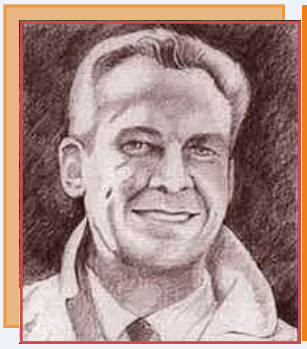
The Organ Spiel

Newsletter for the Sierra Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society

Organ Concert — November 2026



25th George Wright Tribute Concert

$20/At the door (cash or check)



Grant Union High School

1400 Grand Avenue
Sacramento

Saturday, Nov. 7th
2:00 PM

Box Office opens at 1:00PM

The four-manual twenty-one rank theatre pipe organ at Grant Union High School was installed over a period of one year from 1938 to 1939. Pipe work and chests were obtained from theatre organs in Redding and San Francisco, California, and Reno, Nevada. The best parts were used to assemble the organ by students under the direction of Fred Wood, an organ builder from Oakland. The new Grant organ was presented to the public in a recital by Howard Scott and George Wright on December 8, 1939. Recent improvements to the organ have been completed including a replacement Post horn more suitable to the size of the Grant auditorium.



Guest Artist
Walt Strony





Walt Strony is one of America's premier concert organists. Since his debut in 1974 at the age of 18, he has stablished himself as one of the few organists equally at home playing both theatre and classical organ.

Mr. Strony has performed from coast-to-coast in the United States as well as in Japan, Australia, England and Cana-da. He has performed for more conventions of the American Theatre Organ Society than anyone living, and has also performed numerous times for chapters of the America 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 organists. As one reviewer noted years ago -- " 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 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."

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE – Randy Warwick



We are approaching what will be the 25th George Wright Tribute Concert; played in a return engagement by **Walt Strony**. Walt always puts on a terrific concert with artistry that aptly shows the variety of sounds and huge dynamic range of the Grant High 22 rank Wurlitzer.

Due to the pandemic and lack of accessibility to the auditorium and rehabilitation of the building, there has not been a concert every year after George Wright passed. Please remember that this is an event that over the last 28 years has raised funds both for the Grant Alumni Association and our Chapter and has featured most of the highest lauded theatre organists in the U.S.

Hope to see you there.

Also **Dave Moreno**, aided by **Terry Clifton**, have nearly finished installing our "new" Wurlitzer console at the Clubhouse for our Chapter Organ. Among other improvements it has many more stop tabs allowing more unification and ultimately can accommodate more ranks in the future.

Does anybody know anything about this pipe organ?

By Bill Trabucco

Years ago, my family (lots of it near Stockton) put on a big wedding in the Stockton Civic Auditorium. At the time, looking at what appeared to be organ grilles adjacent to the proscenium, I thought, "I wonder if there was or is an organ back there". In poking around on the internet, only once using AI, it claims a Reuter concert pipe organ was installed in 1926. Further, it says it is un-playable, having been neglected for years and there is no budget for it.

I contacted Reuter and their response is, they don't have a record of an organ going to Stockton then, but it might have been a transplant.

Having been slightly connected to the Sacramento Memorial Estey (worked with Hupalo and Repasky in the rebuild of four divisions and trouble shooting the replacement console with a new high-tech relay); and having worked on tuning the marvelous Austin opus 400 that used to be in the SF Civic auditorium (I worked for Felix F. Schoenstein in 1970) I've got a soft spot for these installations and their organs.

Does anyone know if the Reuter is still there and would it be worth an evaluation? Or does someone we know, already know about it.

I'm still poking around on something closer that is in Grass Valley. On Mill St., there is the old "Auditorium Building" built 1916 ish that had a marvelous performance/concert hall, seating something like 800, as part of it's upper section. I'm somewhat familiar with this building as we have to crawl through some of it to get to the roof of the adjacent Union Building which I work on sometimes. According to the local historical society, the Auditorium was turned into a movie theater about 1922 called "The Strand".

Much of the building has been gutted and turned into a furniture store, but the Historical Society sent me a collection of newspaper articles about things that happened there including one talking about an orchestra performance and listed performers including an **organist**. Was there an organ? Maybe more than a pump organ considering the size of the place? According to the realty ad pictures (it's for sale) there is one section that still has the elaborate somewhat Baroque style ornamentation. Sometimes in gutting and re-purposing there is a tendency to just board up and cover over, etc. and maybe if an organ was there, some of it got left. The Historical Society, strangely, doesn't have any pictures of the interior which would be fantastic to find. I'm still looking.

Mostly, does anyone know about an organ in the Stockton Civic Auditorium.

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Or phone **530-264-6629**

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Renewing at the Benefactor Level:
Michael Brown & Harold King Jr

Renewing at the Patron Level:
Jeanne Paquette-French



Renewing at the Sustaining Level:
David & Linda Dewey

NOTE: Your memberships can now be renewed online. **See your mailing label for your expiration month and year**.

Go to:
SierraChapterATOS.org/onlineapplication.html
Select your Membership Option
and click on **Add to Cart.**
You will then be directed to pay by Credit Card or PayPal.

ANNUAL ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS

Nominations are still being accepted for Board positions beginning in 2027.

If you are a member of ATOS National and have not yet gotten involved at the chapter level...this is your opportunity!
We have an open position.

Ask not what Sierra Chapter can do for you...ask, what can I do for Sierra Chapter?

It takes a lot of people to keep the chapter machinery running and we have fun doing it! ***The success of every nonprofit organization depends on its volunteers.***

Email sierrachapteratos@comcast.net
if you are interested.