



BRRRRRR! Warmly wrapped organist and audience enjoy the 3-19 Moller during one of its final concerts in its original setting.

chapter bid for and purchased the organ. Mr. Lester Crossman bought the theatre, to convert the building for other uses. Mr. Crossman offered free use of the building to the chapter and this cleared the way for another concert, a farewell concert played by Lowell Ayars on April 2 at 4:00 p.m.

After that day the organ removal was started because the building was soon to undergo alteration. Mr. Crossman, although not an "organ bug," has indeed been a good friend to the chapter.

The Moller was removed and placed in storage until a new home can be found for it.

But let's turn the clock back to the "golden era" of the '20s.

Back in 1927 Leonard MacClain was demonstrating Moller theatre pipe organs, sitting at the console in a "store window" set up, enabling all people and traffic to view him at work. The Tourisin Bros. (builders of theatres) came to arrange for the purchase of organs for two Philadelphia theatres, the "Met" on Broad Street (the building opened as the Metropolitan Opera House, but it is now used as a church) and the Sedgewick Theatre on Germantown Avenue. The price was lower if more than one organ was purchased. "Melody Mac" made a few suggestions regarding the design of the two proposed organs, and his demonstrations at the studio Moller helped clinch the deal.

Existing records show that the Tourisin Bros. bought the instrument through an "agreement of sale" with the Moller Company dated 3/15/28, the organ for the "Met" to cost \$50,000, and the organ for the Sedgewick to cost \$17,000—\$17,000 was the down payment, with \$1,700 more to be paid upon delivery of the organs, and the balance within 36 months after acceptance.

Soon relay boards, chests and shutters started to arrive. A quick appraisal by

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Closing Chord

"Melody Mac" is dead. Leonard MacClain, one of the organ greats from the early days of silent movies, died on September 5 after a long bout with the cumulative inroads of diabetes and heart disease. He would have been 68 on September 8, the day set for his funeral at the Chambers-Wylie United Presbyterian Church—where he had played for many, many years.



Leonard MacClain (Melody Mac)

It's probably impossible to name a major theatre, past or present, in the Philadelphia area where "Mac" hadn't at one time supplied the music; he knew them all—the Kimballs, Wurlitzers and Mollers. It was during the '30s, while playing on radio, that he was dubbed "Melody Mac." It was a telephone request program and Leonard played it with a blank music rack; he knew every tune which had ever been popular, plus "a lot of dogs that never got anywhere," as Mac put it.

While playing in a cocktail lounge just 15 years ago, Leonard was struck by the beauty of a girl who came to hear him play. He was then in his early '50s but he was smitten hard and pursued Dottie relentlessly. Dottie tells it: "Leonard said, I'm much too old for you and I'm overweight and my heart is acting up—but marry me and you'll never regret it." He was right, of course. I never did regret it." Those close to the MacClains confirm the continuing love affair which lasted to the end of Leonard's life.

One friend, Roy Caruth, summed up the thoughts of many who knew Leonard: "Leonard was part of an era of movie palaces, magnificent pipe organs and organists who gave to it their per-

A GIANT STEP FORWARD...

At the suggestion of famed organist Searle Wright, A.G.O., industrialist Edwin Link, famous for theatre organs and the Link Trainer for aviation, has acquired one of his best instruments for renovation and donation to the new Roberson Cultural Center in Binghamton, N. Y.

The instrument, three manuals and some 15 ranks, will have additional ranks of various heritages added, and installation is now under way. The dedication concert will be performed by Mr. Wright, and the first concert of the season next fall will be played by ATOE charter member Billy Nalle.

Mr. Link, Mr. Wright and Mr. Keith Martin of the Roberson Center are due the highest degree of commendation for initiating such a showplace for the advancement of the theatre pipe organ, in the first modern installation of its kind. Kudos also to Billy Nalle for being selected to represent us and the organ world at large in the season's opening concert. Full details will be announced in the next issue of *Theatre Organ Bombarde*.

... A NEW TREND FOR ATOE?

sonalities. And Leonard MacClain left his mark wherever he was heard. One always had to stop and listen when 'Melody Mac' was at the console, whether he was playing an eight-ranker or the giant Wanamaker pipe organ. It is my hope that when the Sedgewick pipe organ is erected in a new home, it will be dedicated to the memory of its designer, Leonard MacClain."

MacClain's career has been documented in these pages a number of times, including this issue. More effective than any eulogy regarding his influence is the story about how the Delaware Valley ATOE Chapter found, repaired and secured the 19-rank Moller recently removed from the Sedgewick Theatre in Germantown, Pa. Read the story and then just try to visualize it without the presence, direct and indirect, of Leonard MacClain.

One more thing. The last words Dorothy heard Leonard utter were typical—". . . I love you, Dottie."

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LETTERS, contd.

Best of luck in the future.

Yours sincerely
JOHN B. POTTER

3 Page Street
Madison, N. J. 07940
September 9, 1967

My Dear Miss Lake,

I'd like to say that it was a terrible shame that you, one of the greatest organists of our time, could not give one of your very distinguished (for one reason or another) performances at the recent Detroit ATOE convention. You were the hit (POW) of the banquet at Portland last year, and I know several people who were very disappointed to hear that you got left home in Squalor Hollow.

I have conferred with a pipe organ owning friend of mine concerning the possibility of an addition to your 3/9 T.O. which I designed for you last March. He agrees that the perfect addition to make it a 3/10 should be a VOX IN-HUMANA. This can be used in solo work with the Tibia Martha rank with accompaniment, of course, on the VDB's! I hope this meets with your satisfaction. Hope you give another concert soon.

Sincerely yours
ERIC ZELIFF

P.S.: When do I get my record?

Dear Sirs:

Being a theatre pipe organ buff, as well as a fellow ATOE member, I am curious to know how many of our membership was fortunate enough to catch the color TV show, titled "Across the Seven Seas" (*Face and Place*), which featured in the opening segment an all too brief series of shots of Leon Berry's two-manual Wurlitzer pipe organ in his home at Norridge, Ill. I accidentally tuned the program in for want of watching something other than a rerun and the caption in the TV guide stated merely, "World's Greatest 'Do-It-Yourself' Organ Builder." I am glad it featured an artist from our Chicago area as I have all, or most, of Mr. Berry's albums as well as hundreds of other pipe organ albums, from Jesse Crawford down to the most obscure artists. My only wish is that more exposure should be accorded to the pipe organ to give the public a more concise picture of the "World's Greatest Instrument."

Hoping you will find this item of interest to our subscribers, I remain

Yours sincerely
Harry C. Miller
Box 336, R. R. #3
Palatine, Illinois 60067

(Program data: Channel 9, July 23, 1967—9:00 p.m.)

CLOSING CHORD

(Continued from Page 4)

John E. Mitchell, 65, known throughout the Pittsburgh area by the phrase "Johnny Mitchell at the organ!" died on August 22, shortly after a cancer operation, in a Pittsburgh hospital. Mitchell's career started in 1918 when he started playing for silent movies at 16 in the Loew's Lyceum Theatre in Pittsburgh.

In 1921 he moved on to the Victor Theatre in McKeesport, then joined the Clark chain which operated the Regent and Liberty Theatres in East Liberty, Penna. Leo Palucki of Erie recalls hearing Mitchell at the Warner House when it first opened. He opened at the Enright in Pittsburgh in 1929, but by then "talkies" had doomed silent movies so he changed to broadcasting with a daily "Footlights and Stardust" program from



the Enright. In recent years he did club work and teaching. A friend, Vincent Volpe, says, "Mitchell was a demanding teacher, but his students loved him. And he was always ready to go along with us (ATOEers) to play the Leona Theatre Kimball over in Homestead. We in the Pittsburgh district are going to miss him." He was planning a record release to be played on the Leona organ, according to Jay E. Smith.

Mitchell played at the Pittsburgh Civic Arena right up to the day of his admittance to the hospital for the operation. He is survived by his widow, Marie; a son, John, and a daughter, Mrs. Joanne Dunn. He was a member of AFM and ATOE. A story about his musical career appeared in the April 1967 issue of THEATRE ORGAN-BOMBARDE.

Harry Reed of Seattle, 73, organist-musician, long active in Pacific Northwest music circles, died in Miami Beach August 7 after an illness of five weeks. He became ill while attending the National Convention of the American Federation of Musicians in that Florida city.

He began his musical career at 14 as a church organist. Later, he was staff organist for Loew's St. James Theatre in Boston. He came to Seattle in 1921, and played the organ at cinemas there and in Everett. In 1931, Reed became assistant program and musical director for radio station KJR. Leaving radio in 1937, he

played for vaudeville shows at the Palomar Theatre until 1944 when he took over the orchestra at the Showbox Theatre.

Reed was president of Local 76, AFM, from 1944 to 1954, and served several terms on its board of directors. He was president of the Northwest Conference of Musicians from 1946 to 1952, and was its secretary-treasurer from 1953 until 1962.

He is survived by his wife and two sons, Eugene A. Reed of Seattle, and Capt. Charles C. Reed of New York.

DELAWARE VALLEY

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the organ installation technicians indicated that something was amiss. A call to the factory at Hagerstown, Maryland, confirmed that there had indeed been a mixup; this was the "Met" organ missent to the Sedgewick Theatre. The "Met" Moller was practically a twin of the 4-43 organ in the Fox, Atlanta, Georgia, the "Big Mo." Some fast reshipping resulted and finally the 19-ranker arrived at the Sedgewick.

In the spring of 1928 the theatre opened with the largest theatre organ in the Germantown area. This was opus 5230. Among the professional organists that were to play this Moller was Leonard MacClain—demonstrator, designer and soloist.

Once again, 39 years later, was organist MacClain to present a lifetime of tunes flowing from his fingers, and those Moller pipes responded.

Leonard MacClain—the master of the console—the teacher and the friend.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF Gaylord Carter

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DURING THIS TIME, we were playing Harold Lloyd pictures. He would make about two pictures a year, and one evening, one of his managers was in the audience at the Seville. Apparently, I was feeling pretty well that night, because I was just going to town on the movie. He phoned the manager of one of the big downtown theaters, and said, "There's a kid out here in the sticks who's really kicking heck out of this organ! You could probably use somebody down there."

"They sent for me, I did an audition, and in 1926, I went into the Million Dollar Theater at Third and Broadway, which was the leading presentation house in Los Angeles. The pictures ran from a month to two or three months, and we

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