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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. 3

March 2013

A Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society

Coming in April...

An Afternoon With Andy

Conversations with "The Crow"

A Tribute to Andy Crow's lifetime of Theatre Organ accomplishments



1971

ANDY CROW's affiliation with PSTOS goes back to its beginnings when on December 15, 1961, he participated in the founding meeting of what today is PSTOS. The Posthorn, a hand-typed mimeographed 20-page predecessor to today's Theatre Organ, reported, "A festive mood filled the Mount Baker Theatre Tuesday night as 40 theatre organ enthusiasts organized an ATOE affiliate theatre organ club. Lovers of theatre pipe organ music from Astoria, OR., Vancouver, B.C., Seattle, Everett, Tacoma, Snohomish and Bellingham were present.



1973

Highlight of the evening was an hour long concert at midnight on the beautiful 10 rank Wurlitzer at the Mount Baker Theatre, featuring Andy's artistry. Members then held a pipe organ "jam session" and the air was filled with the varying modes of music that only a pipe organ is capable of creating....."

In the years since, Andy has become a living legend in the Northwest theatre organ world. He was awarded PSTOS Honorary Life Membership in 2005, a tribute long overdue.



1981

Andy will share his fascinating half-century of music experiences including his years at Rodgers Organ Company, touring as road manager for Virgil Fox, his association with Ted Alan Worth, his ownership of a theatre business complex in Olympia, part of which has become the Washington Center for the Performing Arts, and much more.

**And there will be music!
Don't miss it.**



Saturday, April 13, 1:30PM

Bill Keller residence near Olympia
9914 Hampshire Dr. SE, Olympia 98513

Reception

\$10 per person

Seating limited, reservations required!

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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

Washington Center—Andy Crow

Calvary Christian Assembly—Jeff Snyder

AGO—David Locke

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, Jon Beveridge, Treasurer
9594 1st Ave. NE #453,
Seattle WA 98115-2012

PRESIDENT'S Message

It was so good to see so many of you at the Dave Wickerham program last month. We enjoyed a good turnout and an outstanding program from Dave. This was the fourth time I've heard Dave in concert and I continue to be amazed by his creativity and musicality. A big thank you to the program committee for all their planning and especially to the Evans' for making sure Dave was taken care of. Another big thanks to Greg Smith and Russ Evans for all their work on the organ. It's sounding better than it has in many many years. This was our first event at Calvary Christian Assembly under the new agreement between PSTOS and the church. As you saw in the last Pipeline, new pipe work, percussions and a toy counter are now at the church waiting to be installed. The organ crew has been busy drawing up plans for placement of everything in the chambers and is developing a new stoplist for the console. It's pretty exciting to think about the "new" organ we will soon have regular access to for concerts.

I hope to see some of you at some of the Silent Movie Monday films at the Paramount this month. If you're there, be sure to stop by the PSTOS table in the lobby and say "Hello" to the volunteer working there. These movies give the general public such a positive experience with the theatre organ, and thanks to the Paramount crew chief Phil Hargiss and the management at the theatre, the organ is soon going to be heard "playing in" select shows at the theatre. It's exciting to think of all the new people that will have the opportunity to fall in love with the sounds that we so enjoy. See you next time!

...Jeff Snyder, President



PSTOS Coming Events

► TRIBUTE TO ANDY CROW at Bill Keller's Olympia home

A long time pillar of the Theatre Organ community in the Northwest, Andy Crow well deserves recognition. This will be an unusual afternoon of music, conversation and reminiscing about Andy's many fascinating experiences making music.



Saturday, April 13

► SHARON STEARNES at the Wurlitzer plus a catered Italian dinner at Haller Lake Community Club!

Great Italian food from Amanti's. Add RAY HARRIS and his strolling accordion to the day and you'll have an event to savor!



**Sunday,
May 26, 2013**

► HOME PARTY at the Jack & Mary Lou Becvar residence in Kent

A fun summer afternoon event with member cameo performances at the Wurlitzer. Refreshments.

Sunday, August 4

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

David will play your favorites for a great afternoon of music. This is definitely a not-to-be-missed event!

Sunday, September 15

► Annual Holiday Party is in the planning phase—watch this column!

Your Program Planning Team is exploring both new and tried-and-true options for a special Holiday celebration in 2013. Be assured it will be a fun event, getting your holidays off to a great beginning! Mark your calendar now.

Sunday, December 1



Trader Joe's Silent Movie Mondays

The Women of Silent Film

at the Paramount Theatre
Mondays in March

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

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

Celebrate The Women of Silent Film. From drama to comedy to sex symbols, women played a remarkable role in the early film industry on the silent screen and produced some the brightest and most beloved films of the era. Come and rediscover some of these legendary stars from the silent film generation!

March 4 - Mary Pickford starred in and produced *Heart O' the Hills* (1919) directed by Joseph DeGrasse and Sidney Franklin.

March 11 - Lillian Gish stars in *The Scarlet Letter* (1926) directed by Victor Sjöström from Sweden.

March 18 - Joan Crawford stars in *Our Dancing Daughters* (1928) directed by Harry Beaumont.

March 25 - Greta Garbo stars in *The Kiss* (1929) directed by Jacques Feyder.

Other NW Theatre Organ News

Kenyon Hall in West Seattle

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

Lincoln Theatre in Mt. Vernon

lincolntheatre.org

Columbia River Theatre Organ Society

www.croconline.org

Spokane's First Nazarene Theatre Organ Society

www.sfnatos.org

Oregon Chapter ATOS, Portland

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

CAMERON CARPENTER to play the Andy Crow Mighty Wurlitzer at Olympia's Washington Center

"Cameron Carpenter is one of the rare musicians who changes the game of his instrument... He is a smasher of cultural and classical music taboos. He is technically the most accomplished organist I have ever witnessed... And most important of all, the most musical!" – The Los Angeles Times.

A virtuoso composer-performer unique among keyboardists, Cameron's approach to the organ is smashing the stereotypes of organists and organ music while generating a level of acclaim, exposure, and controversy unprecedented for an organist. His repertoire is perhaps the largest and most diverse of any organist. He is the first organist ever nominated for a GRAMMY Award for a solo album.

Thursday, March 28, 7:30pm

Box Office: 360-753-8586

512 Washington Street SE, Olympia

Order Online at:

www.olytix.org



Welcome to
our recent
new PSTOS
members!

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Dave Prince

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Elizabeth Hoffman

Mountlake Terrace

Leilani Montagne

Seattle

FOR SALE Organ Stuff

A-100 HAMMOND ORGAN, walnut finish, with two Leslie 122 RV speakers. Also—Andrew Kohler upright piano, ebony finish. Randall Greseth, 206-935-2093, jvbrhg@seanet.com

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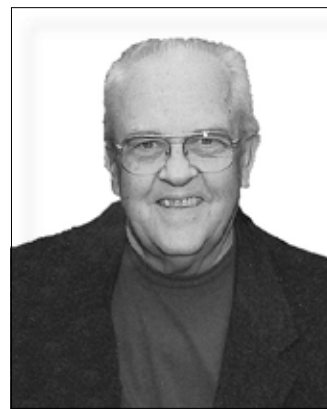
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A few clicks and it's done!



Remembering Bill Iverson 1935 – 2013



A long-time PSTOS member, Bill passed away February 11 after a lengthy struggle with cancer. He attended many PSTOS events, always enjoying the organ music.

Bill's interest in theatre organs went back many years, and in 1969 he built his own organ from a Schober Organ Kit. Over the years, he volunteered his mastery of organ assembly for several Puget Sound organ restorations and relished in the music these revived instruments could produce.

He was also an old car enthusiast, owning three vintage Oldsmobiles.

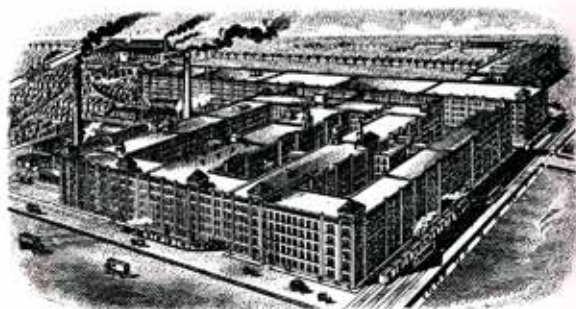
Sincere PSTOS sympathy is extended to his many family members and friends.

Pages From The Past..

W.W. KIMBALL CO. was established in 1857, grew to become the world's largest manufacturer of pianos, and was an aggressive builder of theatre pipe organs during their heyday. The story of this company is a fascinating one. Presented here is the first of two parts.

The history of the W. W. Kimball Company is another classic American success story. William Wallace Kimball moved from his native Maine to Decorah, Iowa in 1853 at the age of 25 and was in the insurance and real estate business there for four years. In 1857 he decided to travel to Chicago to seek his fortune. In many people's eyes he couldn't have picked a worse time. The Panic of 1857 was bankrupting businesses right and left. Over breakfast one morning at the Sherman House, Kimball happened to make the acquaintance of a young piano merchant who, along with many other people at the time, was down on his luck. One thing led to another and eventually the men agreed to trade four Grovenstein & Truslow square grand pianos for some property in Decorah, Iowa. With that simple transaction the Kimball music business was born. Little did Kimball know at the time that his company would one day become the world's largest manufacturer of pianos.

The Kimball business began by retailing instruments of other manufacturers. Though W. W. Kimball knew nothing of the music business and couldn't play a note, he was, however, a shrewd businessman who believed in making money by smaller profits from a larger number of customers rather than by large profits from individual sales. In Kimball's own words, "There are few people who understand that the expenses of running and increasing business do not increase as the business increases; consequently, the point to arrive at is a large volume of trade."



FACTORIES - CHICAGO

By 1859 Kimball had branched into the reed organ business in an effort to secure

an even broader market of customers.

Even a cheap piano sold for \$200 in those days but a parlor organ could be had for less than half as much. By the mid-1860s American reed organ production reached 15,000 instruments per year and Kimball was selling 25% of them! One major reason for Kimball's success was his inauguration of the installment plan which enabled families of modest means to afford the luxury of owning a piano or an organ. Clever sales gimmicks, in those days before heavy media advertising, also helped. One trick was to load a wagon (horse-drawn, of course) with an instrument and head for a country farmhouse. The wagon was outfitted with a wheel which would fall off on command. The salesman would enlist the aid of the farm family to move the instrument off the "broken" wagon into their house to protect it from the elements until he could return to town to secure repairs to the wagon. Returning a day or so later, the salesman usually found that the farmer's wife had become so enamored of the instrument that she would not allow it to be taken away!

Kimball's success in the pipe organ market was immediate. In 1894 the first permanently installed instrument was built and a new five-story building of 96,000 square feet was added to the factory complex. In 1907 a new 60,000 square foot structure was built in order to meet increasing production demands. By 1909, 5,000 pipe organs (mostly portable), 200,000 pianos and 320,000 reed organs had been built in the Kimball factory. Reed organ production ceased in 1922 with 403,390 having been built. The last new Kimball pipe organ, opus 7326, was shipped from the factory on September 26, 1942 to Good Hope Lutheran Church, Bucyrus, Ohio. After the pipe organ division was closed, the company continued manufacturing pianos and in 1948 produced the 500,000th Kimball piano, an industry record. Electronic organs which were added to the line in the 1960s.

Frederic W. Hedgeland was in charge of Kimball's pipe organ division from its inception until 1908. Until his departure the firm had built tubular pneumatic organs exclusively. After he left, a successful electric action was developed and Oscar J. Hagstrom, who had also been with the



The Stanley Theatre in Philadelphia ordered the first large Kimball unit orchestra, a 3/29 instrument, in 1921. Its console featured the same style as virtually every other Kimball horseshoe console ever built. This design, with two "ears" on the top, is quite similar to original Hope-Jones concepts—not surprising given that two of the top people in Kimball's organ department, Joseph J. Carruthers and Robert Pier Elliot, were former Hope-Jones men.

company since the beginning of pipe organ production in 1890, became superintendent of the organ factory. F. T. Milner joined Kimball around 1901 and in 1905 was appointed manager of the pipe organ department. In this same year George T. Michel joined the company and within ten years became head voicer. George Michel, as much as anyone, was responsible for the Kimball sound and he occupied perhaps a unique niche in the industry in being supremely talented at voicing both reeds and flues. His reeds were constructed with a jeweler's precision. They had distinctive tone colors, stood rock solidly in tune and were perhaps more uniform note per note than any ever built. Michel's strings

Pages From The Past...continued

set the standard by which all others were judged. Their richness, timbre and incredible promptness of speech, even in the 32' octave, have never been surpassed. An example of the esteem George Michel's voicing gave the company was the fact that Wanamaker's Department store in Philadelphia commissioned Kimball to build a 93-rank string organ plus a number of solo reeds for additions to the giant Wanamaker instrument in the late 1920s.

Another Kimball voicer of distinction was Joseph J. Carruthers who had been the right hand man of Robert Hope-Jones from the first organ he built to his last. Mr. Carruthers joined Kimball after Hope-Jones' tragic suicide in 1914 and served the company not only as a voicer but as an engineer thoroughly knowledgeable about Hope-Jones methods in organ building. It was Mr. Carruthers who introduced the Hope-Jones triple-valve reservoir to Kimball. Factory documents still extant reveal that Mr. Carruthers' salary in 1920 was \$1.00 per hour. [Nearly double the average.]

Several other people prominent in the Kimball organ division should be mentioned. The head of the metal pipe shop until his retirement in 1929 was Frank A. Meyer, a brother of Jerome B. Meyer, owner of the well-known Milwaukee pipe making firm bearing his name. Carl Benson was foreman of the electric action and wiring department until 1925 when he left to join Welte. Previously he had been with E. M. Skinner from 1907 to 1917 and then with Wangerin-Weickhardt until joining Kimball in 1918. Walter D. Hardy, one of the company's best salesmen, was appointed manager of the organ department in 1925 and was succeeded in that post by William Wallace Kimball, grand nephew of W.W. Kimball, Sr., in 1930. Wallace Kimball (1901-??) started in the pipe organ factory in 1925 as a draftsman earning \$13 per week and later worked on organ installation crews before assuming the post as department manager. He became president of the company in 1945.

There was one man, however, who, more than any other, was really responsible for the Kimball pipe organ we know today. If George Michel was the voice of the Kimball organ, R.P. Elliot was its soul. Robert Pier Elliot (1871-1941) began his career in the organ industry in 1889 with Granville Wood & Son of Northville, Michigan



This Kimball console controlled 27 ranks when it was originally installed in the Colonial Theatre, Seattle, in 1914.

shortly before that firm was acquired by Farrand & Votey. At the latter firm Mr. Elliot made the acquaintance of John T. Austin and was instrumental in organizing the Austin Organ Company in 1898, becoming its vice president. When Robert Hope-Jones joined Austin in 1903 as vice president, Elliot became secretary. Angered because the firm accepted Hope-Jones' resignation in his absence, Elliot sold his Austin stock and founded the Kinetic Engineering Company, having obtained the rights to manufacture Kinetic blowers in America during a previous trip to England. After the Kinetic company was well established, Mr. Elliot left the country for a few years, pursuing his other avocation of mining, in Mexico and England. He returned to America in May of 1909 to assume the presidency of the Hope-Jones Organ Company of Elmira, New York but left the country again to pursue his mining interests when the Hope-Jones company failed in 1910.

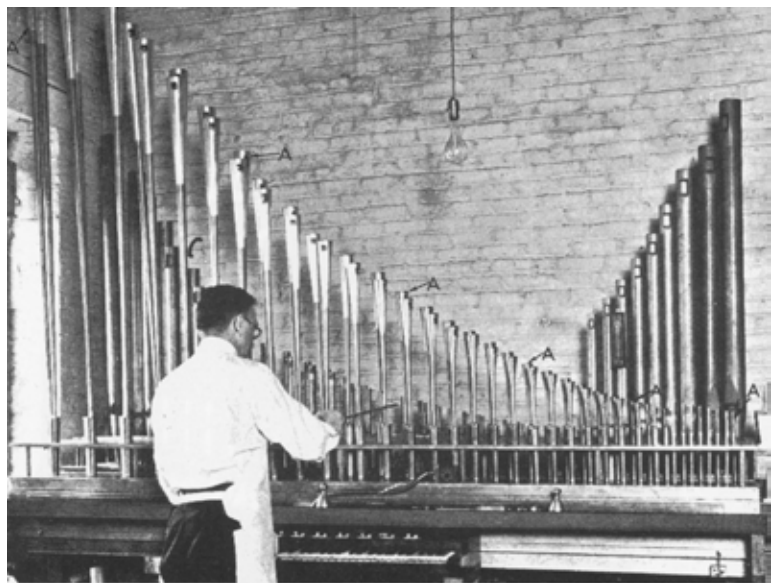
Mr. Elliot returned to America to stay in 1914, becoming eastern United States manager for Kimball. He left this position in October of 1916 to be-

come vice president and general manager of the California Organ Company, which soon became the Robert-Morton Company, and he remained there until May of 1918. At that time F. T. Milner resigned as manager of Kimball's organ division due to ill health and Mr. Elliot stepped in to fill his position. One of the first policies instituted by Elliot was the abolition of tubular pneumatic action; after 1918 electropneumatic action was used exclusively.

R. P. Elliot embodied a number of talents which served the Kimball company well: he was well schooled in Hope-Jones principles of electric action organ building; he was a knowledgeable businessman who had experience in the day to day operations of running several organ companies; he knew, socialized with, and was respected by many of the country's leading organists and he was recognized by his peers as one of the leading figures in the entire industry. He was described by Riley Daniels, former president of the Moller company, as "a very polished gentleman" and "a professional letter writer" His letter writing skill kept him in close communication with friends in the industry with the result that he was better informed than most about what was going on in the organ business. He also listened to the needs of organists and did his best to satisfy them; not all firms had such a wise policy!

Part 2 will appear in the April Pipeline.

Images from Encyclopedia of the American Theatre Organ, Volume 1.



This set of oboe pipes has been voiced by one of the Kimball voicers and is being checked by head voicer George Michel.

Wickerham's Twenties Roar at Calvary

By Jamie Snell

Stares of delight and amazement were evident across the audience as organist Dave Wickerham performed "The Best of the Roaring 20s and More" on February 10 at Calvary Christian Assembly Church. Over 150 people attended the concert, including a number of members of the Seattle AGO Chapter, which had helped publicize it (many thanks!).

Wickerham devoted the first half mainly to selections from the Roaring 20s, many

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Russ & Jo Ann Evans, Newsletter Editors

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familiar, like "Alexander's Ragtime Band," a few less so, like J. Frederick Coots's "Doin' the Raccoon." Then just before the intermission he invited the audience to write suggestions for the second half on a sheet in the lobby. When he returned he scanned the sheet and proceeded to play a medley of more than twenty of the suggested songs without a break! Some were from the 20s, like "Kitten on the Keys," while others were more recent, such as "Phantom of the Opera," adroitly interwoven with themes from Bach's "Toccatina and Fugue in D Minor." Not only did he perform this impromptu medley from memory, but the selections were polished arrangements, tastefully registered, flowing seamlessly from one to the next. The awe in the audience was palpable.

The 3/19 Kimball-Wurlitzer organ at Calvary sounded the best ever, thanks to

recent upgrades by principal technician Greg Smith, assisted by Russ Evans, Bob Zat, and others. These included improvements to the wind supply, adjustments to the tremulants, and a new tibia rank. Many more enhancements are planned, including several new ranks of pipes and tuned percussions, a fully equipped toy counter, and a state-of-the-art relay. PSTOS and the church are enthusiastic about these developments, which will make the instrument even more exciting to hear.

Dave Wickerham is an internationally celebrated performer. He has served on the staffs Organ Stop Pizza in Phoenix, Mesa, and Tucson, AZ; Pipes & Pizza in Lansing, MI; the Piper Music Palace in Greenfield, IL; and Roxy's Pipe Organ Pizzeria in Las Vegas; and for seven years as Organist-Curator with the legendary Milhous Collection in Boca Raton, FL. He is cur-

rently Organist in Residence at the Crystal Theatre in Crystal Falls, MI. He has done three tours of Australia and New Zealand to great acclaim, most recently in 2012, and has recorded four albums with two more in the works.

Without a doubt, everyone who heard this concert will be excited to hear Dave Wickerham whenever he returns, and to hear the Calvary organ as its expansion progresses over the coming months.

RIGHT: Master of Ceremonies Bob Zat did a masterful job. Dave's keyboard skills were visible to all thanks to live video projection on large dual screens, one on each side of the sanctuary.

BELOW: The large crowd was impressed by Dave's masterful use of the organ.

