

lished in the "THEATRE ORGAN and BOMBARD" magazine.

Bob Van Camp then gave everyone present the details of the New York Chapter's 12th Anniversary Festival which he attended.

Mac Watson moved that the meeting be adjourned. Bob Van Camp seconded.

After the meeting was brought to a close, all present went to the Lenox Square Auditorium to hear Hal Shutz's performance at the Hammond.

*Donald V. Quinn
Sec'y-Treas*

VALLEY OF THE SUN CHAPTER

The regular meeting for April of the Valley of the Sun Chapter of the American Theater Organ Enthusiasts was held April 30, 1967 at the Paramount Theater. Meeting was called to order at 10:05 A.M. by Chairman, Howard Rowe.

Minutes of the March meeting were read and approved and brief treasurer's report given. Warren Bechhoefer was asked to follow up on getting a notice of meetings placed in the Sun City newspaper. Announcement was made concerning a request from Motor City Chapter to elect a club representative to play at the convention. Volunteers were requested but none responded.

Since the May meeting will be the last regular meeting before the club goes dark for the summer, tentative plans for an early June social were made.

Guests were introduced. These included Jim Gibson, organist from the Feed Bag in Mesa, Frank Smith, and Bill Sink's mother, Mrs. Sink.

Chairman Howard, explained why the organ had been down for repairs and just what had been done to make these repairs.

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned. The organ was open for playing by members and guests.

*Nadine A. Benton
Secretary-Treasurer*

HEART OF AMERICA CHAPTER

On June 17, 1967, Heart of America Chapter, ATOE had its regular monthly meeting in Stover Auditorium, University of Missouri at Kansas City. Mr. Bob Jones—a charter member of Heart of America—played for two silent films which turned out to be something of a real special evening for those attending.

The house was packed with well over two-hundred people that came to enjoy Bob playing the Mighty Wurlitzer that

was originally installed in the Plaza Theatre in 1928 and moved to its' present location in 1961.

Bob began the evening with melodies of the 1920's that led into the films that were scheduled for the evening. The first being a classic Charlie Chaplain two-reeler and everyone in the room at one time or another, got a real kick out of not only the "flick" but the fast moving feet and hands of Bob Jones as he tried to keep up with the rather unpredictable motions of Charlie.

The second film was a Laurel and Hardy and was a real "oldie". This time the organ and organist really had a work-out with most all traps going at once—which really followed the mad cap actions of the late and great team of Laurel and Hardy.

The club members and guests recognized Mr. Jones with a standing ovation following the program and it was agreed that not only the organ sounded great, but the organists' artistry at the 3 /8 console was nothing short of just plain great.

This was the first such movie program sponsored by the local chapter and proved to be one of the most successful to date. It is planned to have Bob return this fall and play for a feature length film with either Chaplin or one of the other many great from films that helped make the Wurlitzer what it was and is today to countless thousands of bug-eyed movie-palace goers.

It was also noted that the local chapter had grown over 60% in the past year and was growing by almost 8 members every meeting. Our membership should climb to well over 100-120 by the end of 1967.

*Dr. Robert B. Fray, Jr.,
Secretary
Prairie Village, Kansas*

WOLVERINE CHAPTER

The chapter meeting at the Detroit Theater Organ Club on May 7th was a tremendous success. Practically all of our members were in attendance. After a wonderful concert by Bill Buswell, and a brief intermission in the outer lobby, several members showed their ability on the gigantic instrument.

A short business meeting was called to order by chairman Fred Bayne. Roll call was taken and a treasurer's report followed.

A question on whether the \$1.00 assessment per year was sufficient to meet the Club's demands was discussed and it was decided that it was.

With a limited membership of 50, it was noted that there were 42 members on the roll call, leaving openings for 8 new members.

LA CHAPTER UNDERTAKES NURSING

ATOE's Los Angeles Chapter has completed negotiations with the owners of the LA Elks Club to undertake the restoration and maintenance of the 4-manual, 61-rank Robert Morton concert pipe organ located in the lodge ceremonial hall, according to chapter chairman Bob Carson. Work on the instrument will start about September 1 and it is expected the instrument will be in playing shape by December, then polished to a high sheen for the 1968 ATOE National Convention, which will be held in Los Angeles in July.

The Elks project organ crew will be headed by Dick Stoney who is leaving the chapter's other maintenance project at the Wiltern theatre with its 4-37 Kimball to organize a small but skilled group. Because of the crowded arrangement of pipes in Elks Lodge chambers, crews working at a given time will be limited in number.

The instrument was played for a broadcast series by John Ledwon a few years ago and at least one commercial recording has been grooved with it. However, the entire instrument has been in need of a complete renovation for many years.



Letters to the Editor concerning all aspects of the theatre organ hobby are encouraged. Send them to the editor concerned, Box 7404, Bitter Lake Station, Seattle, Washington, 98133. Unless it's stated clearly on the letter "not for publication," the editors feel free to reproduce it, in whole or part.

TRINITY RECTORY
Lime Rock RFD
Lakeville P.O., Connecticut 06039
June 1, 1967

A.T.O.E.

Gentlemen:

In reading the February and April 1967

(Continued Next Page)

Letters, continued

issues of the THEATRE ORGAN BOMBARDE I have noted several references to four-rank Mortons.

Recently I purchased a four-rank Morton chest which, I suspect, was part of a "pit" organ. Not having the console of this organ, I am anxious to find out just what the arrangement was in which this chest was used.

Is there any one you know of who could supply the specifications and other technical data pertaining to the four-rank Mortons? Is there any book or catalog about the Morton Company, etc.? (The Organ Literature Foundation does not have anything about Morton.)

I want you to know how much I have enjoyed reading these first two (for me) issues of the ATOE magazine. They are opening up a whole new world within the organ world. Also, having attended a meeting of the Connecticut Valley Chapter I find a real fellowship and acceptance I have never experienced before in any of the organ groups I have, from time to time, been associated with. I wish I had "discovered" your group ten years ago!

Thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,
The Rev'd (Father) Bruce E. LeBarron

793 Echo Valley Road
Salinas, Calif. 93901
June 26, 1967

The Rev'd (Father) LeBarron
Trinity Rectory
Lime Roack RFD
Lakeville, P.O., Conn. 06039

Dear Father LeBarron

Your interesting letter of June 1 has been forwarded to me for answering.

It is unfortunate that information on the Robert Morton is meager. However, many of our members have owned and worked on Morton instruments. Therefore, I am planning to publish your letter in Theatre Organ Bombarde and in this way we may be able to come up with answers to your questions.

The Robert Morton was one of the first victims of the "sound" era in theatres, the company was dissolved, and all the records concerning the organs built, the designs, and other data was lost or destroyed.

We hope in the future to gather enough material to publish an authentic account of the Morton Company and their product. In the meantime, it is hoped that your published letter may bring you the information which you desire.

We welcome you to our group and are glad that you are enjoying the magazines and the association with the Chapter.

Trusting that we will have answers for you soon, I remain

Yours truly,
George Thompson, Editor

The Editor
Theatre Organ Bombarde

Dear Mr. Editor:

In your April issue my fellow countryman, E. R. P. Crawford, expounds at length views that display a remarkable lack of factual knowledge especially in the field of organs, formerly in theatres, which have found their way for use in churches.

To limit examples to a few, the first Wurlitzer to be installed in Britain (a Model D #956 shipped November 30, 1924) was formerly in the Picture House, Walsall, Staffordshire and is now doing service in a Congregational church in Beer, Devon. A Compton unit organ, formerly in a cinema in Burslem (also in Staffordshire) is now in the Methodist Church, Chasetown. What is more Reginald Dixon, of Blackpool Tower fame, re-opened the organ with a program which could hardly be called churchy. Admittedly both were re-installed by professional organ builders. But the small 2 /6 rank Christie in Garon's Cinema, Southend-on-Sea, Essex was dismantled and re-erected in the nearby church of St. Stephen's, Prittlewell by the organist, vicar ('rector' to you!) and a few helpers just as Mr. Crawford advocates. A similar organ taken a theatre in Leigh-on-Sea close by is being currently erected single handed by the organist of St. Andrew's church, Basildon.

Mr. Crawford's gloomy predictions about the state of the organ building industry are hardly in accordance with the facts. One firm only has gone over to building electronic instruments—the advertisements in the musical journals display an impressive list of new organs and re-builds by the remaining pipe organ firms. And, for the record, a new organ of modest size can be bought for less than 1-5,000.

Let us face the facts squarely. A pipe organ enthusiast be he unit, baroque or just plain straight will do no more than suffer an electronic "organ" as a poor substitute for pipes and some will have no dealings with them at all. Ask a steam locomotive enthusiast what he thinks of diesels and you have the relationship between the pipe organ man and electronics.

Sincerely
Colin Betts
Member and London Correspondent
NIAGARA FRONTIER CHAPTER

Buffalo, N.Y.

Dear Editor:

It is interesting reading the "Questions and Answers" Department and of equal interest to read the answers to those answers. In summer 1966 Theatre Organ Bombarde, Ben Hall contributed some information on the style 150 Wurlitzer which was probably hitherto unknown. However, he led us astray on some of it. In describing his style 150 he noted that the tibias are extended to the 2' pitch. He then says adding the diapason makes them actually a style D. He fell short here because when Wurlitzer extended the tibias and added unification to get 56 tabs for the horseshoe as compared with 52 tabs for the D, it then became the style 165. I am the proud owner of Opus 1966, a divided 165. On this model in addition to the foregoing, the bass drum was stepped up in thickness, some chests are slightly shorter than is the same chest from the style D. Consequently, adding diapason-diaphone rank to his style 150 would make it a style 165.

In another instance—in February 1967 Theatre Organ I noticed an article featuring organist Dean Mc Nichols pictured at the Friends Church in Bell, California, organ, which also refers to that style 165 as being a D. While both organs are 6 ranks, the style 165 is a later model version of what was the style D. It has a few desired features not incorporated in the former model (if it is all there).

Sincerely
Earl Gilbert

Mr. George Thompson
P. O. Box 1314
Salinas, California

Dear George:

Bravo to Dan Barton, for laying it on the line regarding organ "improvers" in the June, 1967 issue of "Theater Organ" Bombarde.

How many times have we heard the horrific examples of overblown pipes which the perpetrators perhaps in all good consciousness believe improves the sound.

I wholeheartedly concur with Mr. Barton's comments and endorse every word he says in this regard.

No true Model T Ford car buff would ever consider "souping-up" his restored vehicle. It is my sincere hope that those of us who are so intensely interested in theater organs can approach the instrument toward its restoration along the original lines. There can be no doubt that, properly planned, additions can be made which will improve the sound of the theater organ, but additions for additions sake alone makes no musical sense.

We are all indebted to Dan Barton for his very fine series of articles which are

making available to us his vast knowledge and experience in the theater organ world.

Sincerely yours,
Judd Walton
Past President, ATOE

Editor,
Theatre Organ—Bombarde

Dear Sir:

Would like to state that I enjoyed 1967 A.T.O.E. Convention thoroughly. However, I do have one or two criticisms that I would like to mention.

First, the accommodations and service at the Pick-Fort Shelby Hotel were less than mediocre. Second, many of the programs were not started at the stated time making transportation to the various events somewhat hurried.

It is hoped that future host chapters can do something to overcome these inconveniences.

Yours respectfully,
J. R. Gallagher
Alameda, California

Dear Editor,

I had expected to be away during the A.T.O.E. Convention, and did not get involved in the preparations. For this reason, I feel free to express my satisfaction with the convention.

This was my first convention, and I was amazed at how much better the players I had heard before sounded—did they really do better than their best?

Conversations with other convention attendees seemed to indicate that I was not the only one who appreciated this event—a full program of the highest quality.

It seems to me that unless you have larger facilities in Los Angeles, we had better exercise restraint in publicizing the next convention—there were standees in Detroit.

I am proud of the Detroit people who planned and conducted the work of the convention, and I was very impressed by the behavior and understanding of the people who attended—a fine group of people.

It had not occurred to me that this part of ATOE membership was such a substantial benefit—but I'm afraid I'm "hooked".

See you next year, at the convention, if I possibly can.

Baxter Webb
19471 Ilene
Detroit MI 48221

P.S. I notice that I forgot to mention how much I appreciated the performances of the artists—but I think two standing ovations for each of two artists on the first day shows what we all thought. When you have such outstanding artists and they perform at their best, it adds up to an experience that few of us can forget.

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