



SHORT SHOTS FROM EVERYWHERE

New Yorker Dick Loderhose, owner of both Jesse Crawford's Paramount studio 4-21 Wurlitzer and the NY Roxy 5-deck Kimball, hasn't been prominent in the organ hobby area of late. A recent New York to Los Angeles phone call explained why; Dick reports that for the past three years he has been redoing his entire Jamaica Estates installation. For most of that time the organ has been silent. The chambers now boast 42 ranks of pipes and the console stop rails have been reworked to accommodate the additional stop keys at the expected places on the horse shoe (instead of on the front board). Dick played a chorus of "The Lady Is a Tramp" over the phone and even within "Ma Bell's" narrow transcontinental frequency range, it sounded great. Now he's looking forward to a resumption of recording, as soon as some topflight artists can be signed.

The new job in Fall River Massachusetts, looked good but it was with considerable reluctance that Walt Hanlon (one of the group which revitalized the El Paso Plaza 3-15 Wurlitzer) moved his family across the land, East from El Paso, Texas. He left many memories—among them Jim Connor and John R. Thomas, two who gave large chunks of their final years on Earth to bringing theatre organ back to the Texas border town. But there was treasure at Walt's destination. He attended a United Fund show in a Fall River theatre and lo, between the acts, the sound of a theatre organ was heard and a console came up out of the pit (played by a local school teacher, it was determined later). The organ (a 3-12 Marr & Colton) was obviously in need of help so Walt made an offer to management and found "the powers" downright cooperative. "At that

moment," writes Walt, "the Theatre Organ Club of Fall River was formed!" A full rehabilitation program is planned and we can expect periodic reports.

After the big opening of the Roberson Culture Center in Binghamton, NY, silent films were scheduled with Link organ accompaniment—one program a month for the remainder of the year, including such classics as "Birth of a Nation," "Intolerance" and "Way Down East." Organ accompanist scheduled was Paul Loomis. Forty years ago, Paul was one of the finest theatre organists in the Triple Cities area, his fame extending as far north as Utica and Rome. According to ATOE member, Chet Rataski, Mr. Loomis retains his touch.

Minneapolis with long memories who recall Eddie Dunstedter's "salad days" in the twin cities may also remember another name which appeared concurrently on theatre marquees—Bob ("Bobo") Ryan. Eddie was Bob's idol when the latter played at the St. Paul Orpheum and Palace. Those who remember Bob will be glad to learn that he's well and living in Calistoga, Calif., where he operates a swank motel and restaurant. The latter, no surprise, is equipped with a Conn theatre model plug-in which Bob sometimes plays for diners.

It's nice to have friends, including the kind who perform unexpected kindnesses. In Lancaster, New York, Joe and Laura Thomas were tickled when they received a priceless gift in the mail, a pair of Wurlitzer nameplates to replace those missing from their home installation console. The plates were a gift from Dave Voydanoff who, during a visit, noticed the original plates were missing. Some time before that, Bill Hatzenbuehler had presented the Thomases with a unique 25th wedding anniversary gift, an addition to the little Wurli's toy counter in the form of a raspy "Bronx cheer" which Bill installed in time for use during the anniversary party. Hm!...

Dolton McAlpin, the young law student who turned out such a creditable Concert Recording album (Thoroughly Modern Morton," played on the Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Paramount 6-ranker), now admits that he "turned on" members of the New Orleans Hammond Organ Society, who motorcaded to Baton Rouge at the behest of the Paramount's manager, Tom Mitchell, to hear the sound of real pipes on a Sunday morning. A witness stated that Dolton had the "joint jumpin'" during his one and one-half hour concert, much to the sur-

prise and amazement of an audience which half expected to hear hymns on Sunday morning pipes. Dolton admits he was a little shook, too: "I received my 'baptism of fire' in front of that audience—but it was lots of fun." Afterwards some club members admitted that Hammondry would never again be the same after hearing pop pipes.

The same Morton got a workout by none other than Don Baker while he was in Baton Rouge for a Concert. A little group of fans listened intently and one was heard to exclaim, "Who would ever have thought that, of all people, the great Don Baker would one day play at our Paramount!" Why not? Don played for 13 years at another Paramount, and even the gap between 36 and 6 ranks made little difference to Don, who expressed admiration for the fine tone and good condition of the Morton.

Theatre Organ Enthusiasts visiting the New York area should make the Radio City Music Hall a must in their itinerary, if the words of ex-RCMH organist Doc Bebko are any criterion. Visiting this great stronghold of the theatre organ recently, Eddie reported: "I sat in the orchestra in mid-house and the organ was absolutely at its finest. Henry Pope's restoration work was superbly evident; not only is the organ in perfect tune, but the highs, harmonics and overtones were evident where previously they were either absent or muffled. And the PEDALS—oh, those gorgeous subtones are absolutely awe-inspiring! Jack Ward's playing was really excellent, no doubt enhanced by the ease of playing a well-maintained instrument. It made me wish I could be at that console again." His friend, Paul Lavalle, the Music Hall conductor, got a great ovation, reports Doc. "He is an electrifying personality."

After 35 years, the former 3-manual Kobl organ which was in Rochester, the organ was apparently installed in a Massachusetts church where it has remained until a Mr. Sudre of Miami, Florida, purchased it recently. Mr. Sudre already has a 12-rank, 2-chamber Robert Morton in his home, and will install the Kobl, making it into a 4-manual organ in the process.

The organ was used by several players in its heyday. Among them were J. Gordon Baldwin, George Bacon, Westfield S. Brown, Gladys Clark, Margaret Culp, Rose Harloff, Chester E. Klee and Lou Perricola. Theatre is still open, adapted for Cinerama and other wide-screen productions.

The Theatre Organ Society of Australia's Honorable Secretary, John Clancy, takes us to task for stating that Sydney has 18 theatre organs in theatres (December 1967 TO-B). While that statement would have been correct 40 years ago, at present, John advises, Sydney has only two left, both Wurlitzers, a 4-21 in the State Theatre and a 3-15 in the Capitol. He adds that Melbourne theatres have three Wurlitzers, a 4-19 in the Regent, a 3-15 in the Dendy and a 2-12 in the Plaza. In addition, there's a 2-12 Wurlitzer in the Metro Theatre in Perth and a Christie in the Victory Theatre at Kogarah. So much for theatres, but it doesn't end there. There are Wurlitzers in the Moorabin Town Hall (4-21), the Marrickville Town Hall (2-10), St. Peters College at Adelaide (3-15), a 2-10 awaiting installation in the Willoughby Civic Centre, not to mention John Clancy's residence (2-15). Many of these organs have been the objects of TOSA's affection and preservation efforts. Are we forgiven now, John?

Before we leave Australia, it would be proper to note that Vic Hammett there continued his string of concert successes across the face of the planet, starting in his native England, through the USA and ending at Melbourne's Dendy theatre. In addition to his six weeks of nightly "down under" spotlight concerts he also found time to cut three LP recordings, two on the Dendy 3-15 Wurlitzer and one on the Clancy 2-15 home installation. Vic got around to the Town Hall installations, too. He told a newspaper interviewer, "... the theatre organ is booming back into fashion again."

In Youngstown, Ohio, it was the familiar story. This time it was the 38-year-old Warner Theatre which would be sacrificed to the wrecking ball. Californian Elbert Dawson, living temporarily in Warren, Ohio, panicked when he recalled that the now dark theatre originally had an organ and he wondered whether it, too, would be pulverized by the wrecking ball. A fast exchange of letters assured Mr. Dawson that the organ had already been sold and removed before the furnishings were auctioned in late September, although we couldn't name the rescuers.

In the same somber mood, Eric Zelif reports that the Fabian Theatre in Hoboken also kept a date with the steel ball. The 2,000-seat Fabian was where Leroy Lewis obtained the Wurlitzer which he and Ted Cambell installed in

the Surf City Hotel some years ago. The 3-14 is still a strong attraction.

Leroy Lewis? After the big blast of national publicity he experienced when he masterminded the installation of the former Atlantic City Warner's theatre 3-27 Wurlitzer in the Panama Hilton's "Bombarde" Room, plus his playing stint and recording session there, we lost track of him. But not for long. One of the most inventive and imaginative musicians in the entertainment business, Leroy has been busy designing "pipes plus electronics" combinations. Lately he's been playing club dates in the Pittsburgh, Pa., area and those who heard his Hammond X66 plus pipes (Vox and Tibia), describe it as a tonal marvel.

A note all the way from Middlesex, England, from Don Knights, British recording organist for the Concert Recording label, says he tried to get in touch with the BOMBARDE during his recent Los Angeles visit, but learned that the entire staff (two) had gone North to the Ninth Annual Home Organ Festival. That's the second time we missed him; last time (two years ago) he was right on the grounds of the Festival and we let him get away. Here's hoping next time he's around that Don and the editor will have a chance to go over that book of Viennese tunes Don carries with him; we have a mutual interest in Viennese music. Of his trip across the USA, Don states that it was "the best vacation Belle and I have ever had. We enjoyed every minute we were there."

In Detroit to record an RCA album for Readers Digest release, Billy Nalle noted that westcoaster Tom Hazleton was set for a concert that mid-October weekend for the Detroit Theatre Organ Club. Billy decided to stick around for the Senate Theatre bash and admits he's glad he did. "... I found both the man and his playing delightful... His best rhythm number was "San Jose" and his best ballad was one whose title I can't recall except it had the word 'heart' in it. Afterward, we had a grand visit and I enjoyed getting to know him. I'm very glad I stayed for his concert." If Tom Hazleton so completely captivated the seasoned pro with his style and music, what must he have done to the rank and file DTOCers when he fondled that 4-34 Wurlit?

Billy Nalle becomes ecstatic when he talks about the fine cooperation he had from the DTOCers while recording: "... You just can't imagine how interested and hospitable

and helpful to us all were those DTOC folks. What a wonderful spirit they have!" The DTOCers must have "taken" to Billy in return. At least they signed him for a return concert at the Senate on January 18th.

Our now-and-then overseas correspondent, Michael Candy, reports from Germany that he managed to get in to inspect and play the 4-16 Wurlitzer in the Siemens mansion in Berlin. He reports that it is still there, intact, unused and apparently unmaintained since U.S. GI Marvin Merchant returned to the USA sometime after 1964. Merchant did a lot of work on the neglected giant while he was stationed in Berlin and, says Mr. Candy, the organ needs another interested GI with organ-fixing skills; it's loaded with ciphers. This 4-16 may be one of the last two Wurlitzers left on the European mainland, the other being a 2-7 in the Paris Paramount. Michael said the 4-16 console still bears a pair of "ATOE" automobile-type windshield transfers, relics of its Merchantising days.

Recently we noted that Reginald Foort, who believes "15 years in the same place is enough," was about to leave Chicago. Since then we received a very formal card asking us to "please note change of address." Betty and Reginald Foort are now residents of Pompano Beach, Florida.

In Minot, North Dakota, Eric Reeve, a very meticulous researcher in matters theatre organ, is still trying to unravel the radio studio organs of Chicago. The list of Barton installations we've been running has proved helpful. Eric estimates, for example, that station WBBM must have had three organs over the years. In later years the station is said to have had a 3-7 Wurlitzer. Before that, it had a 2-7 Barton and after that a 3-10 Barton, and Eric wonders which one Milton Charles played on the memorable "Three Consoles" program. WLS studios were equipped with a 3-manual Barton which is probably the one Ralph Waldo Emerson recorded for the Silvertone label. The NBC organ situation was a greater puzzler, but Eric thinks he has it unraveled. First there was Al Carney's (now Johnny Seng's) studio organ (a custom 4-15), then the Wurlitzer in the WENR Opera House studio, and later the 3-13 Wurlitzer in the WMAQ Merchandise Mart studio, on which Irma Glen used to play the "Quiz Kids" radio theme. "Chicago organ lore is kinda mixed up," states Eric.

The "Quiz Kids?" Wonder if anyone recalls the title of their radio theme? We

are certain Dave Junchen remembers that it was "School Days"—because he was one of radio's Quiz Kids. Which leads us into a brief commercial for Dave. After years of helping others with their organ projects, Dave has put out his own shingle and now runs the Junchen Pipe Organ Service, 401 First St., Sherrard, Illinois. The reason we include his address is because we have just received a list of pipe organ goodies which Dave has for sale—Pipework galore—Wurlitzer, Barton, Kimball, Mar & Colton, Robert Morton. Also parts for all those brands—chests, percussions, blowers, swell shutters, reservoirs, consoles, stop keys, pedalboards, toy counter effects and actions—the works (even a rare 4-poster Barton console lift with turntable!) Send for his list if any of these items are needed.

A few Vox Pops back, we mentioned the Wurlitzer in the Surf City hotel. It did well by members of the New York Chapter during a September meeting held there. Among those players who were especially pleased were Lowell Ayars, Violet Egger and Esther Higgins, reports Eric Zeltiff.

Remember that full-page cigarette ad which showed the interior of an attractive theatre pictured from the balcony? A cleaning lady, broom in hand (in the foreground) was presumably asking "If we rented a hall to tell the Lark charcoal filter story, would you come?" Reader Lew Williams advises that it was the interior of the Brooklyn Paradise Theatre. In reply to the question posed, unless there was an organ involved, the answer is probably "no." Lew doesn't smoke.

Ben Levy, the Detroit who wrote our up-coming series about the care and repair of Wurlitzer magnets, is at his most colorful when reviewing a concert. He aimed this remonstrance at absent Detroit Theatre Organ Clubbers in the "DTC News" following last summer's Ann Leaf concert at the 4-34 Wurli in the Senate theatre: "Any club member who missed the Ann Leaf program and who didn't have a legitimate excuse, such as a broken leg or having to take his mother-in-law to the airport, is hereby authorized to bang his head against the wall. Better yet, walk into a neighbor's backyard and get his dog to bite you!" Oh, the power that Ann Leaf has over men, especially writers!

Echoes of that opening pop concert on the Link organ in the Roberson Cultural Center continue to filter in. It at-

tracted fans from far and wide. Martin Thal and Rick Shindell came from Toledo, Jess Littlefield from Rochester, Laura Thomas from Buffalo, and even the Syracuse University organ whiz, Will Headley. They came to marvel at the tasteful decor of the little auditorium, the solid glass walls from ceiling to floor, the handsome console which rises out of the floor as smooth as silk, and the young man who rode it up, Billy Nalle, who later declared in broad "suthin" accents, "... they had to add 150 extra seats which cut the reverb but sure didn't cut the enthusiasm. That audience was a sizzler."

Lost somewhere in the shuffle of international theatre organ matters was a shocking tale of piracy on the low seas—perpetrated by ATOErs! It involved a "shanghaiing" in reverse, carried out by a band of ATOE-led hearties. The plot evolved when a ship carrying a famed Australian organist, Noreen Hennessy, hove to and dropped anchor in Port Everglades (Florida) waters. Little did the ship's officers know there was a band of organ-thirsty natives with a dastardly scheme hiding among the palms ashore. In the dead of night the "natives" (led by ATOE's South Florida Chapsec, George Gearhart) boarded the ship and "kidnapped" Miss Hennessy. They took her ashore, hustled her 30 miles to Miami and sat her down at ATOEer Calvin Jureit's 3-11 Wurlikimball. Miss Hennessy was at first surprised and overwhelmed by the confrontation but offered no resistance. With the help of Chapter Chairman John Steele, who stood by to assist Miss Hennessy with registration on an organ strange to her, she played for the assembled multitude. Plot ringleader Gearhart later wrote in the "down under TOSA "Diaphone" that the "shanghaiing" guest played some "lovely compositions . . . perfectly. She endeared herself to all." After soothing some 80 Floridian conspirators, the lady was whisked back to her ship, no worse for her encounter with the "natives." But before leaving she remembered her history and sold the natives a slew of her records. Fair enough!

In a couple of years, Concert Recording, through its Organ of the Month Club, has become the major producer of organ recordings and tapes. To those who wonder what makes such an enterprise perk, the power behind the platter is a soft-spoken young man named Bill Johnson. As though the recording, production, packaging and mailing of thousands of organ discs each month wasn't enough to keep him busy,

electronics engineer Bill Johnson also designs, builds and markets logic control systems. And girls, he's handsome and single! Why still single? "The electronics work plus the record business keep me a bachelor," admits Bill, a little wistfully. A profile on Bill Johnson and his burgeoning Concert Recording Co. is coming in a future issue of TOB.

"To coin a saying, the report of my passing has been greatly exaggerated," cried BOMBARDE editor Stu Green when questioned about a rumor that he was quitting the staff of THEATRE ORGAN BOMBARDE. After years of sitting at his typewriter, sometimes to 11:00 p.m. or later on weeknights, while writing editing or answering reams of correspondence, Stu decided that his social life was in a somewhat soggy condition. What added fuel to the conflagration was the fact that Stu has acquired a personal interest in one of the magazine's associate editors—one who is a girl, we hasten to add. With little spare time in which to press his suit "it got kinda wrinkled," adds Stu. So he hollered for help and Pres. Al Mason is providing it with two welcome additions to the TOB staff, both excellent and experienced writers. Al will release the names. So what it amounts to is that the work of producing the magazine has been spread out a little to accommodate a middle-aged Romeo. George Thompson remains editor-in-chief, as always.

—Hal Steiner

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