

# The Organ Spiel

NEWSLETTER FOR THE SIERRA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

## Hot August Pipes



AUGUST 2011



### HOT AUGUST PIPES is back!!

After a couple of years, it was time to resume this fun event. And if you have not heard our clubhouse organ in the last year, there have been several significant improvements. So, come and hear *jazz talent*, **Craig Browning**, work his magic on this fine instrument and enjoy some ice cream on what will most likely be a very typical hot summer day in Fair Oaks.

### ABOUT THE ARTIST:

**Craig Browning** studied classical piano with Jean and Ray Drake of the Drake Studios, Oakland for 6 years. He knew that was not his forte. His father was a stride piano player and exposed Craig to the music of Goodman, Ellington, Waller, and Tin Pan Alley tunes, all of his life. His father also had some theatre organ recordings of George Wright and Jesse Crawford, among others.

Craig is also a Pipe and Theatre organist. He was introduced, at age 5, to the Wurlitzer Theatre Organ at *Ye Olde Pizza Joynt*, in Hayward, while Bill Langford played there. *"One person I wished I could have met at this time was Larry Vanucci, unfortunately I never did."*

As a youngster, Craig expressed interest in the B3 Hammond. From 13 on, that was his passion, and he played with Zeke Nuez, guitarist from Hawaii and teen Ronnie Wilson, organist. He joined the Chabot College Jazz band at 16. He has done theater work for the **BLACK REPERTORY GROUP** providing music and sound effects for their productions for several years.

*"Having Asperger's Syndrome and other learning disabilities (music being a refuge from the "Normal" world, especially around the time of High School) I never was a good sight reader and shied away from classical music, except as a learning tool (oddly enough I can write music notation easier than I can read it)."*

Craig has played keyboards with Pete Yellin and Bob Edmonson, Diamond G and her Gentlemen, Margie Turner, and Georgia Freeman.

He played organ and piano with **WALTER SAVAGE AND THE SAVAGE FIVE**. He was the pianist for **DONALD DUCK BAILEY's** trio, has played organ with the Funky Beulah Band of San Francisco and played for Bruce Davidson's Band, San Francisco.

In 1991, he moved to Vancouver, WA, to study piano tuning at the Piano Hospital and got re-introduced to Theatre Organ at

### WHAT - Ice Cream Social

**PLUS: Theatre Organ Jazz Concert** on the Seaver Memorial 3/13 Morton/Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ

**WHERE - Fair Oaks Clubhouse - 7997 California Ave**

**WHEN - Sunday August 7 - 2:00PM**



*Uncle Milt's Pizza & Pipes* while Skip O'Donnell played there. He joined Nor-Cal after returning to the Bay Area around 1994.

Since then, he has studied with Dave Hegarty and has performed repeatedly for several organ clubs in the Bay Area, including the Sonoma Organ Club. He is a member of the American Theater Organ Society and participates in the Open Consoles once a month at Berkeley; Sierra Chapter members have also heard him at several of our Open Consoles, as well.

*"My theater organ concept is more Fats Waller (who made most of his pipe organ records on an Estey church organ), Buddy Cole, Billy Nalle and Johnny Seng, in addition to what I know about Hammond playing and what I've learned about orchestral arranging (most notably the late Henry Mancini's book which is tied to various arrangements he did on LP's mainly Mr. Lucky [w/Buddy Cole on Hammond] and Peter Gunn)."*

Currently, Craig is working on a Bachelor's degree from the Jazzschool Institute in Berkeley. He is playing in the Blues band, Billy & the Thrillers.

### Theatre Historical Society to visit the Central Valley



The 2012 Conclave (June 26 - 30) will be based in Sacramento. Attendees will tour theatres in cities that include: Sacramento, Roseville, Auburn, Woodland, Redding, Modesto, Fresno, Stockton, Hanford, Visalia, Merced and more. If you are interested in theatre architecture, this is the organization you want to be involved with. Consider joining THS. They publish a wonderful quarterly magazine. For more information, go to: [www.historictheatres.org](http://www.historictheatres.org)



THEATRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY of AMERICA

# Piano and Pipes Ragtime Trio

**Saturday, July 30**  
**Concert - 2:00PM**

Bringing you ragtime with all the bells and whistles, the **Piano & Pipes Ragtime Trio**, with William Coale, theater organist and ragtime piano duo, Jack and Chris Bradshaw, will perform a 2:00 PM concert, July 30, at the home of Wendell Jacob, 48 College Park, Davis.

Wendell has recently restored the glorious pipe organ that once graced the lobby of the San Francisco Fox Theater. This historically significant instrument performs as it once did in its heyday.

**William Coale**, Chairman of the NorCal Theatre Organ Society, a licensed renewal coach, educational consultant, pipe organ technician, editorial writer and all around ne'er do well punster, has been playing theater organ since 1973. Most recently he has presented concerts for ECHO organ club in San Carlos and the Sierra Chapter of ATOS.



Ragtime piano duo, **Jack and Chris Bradshaw** have performed in 11 states and Canada. Their flying fingers dance off the keyboard to Jack's four-hand arrangements of popular rags, cakewalks, marches and novelty numbers. Jack also performs solos.

Come enjoy the blending of two of the ragtime era's most prominent instruments. Donations accepted jointly for the Sierra Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society Scholarship Fund and the West Coast Ragtime Society Youth Program.

Call: **Chris Bradshaw 408-842-4990** for reservations and questions.

## California Auto Museum Organ Relocation Project

The Contract is signed, soon the CAM organ will be moving to Oroville!!! It's an exiting time here! If anyone is interested in helping with the move, just contact David Dewey ([djdewey@cncnet.com](mailto:djdewey@cncnet.com))

**530-589-3676**, we'd love to have the help! The State Theatre still needs to be prepared for the organ and we are working with a structural engineer to get approval for the echo chamber access door so we can begin the organ chamber preparations. Meantime, we are going to have another "Silents at the State" event on Friday, November 11 with Dave Moreno at his "portable" organ. Save the date! More details to follow!

### Chapter Officers

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# PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE – CAROL ZERBO

The ATOS Convention was great fun and the weather, thankfully, was quite nice. We heard some very nice organs in a variety of venues. I am amazed at the ingenuity exhibited by those who simply must have a theatre pipe organ on their property. It was most kind of these people to share their "pride and joys" with us.



With the public venues we visited, one glaringly obvious point was that, if an organ is in a venue that supports and encourages its use, it will be showcased and maintained to a much greater degree than an instrument that might just be there because of its historical value. There's that "champion" thing again. It takes dedication, know-how and money to make these relics of a bygone era sing again. Once they can sing, it takes people who go to the trouble to make sure an audience benefits by the experience. And benefit, they will. Used regularly, a theatre pipe organ becomes an expected part of the show. Play the audience in, play at

intermission, play the audience out, play a concert, play a silent movie. If it's there, perhaps it should be used. Hey - what a concept!

This is the reason the Board of the Sierra Chapter voted unanimously to donate the Mendenhall Wurlitzer to the State Theatre Arts Guild in Oroville, CA. The organ will be restored and installed in the historic Oroville State Theatre. It has a champion in Sierra Chapter members **David and Linda Dewey** who also belong to the Mt Shasta Chapter ATOS. David's vision for the organ is a theatre pipe organ devotee's dream: *an organ in a theatre whose audience appreciates it's value as a part of their entertainment experience. We'll miss the old girl but look forward to hearing her loud and clear in her new home.*



We heard another "old girl" on JULY 24th - the Grant Union High School organ came out of hibernation early this year. Our Mr. October at the

CAM, **Paul Quarino**, came to play and accompany a couple of silent movies starring Charlie Chaplin. We had a very good turnout for our first summer presentation. This was a joint venture with our George Wright concert co-sponsors, the Grant Union High School Alumni Association. Hmm, perhaps we will start a new tradition. It would certainly be nice to use that venerable instrument more than once a year.

July will close with a ragtime trio concert at **Wendell Davis's** home on July 30th. 1/3 of the trio is our own **Bill Coale**. This is another opportunity to highlight the versatility of the theatre pipe organ. Ragtime -- well, why not? And what about jazz? **Craig Browning** will be playing for our Hot August Pipes on August 7th at Fair Oaks Clubhouse.

Yep - summer is speeding by. Good things happened; life in the theatre organ world is never dull, certainly not from my point of view.

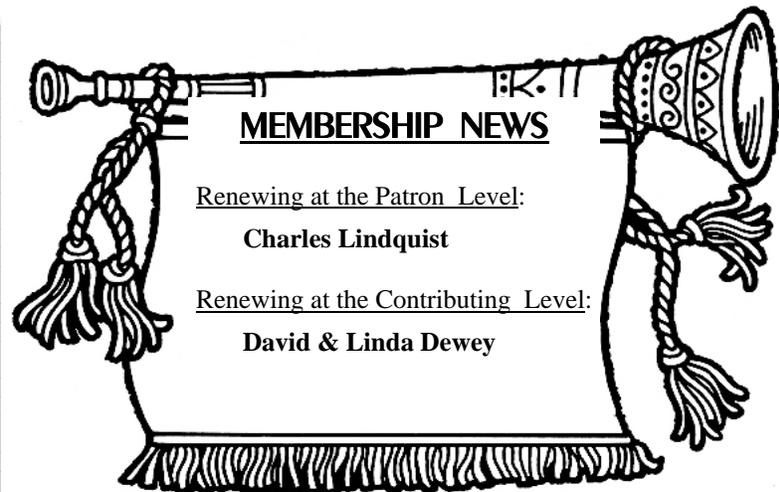
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## Berkeley Community Theatre Update

The Berkeley Community Theatre, the home for Nor-Cal theatre organ concerts, is now closed for upgrading to American Disability Act (ADA) standards. Major re-wiring of the building will also be done with anticipated re-opening in late November or even later. All scheduled concerts at BCT for the 2011 - 2012 season are now on hold.

Sierra Chapter will keep you informed of other potential public events in the Bay Area while work progresses on BCT.



### MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Renewing at the Patron Level:

Charles Lindquist

Renewing at the Contributing Level:

David & Linda Dewey



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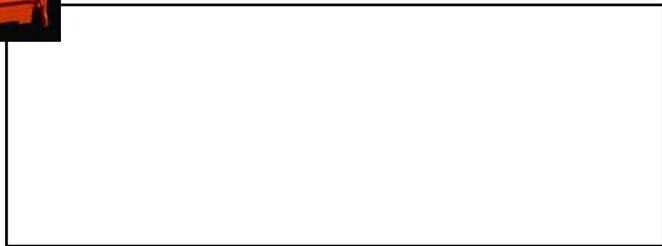
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## MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR EVENTS



### PIANO & PIPES EVENT

**Saturday, July 30th 2:00**

Home of Wendell Jacob  
48 College Park - Davis

#### Ragtime Trio:

Chris & Jack Bradshaw - Piano duo  
Bill Coale - Theatre Organ



Fundraiser for:  
Sierra Chapter Scholarship Fund  
and West Coast Ragtime  
YOUTH Program

### SIERRA CHAPTER EVENTS



## Hot August Pipes



### Ice Cream Social

Fair Oaks Community Clubhouse

**Sunday, Aug 7th 2:00PM**

**WITH Craig Browning**

**\$5.00 Donation Per Person**

### *Pot Luck / Concert*

Pete & Dianne McCluer

Shingle Springs

**Saturday, Sept 17th**

Artist: TBA

### STOCKTON FOX EVENT

*Notorious!*



**Friday August 12 6:30PM**

**\$8/Adults**

Featuring

*Tom Thompson*

*On the Mighty Morton*

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](http://www.atos.org)