PUGET SOUND THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

PUGET SOUND PIPELINE

Volume 37, Nos. 1 - 2 • Jan.– Feb. 2026 www.pstos.org • www.facebook.com/pstos

Coming March 22

SPRING FLING

Featuring our talented PSTOS musicians playing your favorite toe tapping tunes!

Food

Music

Fun

Sunday, March 22, 1:30 pm

Haller Lake Community Club

12579 Densmore Avenue North, Seattle

Watch this space for more info!

Drive directions to Haller Lake Community Club

Northbound I-5: Use Exit 174 onto NE 130th St., turn left over freeway one long block to 1st Ave. N.E. Turn left (south) one block to 128th. Right on N.E. 128th a few blocks to Densmore. Left on Densmore, clubhouse is on the right. Parking both front and rear. Handicapped entry with parking and an elevator at rear of building.

Southbound I-5: Use Exit 175 onto N.E. 145th, turn right one block to 1st Ave. N.E. Left (south) continuing through N.E. 130th to N.E. 128th. Continue where underlined above.

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Vol. 37, Nos. 1– 2, Jan. – Feb., 2026

Published by
Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society
10002 Aurora Ave N, Suite 36 #516
Seattle, WA 98133-9329

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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- **Secure!**
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http://www.pstos.org/membership/new-member.htm

PRESIDENT'S *Message*

Hello and Happy New Year to each of you!

As the new president of PSTOS, I'd like to introduce myself because I'm fairly new on the scene. Those of you who know Estelle McMaster probably already know me as "Estelle's mom." My name is Grahame McMaster. I live in Marysville with my husband and kids and spend my days homeschooling our boys, gardening, knitting, baking, and doing various other homesteading-type things. I'd like to tell you about how I was introduced to the theatre organ:

My oldest daughter, Estelle, had been studying piano for a couple of years and frequently mentioned how she would really like to try playing an organ. I knew someone who played organ for her church, so I arranged a time when they could meet up and Estelle could play around on the church organ. A few months later my friend called me up and told me that the American Guild of Organists was going to hold a "Pipe Organ Encounter" - kind of like an organ summer camp - and that the local chapter of the AGO had said that they would sponsor any local kids who were interested in attending. Was Estelle interested? Of course! So we bought her some organ shoes (who knew such a thing existed?) and shipped her down to Seattle for a week.

During that week, they toured several pipe organs around the city, including the 3/25 Kimball-Wurlitzer at Calvary Christian Assembly (now All Nations Church), which Jamie Snell and Jeff Snyder presented. Estelle was thrilled with this "theatre organ" - a thing of which I had never heard - and took Jamie and Jeff up on their offer to tour a different theatre organ in a local venue at a later date.

So a few weeks later I drove her down to the Paramount Theater and met up with a few other people. Phil Hargiss showed us the organ, took us up in a chamber, and I marveled at this enormous, interesting, complex instrument and wondered at how I'd never heard of them before. Estelle and others got to play the organ, Jamie played us a few songs, and Phil had it play more music through a computer program.

This was my introduction to the theatre organ.

As you may have guessed, the rest is history. We joined PSTOS, began attending concerts, and Jo Ann Evans graciously agreed to begin teaching Estelle the basics of playing the theatre organ.

Thank you for electing me and trusting me with the presidency of PSTOS. I hope to raise awareness of these instruments within the larger community and will endeavor to faithfully fulfill my duties.

I may not have a message in every Pipeline, but when I have something to say you'll hear from me.

Sincerely,
Grahame McMaster

2026 Officers and Directors, left to right: Jamie Snell, Phil Hargiss, Jim Welch, Bob Borton, Grahame McMaster, Annabelle Schertzinger, Jo Ann Evans. Absent: Bob Zat, Barb Graham

Coming in 2026

Your PSTOS program planning team has been hard at work putting together an exciting year of programs for you!

In addition to the Spring Fling on March 22nd, our annual holiday celebration at Haller Lake Community Club, and tentatively a summer social at the Evans home in Kenmore, three major concerts will be presented at All Nations Church (formerly CCA).

Thank you for supporting these events!

See www.pstos.org for details.

May 16

KEN DOUBLE

Ken will return to our area to entertain with his always enjoyable toe-tapping tunes.

July 25

BEN FORSTHOFFER

A rising young theatre organ star, Ben will be welcomed for the first time by PSTOS.

October 10

DAVE WICKERHAM

Always a favorite, Dave returns to entertain his many PNW fans.

A message from Jeff Snyder, PSTOS liaison to Calvary Christian Assembly, now All Nations Church

As you may have heard, Calvary Christian Assembly, the church where we have our concert series, has a new name. I serve as PSTOS liaison to the church, and I am also the vice-chairman of the church board.

When our last pastor resigned in June 2024, it became my job to lead the board in finding a new pastor. Because our attendance had been declining in recent years due to people moving to the suburbs and older people in our congregation passing away, the church board decided to look into merging with a church within our denomination that was growing.

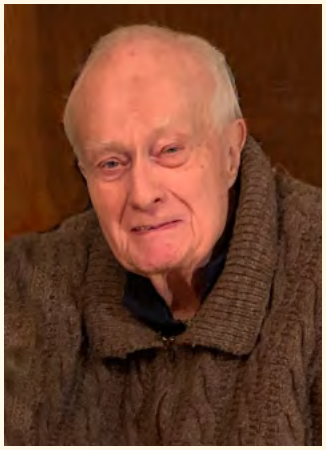
We ended up merging with a church from Lynnwood. Their congregation joined our congregation in Seattle, and their pastors joined with our associate pastor and church staff to lead the merged church. It has really been a miraculous merger! Legally, we have formed a new church with a new set of bylaws, so it made sense to have a new name. All Nations Church was the name chosen by the congregation, and it really represents both who we are as a congregation and the Roosevelt community around us. It has been an exciting time in the history of our church.

While the organ has not been used every Sunday for many years, it is being used more regularly than it has been for several years and is truly appreciated by both the church leadership and those involved in the music department. Leilani Montagne, also a member of PSTOS, plays both piano and organ at the church. The organ was played extensively during our Christmas Eve candlelight service, which was very well attended.

I continue to look for ways to help other keyboard players within the congregation learn about and explore the resources of the organ in order to help expand its use.

Remembering Russ Evans

May 3, 1929 — January 4, 2026



On Halloween night of 1963, Russ was reading the classified ads as he minded the door for trick-or-treaters, and spied an ad for a pipe organ "in excellent condition" for $2350. He followed up, and before he knew it, he was the owner of a 5-rank theatre pipe organ, purchased from Stan Smith, father of Greg Smith.

Thus began a lifelong affiliation with the theatre pipe organ hobby, which ultimately connected him to like-minded friends from around the world — U.S., Canada, Australia and the U.K.

Russ was involved with getting the organ installed at Haller Lake Community Club.

He played a big role in working out the agreement with Calvary Christian Assembly (now All Nations Church), to invest $70,000 of the profits from the 2010 Seattle ATOS convention in an upgrade to their Wurlitzer-Kimball organ so as to have an organ worthy of top-tier theatre organists.

Meanwhile, Russ had his original purchase installed, and massively upgraded, in his Kenmore home, where he and his wife, Jo Ann, have welcomed many organists to perform for PSTOS members.

We sadly say "Good bye" to Russ, who left us at age 96.

A celebration of his life will take place at All Nations Church (formerly CCA), 6801 Roosevelt Ave. NE, Seattle, on Saturday, February 21st at 2:00. Jonas Nordwall will play. All are invited.

Holiday Party Swings In the Season!

by Jamie Snell

This year's Holiday Party, at Haller Lake Community Club on Dec. 14, with about sixty attendees, had an extra twist, being fittingly titled "Swinging in the Season." Sawyer Best was the main organizer (pun intended) and made sure there was plenty of variety, including some swingy tunes. Four friends joined him on stage: Murl Allen Sanders, Lindsey Dabek, Jamison Colagrossi, and Kazuki Taylor, performing variously on organ, piano, accordion, and harmonica, as well as vocally.

Preceding the program was a quick-as-Saint-Nick membership meeting, at which the 2026 officers and other Board members (see masthead on page 2) were elected by acclamation and took the Oath of Office, and Treasurer Jim Welch gave a blessedly brief report on PSTOS finances.

Sawyer launched the entertainment at the mighty 3/10 Wurlitzer with a jazzy number from 1950s: Bobby Gimby's "Santa Claus Rides Again"; he was then joined by Murl on accordion and Lindsey on vocals for "The Man with the Bag," famously sung by Kay Starr. Murl remained on stage with his accordion for "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," and was then joined by Sawyer at the piano for "What Are You Doing New Year's Eve?" Next was the comedic duet "Baby It's Cold Outside," sung by Lindsey and Jamison, accompanied by Sawyer at the organ. And for a surprising change of pace, Murl, Jamison, and Sawyer all on accordions for an upbeat trio on the Hebrew folk song "Hava Nagila."

Up-and-coming organist Kazuki then took the console for two Christmas classics: "Sleigh Ride," composed by Leroy Anderson during a 1947 summer heat wave, and "Frosty the Snowman," popularized in 1950 by cowboy singer Gene Autry. Next was the beloved "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" from the 1944 Judy Garland film *Meet Me in St. Louis*, sung by Lindsey with Murl on piano. Fast-forwarding to the 1990s, Jamison played a snappy rendition of "It Feels Like Christmas" from *The Muppet Christmas Carol*. And for a humorous variation on that theme, Sawyer accompanied himself at the piano to sing Tom Lehrer's sardonic "A Christmas Carol" from 1959.

For a different kind of variety, Murl and Sawyer on accordions played the cherished José Feliciano song "Felice Navidad." Sawyer then returned to the organ for a reprise of "Have Yourself..." and Irving Berlin's timeless 1942 standard "White Christmas." For unexpected variety, Jamison returned with his accordion for Gershwin's 1922 hit "Stairway to Paradise," with intriguing obbligatos on harmonica.

Next, singalong time! With Sawyer at the organ, Lindsey led the audience in singing four favorite holiday songs: "Jingle Bells," "Deck the Hall," "Santa Claus is Comin' to Town," and "I'll Be Home for Christmas." The group singing was strong and heartfelt! To close the program, Lindsey sang a lively rendition of the Hawaiian Christmas classic "Mele Kalikimaka," accompanied by Sawyer at the organ, Murl on accordion, and Jamison on guitar. The applause was thunderous, and the quartet encored with "We Need a Little Christmas," famously performed by Angela Lansbury in the 1966 musical *Mame*...followed by more thunderous applause.

To wrap up the festivities, emcee Jeff Snyder asked that someone at each table take home the centerpiece poinsettia, and encouraged everyone to continue feasting on coffee, pastries, and cheesecake at the back table. The audience joyfully complied!

Many thanks to all who helped "swing in the season" in grand style: the five masterful performers; Jo Ann Evans and Sawyer Best for planning; Ellen Sullivan, Marie Perdue, and Lynda Sue Welch for stunning decorations and yummy refreshments; Greg Smith for organ tuning and prep, assisted by Terry Perdue; Bob Borton for managing the organ and audio equipment; Jim Welch for his Treasurer's report and handling donations; Jeff Snyder for fine emcee work and photography; Pipeline editor Annabelle Schertzinger, webmaster Tom Blackwell, and social media specialist Grahame McMaster (also the incoming President) for vital promotion; and everyone who helped with setup and cleanup.

AGO Programs

Saturday January 24, 2:00 AGO chapter event on Hauptwerk "virtual organ" software at the home of David and Jan Toy 7624 67th St NE Marysville, WA 98270. David Toy will show his new Hauptwerk set-up and answer questions. Attendees are welcome to try it out.

Friday January 30, 12:00 Wyatt Smith presents American organ music written between 1776 and 1876. He will play the Fritts Organ at Kilworth Memorial Chapel 1500 North 18th St, Tacoma, WA, 98416. Music by William Selby, George Washbourne Morgan and Dudley Buck.

Saturday January 31, 2:00 Benaroya Hall in Seattle. The Seattle Philharmonic directed by Adam Stern will present a rare performance of Jeanne Demessieux's Poème for Organ and Orchestra. Organist Joseph Adam will be the soloist in the Demessieux The program will also include a suite from Handel's Water Music and the U. S. premiere of Ruth Gipps' Symphony No. 1.

Sunday February 8, 3:00 Richard D. Moe Organ Recital Series on the Fritts organ at Lagerquist Hall, Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, WA. Justin J. Murphy-Mancini "Avancez!" He will give the world premiere of two works written expressly for him by Kat Farn and Elisabet Curbelo; other works will feature other women composers working in experimental and avant-garde idioms. $16 General Admission, $12 Seniors age 60+ and military, $8 under age 18, Free for PLU students with ID.

Sunday February 15, 10:10 pm Organ by Night, informal mini-concert on the Flentrop organ of St. Mark's Cathedral, 1245 10th Ave E, Seattle 98102. Michael Kleinschmidt. No charge. This concert follows Compline Service which starts at 9:30 pm.

Silent Movie Mondays at the Paramount Theater

Monday, January 26, 2026
Lady Windermere's Fan (1925)
Donna Parker at the Wurlitzer

Step back into the elegance and wit of the Roaring Twenties with *Lady Windermere's Fan*, director Ernst Lubitsch's sparkling silent adaptation of Oscar Wilde's classic comedy of manners. A tale of scandal, secrets, and society gossip unfolds as a young woman suspects her husband of infidelity—only to discover a deeper truth about love and sacrifice.

Monday, April 27, 2026
Faust (1926)
Christian Elliott at the Wurlitzer

Witness a battle for the soul on the grandest scale in F.W. Murnau's silent masterpiece *Faust*, a landmark of German Expressionist cinema. With breathtaking visuals, stunning special effects, and haunting atmosphere, this legendary adaptation of Goethe's classic tale follows a scholar who makes a fateful deal with the devil.

Monday, July 27, 2026
The General (1926)
Tyler Pattison at the Wurlitzer
Paul Hansen on Foley Sound

Widely regarded as one of the greatest silent films ever made, Buster Keaton's *The General* delivers breathtaking stunts, perfectly-timed comedy, and pulse-pounding action—all set against the backdrop of the American Civil War. Keaton stars as a devoted train engineer whose beloved locomotive and sweetheart are both stolen by enemy forces, leading to one of cinema's most thrilling and hilarious chase sequences.

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

Friday February 20, 12:10 noon Third Friday concert at Christ Episcopal 310 North K St. Tacoma, WA 98403. Performer and program pending. Free-will donation at door.

Friday January 30, 12 noon **Wyatt Smith** presents American organ music written between 1876 and 1926. He will play the Fritts Organ at Kilworth Memorial Chapel 1500 North 18th St, Tacoma, WA, 98416. Music by Amy Beach, Horatio Parker, Arthur Foote, John Knowles Paine, George Chadwick and Edward MacDowell.

Friday, February 27 at 7:30pm **Jan Kraybill**, Concert Organist on the combined Rosales / Hutchings-Votey organs at St. James Cathedral, 804 9th Ave. Seattle 98104. Feats for the Feet: Bach BWV 598 & 532, Sowerby Pageant, Holst, Elgar, Stanford, Larsen, Laurin & Wilcken. Suggested donation $12-$20 or pay as able. The box office for all concerts is now at the Columbia Street courtyard entrance on the south side of the cathedral.

Sunday, March 1, 4:00 p.m. "Encore and More" at Queen Anne Lutheran Church 2400 8th Avenue West, Seattle, WA 98119. QALC Cantor **Kyle Haugen** presents an informal recital of organ works heard previously on the Wech organ in worship and more, plus commentary. All are welcome; suggested donation: $15 (or as you can)

PAGES FROM THE PAST . . .

Honolulu's Hawaii Theatre underwent a major refurbishing in 1996. Following is an edited version of the story as reported in the Honolulu Star Bulletin on May 2, 1996.

The theatre reopens this week [May, 1996]. Here's what's new and improved, top to bottom.

The theatre ceiling features a rotunda, which amplifies the sound from the stage. It's also a safety feature. "In the 18th and 19th centuries, most deaths in theatre fires were due to smoke inhalation," said Burton White, Hawaii Theatre technical manager. "The rotunda and the stage loft act like chimneys and draw the smoke upward."

Top Notch Acoustics

The original rotunda has been repaired and is now flanked by large light pits for improved stage lighting. A cove that runs around the auditorium has hidden colored lights that can be adjusted to set a mood. This original feature has been updated and computerized.

At the back of the room a two-story projection room has been enlarged. The top floor features spotlights; the bottom,film projectors and sound and light controls.

The original electrical equipment was right out of Frankenstein's hobby room. Hawaii Theatre techies claim the renovated theatre electronics will have some of the best acoustics in Honolulu, "better than the Blaisdell," White said, of the best acoustics in Honolulu, "better than the Blaisdell," White said,

An enormous cluster of black PA speakers hovers above the curtain, very Darth Vaderish, the most obvious modern element in the renovation. These can be lowered into a rollaway box and disconnected and the cables drawn back into the proscenium. Despite all the ornate detail, the theatre interior abounds with hard, reflective surfaces. Even the seats are on hardwood floors; only the soft mohair seat cushions and strip carpeting in the aisles will absorb sound.

The rear of the house, where curtains once screened the SRO crowds, has been replaced by hard stucco in a slight convex curve to radiate sound waves.

The interior decorations have been revamped with additional applications of gold leaf and paint. A Lionel Walden mural that graced the proscenium soundboard above the stage was restored, as well as the faux-tile paintings around it.

The walls of the theatre were textured with a technique called "rag-rolling." It was a quick way for set designers to add texture to a flat surface. An old T-shirt or rag was cut up, and rolled across the base color with another color. The resulting texture is neither predictable nor overwhelming.

The seats and carpeting are specially made for the theatre. The seat patterns, based on a sample of the old wicker chair slipcovers, is split mohair, which requires the cloth to be cut away from itself after the mohair is looped through the cloth. Instead of throwing out the negative pattern, the Hawaii recycles the excess on every other seat, creating a variegated look to the banks of seats. Look at the pattern; it reverses every seat.

The back row of the loges have tall seat backs, which eliminates the need for a railing. At least the seats don't have those annoying drink holders,

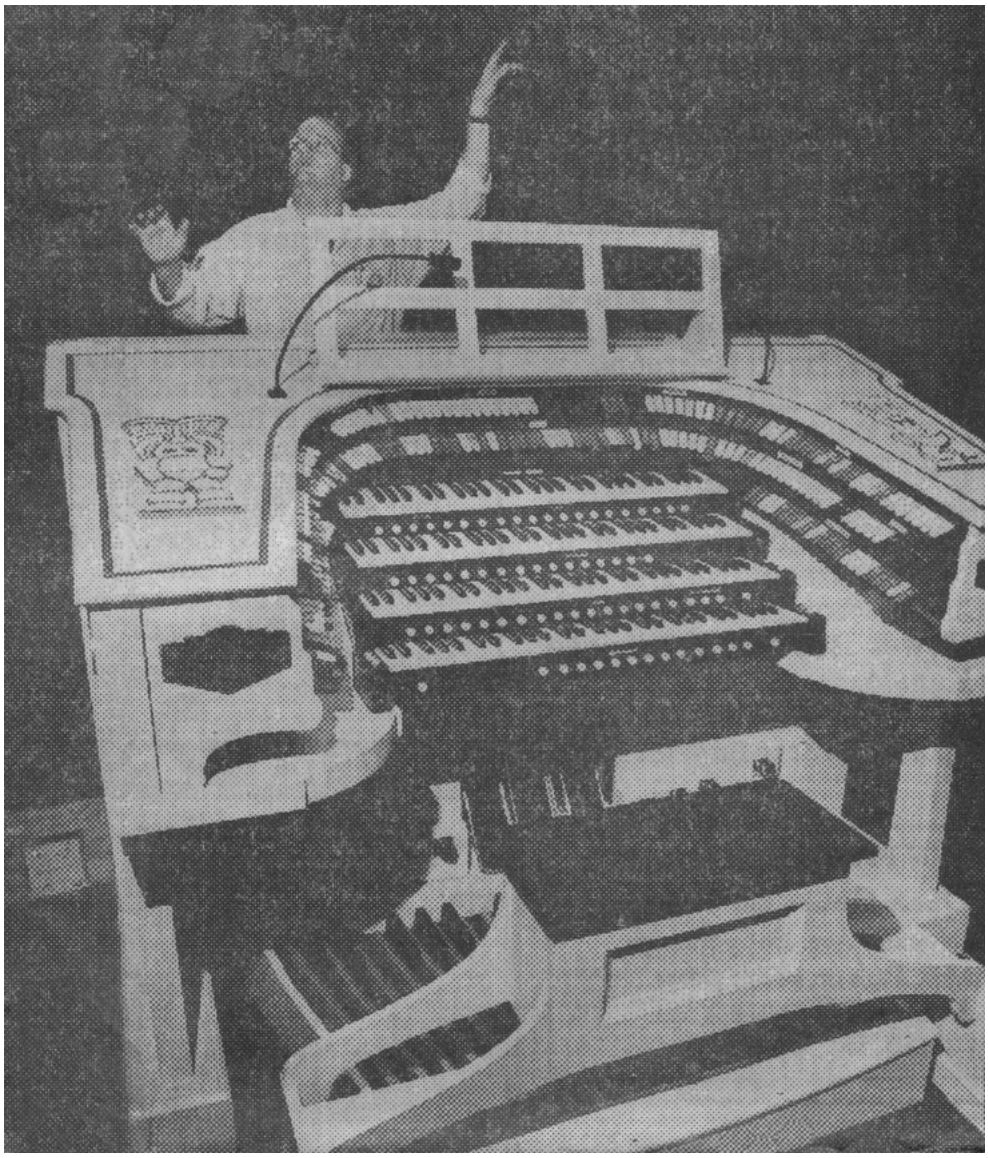
There's been a not-so-subtle change in the fire curtain. It replicates the original exactly except that the new one says HAWAII where the original proudly declared ASBESTOS.

The Organ

The Hawaii's original Robert Morton pipe organ was packed off to the Waikiki Theatre in 1936. The organ used by the Hawaii was rescued in 1969 from the doomed Princess Theatre nearby, and wheeled down the street by theatre organ enthusiasts.

"The organ will be one of the most glorious parts of the Hawaii," said Bob Alder, a Hilo theatrical consultant who is best known in Honolulu for performing on the Waikiki Theatre No 3 organ on weekends. "The only problem with the organ is that it will be locked up in a room downstairs. It used

PAGES FROM THE PAST . . . *continued*



Musicians who use the Hawaii's theatre organ will be able to take advantage of some of the best acoustics in Honolulu, technical manager Burton White says.

to be on its own elevator. The majority of theatre organs are like that. But this one has to be wheeled onto the orchestra lift and plugged in to use it, which makes it difficult to rehearse."

One of the real audio problems with orchestra pits is "flutter," as the sound is caught inside the pit and bounces around before escaping into the audience. The Hawaii people have a low-tech solution—sound baffles that hang on eyehooks beneath the stage.

Dressing rooms have showers, but the "star's" dressing room features a bathtub.

The passageway between the two ends of the stage is lined with blue tile. "This area traditionally gets really dirty because makeup gets wiped off on the wall. It really takes a beating as people rush around," White said.

One change on the main floor is the raised enclosed seating areas in the back corners. "They improve the sight lines and they're fun to sit in," Holzman said.

There are wheelchair spaces on the bottom floor; the top floor and balcony region are not accessible to them. Richards estimated that an elevator would have cost an additional $1 million. An infra-red system amplifies sound for the hard-of-hearing.

A Place to Get Together

The area outside the performance arena is where the Hawaii has changed the most. The beloved art deco elements familiar in the lobbies have disappeared while the rooms have been modified to become more useful. The top floor, where Consolidated once housed its offices, has been replaced by a large "function room," a corner office and a catering kitchen. The function room is brightened by Juliette May Fraser murals and the wall colors are chosen to complement the paintings.

The original offices were a step above the original upstairs lobby, and at first glance it appears the lobby ceiling has been lowered. Not so. The floor was raised to make the lobby area a single space. A bar has also been added to the second-floor lobby as well,

If you went to a theatre a hundred years ago, it was all for the patrons. It was for the elite," Holzman said. "The stage itself was rather rickety and shabby. Today, however, millions are spent on the stage, things that people never see, and the auditoriums have grown drab. Going to the theatre should be a memorable experience and there should be a sense of a distinguished place—and this should be true for performers AND audiences.

"I have a theory. We live in a society where technology is so pervasive that it's everywhere. It's easier to talk to people than ever before, while there's less social interaction.

"I think this need for social interaction hasn't gone away, and we NEED places to get together. That's why there is a resurgence of interest in building new performance space and restoring older theatres."