



Theatre Organ Society ORGAN LOG

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Toll free Info Line & Message Center: 1-888-LATOS22

Website: www.LATOS.org

Bob Ralston Concert & Show

September 30, 2012 at 2:30pm
at the Founder's Center in Los Angeles



Bob Ralston seated on the right at the organ with the Lawrence Welk Orchestra during a TV broadcast

A SPECIAL PHOTO-ARTICLE ABOUT BOB RALSTON

Although you won't see the Lawrence Welk Orchestra perform at the concert on September 30, **you will have a very rare opportunity to see and hear a legendary artist from the show, Mr. Bob Ralston.** He will perform a concert and show at the Founder's Center in Los Angeles on their fabulous 4-manual/31-rank Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ!

With the help of photos, this article will share a few of the many highlights of Bob Ralston's remarkable career. A separate article in this issue provides brief info about the Wurlitzer organ.

As mentioned in the last issue, Bob Ralston is best known for his 49 years as pianist, organist, and arranger with the Lawrence Welk Orchestra, and for many solo performances on the TV show. Many beautiful orchestrations you hear on the Welk show were written by Ralston. Reruns of the TV show are still shown every week in most major U.S. cities, with Ralston and his family hosting some of those reruns. Besides his fine piano and organ solos, the shows also included his performances as a singer, dancer, and comedian. Musically, Bob "wears many hats"!

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Bob performing on the Lawrence Welk TV show

A native of California, Bob Ralston attended Wheaton College on a full scholarship, and then returned home to attend USC, where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in Music in 1964. While in college, he played six nights a week with the Freddy Martin orchestra (1959-1962) at L.A.'s Coconut Grove nightclub, where in 1962 Lawrence Welk invited him to appear on his show as a guest musician. He was permanently hired during the summer of 1963.



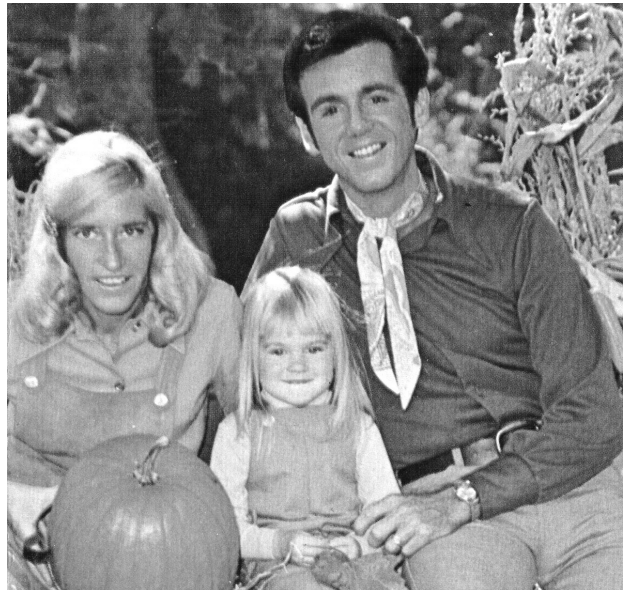
1963: Bob Ralston with wife, Fietje, in his 1961 Corvette

The same year that Bob began performing regularly on the Lawrence Welk show, he married his lovely wife, Fietje. In fact, he and Fietje just celebrated their 49th wedding anniversary on March 3, 2012.

In 1965, Bob Ralston and Norma Zimmer from the Lawrence Welk show had the opportunity to meet famed composer and songwriter Meredith Wilson. Wilson was famous for his Broadway scores, including *The Music Man*, *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*, and *Here's Love*, and for writing many memorable standards. It is rumored that Wilson was a fan of Norma Zimmer and Bob Ralston.



Bob Ralston (L) & Norma Zimmer with Meredith Wilson



1969: Bob with Fietje (L) & daughter, Dianne

By 1974, Ralston was already performing theatre pipe organ concerts across the United States and abroad, and has been in high demand ever since.



Bob Ralston in concert on a Wurlitzer in 1974



Bob Ralston opening in Las Vegas for Bob Hope



2003: Bob Ralston and his wife, Fietje, celebrated her Dutch heritage during a reunion broadcast of the Lawrence Welk TV show.

FOUNDER'S CENTER & WURLITZER

a focal point of Bob Ralston's concert on Sept. 30



Bob Ralston with the Founder's Center Wurlitzer

The Founder's Center is unique, as it seems more like a theatre than a church. The auditorium seats 1500 people in comfortable theatrical-style seats.

The 4-manual/31-rank Wurlitzer at Founder's is unique for a church installation since it includes extensive percussions, traps, and effects. It also features a Trumpet en Chamade that is installed over the lighting booth in the balcony. The instrument was designed by Lyn Larsen, who assisted Ken Crome with the installation. The console came from Chicago's Northshore Theatre. The organ was donated to the church by Marion Minor Cook in 1984 in memory of her husband, John Brown Cook.

TICKETS

FOR THE BOB RALSTON CONCERT & SHOW ON SEPTEMBER 30:

Pre-Paid/Advanced Ticket Price: \$18 Tickets will be held in will-call at the box office for pick-up the day of the concert.

Tickets on the Day of the Concert: \$20 at the box office.

Students w/Valid Student ID: \$10 at box office.

Children under 12 will be free (at the box office) if accompanied by a paying adult.

There are three ways to buy advance tickets:

- **Mail:** Make checks payable to **LATOS** (\$18 per ticket) and mail to:
 LATOS c/o Dawson
 2721 W. 182nd Street
 Torrance, CA 90504-5228
- **Online:** Visit www.LATOS.org anytime after Friday, August 17 to order and charge tickets to Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express.
- **Phone:** Call the toll-free LATOS Info Line & Message Center at 1-888-LATOS22 (1-888-528-6722) to order and charge tickets, or for any questions.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE...

- Details on the Bob Ralston Concert & Show at Founder's Center on Sept. 30.
- Directions to Founder's Center and information about convenient parking.
- Notes about the ATOS 2012 Convention.
- More info about Old Town Music Hall.



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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COMING EVENTS *(LATOS events are in larger text)*

August 15, Wednesday at 7:30pm – Jim McEwan in concert for the Valley Organ Society on a Rodgers theatre organ (electronic) at the Little White Chapel Social Hall, 1711 N. Avon St., Burbank. \$5 at the door.

August 19, Sunday at 7:00pm – Bob Salisbury accompanies the silent film “The Thief of Baghdad” at the Broadway Café on 1117 West Big Bear Boulevard, Big Bear City, CA 92314 - (909) 585-7682. Tickets are \$20, which includes a spaghetti meal. Beer, wine, and desserts are available.

August 26, Sunday at 4:00pm (reception at 3:00pm) – Bob Salisbury accompanies the silent film “The Mark of Zorro” at the Kirk of the Valley Presbyterian Church, 19620 Vanowen St., Reseda, CA 91335. Admission: \$10 for adults and \$5 for students. Children under 12 are free.

September 30, Sunday at 2:30pm – Bob Ralston Concert and Show at Founder’s Center - 4-manual/31-rank Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ! See info, articles, and photos in this and the September issue.

December 2 – Sunday at 2:30pm – Nathan Avakian Concert & Show at Barnum Hall in Santa Monica. *More details in upcoming issues of the Organ Log.*

Ongoing: Concerts, Movies, and Shows at the Old Town Music Hall, 140 Richmond Street in El Segundo. For info on concerts or movies **featuring the 4-manual/27-rank theatre pipe organ**, call (310) 322-2592 (recorded info) or visit <http://oldtownmusichall.wordpress.com>

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