

A MONSTER IN THE HOUSE!

By BEULAH McNEILL MARTIN

MY HUSBAND, Marion, was first introduced to theatre organs in the early 30's when a 3/10 Wurlitzer Special was installed in Duke University's School of Theatre Operation's 2,000 seat house—Quadrangle Pictures. Bob Van Camp was the first Quadrangle organist, to be followed by Marion. Years later, hearing Bob at the console of the Atlanta Fox's Mighty Moller, Marion decided that he could not rest until he had a theatre organ of his own, and a Moller it must be. I was not at all sold on the idea until shown many California home installations by Stu Green and Tiny James last summer. Then I saw that it could be done.

Early in 1966, we were able to secure the console of the Fort Wayne Palace's 3/21 Moller, with hopes and promises for the rest of this instrument. However, a summer spent at the University of California in Berkeley prevented us from doing anything about it until the fall of '66, only to find that in the meantime the instrument had been so badly vandalized that what was left was nothing but junk. Now the question arose as to how and where to find another Moller.

On the advice of Clay Holbrook, letters were sent to 125 theatres in Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and Maryland that had large Moller instruments. Ninety of these were answered, twenty-three were returned by the postal department indicating that these theatres were demolished and gone. Only three of the theatres still had their organs and none wanted to sell. Then came a letter stating: "The organ is gone, but a few pipes, mostly junk, are still in the loft."

Playing a hunch that there might be more here than met the manager's eye, Marion asked for permission to visit the theatre look the situation over. The house manager arranged for the janitor to show him through the "dusty organ lofts", assuring him: "there is ab-



Stripped down console of Martin Moller

solutely nothing there but junk!" When asked by the janitor which side he wanted to see, Marion replied: "Both". The janitor came back with, "Ain't nothing on this side. The drums is all on t'other side. . ."

Opening a door into a tiny triangular-shaped closet, they climbed a 50-foot ladder, up through a small trap door and came out in a large empty room. Just as Marion decided he was right, the janitor opened another door disclosing an array of nine ranks of pipes in flawless condition: 16' Tibia Clausa; 16' Tibia Plena; 8' French Horn; 16' Stentophone; 8' Concert Flute; 16' Contra Fagotta; 4' Harmonic Flute; a beautiful Marimba Harp; and Orchestra Bells. Five other ranks of pipes had been mostly removed by vandals or organ builders at an earlier



Six rank solo chest as set up in Martin Carport, showing Harmonic Tuba, Gross Flute, Major Violin, English Horn, French Trumpet, and Contra Fagotta.



Loew's 83rd, St. Theatre at 83rd and Broadway,

date. However, their chests and some pipes remained. They were 8' Cornopean, 8' Gross Gamba, 8' Gamba Celeste, 8' V.D.O., and 8' Viol Celete, and 8' Mezzo Vox Humana. Marion thought, "If there's nothing up here, what must the other side contain?"

Going around the balcony, into another similar closet and up another ladder, but this time a bit steeper, they finally emerged into a very small room where the janitor informed him: "This here side is loaded!" Marion realized just how right he was after being forced to



Marion Martin in the midst of pipes.



16' Violins on floor of new home.

move back over the trap door in order that the chamber door might be opened. After colliding with a large thunder sheet, which to me, waiting in the audience, sounded like the end of the world, Marion saw twenty ranks of beautiful pipes stretching as far as he could see. They were : 8' Kinura, 8' Minor Vox Humana, 8' Clarinet, 16' Tuba Profunda, 16' French Trumpet, 8' English Horn, 16' Violin, 16' Stopped Bourdon, 8' Orchestral Violin, 8' Orchestral Viol Celeste, 8' Major Vox Humana, 8' Gross Flute, 8' Gemshorn, 8' Quintadena, 8' Dopple Flute, 8' Clarabella, 8' Flute Celeste, 8' Major Violin, 16' Open Diapason, 8' Harmonic Flute, 61 note metal harp, chimes, xylophone, and a terrific collection of goodies on the toy counter.

NO PROBLEM was involved in negotiating for the purchase of the 32 rank monster. Now the real problem began, that of getting the beast out of the theatre in New York and moved to Whiteville, North Carolina, a distance of some 700 miles. Moller really made some big ones, and used nothing small in so doing. Moller used only the finest materials in these instruments, and did not sacrifice quality for space. This was paying off for us forty years later.

This was Opus #4373, December, 1925, and installed in Loew's 83rd Street New York Theatre. This was one of five identical instruments installed by Loew's



Five rank chest being lowered out 4th floor door over 83rd St. Note broken hinges on door.

OR ANOTHER MIGHTY MO

in New York theatres at this time. All were 3/32's with 157 stop keys. They were installed in the 83rd Street, Alhambra, Astoria, Spooner, and Rio Theatres. This organ was used for only two years until outmoded by the "talkies".

Even today the 83rd Street is a beautiful house of over 3,000 seats. However, the theatre is now in a bad district and so was given a face lifting a few years ago by having most of its elegance removed. Its lovely crystal chandeliers, paintings, and furniture were bought by New York's Hotel Americana and can now be seen there.

Marion took three 17-year-old boys to New York with him and the four of them worked six nights removing the organ. This was made more difficult by the fact that the house was in operation, and they had to work when the theatre was not running. Everything except the nine largest chests had to be let down the 2'x1½' trap doors in an Army barracks bag, three stories to one of the grand tier boxes, then over the edge to the balcony, where it had to be carried around the balcony and down a flight of steps to the stage, to be packed and stored until the truck came to get it.

There were outside chamber doors which opened right out into space, four stories up over the sidewalk. Marion felt that there was just too much danger of someone getting hurt for him to try to use them. To make matters worse, the Management, trying to be most helpful, had had these doors (sealed for 40 years) opened for him before he and the crew arrived and in so doing tore all the hinges but one off the door on the 83rd Street side. So there it hung, four stories up in the air, 600-pounds of steel door held by just one rusty hinge, ready to crash down on the sidewalk or on top of someone's car. Much too dangerous for them to touch!

(Continued on Next Page)

A MONSTER OR ANOTHER MIGHTY MO

(Continued)

I really think the crew must have made some kind of organ removal record—32 ranks and 6 tuned percussions in six nights—all done by one man and three boys who had never seen a pipe organ until Marion took them to Radio City the first afternoon they were in New York. Professional riggers were called in to get the nine chests and reservoirs out. This proved to be quite a task even for them.

Moller, it seems, never could be persuaded to go to a full unit organ on their big ones, and even the Atlanta Fox has a straight division. So not to be outdone, the 83rd Street had eight unit chests and two straight. These contained the: V.D.O., Celeste, Concert Flute, Mezzo Vox Humana, 4' Harmonic Flute on the Solo side, and Flute Celeste, Doppie Flute, 8' Harmonic Flute and Clarabella on the Main side.

It was decided to leave the offset chest and huge wooden pipes of the 16' Diapason, 16' Tibia Plena and the bottom six notes of the enormous 16' Tuba Profunda, which were made of wood. It would require the riggers to get them out, and at \$35.00 a lowering, this was just too much. Ben Hall nearly cried as he saw the beautiful tubas left. Marion offered to give them to him for his own home installation, but the offer was quickly refused when told he would have to remove them at his own expense.

MARION WAS amazed to be offered a large sum for the unusual metal harp by a New York organ fan. This strange instrument of 61 chrome Degan bars, has tuneable resonators which look like tibia pipes. Delicate piano-type action causes a felt piano-like hammer to hit these bars for a gorgeous harp-like sound. A pneumatic causes a gear-shift like arrangement to allow small metal rods to move in front of the hammers. The hammer shaft then strikes the rod, which in turn hits the bar for a very nice Orchestra Bell effect. This works on the top four octaves. Mounted on the top three octaves are electrical clappers (like door-bell action) which gives an effect of reiterating bells sounding much like saucer bells. This odd instrument

seems even more unusual when you realize that a regular 39-bar Degan Glockenspiel and Orchestra Bell unit was located in the other chamber.

We have also been very puzzled as to why some vandal had most carefully removed all the bars from the xylophones, leaving the chrome resonators, retaining screws and action intact. Just one 65-pound brass tubular bell was missing from the peal of tower chimes, leaving the regular organ chimes intact, thank goodness.

Try as they would, the boys could not find the three bird whistles listed in Mr. Moller's blueprints, and they supposed that they had been taken by the vandals. When they were removing the last reservoir on the Main side—there they were, safe and sound, attached, of all places, to the side of the 6'x4' reservoir.

By the fifth night, the removal crew began to agree with the elderly night watchman, who was never heard to say anything before, but muttered as he made his rounds back stage where the organ was beginning to mount upward toward the grid, "Too mucha stuffa! Too damma mucha stuffa!"

Ben Hall and Marion wondered what had happened to the large console? Miles of cable were traced into what, at one time, was a very large orchestra pit. However, no amount of pulling could budge it. The pit was many years ago filled with concrete to provide four more rows of seats for patrons. We suppose the console must repose there under tons of concrete. The door from the musicians' room had been bricked up. It was all Marion could do to keep Ben and the boys from attacking the pit wall with a fire axe. They assured him that just one brick away lay the largest and most beautiful console ever built.

A 35-foot tractor-trailer truck was used to bring the 14,000-pound monster home. Loading took eight hours, as each piece had to be carried up thirteen steps from the stage level to the street, out the stage door (which opened on the side of the building away from the street), into an alley, around the theatre for half a block, and finally out to the truck on 83rd Street. While this was going on, all work came to a halt in a large four-story school building across the street, while the kids hung out the windows

yelling, "Oh! Look at the rockets!" (English horns)

DRIVING to New York by car made it impossible to take the necessary boxes and packing that were needed to properly pack the pipes for moving, so each metal pipe was wrapped with newspaper and masking tape and packed inside one of the many large wooden pipes in lieu of packing cases. Only the 16' Violin and Contra Fagotta were too large and had to be placed loose in the truck. To our amazement, only one pipe was damaged and that not beyond repair.

Living in a large two-story colonial home, we found no problem finding space for installation of the organ. Having obtained the original installation blueprints from the factory long before undertaking to remove the instrument, we thought we had prepared the new chambers in advance so that the organ could be put in place at once. However, we found that in many instances Mr. Moller's organ and his blueprints did not agree. Results—renovation of the chambers is now necessary before the organ can be installed. This will be made much more difficult now because everything is full of organ.

We hope to use 21 of the 32 ranks. The big difficulty for us now is trying to decide which ranks to use and which to leave out. This is made more complicated by the fact that a rank that we desperately want to use is always on a chest Marion does not wish to use, and a chest that had a vacant space where the rank will fit is always on the wrong pressure. (The organ uses both 7" and 12" wind.) Time will work all of this out. Right now, we are both busy, along with all the neighbors, cleaning and polishing the 1/2" of New York dirt and grime off everything. At the present time, we have 19 ranks clean and set up. This time we are going to make sure everything fits before we alter the chambers.

Yes, all our friends think we have lost our minds, but the Martin's Mighty Mo has become the biggest tourist attraction in Eastern North Carolina, next to the Battleship North Carolina. Some day before too long it will play again, and . . . who knows, it might even sound like its big sister in the Atlantic Fox.

Specifications of the organ in both locations will be found on page 43.

SPECIFICATIONS OF MOLLER OPUS 4373
LOEW'S 83RD ST. THEATRE
NEW YORK, N.Y.
12-16-25 3/32

MAIN SIDE

RANK	NO. PIPES	WIND PRESSURE
Contra Fagotta	85	7"
Mezzo Vox Humana	73	7"
Viola Celeste T.C.	61	7"
Violin D'Orchestre	73	7"
4' Harmonic Flute	73	7"
Concert Flute	73	7"
Stentorphone	73	12"
Gross Gamba Celeste T.C.	61	12"
French Horn	73	12"
Cornopean	73	12"
Tibia Clausa	97	12"
Tibia Plena	97	12"
Gross Gamba	73	12"
Marimba Harp	49 bars	
Orchestra Bells	37 bars	
Snare Drum	Triangle	
Castanets	Thunder Sheet	
Tambourine	Surf Effect	
Tom Tom	Brush Cymbal	
Sleigh Bells	Cymbal	
Indian Block	Crash Cymbal	

SOLO SIDE

Clarinet	73	12"
Major Vox Humana	73	12"
Kinura	73	12"
French Trumpet	73	12"
English Horn	85	12"
Major Violin	73	12"
Gross Flute	73	12"
Tuba Profunda	85	12"
Violin	97	7"
Bourdon	97	7"
Minor Vox Humana	73	7"
Quintadena	73	7"
8' Harmonic Flute	73	7"
Viola Celeste T. C.	61	7"
Orchestral Violin	73	7"
Open Diapason	85	7"
Dopple Flute	73	7"
Clarabella	73	7"
Flute Celeste T. C.	61	7"
Concert Harp	61 bars	7"
Cathedral Chimes	25 tubes	7"
Xylophone	49 bars	7"
Song Birds 3	Chinese Gong	
Tympany	Tubular Bell Sharp	
Bass Drum	Tubular Bell Flat	
Fire Gong	Grand Crash	
Boat Whistle	Chime Peal 6 Bells	

How to Play Cinema Organ

(Continued from Page 42)

we usually imply a lively little piece in 2/4 or 4/4 time, and often in playing these on the organ, a considerable amount of impromptu adaptation and alteration from a piano copy is necessary. Avoid low-sounding chords for the left hand, transposing or altering the position of the chord if written too low. Play lightly and rhythmically, with a rhythmic and practically staccato pedal bass, and avoid heavy stop combinations. It is so easy to play these pieces in a way which makes the organ sound like some uncouth monster, giving one the impression of a performing elephant.

Sustaining Notes. When scoring this type of music, a composer will in various places introduce sustained notes for middle instruments which sustain a part of the harmony (such as horns), in order to bind the music together and avoid undue choppiness. The organist, therefore, in playing such music should judiciously introduce sustained notes which will not only give cohesion to the music but are necessary to give an effect of steadiness on the organ.

Thumbing. A useful device in solo playing is that of thumbing in order to bring a passage of melody into greater prominence, while at the same time securing a more full effect in the accompaniment or to produce the effect of two solo passages running concurrently. This necessitates the playing of part of the accompaniment or one solo on one manual with one hand, and the solo melody, or second solo, on the next manual below with the thumb of the same hand; thus leaving the other hand free to play a counter-melody or add the accompanying chords. To do this neatly and effectively requires skill, which can only be ensured through careful practice; unless the thumbed passage is to be played actually staccato, an effect of detached notes must be carefully avoided, and it is very difficult to obtain a good legato effect, even when the notes are consecutive.

Jazz. Whether we like or do not like jazz, is beside the point and quite immaterial; jazz is here and must be attended to, and to shut our eyes to it is only to imitate the proverbial stupidity of the ostrich. No one can pretend that it is a high form of musical art, but whether it is art, science or mere mechanical tricks, jazz is a fact, and we cannot overlook it. An organist who does not play jazz music to a jazz scene in the picture can only expect uncomplimentary remarks from his manager; and as a jazz scene is almost invariably included in the film

(Continued on Page 44)

STOPLIST OF ORGAN AS PLANNED FOR MARTIN RESIDENCE

MAIN CHAMBER

RANK	ACC.	GREAT	SOLO	PEDAL
Stopped Diapason	8', 4', 2-2/3', 2'	16', 8', 5-1/3', 2-2/3'		16', 8', 4'
Tibia Plena	8', 4'	8', 4'	8'	8'
Tibia Clausa	8', 4', 2'	16', 8', 4', 2-2/3', 2'	16', 8', 4'	16', 8'
Quintadena	8'	8', 4'		
Diapason	8'	8', 4'		8'
Minor Vox Humana	16', 8', 4'	16', 8'		
French Horn	8'	8', 4'	8'	
Violin	16', 8', 4', 2'	16', 8', 4', 2-2/3', 2'	16', 8'	16', 8'
Orchestral Violin	8', 4'	8', 4'		
Orch. Viol Celeste	8', 4'	8', 4'		
Marimba Harp	8', 4'	8'		8'
(reiterating)		8', 4'	8'	
Orchestra Bells		x	x	
Glockenspiel		x	x	

SOLO CHAMBER

Gross Flute	8', 4'	8', 4'	8'	
Tuba Profunda	16', 8'	16', 8', 4'	16', 8'	16', 8'
English Horn	8'	8', 4'	16', 8'	
French Trumpet		8', 4'	16', 8'	
Contra Fagotta	16', 8', 4'	8', 4'	16', 8', 4'	16'
Major Vox Humana		16', 8', 4'	16', 8'	
Kinura	8'	8'	8'	
Clarinet	16', 8'	8'		
Major Violin	8'	8', 4'		8'
Concert Harp	8', 4'			
Concert Harp Bells	4'		4'	
Saucer Bells	4'	4'	4'	
Xylophone		x	x	
Bass Drum				x
Snare Drum	x			x
Tympany				x
Chimes		x	x	x
Crash Cymbal				x
Brush Cymbal	x			
Chinese Block	x			
Tom Tom	x			
Triangle	x			
Tambourine	x			
Castanets	x			
Sleigh Bells	x			

ON TOE STUDS

Chinese Gong	Tower Bell #	Thunder Sheet	Train
Bird Whistles 3	Tower Bell b	Surf	Fire Gong

COUPLERS

Acc to Solo 8	Solo to Great 8	Acc 16	Gr. to Pedal 8
Solo 4	Solo to Great 4	Acc 4	Gr. to Pedal 4
Solo 16	Great 4	Acc to Pedal 8	Solo to Pedal 8
Solo to Great 16	Solo to Acc 8		

TREMULANTS

Solo	Vox I	Strings	Brass
Main	Vox II		