn't realize how many were destroyed by fire. It is a mystery how they all started and it did make one suspect a possible serial arsonist. Fortunately the Pizza & Pipes in Greenwood wasn't mentioned, but that building was there a little later and I recall Seattle AGO had an event there once.

I do remember the old Palladium Dance Hall from my college days and I wondered what ever happened to it.

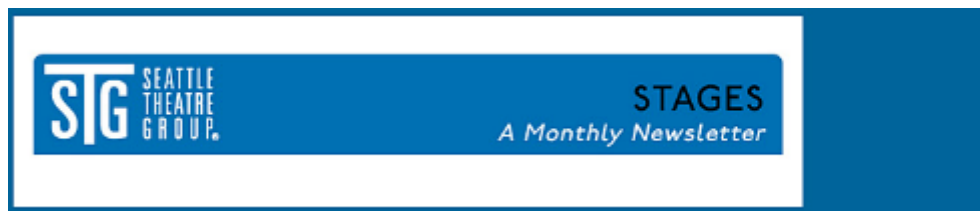
My mother wouldn't let me go near the Roller Bowl, but when I was a bit older I skated at the Ridge Rink in Greenwood.

At any rate, the story was intriguing and I really enjoyed it.

Best wishes for the New Year and I hope that PSTOS can begin its live concerts again soon. Live streamed music is just not the same!

JoAn Andenes

## What's happening at the Paramount Theatre?



As we approach the one-year mark of closure (March 11th), we are doing so with a sense of Gratefulness, Purpose and Hope.

All of us at STG are Grateful for your ongoing engagement and support. Many of you reading this are subscribers, donors, sponsors, participants in our Education & Community Engagement programs, teachers, government workers, medical professionals – we are grateful to all of you! You have continued to participate in our Education & Community Engagement online programs or other digital performances and have financially supported our ongoing work and reduced infrastructure.

I have always equated our Vision with Purpose – both imply what we are striving for, what we aim to achieve and move towards. During this closure I have developed an even greater passion and belief in our Vision – STG is The People's Theatre – all are welcomed and represented. We have been able to move many of our Education & Community Engagement programs online, maintaining and even expanding access to arts learning. I am a big fan of our on-demand programs, which enable people to learn and experience the arts from home and on their own schedule. There are now a few programs in Spanish!

We have been able to continue some of our long-standing programs such as More Music @ The Moore. On March 12th, we'll celebrate 20 years of this signature youth music program! All are invited to the virtual celebration. Read on for more details...

We are also looking forward to our upcoming Silent Movie Mondays: Comedy Classics series. The films, featuring Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, and Marion Davies, are available to view online, at your convenience. After watching, you are invited to join us for a free CineClub discussion, just like we would host in the Paramount Theatre bar after an in-person screening! Visit [www.stgpresents.org/calendar/6521](http://www.stgpresents.org/calendar/6521) to learn more about the series and to sign up for the CineClub discussion.

Some of you may have come across media coverage of the announcement that our fabulous Broadway at The Paramount Series will start back up in October 2021 and includes a 6-week run of HAMILTON in August-September of 2022. In speaking with The Seattle Times, I characterized this announcement as an expression of Hope. I believe it will be possible to achieve a safe environment for the performing arts by the fall of 2021. You can see more about how we are working towards reopening on our website, [www.stgpresents.org](http://www.stgpresents.org). As a certain song in HAMILTON says... "Just You Wait..."

Wishing you and your families health.

With appreciation,

Josh LaBelle, Executive Director

# Things are happening in Leavenworth

Dave Johnston makes his Vox regulator like new again



"Is this an extra pipe?" Dave wonders

Winter can seem unending in Leavenworth. Between sitting on my duff watching "Escape to the Chateau" and plowing snow, I decided it was finally time to take on the task of re-leathering the failing Vox regulator. The camouflage Gorilla duct tape has done a pretty good job keeping the wind in check, but with the blower upgrade giving additional pressure, the faithful duct tape just couldn't hang on anymore.



Regulator with camouflage duct tape

Searching through the "Theatre Organ Shop Notes" manual from ATOS, I found an article by Allen Miller on the re-leathering procedure to guide me. My idea was to pull out the small 20" x 30" Vox regulator to practice on before I tackled the larger 24" x 48" regulator. I figured if I failed I could always tuck my tail between my legs and haul it over to Russ Evans and Greg Smith to rescue my disaster and make it all better.

Not knowing exactly what type of leather to buy, I called Columbia Organ Leathers back in Pennsylvania for advice and to place an order. The gal on the other end of the

line suggested I needed about half a cow for a 20" x 30" regulator. I thought she was kidding since my intent was to just do one small regulator, but, being a novice, I went ahead and placed the order. When I saw the credit card charge for \$400 before receiving the order I almost canceled! My wife Jennifer, always being the voice of reason said, "If you cancel the order, you'll never be able to order from them again." So I let the order stand.

When it arrived, sure enough there was way more leather than I needed for the small regulator and even more than enough to do the large 24" x 48" regulator also. You know, "about half a cow's worth!"

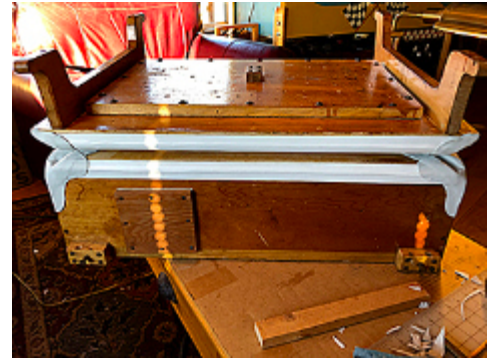


So, to get on with it, after hours of scraping, sanding, and cleaning (regulators are filthy with coal dust from the old days), then cutting leather strips, I carefully glued everything back together. I reinstalled it, fired up the blower and it works great!

With that bit of success under my belt, my next move was to tackle the big guy for the Tibia chest.



Reassembling the Vox regulator



Interestingly, there is also an article in the shop notes written by Bill Exner on modifying the single cone valve in a Kimball regulator to make it more responsive to the tremolo action. So I am going to follow along and make that improvement. Here is a quote from the article that gave me a chuckle, "...the prose accompanying this picture emphasizes the superiority of three-valve regulators for theatre organs, making it abundantly clear that nobody but an idiot would try to trem a single valve regulator. On this point nobody should question Kimball's right to speak, because for many years previously they had done exactly that!"



Kimball single cone valve

Now, as of this writing, the big guy is all re-leathered, the modified valve in hand, and I am waiting for the new felt to arrive.

Oh, and by the way, I have about 1/16 of a cow left over.



Dave in the chamber

# PAGES FROM THE PAST . . . 1926

Published September 12, 1926, this article tells of the Wurlitzer being installed in Seattle's soon-to-open Fifth Avenue Theatre

## HUGE ORGAN FOR NEWEST THEATRE

Music—hand maiden of the cinema—will play an important part in the programs of Seattle's new Fifth Avenue Theatre which is soon to open. Not only will the magnificent new film house feature George Lipschultz and his splendid orchestra, but organ music of a superior quality will have a prominent place on each program.

The work of installing the giant Wurlitzer Hope-Jones organ has been under way for some time and Seattle motion picture fans may be assured of the finest organ music under the capable presentation of a master organist.

### Monster Organ

The Fifth Avenue Theatre's organ compares with the finest in the country, being identical with the instruments played in Grauman's Egyptian Theatre in Los Angeles, the Chicago Theatre, and in the recently completed Uptown Theatre in Chicago.

An indication of its capabilities may be gained by the fact that it can produce the music of a forty-piece orchestra or the soft strains of a violin solo. At the touch of a button the thundering roar of a storm is produced, or the sweet notes of a delicate reed are rendered.

Hundreds of pipes, ranging in size from thirty-two feet in length affording ample room for two men inside, to a delicate unit six inches long and scarcely larger than a soda straw, are contained in the gigantic lofts. More than a hundred miles of wire and between four and five thousand electric magnets are necessary in its operation. Huge fans delivering 15,000 cubic feet of air a minute furnish the pressure to operate the pipes and effects. The pipes and instruments are contained in two concrete lofts on each side of the stage proscenium and have been so designed that not an iota of acoustic quality is lost in delivering the music to the theatre.

### Instant Change

The console itself has all the intricacies of a Chinese puzzle. The keyboard has four sets of double-touch keys and one set of foot pedals. By the double-touch key system two different instruments or effects may be produced by touching one key. By a light pressure on a key a saxophone may be brought into play, and by a heavier touch, a violin is put in operation.

Another feature of the keyboard is that by touching one button the music of a violin sextette may be changed to a brass band instantaneously, The organist has under his control more than 260 keys and foot pedals.

The Fifth Avenue Theatre organ concerts will be supplementary features of the program.

## Strike Up The Band



The job of handling the console of the giant Wurlitzer of the new Fifth Avenue Theatre is a "man's size job" agrees Miss Alma Cameron who is pictured above. The work of installing the huge instrument was begun several weeks ago and is nearing completion. It will be identical with the organ used in Grauman's Egyptian Theatre in Los Angeles and the new Uptown Theatre in Chicago.

# EMBASSY

25¢

**Dorothy Gish**  
IS HERE IN  
**"TIPTOES"**  
with **WILL ROGERS**  
A Paramount Picture  
Aurelio Sciaogua,  
Lucille Johnson and  
Laureen Morris on  
the stage  
**EDDIE CLIFFORD**  
At the Organ

25¢

NEW SHOW EVERY THUR

EVERY ONE FIRST RUN

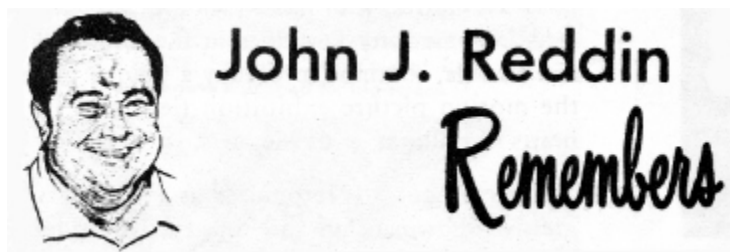
SHOPPERS BARGAIN PRICES **15¢**

9 to 2 DAILY

This ad appeared in the same issue. The Embassy Theatre's Kimball organ is now owned by Dave Johnston in Leavenworth, WA. See page 4.

# PAGES FROM THE PAST...

From The Seattle Times, Sunday, January 18, 1970



Although “The Great Train Robbery” and “Perils of Pauline” were before my time, I do remember “The Birth of a Nation,” though somewhat vaguely and the first silent version of “The Ten Commandments.”

But it was the old Saturday afternoon serials in neighborhood theaters that most of my generation remembers best.

I was reminded of this the other day while reminiscing with two contemporaries, an old high-school buddy, and a service-station mechanic, as they recalled almost-forgotten neighborhood theaters such as the Venetian, Roycroft, Society, Portola, Egyptian, and still others so primitive that they had folding chairs instead of theater seats.

“I would work like crazy all Saturday forenoon, mowing and raking the lawn to earn the necessary 10 cents for admission to the Saturday afternoon matinee, with its William S. Hart movie and some thrilling serial like ‘The Green Arrow’ or ‘The Spider’ or some other shoot-‘em-up starring the wonder dog, Rin Tin Tin,” my friend recalled.

It was always some guy taking on 47 Apaches single-handed, and you could hardly wait to see next week’s installment – how the hero could ever get out of his latest predicament trapped again, or jumping off a high cliff, hit by a speeding train or tossed off a high viaduct or into a deep mine shaft.

And wonderful heroes like Tom Mix, Ken Maynard, Hoot Gibson or George O’Brien with his rippling muscles and arms even bigger than Clint Walker on modern-day television. And the young William Boyd in “The Volga Boatman” at the Liberty Theatre many, many years before he became better known as Hopalong Cassidy.

Personally, my first experience with Saturday afternoon serials was at the old Queen Anne Theatre at Queen Anne Avenue and Boston Street, the small frame building where the late John Hamrick got his humble start before going on to bigger things, including a major motion picture theater chain.

It was 1925 and for a small boy, the height of luxury was 15 cents – a dime for admission to the matinee and five cents for a Queen

Anne Candy Co. Hard Bar, a long, chocolate-covered nougat-type candy that took at least two hours to eat.

Getting the first bite off the brick-hard confection was a major accomplishment that required good teeth, plus much twisting and turning, during which most of the chocolate coating dropped off as crumbs in your lap.

But it was the only candy bar that would last through an entire Saturday matinee.

Later, after the old Queen Anne Theatre was torn down to make way for a grocery, we took our business to the more modern Cheerio Theatre, five blocks farther south on Queen Anne Avenue. It featured more sophisticated fare in silent films such as Lon Chaney in “The Phantom of the Opera,” Douglas Fairbanks in “The Black Pirate,” Milton Sills in “The Sea Beast,” and Ricard Dix in “The Vanishing American.”

My all-time favorite, however, was a western entitled “The Iron Horse,” a railway saga with an Indian named “Two Fingers” as the villain. He had only two fingers on his right hand – a dead giveaway no matter how he disguised himself, even as a white man in top hat and overcoat.

It was a simple unsophisticated era. Good guys always won out in the end, but there was plenty of action in between. On several occasions, as I recall, I nervously chewed the bill of my cloth cap until the cardboard lining showed through and left a dank taste in my mouth.

It’s little wonder we still remember those Saturday matinees.



John Redden was an outstanding courthouse and police reporter for The Seattle Times. He later became a feature columnist, writing material similar to some of what Emmett Watson did in the 1980s and ’90s.