

The Organ Spiel

NEWSLETTER FOR THE SIERRA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

Silent Movie From 1927



MARCH 2010

Friday,
MARCH 19

CALIFORNIA AUTO
MUSEUM
(FORMERLY THE TOWE)

7:30 PM

About the Film:

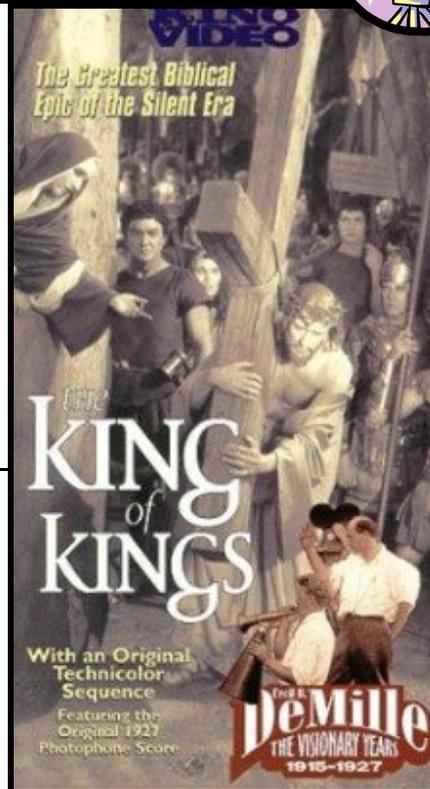
One of the cinema's most important religious epics, Cecil B. DeMille's masterwork, **The King of Kings** (1927), tells the story of Christ's final experiences, from his meeting with Mary Magdalene, to his Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension.

In an attempt to honor the material, DeMille had both a Jesuit Priest and several other members of the clergy (including a Rabbi) on hand during filming to ensure that the proper reverence was being paid to the film's subject matter.

The film's first day of shooting was honored with prayers offered by representatives of Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Buddhist and Moslem faiths. Anxious to set the proper ecclesiastical mood, each morning DeMille entered the set to the strains of "Onward, Christian Soldiers!" and spiritual music was continually piped onto the set during the production. Cast members were all given Bibles and asked to call each other by their Biblical names whenever they were on the sound stage. At one point, an impatient DeMille reportedly demanded to know "where in the hell is Judas?" garnering an angry dressing down from the producer.

It is said that worldwide, some 8 billion people have seen DeMille's film. Reportedly no week passes without **The King of Kings** playing in some corner of the world. Missionaries have carried the film all over the world in support of their ministry.

But **The King of Kings** was not a success in all regards. The part of Christ was less than a boon to the acting career of its star, H.B. Warner. Because Hollywood tended to see actors as "types," Warner had great difficulty finding a role that matched the dignity of Christ after completing DeMille's film. He later told friends that his career virtually ended with **The King of Kings**. (review courtesy Turner Classic Movies)



GUEST ARTIST

WALT STRONY

will ACCOMPANY
THE SILENT FILM.



About the Artist,

Walter Strony is one of America's premier concert organists. He made his public debut in 1974 at the age of 18 and has since established himself as one of few organists equally at home playing both theatre and classical organ.

He is the only living organist to have been twice voted "Organist of the Year" by the American Theatre Organ Society - in 1991 and 1999 and has performed hundreds of concerts from coast to coast in the United States as well as in Japan, Australia, England, and Canada. In addition, he has performed at many conventions of the American Theatre Organ Society and the American Guild of Organists.

This well-rounded musician brings a wealth of experience to any organ console. This experience has brought him the reputation of being one of America's most original and interesting sounding concert organists. As one reviewer noted - "*Strony has become one of the rare breed of today's younger theatre organists to have developed a style uniquely his own. While looking backwards, respectfully to the masters of the theatre organ tradition, he manages to look forward with a refreshing approach in all his musical arrangements. It is a style that is inventive, harmonically interesting, and above all, right for today.*"



ATOS RECEIVES THE LARGEST GIFT IN ITS HISTORY



The American Theatre Organ Society is pleased to announce the reception of a major gift; ATOS received a letter from the trustee of the estate of the late Kenelm M. Lufkin of Des Moines, IA, a longtime member of the organization. The letter included a **check in the amount of \$900,000**, the largest single gift ever given to ATOS. In granting the funds, Mr. Lufkin left no specific instructions nor restrictions, thus ATOS has the opportunity to provide funding for several worthy programs.

More importantly, the Board of Directors will be guided with input from our experts on the Fund Raising Committee and the new Financial Review Committee in terms of the best use of these funds for the long term interest and growth of ATOS. Clearly, the vast majority of these new dollars will be invested for the future of the organization. **The Board of Directors, the staff, and the membership of ATOS extends its greatest appreciation** to those closest to Mr. Lufkin for his largesse and the monumental impact his gift will have on this organization.

Furthermore, this single occasion points out what the ATOS leadership and its President and CEO Ken Double have been discussing for nearly three years. There are members of this organization from all walks of life who are passionate about theatre organ and the future of this art form. That passion can extend to major gift-giving when the organization presents a well prepared program for future growth.

In addition to the four new Estate Planning gifts that have been announced, this spectacular announcement and Mr. Lufkin's incredible generosity, present ATOS with an entirely new, and certainly much brighter message about the future of theatre organ music and the society charged with promoting and presenting this unique art form.

The American Theatre Organ Society leadership intends to be a good steward of these funds, and looks forward to announcing the allocations for the various worthy and important projects underway and being planned with a close eye on long term growth of the organization.



MESSIAH LUTHERAN IN CITRUS HEIGHTS is seeking an organist/pianist. One Sunday service each week (9:00 a.m.) plus midweek services during Lent, Advent, and Thanksgiving. Accompanies weekly choir rehearsal and pre-service warm-ups.

Stipend (depending on qualifications) up to: \$75.00 for Sunday services; \$75.00 for choir rehearsals; and \$60.00 for midweek services. For more information, contact:

Ron Bischoff (elder) at bischoff@surewest.net or phone (916) 782-3323

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PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE – CAROL ZERBO



As the saying goes: "Ask and ye shall receive". I decided that my lesson for this year should be to learn clarity and brevity. In other words, don't talk so much and be precise when speaking. Whoever is in charge of these things decided that was a good idea, so when I had my thyroid removed in January, my voice went with it. In pipe organ terms, the blower works fine but the windlines are a bit leaky and the pipes are rather badly dented. The resulting sound is little more than a breathy squeak. I'm told this is a temporary glitch but if not, I'm okay with it. Life is an equal opportunity learning experience and this has convinced me that my ability to talk is far less important than my ability to listen and observe.



A perfect example: Free Museum Day which happened on Saturday, Feb. 6th and Bless Them - **Dave Moreno and Randy Warwick** (all the way from Grass Valley) spent their day along with **Dave Sauer**, taking turns on the Wurlitzer and talking with many of the estimated 5,000 people who came through the California Automobile Museum-- At various times

during the day, **Eric Parker, Dr. Bob Barrett, Diane Lennon, Craig Peterson and Tom Norvell** stopped by to chat and answer questions from curious visitors.

Quite a few had heard the music playing in the far reaches of the museum and, unaware there was a musical instrument in the building, were attracted by the sound. The most frequently asked question: "When will the organ be played again?" The organ evoked memories of the Carl Greer Inn or Arden Pizza & Pipes. For others, the notion of silent movies with organ accompaniment sounded like a different way to spend an evening.

It will be interesting to see if this affects the attendance for our March 19th presentation of *The King of Kings* with Walt Strony playing. The point is - by its very presence, the theatre pipe organ draws people. It may not be the main attraction but just sitting there, the console draws the curious and when the pipes speak, people pause to listen to a sound they may have never heard before. Whether they linger depends on the human factor-- someone actually playing the console, choosing what sounds come through those slots opening and closing (IMHO - yes, the lights

should be on in the chambers). Then the questions start -- What! no speakers? Just pipes and real drums, cymbals, marimbas, xylophones, bells, car horns, train whistles --all air driven? And that guy is making it all happen with his hands and feet?

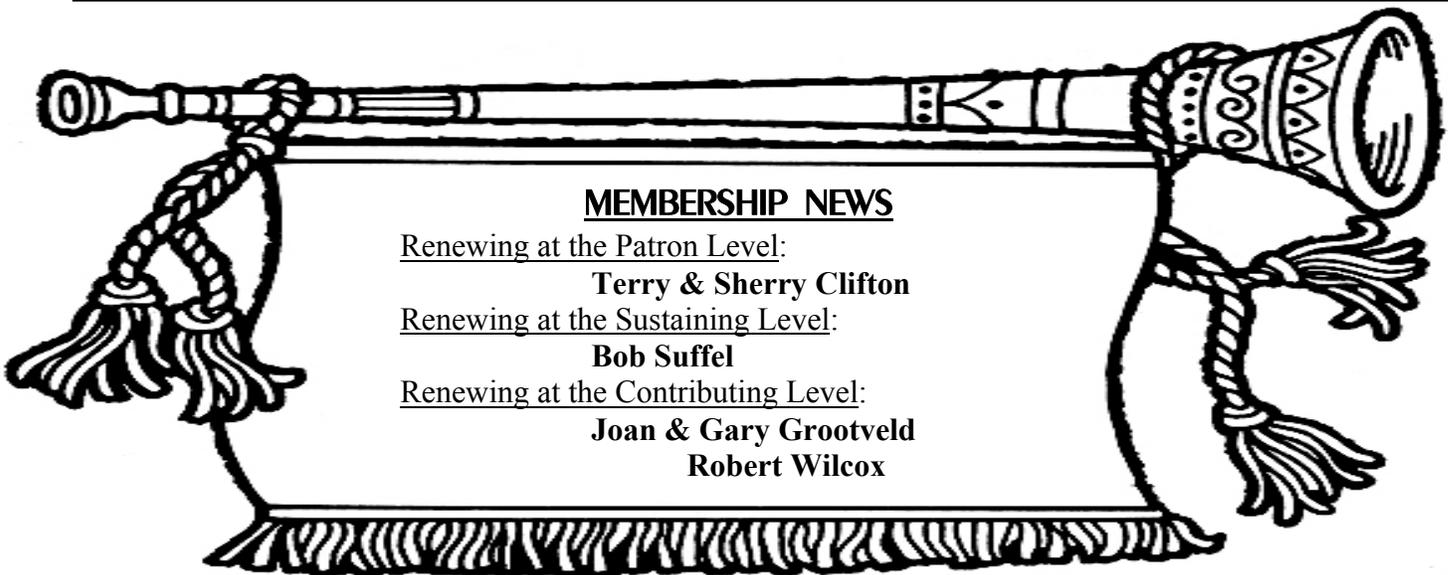
In the words of one young observer "Whoa, that is so cool!" Ahhh - music to my ears. Will this kid become an organist or technician? Highly doubtful. But, he stepped back in time to experience an instrument built to enhance a mood, set a pace and, occasionally, thrill a theatre full of concert goers. Did he care about that bit of history? Probably not.

But, whether it lives in a museum full of cars, a noisy restaurant, a beautifully restored theatre auditorium or lobby, or private home, the theatre pipe organ attracts people of all ages. I think every effort to preserve these instruments deserves respect and support.

Well, so much for brevity.

See y'all at the movie.

Carol Z



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Renewing at the Patron Level:

Terry & Sherry Clifton

Renewing at the Sustaining Level:

Bob Suffel

Renewing at the Contributing Level:

Joan & Gary Grootveld

Robert Wilcox



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We are on the Web:
sierrachapterATOS.org
youtube.com/SierraChapterATOS

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR EVENTS

SIERRA CHAPTER EVENT
California Auto Museum
2200 Front Street

Friday March 19 7:30 PM



The King of Kings
1927

Silent Film - with
Walt Strony

\$10/General
\$8/Member
\$5/Students
\$20/Family



Ironstone Vineyards
Murphys, California



POPS Concert
With
Martin Ellis

Saturday April 17th



Coach leaves Auto Museum
New Time
==> 10:00 A.M.

NOR-CAL TOS EVENT
Berkeley Community Theatre
Sunday Mar 14
2:30 PM
Chris Gorsuch
\$15/General Admission



Stockton Fox Event
Bob Hope Theatre
242 E. Main
Friday March 19
6:30PM
The Pink Panther
\$8/Adults

Featuring **Tom Tompson**
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