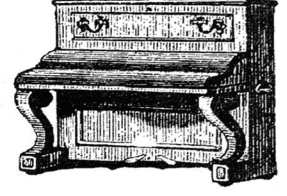


# WEST COAST RAGTIMER



THE JOURNAL OF THE WEST COAST RAGTIME SOCIETY

Sacramento, California

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Winter 2007

## THE WEST COAST RAGTIME FESTIVAL TURNS 21 Mark Your Calendars: November 16-18, 2007

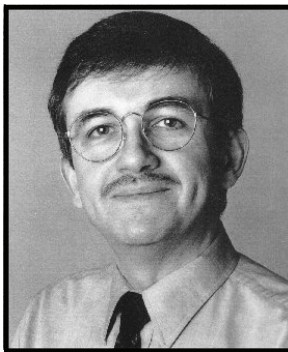
The West Coast Ragtime Society Music Committee has already begun working on another outstanding line-up for Festival 2007.



*John Arpin*

**John Arpin** was a real favorite with our 2005 festival audience and we are delighted to welcome him back for 2007. John has a long history in ragtime preceding the ragtime revival of the seventies. This Canadian performer was one of the board members of the Ragtime Society of Toronto. He has released numerous ragtime and other solo piano recordings starting in the LP era and continuing with recent CDs.

**Alex Hassan** also made a hit with our 2005 festival audience and WCRS is happy to welcome him back for 2007. This Northern Virginian pianist is thoroughly immersed in the musical styles and arrangements of the 1920's and 30's. Alex's extensive resources include over 1,600 syncopated/novelty piano solo 78s and approximately 30,000 pieces of sheet music. He is classical trained and has an intense love of the nebulous novelty idiom, somewhere between classical and jazz.



*Alex Hassan*

**Paul Asaro** is another performer frequently requested by our festival audience. He is known as one of the finest of a select group of pianists who still perform demanding, two-handed piano styles from the first half of the 20th century. Ragtime, stomps, boogie woogie and swing, Asaro plays them all with a fine ear for detail, blending the elements into his own personal style. Welcome to the WCRS Festival, Paul!



*Paul Asaro*

**Ray Skjelbred** last appeared at the West Coast festival in 2005. The festival audience was delighted and surprised by the Ray's unique piano style. Ray is a Chicago native and that becomes apparent when he sits down to play and the sounds of the Windy City emanate from the keyboard. Ray's inventive style makes even old standards like *St. Louis Blues* sound fresh.



*Ray Skjelbred*

Ray was called "the best jazz pianist in the Bay Area" by jazz critic Phil Elwood. Hal Smith said his playing is the "ultimate illustration of jazz as 'the sound of surprise.'" And, with a little coaxing, you might persuade Ray to share some of his witty and charming poetry with you.



*Janet Klein*

The West Coast Ragtime Society takes great pleasure in welcoming **Janet Klein** and **Brad Kay** to the 2007 festival. With her sleek bob haircut, vintage fashion sense, and artfully customized ukulele, Janet recreates an ever-expanding repertoire of “obscure, lovely and naughty songs from the 1910s, ‘20s and ‘30s.” When she sings a tune, it is part lyric, part vocal inflection, and large part visual.

Brad Kay is a pianist, cornetist, composer and musicologist. Classic ragtime was his first inspiration and his entrée into composing. Brad has arranged and performed for several film soundtracks, and has composed over 1000 pieces. As a music researcher Brad discovered previously overlooked records by Bix Beiderbecke and Louis Armstrong.



*Brad Kay*

Both Janet and Brad are accomplished and entertaining solo performers. But as those of you who have seen them perform together can attest, they make a fabulously entertaining duo.

### *West Coast Ragtimer*

Editor: Bonnie Gonzalez

WCRS can be reached at: P.O. Box 13346  
Sacramento, CA 95813-3346  
[www.WestCoastRagtime.com](http://www.WestCoastRagtime.com)

## RAGTIME CONCERT



*Mimi Blais*

The West Coast Ragtime Society is proud to present the fabulous Mimi Blais in concert. Those of you who have previously attended Mimi’s concerts will not want to miss her, and those of you who have never attended a Mimi concert will be in for a wonderful musical experience! Mimi is a virtuoso pianist and a marvelous entertainer – don’t miss this concert!

**Saturday, February 24, 2007  
2:00 PM**

**Larrick Piano  
9500 Micron Avenue  
Sacramento, 95827  
Hwy 50 at Bradshaw  
(916) 362-4100**

**\$18 advance reservations  
(encouraged)  
\$20 at the door**

**Contact: Bob Gonzalez  
1-866-724-9279**

## LOCAL FAVORITES

As Lewis Motisher pointed out in his article in the December, 2006 Sacramento Ragtime Society Newsletter, no West Coast Ragtime Festival would be complete without the participation of some of the remarkable talent that lives right here in the Bay Area.

**Frederick Hodges**

made his first appearance at the WCRS festival in 2004. He has become one of the Bay Area's favorite entertainers. He is not only a concert level pianist, but a master of novelty tunes. He has updated the lyrics to some of them—much to the delight and amusement of his audience. The photograph of **Frederick Hodges** with legendary singer **Alice Faye** and her band leader husband **Phil Harris** was too much to pass up. Perhaps you will be able to persuade Frederick to share the story of this meeting with you.



*Frederick Hodges with  
Alice Faye & Phil Harris*

**Nan Bostick** is one of the favorite performers at the West Coast Ragtime Festival. She is also the organizer of the seminars that many of you attend and enjoy. Nan's own musical seminars and her entertaining performances are warmly received throughout the country including the Scott Joplin, Blind Boone, Sutter Creek and Indianapolis Classic Ragtime Festivals. And did we mention that this grandniece of **Charles N. Daniels** is also a very fine ragtime composer?



*Nan Bostick*

**Marty Eggers** is a versatile performer who has recorded and performed both locally and nationally with many jazz and ragtime groups, notably the Butch Thompson and Carl "Sonny" Leyland trios, the Yerba Buena Stompers and the Royal Society Jazz Orchestra. Marty is a skilled composer and arranger of ragtime and traditional jazz. He was a founder of the Sacramento Ragtime Society in 1982 and is a past president of the West Coast Ragtime Society.



*Marty Eggers*

Festival audiences always enjoy it when he teams up with his wife **Virginia Tichenor**. They employ several configurations that give their sets variety and balance. Sometimes they play duo piano, then Marty may switch to the tuba or bass. And now that Virginia has learned to play drums, we must add drums! The music from this duo is always energetic, toe-tapping traditional ragtime!

Marty and Virginia are also part of the **Tichenor Family Five** which includes Virginia's father, **Trebor**, piano; her brother, **Andrew**, trumpet; and her sister-in-law **Susanna**, violin & viola. They are an outstanding and talented ragtime family!

Virginia has been consumed by ragtime her entire life. As the daughter of **Trebor Tichenor**, the noted ragtime scholar, pianist, collector and founder of the **St. Louis Ragtimers**, her parent's home was filled with ragtime music and musicians. Their home houses the world's largest library of ragtime sheet music and piano rolls. Virginia is Vice President and Festival Director of the West Coast Ragtime Society.



*Virginia Tichenor*

## Local Favorites



Tom Brier

**Tom Brier** is dedicated to the proposition that music should be fun—Imagine that!! This fleet-fingered performer can rip out a rendition of his fast-paced composition *Razor Blades* that will stun and delight an audience, and then can turn around and play a dynamic and expressive concert level version of his beautiful composition *Moon Shadows*.

The big surprise this year was the newly-formed **Raspberry Jam Band**. Tom Brier once again demonstrates his musical versatility as the pianist for the band. Tom and several ragtime enthusiasts from the Auburn Concert Band met for a jam session in December, 2005. They “jelled” and became the Raspberry Jam Band. They received enthusiastic reviews from the ragtime dancers. We look forward to hearing a lot more from the group in the coming year and we welcome them for their second festival appearance.



Tom Brier, piano; Julia Riley, flute; Mark Meeker, tuba; Julie Austin, vocals; George Preston, euphonium; Mary Rose Preston, violin, Kitty Wilson, percussion

And no West Coast Ragtime Festival would be complete without the **Porcupine Ragtime Ensemble**—it’s simply unimaginable! They have been playing for the ragtime dancers and listeners since 1989. The group often claims that they were organized in 1909, but we have it on good authority that they began about 1983. Elliott Adams and Petra and Bub Sullivan started playing together as a trio at Sacramento Ragtime



Steve Drivon, trombone, percussion, vocals; Bub Sullivan, mandolin, cümbus, vocals; Petra Sullivan, violin; Elliott Adams, piano; Susan Desper, flute, piccolo; Robyn Drivon, tuba

Society sessions to explore harmonies and Elliott’s sheet music collection. Over the years the group has expanded to its present size and instrumentation. The Porcupine repertoire ranges from folk rags to tangos, cakewalks, classical rags, marches, waltzes, one and two steps, plus many songs.



## Sheet Music From Tom Brier

So I said, “I really need a piece of sheet music for the newsletter, Tom.” And he replied, “Aw, **Gee Whizz**, I’ll see what I can do.” And what do you know—I received another rare rag from Tom Brier’s collection, *Gee Whizz* by Robert Warner, 1908. Every piece of music that I receive from Tom I try to play on my piano on the assumption that if someone at my amateur level can play it, anyone can play it! This piece meets that criteria.

The rhythm is a bit tricky—just enough to offer a little challenge and to give the A strain a nice bounce. The B strain is in E flat and has a catchy little melody that you can hum along with—or create your own lyrics. With three key changes, there’s plenty of variety in the piece. Once again the instructions with this piece of sheet music are: Have Fun With It!! Thank you Tom for sharing rags from your collection for the newsletter.

**Youth Program Report**

**Advanced Youth**

**THANK YOU!** Your generous contributions to our West Coast Ragtime Society Youth Program made it possible to bring six talented advanced youth players to the festival to perform at the Youth Concert and to play some individual sets. **Virginia Tichenor** Chairs this part of the Youth Program and she is always on the lookout for talented young piano players.

Two young pianists were new to our festival Youth Concert in 2006, **Joel Hill** and **Stephanie Trick**. **Joel Hill** tied for first place with Marielle Pinheiro in the Second Annual West Coast Ragtime Society Youth Ragtime Competition. Joel won the competition with an arrangement of Euday Bowman's *Twelfth Street Rag* that had a distinct stride flavor—complete with glissandos!

The exceptionally accomplished **Stephanie Trick** won the Friends of Scott Joplin Youth Competition three years in a row. **Trebor Tichenor** is one of the organizers of the competition and suggested that **Virginia** consider inviting Stephanie to play at the West Coast Festival. When Virginia heard Stephanie play, she enthusiastically followed her father's suggestion.

**Andrew Barrett** and **Adam Yarian** performed at our first Youth Concert in 2004. It's been fun to watch as their playing techniques develop and their styles mature. This was **Adam Yarian's** last year to perform in the WCRS Youth Program! We hope, however, to have him return to the festival to perform as part of our regular line-up.

**Jared DiBartolomeo** and **Adam Swanson** made their first appearance at the Youth Concert in 2005. This year we learned that Jared is a composer as well as a fine pianist when he played his beautiful, but yet untitled composition at the Youth Concert.

We also learned that Adam Swanson is not only an exceptionally talented piano player and an entertaining performer, but is very knowledgeable about the composers and players of vintage music. Adam's seminar "Sincerely, Charles Thompson" was billed as a special set, but in fact was one of the most interesting seminars presented at the festival.

**Youth Ragtime Competition**

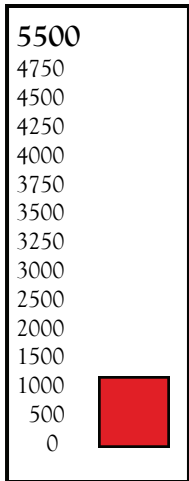
The Second Annual WCRS Youth Ragtime Piano Competition was held November 4, 2006 at Lar-rick Piano & Organ in Sacramento. The competition was organized by the Chair of the Youth Competition, **Chris Bradshaw**, and the event was a smashing success! Chris made the first competition so much fun that many of the students returned for this second competition!

**Jack Bradshaw, Tom Brier** and **Shirley Case** served as judges. After each division, ragtime performer **Virginia Tichenor** and **Jared DiBartolomeo**, a winner in last year's competition and now above the age to participate, played while the judges were deliberating.



**Division 1 Winners(8-10 year olds)**

Donations to the WCRS Youth Program make it possible for us to hold the competition and to bring outstanding advanced youth performers to the festival. Our budget for 2007 is \$5500. The donations we received at the festival plus the proceeds of the sale from **Storm Case's** artwork start our budget with a balance of nearly \$1,000. Our sincere thanks to Storm for generously donating his wonderful artwork to our Youth Programs.



The WCRS is a 501(c)(3) group and all donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

**Your generous support is greatly appreciated.**

## Be Part of The Insane!

We modern day ragtime fans agree that this lively music is a joy to listen and dance to. But, as we know, it was not always welcomed to the social scene in the early 1900's. The following article from an unknown newspaper was found in **Irving Berlin's** scrapbook.

### CALLS RAGTIME INSANITY SIGN

Beware of the ragtime germ.

You certainly will get "dippy" if you become too fond of the syncopated melodies.

"Alexander's Ragtime Band" is a public menace and it doesn't do to dance too many two-steps.

The authority for these statements is Ludwig Gruener of Berlin, a German alienist who has devoted twenty years' study to the criminal insane. List to what he says in an interview in Los Angeles, Cal.:

Hysteria is the form of insanity that an abnormal love for ragtime seems to produce. It is as much a mental disease as acute mania—it has the same symptoms. When there is nothing done to check this form it produces idiocy.

Dr. Gruener says that 90 percent of the inmates of the American asylums he has visited are abnormally fond of ragtime. On the other hand, they fail to respond to classic music.

Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata means nothing to them, while heavy doses of ragtime will sooth the nerves of a patient violent enough to be put in a straitjacket.

"Too much ragtime is a curse. It sets people off their mental hinges. Ragtime isn't music—it's a disease," is the doctor's opinion.



*Those Crazy Ragtime Dancers*

Colonel James Hamilton Lewis, who has just returned from a trip three-quarters around the globe, took issue with Dr. Gruener today.

"Not only did I hear 'Alexander's Rag Time Band' played in every big café in Paris, London and Berlin, but I heard it also played on zithers by Japanese girls in tiny restaurants in the Orient," said Colonel Lewis.

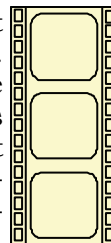
"As a matter of fact there is a wave of ragtime which has overswept the world. In Germany, the home of classical music, there is a big popular clamor for the ragtime music—the passion for which started in Chicago, New York and Washington a few years ago.

I don't believe jolly and lively music ever drove anyone insane. I believe in music in hotels and dining rooms. It banishes business and sordid cares. It is inspiring and soothing. Even in the little eating houses on the road from Shanghai to Peking we heard tiny orchestras tinkling the tune which we first heard in the cafes here."

**BRAVO COLONEL LEWIS!**

## Silent Movies

Silent movies were one of the most popular features at the 2006 festival. In fact they proved to be far more popular than had been anticipated—as those of you who were unable to get into the overly crowded venue can attest! The silent movie sets were interesting, informative and downright fun!



**Nick Langdon** and **Frederick Hodges** proved to be an effective team. Nick was head projectionist and senior film historian and Frederick provided the piano accompaniment for the movies. Nick has an amazing depth of knowledge and a great collection of silent and early films. Ragtime music was very important in the early silent era and Frederick clearly did his homework, as he always does before accompanying silent movies, since he selects tunes that were published on or before the release date of the movie being shown.

Silent movies will be scheduled again for the 2007 festival. WCRS festival organizers will make a concerted effort to schedule this popular feature in a larger, more suitable venue so that everyone will have an opportunity to attend these wonderful shows.

### NEWSLETTERS MAILED TO WCRS MEMBERS ONLY

This is the first issue of the West Coast Ragtime Society newsletter that will be mailed to members and supporters only. The cost of postage has made it prohibitively expensive to mail as a promotional vehicle for the festival. For those of you who prefer to receive the newsletter on the internet, this issue will be posted on the West Coast web site:

**WestCoastRagtime.com**

Your membership helps to defray the cost of producing and mailing the newsletter and assures that we have a valid address for each recipient of the newsletter. A membership form is located on the back cover of this newsletter. Please help us by remaining a member of WCRS.

**Thank You for your continued support of  
the  
West Coast Ragtime Society**

### Get Well, Bob!



*Helen & Bob Fingado*

This article began as a thank you to Bob Fingado for his ten years of work as the Festival Volunteer Coordinator. Before going to print I learned that Bob had suffered a stroke, so I will begin by wishing Bob a speedy and complete recovery.

Bob announced his retirement from the position as Festival Volunteer Coordinator at the festival warm-up party. Bob did a masterful job over the last ten years of organizing the festival volunteers and it will be difficult to replace him. He stated that he and Helen would be spending a lot of time traveling. We hope that Bob will regain full health so he can enjoy those trips! Thank you Bob, for your ten years of service to the West Coast Ragtime Society festival!

### CD Review

### “It’s A Bear” Heliotrope Ragtime Orchestra

If you relish the warm, sweet sound that characterizes a fine ragtime orchestra, then “It’s A Bear” is for you. Cornetist and author Bruce Vermazen, of the late Chrysanthemum Ragtime Band, and pianist Bob Pinsker organized the Heliotrope Ragtime Orchestra in early 2005. The group was originally formed to provide accompaniment for ragtime-era events by the San Diego Vintage Dancers.



The CD contains a number of very danceable tunes including one-steps (*Ridin’ de Goat, Are You From Dixie, Some Sweet Day, Down in Honky Tonky Town*), tangos (*Panama, La Danza Apassionata*), a waltz (*Lazy Jazz Waltz*), and some rags (*Too Much Raspberry, The Buffalo Rag, Operatic Rag, Russian Rag, That Eccentric Rag*).

**Jack Rummel** has done a very fine review of the CD on his website [www.ragtimers.org/reviews](http://www.ragtimers.org/reviews). He particularly liked the “untitled fox trot” by Eubie Blake (receiving its premier performance on the CD as a piano solo). Jack stated that “now that it’s been brought out of obscurity it deserves a title!” Take a look at Jack’s review and I think you’ll want to add “It’s A Bear” to your ragtime CD collection.

**\$16.00 postpaid from Stomp Off Records, P.O. Box 342, York, PA 17405.**

**WEST COAST RAGTIME Society**

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## Your WCRS Membership Will Be Appreciated

The West Coast Ragtime Society is a member-supported organization. Dues must be received by December 31, 2007. Please make your check payable to:

**West Coast Ragtime Society + P.O. Box 13346 + Sacramento, CA + 95813-3346**

Please Indicate Type Of Membership:     Individual (\$15)                       Couple (\$25)

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Phone(s): \_\_\_\_\_ (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (office)

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE NOTE:** Subscribing to the Sacramento Ragtime Society's newsletter does NOT make you a member of the West Coast Ragtime Society. It is true that WCRS is greatly supported by Sacramento Ragtime Society members, and it gets confusing. The SRS is unincorporated and exists solely for the purpose of having monthly sessions to promote ragtime in Sacramento. The West Coast Ragtime Society is a separate, member-supported 501 (c) (3) organization whose activities include the annual Ragtime Festival, Ragtime Concerts and an active Youth Program.