PUGET SOUND PIPELINE

PUGET SOUND THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

Volume 36, Nos. 3-4 March-April 2025 www.pstos.org

Pops on Pipes

presents
in concert

Seamus Gethicker

Saturday, March 29, 2025
2:00 p.m.
Calvary Christian Assembly

Winner of the 2016 ATOS Young Organist Competition, Seamus began picking out tunes by ear on the piano at a very young age. His interest in pipe organs began at age 8 when he attended a Christmas concert in his home state of Maine.. Then he stumbled across a theatre organ video online and was instantly hooked. He has had the privilege of performing in venues across the country and enjoys introducing theater organ to new audiences Since 2022, he has been a regular guest organist at Organ Stop Pizza in Mesa, Arizona. When he's not at the organ, you can find Seamus buzzing around in the sky flying planes as he follows his interest in aviation. With his broad taste in music, he plays a wide variety of tunes. His concert is sure to have something for everyone. Bring a friend or two and enjoy a delightful afternoon together!

Driving directions to Calvary Christian Assembly, 6801 Roosevelt Way NE

Southbound I-5
Take exit 171 toward NE 71st/NE 65th St. Merge onto 6th Ave. NE
Take a slight left at NE 71st St. Continue onto NE 70th St.
Turn right at Roosevelt Way NE. Destination will be in the right.

Northbound I-5
Take exit 171 for WA-522/Lake City Way toward Bothell
Take a slight right at NE 73rd St.
Take the 1st right onto Roosevelt Way NE
Destination will be on the right.

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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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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Spring is on the way, and with it our first concert of the year: Seamus Gethicker on Saturday, March 29, 2 PM at Calvary Christian Assembly. Gethicker is a highly acclaimed, up-and-coming artist, winner of the 2016 ATOS Theatre Organist of the Year. He's sure to be sensational, and we look forward to seeing you there!

Later this year we have three more exciting Saturday concerts at CCA, as well as two other events: Donnie Rankin on June 7, Richard Hills on July 19, Nick Renkosik on September 27, plus the traditional summer social at the residence of Russ and Jo Ann Evans on Sunday, August 3, and the holiday party at Haller Lake Community Club on Sunday, December 7. Please plan to attend these events, and encourage your music-loving friends to join you!

PSTOS is chugging along as ever, with those six events coming up, regular Board and Program Planning meetings, and of course the Pipeline. We're now starting to focus on 2026 and beyond, searching for ways to invigorate the organization, especially to increase attendance and membership, and to encourage a few new volunteers to take leadership roles. We particularly need someone to take overall responsibility for organ maintenance. I've made the decision not to continue as President after 2025, and there will be other vacancies. If you're looking for a fun and rewarding new activity, please consider getting more involved with PSTOS! Email me at jamie@pstos.org.

This year's ATOS convention will be July 21-27 in Milwaukee. The world-class concert artists will include Mark Herman, Simon Gledhill, Seamus Gethicker, Walt Strony, Dave Wickerham, Ben Forsthoffer, Brett Valliant, Richard Hills, Justin LaVoie, Jelani Eddington, and Donnie Rankin. They'll perform on magnificent instruments at venues including the Sanfilippo Estate, the Riverside, Oriental, Geneva, and Capitol Theatres, and the one-of-a-kind Carma Labs. And of course there will be other activities – the cocktail party and awards dinner, jam sessions, seminars, tours, the Young Organist Competition, and much else. Reserve your place now at http://atos.org/convention ...see you there!

Jamie Snell
President

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. $35 for new members. Receive ***Theatre Organ*** magazine and other benefits.
www.atos.org.

2025 Concerts

More Concerts in 2025!!

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

Mark your calendar now for our **Summer Social**
at Russ & Jo Ann Evans' Kenmore home
Sunday, August 3
Details to come

This is our best opportunity to get to know each other better while hearing good music, having open console time at Russ & Jo Ann's 3/18 Wurlitzer, and eating yummy desserts. Plan to attend!!

2025 ATOS Annual Convention

Sheraton Milwaukee Brookfield Hotel
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

July 21-27, 2025

PRE-GLOW - MONDAY, JULY 21

Morning & Afternoon: Jonas Residence, Mark Herman (3/12 Wurlitzer)
Evening: Sanfilippo Estate, Simon Gledhill (5/80 Wurlitzer)
Participants will enjoy touring the carousel building, which is the home of the most complete example of a European salon carousel in existence - the 'Eden Palais' (or Eden Palace), built in 1890, and dinner will be served.

TUESDAY, JULY 22

The **Pre-Glow** continues: **Morning & Afternoon**: Bieck Residence, Seamus Gethicker (3/19 Wurlitzer)
Evening: Convention Opener at the Riverside Theatre, Walt Strony (3/14 Wurlitzer)

WEDNESDAY, JULY 23

Morning: Oriental Theatre, Young Organist Competition (3/15 Wurlitzer)
Optional Lunch at Organ Piper Pizza (3/30 Wurlitzer / Kimball)
Afternoon: Hauptwerk Seminar & Annual Meeting (Both at Hotel)
Evening: Geneva Theater, Dave Wickerham (2/10 Wurlitzer)

THURSDAY, JULY 24

Morning: Free Time!
Afternoon: Capitol Theater, Ben Forsthoffer (3/14 Barton)
Evening: Riverside Theatre, Brett Valliant (3/14 Wurlitzer)

FRIDAY, JULY 25

Morning: Oriental Theatre, Richard Hills (3/15 Wurlitzer)
Afternoon: Geneva Theater, Justin LaVoie (3/10 Wurlitzer) & Optional Jam Session at John Cornue's Shop
Evening: Cocktail Party at Hotel, Perry Petta on Piano

SATURDAY, JULY 26

Morning: Carma Labs, Jelani Eddington (4/90 Hybrid)
Afternoon: Carma Labs, Donnie Rankin (4/90 Hybrid)

AFTER-GLOW - SUNDAY, JULY 27

(Two groups) East Troy Railroad Museum Lunch / Dinner Train with Lake Geneva Boat Tour

Email Ryan Jonas --- ryan@dtoswi.org --- for questions..

For more info and to register: https://www.atos.org/convention

Kenyon Hall

(home of a 1929 Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ)
7904 35th Ave SW, Seattle, 98126

June 6—-Variety Show featuring Sawyer Best at the organ
June 29—Murl Sanders band with Sawyer Best playing pre/post show + intermission on the organ

Watch for details in the next issue!

Silent Movie Mondays at the Paramount Theater

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**

Silent Movies at The Historic Everett Theatre

2911 Colby Ave., Everett, WA 98201
with Tyler Pattison at the organ

March 23, 3:00 p.m.

Romantic love & rivalry play out in three times periods—in the Stone Age with dinosaurs & a turtle used as a Ouija board, in ancient Rome with a chariot race using dogs instead of horses, and in contemporary times including a very fragile car.

May 4, 3:00 p.m.

Pirates loot a ship of its riches before blowing it up. Father & son survivors of noble birth wash ashore on an island & the father perishes. The son promises to seek revenge by infiltrating the same band of buccaneers and bringing them to justice.

AGO Programs

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

Saturday, March 1, 10 a.m.—noon
Master class with Dr. Caroline Robinson at St. Dunstan's of Shoreline. Contact Susanna Valleau at music@sdchp.org.

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

Monday, March 3, 7 p.m.
Dr. Caroline Robinson presents a Masterclass: The Art of Liturgical Improvisation at St. Dunstan's Episcopal, 722 145th N., Shoreline, 98133. No charge.

Saturday, March 8, 7:30 p.m.
Organ recital by Michael Plagerman at Church of the Blessed Sacrament, 5050 8th Ave. NE, Seattle, 98105. Works by Dupre, Messiaen & Bach. $25 suggested donation.

Sunday, March 16, 3:00 p.m.
The Seattle Bach Choir will present a concert entitled "Day" at Trinity Episcopal Church, 609 8th Ave., Seattle, 98104. Suggested donation $20.

Sunday, March 16, 10:00 p.m.
Organ by Night at St. Mark's Cathedral, 1245 10th Ave. E., Seattle 98102. Kyle Haugen at the Flentrop organ. Free.

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

Saturday, March 22, 11:00 a.m.
And Grace Will Lead us Home—a journey in hymns through the seasons of life at Green Lake Adventist Church, 6350 E. Green Lake Way N, Seattle, 98103. Open to the public.

Sunday, April 13, 3:00 p.m.
Concert by Katelyn Emerson celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Martin Pasi organ at Trinity Lutheran Church, 6215 196th St. SW, Lynnwood. Suggested donation $15/$10.

Friday, April 18, 12:10 noon
Third Friday concert at Christ Episcopal, 310 North K St., Tacoma, 98403. Donation at the door.

Sunday, April 20, 10:00 p.m.
Organ by Night at St. Mark's Cathedral, 1245 10th Ave. E., Seattle 98102. Michael Kleinschmidt at the Flentrop organ after Compline. No charge.

Sunday, April 27, 7:30 p.m.
Poulenc Organ Concerto, North Corner Chamber Orchestra, Blessed Sacrament Church, 5050 8th Ave. NE, Seattle, 98105. Tickets available through NOCCO.

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.

Here is a website 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/

Position open:
Twelfth Church of Christ, Scientist, Seattle, 1700 28th Avenue W., Seattle 98199 is hiring an organist for Sunday services. Services needing coverage include the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and any 5th Sunday of every month. If interested, please email seattle12cs@gmail.com

FREE: SAVE ME from recycler, I'm the complete Wicks theatre organ purchased in 2006 from Don James of Hillsboro, OR, carefully boxed and in heated storage since then. 2 manual console, 800+ pipes, lots of toys, blower. Ranks include Violin, Tibia Clausa, Tuba, Vox Humana, Celese, Flute, and Diapason, Organ is in Anchorage Alaska; easy truck access. History and pics available on request 907-561-5648. finley@ak.net.

2024 Financial Report

Income	
Membership	$1,963.44
Donations	931.72
Corporate Match	7.00
Concerts	4,840.96
Member Events	1,216.00
Total Income	$8,959.12
Expenses	
Seattle City Light	$ 641.09
HLCC	1,040.00
Concerts	5,580.25
Member Events	628.12
Equipment	772.79
Administrative	795.23
Total Expenses	$ 9,437.48

Pages from the Past

Sound of Silents

Couple keeps alive a love of theater organs

By Bart Ripp
The News Tribune

When Jane and Homer Johnson sit at the console, the lights go dark. The audience hushes. A rosy spotlight shines on a pit behind the orchestra.

Their hearts racing, the Johnsons are languidly propelled from the pit on a hydraulic lift. The audience sighs. The Johnsons rise, higher and higher. They swing into "It Had To Be You" on the organ.

Homer R. Johnson, 77, and Jane McKee Powers Johnson, 76, have nurtured this reverie from a time long lost to today's movie fans and video freaks. The Johnsons prefer to remember the days before television, before radio, a time at the dawn of mass entertainment. The Johnsons like recalling silent films accompanied by an organist.

Their lives have been dedicated to playing, fixing, promoting and revering the theater organ.

"Some people think organs are only good for theater music," Jane Johnson said. "But on theater organs, you can go everywhere. The classics. Pops. Polkas.

"You've got a whole orchestra at your fingertips."

Every Sunday, from 5 to 6 p.m., Jane Johnson is maestro of her own orchestra on a mighty Wurlizter at Pizza & Pipes in Tacoma. She has been playing this renovated Wurlitzer, once the pride of the Paramount Theatre in Fort Wayne, Ind., since Pizza & Pipes opened 16 years ago.

Unlike so many organs which have their rhythmic innards concealed, Pizza & Pipes' Wurlitzer has its resonators, horns and pipes exposed and lit. As a concession to the times, plush green Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles sit on the pipe chests.

Teenagers zooming on the Police Force video game stop their twitching thumbs when Jane Johnson plays "Feelings" on the Wurlitzer. If mom and dad played "Feelings" on the stereo, the kids would think what corny parents they have. At Pizza & Pipes, Jane Johnson weaves colors with the Wurlitzer's wall of sound.

Comment cards at the pizza parlor consistently register one response to Jane: "Awesome!"

That word was not so overused when Jane McKee was growing up in Aberdeen. She was recruited as an 18-year-old summer substitute to play the organ on KXRO, which broadcast an evening recital from Whiteside Mortuary, across the street from Jane's home.

"It was just a little box of whistles they had," Jane said. "My mother was a piano teacher, and she just couldn't see the organ. I

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ON THE COVER
Homer and Jane Johnson sit at the console of the theater organ in their home.
Photo: **Russ Carmack**
The News Tribune

From the January 14, 1991, edition of the "Morning News Tribune."

Pages from the Past

Russ Carmack/The News Tribu

Homer Johnson, above, tunes the tubas of the theater organ he and his wife Jane have assembled. Below, the organ's keyboard lights up Johnson's eyes.

Organs

Continued from Page 3

thought it was the most marvelous thing."

Jane McKee became the organist at the Temple and Music Box Theatres in Tacoma.

"Jane was a wonderful silent picture organist," said Will J. Conner, longtime local theater impresario. "See, an organist played the picture. Pratfalls. Chases. Train scenes. To play an organ before talkies was really a talent."

When sound invaded in 1929, organists were relegated to radio recitals. From 1938-42, Jane McKee played the Temple and Music Box organs on shows broadcast live by KVI, then headquartered in Tacoma. The show was called "Console Reveries." Will Conner introduced numbers requested by phone and mail. Jane McKee would play polka medleys and "Stars and Stripes Forever."

All this time, she knew Homer Johnson, who was a Tacoma theater projectionist and organ tuner. While growing up, Homer used to listen to a small Wurlitzer in Puyallup's Liberty Theatre. One day, Homer was standing outside the old Park Theatre on McKinley Avenue in Tacoma.

"I was going to Lincoln High, but it was summertime, so I was just standing outside the Park, gawking at the posters," Homer Johnson said. "The manager came out and said he needed somebody to hold down the keys while they tuned the organ.

"He sat me down at the console. I could glob a few keys on the piano. Once I got that organ sound out of my own hands, I was bitten. Organs became my life."

Homer and Jane didn't merge their talents until 1972. Widowed, they married and began building a home populated by theater organs. Two consoles are linked to a trembling basement, where Homer built a hybrid organ with huffing diaphragms, shuddering pipes and a great bottom.

The tibia (flute pipes) were rescued from the old Lincoln Theatre in Port Angeles. The tubas came from an Ernest M. Skinner model organ in Los Angeles. Many of the horns, flute, harp, clarinet and piccolo pipes were hand-crafted by Homer Johnson, to go with a percussion rack of brush cymbal, snare drum, Chinese gong and tambourine.

Their home is a shrine to the theater organ. The reading material in their bathroom, instead of a magazine or last Sunday's newspaper, is "The Life and Work of Ernest M. Skinner," who was a pioneer organ maker in Boston.

On their mantel is a framed photo of Homer McDonald, star organist at the Rialto in Downtown Tacoma.

"He was a genius," Jane Johnson said. "He could weave a spell."

Bookshelves are populated by bound volumes of the American Theatre Organ Society journal. The Johnsons like to entertain guests by reading aloud a 1978 article about Arnold Leverenz. He was a short, dapper, self-taught organist who perched on the Pantages console smoking a cigar.

Alexander Pantages bought 12 Robert-Morton organs in Van Nuys, Calif., and installed them in his theaters from Seattle to Oakland to Hollywood to Los Angeles. In 1923, the Tacoma Pantages had the first console elevator in the Northwest. Leverenz, a cigar bobbing in his mouth, was such a gifted organist that customers would come to the Pantages again and again to hear him play the earthquake, storm and crucifixion scenes in the 1927 silent hit "King of Kings."

When sound came to the Pantages in 1929, Leverenz transposed his career. He played nightly on KMO. He broadcast concerts for Tacoma Savings & Loan on a radio hookup from his home. He played organ for Afifi Temple Shrine, Western Washington Fair, Top of the Ocean Restaurant, Piper Funeral Home, Steve's Gay 90s and Tacoma Elks.

When Leverenz died in 1980, a brief pall fell over the theater organs in Western Washington. But a spotlight came back on, illuminating a pit where Jane and Homer Johnson rose on a hushed console, playing organ together.