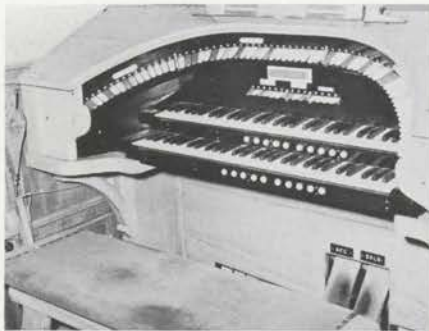




SHORT SHOTS FROM EVERYWHERE

Michael Candy, a Briton with a fine sense of humor, is building a home for his "organ in the cowshed" (as it was known when the property of the late E. A. J. Johnson in Cambridgeshire). It's a weekend and holiday project but progress is rapid, according to Michael, who enclosed a photo of the 2-8 console in its former "cowshed" location. But there's a "stinger" in the photo which our sense of the ridiculous can't pass up; note the small bellows hanging on the wall (left side). Doesn't that suggest some interesting questions concerning the instrument's air supply? Could it be that the British know something we don't about "winding" pipes? Michael, please drop the other shoe!



THERE'S A 'STINGER' in this 'candied' photo.

ATOE'er Amos Highlands was somewhat amazed when he sat down at the Baldwin plug-in. The response and control were fast and easy, respectively. It happened in Muncie (Indiana) after Mr. Highlands had read an item in these columns about Sylvan Ketterman's Hood Music Co. in Muncie having copies of Ben Hall's "The Best Remaining Seats" available. He drove over from Middletown (Ohio), where he has installed in his home a one-time tracker church organ of 13 ranks which has been electrified—to some extent. Highlands had to admit

the plug-in was easier to handle. Apparently the confrontation with the Baldwin increased the Highlands interest in theatre instruments because he purchased a recording of Bill McMains' "Vintage Theatre Organ" recording (played on the Whitney studio Morton, in Glendale, Calif.), a platter which teaches playing in the TO idiom. That church organ should sound somewhat different by now.

Best wishes to the New York Chapter's new local publication venture, *New York Theatre Organ*, a bi-monthly four-sheeter which it is hoped will help weld the 350 far-flung chapter members "from the wilds of eastern New Jersey to the tip of Long Island" into a more closely knit unit. Co-editors are Bon R. Smith and John Bittner. Welcome to the association, fellow slaves!

In Detroit, veteran organist Don Miller's favorite pastime (when he isn't making wonderful music) is playing the tape made during his stint on the 4-34 Senate-Orbits Wurlitzer for 1967 ATOE conventioners. He writes, ". . . playing the tape is just like being there. The atmosphere was charged that afternoon. Such an appreciative audience and so many "greats" out front! Each time I play it—sometimes there are tears, sometimes goose pimples. I keep saying "was that ME?" Yes, it was you, Don, and those of us fortunate enough to have been there will never forget the beauty of your music on that memorable afternoon.

Niagara Frontier's "Silent Newsreel" reports via Bob Gebhardt that work on the 3-15 Wurlitzer in the 4,000-seat New York Academy of Music Theatre is well along the road to completion. Sparked by a group of four dedicated New York Chapter ATOE's headed by Mel Robinson, restoration work started in February, 1966, and has continued quietly ever since. The style 260 will be a welcome addition to Gotham's growing list of working theatre organs, reports the NF sheet.

Speaking of Niagara Frontier, the chapter staged a concert by that master of the theatre console, John Muri, on July 31 at the Riviera Theatre in North Tonawanda. John's program during the first half was heavy with nostalgia—old movie music and a singalong. After intermission it was a tribute to Jesse Crawford, a silent movie comedy and tunes from Jerome Kern's little known show, *Very Good Eddie*. "Judging from the long round of applause, it's safe to say that 'oldies are goodies,'" reported reviewer Shirley Cole.



THE OLD MAESTRO: John Muri at the Riviera's 3-21 Wurlitzer. He knows how to please his audiences with top quality selections and compelling performances.

The *New York Times* in July carried a small piece from the Associated Press wires about the theatre organ installation of Dr. Roland Matson, ATOE member of Spring Valley, Minnesota. "Besides a theatre pipe organ, the hayloft of Dr. Matson's barn houses a piano, church pews and stained-glass windows rescued from a wrecked church. More than 1,600 hours of work went into converting the barn and organ into an effective place for Dr. Matson to escape from his office and hospital work. The studio includes special sound insulation to provide for comfortable, year-around practice sessions.

"The organ's special effects—Hawaiian surf, automobile horn, steamboat whistle and cymbals—have replaced the traditional barnyard sounds of the farm."

Dolton McAlpin, whose recording, Thoroughly Modern Morton, is such a pleasant excursion through a skillfully used six ranks of exquisite pipework, is cutting a second disc on the Baton Rouge Paramount's restored Morton (thanks, Don May) before moving on to Oxford, Mississippi, to attend law school at the U. of M. Memphis isn't so far away and there's a 3-14 Wurlitzer there that McAlpin hopes to practice on. While attending the 1968 convention, the student-organist became a solid Dunstedter fan, describing Eddie's concert as one of the big "highlights of the convention."

Before entering the teaching profession, Bill Blanchard was both theatre organist and theatre projectionist. He's now associate professor of music and organist at Claremont College in Claremont, California. Now that he's "William G. Blanchard, professor," does he forget his former vocations? Not at all. One of the most-anticipated events of the Claremont summer session is Bill's program, "Fun Night at the Silent Movies," which brings old flickers and organ

scores to a new generation. It's been going on for 15 years. In 1967 he was invited to the third annual Chicago International Film Festival to create organ scores for the old movies shown there, an event which had him rubbing shoulders with such memorable names as one-time glamour star Ruby Keeler, dance director Busby Berkeley and director George Cukor of *My Fair Lady* fame.

To paraphrase an old song title, "The draft board is breaking up that old gang of mine," but it can't seem very humorous to members of the Chicago "Theatre Organ Presentations" group, a small band of young men with a number of interesting musical events to their credit and some great plans (including restoration of an organ). With Pat Chambers in the Air Force for four years and Mark Noller in the Navy for four years, Richard Sklenar, last of the big three, left for Fort Leonard Wood on August 27 and an Army career of at least two years. Before leaving, Dick padlocked "our beloved little Kimball" until restoration can continue "in a few years."

Before leaving, Dick Sklenar advised us to "watch out for lots of action under CATOE (chapter) chairman Bill Benedict — Tony Tablman at the Indiana, Carter (?) at the Pickwick, Hal Pearl at the Montclare — all public concerts — and Hal Pearl back at the Aragon ballroom 3-10 Wurlt."

From Syracuse, N. Y., C. T. Anderson reports that the 3-11 Wurlitzer installed by the Syracuse Theatre Organ Society in the Empire State Theatre and Musical Instrument Museum (whew!) at the nearby State Fair site, is now in top-notch shape, a complete re-leathering of the combination action closing a restoration job which has been going on for several years. It was in almost constant use during the 1968 fair, with Carleton James at the console to accompany silent movies and fashion shows, and to play concerts. It was still in top shape when Allen Mills played a concert for the Syracusans on September 28th.

The Cinema Organ Society Newsletter reveals that British pipe fans didn't take kindly to the removal of the Compton organ from its home in the Odeon Cheltenham theatre for shipment to Melbourne, Australia, for installation in a second "Dendy" theatre. Describing the action as "poaching on our territory," the complaint was that it was a working organ removed from an operating theatre that was not in any way threatened. Editor Sutherland closes with the hope "that little Union Jacks were stuck all over the console when it was shipped."

The New York Chapter is still getting enthusiastic comments about a concert it staged at the Rahway Theatre last March, an organ show which starred Lowell Ayars, writes Eric Zeliff from New Jersey. And youthful Eric adds his praise to the Ayars musical acumen. It has been our experience that when an organist can "get through" to the young, he has it made. And Lowell does it with solid theatre organ music, not "rock."

Mr. Zeliff is no slouch at the ivories, either. During the recent Art Mosca concert at the Brook Theatre, Boundbrook, N. J., Eric was engrossed in the silent movie when he was approached by New York Chapter Chairman Al Rossiter, who asked Eric if he'd like to "spell" Mosca at intermission time. Although such a turn of events was far from his thoughts, the youth accepted the challenge and did a creditable 15-minute stint during the popcorn break. The point is the degree of confidence the chairman had in the lad to ask him to perform "cold."

Another youthful organist in the East broke a leg early this year and spent the time his "gamba" was in a cast writing music. Eddie Zimmerman, who is remembered as the winner of the Hammond X-66 for his prize-winning name for the model, had to drop out of Juilliard (where he has a scholarship) while the bone knit, nor could he play his prize Hammond. A trip to Europe in the summer helped while away time until next semester, but Eddie returned to learn that the Hammond Company still hasn't released the prize-winning name for the now superseded model X-66.

When Ben Hall mentioned the Coconut Grove Wurlitzer during the 1968 ATOE convention banquet, it set the wheels whirring in Dewey Cagle's memory. He informs us that it was originally in the Palace Theatre, Dallas, Texas, and was replaced by the present larger Wurlitzer. From there it went to the Coconut Grove and remained for many years. In the '30s it went to the studios of radio station WHEC in Rochester, N.Y. Then it was purchased by Dick Hull of Denver who installed it in a Colorado church (not to be confused with the style 240, also from Rochester, which Dick installed in the Three Coins restaurant at Louisville, near Denver). Three years ago it was purchased by Andy Crow (Wash.) and sold last year to Dennis Hedberg (Portland)—for parts. Texas, Cali-

fornia, New York, Colorado, Washington, Oregon; quite a trip to oblivion!

When Henry Pope went to New York earlier this year to complete work started three years ago on the Radio City Music Hall 4-58 Wurlitzer, he apparently failed to consult his ulcer—which had been in a quiescent state for some time. He'd been in Gotham only a short time when the ulcer started expressing its displeasure with the Eastern climate. In fact it acted up so badly that Henry had to be hospitalized. Alone and ill in the big town, Henry sent out an "SOS" to his friend (and colleague on the RSMH project), Dick Simonton. Dick dropped what he was doing and hurried across half a continent to look after Henry, and his first sight of the veteran organ builder in his hospital room was encouraging. Henry, looking a little peaked, was sitting up in bed, working on one of the 32-foot Bombarde boots which had been smuggled into the hospital from the RCMH.

"Organ playing keeps you young and on your toes," stated veteran silent film organist Luella Wickham to an interviewer from a Syracuse, N.Y., newspaper recently. The reporter had been lured into the showroom of the Goss Piano and Organ Shop by the sound of organ music and found Luella hard at work demonstrating a Baldwin plug-in, the brand she sells. "I've been playing organs for 68 years," admitted Luella to the surprised newsman, who blurted out, "But you don't look 68 years old—when did you start?" Luella explained that she developed a serious interest in music when she was about 4½ years old and the quest has continued ever since. There are five members from a senior citizens' home among her students who agree that playing organ is "much more fun than playing bridge."

Robert G. Miner, Publishing Director of the American Guild of Organists' fledgling publication, *Music*, had good news; the Royal Canadian College of Organists (RCCO) had adopted AGO's *Music* as their official magazine. This move was instrumental in jacking the new mag's circulation up to 18,000 (the former advertising rate was based on 15,000).

Chester E. Klee, "Mr. Music of Olean" (N. Y.) celebrated 25 years as organist and choirmaster of St. Mary of the Angels Church in Olean. Educated at Rochester's Eastman School of Music, both as theatre and church organist, Mr. Klee "moonlighted" at several Rochester
(Continued on Next Page)

VOX POPS, contd.

movie houses—Eastman, Madison, Monroe, Picadilly and Regent—to help cover his music school expenses. He has lived in Olean since 1934, taught piano and theory, been president of the Olean Civic Music Assn., and still teaches. Practically every facet of Olean's musical scene has felt the guiding hand of Chet Klee.

Dick Simonton and E. J. Quinby were seen on a half-hour TV program relative to a voyage of the last remaining Mississippi stern-wheeler, the Delta Queen, in August. A part of the Jack Douglas series of USA travelogues, the program traced a typical voyage of the ship from its home port of Cincinnati to New Orleans, complete with calliope, mint juleps, electric organ, etc.

Oldtime theatre patrons in Chicago and New York may recall organist Raymond Lopatka. He is now enjoying a successful law practice on South La Salle Street in the windy city, and attending theatre organ concerts of the two Chicago area organizations.

George Lufkin from Shelton, Washington, sends the news that Sterling Theatres recently announced that the Granada Organ Loft in Seattle would become a second-run theatre. The theatre will be used most of the time for recent second-run films, but Sterling has promised the non-profit Granada Organ Loft organization several weekends a year to show silent films and present organ recitals. In addition, short organ recitals will be included in programs of recent films. Lou DuMoulin, organist, says that the silents will appear almost monthly, limiting the kinds of silents to be shown to the more popular classics such as "The Gold Rush," "Phantom of the Opera" and "The Thief of Bagdad."

Utterly Useless Information Dept.:

During the summer of 1968, organists Vic Hammett and George Wright had something besides music in common, rather, lack of something—big toenails. While George was hobbling about his studio wearing a left shoe from which the top had been cut away, Vic was practicing for his concert at the LA Wiltern Theatre with a fully shod but tender right foot. Both nails had been lost as the result of injuries. By the time this reaches print, nature should have had plenty of time to make amends.

SAN DIEGO (Continued from P. 6)

Holes in the plaster walls have been filled and all surfaces painted. The refinished chests are complemented by refinished floor frame and walkways. It is beautiful in appearance throughout, in addition to being technically good.

Paul Cawthorne gives the reason for the thoroughness: "Our desire was to refurbish it completely so it would require a minimum of maintenance in the future."

Wayne Guthrie adds: "We wanted to make certain that fine artists will find it worthy of their musicianship."

The Fox organ specification is indeed a strange one for a theatre organ. Most of it was originally installed in the San Diego Balboa Theatre in 1923 where the instrument supplied the scores for numerous silent movies. It was moved to the brand new Fox for that theatre's grand opening in 1929, during which it underwent considerable revision. For a theatre organ it has a dearth of unification, so little, in fact, that all 31 ranks are served by a single row of stopkeys around the horseshoe, with a few located on the backboard above the Echo (top) manual. The arrangement of manuals is unique. The bottom manual is identified as the "Orchestra" and has only six 8' speaking voices, plus couplers. It's more of a solo manual. The next manual up is the "Great" with mainly accompaniment voices and some unification. The third manual, the "Swell," has the most theatrical unification. The top manual controls a two-chamber Echo organ in the back of the house. Then there is one chamber called an "Ancillary" which has no manual at all, although it has a separate swell pedal to control its volume. It's a five-rank string section and it can be switched to three of the four manuals. The Pedal division has six 16' voices, a 32' Diapason "resultant," but only four 8' stops.

Although the layout and unification leave something to be desired, the actual ranks are most theatrical in their nomenclature, as a look at the accompanying stop list will prove. The pipework is installed in five chambers, two on the left side of the theatre, one on the right side, and in two Echo organ chambers.

Most of the group agree that the high point of the restoration work was hearing the organ speak for the first time in many years. Next to that comes the whirlwind visit of Dave Schutt, a pipe aficionado of many years and one with oodles of know-how. As work progressed it became apparent that the pipes would soon have to be tuned. Up in San Jose (near San Francisco), Dave Schutt got wind of the situation, loaded 200 pounds of organ tuning

gear onto a commercial plane and landed at San Diego. The crew was overjoyed to meet Dave but he had no time for amenities.

Dave headed straight for the theatre, set up his equipment and with the help of Pinky Pinkerton, proceeded to tune every undamaged pipe in the organ between Friday night at 12:30 and Sunday noon (with a hiatus during show time Saturday). Then he played a few tunes, packed his gear, said "Thanks—it was fun. When I can, I'll come back and tune 'er up again," and took off for the airport and San Jose several hundred miles to the North.

Archie Ellsworth, one of the Con-vair men, expressed the gratitude of the group with, "One doesn't forget wonderful men like Dave Schutt."

Although plans haven't yet been evolved for the eventual use of the organ in the theatre, already some additions are in the wind. W. L. Perkins of the Finders Music store says: "Mr. Gildred seems enchanted with the idea of a Brass Trumpet, so we are on the lookout for one. This addition, plus some others we have in mind, should result in a versatile theatre instrument worthy of great artists."

The "other" additions planned consist, so far, of a Chrysoglott Harp (the organ has only a wooden harp) and a second Xylophone for the Main Chamber, plus some additional intermanual couplers.

Bob Lewis, who makes his bread as an electronics engineer, gives much credit to the concrete building and the smog-free San Diego atmosphere for the state of preservation of the instrument. He says, "We never found one air leak or even an 'open' or 'shorted' electrical circuit once the console was repaired and reconnected. Despite some missing and damaged pipework, it's encouraging to find so much on an instrument in excellent condition after so many dormant years." This also says much for the original Robert Morton quality and craftsmanship.

As for the missing pipes, they are mostly a few here and there, stolen over the years as souvenirs. One rank of strings looks as though someone, perhaps one of the air conditioner installers, had fallen bodily into the pipes. Some can be salvaged, others must be replaced, and the group has a weather eye out for broken sets containing the missing pipes. The pipework must be complete before big events can be scheduled. But with the lion's share of the project behind them and a friendly, enthusiastic owner egging the group on, there's no doubt that the mighty San Diego Fox organ will once again sing out in all its former glory. —Bert Brouillon