

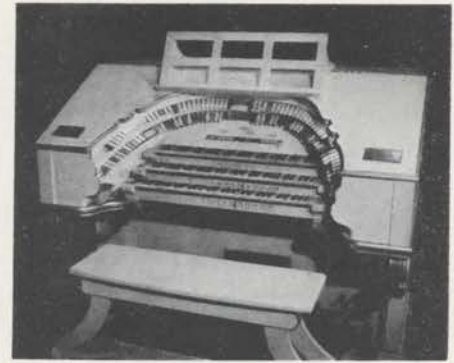
A REPORT ON THEATRE ORGAN ACTIVITY IN THE UTICA-ROME, NEW YORK AREA

by Donald Robinson

Theatre Organ activity in this Central New York area of the Mohawk Valley has reached a new and challenging level.

The organ in the Stanley Theatre in Utica, New York has been donated to the City by RKO-Stanley-Warner Inc. The organ, a 3/13 Wurlitzer which is being removed, will be rebuilt and installed in an arta high school auditorium with a seating capacity of 1,300.

Area members of ATOS plus other



local organ enthusiasts have formed a group and have undertaken the task of dismantling and removing and to rebuild and install the organ in its new home. The offer of the organ and the final acceptance of the instrument by Utica was the result of much effort. It represents three months of leg work, searching for a suitable home for the instrument, letters, telephone calls, appearances before City subcommittees, full committees and board of directors.

The success in finally getting a unanimous approval of accepting the instrument may be accredited to several factors, principally the salesmanship of the basic principles of ATOS and its effect on the national scene, the rise and success of theatre organ activity in our own neighboring upstate New York cities: Syracuse, Rochester, as well as our own Rome project in the Capitol Theatre and last but not least, the Niagara Frontier Chapter headquartered in Buffalo, which might be looked upon as the "Mother of theatre organ activity in upstate New York." Now in her tenth year of activity, she might smile approvingly at her "offspring" so to speak, that have blossomed over the years outside her Buffalo boundaries, having certainly been an indirect influence at least on their successes.

The acquisition of the Stanley Theatre organ as a restoration project comes after a ten year effort in trying to bring this instrument out of "moth balls".

The final sounds of this instrument came forth on the morning of Saturday, January 25th at the hands of the area's two active theatre organists, Carl Brush and John Seaton who are both organists at the Capitol Theatre in Rome. Dismantling of the instrument began February 1st.

In our next report from this location, we'll briefly summarize the dismantling and removal. This report would be very much incomplete without mentioning our activities in the Capitol Theatre in Rome. The organ is featured regularly on week-ends, Fridays and Saturdays. The instrument is also used during stage shows and community programs. The opening of the United Fund Campaign Program held in the theatre a few months ago featured Carl Brush at the 3/7 Moller.

Finally the Organ Loft Program (which celebrated its seventh anniversary April 20th) continues to serve the FM listening audience with the best sounds in organ music over Utica's FM Stereo Voice, WUFM, 107.3 on the dial, every Sunday evening with the writer as host.

mately encumber the total picture of the American contribution to the field of music from classics to talking pictures. Within this broad scope, we will get into the mechanical aspects, such as projection equipment, the development of sound on film, mechanical musical instruments, records, sheet music, and even the classical side of the family, including early American tracker organs. What we have installed now is the first phase. During the 1968 Fair Week, a second phase was examined as to public acceptance. This was a limited display of historical musical instruments, nickelodeons and antique projection equipment dating back to 1908. With only three nickelodeons, 3,403 nickels went into them in seven days.

"To Mr. Harold L. Creal, president of the Museum, goes much credit for expansion of facilities. This is a permanent public museum. As we grow,



Carlton James at the console, Music Museum.

we will be in a position to offer to both hobbyists and groups doing research, information into the fields which the museum will cover, technical assistance, lending of books and films and other help. The scope is broad, and we are feeling our way to assure that we have a solid foundation upon which the museum will be built.

"As a personal note, I have never worked with such wonderful and enthusiastic individuals, all the way from officers to our loyal and important Museum Society Members."

One thing worries Charles Schubert. That is air pollution which has killed the leathers of many organs in the New York - New Jersey area. A nearby plant spews pollutants into the atmosphere which could be a real organ-killing proposition.

So, another 'organ transplant' is doing exceptionally well. Through perseverance and hard work, Syracuse's last theatre organ has been preserved for posterity; just one more notable contribution to the Renaissance of the Theatre Organ. □

RANKS OF THE 3/11 WURLITZER OPUS #1143 NEW YORK STATE FAIRGROUNDS SYRACUSE, N. Y.

- 8' Harmonic Tuba
- 8' Diaphonic Diapason
- 8' Tibia Clausa
- 8' Clarinet
- 8' Orchestral Oboe
- 8' Kinura
- 8' Viol d'Orchestre
- 8' Viol Celeste
- 8' Salicional
- 8' Concert Flute
- 8' Vox Humana