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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. 10 October 2006

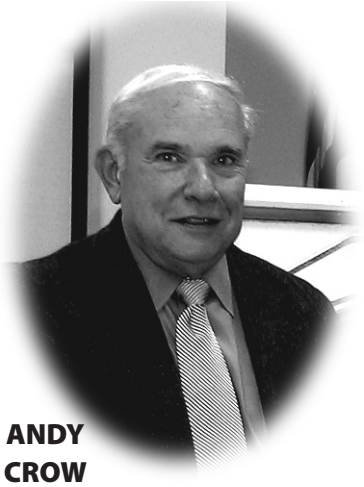
A Chapter of American Theatre Organ Society

The Swing Years and Beyond

Featuring the WURLITZER UNIT ORCHESTRA

JONAS NORDWALL

Under the direction of JONAS NORDWALL with special guest pianist ANDY CROW. This will be a rare treat with a variety of up-tempo music from the 1930s & 1940s including tunes of Duke Ellington, Tommy Dorsey, Glenn Miller, Woody Herman and Count Basie.



ANDY CROW

Sit back and enjoy a special Sunday afternoon of sophisticated music from the great swing era, with world class theatre organist, JONAS NORDWALL at the Paramount's Mighty Wurlitzer pipe organ, joined by ANDY CROW at the grand piano.

We hope to see you there.

Bring a friend or two!

Paramount Theatre — Sunday October 8, 3:30 PM

All proceeds benefit the Paramount's Mighty Wurlitzer Restoration Fund

Suggested minimum donation $20

Reserve your tickets now by phone at **206-784-9203,** or by e-mail at **tickets@pstos.org**

To avoid standing in line, mail your ticket order, check and stamped self-addressed return envelope to--

Tickets, c/o Tom Blackwell
9717 Dayton Ave. N.
Seattle, WA 98103-3127

Sponsored jointly by PSTOS and Seattle Theatre Group (Paramount Theatre)

STG SEATTLE THEATRE GROUP

PUGET SOUND PIPELINE

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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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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*

We have a very special event coming up on Sunday, October 8th that I hope every PSTOS member will try to attend. This is a Paramount Theatre concert featuring Jonas Nordwall at the 4/20 Publix 1 Wurlitzer with special guest Andy Crow at the Steinway B grand piano. Jonas and Andy will treat us to an up-tempo variety of music from the great swing era of the 1930s and 1940s. All proceeds will benefit the Paramount's Mighty Wurlitzer Restoration Fund.

As many of you know, the Paramount Wurlitzer is the largest remaining original theatre pipe organ in Washington State and the city of Seattle's only surviving original installation. For over 45 years, PSTOS has played a pivotal role in protecting and maintaining the Paramount's Wurlitzer and presenting it to the public. Literally thousands of volunteer hours have been invested.

PSTOS has done a great job keeping the instrument functioning over the years, repairing dead notes as they come up. But the continual disassembly and reassembly of the windchests creates wear and tear on the mechanism and it is simply not practical to continue performing repairs in a piecemeal fashion. It is time for a complete re-build of all windchests.

Many of the instrument's 20,000 moving parts have deteriorated, resulting in notes that do not play. Non-playing notes are caused by deterioration of the leather used for the organ's nearly 7,000 valve components that control the wind supply to the pipes. When built in 1928, the leather was intended to last only 30 years. The Paramount Wurlitzer is still operating on much of its original 78-year-old leather!

Other work that needs to be done includes re-wiring to meet current electrical code, professional pipe repairs and tonal finishing. Additionally, the chambers need plaster repairs, seismic structural bracing and installation of additional walkboards and work lighting to improve safety.

This work will require hundreds of PSTOS volunteer hours, but we must also raise over $100,000 for the materials and professional services required to complete the job.

The Paramount Theatre management has been very supportive of using the organ as frequently as possible. They produce one of the most successful silent film series in the country. The organ is featured at many "First Saturday" monthly public tours (demonstrated by PSTOS volunteers) and there is interest in expanded use of the organ for other events.

On October 8th, we have a chance to recognize the Paramount for their great efforts in presenting the Mighty Wurlitzer to the public by turning out in large numbers. If you feel strongly that the theatre organ is something that should be preserved for future generations, THIS IS THE TIME TO SHOW WE MEAN BUSINESS! Please bring yourself, bring a friend, or two or three!

Tom Blackwell, President

PSTOS *Coming Events*

♦The Swing Years & Beyond

A rare and exciting program at the beautiful Seattle Paramount Theatre! Jonas and Andy, at the Wurlitzer and grand piano, will bring you an entire program of great music from the Swing Years. Don't miss it! See front page. for details.

Sunday, Oct. 8, 3:30 p.m.

Roosevelt H.S. Open House to celebrate a total rebuild… including space for Froula Memorial pipe organ

Remember when PSTOS members rallied around the effort to raise funds for preservation of Roosevelt High School's pipe organ? It was destined for its grave when alums came forth to spearhead a fund drive, raising money for its preservation.

Although more is needed for a total restoration, the necessary dollars to pay for its removal and crating, and revising architectural plans to include air ducting, blower space and chambers, was raised.

The completely rebuilt school is ready for occupancy, and an Open House is scheduled for Saturday, September 30, from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

You are welcome, and while there, you may learn more about future plans for restoring and installing the organ.

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 7PM & Fri/Sun at 5PM.

Columbia River Organ Club

For info and latest news go to **www.croconline.org**

Introducing the PSTOS Event and Program Committee

President Tom Blackwell reported in the January 2006 Pipeline that PSTOS has formed seven new member-run committees. We've learned, through Pipeline articles, about the Organ Preservation & Maintenance, Scholarship, Development/Grant Writing and Promotion & Media Relations Committees. Watch for future articles about the History & Archives and Volunteer Coordination Committees.

Our Mission Statement: "Identify PSTOS events and programs; assist Event Coordinator(s) in organizing and keeping event or program on track; ensure PSTOS Pipeline Editors and Webmaster are provided information relevant to publicizing events and programs within established lead times, to produce the very best PSTOS events and programs we can."

The Event and Program Committee will continue to help organize the PSTOS events and programs you've come to enjoy. The Committee meets at least twice a year to suggest, select, and maintain events for the upcoming year. In addition we assist event coordinators — answering questions regarding their particular program or event; making suggestions (based on expertise and past event experience); and reminding them of lead times and deadlines.

Our Committee includes Chair Barbara Graham and Members Russ & Jo Ann Evans, Tom & Joani Roughton, Bob Zat, Dan Warner, and President Tom Blackwell, ex officio member.

We're open to ideas for future events and welcome your input. Volunteers are always needed to help set up events, clean up after events, take tickets, act as greeters, help with food and beverage service, etc. You may have a special skill or a suggestion you'd like to share with us. Please contact Barbara at barbara@pstos.org, or 206 525-7859.

PSTOS volunteers gather to move our Haller Lake organ console…again

How many people does it take to lift a pipe organ console onto a stage? Read on…

Several years ago, a crew of volunteers gathered to move the console off its platform to replace the red carpeting. No small task, that! But with the strong backs and clever "engineering" of half a dozen members, the entire task was accomplished in just one day.

Recently the console needed once again to be moved, this time for several weeks while the floor was being refinished. The only place to put it was on the stage. But how? With many strong backs, that's how!

Following the *Historic Theatres Walking Tour*, a crew of volunteers detoured to HLCC and as you can see in these photos, accomplished the job in short order. The same folks again gathered on Labor Day to reverse the entire procedure.

It takes many hands to keep PSTOS going! Many thanks to everyone who pitched in!

ABOVE: "Project manager," Bob Zat, lays out The Plan.

LEFT: That's Barbara Graham doing the "Console-movers' hop!"

Mission accomplished!

CLOCKWISE FROM FRONT: Barbara Graham, Dave Luttinen, Clint Meadway, Grant Shipley (visitor), Bob Zat, Mark Baratta (knee on platform), Tom Blackwell, Russ Evans.

Pages From The Past... 1914

The Seattle Liberty Theatre was designed strictly for movies, with no provision for vaudeville...a daring first! And its Wurlitzer set the pace.

A glowing testimonial from the Liberty's J. von Herberg

Seattle, Wash. May 7th, 1915

The Rudolph Wurlitzer Co.
Cincinnati, Ohio

Gentlemen:

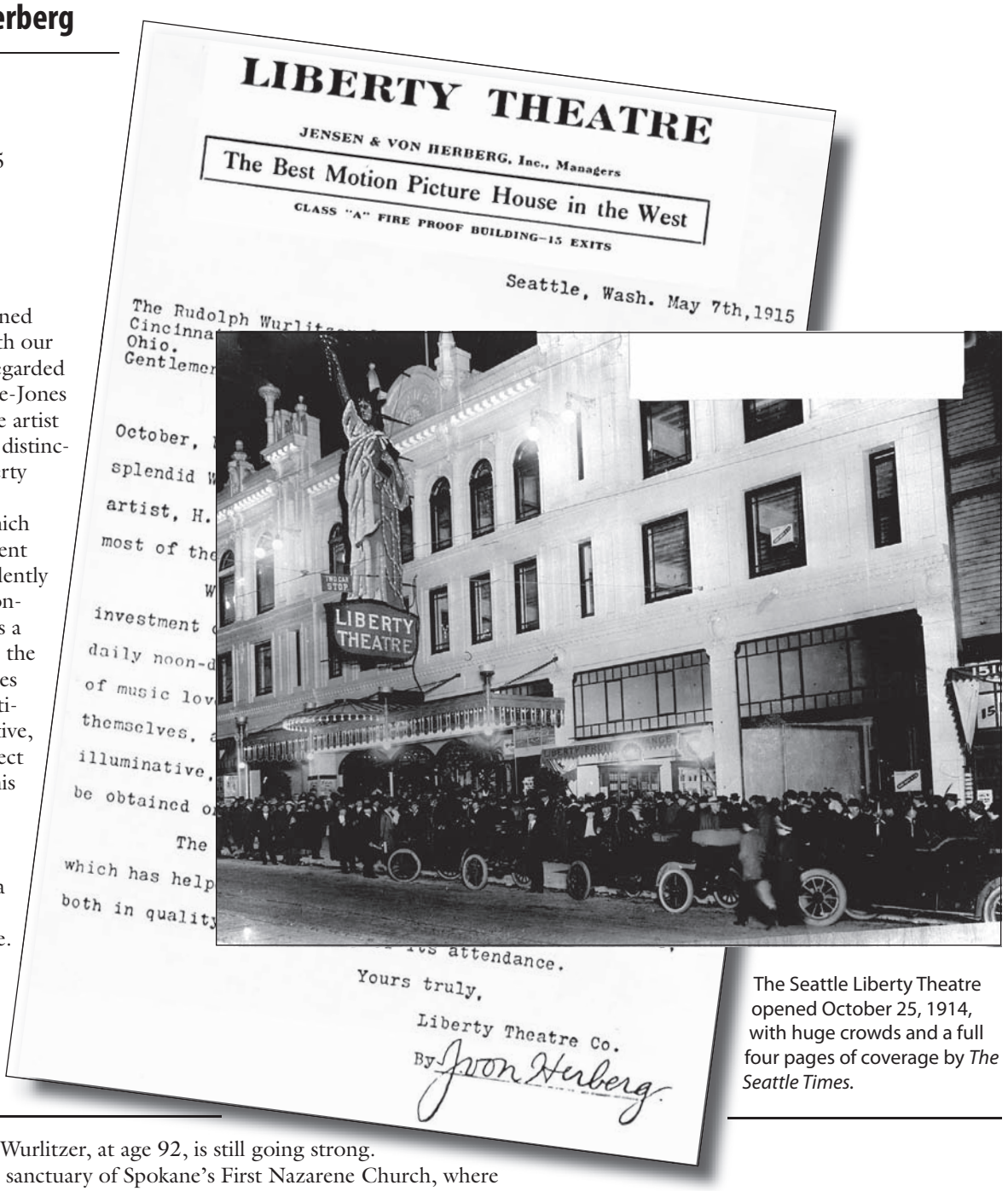
Ever since our theatre opened for business last October, both our patrons and ourselves have regarded your splendid Wurlitzer Hope-Jones Unit Orchestra, played by the artist H.B. Murtagh, as one of the distinctive and foremost of the Liberty attractions.

We deem the $27,000, which represents our initial investment on the Orchestra, most excellently spent. Our daily noon-day concert program invariably draws a throng of music lovers; while the accompaniment to the pictures themselves always seem beautiful, appropriate and illuminative, so great is the diversity of effect which may be obtained on this unusual instrument.

The Orchestra, in short, is one of the things which has helped to put the Liberty in a class by itself, both in quality and quantity of its attendance.

Yours truly,
Liberty Theatre Co.

By J. von Herberg


LIBERTY THEATRE

JENSEN & VON HERBERG, Inc., Managers

The Best Motion Picture House in the West

CLASS "A" FIRE PROOF BUILDING—15 EXITS

Seattle, Wash. May 7th, 1915

Yours truly,

Liberty Theatre Co.

By J. von Herberg

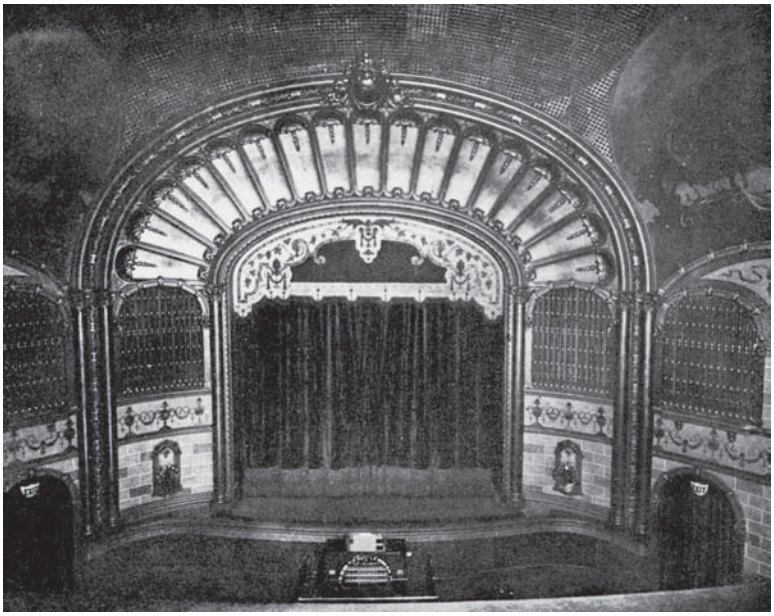
The Seattle Liberty Theatre opened October 25, 1914, with huge crowds and a full four pages of coverage by *The Seattle Times.*

The famous Liberty Theatre Wurlitzer, at age 92, is still going strong. Since 1973, it has graced the sanctuary of Spokane's First Nazarene Church, where organist Ken Fuller presides over it each Sunday. The instrument is currently undergoing much needed cleaning and maintenance.

Editor's note: The historic information, photos, articles, advertisements, and other theatre- and theatre organ-related infomation published in the *Pages From the Past* section of the *Pipeline* comes from the Wm. Bunch archives, passed on to Russ Evans prior to Bill's death from Parkinson's disease. We are grateful to Bill for having been a faithful steward of such a marvelous collection, carefully amassed over many years.

Pages From The Past...continued

Features of the 1914 Liberty Theatre



Seats 2,100. Admission, 10¢ to 25¢. Has a daily attendance of from 8,000 to 10,000. Modernized colonial architecture. Front of white terra cotta, three stories high; costing $140,000.

Has ten loges, inside decorations ivory and gold, with arbor and lattice tracery on ceiling. Has an ornamental singers' balcony. The last word in attractiveness, comfort and modern ideas. Inclined planes to balconies, instead of stairways. Thousands of dollars worth of rare paintings in the foyer. Every seat a perfect view to the screen. Rest rooms, smoking rooms, writing rooms and telephone booths. Has unique heating, lighting, cooling and warming appliances. Air changed every three minutes. Automatically kept at right temperature.

Other features: Specially designed barrel-back opera chairs. Two dressing rooms by the side of the stage. The exterior of the theatre has marvelous lighting novelty in the shape of a mammoth figure of the Statue of Liberty, forty feet high, and containing 1,200 lamps, in eight different colors. Two projection machines, capable of handling 3,000 feet of film each. Machines have 100 amperes of light, giving greater sharpness and brilliancy to the pictures. The screen is concave. Large corps of women ushers. Conceded to be the finest, largest and most luxuriously appointed photoplay house on the Pacific Coast. On the opening day, October 25th, 1914, the Seattle Times gave four entire pages to a description of this theatre. The Wurlitzer Hope-Jones Unit Orchestra installed was especially built at a cost of $27,000.

Liberty organ details from the 1970 writings of organ historian, E.M. Nye

The Liberty Theatre organ in Seattle was one of the best known on the West Coast. The instrument was installed in 1914 at the time of the building's completion. Part of the prominence came from its organists. It was first opened by Henry Murtaugh, followed by Oliver Wallace, who left in November 1926 to go to the New Broadway Theatre in Portland. He was followed by Frank A. Leon, Albert Hay Malotte, and others of note. Eddie Clifford also played here at one time.

The official cost was supposed to have been $27,000. Rather uniquely, the instrument was powered by a Kinetic blower, #C146 of 20 hp, at 850 rpm. This blower was run from a 550-volt D.C. motor powered off of the street car lines. Power was available except during the late night and early morning hours when the street car current was shut down.

The instrument was never played publicly after 1929, at the time talkies began. The house was opened by J. von Herberg and C.S. Jensen, early day theatre pioneers. There were 17 ranks of pipework in the front organ and an Echo division of four ranks, although various specifications show from 15 to 16 ranks in the front organ.

The need for a larger screen caused removal of the small proscenium arch and extension of the stage to meet the second arch, although this did not affect the pipe chambers. The 32-foot diaphones were placed horizontally on sawhorses in the chamber area over the stage. This theatre had no stage area for the presentation of vaudeville or other live shows.

The organ, after its original installation, became nationally famous when the Wurlitzer Company used it frequently for demonstration purposes and in their national advertising.

Even after the instrument ceased being used publicly, it was maintained until 1935 by Dick Simonton and Gordon Blanchard. The writer personally visited the organ on August 26, 1950, and from June 23-25, 1955, during the time of its removal. The building was razed for a parking lot and the instrument was placed on the market for sale.

It was eventually sold for $1500 to Pacific Lutheran University at Parkland, WA. It was erected in the gymnasium by R. Byard Fritts, who with some students and fellow faculty members, worked around the clock for six days to dismantle it. It was hauled to Parkland in 15 truck loads. Holes were chopped in the roof and pulleys installed to lower some of the materials, since the proscenium arch was four stories above the stage.

It is not known what became of the Echo organ, which was not removed to Parkland. The highest wind pressure for the Tuba Mirabilis and 32-foot pedal Diaphone was 25 inches of wind w.g.

Parking near the Paramount Theatre on Sunday afternoon, October 8, should not be difficult. Street parking often can be found, and there are a number of affordable public parking lots within a short walk of the theatre.
We suggest getting tickets ahead by mail, to avoid standing in line at the ticket window or at Will Call.
Ticket information can be found on the front page.

PUGET SOUND THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY
Russ & Jo Ann Evans, Newsletter Editors
6521 NE 191st ST
Kenmore, WA 98028-3453

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Historic Theatres Walking Tour, a full and fascinating day!

Nearly 30 PSTOS members and friends gathered at the Seattle Architecture Foundation's museum-like Rainier Square headquarters, in anticipation of learning more about historic downtown Seattle theatres of the past. They were not disappointed!

After a brief introduction, a short walk took everyone to the beautiful *5th Avenue Theatre* where a theatre guide told of the building's history, its design features, how a group of concerned Seattle residents saved it from the wrecking ball, and how it's used today. (Sadly, its Wurlitzer was virtually "whisked away in the middle of a night" to an eating establishment in California.) Learn more at **www.5thavenue.org**

The present *Triple Door* night club occupies the space of the former *Embassy Theatre*. This club today offers a variety of entertainment acts and fine food, plus lunch in the street-level *Musiquarium*.

Check it out at **www.thetripledoor.net**

The group toured the former Eagles Lodge, now the *ACT Theatre*, then walked through the building occupying the site of two former theatres including *The Blue Mouse*. From a second floor vantage point, the exterior of the old *Coliseum Theatre* was viewed (now Banana Republic).

The day was capped with a guided tour of the *Paramount Theatre*, followed by Open Console.

Many thanks to Tom Blackwell, who organized this interesting day, and to the very competent SAF volunteer guides. Learn more by visiting their website at **http://seattlearchitecture.org/**

SAF volunteer guides begin the tour with introductory information about the old downtown theatres to be visited on the two hour guided walk.

A SAF guide talks about the 5th Avenue Theatre, visible across the street.

At the Paramount, AMICA's Kurt Morrison demonstrates the Knabe grand piano with Ampico Reproducing player unit.