

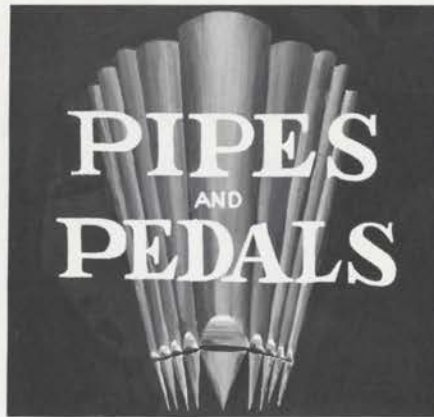
## A Pipe Dream? . . .



Auto racing driver—artist—promoter—creator of illusions—model maker—organ enthusiast—art collector—dreamer—Marshall Owen is all of these, and more. When we first heard of his scheme to conjure a veritable "showplace of the stars" in the heart of Hollywood last year, we gave it small notice and no more. It seemed too fantastic, but the fact that the plan included a theatre organ maintained our interest. In the interim we have had a chance to look into previous endeavors of Mr. Owen—the "mine ride" at Knott's Berry Farm, for example. The Anaheim, Calif. amusement park boasts a ride through an animated, full-scale, old-time mine. The figures, lighting, interior, sound effects and thrills in the cavern are the work of Marshall Owen. He even supervised the music score by hiring Bill Thomson to compose and play (on a mighty Wurlitzer) the recorded sound track. And at Disneyland, Owen constructed the set for the black-lighted "Peter Pan" ride, during which one soars through the night skies above the delicately-illuminated London of Wendy and Peter. As for the "Grand Prix" aspects of Owen's life, he has the scars to prove them; he was very nearly "done in" twice (although one smash occurred on a Freeway and, therefore, doesn't count).

How about the dreamer, promoter and model-making areas of Owen's life? We contacted the office of his "Crescendo Enterprises" in Alhambra only to find him more deeply involved than ever. He is busy lining up more financial backing needed to make such a gigantic undertaking come off, and he is concurrently negotiating for the purchase of a suitable organ—a mighty Wurlitzer, naturally. Frankly he hasn't much time for interviews but he asked one of his assistants to prepare a statement for the BOMBARDE. He also provided photos of his own painting of one of the buildings and also pix of a scale model he has constructed. Then he was off to the "Moulin Rouge" building on Sunset Blvd. in Hollywood, the onetime home of Earl Carrol shows, to take some measurements.

The statement prepared by Crescendo Enterprises is reproduced in its entirety. We sincerely hope that the hotly-pursued dream of Marshall Owen materializes—because his success will provide a showcase for theatre organ—the dream of most of us.



It all started in Hollywood during October of 1966 when Marshall Owen was visiting Paul Beaver and Bob Gerdes. Owen had a burning desire to do something with a very large Wurlitzer theatre organ. "I want an installation that will be seen and heard by the maximum number of people in Los Angeles," vowed Owen.

Between Beaver, Gerdes and Owen, the idea of a restaurant installation began its embryonic life. Beaver had from time to time in the past, given thought to such an installation and even had a building chosen for this purpose. Owen went about looking for a building that might perhaps be more suitable from the standpoint of crowd capacity.

"From that time on, I was committed to a course that must end in the realization of this great dream," said Owen.

And from the distaff side: "These past days, weeks and months, every moment of my husband's time has been devoted to the perfection of this project," said Verna Owen, who has been deeply involved in the project also.

**Richard Simonton told Owen to have a look at the "Moulin Rouge" building. About a week later Simonton and Owen made a tour of the building. Satisfied, Owen intensified his work on the project.**

The name Marshall Owen selected for his dream showplace reflected his longstanding love for the organ—"Pipes and Pedals." And when he speaks of the fruition of his plans, he becomes ecstatic.

"The Pipes and Pedals Theatre-Restaurant will be the greatest showplace in the West, with entertainment ranging from Petula Clark to Andres Segovia. Roger Wagner and his Master Choral has been contacted to perform with the 47-piece Los Angeles Symphonia Orchestra, and a great and well-known organist has been chosen to join in for the opening week chores. One of the topmost singing stars of stage, TV, recording and concerts will augment the program," promises Owen. Dinners will be sumptuous, with six entrees to choose from, each featuring seven courses.

## . . . Or Dream Pipes?

The vastness of the auditorium will be highlighted by the stage-center location of the great console upon its own lift. The organ pipes will be placed behind seven by ten foot glass windows, three on each side of the auditorium. The interior of the chambers will be completely mirrored and dramatically lighted. The swell shades will be located 18 feet above the floor and placed horizontally in the chamber ceilings, unseen by the public. The great sounds will be mixed and pour forth into the auditorium from 16 foot high parabolically curved bandshells located above the chambers. On each side of the stage will be placed six of the huge 32-foot Diaphones. These will be painted by a world famous custom car builder in a special "pearlescent" creamy-white, upon which will be applied gold-leafed compo of the same configuration as that on the console.

The ceiling measures approximately 110 feet by 100 feet, is flat and 34 feet above the floor. This ceiling will feature about 2000 "grain-of-wheat" light bulbs which measure 1/8 inch diameter by 1/4 inch long. These will be placed "astronomically" and will possess the ability for example, to create cloud effects passing through the room at any speed. This effect will be installed by a Jet Propulsion Lab technician.

It is planned to move a top-rated noontime TV show into the auditorium each day.

Over the driveway behind the marquee a very large room will be constructed for the serving of a buffet luncheon and cocktails. For the benefit of the many executives in the area who would not care to have lunch in the presence of a telecast, this room will be for MEN ONLY between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. each day. Entertainment is planned for the evenings.

All beef will come from the Owen ranch, and all bread will be baked on the premises. All waiters will be brought from Europe, straight from the greatest school for restaurant personnel in the world. Each must have had five years apprenticeship and normally speak three or more languages fluently.

The famous personalities' signature blocks, which have been world famous for over 30 years and are presently placed on the facade, will be removed and given to a museum which has requested them. Smaller duplicates of these blocks will be made and placed on the interior walls of the new cocktail lounge, to be named "The Signature Room."

## PIPE DREAM PIPES (Continued)



N. Y. PARAMOUNT-STYLE MARQUEE covers one entrance, but unlike its illustrious forebear, this one sits astride a driveway. The scale model shown here occupies a 46 x 46-inch area and is made of plastic, cardboard, cork and contact paper; scale: one-eighth inch equals one foot. Three artisans worked a month and a half to complete the model.

Says Marshall Owen of his project: "Research indicates that many Las Vegas stars want a Hollywood showcase where they can get more mileage from their Vegas routines. That's one reason for PIPES AND PEDALS; another is . . . the Mighty Wurlitzer."

It is planned to install a second organ—probably a good electronic—in one of the cocktail lounges.

"I sincerely believe," states Owen, "that the financiers of this project should endeavor to procure an airways franchise in order to maintain a Heliport atop the high-rise building. Being connected to the major airports by helicopter and located within a few blocks of the proposed Hollywood Convention Center can help make it one of the great hotels of the West. Subterranean parking will accommodate both the Pipes and Pedals Theatre-Restaurant and the high-rise building.

The value of the property shows itself to good advantage in the erection of a high-rise building on the present parking area. The type of building, whether office or hotel, shall be determined after presently instituted research is completed.

"When will it all come about? I predict we will open the restaurant late this year," says Owen, "not in time for the ATOE National Convention, perhaps, but it will nonetheless be there for all to enjoy for a long time."

—CRESCENDO ENTERPRISES RELEASE

Photos: G. Bandini

# WHERE THE BARTONS WERE

—Part One—

by Dan Barton

*In which veteran organ builder Dan Barton reminisces some, then starts his long-awaited list of Barton installations.*

The talking pictures killed the theatre organ business and by early 1932 it was really dead! The Barton organ factory was closed, the machinery and equipment sold and the remaining organ parts disposed of. The records were stored in a vault in the office of Mr. W. G. Maxcy, who was the president of the company. Mr. Maxcy died soon thereafter and the executors of his estate, seeing no reason to save records of a concern that was then out of business, destroyed all of the Barton company records.

To me the theatre organ business became just a pleasant memory. I went to Chicago to work for Wurlitzer. For 12 years I had been battling Wurlitzer for theatre organ business in the Midwest, and Mr. Tom Clancy, the sales manager of the Wurlitzer Co., must have taken some note of the battle for he offered me a position in the Chicago retail store to take charge of a new department selling a newly developed electric refrigerator.

After several months it was decided that kitchen refrigerators and musical instruments did not synchronize in the public mind and Wurlitzer gave up the refrigerator business.

I then started a poster advertising business in Chicago and soon learned I knew more about the theatre organ business than advertising and, not wanting to spend the time to learn a new business, I quit and returned to my home in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

I purchased four large houses and remodeled them into apartments. I became the busiest handyman in the community. I was a carpenter, house painter, interior decorator, electrician, plumber, upholsterer and even did cement work. I did everything but cook and baby-sit for the tenants.

During these years I gave little thought to the theatre organ business. Then, in 1960 I received a letter from Alden Miller, of Minneapolis, and a copy of his magazine, the *Kinura*. He asked a lot of questions about Barton organs and the magazine was full of articles about old and abandoned theatre organs, and how they were being restored. He advised there were two other magazines, the *Posthorn* and *Theatre Organ*,

that Stu Green and Tiny James were the producers and that *Theatre Organ* had recently run an article about the Barton organ in the Orpheum Theatre in Springfield, Ill. He said there was a national organization with chapters in many cities in the U.S. and the aim was the restoring and maintaining of old theatre organs.

That was my first knowledge of the American Theatre Organ Enthusiasts. I sent for copies of the *Posthorn* and *Theatre Organ*. I was surprised to find the extent of this hobby. I received a letter from Mr. Green asking me to write an article for his *Posthorn*. I complied with an article, "How To Tune An Organ," which was published in the April '62 edition of the *Posthorn*.

I began to receive letters from organ enthusiasts telling of their activities and asking questions about Barton organs, and personal visits to my home in Oshkosh. Many from the Midwest, Milwaukee, Chicago, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Minneapolis, St. Paul and other places. The champion long-distance visitor was George Anthony of Burlington, N. C. He had purchased a 3-10 Barton that was installed in the Paramount Theatre in Lynchburg, Va., in 1930. George flew from Burlington, N. C., to Oshkosh just to become acquainted with the man who built his organ.

Chris Feiereisen of Manitowoc, Wisconsin, took me on trips to hear concerts on restored Barton organs, a 3-14 installed in 1927 in the Capitol Theatre, Madison, Wisconsin; a 3-21 installed in 1926 in the Rialto Theatre, Joliet, Illinois; a 3-10 installed in 1927 in the National Theatre, Milwaukee, and now moved and reinstalled by John Deegan in Antioch, Illinois; and a fine church installation in Manitowoc which had the pipe structure of the 4-21 Barton from the Highland Theatre, Chicago (installed in 1925) and which Chris and Ben Comstock, another Manitowoc enthusiast, had purchased.

I have written several more articles for Stu Green's *Bombarde* and a history of the Barton organ for L. A. Waldsmith, Dayton, Ohio. He is an enthusiast who owns the 3-15 Barton organ from the Paramount Theatre, Hamilton, Ohio, installed in 1931. I made a recorded interview with Gene Boorum, of Chemung, N. Y. At the 1965 ATOE national convention in Chicago there were concerts