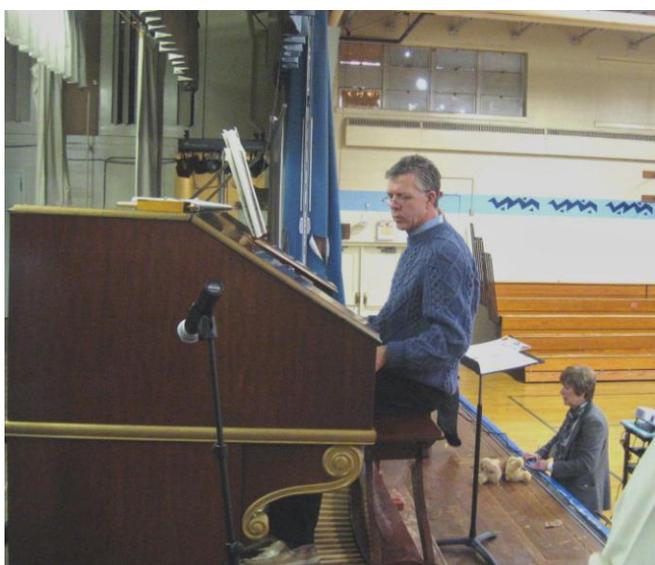


Portland's Municipal Organist, Ray Cornils, Performs on the Mighty Wurlitzer at Loranger School

In mid-February of this year, Ray Cornils conducted several special sessions for the students of the Loranger School in Old Orchard Beach, followed the next week by two concerts for the students of RSU 23. This is the second consecutive year that the music department has worked with Mr. Cornils to showcase this instrument to the students of the school district, a program that we hope will continue for a long time.

Following is an account from a member following the concerts of February 17th.

"Today's two concerts at Loranger went very well. The first concert was for kids from other schools in RSU 23 and the second was for Loranger kids. The console was at center stage front (first time I've ever seen it there). George Shabo shined up a bit for us. We also used some new bench risers that I made for the 1 ¼" rise that Ray said would be ideal for him. Each concert began with a rousing rendition of our National Anthem.



Quieter sounds from a theme from Harry Potter and louder ones from a brassy piece from Star Wars. The "Little Gm Fugue" was done with help from kids holding up signs with Ray's chorus line printed on them "J. S. Bach composed this little mel-o-dy". It gets in your head after you hear it a few times. And the concert ended with Widor's Toccata in F. Great stuff!

The kids sat in chairs in the center of the gym, so they got the best sound possible. Ray had some help from a couple other "FOKO members including Kathleen Grammer.

We tuned a couple more Solo Vox pipes before Ray arrived today and found a G and an F pipe were switched. Not a big deal since they easily tuned to each other's notes, but we switched them back to their proper places and tuned them. Had one single-pipe cipher in the Kinura - Ray pushed down all the stops - but it was fairly easy to isolate and clear. And it was more like a quiet buzzing up in the solo chamber, so it wasn't all that disruptive. Not like a Posthorn cipher!

We had a good representation of PTCATOS there. Bill Whitman, Pete Haskell, Stewart Shuster, and I were there. And Ray asked us to let Jim know that he was very pleased with the organ and how it sounded and played. It sounds better every time it's played, from what I hear.

You couldn't help but leave there with a big smile today!"

Thanks to Bill Whitman for taking pictures.

Odds and Ends

Since we had some advance notice of the program with Ray Cornils this year, we spent some time late last year and especially in January and early February focused on the playability and sound of the organ. Tuning the organ in the hot or cold times of the year presents some special difficulties. With Ray's program scheduled in February, it was necessary to tune in January. Chapter Technician Jim Martin did a great job in two attempts to bring the instrument into tune during cold weather and keep it there for the program. Each day we tuned a few that drifted, but it worked very nicely overall for the classes and concerts in February.

A lot of the current and recent maintenance work has been focused on quieting wind leaks and continuing to improve the Marimba. Overall, the organ is approaching 100% functionality and is noticeably quieter and more stable than last year. Ciphers are fewer and fewer.

I have a copy of the ATOS 4 DVD set "John Ferguson and Friends - The Art of Playing Theatre Organ". This set features Jonas Nordwall, Lyn Larsen, Simon Gledhill, and Jelani Eddington and demonstrates the basics of the theatre organ, registrations, techniques, and style. There is a lot of fine playing during these as well as excellent instruction. The instruments used are Allen organs - an STR4 4-manual - and an LL324 - 3-manual 24 rank. It's a very nice set. I haven't gotten very far into it yet and learned quite a bit just from the first DVD "An Introduction to The Basics", by Jonas Nordwall. It's not cheap, but most good things aren't. There will be a 5th DVD released soon by Walt Strony in which he has taken some requests and addressed those specifically.

I also have a copy of the ATOS 2010 Convention audio recordings, a 2-cd set. These are very good quality recordings. The only criticism I've heard is that the applause at the end of each piece is cut too short, and I agree with this. This may have been a compromise to get as much material onto each CD as possible.

Our first meeting of 2011 will be held on April 10th at 3pm on the Loranger School stage. I will bring along these ATOS recordings if anyone would like a preview.

