



Theatre Organ Society

ORGAN LOG

September 2011
VOL. XXXIII, No.6

Phone 1-888-LATOS22

Web Site www.LATOS.org

The Fall Concert & Event Season is Here!

(See details inside).

Season Premier Concert

Sunday, September 18th at 2:30pm

at the San Gabriel Mission Playhouse

320 South Mission Drive, San Gabriel, CA 91776

Featuring Walt Strony in Concert!

Walter is one of America's premier concert organists who made his public debut in 1974 at the age of 18 and has since established himself as one of few organists equally at home playing both theatre and classical organ

Mr. Strony has performed hundreds of concerts from coast to coast in the United States as well as in Japan, Australia, England, and Canada. In addition, he has performed at many conventions of the American Theatre Organ Society and the American Guild of Organists.

In July 2007 he performed the first solo organ recital to be presented in many years at New York's Radio City Music Hall for the American Theatre Organ Society's 2007 Convention.

He is the only living organist to have been twice voted "Organist of the Year" by the American Theatre Organ Society - in 1991 and 1993. In 2011, he was inducted into the ATOS "Hall of Fame" - the youngest person currently in it. He has performed with the Calgary Symphony; Allentown Symphony; El Paso Symphony; and Symphony Silicon Valley.

**Join us for an exciting program of theatre pipe organ music
that you are sure to enjoy!**

Tickets: \$17 in Advance or \$20 at the Box Office

Visit www.LATOS.org for more information and advanced ticket sales. OR Call LATOS' Info Line and Message Center at 1-888-LATOS22 (1-888-528-6722) for recorded event & ticket info, or to order advanced tickets on the phone.

Tickets will be available at the Box Office one hour before the concert.

OUR SEASON OPENS!

September will mark the beginning of what will be an exciting concert season. We will begin with two concerts at the San Gabriel Mission Playhouse. Attendance at the Playhouse over the years would indicate that it is your favorite concert location. And that preference is well deserved, as the auditorium is always clean and in tip top shape, and the staff always friendly and parking close by. With the refurbishing of the organ a few years ago, the Wurlitzer is better than ever. However, the Playhouse is the most expensive venue we use so, if we are to continue to use it, it is important that everyone make an all-out effort to attend the events scheduled there.



Walt Strony at the Mission Playhouse

The season will start on **Sunday, September 18 at 2:30 pm.** The artist is one of the country's premier theatre organists, **Walt Strony.** Walt is no stranger to Los Angeles having appeared here many times over the years, both in regular LATOS concerts and when LATOS hosted the ATOS National Conventions. It will, of course, be Walt's first time on the San Gabriel organ since the recent work was completed.

Next up will be Mark Herman. Mark was still in college when he last played for us at South Pasadena High School, but we were privileged that he squeezed us in during his studies. Most recently Mark played at this year's ATOS convention. Dave Wickerham had been scheduled for the event, but had to cancel at the last minute due to a death of a close family member. With two days to prepare a program Mark stepped in and received rave notices from the conventioners. Mark will appear at the San Gabriel Mission Playhouse on Sunday afternoon, October 30 at 2:30.

HOW BIG IS BIG?

In ancient times, some flute player, probably frustrated that he could play only one note at a time, placed several flutes on a box, rigged up some sort of valves with levers to control which would play and the organ was born. In time someone reasoned that additional sets of flutes, perhaps louder, softer, higher or lower, could be added. We came to call each set a "rank" possibly because the "sets" of pipes stand on the windchest in rows, like ranks in the military. Mechanisms would be incorporated to "stop" the sets you didn't want sounding. In time, additional keyboards were added so a melody could be played on one keyboard accompanied by softer stops on another. The race was on!

Over the centuries, larger and larger organs would be built. For the 1904 St. Louis Exposition, an organ was built to be the largest in the world with about 140 ranks. After the exposition closed, John Wanamaker purchased the instrument to put in his department store where it was continually enlarged until today it stands at 6 manuals, 462 ranks and 28,543 pipes.

Here then are the 14 largest organs in the world.

<u>Location</u>	<u>Keyboards</u>	<u>Ranks</u>
Macy's (Wanamaker) Philadelphia, PA	6	462
Convention Hall, Atlantic City, NJ	7	449
West Point Cadet Chapel	4	380
First Congregational, Los Angeles, CA.	5	346
Passau Cathedral, Bavaria, Germany	5	309
Crystal Cathedral, Garden Grove, CA	5	280
First Baptist Church, Jackson, MS	5	231
St Bartholomew's, NYC	5	225
Riverside Church, NYC	5	216
Mormon Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, UT	5	206
Calvary Church, Charlotte, NC	5	205
Opera House Sidney, Australia	5	205
Woolsey Hall, New Haven, CT	4	197
National Cathedral, Washington DC	4	189

Several of the instruments continue to grow. In 2002 the Cadet Organ stood at 325 and First Congregational at 320. The race continues.

The biggest original Wurlitzers were the 58 rank Radio City Music Hall, the 37 rank Brooklyn Fox, and the 36 rank specials in the NY Paramount, St. Louis, San Francisco, Detroit Fox theatres.

ELECTIONS

It's not too early to begin thinking about our annual elections. Our bylaws mandate a nine member Board of Directors, with three members elected to three year terms each year. Elections are held in December at a General Meeting. As a chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society, only LATOS/ATOS Members are allowed to vote or hold office. This is a volunteer organization, so if you would like to run for a seat on the Board, contact any current board member (see back page for contact info).

PIPE ORGAN PRACTICE

As much as electronic organs have improved over the years, there's no substitute for the real thing - a pipe organ in a large auditorium. Over the years we've had "open console" sessions but the time available to each player plus the presence of others meant *performing* your best number or two. So a person really doesn't have time to learn much. And there are those who just don't want to play before others.

Here's a plan we are considering. The most generally 'down' days at commercial theatres are Tuesdays (or Wednesdays). If you wished to practice, on the day before, you would phone or email a "coordinator" to see if the auditorium would be free that week, and be given an assigned time period. You would arrive at that time and the organ would be yours with no one else there except the coordinator. You could use your time to play multiple numbers, practice the same number till you got it right, try it with different registrations, work out a tricky passage, etc.

The only organ generally available would be our 3 manual Barton at the Wilshire Ebell Theatre. It's a nice size organ, neither too large nor too small, and there's free parking in their lot. Of course, we'd have to work things out with the theatre management. Right now we're trying to determine if there is sufficient interest to proceed. So if you like the idea, and would be interested in practice sessions, please either email Steve Asimow: asimow@sbcglobal.net or phone him at (818) 240-2895.

TOM HANDFORTH

It is with great sadness that we must report the August 3 passing of long time LATOS member Tom Handforth. He was 96. A native of Boston, Tom attended one of the colleges there and following graduation began working with a local organ builder

before moving to Los Angeles. He studied organ and musical theory with Jesse Crawford and later taught theory at Pasadena City College. At one time he worked for Bob Eby, whose Artisan Organ company made do-it-yourself kit organs. While there, he designed and perfected a solenoid operated glockenspiel, a design picked up by other organ companies, especially Rodgers. He tuned pianos and serviced electronic organs. He played organ for the circus. He regularly played at the Los Angeles County Fair, at one point using an impressive organ of his own design that included two manuals of a Hammond Organ and a third manual with tone generators of his own design. He also designed a pair of his own version of the Leslie speaker that were incorporated in a large system that included a glockenspiel, marimba, chimes and other percussions....all played from this three manual instrument. Tom served, for many years, as our LATOS Crew Chief for the San Gabriel organ. Until recently, you could be sure to see Tom at LATOS concerts. He will be greatly missed.

I WANT YOU!

Those of you who were around during WWII will remember the posters of Uncle Sam with a stern look on his face, pointing forward with the words "I Want You." Sometimes they referred to military recruitment, other times to encourage taking jobs in war plants. Well, LATOS wants (and *needs*) **YOU**; each and every one of you.

The venue costs and artists fees require an audience of around 300. As you may have noticed, in recent years our attendance has often dropped as low as 1/3 that number... sometimes less.

Our annual dues barely cover the fixed costs of the Organ Log, the required annual audit by a CPA and public liability and property damage insurance. It's obvious that we can't go on that way for long before the treasury is diminished.

We have joined LATOS because we like organ music but also to preserve the instruments and hopefully interest future generations in Theatre Organ. We have two great upcoming concerts - September and October. *Everyone* is needed. Let's all do our part and make it a point to attend both events and **insure the future of theatre organ in Los Angeles!**



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED
FIRST CLASS MAIL

P.O. Box 1913, Glendale, CA 91209

SO-CAL COMING EVENTS (LATOS Events are in Bold Text)

Sep 11, Sunday 7:30 PM – Tony Wilson at the Mighty Wurlitzer – Old Town Music Hall, El Segundo – 310-322-2592 – www.OldTownMusicHall.org

Sep 18, Sunday 2:30 PM – Walt Strony at the fabulous San Gabriel Mission Playhouse Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ, San Gabriel - LATOS.org or call 1-888-LATOS22

Oct 7, Friday 8:00 PM "Dr, Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" - for OCTOS - Silent film w/ Robert Israel - Plummer Auditorium, Fullerton

Oct 30, Sunday 2:30 PM – Mark Herman at the San Gabriel Mission Playhouse Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ, San Gabriel

YOUR BOARD MEMBERS:

Bob Kambeitz bob-kambeitz-latos@latos.org
(619) 589-0832 **Chairperson and President**
Membership Chairperson

Shirley Burt shirley-burt-latos@latos.org
(626) 210-2138 **Secretary**

Jim Dawson jim-dawson-latos@latos.org
(888) LATOS22 **Treasurer**

Donn Linton donn-linton-latos@latos.org
(323) 254-6985 **Technical Director & Editor**

Neal Kissel

Dorsey Caldwell dorsey-caldwell-latos@latos.org
(626) 798-1820

Bill Peterson
(619) 589-0832

Bill Campbell bill-campbell-latos@latos.org
(888) 528-6722

Don Near don-near-latos@latos.org
(800) 539-8944

COMMITTEES

So Pas Crew Chief	Dorsey Caldwell
PCC Crew Chief	Donn Linton
Wilshire Ebell Crew Chief	Steve Asimow
San Gabriel Crew Chief	Donn Linton
Membership	Bob Kambeitz
Web Master	Bill Peters
Project Dir., So. Pas High School	Peter Crotty
Special Projects	Tony Wilson
Program Director (Acting)	Don Near