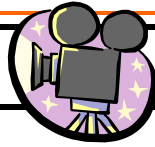


The Organ Spiel

NEWSLETTER FOR THE SIERRA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

Silent Movie From 1923



May 2010

Friday,
May 21

CALIFORNIA AUTO
MUSEUM
(FORMERLY THE TOWE)

7:30 PM



About the Film:

One of Buster Keaton's earliest feature length films, *Our Hospitality*, uses the conceit of the Southern family feud for its melodrama. At the outset, the Canfields and the McKays (an obvious play on Hatfields and McCoys) continue the family feud in 1810 and the heads of the latest generation kill each other in a rain-soaked duel. The surviving elder of the Canfields swears that his grandchildren will avenge their father when they grow up, so baby William McKay is sent off to live with relatives in New York City.

Jump ahead twenty years. William (Buster Keaton) is living contentedly in 1930 New York City, where 42nd and Broadway looks like rural farmland and where a policeman declares that an intersection is getting really dangerous when he has to stop Buster on a bicycle while a horse drawn cart passes. Its dry humor like this that provide much of the humor of the piece.

William returns to his Southern past for his inheritance, riding a flimsy railroad train. Coincidentally, he sits next to a beautiful young woman (Norma Talmadge--soon to become the real life Mrs. Buster Keaton), who happens to be a member of the Canfield clan returning home to the Blue Ridge Mountains. The stage is set to proceed as a romantic comedy of errors when the Canfields discover William's family identity. The predictable plot provides few surprises, so the main pleasures come through the details and delivery.

Keaton was a stickler for historical accuracy: the train is modeled after the earliest DeWitt Clinton steam engine that had movable track and was extremely slow, shown visually here with the dog that follows the train all the way. Passengers are jostled, and faces are blackened along the way--humorous exaggerated touches, but representative of early passenger train travel in the 1830s. Additionally, take note of the costumes; Keaton insisted on making them representative of the times. The rural setting of New York City isn't merely inserted for its humorous qualities--Keaton points out that the city scene is based on an actual photograph. (courtesy of Old School Reviews)

GUEST ARTIST

CHRISTIAN ELLIOTT

will ACCOMPANY
THE Silent Film.



Christian Elliott is one of today's prominent concert organists. At home performing literature of the church or theatre, he is very much in demand as a scorer of silent films. He has done extensive silent film accompaniment, including the Packard Foundation's Stanford Theatre (Palo Alto, California), UCLA, the Cinequest and San Francisco Silent Film Festivals, as well as for the Los Angeles Conservancy and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

A southern California native, Christian graduated with honors from Vanguard University of Southern California (formerly Southern California College), Costa Mesa. While still a student, he held church organ positions in several prominent southern California churches. For nine years he was a guest artist for the summer noon organ recitals at the Crystal Cathedral where he also played weddings and coached with Frederick Swann. After moving to the San Francisco Bay Area in 1988, he studied with celebrated organist and composer Richard Purvis.

Christian has six solo recordings to his credit. Theatre Organ Journal's Bob Shafter said in reviewing *Shuffle Off to Buffalo*: "...the best of the best...this recording (will be) one of the few 'classics' in the theatre organ world. It gets the highest possible recommendation."

After a tenure of eleven years as Senior Organist and Associate Minister of Worship at the Menlo Park Presbyterian Church, Christian transitioned to a corporate career in 1999. He continues as the Principal Guest Organist at the Church, where he performs monthly, and continues to perform silent film presentations and solo organ engagements and all across the USA.



CHRISTIAN ELLIOTT

“Where it all began...”



When:
June 28 - July 4
Where:
Renaissance Seattle by Marriott
Venues:
1st Church of Nazarene - Spokane
Wenatchee Valley Museum (Sold out)

- Daniels Recital Hall - Seattle
- Kenyon Hall - West Seattle
- Haller Lake Comm. Club - Seattle
- Evans residence - Kenmore
- Paramount Theater - Seattle
- Everett Theatre - Everett
- Mt Baker Theatre - Bellingham
- Cleveland High School - Portland
- 1st United Methodist Church - Portland
- St. Columban Church - Yelm
- Washington Center - Olympia
- Calvary Christian Assembly Church - Seattle
- Bastyr University - Seattle
- Tahoma Studio - Maple Valley
- Wurlitzer Manor - Gig Harbor

Artists:
Mark Anderson
John Atwell
Nathan Avakian
Jelani Eddington
Tony Fenelon
Scott Foppiano
Simon Gledhill
Chris Gorsuch
Richard Hills
Jonas Nordwall
Donna Parker
Jim Riggs
Walt Strony
Dave Wickerham
Lew Williams
Clark Wilson

TO REGISTER
www.atos.org or if you don't have a computer, contact Tom Blackwell at (206) 778-2724



GREAT IDEA

Let's ALL BUY tickets for the **Amtrak Coast Starlight** and have a RELAXING, leisurely, fun-filled trip all the way to Seattle!!!

If buying tickets from Sacramento, you want the #14 train that leaves on Saturday night June 26 at 11:59PM. Yes, it's in the middle of the night, but at daybreak we will be at Dunsmuir, with beautiful views of Mt. Shasta! After a full day on the rails and wonderful vistas, we arrive in Seattle at 8:45PM, only a mile away from the Hotel.

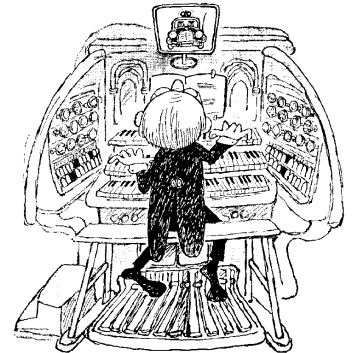
At the end of the Convention, return on Train #11, at 9:45AM and arrive back in Sacramento the following morning, June 6 at 6:35AM.



ORGANIST POSITION AVAILABLE

St. Luke's Lutheran Church in South Sacramento has an immediate opening for an organist to play Sunday mornings at 10:30 a.m.

The primary duties are accompaniment of service music and hymns from the Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnal and instrumental pieces for the service. The instrument is a 3 manual, 50 stop Allen model Q325 electronic organ. For a copy of the job description or to arrange an audition, please contact **Pastor Carl Hoppman at (916) 421-5039 or email at pr.carl@att.net**.



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PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE – CAROL ZERBO



When he emailed me on Tuesday after playing our Ironstone Presents concert, Martin Ellis' subject line was "What fun!!" I couldn't agree more. I thought things went quite nicely for our first concert under the new model. The weather could not have been better. The Alhambra room was full but comfortable. Dave Moreno had the Morton sounding great and Martin said he felt quite at home on the bench since recording his CD on Paul Van Der Molen's "Wonder Morton" in hometown, Indianapolis.

Don't have the final count at this writing but I think around 216 people enjoyed Martin's concert. We organ folks comprised about 1/3 of the audience and the rest were first-timers who came in on buses. Martin played a variety of music - something for everyone, there was even some dancing in the back of the room - and, I think the result was quite successful. I believe the new model accomplished what it's creator, **Dave Sauer**, set out to do - introduce new people to the (pardon the pun) wonders of the theatre organ and put a little more money in the coffers of Sierra and NorCal Chapters.

As the saying goes: Nothing ventured, nothing gained. We talk about declining attendance, increasing concert costs - what to do, what to do? Well, Dave decided to do something about it and I think that deserves recognition. We will see what next year brings; but for this year,

**THANKS VERY MUCH,
DAVE - WELL
DONE!**



Since I'm on the topic of events - our next one is, as you can see,

May 21st at CAM. Professor Dave Moreno has been tweaking the Mendenhall organ big time! We should have the new computer relay system in, thanks to Paul Brown, Chris Elliot will be at the console and Buster Keaton will be on the screen. So, y'all come on down.

ALSO -- I hope to see as many people as possible in Seattle for the Convention. A quick plane ride, a relaxing train ride, or a pretty road trip and you're there. These things are expensive and complex to put on, so show your support for our northern counterpart's efforts; it'll be fun!

Those of you who decided to stay home on Sunday, May 2nd, missed a wonderful concert by Walt Strony at Berkeley and an "experience" by Cameron Carpenter at Davies Symphony Hall. Walt can be depended upon to deliver a varied and most enjoyable program, which is why the audience was larger than one normally sees. Though hobbled by a badly sprained right ankle (I think stairs were involved), Walt played an ambitious mixture of classical music and popular medleys as if pain was not a problem and the result was, of course, a real pleasure to hear. Walt -- YOU ROCK! Just watch those stairs!

And then came Cameron. The ticket called it an organ recital, a newspaper article called it a concert, young organist Eric Fricke called it a show, my concert companion called it a rampage and I'm going with experience which, thanks to Dr. Bob Barrett's daughter, I and three others, are most grateful to have had. Cameron is very personable and has a wonderful stage presence, announcing his

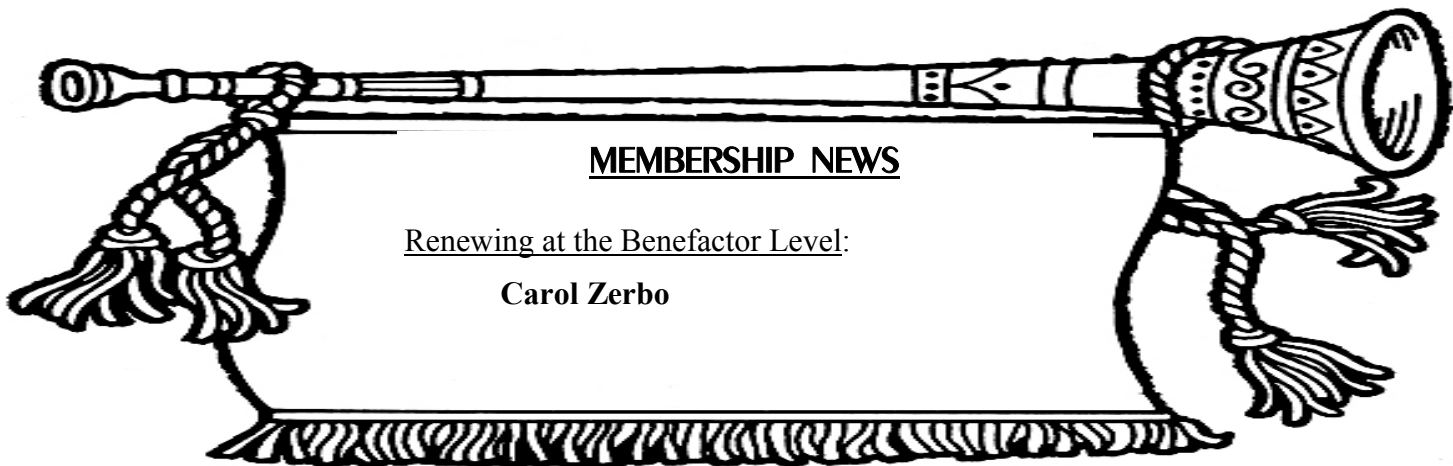
program and, like his theatre organ comrades, explaining what we were about to hear, which was very helpful considering that, before Sunday, I had not attended a classical organ program. Come to think of it, I'm not sure I've been to one yet. As he has said in many interviews, "It's about the organist, not the organ." No kidding!

The hall was full of people who came to witness Cameron Carpenter, and, according to my companion, very few of them were from the organ world. Classical music, as presented by Cameron Carpenter, is a happening, something I would encourage everyone to "experience" once. And, if Sunday was any example, do it soon before this remarkable young man's hearing is affected.

A quick update on our music library - we have received gifts of sheet music from **Bob Wilcox** of Walnut Creek and music books from **Sue Lang** of Ft. Bragg - both longtime members of Sierra Chapter. **Thanks to you both** for remembering us with your contributions. It is nice to know that organ music will be available to those interested in not just listening, but playing as well.

Well, as my friend Louise Eddington, Jelani's mom, said in an email. "Why use 100 words when 1,000 will do?"

That's me,
Carol Z



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

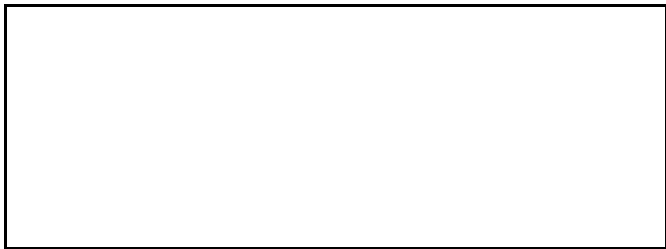
Renewing at the Benefactor Level:

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR EVENTS

SIERRA CHAPTER EVENT
California Auto Museum
2200 Front Street

Friday May 21 7:30 PM



*Our
Hospitality
1923*

Silent Film - with

Christian Elliott

\$10/General

\$8/Member

\$5/Student

\$20 Family



ATOS CONVENTION
Seattle, Washington



June 28 - July 4
www.atos.org



**SIERRA CHAPTER
EVENT**

Mini-Concert/Pot Luck/
Open Console

Home of Pete & Dianne
McCluer

Shingle Springs, CA

Sunday June 13 1:00PM

Friday March 21

6:30PM

\$8/Adults



Thoroughly Modern Millie

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