



Theatre Organ Society

ORGAN LOG

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

Website: www.LATOS.org

Coming on January 27, 2013 at 3:00pm

Gene Roberson in Concert!



at the San Gabriel Mission Playhouse

Popular artist Gene Roberson will be featured on the fabulous Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ in a concert and show at the San Gabriel Mission Playhouse on Sunday, January 27th at 3:00pm. The Mission Playhouse is located at 320 South Mission Drive in San Gabriel.

While the primary focus of the concert will be theatre pipe organ, attendees will be delighted by cameo appearances by guest performers including Gene's daughter Rozlyn who is a professional singer and dancer, and has performed on Broadway in "Wicked". Baritone, David Wells will also perform with Gene. David recently graduated from Long Beach State majoring in voice, and sings regularly with Gene at the church as well as at numerous concerts.

A special attraction that will join Gene during the show will be an instrumental "Big Band" ensemble. They will accompany the Wurlitzer in "Great sounds of the 1920's" as well as a variety of brass and organ selections. The concert will include a diversity of organ music from show tunes, theater organ novelty pieces, familiar ballads, to classical offerings.

About Gene Roberson: Gene began playing a Hammond C-3 organ at his church when he was just ten years old. In 1970, he accepted his first pipe organ position at the Grace Brethren Church in Long Beach playing a 3 manual Moller pipe organ. Gene appeared regularly for Saturday night jam sessions on the Joe Koons' Motorcycle shop Wurlitzer, and later recorded on the instrument in the late 1970's. Gene opened his own Conn organ store in 1972 and remained in the home organ business until 1997.

Gene was instrumental in starting the Sea Safari Organ Club taking over 30 ocean cruises around the world. Among the organists that traveled with him were Lyn Larson, Gaylord Carter, Bill Thomson, Joyce Jones, Tony Fenelon, and many others.

Gene has played concerts every year for organ groups including: Keyboard Concerts in Laguna Hills (40 consecutive years), Valley Organ Society, and annually at the Home Organ Festival at Asilomar until its final run in 2001. He has played concerts around the country for major electronic organ companies, and was recently an adjudicator for the National Roland organ competition.

Gene Roberson Concert, January 27, continued from the front page:

Gene has produced over 20 CD recordings of organ and piano music, including the recording of his concert on the Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ at the Plummer Auditorium - still a best seller. Gene is currently Director of Music and organist at the Presbyterian Church of the Master in Mission Viejo. He donated his 15 rank Ruffatti pipe organ to the church which is interfaced with a digital organ.

Gene is currently building his website (www.GeneRoberson.com/TheaterOrganMentor) which will offer organ and piano studies for beginner to professional levels including special classes in theater organ studies as well as Jazz piano. Lessons in theater organ styling are now available on DVD. Gene plans to carry on the great theater organ teachings of his organ coach, Mildred Alexander. His other teachers included: Elma Proctor (founder of group organ lessons at Pasadena City College in the 60's), Cleo Hibbs (founding organist of Pageant of the Masters), and Dr. Joyce Jones (Baylor University)

This spectacular afternoon of great music will be a must-see event. You will be thrilled that you came.

CHRIS GORSUCH 1954-2012

the Passing of a Friend of the Theatre Organ

A poignant excerpt from of a post by **Jelani Eddington** on www.ATOS.org in late October, 2012



It is with a heavy heart that I report the passing of our long-time and dear friend and colleague, Chris Gorsuch, who, after courageously battling cancer, passed away peacefully in his sleep just before midnight on October 17th, 2012

As you all know, Chris earned widespread admiration as a brilliant organist, arranger, and technician. In 2008, he received the honor of the American Theatre

Organ Society's Organist of the Year. Those of us who had the great honor of knowing him will always remember his gregarious, fun-loving, outgoing nature and will deeply miss his friendship. Although he was unable to respond personally to everyone, Chris Gorsuch was profoundly touched by the tremendous outpouring of support that he has received over the past several weeks.

NATHAN AVAKIAN CONCERT

In spite of rain and challenging traffic, there was a good turnout at the Nathan Avakian Concert at Barnum Hall. His performance was very well received, and included a refreshing mix of traditional theatre organ; some Disney-themed pieces; a fun medley of Frankie Valli songs; a very tasteful interpretation of the Rondo in G by John Bull; a few cameo pieces played by the award winning Santa Monica High School Jazz Combo; three wonderful 3-minute silent movie shorts created by youth and scored by Nathan, and much more! Look for a review from Tony Wilson in one of the upcoming issues of the Organ Log.

“GUESS WHO THIS IS”

Bruce Johnson was the first to guess that the “puzzler photo” in the November 2012 issue of the Organ Log was of Bob Salisbury in his teens.

Now, who is the person in the photo below?



The first person to send an email with a correct answer to this month's puzzler will receive two tickets to the Gene Roberson concert on Jan. 27, 2013. Email answers to LATOS1@verizon.net

Hint: The person in the photo is from Michigan, and has a collection of theatre and classical organs.

A RARE WURLITZER GEM in Visalia

By Dave Schutt and Anthony Paul

Only a one hour local flight from Los Angeles is the charming city of Visalia, home of the Visalia Fox Theatre. Many may remember that after the Visalia Fox was restored in 1999, members of the American Theatre Organ Society worked tirelessly in an effort to return an organ to the theater. Their prayers were answered when Dr. Ruth Villemain Dresser sold her house in Malibu, and needed a good home for her four manual Wurlitzer pipe organ from the State Theatre in San Francisco. In June 2003, Ruth not only donated her organ to the Fox, but a grand piano as well.

Also, in an upscale neighborhood of Visalia, California is Ruth's lovely 4-bedroom home that has fully installed and operating 2-manual/13-rank theatre pipe organ (mostly Wurlitzer). The installation was designed and completed in 2008 by Ken Kukuk and Ed Burnside who are well known organ experts in Los Angeles, and also by Rich Manley.

The organ has a very unique past starting with its first owner who was Leon F. Douglass, a prolific inventor, co-founder, first vice-president and general manager of the Victor Talking Machine Company of Camden, New Jersey. In 1921, Douglass purchased a 52-room Italianate mansion in Menlo Park, California that had been built 1910–1914 by the heiress to the Comstock Lode fortune, Mary Pauline O'Brien Payne.

Douglass adapted the mansion (he called it Victoria Manor after his wife, Victoria Adams Douglass) to his own inventive pursuits. He also ordered a Wurlitzer pipe organ with a player attachment for his new home. On April 28, 1922, Opus 538 left the Wurlitzer factory in North Tonawanda, New York. It was installed in the library with a grillwork covering the tone-chute to the pipes in the basement. It appears Wurlitzer made additions to the organ in 1928.

After two of the Douglass daughters died, in 1935 he built a much smaller home nearby and lived a much simpler lifestyle until he passed in 1940.

During World War II convalescing blind patients from a nearby hospital occupied the mansion. In 1945, the Douglass Trust sold the property to the Menlo School and College whose campus adjoined the property. Incidentally, two members of the Kingston Trio were students at Menlo College. The organ was eventually removed and installed in an Assembly of God church in San Francisco. In about 1980, the organ was sold to

Tom DeLay, who eventually sold it to Ruth. As mentioned earlier, the organ is currently installed and playing beautifully in her Visalia home.

From a distant glance, the organ console might appear to be that of a traditional Wurlitzer residence organ. One would expect the stops and pipes to also be of a traditional residence organ configuration. Closer inspection reveals that the organ is purely a theatre pipe organ. All of its stops tabs are Wurlitzer theatre style (red for reeds, etc.), and its ranks are also theatre.



The console's ornate décor is very tasteful and unique, and includes a matching bench from the Wurlitzer factory.

The organ includes all the features of the original Douglass installation plus additional ranks including English Post Horn, Viol d'Amour Celeste, Orchestral Oboe and Trumpet. A Uniflex electronic relay and player controls the organ pipes, percussions and traps, and these MIDI voices: Marimba Harp and Piano.

Ranks/Percussions Include: Vox Humana, Oboe Horn, Viol d'Amour, Viol d'Amour Celeste, Tibia Clausa, English Post Horn, Orchestral Oboe, Trumpet, Open Diapason, Salicional, Salicional Celeste, Concert Flute, Clarinet, Xylophone, Glockenspiel, Chrysoglott, Drums & Effects

Ruth recently decided to sell her spacious 2,648 Sq. Ft. residence and hopes to see the fully installed and operating Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ remain with the house.

Anyone with a genuine interest in possibly acquiring Ruth's home with the pipe organ can email their contact info to Tony Wilson at TonyWilson.MPM@sbcglobal.net who will follow up.



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED
FIRST CLASS MAIL

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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COMING EVENTS *(LATOS Events are in larger/bold text)*

December 7, Friday at 8:00pm and December 8, Saturday at 2:00pm and 8:00pm – Organist Martin Ellis at The Nethercutt Collection in Sylmar - Tickets and info: visit www.nethercuttcollection.org

December 14, Friday at 8:00pm and December 15, Saturday at 2:00pm and 8:00pm – Christmas Concert with Jelani Eddington at The Nethercutt Collection in Sylmar - Tickets & info: visit www.nethercuttcollection.org

January 11, 2012 – Friday at 7:00pm – Bob Salisbury accompanies the silent film, "Peter Pan". St. Margaret's Episcopal Church on 47535 Highway 74, Palm Desert. Admission \$10

January 27, Sunday at 2:30pm – Gene Roberson Concert at the San Gabriel Mission Playhouse.
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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