

# The Organ Spiel

NEWSLETTER FOR THE SIERRA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

## Organ Concert

June 2019



Wine & Cheese  
Reception following  
the concert.



*Presents:*

### **SIMON GLEDHILL** in Concert

On the Walt Strony Signature Series Allen Organ

**Sunday, June 23, 4pm**

**828 W. Main St, Grass Valley**

This is a fund raising event  
for the Church Organ Fund.

**Simon Gledhill** was born near Halifax, in the county of West Yorkshire in the north of England. It was clear at an early age that he had strong musical leanings, probably transmitted through the generations from his artistic maternal grandmother. He made his first major musical decision at the age of six when, after seeing a friend's toy accordion at school, he announced to his parents that the accordion was the instrument for him. They recognized his enthusiasm and acquired an accordion for him. They also found him a good teacher – no small achievement as accordion teachers are few and far between. In the early days the accordion was so large relative to Simon's small frame, that he had to be tied to the back of the chair on which he sat to play it to stop him from toppling over. He made strong progress, gaining awards in competitions and at the age of 15 was runner-up in the Under-16 British National Accordion Playing Championship.

Meanwhile, Simon's father had bought himself an electronic organ for his own use and it soon became clear that Simon showed an aptitude for that instrument, too. Again, he was fortunate enough to find a good teacher who taught him classical piano, classical organ and popular organ on which he gained exceptionally high marks in exams. He enthusiastically followed other organists, attending their performances, and it wasn't long before he discovered the theatre pipe organ to which he took like a duck to water. He was encouraged by other organists, and at the age of 16 gained first prize in the Northern Young Theatre Organist of the Year competition.

Simon decided that music would remain a hobby. He was doing well academically at school and at the age of 18 was admitted to the University of Cambridge, one of the most prestigious universities in Britain. He studied Natural Sciences,

specializing in Organic Chemistry, but decided that his career would be in the world of finance rather than science. He joined Lloyds Bank as a Graduate Trainee in 1987 and remained there for 26 years, rising to a senior position. He is now a divisional Chief Risk Officer at Legal & General, a multi-national financial services company based in London.

As a musician, Simon is in great demand and his "hobby" seems almost like a second career at times! Even though his main interest is in theatre organ, he is one of the few organists to successfully "cross the divide" by also giving recitals in churches, cathedrals and concert halls where he includes transcriptions of well-known orchestral pieces and some lighter music in his programs. He is especially known internationally as a theatre organist, and has toured just about every country in the world where theatre organs are found. He was twice honoured by the American Theatre Organ Society, having been named Organist of the Year and later admitted to the Society's "Hall of Fame" of distinguished theatre organists, past and present.

Simon's music has won high compliments from his peers, praising "... his rare combination of flawless technique, impeccable phrasing and an unerring sense of musical good taste," and describing him as "... someone who was born to be a theatre organist."

He has made over 20 commercial recordings over the years and has been heard on the radio many times. He was selected as the artist to make the first and only recording on the much-admired Wurlitzer organ in the Castro Theatre, San Francisco. His most recent release was recorded in Switzerland on a historic instrument in a college close to the shores of Lake Geneva.

## PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE—Randy Warwick



We had a spring season that for a couple of reasons did not result in events after the late January movie at Fair Oaks. However, the remainder of the year will be filled with several organ events and/or concerts, and what a great way to start the remainder of the year than to drive to beautiful Grass Valley to hear no less than England's Simon Gledhill, playing probably the best Allen theatre organ in the world.

On another note: For many years the Fair Oaks Parks District allowed us the use of a closet for storage of miscellaneous items. Remodeling the Clubhouse basement eliminated the closet with much of the items cluttering the chambers or stuffed under the stage. To solve this problem, we have rented a small storage space. However as this is a continuous dollar drain, we are looking for a space or even two small spaces to store these items at no charge. Ideally, we would like to have a place that is close to Fair Oaks. We thank Greg De Santis who has already accepted storage of, by far, the largest group of items consisting of the entire trumpet rank that has been replaced.

If you have some available enclosed space, please contact **Terry Clifton (916-501-4045)** regarding size and location.

### MEMBERSHIP NEWS

#### Welcome New Members

**Stuart Boyer** (Sustaining Level)

**Esther & Wayne Joseph**

(Contributing Level)

#### Renewing at the Benefactor Level:

**Terry & Sherry Clifton**

**Charlie Metcalf**

**Jim & Marilyn Pearce**

**Bob Suffel**

**Richard Taylor**

**Randy & Adele Warwick**

**Bob Wilcox**

**Carol Zerbo**

#### Renewing at the Patron Level:

**Joan & Gary Grootveld**

**Jeanne Paquette-French**

#### Renewing at the Sustaining Level:

**Jim & Denise Brown**

**Gary French**

**Frank & Sondra Fuson**

**Linda & Bob Jarvis**

**Bill & Alice Kutzer**

**Bill Trabucco**

#### Renewing at the Contributing Level:

**Pat Fitzgerald**

**Robert & Linda Hartzell**

**Wendell Jacob**

**Jim Leach**

**Roy Powlan**

**Virginia Thomas**



### **NorCal Theatre Organ Society Presents:**

**Richard Hills *In Concert***

**Sunday, July 7, 2:30PM**

**Berkeley Community Theatre, Berkeley**

**Enter through Stage Door at 1930 Allston Way**

This is a NorCal Members Only Concert. Memberships available at the door and you and your guest may attend as our guests!

**Richard Hills** is one of the very few musicians truly to have bridged and mastered the divide between the world of the classical organ and that of the theatre organ. Having commenced classical organ studies under William Whitehead at Rochester Cathedral, he became Organ Scholar at Exeter College Oxford, studying with David Sanger. Further organ scholarships followed at Portsmouth Cathedral, where he studied with Rosemary Field and at Westminster Abbey.

He now pursues a freelance career and is Organist at St Mary's, Bourne Street, London. His career in the theatre organ world has been equally prestigious. He has numerous prizes and awards to his credit, both in this country and in the USA, where he was named by 'Organist of the Year' in 2010 by the American Theatre Organ Society. He has appeared many times on national and international TV and Radio, including solo appearances on programs as diverse as Radio 3 Choral Evensong and Radio 2's 'Friday Night is Music Night', and has several recording credits. His most recent solo recording was made on the magnificent dual-purpose Compton organ of Southampton's Guildhall.

When not on the bench Richard serves as Musical Advisor to the Cinema Organ Society and maintains a practical interest in organ building.

### **When do we publish *The Organ Spiel*?**

Each edition of the *Spiel* generally comes out two weeks prior to a Sierra Chapter event rather than on a monthly schedule. Information about all organ related events that may be of interest will be announced via e-mail, on our Hotline (916) 604-6173 and of course our Website **www.sierrachapter.org**.