

# The Organ Spiel

NEWSLETTER FOR THE SIERRA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

Silent Movie From 1927

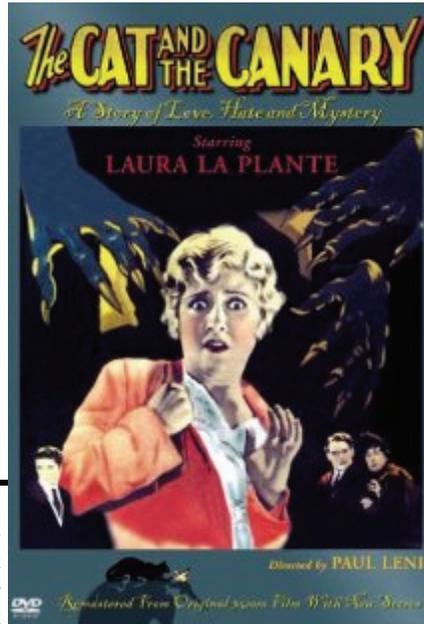


October 2010

Sunday,  
October 24

CALIFORNIA AUTO  
MUSEUM  
(FORMERLY THE TOWE)

6:00 PM



## About the Film:

An old, dark house. A lunatic on the loose. A fortune people will do anything to get their hands on. These are the ingredients comprising one of Universal's earliest screen shockers, 1927's silent feature *The Cat and the Canary*. You may be surprised at how the story doesn't quite fit in with the studio's go-for-broke monsterfests,

but it's the sort of flick that works wonders with little material. Starring Laura La Plante as the plucky heroine and Creighton Hale as the unlikely hero, *The Cat and the Canary* is a tale of greed and ghosts sure to satisfy any viewer looking for a creepy good time.

After years of being pestered by his avaricious relatives, sickly millionaire Cyrus West has at last kicked the bucket. But it's he who's had the last laugh, for his will decrees that it only be opened twenty years after his death. But the decades have passed by, and the time has come for West's heirs to gather for the reading. As it turns out, old Cyrus has one more trick up his sleeve, having left the entirety of his wealth to the most distant relative carrying his name.

The stage play *The Cat and the Canary* was based upon had a pretty good run in its time, and since 1927, even more big-screen versions were cranked out. But it's this adaptation in particular to which classic horror fans owe a debt of gratitude. Though it wasn't Universal's first genre film (*The Phantom of the Opera* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* were first), it did help establish various elements that horror now holds near and dear to its heart. First and foremost, *The Cat and the Canary* is all about atmosphere.

Starting off with a hand wiping off cobwebs covering the opening titles, director Paul Leni proceeds to play up the story's spookiness to the hilt. He casts dark shadows on nearly every corner of celluloid, seizing every opportunity to heighten the story's claustrophobic nature and depict Annabelle, as the title suggests, like a canary surrounded by cats.

Leni's constantly eerie exploitation might seem overdone to modern viewers, but that's just what the man intended. *The Cat and the Canary* is as much a comedy as it is a thriller, blurring the line separating the two and doing a rather adept job of it. There are no huge guffaws to be had, just as there aren't any shriek-out-loud moments; it's mostly a matter of never going heavy on the thrills, blending in a jovial spirit to ensure the story doesn't grow too dour. This goes without saying that the central mystery isn't terribly difficult to solve. With a pretty short list of suspects, it's not hard to deduce the source of Annabelle's seemingly supernatural troubles. But Leni and crew do a fine job of keeping viewers interested throughout, as do most of the actors.

La Plante does well as Annabelle, Hale is a hoot as a total wimp eventually forced to grow a backbone, and Martha Mattox does great work as the almost impossibly ominous housekeeper.

*The Cat and the Canary* may not seem like much when compared to today's horror offerings, but there's still a lot to appreciate about it. From its experiments with cinematography, superimposition, and even the title cards, you can tell *The Cat and the Canary* was made with a touch of class afforded to very few of modern genre flicks.

(Review courtesy of A.J. Hakari)

GUEST ARTIST

PAUL QUARINO

will ACCOMPANY  
THE Silent Film.

## About the Artist,

Paul Quarino is from the Portland Oregon area and joins us once again to accompany our Halloween Season silent movie. Paul is a versatile artist that can do it all, from Bach to rock, to gospel.

More recently, Paul was our featured artist for Morton Madness XIII and two years ago, performed his "Gospel According to Paul" concert on our Theatre Organ at the Fair Oaks Community Clubhouse.



# Annual Election of Officers and Board Members



**It is once again time to line up candidates for officers and board members.** Positions up for grabs are Vice-President, Secretary, and two Board Member positions. If you

are interested in running for any of these positions, please contact a member of the Nominating Committee. So far, except for one Board Member position, each of the persons up for reelection have agreed to run for a second term. If you are interested in running for any of the

open positions, please contact Dave Sauer (Nominating Committee Chairman) or Dick Taylor, or Marian Galbraith. See below for contact information.

If you have been a member of ATOS National and not yet gotten involved at the chapter level...this is your opportunity! 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 a lot of fun doing it!

The success of every nonprofit organization depends on its volunteers.

**Your participation is greatly appreciated!!!**

## Founder's Day at the California Auto Museum

On Sunday, October 3, the California Automobile Museum celebrated its 28 year history in Sacramento with a special event honoring its founders. The Dale Mendenhall Memorial Theatre Pipe Organ was a featured part of the program. Staff organist **Dave Sauer** demonstrated the organ and explained that ATOS paid over \$100,000 to have it installed in 1991 and that Sierra Chapter has presented many outstanding concerts and silent movies during the past 20 years. Several visitors commented on how much they enjoy listening to the Mighty Wurlitzer.

## Mark Herman Returns to Northern California

Internationally acclaimed young artist, **Mark Herman** will be returning to California to entertain us with a concert at the Berkeley Community Theatre on Sunday afternoon, November 7th. Sierra Chapter members last heard him at Morton Madness in April 2009, and at Grant Union High School, in 2008. Mark recently graduated from DePaul University with a BA in Theatre Arts, and Theatre Management. In 2004, he was the winner of the ATOS Young Theatre Organist Competition.



### Chapter Officers

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# PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE – CAROL ZERBO

I hope, by the time y'all are reading this, it really is Fall. Mother Nature must have decided that, since our summer was relatively mild, she would make it last longer. The last weekend in September for Bert Atwood's picnic in Clearlake was a toasty 95+. Great fun though! Bert's custom GW-4 has been augmented with real pipe organ percussions and speaks through swell shutters from main and solo chambers. It is quite an installation. Bert, Neal Wood and Art Woodworth played and, of course I didn't, but it's always nice visiting with the NorCal bunch. The next opportunity will probably be on November 7th when Mark Herman plays at Berkeley. Mark your calendars!

Our first attempt at a Sunday presentation of our silent movie series at CAM went quite well. I will admit to being surprised at the turnout - more than expected. Of course, Bob Salisbury is a popular artist and did his usual stellar job with The Iron Mask. A "show of hands" poll of the audience told us that the majority of the attendees like both the time and the

day. Our next movie will be October 24th with Mr. October - Paul Quarino. Please note, that is Sunday, October 24th at 6PM. It's not a bad way to start your week or finish your weekend - depending on your perspective. Come give it a try.

I realize this is a scheduling issue but there might just be some among you who are fascinated with really old music (think Renaissance Faire type music) and instruments of the period. Sierra Chapter member Bill Trabucco of Grass Valley is presenting something called "Foolia" at 3PM on October 24th. He emailed me that his pipe organs, harpsichord and piano would also be played. A call to Bill at (510)273-4252 will provide further enlightenment. And, if you're really energetic, come back down the hill and catch our movie at CAM at 6PM.

While I'm on about silent movies, keep in mind our members in Oroville, David and Linda Dewey. David is spearheading the drive to put a theatre pipe organ back in the Oroville State Theatre. As part of their fundraising efforts, Silents at the

State will be presented on October 30th and November 12th. Our own Dave Moreno will provide his organ to accompany "The Phantom of the Opera" starring Lon Chaney on the 30th and will also play November 12th's presentation. It is encouraging to see projects such as this taking shape. Perhaps the future of the theatre pipe organ lies in the purpose of its past. Hopefully the citizens of Oroville and its surrounding communities will recognize the value of such events and attend.

Yes indeedy - if you add in our November events, the aforementioned Mark Herman concert, and our Grant Union concert with Jonas Nordwall, autumn is shaping up to be as busy as summer. That's a good thing!

Carol Z



**BOARD MEETING- SATURDAY**  
 Nov 6 10:00AM  
 Home of Carol Zerbo.  
 Open to all Regular Members, but please RSVP to Carol if you are planning to attend.

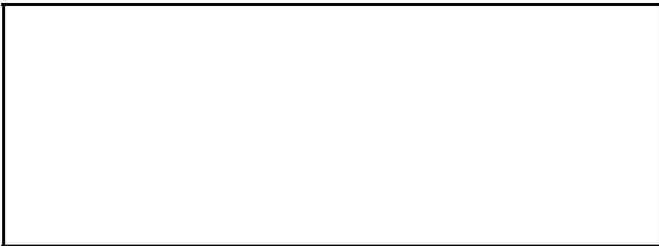




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# MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR EVENTS

**SIERRA CHAPTER EVENT**  
California Auto Museum  
2200 Front Street  
  
**Sunday Oct 24 6:00 PM**  
***The Cat and the Canary* —**  
**1929**



Silent Film -  
with  
**Paul Quarino**



\$10/General  
\$8/Member  
\$5/Student

**NOR-CAL TOS EVENT**  
Berkeley Community Theater  
**Sunday Nov 7th -**  
**2:30 PM**  
Mark Herman  
\$15/General Admission

**SIERRA CHAPTER/GRANT**  
**UNION ALUMNI EVENT**  
Grant Union High School  
1400 Grand Avenue  
  
13th Annual  
George Wright Memorial Concert  
**Sunday Nov 14th -**  
**2:00 PM**  
Jonas Nordwall  
\$10/General Admission

**Oroville State Theatre Event**  
Silents at the State  
Featuring:  
Dave Moreno &  
Linda Small  
Saturday October 30  
7:30PM



**Stockton Fox Event**  
Bob Hope Theatre  
242 E. Main Stockton, CA  
  
**Friday Oct 29**  
**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)