PUGET SOUND PIPELINE

PUGET SOUND THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

Volume 36, Nos. 1-2 January-February 2025 www.pstos.org

2025 at a Glance!

Saturdays at 2 p.m. **Calvary Christian Assembly, Seattle**

Start planning now to attend the ATOS Convention this summer. More news coming soon!

ATOS Convention
July 21-27, 2025
Milwaukee, WI

In Memoriam

We were sad to learn of the passing on November 14 of **John E. Norton**, a highly-esteemed and stalwart support of PSTOS over the years. He was a generous donor, served as a Board member, and received a volunteer recognition award in 2017. After his service on the Board, he asked to be kept on the Board email list as a way to stay in touch, which we were glad to do. **Our condolences** to his wife of many years, Karen O'Donnell.

In addition, **Paul Quarino** passed away on December 15, 2024. A veteran theatre pipe organ artist, he played at Portland's Organ Grinder Restaurant from 1974-1996 and was the organist at Rivercrest Community Church in Portland for more than 30 years. He had played concerts for PSTOS at Merlyn Johnson's and Bill Keller's homes. Our sympathy to his family and friends.

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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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DIRECTORS
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Bob Borton, borton@pstos.org
Tyler Pattison, tyler@pstos.org
Grahame McMaster, grahame@pstos.org

COMMITTEES & ROLES
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we head into 2025, PSTOS is going strong, with six events on the calendar, thanks to the Program Team, chaired by Jo Ann Evans: Seamus Gethicker in concert on March 29; Donnie Rankin in concert on June 7; Richard Hills in concert on July 19; the Evans summer social on Aug. 3 or 10 (TBD); Nick Renkosik in concert on Sept. 27; and the holiday party on Dec. 7.

The 2025 Board was installed at the Dec.1 holiday party, with all members continuing service for another year (thanks to all!). Our financial condition is sound, as reported by Treasurer Jim Welch at the same event. Membership is stable at around 125. The two organs we use for most events and maintain, at HLCC and CCA, are in fine condition, thanks to Greg Smith and volunteers Bob Borton, Terry Perdue, and Jeff Snyder, as is the Seattle Paramount organ, maintained by Phil Hargiss and his crew. The Pipeline continues solidly as always, thanks to Editor Annabelle Schertzinger, and likewise the website, thanks to Tom Blackwell. And our unsung heroines, Ellen Sullivan and Marie Perdue, continue to provide scrumptious refreshments at every event!

We had six successful events in 2024: the Spring Fling, concerts by David Marsh, Brett Valliant, and Dave Wickerham, plus the Evans summer social and the recent holiday party. I was particularly encouraged by the participation of our younger organists, including Mason Jones, Elliot Sander, Estelle McMaster, Jamison Colagrossi, Sawyer Best, and Kazuki Taylor. Attendance at events is on an upward trend, thanks to good work by several members, including promotion on social media by Grahame McMaster. I'm concerned, as is the entire Board, about the longer term. Our long-time leaders have been gradually stepping down, and while we've been fortunate in gaining some fine "new blood," we will need more if the chapter is to keep going strong. This is true for all leadership categories – officers, directors, committee chairs, liaisons, and specialized responsibilities, notably overseeing organ maintenance. We also need to continue building our membership and attendance numbers, for example, through increased media outreach, reciprocal promotion with related organizations, and coordination with retirement homes.

You can help! Please tell your friends, family, and neighbors how much you enjoy the kooky, retro sound of the theatre organ – word of mouth is a major factor in concert attendance. And if you have time, consider getting more involved with PSTOS, anything from helping out at events to serving in a leadership role.

Happy New Year!

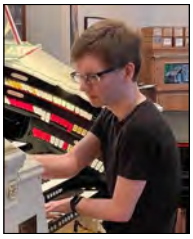
Reminder—
It's time to renew your membership for 2025. Renew online or check the website pstos.org. $25 per family

Also consider joining ATOS. New price $70 effective September 1, 2024. Increase needed to balance the budget. *www.atos.org.*

2025 Concerts

Put these on your calendar now for 2025!!

March 29, 2025 Seamus Gethicker



2016 winner of ATOS' Young Organist Competition, Seamus now performs at venues around the country and serves as guest organist at Organ Stop Pizza, in Mesa, Arizona. He has a broad taste in music and his programs contain selections that are sure to please everyone.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u0j2IqlFvoA

June 7, 2025 Donnie Rankin

Donnie's first interest in theatre organ was when he was 3 years old. In 2007 he began studying with Jelani Eddington, & he won the ATOS Young Organist Competition the same year. Now he plays concerts around the world.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7RrPKPFL-JM

July 19, 2025 Richard Hills

We're excited to welcome back Richard Hills who played a fabulous concert for us in June 2023. Richard was named Organist of the Year by ATOS in 2010. He's equally at home on both classical organ and theatre organ and is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWClq1Pr7hM

September 27, 2025 Nick Renkosik

Nick not only has degrees in piano and organ performance, he is also an organ restoration technician and has a degree in Business Design & Innovation. He has also studied with Jelani Eddington and plays concerts around the country.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVX7-jaI-OY

Holiday Party Lifts Spirits

Spirits were running high in the afternoon of December 1st, as the audience of about 70 gathered for the annual PSTOS Holiday Celebration at the Haller Lake Community Club. The tables were adorned with fancy tablecloths, poinsettias, and holiday candy, and the organ console and piano were decorated with Christmas trees and tinsel garlands, thanks to the work of Ellen Sullivan and several volunteers. Many attendees were wearing festive red and green to help usher in the season. At the rear table, cupcakes with Christmas-themed frosting were ready, as well as coffee and other delights, thanks to Marie Perdue and Ellen.

After emcee Jeff Snyder welcomed the audience, President Jamie Snell called to order the annual membership meeting, at which the 2025 Board nominees present recited the Oath of Office, and the Board (some in absentia) was installed by acclamation of the chapter members present. Treasurer Jim Welch and Program Chair Jo Ann Evans gave brief reports, the meeting was adjourned, and the festivities were underway!

Jamison Colagrossi, one of our younger organists, opened with “Put One Foot in Front of the Other,” from the 1970 TV special Santa Claus is Comin’ to Town. He was followed by our youngest organist, 11-year-old Kazuki Taylor, playing “White Christmas,” the 1940 Irving Berlin classic popularized by Bing Crosby. Yours truly then played Mel Torme’s “The Christmas Song” (AKA “Chestnuts”), a hit for Nat King Cole in 1946; “It’s Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas,” composed in 1951 by Meredith Willson, of Music Man fame; and Felix Bernard’s 1934 song “Winter Wonderland,” a hit tune for Guy Lombardo, Johnny Mercer, and Perry Como. Jo Ann Evans then came to the console, and Paul VanDyck to the piano, for a set of duets: “Santa Claus is Coming to Town,” the 1934 hit by J. Fred Coots and Haven Gillespie; “Silver Bells,” composed by Jay Livingston and Ray Evans in 1950, and famously sung by Bing Crosby; the 1963 Andy Williams hit “It’s the Most Wonderful Time of the Year”; and “The Christmas Waltz,” written in 1954 by Sammy Cahn and Jule Styne for Frank Sinatra. The duo concluded with the traditional song “Hanukkah, O Hanukkah.”

Sawyer Best, another of our younger players, continued the program with a medley from the 1964 TV special Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, featuring the 1949 song by Robert May and Johnny Marks. Jamison then came to the microphone and, accompanied by Sawyer, sang a heartfelt rendition of “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas,” by Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane, sung by Judy Garland in the 1944 musical Meet Me in St. Louis. That was followed by three Bing Crosby hits: the 1942 song by Irving Berlin, “Happy Holiday,” introduced in the film Holiday Inn; the 1950 hit “It’s a Marshmallow World,” by Carl Sigman and Peter DeRose; and from 1943, “I’ll Be Home for Christmas,” by Kim Gannon Walter Kent. And to close the set, Leroy Anderson’s timeless 1948 hit “Sleigh Ride,” perhaps most famously played by the Boston Pops under Arthur Fiedler. For this song, the audience was carefully instructed and cued to participate with four hand claps, simulating whip cracks, and an exuberant horse whinny at the end.

The final musical group was a singalong of four songs: “Silver Bells” (see above); the 1950 Frank Sinatra hit “Let it Snow,” by Sammy Cahn and Jule Styne; “Jingle Bells,” the classic 1850 song by James Lord Pierpoint; and the 16th-century English carol, “We Wish You a Merry Christmas.”

All the performers were in fine form, the organ sounded best-ever, and the audience was plainly delighted. The program closed with the usual drawing for the poinsettias on the tables, and Happy Holidays wishes by the emcee. As always, many attendees helped with cleanup; many thanks to you, all the performers, the setup crew, and everyone who helped make this event a success!

Silent Movie Mondays at the Paramount Theater

Monday, January 27, 2025
The Gold Rush (1925)
Live full orchestra performs Chaplin's original score.

Written, produced, directed by Charlie Chaplin who stars as the Lone Prospector, a character who ventures into the Alaskan wilderness during the Gold Rush in search of fortune. One of the film's most iconic scenes features Chaplin's character cooking and eating his own shoe to stave off starvation. *The Gold Rush* is celebrated for its blend of comedy and pathos, and Chaplin himself considered it one of his best works

Monday, April 28, 2025
The Last Laugh (1924)
Donna Parker on the organ

This German silent film directed by F.W. Murnau stars Emil Jannings as an aging hotel doorman who takes immense pride in his job and uniform. However, his life takes a dramatic turn when he is demoted to the position of washroom attendant due to his advancing age. The film ends with a surprising twist allowing him to return to the hotel in a position of newfound wealth and respect. *The Last Laugh* is celebrated for its innovative use of the moving camera and its profound depiction of human dignity and despair.

Monday, August 25, 2025
The Freshman (1925)
Tyler Pattison on the organ, Paul Hansen on Foley Sound

Harold Lloyd shines as the lovable underdog Harold Lamb, a naive and eager college freshman who dreams of becoming popular by joining the school's football team. Despite his enthusiasm, Harold becomes the butt of jokes and is unaware that he is the laughingstock of the school. Through his perseverance and genuine nature, Harold finally earns the respect and popularity he sought. A delightful blend of physical comedy and sweet charm.

All shows begin at 7 p.m. $12 general admission / $10 for seniors

Scott Foppiano

November 11,1965– December 17, 2024

A sought-after organist and choirmaster, Scott studied both classical and theatre organ and was equally at home with friends in American Guild of Organists and American Theatre Organ Society as well as other music organizations. As a choirmaster, he took his choir to Rome in 2001 where they performed for Pope John Paul II in addition to other concerts. He was awarded "ATOS Organist of the Year" in 2007 & was a well-loved artist. He played a concert for PSTOS in June 2018 at CCA and also performed at the 2010 ATOS convention when we hosted it here in Seattle. His favorite thing was to play Christmas music, and he played a Christmas concert in Spokane every year. His last concert was there on December 15, 2024. ATOS and PSTOS will miss Scott.

AGO Programs

Classical organ events for your enjoyment
More information at www.agoseattle.com.

Thursday, January 9, 7:30 p.m. AND
Saturday, January 11, 8:00 p.m.
Organist Paul Jacobs joins the Seattle Symphony in the Poulenc Organ Concerto at Benaroya Hall, Seattle.

Monday, January 13, time pending
AGO Chapter Event at St. Andrew's Episcopal, 111 NE 80th St., Seattle, 98115. Tim Drewes will give a multi-media presentation on historic American organs. No charge.

Friday, January 17, 12:10 noon
Third Friday concert at Christ Episcopal, 310 North K St., Tacoma, 98403. Free-will donation at the door.

Friday, January 17, 7:30 p.m. AND
Sunday January 19, 3:00 p.m.
Organ Plus concert in Thomsen Chapel of St. Mark's Cathedral, 1245 10th Ave E, Seattle, 98102. Laura Loge, soprano & John Stuntebeck, organist.

Saturday, January 18, 7:30 p.m.
Concert of the works of Joseph Hayden. St. James Cathedral, 804 Ninth Ave., Seattle, 98104.

Sunday, January 19, 10:00 p.m.
Organ by Night at St. Mark's Cathedral, 1245 10th Ave. E, Seattle, 98102. Michael Plagerman, organist, after Compline.

Monday, January 27, time pending
AGO Chapter Event at St. Andrew's Episcopal, 111 NE 80th St., Seattle, 98115. Rim Drewes will give a multi-media presentation on historic American organs followed by open console time on the church's Bond tracker pipe organ. No charge.

Saturday, February 1, 2:00 p.m.
Christopher Stroh in concert on the Pasi organ at Faith Lutheran Church, 9041 166th Ave NE, Redmond, 98052. $10 per person.

Saturday, February 1, 7:30 p.m.
"Soundscapes through Time" organ concert by Dr. Stephen Price at Church of the Blessed Sacrament, 5050 8th Ave NE, Seattle, 98105. Suggested donation $30/$25.

Friday, February 7, 7:30 p.m.
Flentrop organ recital at St. Mark's Cathedral, 1245 10th Ave E, Seattle, 98102. French-Canadian organist Isabelle Demers.

Sunday, February 9, 3:00 p.m.
Barbara Baird plays the Fritts organ at Lagerquist Hall, Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma.

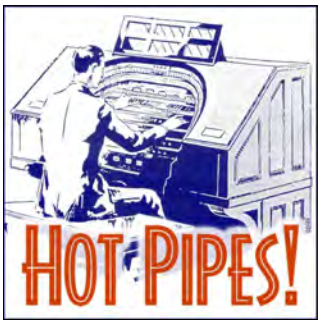
Sunday, February 16 , 10:00 p.m.
Organ by Night at St. Mark's Cathedral, 1245 10th Ave E, Seattle, 98102. Amiel Elfert at the Flentrop organ after Compline. No charge.

Friday, February 21, 12:10 noon
Third Friday concert at Christ Episcopal, 310 North K St., Tacoma, 98403. Donation at door.

Friday, February 21, 7:30 p.m.
Christopher Stroh plays music by Bach, Dupre, Herbert Brewer, & more.

Friday, February 28, 7:30 p.m. AND
Saturday, March 1, 7:30 p.m.
Music of Handel, Purcell & Correlli. Epiphany Episcopal, 1805 38th Ave., Seattle, 98122. $38.

Here are some websites where you can hear theatre organs at your leisure!!!



"For the best in theatre pipe entertainment from around the world, hosted by Steve Ashley."

https://www.hotpipes.eu/

A chance to hear a concert by Seamus Gethicker.

ALSO: type in "Kay McAbee at the Artisan Organ" into your browser to hear/see a concert. Link too long for here!!

On October 7, Moira Macdonald of the *Seattle Times* wrote a great article about theatre organs in our area and Sawyer Best. PSTOS was included in the article. If you would like to read the whole thing, here is the link:

https://www.seattletimes.com/entertainment/music/maintaining-rare-theater-organs-around-seattle-is-a-labor-of-love/?utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=owned_echobox_f&utm_source=Facebook#Echobox=1728320762-1

The Pipeline publishes, at the editor's discretion, one-time free ads submitted by PSTOS members, no larger than 2 column inches, including a brief description of the item, contact info, and optionally an image, but not the price of the item.

Pages from the Past

World photo/Kathryn Stevens

Above: Brad Miller, organist, fine-tunes the Wurlitzer organ at the Wenatchee Valley Museum & Cultural Center Friday before the Pipes, Camera, Action! movie night with organ accompaniment Saturday. **Below:** Bill Starkey stands among the 754 pipes he has restored.

Wurlitzer is the star of silent movies

◆ Volunteers keep old Liberty Theatre organ alive

By Rachel Schleif
World staff writer

WENATCHEE — After 90 years, Wenatchee's mighty Wurlitzer can still blow your socks off. On Saturday night, as the silent films played on, Brad Miller's hands deftly traveled the two antique keyboards. His feet hopped between the wooden pedals, his eyes glued to the movie screen before an audience of about 100 at the Wenatchee Valley Museum & Cultural Center.

"It's so natural, it's like typing," Miller said before the show. "I don't even have to think about what my hands are doing."

Miller, who taught music at Columbia Elementary School and owned two local music stores before moving to Spokane about 10 years ago, gets a kick out of being one of a few hundred people in the nation who can play theater organ.

"It's such a unique art form because of its connection with

Please see ORGAN, Page A9

World photo/Rachel Schleif

From the *Wenatchee World* newspaper, Nov 15, 2010. I've never seen this place. I think it's time to go visit. If you would also like to go, let me know. Let's get a group together! (*ed.)*

Pages from the Past

World photo/Kathryn Stevens

Organist Brad Miller, learned to play the organ from his mother. He plays the pipe organ to accompany silent movies at the Wenatchee Valley Museum & Cultural Center.

Organ

From Page A1

the music," he said about silent movies. "I think we've lost that personal connection with the music and the performer. When I'm up here, it's not just about the movie. It's more like a variety show."

The movies were anything but silent. The audience laughed, groaned and talked back to the screen as a matching melody flowed through the Wurlitzer.

At the push of a button, Miller provided sound effects, too: the clip-clop of horse hooves on Buster Keaton's getaway carriage, the sirens of police cars chasing him and a comical slide as Keaton realized he just lit a cigarette with the fuse of a bomb.

The wooden organ itself looked stately and vintage. The audience couldn't see the 754 pipes, drum set, marimba, xylophone and whistles in the room behind the movie screen. Still, the Wenatchee Wurlitzer is relatively small compared to the other 20 known pipe organs in the state that survived the '50s and '60s.

"It's like antique cars. Pipe organs have this small cult following who restore them and enjoy playing them," said Miller, 59, who learned to play organ from his mother, who studied it in college and graduated just as soundtracked movies put theatrical organists out of work. "The people who remember organ music, that generation is dying off," Miller said. "We have to entice a new generation."

Bill Starkey took it all in from his seat in the back rows, listening to the organ he lovingly refers to as "her."

"I was born in Wenatchee and I remember when I was a kid I would sit down in the theater for hours and watch Ken Warner play it," the 84-year-old said.

"I used to love to listen to that thing when I was about seven or eight years old. Little did I know that I'd ever get so close to it as I have been."

Starkey was one of the key players behind the restoration of the old Wurlitzer when it was donated to the museum in 1988, moving from the Liberty Theatre.

PLEASE SEE VIDEO at wenatcheeworld.com

The theater originally bought the Wurlitzer in 1919 to accompany its silent movies. As soundtracks replaced the silent movies, the old organ faded into disuse.

By the late 1950s, it was rarely played.

Thirty years later, Starkey said he "kept hounding" the owner, Dave Gellatly Sr., about restoring the old theater organ. After six months, he agreed.

"When I first looked at it the keyboards were gone," Starkey said. "It was just a couple of rails and a whole mess of connectors. I said 'Boy, I don't know what I got myself into.' "

Volunteers spent months cleaning the black, sticky residue inside the pipes, left by decades of coal and oil heating. The wiring, then 70 years old, was shot.

"I spent lots of hours in the pipe chamber putting in new contacts and leathering until finally we brought her back to life," Starkey said. He lost part of his thumb sawing a piece of wood for the organ.

Starkey, a retiree from a phone company, called the Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society to guide parts of the project.

Meanwhile, the museum raised $60,000 to contract with Wood N' Things to restore the wood console and a Seattle company for some of the restoration work.

The project took two years to finish.

More than 20 years later, Starkey and his fellow volunteer Herb Sinclair still visit the organ monthly to check the oil levels, the pipes, the wiring, everything. Tuning takes more than an hour, Starkey said.

The two are training Jessie Zylstra, a Wenatchee Valley College student, to do the maintenance work.

"It's just something I enjoy doing," Starkey said. "It's a never-ending task."

Rachel Schleif: 664-7139
schleif@wenatcheeworld.com