



Engaged in news-gathering is Theatre Organ Associate Editor, Lloyd Klos (ctr), conversing with radioman John Carey (2nd from rt.), who runs a theatre organ program in Kingston, Ontario. — (Karl Leutner Photo)

Grand Hall is 60 feet high, the chambers are situated, one above the other at one end, and the entire organ is on 18 inches of wind. The crew admits that there will be a period of regulating; the piano has to be hooked up and the English horn can be made more strident. But these problems are minimal compared to the challenge of installation.

What impressed this writer was the complete spirit of harmony and co-operation exhibited by the men of the organ crew. Working right up to concert time, there was no evidence of salty language, bickering or in-fighting which can cause friction. A huge wreath of laurel to each and every person connected with this remarkable project!

And thanks are due to all concerned for the courtesies extended the writer during our stay in the Queen City.

What sort of day was February 12, 1974? A day like all days, filled with events which altered and illuminated the renaissance of the theatre organ. And we . . . were there! □

Horace Lapp and Kathleen Stokes, who played the organ in its previous locations, pose at the console following the concert. — (Karl Leutner Photo)



## VOX POPS



Conducted by Stu Green

Readers are encouraged to submit interesting sidelights on the organ hobby (exclusive of chapter news items) material 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 an 8 cent postcard to get it to VOX POPS Editor, Box 3564, Granada Hills, California 91344. If the contributor can afford a 10 cent stamp, why not include a black and white photo which need not be returned.



CHANDELIERS and SHALLOTS. The chamber was a dining room before the pipe invasion.

ATOSer Judd Walton, who keeps track of Wurlitzers, will be interested to learn that Publix No. 1, Opus 1148, originally in the State Theatre, Detroit, is destined for an eventual home in Dallas, Texas. Mark Muntzel, Jr. reveals that the senior Muntzel has purchased the instrument from Roy Davis of McMinnville, Tennessee, and will move it shortly — but not into the Muntzel residence in Dallas because a 3/9 Hillgreen-Lane is already ensconced there. Mark Jr. sends along a

photo of the H-G chamber which shows a chandelier above the rows of pipes. Mark explains that the chamber used to be the family dining room.



There may be a widespread public reaction arising about the destruction of '20s theatres which are no longer profitable as film houses. The Pittsburgh symphony orchestra is now heard in an ex-movie palace and a film theatre in St. Louis has been converted into an elegant concert hall. The Ohio Theatre in Columbus is now a performing arts center. Next may be the 2400-seat Majestic in Dallas, Texas. The theatre was closed recently for lack of movie attendance. Now the entire building, valued at \$2,000,000, has been offered free to the City of Dallas by the Hoblitzelle Foundation, trustees of the 1921 theatre's builder, Karl Hoblitzelle, for use as a performing arts center. The city council is dragging its heels because it would require 1½ million to restore the Majestic to its original opulence — a condition of the transfer. Chances are good because a study revealed that a proposed performing arts center would cost 20 or 30 million, according to the Dallas Times-Herald.



And plans are afoot to convert Omaha's 2975-seat Orpheum Theatre into a performing arts center. Mayor Zorinsky has sought a \$250,000 grant from the Kresge Foundation which has made previous grants to the arts. The Orpheum has been closed for 2½ years, although a couple of organ concerts were held during this period, using the 3/12 Wurlitzer.



Don't believe all those media reports about the closing of the Harold Lloyd estate in Beverly Hills, Calif., a project in which ATOS has a stake. Estate trustee and ATOSer Dick Simonton assures us that the closing is temporary and that the estate definitely will open again to the public. Several factors were involved in the decision for a temporary closing at this time: (1) the energy crisis which cut into tourist business, (2) Sanitation Department demands for immediate updating of the plumbing and (3) the popularity of the estate as a setting for TV and movie filming.

"The estate can take in up to



\$1500 daily during the slack season as a film location, but filming is a little clumsy with tourists coming and going. With commitments to Universal, Warners and Paramount, we thought that closing down tourism would be a wise move — especially until we get the plumbing fixed,” explains Dick.

Nor is “Little Mother” being neglected. Ben Hall’s 2/5 Wurlitzer has been moved to the warehouse of Dick Simonton’s Hollywood factory to put it in a central location so volunteers can afford the motor fuel to be able to work on it. The console has been shipped to Seattle, to Bill Bunch (he built the new console for the Wichita installation of the N. Y. Paramount 4/36 Wurlitzer) for a refurbishing which will include all new pneumatics and allow for more unification and additions (extra stopkeys). Back in the warehouse, a swell box will be built and a couple of ranks added, ones Dick has donated. It will emerge as a 7-ranker, equivalent to a Style E.

“Should be set up in the warehouse ready to play by summer. Perhaps we can have a chapter meeting there,” says Dick Simonton.



Harold Lloyd. Worries, yes, but with a silver lining.

“Cass” Parmentier on January 20 tackled a difficult assignment and came out the winner. He reopened the four-manual Moller theatre organ in the Philadelphia Convention Hall (another Moller in the same hall is a classical instrument). Delaware Valley Chapter members instigated and pursued the renewal project last year. The distinguished and able Parmentier was given the bid to do the honors and managed, despite organ chambers being fully six stories above the console and some things still not working. The occasion was a private meeting of the chapter, but attendance was over 300. Back in New York later, Dr. and Mrs. Parmentier gave a dinner party while in their “Philly Festival” mood. Among those they invited were two of their favorite organists, Rollin Smith from the classical field (Frick Museum) and Billy Nalle from the popular field. Mrs. Parmentier (“Topsy” to you) cooked a scrumptious Italian dinner, the wine flowed and it was a very well-tremulated evening!

Organist Karl Cole, now talent scout for the Empire State Theatre and Musical Instrument Museum (meaning the Syracuse, N. Y. T. O. group), is planning a blockbuster June concert. He has invited four Syracuse console giants of the silent film era to participate in a concert featuring the group’s 3/11 Wurlitzer — Carleton James (who played it for years in Keith’s theatre), Peg Kimball, Luella Wickham and Syracuse’s “sing-along



Even a THEATRE ORGAN editor (Emeritus, that is) can learn to play the organ.

maestro,” Paul H. Forster. Success depends on whether Kimball and Forster will consent to trek north from their Florida homes.

Incidentally, teacher Cole, who works with retarded children, informs us that even those with I.Q.’s as low as 75 can learn to play the organ well. So, we’ll keep practicing.

Walter Draughon in Fort Myers, Florida continues work on his 3-manual, 15-rank (eventually) Wurlitzer in his organ studio on the grounds of his home. Presently, lots of new wiring for the setter board and new pistons are



ONE OF ESTMIM’S ANTIQUES. Karl Cole sounds forth on one of the Syracuse museum’s harmoniums.



keeping the premises mighty busy. This is the first Wurlitzer ever to be located in this way-down-south city.

Early in February Lee Erwin played a farewell concert for members of the New York Chapter, ATOS, and friends at Loew's Kings Theatre in Brooklyn. The next day the New York Times devoted nearly half a page to an account of the 4/23 "Wonder Morton" in the theatre (with a large picture). This is the organ which the Loew's chain has given to New York University which will install it in coming months in its famous property, New York's Town Hall. Then, once again there will be a first class theatre organ situation on Times Square and less than a block away from the spot where sat the late Paramount Theatre.

Harry "Pipes" Miller reports from Chicago that his attention was drawn to the Boob Tube during the Feb. 25th NBC airing of *The Magician* series when a horseshoe console hove into view on the small screen. But the sound, says Harry, was that of an old parlor reed organ (perhaps like the one in Karl Cole's photo an item back). Harry's attention was now focussed and in a moment he learned the horrible truth; the organ, according to the plot, was located in a home for derelict men. Apparently there were no voicers among the inmates.

From Ipswich, Massachusetts, new ATOSer Tim Bjareby (say it "B-R-B"), has completed the repair and installation of his 2/8 Robert Morton. He invited local musicians in to inspect it and was amazed to learn that many of the pro's and local citizens had no previous knowledge of the existence of theatre organs. Tim's Morton, which he purchased from the R. S. Rand collection, must be a real blaster: seven of the eight ranks are designed for 15" of wind pressure and the organ was originally powered by a 7½ hp, 3-phase blower. Because no 3-phase power was available, Tim put the output of three smaller (one 1½ hp, two 2 hp) single-phase blowers in series to obtain a static pressure of 25" of wind, more than enough wind "to sustain full organ when full chords are played in the lower registers with all three tremos on."

Several readers have noted the similarity of our VOX POPS heading with the revived *Liberty* magazine's letters column called VOX POP. Could we have thus influenced *Liberty*? No, quite the reverse. *Liberty* had its VOX POP column when it was a weekly back in the '30s. The name was derived by shortening the latin words "vox populi" — voice of the people. When this column first emerged in the old *POSTHORN* it was called VOX POPPINGS (as in "sounding off") which in time got shortened to VOX POPS. At the time we were aware of its similarity to the *Liberty* department title but by then *Liberty* had ceased publication. Now it's back, VOX POP et al, and a boon to nostalgia seekers.

On February 14, Ray Brubacher made his initial RTOS appearance, and the young man was playing under some sizeable handicaps. He was competing with the Rochester Philharmonic, a two-piano recital, a Duke Ellington concert, and the Shrine Circus. To top that, Ray had been in

an auto accident two days previously which injured his legs. "It only hurts when I walk", said he. However, the 1088 attendees who braved cold weather were treated to some spirited marches, some show tunes and a group of classical selections. It marked the first time since the 1972 ATOS Convention that two associate editors of *THEATRE ORGAN* were under the same roof, and photographer Dick Harold captured the event.

Former theatre organist Harold Jolles, living now in Cattaraugus, N. Y., recalls the days when he saw some of the theatre organ greats at Buffalo's Lafayette Theatre 3/15 Wurlitzer. "One day, I was seated in the balcony when C. Sharpe Minor hid a violinist in the solo chamber. He used slides, telling how he had blended stops to imitate a violin, and would wiggle his fingers on the keys to imitate the vibrato. Once, using the Vox Humana, he imitated a quartet; another time he had a soprano in the solo chamber, saying one could make the Wurlitzer sound like the human voice.

"I never saw him or Henry B. Murtagh with tux or tails, but Albert



Two Associate Editors of *THEATRE ORGAN* MAGAZINE get together at the RTOS console, Lloyd Klos and Ray Brubacher. — (Dick Harold Photo)



Hay Mallotte always wore a morning coat and striped trousers in the daytime and tails at night. Arthur Martel also dressed up at the Lafayette. I never heard a style 260 with the volume the Lafayette had. The console had no crescendo pedal, but pressure on one expression pedal brought in everything. Martel was a great fellow for full organ, including the 32' diapasons which lay horizontally above the proscenium arch."



*Stevens Irwin, the walking encyclopedia of pipe organ stops, played the giant West Point Cadet Chapel organ in December, and reports that "some fine Dutch-made baroque stops are being added to it — not the usual flimsy, half-tunable ranks we so often hear, but well-chosen pipes and well installed, too." Steve is re-writing his Dictionary of Pipe Organ Stops and adding 500 stop names to it. He is also doing book reports and articles on How to Combine Stops for the April issue of the Philadelphia-based Journal of Church Music. "It is all great fun, but does not pay much," he says. Steve's final Homage to Robert Hope-Jones installment appears in this issue.*



Rose Diamond reports that there's a radio station in Los Angeles with the call letters KLOS. "Old Prospector" Lloyd Klos isn't happy that KLOS programs are all rock — and no organ.



*From Seattle, Margaret Sabo reports that staffers at the newly-opened organ-equipped Pizza and Pipes are Tom Sheen (5 nights) and Dick Schrum (2 nights). Don Myers played a well-attended concert for Puget Sounders there on Feb. 10. Margaret closes with a teaser: "Last Sunday we unloaded another wonderful Wurlitzer. Opus 2128 (got it, Judd?) arrived in our fair city from Dallas." Margaret — please drop all those other shoes!*



The VOX POP about Dr. Orrin Hostetter in the Dec. 73 issue rang a bell for ATOSer Joe Coggeshall in Little Hocking, Ohio. Circa 25 years ago Joe purchased a 78 rpm Capitol organ record (sides No. 4748Y and 4749Z) of "Parade of the Wooden Soldiers" and "The Doll Dance"

played by Orrin Hostetter. Joe treasures his pressing and wanted to know whether Doc had recorded any more. We contacted Doc during office hours and he reports the 1948 record was a one-shot and his career as a recording organist stopped right there. The organ was the style 216 (2/10) Wurlitzer he rescued from the LA Lincoln Theatre and installed in his then Burbank Calif. home. He added several ranks plus the console from the LA Million Dollar Theatre, so the recording features about 14 ranks. It was later enlarged more. The instrument was recently purchased by Harvey Heck who is scouting a proper beanery location, so Joe may get to hear it again when he visits Southern California.



*The petroleum fiasco has already hit record pressers. Vinyl, a petroleum by-product, is already in short supply, but that doesn't explain the scarcity of common cardboard for record jackets. Perhaps we could do without heavy jackets but those smooth vinyl grooves have probably spoiled us too much to ever again settle for the shellac record surfaces of pre-LP 78 rpm days. Tape is also in the "doubtful future" category.*



Rosemary Bailey

Rosemary Bailey, billed as the youngest organist ever to play with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, was set for a March 28 CATOE concert at the Chicago Patio Theatre's 3/17 Barton, sharing the spotlight with Wrigley Field "Cubs" organist Frank Pellico.



*Lee Haggart, who is releathering the 11-rank Wicks chest he has secured for his originally 5-rank Smith home installation (See "Raid" in our October '73 issue) in Granada Hills, Calif., reports that he finds Titebond an excellent medium-priced adhesive for bonding leather to leather and leather to wood. Lee tried Contact Cement but found it to be generally unsatisfactory for leather bonding. In contrast, Bill Coffman, who does a lot of releathering for hobbyists (when his duties as co-impresario for the Old Town Music Hall in El Segundo, Calif., permit) swears by the old standby, hot glue, for leather bonding. "I have nothing against the new adhesives," explains Bill, "but I bought quite a load of hot glue when it was only thirty cents a pound. I'll be using it for years."*



Alden Miller writes from Minneapolis that a second Cicero's pizzeria will be open by the time these words hit print, this one in Leisure Lane in West Minneapolis. The instrument, says Al, is the 3/15 Barton originally installed in the North Aurora (Illinois) Uptown Theatre. It was hoped that organbuilder Dan Barton, now pushing 90, would be able to attend the opening.



*When the first pipe organs were installed in theatres over 60 years ago, they were church instruments. Rochesterians, the evening of February 22, had an opportunity to hear how non-tremulated accompaniment to silent movies sound when Tom Lockwood accompanied The Great Train Robbery and Buster Keaton's hilarious Go West. The show was presented as a benefit at First Universalist Church and utilized the Hope-Jones Opus 2, installed in 1908. In order for the artist to accompany the picture from the organ loft, closed circuit television was employed. The 200-plus audience thoroughly enjoyed the evening's program in the historic church, now protected as an historical landmark.*



A March 10 ATOS Alabama Chapter concert at the Alabama Theatre (Birmingham) featured Charles E. Durham at the Wurlitzer, assisted by vocalist Jim Ferguson. Jim's eleven varied contributions ranged from "Mac-





Charles Durham

Arthur Park" to "Without a Song," while Charles soloed seven organ medleys on "Big Bertha" which covered a range from "Mickey Mouse Club Theme" to Tchaikowsky's "1812 Overture." Both artists are from Gadsden, Alabama, and this is their first joint concert. From reports on their reception, there will be more.

The theatre organ scene was given a hearty 13-minute boost on February 6 when "Old Prospector" Klos appeared on Rochester's leading talk show, hosted by Channel 10's Eddie Meath. Discussed were the ever-increasing memberships in ATOS and RTOS, artists on the concert circuit, removal of the 3/9 Hope-Jones Wurlitzer from Rochester's Regent Theatre and 10th Anniversary Celebration plans of RTOS. Strongly emphasized by Klos is the fact that the "theatre organ is not some old relic dredged up for nostalgic reasons, but it is every bit as much a current musical instrument on the concert circuit as a Steinway or Stradivarius."

Those who viewed TV's *World of Liberace* on January 13, saw and heard the pianist's pipe organ in one of his homes. "It is a theatre-type organ", the toothy musician said. He demonstrated a couple of the instrument's effects and admitted that he doesn't play it except when friends drop in. The make was not identified, but it appeared to be a Robert Morton.

Radio's former "Queen of the Soaps," Rosa Rio, paid a visit to the Ohio area in January where she played Stan Todd's famous Wurlitzer in the Shady Nook Steak House in Hamilton. The organ now boasts 31 ranks, up six from a year ago. She found that it was a joy to play, compared with her previous experiences at some consoles on the eastern seaboard the past couple of years. She also played the new Baldwin Multi-Wave Form Opus II and Opus III organs at the factory.

Vic Hyde, Niles, Michigan's talented vaudevillian, is happy with his latest acquisition, a 4/14 Cozatt theatre organ with horseshoe console. According to Vic, it was built in 1922 and had been standing unused in an empty house in Danville, Ill. for 15 years. With his wife's help, he built a mini-museum to house his 20 antique automobiles and then moved several loads of pipe organ components into his "new" restoration shop. Between engagements, the monster is being worked on. He has promised a feature story for THEATRE ORGAN.

Attention ATOS Detroit Conventioners: If you pass near Niles, Michigan, you are cordially invited to stop at Vic's residence for rest, coffee, bath, and inspect this Cozatt (and the fleet of rare three wheel autos.) 1737 Ferry St., Phone - 616-683-8279. Can offer hook-up for trailer camper or motor home. It's FREE!

In McMinnville, Tenn., ATOS member Roy Davis has a fascinating project underway. He owns Cumberland Caverns there, which is a big tourist attraction, and is in the process of installing a Wurlitzer down in the big cave which is to become a restaurant. Roy started in the pipe organ hobby eight years ago. He has parts of four organs, plus eight complete ones to sell, besides a Wurlitzer pipe organ in his home. Not bad for a 35-year-old bachelor!

There aren't many former theatre organists whose love for the instrument is such that they have installed one in their homes. How many are there who are installing their second box of whistles? Fewer yet. One of

these is Howard Burton of Marion, Iowa. His first one was installed in the mid-1960's, but not being satisfied with it, he dismantled it, and its place has been taken by a Style E Wurlitzer, opus No. 778 from the 961-seat Chicago Paramount, the first of 14 style E's installed in that city. A feature story has been promised for THEATRE ORGAN.

The 5/110 Kimball in the Memphis Civic Auditorium, referred to by Alleen Cole in the December '73 issue ("Showplace of the South"), is still intact but mostly unplayable, reports ATOSer Vincent C. Astor who is also the organist at the Memphis Malco Theatre. Astor, whose official title at the Malco is Inspection Supervisor, held an open house at "The South's Finest Theatre" on Feb. 23. Attendees, coming to hear the Wurlitzer were surprised to hear another organ sounding forth from the Malco's gallery. It turned out to be a 2/3 Kilgen (Tibia, String and Vox) which had once been the WREC radio studio organ. It's residency in the Malco is temporary; it will probably go into a night club, says Astor.

Doc Bebko experienced a most interesting weekend in January in New York. Having seen about 10 ice shows in the 30's and 40's, he labeled the one at the Music Hall the best yet. Eighteen excellent musicians, a choral tape track and a synthesizer provided the music. The 4/58 Wurlitzer wasn't used. Doc missed Eddie Layton's show for about 100 enthusiasts at the United Palace (Loew's 175th St. Theatre). The house has been entirely repainted at a cost of \$125,000. He did hear Lee Erwin at Loew's Kings, however. "The Kings is about the most beautiful theatre existing anywhere. The Robert Morton is one of the best sounding organs of 23 ranks I've heard yet. When it goes into Town Hall, it should be sensational. Lee Erwin played for two hours for about 200, and wouldn't have asked for a better job, considering the organ hadn't been played for a year." □

Coming . . .

**"THE NOTE-ABLE NINETEENTH"**

1974

**NATIONAL CONVENTION**