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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 22, No. 9

September 2011

A Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society

Coming Saturday afternoon, Oct. 8, in Kent...

Three Cameo Performances at the Unique Becvar Home



Jamie Snell

Jamie, our own PSTOS past president and outstanding 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 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 and vastly enlarged 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 very dramatic main level music room where the console is situated. There is plenty of room for the sound to resonate beautifully.

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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Pipeline Online Website—Tom Blackwell, 206-778-2724

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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

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

Other NW Theatre Organ News

Kenyon Hall in West Seattle

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

Lincoln Theatre in Mt. Vernon

lincolnthetheatre.org

Columbia River Theatre Organ Society

www.croconline.org

Bellingham's Mt. Baker Theatre Organ Society

www.mountbakertheatre.com

Spokane's First Nazarene Theatre Organ Society

www.sfnatos.org

Tom Blackwell resigns from the PSTOS board after 14 years of service in various capacities

With sincere regret, the PSTOS board has accepted the resignation of Tom Blackwell. His resignation letter reads in part:

Hello PSTOS friends,

After a lot of thought and reflection, I want to inform you all of my decision to resign as PSTOS board member, effective immediately. As you know, my life has changed considerably over the last few years. Many new family and work responsibilities require focus at this time. Accordingly, I have also communicated my intention to transition the ATOS Website Manager responsibilities as soon as a suitable replacement can be found.

I'm confident these changes will allow me to focus on my primary areas of interest as Paramount crew lead and PSTOS website coordinator. I hope the board will support my continued involvement in those capacities.

I leave the PSTOS board with regrets as we have shared many good times, but after nearly 14 years of service in various roles, I think it's time to step aside and allow other members a chance to take the chapter in new directions.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve on the PSTOS board. I do hope that the door would be open at some point in the future when I might be able to again contribute in a board role.

Best regards, Tom

Tom has served as a director, as President for three terms, and on various committees. He is solely responsible for the PSTOS website, which has garnered rave reviews not only from folks across the U.S. but from around the world, and which has inspired other theatre organ groups to set up websites of their own.

It is through Tom's patient work with the Paramount people that a good relationship has been forged there.

Tom served as chair of the 2010 ATOS National Convention hosted by PSTOS here in Seattle, a truly gigantic undertaking. The convention was touted by many as one of the best ever. Tom's vision for improving the convention experience included the bright athletic gold shirts worn by all the workers, making it simple for conventioners to find a helping hand, and the first-ever "B3 DrawBar" set up on the top floor of the hotel and which enjoyed a packed house every night.

We'll miss you, Tom, and look forward to the time you can again participate fully in all the board activities.

Remembering Bob Jones, March 11, 1915 – August 16, 2011

Charter Member of both ATOS and PSTOS

Robert C. Jones was born March 11, 1915, in Harrington, WA. He graduated from Washington State College and served in the US Air Force, leaving as a Lt. Colonel. Bob resided in Edmonds since 1951, retiring from National Bank of Commerce and Banking.

More than that, Bob was the consummate theatre pipe organ aficionado. He passed away August 16.

Following is his personal theatre pipe organ memoir, written several years ago.

In the early 1960s I was living in New York City working for the Arabian American Oil Co. I would visit the public library and read the Diapason and other organ magazines with classified ads. An ad for a theatre organ for \$800 appeared – no specifications, only a phone number. I called and was connected to the Young Men's Hebrew Association on Park Avenue. The organ was an 11-rank Robert Morton with a 3-manual oak console, acquired by the YMHA from the Flushing Theater in Flushing, Long Island. I was overwhelmed by the large pipes and wondered if this might be too much for me to manage. And the organ was so badly damaged there was no way for me to hear how it sounded. But having had the dream of owning a pipe organ since I was a twelve-year-old kid, I finally decided to go with my dream and make it mine. So I bought it!

Packing up to move the organ to Seattle

Then came the tremendous problem of getting it out of there and to Seattle where I was planning to move. The New Jersey shipping company knew nothing about pipe organs and asked me if this was household equipment. I said yes, I was planning to install it in my home. Then he asked if I was an immigrant, and I said I had recently moved to the U.S. from Arabia. He said I was in luck because the special rate for immigrants to ship household goods to the west coast was still in force. The rate was \$4 per hundred pounds! He wanted to know how much space the organ would take in a boxcar, and I said they should use the biggest one they could get, because in addition to the organ I had household belongings – a stove, a refrigerator, and furniture. So he used the largest boxcar available, made for shipping automobiles. I obtained large boxes from a carpet company, to pack the pipes. They came through beautifully in the trip to Seattle.

Bob and the boxcar arrived the same day

I had just purchased a brand new Chevrolet, one of the first cars available after the war was over, and was planning to drive to Seattle. I drove ten hours a day to get there before



the boxcar, and we both arrived the same day. The boxcar was on a siding, and I had only 24 hours to unload it. I found three husky guys needing part-time work and using a large truck, we were able to move the organ in four trips. It was stored a year while I searched for a place to install it.

At long last, the project began!

I purchased a house and began remodeling it to accommodate the organ. The organ had to go in the basement and I cut the floor out of one bedroom for the longest pipes. That allowed all of the largest pipes to be installed in one chamber including the trumpet, tibia, and tuba. The other chamber fit within the ceiling height of the basement, and took the vox, strings, and other smaller pipes. Each chamber had its own shutters installed, all opening into a rec room where the console was placed.

The blower was originally 25" static pressure, with 15" going to the chests. Adjustments were needed to reduce the pressure to 10" and even lower for some ranks. The motor on the blower was DC. My brother-in-law worked for an electrical company, and said he thought his shop could redo the motor windings to work on 3-phase AC. The power company finally agreed to bring in a 3-phase line, and made a deal with me saying, "It's going to cost you \$750 to bring in that line, but we'll give you a 50% reduction on the power usage initially."

In about two years everything was set up and some tests proved the pipes would speak. It was another three years before all eleven ranks were installed and playing.

I was able to get a Wurlitzer post horn for \$75, and found a trumpet rank from a large Kimball installation on the east coast which sounded quite like a brass trumpet. I acquired

some other ranks, including an oboe. Then I found a small 4-rank Wurlitzer organ that had been in a mortuary in Hoquiam, WA, an installation by Balcom & Vaughan originally from some unknown theater. One of the original ranks had been removed and replaced with a dulciana and a diapason had been added. I bought the pipe organ and put these four ranks into a third chamber, which was my workshop. Now I had 20 ranks including three tibias!

A fourth manual was added

I then decided I needed a fourth manual, and added a manual below the Accompaniment. With all these additions, I needed more relays and more switch decks, which I bought from an organ company that had stripped some usable ones from an unknown organ and was glad to sell them quite cheaply. I spent well over a year rewiring these relays and switch decks to accommodate the added ranks. Additional stopkeys were needed to match the Morton ones, and they came from Hesco. More console space was required for them, and Balcom & Vaughan built a stoprail to place on top of the original one. They had a draftsman named Homer Toombs who designed this new stoprail in the same manner as Wurlitzer, using thin wood strips formed into a curve. The new stopkey switches had to be wired in, as well as the fourth manual. All these additions required other changes in the console, which never got completely finished.

Finally all the pipes were playing. But eventually I tired of all the work and maintenance, and decided to put the organ up for sale. It finally sold to someone who in turn sold it to someone else, who broke it up for parts. I was sad to see it go, but I still have many fond memories.

Pages From The Past..1856-1956

In 1956, the Wurlitzer Company published the Centennial Issue of *Wurlitzer Organ Music Review*, celebrating one hundred years of musical achievement. Two of the most interesting pages are reproduced here. From the Wm. Bunch archives.

WURLITZER ORGAN MUSIC REVIEW

Centennial Issue



WURLITZER'S CENTURY OF PROGRESS

One hundred years ago, a lad named Rudolph Wurlitzer emigrated to the United States from Saxony, filled with enthusiasm for the opportunities offered by a young, growing America.

Settling in Cincinnati, Ohio with little more than ambition and a rich musical heritage, Rudolph Wurlitzer soon developed a successful business importing musical instruments. Within a few years, the Wurlitzer Company occupied an entire building.

Merely importing instruments, however, did not satisfy energetic Rudolph Wurlitzer. He began to manufacture his own, and by the turn of the century he had all America humming with the music of his orchestreons, woodwinds, brasses, strings, and the famous Regina Music Box.

The manufacture of merry-go-round organs and player pianos was begun at North Tonawanda, New York. In 1919 the company bought out the Melville-Clarke Piano Company in DeKalb, Illinois, and began production of pianos in that locality.

The Rudolph Wurlitzer Company prospered. Its retail stores covered the nation, while such now-nostalgic devices as player pianos and merry-go-round organs were added to its growing list of products.

But it was with "The Mighty Wurlitzer" Theatre Organ for silent movie houses that Rudolph Wurlitzer made his first indelible mark on the American musical entertainment scene. Played as a mood background to the silent action on the screen, this magnificent instrument held audiences spellbound. "The Mighty Wurlitzer" was indispensable to the entertainment offered by first rate theatres throughout the world.

When talking pictures made their debut, the need and demand for the pipe organ began to wane. World War II curtailed its manufacture completely as Wurlitzer tuned production to the needs of national defense.

In 1947, Wurlitzer introduced a new instrument, the electronic organ. Its true organ tone and glorious range of voices won the immediate acclaim of music lovers everywhere. This marvel was followed by still another Wurlitzer innovation, the electronic piano.

An early photograph of
The Rudolph Wurlitzer Company's
first store in Cincinnati, Ohio.

1956, the Centennial Anniversary of The Rudolph Wurlitzer Company, finds Wurlitzer music stores in five major American cities, and Wurlitzer products represented by leading music dealers across the nation. It finds, too, the dreams of the young immigrant, Rudolph Wurlitzer, more than fulfilled through a century of musical achievement that has made Wurlitzer "The Name that Means Music to Millions."



Pages From The Past...continued

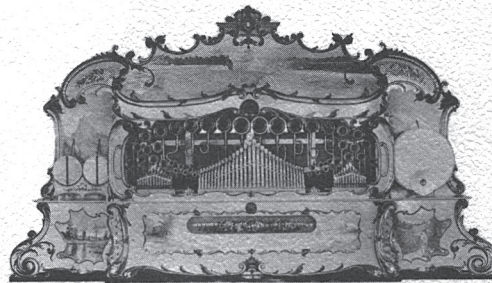
Wurlitzer was known for its many types of automatic musical instruments, all collector's items today.



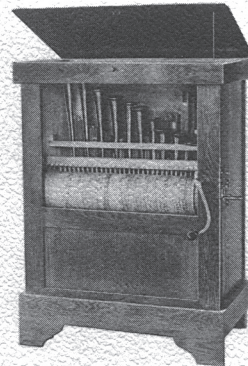
EARLY WURLITZER INSTRUMENTS



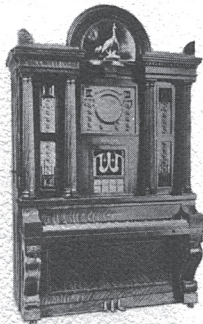
Forerunner of today's coin-operated phonograph, this Electric Piano changed music rolls automatically and featured a mandolin attachment.



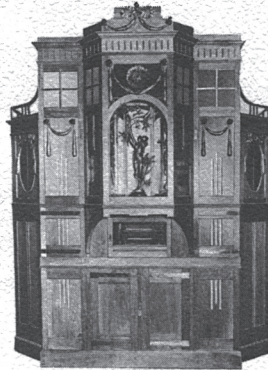
Wurlitzer Band Organ, a familiar sight in early skating rinks where couples glided to music of organ, brass, reeds and drums, all from one instrument.



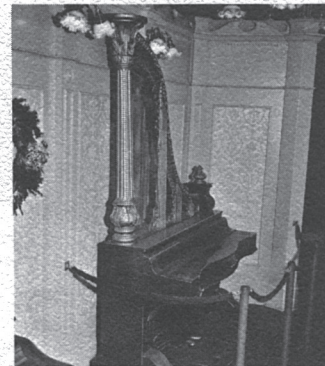
A few turns of the crank and this Wurlitzer Music Box produced many minutes of melodious "plinking" and "plunking."



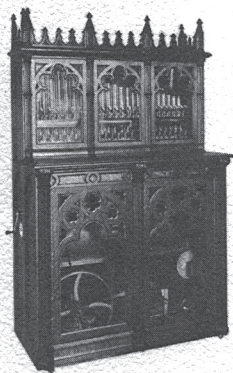
Proud as a peacock was the restaurant-owner who sported this peacock festooned Wurlitzer Piano.



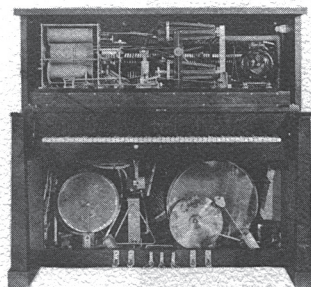
Solid brass and gold leaf, a lighted bronze statue and oak panelling supplied eye appeal to this roll-operated Wurlitzer Mandolin PianOrchestra.



Few modern homes have ceilings high enough to correctly accommodate this once popular Wurlitzer Harp-Piano, now on display at Disneyland.



Pipe organ and percussion unit had glass door to satisfy the curiosity of those who wondered what was going on inside.



Bass drum, snare drum, cymbal and triangle, added to a full note piano, made this instrument a literal "one-man band."



Operated by the "nickel-in-the-slot-box," this was the largest and finest PianOrchestra built by Wurlitzer. 370 musical pipes.

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 dars, but is tight, and someone will guide you.

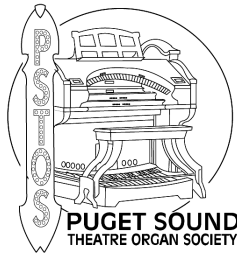
Car pooling is HIGHLY recommended.

PUGET SOUND THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

Russ & Jo Ann Evans, Newsletter Editors

6521 NE 191st ST

Kenmore, WA 98028-3453



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The home event hosted by Merlyn Johnson in her lovely Tacoma residence was delightful.

Having finished a total rebuild of the residence organ in Merlyn Johnson's lovely Tacoma home, Ed and Patti Zollman had reason to celebrate. The instrument looks beautiful and sounds marvelous

About 55 enthusiastic PSTOS members and friends helped re-inaugurate the organ Sunday, August 21st, as Patti Simon-Zollman put the instrument through its paces in a grand manner. Utilizing all its resources, Patti did it justice, indeed. She played a varied program, some numbers reminiscent of her years playing in pizza parlors, and others demonstrating her love of the music of favorite composers. Patti is a NW native, and many friends were in the audience to welcome her back home and to hear her program.



Patti was joined by Micah Bisson at the piano for several piano-organ rags.



The console is stunning. The pipework is a combination of Wurlitzer, Morton and Kimball, and is augmented with several sampled voices.

BELOW: People enjoyed refreshments on Merlyn's sunny patio overlooking the water....a perfect setting.

Audience members wait in anticipation of an afternoon of wonderful theatre organ music. They were not disappointed!

