

Musically Speaking

The Newsletter of the Bellingham Music Club

September 5, 2007

10:30 A.M.

Mount Baker Theatre

TODAY'S ARTIST

ANDY CROW, Guest Organist

Presented by Vernon Greenstreet

Today we are delighted to be guests of the **Mount Baker Organ Society**. This joint meeting with the Bellingham Music Club features Andy Crow, organ authority and performer from Seattle. Not only will Andy perform Handel's Organ Concerto and a potpourri of popular tunes, but he will utilize "all the bells and whistles" of Bellingham's historical Wurlitzer organ as an accompaniment to the 1929 Laurel and Hardy silent movie, "Double Whoopee!" What a perfect opportunity to hear the Mount Baker Theatre's fabulous Wurlitzer at its best and also join hands with members of another successful music group. Thank you, Andy, and thank you, Vernon!

How was your summer? How quickly June changes to September! Here we are starting a new season of exceptional programs and tea parties! **Our mission of encouraging music appreciation and performance in the community** through our programs and awards is right on track! As you know, our programs are always free to the public, "basket" donations and memorials are always appreciated, and your "season membership" dues (still only \$20) support our Club, our programs and awards.

Today's **membership** stands at 189! If you would like to pay your dues or plan to become a member and have not yet made it official, we urge you to see Will Ellender or Lynn Bellinger today. If you don't have your checkbook, still fill the form so that you are included in the handbook which is scheduled to be distributed at the October meeting. Also, do see Lynn immediately for any changes or additions to the directory.

Today's meeting will be the only one not held at **Faith Lutheran Church**, corner of Northwest Avenue and McLeod Road. Meetings are regularly scheduled at 10:30 AM the first Wednesday morning of each month, September through June. (Note: NO program in January) Friends are always welcome and the parking is good!

Alan Wilhite updates **our website** regularly with coming events, newsletters, programs and contact information. Also, look for copies of our **new brochure** at the Senior Center, the Public Library, the Aquatic Center, and even in the Newcomers' Club basket! Pick yours today. Many thanks to Alan and Colette for their outreach!

Welcome to new members Mary Jane Vetter, and Bob & Wilma Bryant.

A welcome donation of \$100 has been received from Midwest friends of Dan and Virginia Addis.

WORDS FROM THE BOARD...

Thanks to Lynn Bellinger for the revamping of our new Handbook... Telephone Chair Phyllis Haberstroh has lined up her volunteer "callers" to inform and remind you of each month's program, so, if a "new voice" contacts you, don't be surprised! If you couldn't find your nametag today, check with Maureen Burr... Who is going to be our new Newsletter editor? You? Tell Colette!

Talking about Dorothy, did you know that she turned 90 years young on August 8th? Many friends and BMC members celebrated with family at an elegant open house party. **Congratulations!**

Calling all opera buffs! If you have a computer, log on to www.metoperafamily.org and click on *Met Opera Goes to the Movies* for information on the new live broadcasts of **Met operas** at theatres in Richmond or Vancouver, B.C. If all else fails, call Clyde Hiss or Jack Frymire!

The Friends of the (WWU) Music Library have 4 tickets for the *Seattle Symphony* series (concerts are on Sept. 28, Nov. 2, March 21 and June 20). There is also a waiting list for that series and for the *Vancouver Opera* (Nov. 10, Jan. 26, March 22 and April 26). If you would like to purchase tickets or be on the waiting list, please contact Addis Chapman preferably via e-mail at chapman321@comcast.net or call her at 360-734-5578.

BMC member Victoria Ebel-Sabo announces the first of this season's **Bellingham Home Concert Series** on September 16 at 3:00 PM at the Sabo residence. September's concert will present David Lanz, New Age pianist, and Gary Stroutsos, world-famed flutist. Reservations are required due to limited seating. Please call 671-6104 or 661-5985. Admission is \$20.

We are deeply saddened by the death of our beloved past-president (1988-1992) **Ethel Boynton Crook**, on August 29th in Olympia. Her leadership and devotion to the Bellingham Music Club have been a powerful influence for our changes and growth. It was her indomitable spirit that empowered her to attend programs up until her tragic fall last spring. She was 96 years old. A memorial service is planned for Saturday, September 8 at 11:00 AM at the Fountain Community Church, at Broadway and Halleck. Refreshments and a graveside service will follow. Among the charities designated by Ethel is the Bellingham Music Club, with donations earmarked for the Scholarship Fund.

MANUAL LABORS: ANDY CROW

Two words that go with “Organ” are “church” and “transplant”. You could say that today’s guest artist is a transplanted church organist; he’s equally at home in a church or a theatre.

Andy Crow got his first regular church job at the age of ten, in Santa Barbara, CA. But he was already in demand for skating rinks, movies, radio, style shows, you name it. While he earned his Bachelor’s Degree in Music at Redlands University he served as organist and Choirmaster at a large church – and composed scores for shows, radio and TV. In the army he played regularly for five chapels on post at Fort Lewis, but also managed to squeeze in organ gigs at the Roxy (now Pantages) and Temple theatres in Tacoma. Since 1977 he has been the organist at the First United Methodist Church of Olympia, but was also a regular at Pizza and Pipes in Tacoma until it burned down in 1999.

Andy Crow was a trail-blazer as a touring organist. In 1966 the Rodgers Organ Co. built a special touring concert organ for him, to play on the Community Concert Association circuit. Teamed up with organist Ted Alan Worth as the Worth/Crow Duo, he racked up 366 concerts in 12 years, touring throughout the U.S. and Canada, under the auspices of Columbia Artists management.

An authority on organ restoration and preservation, Andy Crow participated in the recent installation of a three-manual pipe-organ built for the old Roxy theatre of Tacoma, in St. Columban Church in Yelm, and directed the installation of a large Wurlitzer theatre organ in the Washington Center for the Performing Arts in Olympia.

You might want to ask Andy about his own private railroad car. He logged over 90,000 miles in it, hooked up to the rear of AMTRAK trains!

- contributed by Jack Frymire

MOUNT BAKER ORGAN SOCIETY

The last and most beautiful of ten theatres in Bellingham is the Mount Baker Theatre. Built in 1927, it has remained in constant use to the present time.

From the beginning, the Wurlitzer pipe organ provided background music for silent motion pictures. The organ has many sounds as both pipes and percussion instruments are played from the console, which is on a hydraulic lift in the orchestra pit.

In 1983, a group of organ buffs organized the Mount Baker Organ Society, dedicated to the restoration and maintenance of this unique instrument. Concerts are on a Sunday each month (usually the 2nd or 3rd Sunday when possible) for the enjoyment of the theatre public. Admission is by donation (under 18 years is free). The donations received at the door are how the organ is maintained. No money is given by the Theatre or the City of Bellingham.

In 1992, the Mount Baker Theatre was established as an historical landmark, thereby assuring its future use for community culture. The City of Bellingham is its present owner. Through a special agreement, the Organ Society continues as the custodian and builder of the pipe organ. It is now larger and more brilliant than the original installation.

We are now nearly 200 members in the Organ Society, with addresses from B.C. (Canada) and Alaska to the North, and Tacoma and Olympia to the South. The Organ Society dues of \$15 per year are used to pay for the monthly newsletter, artists and maintenance.

We are dedicated to making this Mount Baker Theatre organ now and forever the finest of its kind.

- contributed by Vernon Greenstreet