


CONVENTION



VOY POPS

Admirer, to George Wright: "I have more of your records than any others." Eddie Dunstedter (kibitzing): "You ought to have more of mine!"

One of the pleasantest experiences of the convention was the performance of Bill Thomson and the audience's reaction to even his first selection. The crowd was with him from the start and evidently the contagion of the moment inspired Bill, in return. Whatever the reason, Bill's performance on the Rialto Theatre's style 216 Wurlitzer crossed over from his usual "excellent" to "great." Truly, a new image of the Thomson charisma was born on that night of July 15th.

How young comedian Harold Lloyd appeared when he stepped to the stage of the Wiltern Theatre following the showing of his 1923 comedy classic, *Safety Last!* Of course, he now requires glasses (his 1923 hornrims were empty frames) but his resemblance to the "human fly" of the movie is still a strong one. Of nearly 60 films he made, Lloyd did his climbing bit in only five, and he can't understand how it came about that he is identified only with the "climbers."

BOMBARDE Editor *Stu Green* was in ecstasy throughout the convention as one happy incident after another befell him. He would have been satisfied just with all the contacts made with THEATRE ORGAN-BOMBARDE readers who buttonholed him during the four days, but during the annual business meeting he was nearly floored when he was nominated for the presidency of ATOE. "And it was actually seconded," cried *Stu* (he declined because of his bachelor status; the Prez needs a wife to be secretary). Then, Eddie Dunstedter included his special arrangement of *Stu's* favorite, *Chloe*,

among his concert selections, a reading *Stu* recalls from Eddie's Fast Freight days. Then, George Wright dedicated a tune to *Stu* during his stanza. He was going to dedicate *Lush Life*, explained George, in view of one of *Stu's* avocations but instead had decided to change it to *Passion Flower*, to cue a more recent development in the Green-tinted scheme of things. Both Billy Strayhorn tunes are favorites of *Stu's*, and by the end of the convention he was walking nearly a foot off the ground. And it requires quite a "lift" to elevate his 220 pounds that high.

Crawl enthusiasts who selected the Carson residence 3-26 Wurlitzer, were greeted at the door by a bearded hippie who some believed to be Bob Carson. Well, it wasn't Bob Carson (as they learned when he appeared during the banquet) but it was a real hippie, one of Bob's neighbors who volunteered for the "greeter" job to add a little Hollywood color to the crawl and also to guard the studio while Bob lived at the Ambassador during the bash.

Speaking of the Carson Wurlitzer, the choice of Johnny Duffy to play it for "crawlers" was pure poetic justice. It is the instrument with which Johnny is identified in the minds of pipe enthusiasts because of the several recordings he cut on the instrument more than ten years ago. "I'm still getting royalties from them," beams Johnny.

While Johnny was doing the honors at Carson's, over at Dick Simon-ton's 2-organ home Gordon Kibbee was presiding at the instrument which has so much of the sound of Jesse Crawford in it (a number of his combinations are still on the pistons). Gordon's stylings have an elusive beauty yet to be captured on recordings but which was quite apparent to the lucky people who voted the Simon-ton ticket at the registration desk. A visit to Dick's Bijou Theatre with its 36-rank special Wurlitzer (kept in perfect condition) is an experience not soon forgotten.

Out at Harvey Heck's Tarzana home a third group was sampling the subtle artistry of Jim Melander, a quiet man with a staggering musical imagination. Although the crawl was intended to be a "stand up" affair, the Hecks rented folding chairs for the comfort of conventioners. The 27-rank Wurli seemed to be built for the weaving harmony which characterizes Jim Melander's arrangements. A moment ago, we used the word "subtle," which applies except when Jim demonstrated Harvey's "Toy Counter Positive," the unenclosed (ba-

roque-style!) conglomeration of moose call, slide whistle, crows, tiny temple bells and a thrusting "party favor" which reached for the ceiling with a hoarse squawk. That sequence was purely for laughs.

The Simon-ton, Heck and Carson residences house the big home installations (with the Lanterman home soon to join them). But whether one heard Duffy, Kibbee or Melander, he heard playing with style, imagination and much warmth. These men bring out the poetry locked in the music and instrument as beautifully as it can be done. We are beholden to them and to the hosts who invited us to their homes.

One studio location on the Saturday schedule was the Haven of Rest recording studio. The almost funereal name probably scared away some of those who worry about being confronted with a church organ, but the Haven Wurlitzer is anything but "churchy" in sound, surroundings or stop complement. Organist Dwight Beacham, playing his second public concert (his first was recently held at the Wiltern under LA Chapter auspices) explained that the 3-decker is a 12½-ranker, the half-rank being a 49-note string celeste. Dwight did a nice job of such non-church liturgy as *Cabin in the Sky*, *Speak Low* and "the taxpayer's song," *Everything I have Is Yours*. Those who came mainly because it was the one excursion scheduled on an air-conditioned bus, were happy with their choice after hearing the compact but smooth-sounding installation and Dwight's attractive playing.

Everybody looks up to Tony Tablman, although those who can match Don Baker's elevation can look him straight in the eye. Ever since the ATOE convention in Chicago (1965), where Tony plays rink pipes, the riddle as to how Tony's name came to fit him so well has plagued the curious. Did possession of a name like "Tablman" cause a subconscious effort on Tony's part to grow up to be a "tall man" in his formative years? We found Tony ducking to avoid bumping his head on door frames at the Ambassador during the convention. He looked at least seven feet tall, but perhaps his beanpole construction amplified the vertical dimension. Even so, he is well over six feet. We finally blurted out the question. Tony smiled, and replied, "Tablman is a professional name I picked out to describe me; my real name is Czechoslovakian, and not easy to pronounce nor remember." End of mystery.

(Continued on Page 18)

The Convention That WAS!

LOS ANGELES • 1968

Photo Coverage by Bill Lamb

July 13-16



BLACK BART AND THE WHITE KNIGHT—Bill Thomson (top left), draped to the nines in black tux and tie, smiles slyly, as if thinking, "Let's see Lyn-baby top THIS tomorrow morning!" Meanwhile, Larsen—never one to be bested in the sartorial arena—abandoned his traditional black tux trademark at his concert Tuesday a.m. and appeared in ice-cream whites with ruffled lace shirt-front. Just incidentally, it might be mentioned that both artists also played superb concerts!



"JUST WAIT till all the complaints start coming in!" Marilyn Schrum, retiring National Secretary, is probably telling new President, Al Mason.



DICK SCHRUM—WHAT is he looking at?



GAYLORD CARTER, DICK SIMONTON AND HAROLD LLOYD show three smiles to top off Convention's final event. The shadow of Convention Chairman Bob Carson's end-of-convention smile is partially visible behind Carter's right shoulder.



SMILE, AL AND BETTY! YOU'RE ON!—The Masons, pictured just after the banquet announcement of their selection as new National President and Secretary, respectively. They appear stunned here, but soon were all smiles and action as they prepared for the coming year's activities.



ORGAN NUTS PACK COCOANUT GROVE to capacity at Annual Banquet in LA's famed Ambassador Hotel.



SHUN TSUKUI, Thomas Organ demonstrator in Japan, plays while (left to right) Byron Melcher, Bill McCoy and Dewey Cagle smile approval.



MC BEN HALL models one of a variety of ushers' uniforms (this one from the Wiltern) in which he appeared throughout the Convention events.



FRIENDLY DON BAKER—Above, the organist's "solo arm" encircles TOB Associate Editor Peg Nielson—to the tune of mutual smiles. At left, however, Don looks startled to be caught on camera in a similar pose with his "accompaniment arm" around Convention Artist Rosa Rio.



Asked why he failed to include his famous arrangement of "Nola" in his convention concert, Eddie Dunstedter explained that he had intended to play the memorable Felix Arndt fingerbuster, but that the Kimball just wouldn't respond fast enough. He said, "My 71-year-old fingers are still faster than this 45-year-old organ."

Rosa Rio sure made a striking appearance at her Elks Temple concert. She sparkled from head to toe as she came on stage after MC Ben Hall announced, "The lovely, talented Rosa Rio"! Even the frames of her glasses glittered. At the four manuals of the 61-rank Morton, she produced some surprises. Her *Blue Skies* was graced with some well-conceived jazz variations. In registration she seemed to favor the fat brass, with which the instrument is loaded. And she obtained the most theatrical sound yet in her registration for *Edelweiss*, ending on soft Voxes alone. The Eastern charmer made her point and the full house made known its approval. Her encore was a dirty, lowdown *St. Louis Blues*.

We caught only the tail end of the Jam Session late Saturday afternoon at the Elks Temple. We entered while Frieda Benz Oakley was coaxing a wildly impassioned "Cumana" from a normally dignified beast, followed by Van Welch, who stated musically that he'd left his heart in San Francisco. Then, a "mystery guest" was announced, to follow a brief intermission. Immediately a pair of the "guys who fixed the organ" (remember?) dove for the console and started resetting combination pistons. What mystery guest was so all-important that he rated special piston settings? The answer wasn't long in coming. Soon Bob Carson stepped to the microphone and announced "Mr. George Wright." George then made his first of several appearances during the convention. Stung by the forced cancellation of his studio "crawl," George was determined to fulfill his commitment to Bob Carson in other ways. Thus the Jam Session appearance. He didn't play long, but his *Heat Wave*, *Over the Rainbow*, *Misty* and *Jalousie* brought to many their first sample of George Wright "live."

Organist Lyn Larsen was observed coming out of the stage door of the Rialto Theatre just before the Monday evening festivities were scheduled to start and our man in Pasadena buttonholed him. His presence proved to be something of an "errand of mercy." He was

there in answer to an urgent "SOS" from Bill Thomson, who was having trouble getting into his tuxedo. Lyn is the recognized local authority on tuxes, white ties, tails and patent leather shoes, because they comprise his usual concert "uniform." So he hurried over and shoehorned Bill into the "monkey suit" and tied his tie. On the way out Lyn also made a decision; no black formal clothes for his concert—too common. So, when Lyn appeared next morning at the Wiltern for his concert, he was outfitted in a cream-white suite. But he retained the black patent leathers, just for contrast.

One of the best-kept secrets was the name of the "theatre organ movie" scheduled for presentation during the convention. Its title appeared at no time in the pre-convention advertising, mainly because the convention planners didn't know the title; it had never appeared in any of the correspondence from its Canadian (Toronto) producer. In fact, the title was known only after the film started to roll at the Elks Building on Saturday night. First, Doc Lawson appeared on the screen and gave a diagnosis title: MY WIFE SAID, 'THAT'S ENOUGH!' And we all understood. Basically its the three-year struggle of one man to install a 3-10 Wurlitzer in his home. The man is Bernie Venus and his "laugh of triumph" when he finally completes the chore is something to remember. Bernie just "erupts." Also appearing are Gaylord Carter, Dick Simonton and Ben Hall—all in pancake make-up. The film, produced by Ronald Piggott of Toronto, will be the subject of a story to appear later in this publication. Prints of the film will be available soon on a rental basis to interested chapters.

Tom Hazleton introduced a happy novelty into his concert—a beautiful, short-skirted page turner who stood by and anticipated all page turnings with stunning charm. No, Tom didn't go out and hire a model. When asked "Who was that Hollywood starlet turning pages for you?", Tom picked up the cue and replied, "That was no Hollywood starlet; that was my wife!" Zoe had no trouble anticipating the page turnings because she's also an organist. Tom opened with a dazzler, Wagner's Introduction to the Third Act of *Lohengrin*, during which he played the big massed trombone melody on the pedals—yes, with his feet! Likewise, *London Bridge Is Falling Down* during the *Elmore Fantasy on Nursery Rhymes* while his hands made a two-part invention of *Three Blind Mice*. But he is just as effective with

quieter material, such as Deems Taylor's *Dedication*.

Organists Lloyd del Castillo and Harry J. Jenkins had their own private record counter at the foot of the grand stairway in the Elks building, and both offered records played on the 4-61 Robert Morton up in the ceremonial room. There was quite a reunion when Roland Pomerat (Houston, Texas) walked in. All three knew one another when they played for silent movies in New England theatres more than 35 years ago.

Speaking of record merchandising, no one could argue that the "Organ of the Month Club" (Concert Recording) was not the most well-stocked record seller at the convention. Prexy Bill Johnson set up shop in a little cottage in the garden of the Ambassador Hotel and soon had the place crammed with records and record hunters. He had dozens of pipe organ releases to please the fans and the cuties who rang up sales had a salutary effect, too.

Next to the registration desk was the Convention's "official record sales" table. Here one could buy records by the artists playing for the convention, a cost-free service extended the convention artists by the LA chapter which allowed the artist a larger slice of the "take."

Despite the well-publicized ban on shooting flash photos in the concert artists' faces (especially while they were playing), the rule was too often disregarded. For example, George Wright, who objects to flashbulbs because they disturb his audiences, was greeted by a blinding series of flashes nearly every time he turned to his audience. This being his first convention concert, he was a special prize for the shutterbugs, as was Eddie Dunstedter, who dismissed the barrage with a wave of his arm and "They're my fans out there." And Gaylord Carter, who has built up an immunity to sudden flashes of white light, says, "I'll start to worry when they stop shooting me."

Next to Chairman Carson, photographer Bill Lamb was the "moviest" guy at the convention. Bill, who drove from his home in Princeton, Ill., spent the four days chasing around with nearly 50 pounds of photo equipment hanging from his shoulders. He shot just under 300 negatives and the choice ones illustrate this issue—cover photo included. Bill has been ATOE's official convention photographer since the Portland convention (1966) and

these pages have been the richer for his careful craftsmanship and cooperative spirit.



PHOTOSNAPPER BILL LAMB, atop ladder, and subject.

—Stufoto

Stevens Irwin is always working, even when he's apparently just sitting and enjoying organ music. Steve is a compiler of organ tonality descriptions, and translating sounds into words isn't easy. So, Steve listens and weighs words, all the time he's supposed to be simply "enjoying"—but he's doing that, too. It sounds as though Steve Irwin "has it made," and that's true, too. A retired educator with an overpowering interest in all kinds of organs (he's preparing a dictionary of electronic organ stops), he travels from gathering to gathering, wherever there's an organ to be heard where he can absorb information for the latest revision of his best-selling "Dictionary of Pipe Organ Stops," published by Schirmer. That's how Steve Irwin spent the four convention days—mainlining sound-word juxtapositions for later publication.

It's a pleasant discovery to learn that one's hero is the wonderful guy in person we knew he would be long before meeting him. That's the way it was with youthful (15) Lew Williams, who lives in Louisiana. Lew's hero is George Wright, an attachment nurtured by listening to his collection of Wright recordings and reading about the organist in organ magazines, ever since he was 11. The lad came to the convention just hoping to catch a glimpse of George and hear him play. Lew got more than he bargained for. Before he left on his return trip to his home in Lafayette, Lew had (1) shot photos of George (posed with Eddie Dunstedter and Stu Green), (2) had a private interview with George concerning music instruction (George recommended piano lessons), (3) heard George play a tune on a pipe organ just for him (after the Rialto concert), and (4) had the opportunity to play a tune on pipes for George (a Crawford-style

"When Day Is Done"). Lew and George parted in front of the Rialto Theatre long after the rest of the ATOE's had departed, and as Lew stepped into the car waiting to take him back to the hotel, George waved to him, then turned to newsben Peg Nielsen with a faraway look in his eyes and said, "I was fifteen once."

"Crawlers" who thought they were seeing twins when the gal who announced the Johnny Duffy stanza at the Carson residence looked just like the gal who introduced Paul Beaver at the Universal sound scoring stage Morton may be interested to learn it was the same gal both times—Ruth Carson, wife of Chairman Bob. Things happened so fast she doesn't remember too much detail about the two shows, but recalls that her favorites were Duffy's own tune, "Cross Country" and "Pigalle" and Beaver's "Swingin' on a Star" (with the J. S. Bach intro) and "Tara's Theme" from the Max Steiner score to "Gone With the Wind."

The "coolest spot in town" on "convention Sunday" just had to be the Iceland Rink in Paramount. It was a very warm day but the large expanse of ice covering the skating area provided a very welcome atmosphere as Bill Field played the 3-19 Wurlitzer assembled over the years by the late Truman Welch. The "crawlers" visited during regular skating sessions so they heard the organ and Bill performing a "duty routine," a stint which proved most encouraging to the Wichita delegation, one of whom expressed the hope that their New York Paramount 4-36 "dowager empress" installation will be as pleasing. Only two ATOE's braved the ice, a couple from Canada, reports Ross Farmer. He hosted the show.

The MC at the swingin' Bell Friends Church, Bill Exner, reports that the stop enjoyed a brisk business—five performances, in all. Dean McNichols started his program with Bach's *Air for a G String* (described as "schmalzy Bach") and revealed that the 2-deck Wurli has "seven and a half ranks." He explained the "half rank" as a full set of Dulciana pipes that are inaudible except when played alone "during quiet moments in church services." The general reaction was one of amazement that a small organ could sound so impressive. That "Welcome ATOE" banner put up by church members was impressive, too.

Speaking of Bill Exner (bus transportation schedule and logistics man), our preconvention prediction

that Bill's hair would be white by the time the convention was over came to pass. Of course, there were some who said it was that color long before the convention. No comment. Outside of one bus which took off for San Francisco enroute to Harvey Heck's home installation, all went smoothly. And there's absolutely no truth to the rumor that one busload of conventioners is still missing.

The place with the most natural reverb was easily "Tubes, Inc.," a huge steel warehouse where Chuck Baker has installed his 2-15 Wurlitzer. Andy Rimmer was there to greet the "crawlers" and to introduce petite Helen Dell. Helen, a looker, sounded great on such novel tunes as *One Morning in May*, *Step to the Rear*, *Love Locked Out*, *Jimmie* and a specialty tune, entitled *Dainty Miss* (which one wag described as "Dizy fingers played sideways!") Helen is a doll!

As we went to press, Chairman Bob Carson was slowly recovering his senses after two gruelling months of preparation plus the impossible-to-anticipate emergencies which never fail to come up during a meeting of 850 people from all over (including England, Hawaii and Japan). The only big disaster was the burn-out of the blower motor in the George Wright studio, and that upset the bus schedules for two days. But there were plenty of minor catastrophes (like "whatever happened to the technical symposium?") to lighten Bob's hair a shade or two. He expects to recover fully in about a month. Bob and his staff did a fine job in organizing the organ bash. There wasn't a dull moment.



"MR. CARSON, YOU'RE WONDERFUL!" says the admiring look of a conventioneer, obviously amazed at the energy of the Convention Chairman. But Carson's mind is miles away—obviously dwelling on some unfinished Convention business.

—PHOTO: Bill Lamb

(Continued on Page 31)

ATOE Publications
Gentlemen:

Recently various items have appeared in Theatre Organ Bombarde and The Console concerning the disc recording produced by the Detroit Theater Organ Club, entitled "For Members Only," featuring Ashley Miller at the console of the Fisher-Orbits Wurlitzer installed at the DTOC.

At the time this recording was made the Board of Directors of the DTOC hoped to be able to make copies available to non-members. However, after a careful review of the Federal regulations which apply to non-profit private clubs such as the DTOC, the Board has most reluctantly come to the conclusion that any such distribution, even to recover costs, would be in violation of these regulations and would seriously jeopardize the Club's legal status.

Therefore, it is with the most sincere regret that we must inform you that copies of this recording cannot be made available to non-members. Furthermore, individual members may purchase only a reasonable number of copies for their own use or disposal as they see fit.

We would like to emphasize that these actions are being taken only for the reason stated; nothing would please us *not-so*-"well-heeled" Detroiters more than to have this recording receive the wide distribution among theatre organ lovers we feel it deserves.

We regret any inconvenience our action may have caused ATOE members or readers of your excellent periodical. To avoid misunderstanding, a ruling has been made stating that all communications with news media in the future must be made with the approval of the Board of Directors.

For the Board of Directors,
Ben Levy
Secretary

(Announcement of DTOC's decision was made in an earlier issue, but the complete text of Mr. Levy's letter is included here so that the many persons who wanted to purchase copies of the Ashley Miller record may understand the reasons behind the decision.—Ed.)

b b b
Mr. Dick Schrum
Seattle, Washington
Hi, Dick!

"BRAVO" for your editorial on p. 3 of the June issue of T.O.B.! I'm not as affluent as many in A.T.O.E.... but I'd gladly scrape up the \$10 annual National dues to promote A.T.O.E. Imagine a big T.O., well-miked, on national TV!!! Beautiful!

Paul Callahan
8 Fletcher Ave.
Lexington, Mass. 02173

— CLASSIFIED ADS —

FOR SALE: ALL WURLITZER!!! Chryso-glott, completely re-leathered, \$250; 25 note chime set, completely re-leathered, \$150; four 6-blade sets of shutters (measure 5' x 8' each), \$25 per set; large toy counter, includes bass drum in need of new heads (crash cymbal missing), \$150; one 6-note and one 7-note 8' off-set diapason chests, neither has magnets, \$20 each; 12-note 8' off-set flute chest with pipes, completely re-leathered, \$50; 24" x 30" reservoir, modified for use in main air line as wind stabilizer, \$25; seven 8' diapasons, CC-FF (15" pressure) with chest, \$30; 16' ophcleide, 12 notes with chest (some pipes badly dented but playable), \$100; assorted orchestral oboe, clarinet and tuba pipes, \$5 per pipe. Crating and shipping extra. Cannot guarantee that all magnets work. PHILIP STOCK, A.I.A., 1224 Farmington Avenue, West Hartford, Connecticut.

FOR SALE: White, 3-manual Wurlitzer Console with combination action. Phone: (206) ME 2-9235.

WANTED: Wurlitzer tremulants—send details to DEWEY CAGLE, 3291 Guido St., Oakland, Calif. 94602.

FOR SALE: Five Wicks direct electric relays. Immaculate condition. \$500, cash or trade. BOB NYE, 330 No. 9th Street, Reading, Pa. 19601. (Phone: 375-5649.)

FOR FUN—The "GREATEST ORGAN SHOW ON (or off) THE EARTH" takes a "Trek To The Stars" September 17th through 22nd. For brochure, write: H. O. F., Box 313, Berkeley, Calif. 94602.

FOR SALE: "Consoling the Console" in compatible stereo, with HARRY J. JENKINS at the console of the Los Angeles Elks 4/61 Robert-Morton. \$4.00 postpaid. H. J. JENKINS, Box 343, Pacoima, California 91331.

FOR SALE: Aeolian Ampico Chickering electric REPRODUCING Grand Piano, perfect playing condition, 5'5", \$1475. Reasonable offer may be considered. J. PICCARI, 363 Warren Boulevard, Broomall, Pennsylvania.

CONVENTION VOX POPS *(Continued from Page 19)*

Eagle-eyed "tape police" were most efficient. Organized to prevent illicit tape pickups during convention concerts, ATOE's "secret agents" were aided greatly by the "no recording" warnings which appeared in all convention literature. They report only one "arrest" during the entire convention, and if the guy who ran headlong out of the Wiltern when he was accosted will come back, he can pick up his \$9.95 tape recorder.

"Nuggets" columnist Lloyd Klos takes us to task for referring to the 1968 con-fab as the 13th annual national convention when there have been only 10 conventions. To avoid confusion we counted from the beginning of ATOE and we

probably should have called the 1968 bash "the 10th annual convention in the 13th year of ATOE." But that sounds so clumsy, Lloyd.

Another guy who was deeply honored by being nominated and seconded for the presidency of ATOE was Easterner Grant Whitcomb (Delaware Valley chapter). But Grant begged off for the same reason which stymied Stu Green; no wife to be secretary. We understand that at least one of these guys is taking steps toward improving his eligibility.

Organist Dave Barrett (who participated in a short-lived attempt to bring back silent movies with organ accompaniment to a commercial LA theatre in the mid-'50s) and "fuzz" Eric Reeve (the law in Minot, N. D.) got together to talk over old times when they lived closer together (Dave is playing the cocktail circuit in Northern California). No doubt, the topic was often Eric's recalcitrant Wurlitzer 2-5 home installation, which he works on when he isn't out rounding up hoodlums, depositing drunks in the "tank" and generally upholding law and order in Minot.

Dottie MacClain looked lovely, as always. She has been very active in ATOE work and other activities to help erase memories of the loss of Leonard. She has been instrumental in the reorganization of the Delaware Valley Chapter and hopes to find a home soon for the Sedgewick Moller, now in storage.

In the next issue, VOX POPS will return to its "Short Shots from Everywhere" policy.



**GET THE GUYS
TO VOCALIZE**
WITH NATIONAL'S DANDY
"SING-ALONG SONG SLIDES"!!
Send for free catalog of all-time hit songs
available in slide form for as low as 50c a tune!
Need a projector? Let us know... we'll save you
real dough!
NATIONAL SONG SLIDE SERVICE INC.
42 W. 48th St. New York, N.Y. 10036