

The Organ Spiel

NEWSLETTER FOR THE SIERRA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

MORTON MADNESS XIV

RON RHODE

April 2008

SATURDAY,
April 12

STARTING
AT

1:00PM

See insert for Itinerary
and Ticket Order Form!



As of 2007 Ron Rhode is beginning his 33rd year as one of the most popular theatre organists. His recordings have received “**Top Rating 10/10**” from *CD Review Magazine*, and he was awarded “**Theatre Organist Of The Year – 1989**” by the American Theatre Organ Society. He has played virtually every major theatre organ installation in the world. He is a favorite at American Theatre Organ Society national and regional conventions. He has more than twenty recordings to his credit.

Ron is a native of Illinois, where he began his musical career on the piano. He quickly advanced to classical pipe organ, and in 1968 held his first theatre organ job playing for roller skating. In 1973 Ron moved to Phoenix, Arizona, to start a long association with the Organ Stop Pizza restaurants. In 1975 Ron moved to Mesa, Arizona, where he held the Featured Organist post and played for pizza patrons until November, 1986. In July, 1988, Ron again joined the staff as Associate Organist until his retirement in 2000. In Phoenix, he has been the Featured Organist for the Orpheum Theatre Silent Sunday Series since its inception in May, 1999.

For those of you new to Sierra Chapter, this is your opportunity to hear two very nice Robert Morton Theatre Organs: They are nearly identical in specifications but with very different sounds due both to their rehabilitation and the acoustics of the rooms where they are installed.

Come early and bring a picnic lunch to enjoy at the Harzell’s lovely outdoor patio. Purchase a glass of wine to savor before the concert.



The organ at Harmony Wynelands was originally installed in the San Francisco Castro Theatre as a 2/11 in 1922. An intervening owner, replaced the two-manual console with a three-manual one. Bob Hartzel purchased the instrument in 1987, and installed it in the “Blue Barn” which was built especially for the organ.



The Organ at Ironstone Vineyards was originally installed in the Alhambra Theatre in Sacramento as a 3/11 in 1927. From there, it went to a Baptist Church in Stockton. When they no longer wanted it, Bob Hartzell purchased it. John Kautz later bought it for his winery and built the Alhambra Music Room to house it (now a 3/14) and provide banquet space.



WOW! This is our first time to step out and begin a **SCHOLARSHIP FUND!** We have over \$5,000.00 that have been given to the Endowment Fund plus the matching funds from Sierra Chapter.

Many have given in memory of loved ones and friends:

This past month Mac Wurtsbaugh, a long time member and supporter of Sierra Chapter, gave \$1,000.00 in memory of Bob Vaughn. Bob was one of the last, real old-time silent movie organists having begun playing for the silents at the Egyptian Theatre in Los Angeles. Later, he played at the Avenue Theatre in San Francisco; he played every night for 14 years. Thank you Mac for honoring Bob!

Our Librarian, Alice Kutzer, gave \$100.00 in memory of her aunts, Doris Schmierer Amburn and Emma Wittmer.

We received \$300.00 from an anonymous donor! I do know that the person sold some of her vacation time to give the donation! **WOW!** You can make a donation at any event or send a check to our Treasurer, Bob Suffel.

Our Sierra Chapter Board has voted to give the profits from the refreshment sales at our Silent Movies to the fund. At the last movie several people gave extra money. Many said "anything to help the young people".

Remember, we will give scholarships from the growth of the Fund. The greater it grows, the more interest we have to award to the youth of our area. **THANK YOU** to **ALL** who have given; we will all reap the benefits of this

Scholarship fund. Let's raise \$5,000.00 more this year!!! Tom Norvell, chairman, scholarship committee



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome new members:

Rosalie & Ken Ingle
from Citrus Heights

OROVILLE STATE THEATER
PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
80TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION!
Saturday, April 5, 2008 at 7:30 PM
Featuring **Buster Keaton** in
THE GENERAL
A Silent Movie Classic
As "The Daleface"



With **Dave Moreno**
at the
Theater Organ



Vocal Stylings of
Matias Bombal
VAUDEVILLE ACTS!



Come walk the
Red Carpet with us!
Yes, there will be **CAKE!**

Oroville's State Theatre - 80th Birthday

David Dewey, our Sierra Chapter correspondent in Oroville, reports that this party will be a "big do", with searchlights, antique cars, stars, with Dave Moreno and Matias Bombal and some vaudeville, too. Silent movies will include Buster Keaton, in *The General*, and *The Paleface*.

The Organ status at this point is just prep. The chamber is empty, but the ceiling and floor need some work, as does the air line duct from the basement. The grill is covered over with sections of the grill itself missing, however they do know where to get exact replacement materials, so there is no anticipation of BIG problems, just little ones that will take some time to overcome.

Tickets are \$8.00. You can reserve them by calling (530) 538-2415.

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE — CAROL ZERBO

Goodness! Seems like I just wrote one of these a few minutes ago! Time flies when you're having fun. **And--it's Morton Madness time!** If you are the type who likes last minute adventure (and we do have a few folks who are picking up tickets at Lodi) you MUST call 916 624-9182 and let me know you are coming by April 10th so we can have a ticket for you at Harmony Wynelands. The nice folks at Ironstone might get a bit testy if more people show up than they had planned for. I'm really looking forward to hearing **Ron Rhode** since I missed him at the Towe last year. From the number of tickets already sold, it appears that quite a few people are also looking forward to hearing him on these two Morton theatre organs.

Speaking of the Towe-- we had our first silent movie for 2008 on March 14. **Bob Salisbury** played for "The mark of Zorro" starring Douglas Fairbanks SR. Bob did his usual wonderful job and we all thoroughly enjoyed the evening. I understand that organists consider their job well done if someone says they were focused on the movie, not the music. Yet, when the lights came back on at intermission and

after the movie, folks came up for a closer look at the instrument subliminally providing an enhanced viewing experience. This is the original purpose of the theatre pipe organ and a visit to the console is the ideal opportunity for a quick lesson in the history and workings of these amazing machines.

In the very near future, we will have a new Sierra Chapter sign by the Towe organ that will contain pictures of the chambers and brochures on the organ and Sierra Chapter/ATOS information. I hope that will encourage people to ask questions, take pictures, reminisce (whatever happened to that organ in Arden Pizza & Pipes?), and in general, spread the word about our activities.

There has been a lot of discussion about the direction/future of ATOS and I am grateful that people closely involved for many years have shared their knowledge and views with me. I encourage all newcomers and returnees, like myself, to contribute to the discussion. Sometimes the best ideas come from people who can't tell a tibia from a posthorn but they know what they like to hear and don't want it to go away. Don't be shy!

Call me-- I'm listed here in the Spiel and would love to hear from you.

This is the perfect time since National is restructuring. If you will visit their website and look at the Education piece under "What's new" you will find that the Board has been busy but it will be up to the local chapters to implement these plans. Help is needed and always welcome!

Since I'm all on about the future I'll update you re:**Eric Fricke**. Mom Nancy emailed me that Eric's auditions with the school in North Carolina and at Curtis in Philadelphia went well. North Carolina accepted him on the spot and they expect to hear from Curtis the first week in April so we will have his decision for the May Spiel. He will thrive in either school -- how nice to have a choice but that's talent for you!

Enough from me. See y'all at Morton Madness!
CZ



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First Class
Postage
Stamp

We are on the Web:
sierrachapterATOS.org



MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR EVENTS

SIERRA CHAPTER EVENTS

Morton Madness XIV

Saturday April 12th

1:00 PM

Ron Rhode

Harmony Wynelands, Lodi

Ironstone Vineyards, Murphys

\$50 per person

Includes Buffet Dinner

TOWE MUSEUM EVENTS

Towe Auto Museum
2200 Front Street

Sunday March 30th

2:00 PM

Dave Sauer

Free With Museum
Admission

NOR-CAL TOS EVENT

Berkeley Community Theater

Sunday May 4 - 2:30 PM

Ken Double

\$15/General Admission

OROVILLE STATE THEATRE

Saturday Apr 5 - 7:30 PM

Dave Moreno Matias Bombal
The State's 80th Birthday

SANTA BARBARA EVENT

Arlington Theatre

Saturday May 10 - 11:00 AM

Jerry Nagano

1317 State St.
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
SBTOS Hotline: 805-692-0939

Sierra Chapter ATOS

The Chapter was organized in 1968 as a not-for-profit corporation under the statutes of the State of California and is recognized as tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and Section 23701d of the California Revenue and Taxation Code. It was organized for the purpose of preservation and promotion of the Theatre Pipe Organ and its music. Membership in the local Chapter also encourages membership in the National Organization, American Theatre Organ Society (ATOS.) www.atos.org