



## SHORT SHOTS FROM EVERYWHERE

Readers are encouraged to submit interesting sidelights on the organ hobby (exclusive of chapter news items), material (photos, too) they believe will be of general interest about local organ activities and installations and the people who work at the hobby. We know "there's VOX POPS in them there chapters" and it only requires a 5c postcard to get it to The BOMBARDE, Box 5013 Bendix Station, North Hollywood, Calif. 91605.

**NOW IT CAN BE TOLD:** George Wright was injured painfully in a multi-car freeway smash near Los Angeles in September of last year. Jagged splinters of glass sliced into his forehead and punctured his cheek near his chin. The million-dollar digits escaped harm. A skilled plastic surgeon made repairs so expertly that there is hardly a trace of scars. In fact, the doc, while treating the new injuries, managed to erase an old chin scar that George had carried for years. . . .

Two current movies have moments of interest to organ and theatre buffs. When the camera follows Frank Sinatra into the sumptuous living room of a rich family in "Tony Rome," we pass, all too quickly, a distinct indication of opulence—a three-manual horseshoe console of unfamiliar design. And, perhaps as a sign of the times, in "Rosie," Rosalind Russell, playing a very rich but somewhat giddy grandma, is committed to a mental institution by her children because she plans to buy a dark theatre which holds happy memories for her, to save it from the steel ball. Her retort, "Who the hell needs more parking lots?" got an affirmative rise from the audience.

Imagine Lyn Larsen, just returned from a triumphant concert tour, listening with rapt attention to Stu Green playing a set of his own tunes on a Conn plug-in. It happened at a San Fernando Valley, Calif., restaurant, both men having just happened by. A few days later Lyn took off for Australia. Stretching things only slightly, it might be stated that this constitutes the longest escape route yet taken by a Stu Green music victim.

1967 Convention echoes continue to resound. Eric Zeliff recalls one told by Detroitter Harold Prim who heard it happen in a bar. A group of conventioners was expounding on the glories of the theatre organ in a booth, tossing around references to Chrysoglotts, Hecklephones, Viol Celestes, Tuba Mirabili, Bombardes, Ophicleides, Quintadenas, Fagottos, Kinuras, Glockenspiels, Bourdons, Sforzandos, Dulcianas, leathered lips—and mutations. The bartender overheard it all as he polished his glasses. Finally he could hold back his curiosity no longer. He came over to the booth, threw down his towel and asked, "Awri—what planet ya from? I never heard such funny language—'Tiberas—Posterns—Quince—Fierce!' Do dey talk like dat on Jupiter Pluvius maybe? Well, listen here—I ain't so dumb—ya gave yerselves away when ya started on 'mutations'—wid 'leather lips!'" It took a little explaining to reassure him that only Earthlings were present.

*GOOF Correction Dept.* In the August issue we published a report from El Paso that the Oakland Paramount 4-20 Wurlitzer had been purchased by a Texan for installation in his home. Yet, on checking with its owner of several years, Urban Braitto, the organ remains in storage in the Oakland area (very near the Oakland city dump!) and no sale had been made. How the story got started will probably never be known because we can't check with the contributor—John R. Thomas (see *Closing Chord*).

But that quest uncovered another item. Remember "Club 615" in the Bay area, featuring Dave Quinlan at the six-rank Wurlitzer? It was an attraction in Benecia for years—until the building outlived its usefulness. Then the organ went into storage. But it's going into another Bay area night spot, Rudy's Supper Club, Spring Road, Vallejo. The organist? Dave Quinlan, of course. Installation is being made by Kurt Wood. It should be ready by March 1, perhaps sooner.

Look for a resurgence of interest in the organized theatre organ hobby in El Paso, which fell off sharply with the death of Jim Connor last year. Jim was the man who spearheaded the formation of the Theatre Organ Club of El Paso and John R. Thomas, playing intermissions at the Plaza, was the focal point in recent years. Now, with John R. gone, there are stirrings which portend a reassessment of the situation and action which just might see the formation of an ATOE chapter in El Paso. Don Shearer, one of the El Paso TOC's first intermission organists, and Dr. Russell Van Norman are pondering the matter.

*If and when such a move takes place, the group will find Plaza manager Bill Rast 'way ahead of them. Bill has hired Rex Kearns to play intermissions on weekends and has extended the organ interludes to nine on a weekend—and each has been extended from five to fifteen minutes, advises Dave Scruggs, a former TOC'er now living in LA. Kelton Joyner is keeping the 3-15 Wurlie in shape (and he has repaired the long, dark cloud projector).*

In Muncie, Indiana, music merchandiser Sylvan Ketterman has developed an engaging "come on" to clinch deals (he sells Baldwin plug-ins). He keeps a copy of Ben Hall's "The Best Remaining Seats" in the store to show to theatre-organ oriented prospects. Invariably they become enchanted with the authoritative tribute to the great movie palaces (and their organs), and Ketterman offers to "throw in" a copy as an incentive. So far, the gimmick has clinched a number of sales and in New York, Ben Hall enjoys the royalties no end.

It happened in the spanking-new chapel at Buell College, Denver, during the Winter concert on Feb. 4. Those listening in the chapel, as well as listeners to KOA radio, noted something strangely familiar in one of the tunes which organist Charles Eve was playing on the new organ. It was listed simply as "Alles Was Du Bist—Kern," but despite the "cantus firmus" treatment, and the polyphonic weaving of the melody against itself, there was something disturbing. Could Eve be tweaking his audience? Indeed he could, and was. The "mystery" fugue was none other than Jerome Kern's "All the Things You Are" as arranged (it was first an improvisation) by Billy Nalle and played during his 1966 AGO convention "pop" concert on the 4-43 Atlanta Fox Moller (also on his Mirrosonic label recording, "Billy!").



Nalle couldn't be reached immediately for comment. He was in Detroit recovering from the effects of the concert he played the night before for the Detroit Theatre Club on their 4-34 Wurlitzer in the Senate Theatre.

Speaking of Nalle, he recently attended a somewhat far-out event in the great St. John's the Divine Cathedral in New York. At the invitation of the Bishop of New York, Duke Ellington had written some jazz compositions with religious themes and texts for church presentation. Billy found himself in a crowd of over 8,000 who came to hear the Duke's "churchly rhythms." He wondered whether the organ would be used. Soon his colleague, resident organist Alec Wyton, appeared at the console and played an original he had conjured for the occasion and which included fanfares on the "Judgment Day-loud" State Trumpets in the rear of the church. Then the Duke went to work, conducting three choirs and a dance troop. Later Billy, a little breathless, exclaimed, "What a wildly wonderful concert! I caught a few new Ellington 'wrinkles'—some real delicious ones—and when I play at Detroit you can bet I'll give 'Satan Doll' some brand-new 'satin'—Ellington style." Wonder if he did.

*From Minneapolis, Gary and Elaine Franklin report that they have acquired a Vottler Tibia and a Kimball Cor Anglais (on 10" wind) for their now 12-rank Wurlitzer "beast in the basement," which is going in, but slowly. Meanwhile their playing is being done on an upstairs Rodgers plug-in to which Gary is adding a third set of generators and a "piano." Both are sold on the Rodgers, which is all to the good, because that's the brand they are selling at their music store—although you can buy a Verschuren miniature pipe organ from them, "under the counter."*

From Dallas, Charlie Evans reports a topnotch human interest story, the kind which speaks well for the TO hobby. Recall that the activities of brilliant organ technician Rodney Yarbrough were severely curtailed (but not stopped) a few years ago when an auto smash left him paralyzed. Rod's been bedridden ever since and the time goes slowly. Just before Christmas, Rodney learned that a group of his friends had chipped in and bought him a 2-manual, 4-rank Morton organ (Tibia, Vox, String and Diapason plus Xylophone and Chimes) equipped with a roll player which when installed

can be activated from his bed. The donors weren't identified, but we are willing to wager that Charlie Evans was in the thick of the plot. He's been Rod's mentor and "good angel" since the crippling accident. Another chapter in our oft-repeated claim, "one meets the finest people in the theatre organ hobby."

*Is the lingo of organ fans so technical that it scares away interested novices? We sent fledgling BOMBARDE reporter Betty Jones to an event near her native New York to review a jam session, after which she wrote, "The lingo might as well have been in Transylvanian. To me, only the ears and viscera are involved in listening to an organ. All that discussion of the mechanics seemed akin to analyzing the salivary and olfactory reactions to a gourmet's delight, and reducing them to a gourmet's delight, and reducing them spot!" Either the conversation was technical to the point of confusing a newcomer—or Betty was just plain hungry.*

Organist Al Bollington sent in a portion of a letter purported to be written by an English organ enthusiast in 1704 which indicates things haven't changed much: "That new fellow in Germany (Sebastian something) is having trouble with his Hauptwerk and Untersatz, while here at home George Handel has grievous problems with his Stopped Zink and a Spitzflute which soaked his Furniture—not to mention leaky wind chests. Let's hope our organs hold up better in 1705." It would seem that Al is tugging our Gamba.

A couple of issues back we listed a few hints on how to get plans for organ buildings (or additions) past the various city or county licensers put there to discourage such efforts. These were submitted by organist John Ledwon, who is engaged in such a project in Agoura, a county area just outside Los Angeles. Evidently John's "feints and flourishes" got the desired results because his building is well on the way to completion. In mid-January, John assembled a crew consisting of Dick Schroder (2-8 Morton), Harvey Heck (4-27 Wurlitzer), Neal Kissel (whose inlaws have a 2-8 Page) and Ray Ledwon (a 100-rank mortgage) to move the Ledwon treasure from the present LA Canoga Park menage to the new address. This included John's 3-12 Wurlitzer plus enough goodies to total 26 ranks. The works will go into three chambers in a 50-foot long building with a 20-foot ceiling height. (See the October 1966 TO-BB, page 18, for further details on the Ledwon project.)

*Luella Wickham, who played at most of all the main drag theatres in Syracuse, N.Y., in the silent era, presented a varied fall concert for organ enthusiasts at the Empire State Theatre and Musical Instrument Museum located on the Fair Grounds near Syracuse. The instrument, the 3-11 (style 235) Wurlitzer moved from leveled Keith's Theatre and re-installed in the Museum by members of the Syracuse Theatre Organ Society, was in fine shape for the presentation which ranged from Mozart to "Tico Tico." Luella included a "Showboat" selection, Kreisler's "Schon Rosmarin," a "Cavalleria Rusticana" potpourri, "Memories of*

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## VOX POPS, contd.

*World War I* (including "My Buddy" and "Over There"), "Ragging the Scale" and a Singalong. All agreed that Luella, now in her 70's, was still a top showman.

Hail to the American Guild of Organists' new publication, entitled "Music." It replaces a long-standing marriage of AGO with the crochety "Diapason," a publication with a head-in-sand policy (last daylight seen about 1910), which couldn't manage to reflect changes in AGO attitudes over the years. But "Music" is quite different. The November 1967 edition included an article entitled "The Renaissance of the Theatre Organ" by Billy Nalle (this guy seems to be everywhere!), which traces the TO hobby history and then attempts to look into the future. Makes interesting reading, and somewhat provocative. However, the AGO must still have a few cobwebs among its beards, if remarks in an article a few pages earlier count. In "The Evolution of the Organ," Kurt Stone writes of "... the musical horror machines of movie house and soap opera fame." Mr. Stone—go for baroque!

*From Rochester, N. Y., RTOS' Dan Schultz writes that a second Vox Humana will soon be added to the 4-21, the wind supply for the Tuba Mirabilis will be revised to allow for a wider range of adjustment in the trem beat, and the piano beefed up so it can be seen and heard easier. Dan says that the Wurlitzer now sounds even better since Lyn Larsen assisted in regulating the Tibias and some of the reeds before his fall concert for the Society. Veteran theatre organist Clark Fiers was set to play for RTOS during January.*

Dick Ellsasser continues with an ambitious series of concert tours around the country, some played on Con plug-ins, some on pipes (where available). On March 3rd he was set for a bash in Buckhannon, West Virginia, playing at Wesleyan College.

Those who awaited expectantly for an appearance of the 4-58 Radio City Music Hall Wurlitzer during that theatre's annual Christmas broadcast on Dec. 10 last, were disappointed. Although it had been a part of previous RCMH Christmas shows, it was not included in the 1967 show. For shame!

Those "down under" lads sure know how to do things with a vengeance. To raise money for the Boy Scouts they devised a 1920 style "Hollywood Premiere" of the film "Son of the Sheik" with Valentino. A horseshoe plug-in Wurlitzer was installed in the Avalon Theatre (Avalon Beach) for Charles Tuckwell to cue the film, a stage presentation (complete with pit band) was secured, and also a sky-searching, undulating light. A quartet rehearsed the film's theme, "That Night in Araby." On show night, sleek cars unloaded "stars" who were interviewed on the PA system while flashbulbs popped. But the Aussies didn't stop there. To get full "authenticity" they inserted a carload of "Chicago gangsters," complete with big cigars, pulled-down Homburgs, white flowers in lapels and protruding bulges in their clothes to show where the "artillery" was secured. The "mugs" pulled up in front of the theatre, made a vulgar display of getting out and "mingled" with the "stars" in front of the theatre. One tossed and caught a coin endlessly, a la George Raft. They leered at the beauties and finally went boisterously into the theatre. Just shows what comes of sending all the old Jimmie Cagney movies to Australian television.

*Organist Mildred Alexander, slowly recovering from the shock she suffered on receiving a very special Christmas present from a "fan," is already anticipating the ATOE convention. She recently visited Johnny Seng and his concert pipe organ for a workout on pipes. The special present? A can of "Schmer-it Palm Grease—to ease those glissando-calloused*



THE FAMOUS ALEXANDER pedalwork. (Could "barking dogs" be far behind?)

—Probably a STUfoto

*hands," sent to her in memory of her demo concert for Hammond at the 1967 Home Organ Festival. Millie shows it with no little pride to her worshipful audiences all over the USA, in all, concerts in 43 towns between February 1 and May 15! Plus a modicum of her famous Teachers' Workshops.*

From Fairburn, Georgia, Clay Holbrook reports on his pipe installation: "I have all the pipework, the chambers have been completed, a few of the chests have been placed, a couple of 16' bass offsets have been placed and some of the tuned percussion actions have been reworked. The big Kilgen console has been refurbished and looks great—even if it is mine. It would look great even if weren't mine."

Ever wonder how two organ clubs manage to get along well, although they operate within the same territory? The Motor City Chapter and Detroit Theatre Organ Club get along fine. How? because the roster of one club reads pretty much like the roster of the other. Then why two clubs? Because the DTOC concentrates on its 4-34 treasure in the Senate theatre while the Motor City group gives attention to all available instruments—such as the Fox 4-36 Wurler. Al Mason has six shows already lined up for 1968. Wife Betty informs us that the 2-5 Wurler which the Chapter members have been restoring in the 650-seat Punch and Judy theatre is about ready to go, and next they'll start work on the 3-10 Barton in the Royal Oak theatre. Betty's complaint is typical, "Not enough hours in the day!"

Dolton McAlpin is playing Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays at the Baton Rouge Paramount Theatre (2-6 Morton organ) for intermissions and is looking forward to cutting his first album on the instrument. He's a senior, majoring in political science at Louisiana State, and feels the theatre organ at the Paramount is more popular with the college crowd than with older folks. We'll have a story on McAlpin in a coming issue.

*The Chicago Tribune took note of Gaylord Carter's concert at the Chicago Patio Theatre with an article by William Leonard in the October 1 issue which reflected solid enthusiasm for both Gaylord and the 3-17 Barton (restored by CATOE members as reported in a previous issue of this mag). The writer noted that the Chicago Area Chapter has only 160 members but that the Patio's 1600 seats were filled at \$1.50 each. The program consisted of Carter's "trip through the organ," an old newsreel, a sing-along and a silent feature, "Ella Cinders," with Colleen Moore. Leonard wrote, "It was a great show, with reverberating that agitated one's eardrums as they haven't been stimulated in years." All of which speaks very well for CATOE, as well as Gaylord.*