

REGIONAL PREVIEW

Sooner Sonic Sights and Sounds: The Artists and Instruments

CHRISTIAN CRUSADE AUDITORIUM

3 Manual 10 Rank Robert Morton

This Morton is a transplant from Steubenville, Ohio, where it was installed new, in a movie theatre (name unknown to us) in late 1928. Dr. Hargis, founder and director of the Christian Crusade, has long appreciated Theatre Pipe Organ Music and engaged Mr. Loren Whitney of Glendale, California, to locate an appropriate instrument for the new headquarters Auditorium-Convention Center, under construction here in Tulsa. Mr. Whitney located this organ and found it to be in a rather neglected condition, having been unplayable for many years due to water damage to the console. Mr. Philip Wellington of Los Angeles was engaged to remove, rebuild and re-install the instrument in the Christian Crusade Auditorium. It was removed from the theatre in the latter months of 1965, the console being taken to Mr. Wellington's California Shop, where it was completely reconstructed. The console was so deteriorated due to water, that in addition to the usual manual recovering and relathering, many of the parts had to be built from scratch.

The rest of the organ was shipped direct to Tulsa, where it was rebuilt in a warehouse preparatory to re-installing in the new Christian Crusade Auditorium. Installation took about three months during the late spring and early summer of 1966 and was completed in September of 1966 in conjunction with the opening of the new Christian Crusade headquarters.

The organ was played regularly for radio and television broadcasts, and many other concerts by Staff Organist, Mr. Jim Orcutt, until his untimely death at the age of 36 in November of 1968. Mr. Orcutt and the organ were an immediate success with the public in Tulsa and it has done much to revive the interest in Theatre Organ in this area.

The organ has 10 ranks and is on 10 and 15 inches of air. The acoustical qualities plus the high pressure of the organ tend to give one the impression that it is somewhat larger than it actually is. It was installed with all percussions and traps. It is maintained by Phil Judkins, Vice-Chairman of the

Sooner State Chapter ATOS and is never allowed to be in anything but perfect playing condition, as many of you know, a rather difficult assignment for a 41 year old theatre organ.

CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL KILGEN MEMORIAL ORGAN

4 Manual 45 Rank

The Central High School Memorial Kilgen Organ was an idea conceived by the Senior Class of 1924. Money to purchase the organ was advanced by the School Board and was to be repaid by the students. Payment for the organ was concluded with the Class of 1934. And so, the organ was actually paid for by the graduating classes of Central High School, 1924-1934 inclusive.



Bob Foley at the console of the 4/45 Central High School Kilgen. Photo by Tom Cusick

The organ was dedicated to the public on Friday, March 4, 1927, by Merle C. Prunty, Principal. World renowned Virtuoso, Palmer Christian performed the Dedicatory Program, featuring selections ranging from hymns to Spanish Rhapsody.

Upon completion of payment for the organ by the Class of 1934, the organ was re-dedicated. Mr. Reed Jerome, School Organist at this time, provided a varied program, with prominent Organist George Oscar Bowen closing the program.

The Central High School 4/45 Kilgen is a four manual instrument of Electro-Pneumatic Action, with all of its divisions under expression, except the First Open Diapason in the Great Organ. A ten-horsepower motor supplies the wind for the main organ with necessary generators for the action. The Echo Organ is located in a chamber at the back of the auditorium, 220' from the console.

Besides the various couplers, there are on the console, 16 stops controlling the great organ; 20 for the swell organ; 14 for the choir organ; 11 for the solo organ; 10 for the echo organ; 15 for the pedal organ and 2 for the echo pedal organ, a total of 88 stops, affecting 3,087 speaking pipes. Thirty-six combination pistons are provided to make the work of the organ more flexible.

PHILBROOK ART CENTER

2 Manual 7 Rank Aeolian
Unit Organ

The organ is located in the former home of pioneer oilman and philanthropist Waite Phillips and was installed in 1927 when the palatial home was built. The beautiful home and grounds were donated to the city of Tulsa upon Mr. Phillips' retirement and is now known as Philbrook Art Center. It is maintained by an adequate endowment and voluntary memberships, and is fully staffed, showing a year-round art and cultural program for the Southwest. The organ is featured in concert each Sunday afternoon and this service is performed gladly by local artists on a reservation basis.



Ray Elmore at the console of the 2/4 Masonic Temple Morton. Photo by Tom Cusick

MASONIC TEMPLE

2 Manual 4 Rank Robert Morton

This organ was originally installed in the "Circle Theater" in Tulsa, in two chambers, during 1926.

In April of 1931, the organ was moved to the Masonic Temple, where it was installed in one chamber. The console is in a room fourteen feet above the Commandery Room into which it speaks. The pipe loft is adjacent to the console room.

Very little had been done to this organ in the way of maintenance until 1969. At this time, the chapter crew, ably supervised by Vice-Chairman, Phil Judkins, was authorized by the Masonic Temple to repair and tune this organ on a continuing basis and in particular, for the upcoming Regional Convention of ATOS.

The organ has the following Ranks: Tibia Clausa 16', 8', 4', 2', Violin 8', 4', Diapason 8', Vox Humana 8', Pedal Stops: Bourdon 16', Tibia 8'.

Due to lack of space, stoplists could not be published.

BOB FOLEY

Bob Foley of Mid-America Chapter in Wichita is one of the outstanding organ teachers in this area and is currently in the process of installing the Raymond Shelley organ in his home. He has scored and will accompany the "Drunkard" presented by the Tulsa Spottlites. Bob's labors are typical of the generous efforts all of the Southwestern Region Chapters have given to this project—The Regional Convention.

MARK KENNING

Mark Kenning of North Texas Chapter is continually in demand as a music critic for newspapers, organist and choir director and for playing engagements. He has the 4/17 Morton from the Ritz Theatre in Tulsa installed in an addition to their home which he and his wife built and decorated in a Spanish motif.

MARY JEAN MILLER

Someone asked: "Whatever became of Mary Jean Miller?" Well, to quote the lovely lady herself, "I'm alive and well and living in Kansas City, Missouri." And so, the story appeared in the April issue of Theatre Organ Bombarde. Be sure to come and hear this fabulous lady at Regional in Tulsa.

KEN WRIGHT

Ken Wright hails from Oklahoma City where he is Music Director for WKY Radio and TV. His record made of the WKY Kilgen in 1947 was just released in 1968 and the success of this record led to his most recent disc at



Phil Judkins, Vice-Chairman, Joe Crutchfield, Treasurer, Ray Elmore, staff organist at Christian Crusade Auditorium, Dick Schrum, past President, National ATOS, Ron Willfong, Chairman, gathered around the Christian Crusade 3/10 Robert Morton on the occasion of receiving the chapter charter in May of 1968.

the Deluxe Conn Theatre Organ. Ken will play dinner music for the banquet at the Camelot.

ROSE TEIS

Rose Teis, a Sooner State member, is another of those lovely ladies who has given so much beautiful organ music to the world. She has been teaching and arranging music at the Hammond Studios in Tulsa for the past five years. You will get a chance to meet her and hear her during the get-acquainted cocktail-party on the opening night of the Regional.

ED LOVE

Ed Love belongs to Heart of America Chapter and is one of the lucky ones — a 2/5 Marr and Colton in his home. Born in that betwixt and between era, young enough to have heard theatre organs but by the time he was old enough to do anything about it, they had disappeared from use. This just hooked him on the theatre pipes. You will hear Ed in concert in Tulsa in February.

RAY ELMORE

Ray Elmore was the first secretary of Sooner State and is now chairman of Events and Program Schedules Committee for the upcoming convention. Staff organist at the Christian Crusade Auditorium, concerts for local organ



2/4 Wurlitzer now being installed by chapter members in the home of the Hayden Weavers. Organ originally came from Perry, Oklahoma.

clubs, civic and social engagements plus a six year stint at the Petroleum Club are a few of his accomplishments. He maintains a daily teaching schedule and is featured organist with the Harry Arnold Orchestra — our stars on opening night.

DENNIS MINEAR

Dennis' formal training plus a phenomenal "by ear" talent and a love for all that's good in theatre organ music make him a most enjoyable artist to hear. He will close the Convention playing the Philbrook Art Center Aeolian Organ. His second love is art and will be represented by his design of our convention program.

JOE CRUTCHFIELD

Joe Crutchfield is a charter member of Sooner State and the only treasurer this chapter has ever known. He is a first rate carpenter, recording engineer, licensed pilot, musician and best of all, theatre organ enthusiast. "Portly Joe Crutchfield," as nicknamed by Lyn Larsen, will open the Convention.

TULSA SPOTLITERS INC.

The Tulsa Spottlites have been in existence for 17 years and was formed by a group of actors who needed additional outlets for their theatrical enjoyment. Inspiration for their efforts was a play called "The Drunkard", a condensed version of "Ten Nights In A Barroom" written by Bob Feagin. The re-writing for the Spottlites was done by Mr. Richard Mansfield Dickens in honor of whom, they have named their theatre.

The money received from attendance, after deduction of expenses, is given to various charities. This amount will average about \$3,000 per year. The group also gives three scholarships per year, for approximately \$300 each, in the furtherance of theatrical training.

Bob Foley will accompany this presentation on the 4/45 Kilgen on Saturday evening of the Regional. □

The *Real* Crawford Special

by Douglas Marion

Theatre Organ buffs have long recognized that the basic theatre organ has at least one rank representing each of the six tone colors required to provide good combination possibilities. These are the diapason, flute, tibia, string, brass reed and color reed. The Wurlitzer Style D is just such an organ. Most organs larger than this provide more ranks still falling within the six tonal divisions. A Style E adds a second string rank, a Celeste; a Style F adds to this a second reed, the Clarinet. A Style 235 of 11 ranks has yet another string, and two more color reeds, the Orchestral Oboe and the Kinura.

Thus on the six basic tone colors, Wurlitzer as well as other makers built their tonal structure. Even the renowned 4 manual 36 rank Wurlitzers, of which 5 were built, were designed on this principal. For many years these remarkable instruments, the first of which, Opus #1458, was installed in the New York Times Square Paramount Theatre, have been popularly referred to as the "Crawford Special". This is undoubtedly due to the fact that this outstanding and famous theatre organist reached the apex of his theatre playing career on this instrument.

One of the really great opportunities to establish facts regarding the Crawford Special were the conversations with Crawford during the final years of his life. His answer to the question, "Jesse, did you design the Paramount Theatre Organ?", was "No, I did not. I specified only that the organ was to include certain ranks; the three Tibia Clausa, certain of the string and diapason ranks, and the four Vox Humana."

To the next question, "Well, do you know who did design it?", he replied, "No, someone at the Wurlitzer factory made up the specifications. Contrary to common belief, I did not specify that the organ was to have such ranks as the musette, the French horn, the Dulciana and some of the other ranks that were included. These ranks, the entire stoplist as a matter of fact, would have been hard to improve upon. The final result was very satisfying to me. I enjoyed playing the organ as it included the ranks I did specify as well as the many others that the factory put on the organ."

"Well, Jesse," I asked, "did you actually design any of the Wurlitzer organs?". His reply surprised me as well

as the others in the group. It established which of the Wurlitzer organs was the real "Crawford Special", as he stated, "Yes, I designed the Publix #1 organ at the request of the theatre chain." He continued, "They wanted an organ designed that would be suitable for their deluxe houses soon to be built. It was several years before they became known as the Publix #1 organs, the first being simply noted a 4 manual 20 rank special model. They specified that it must be a four manual organ for prestige, and that the cost must be kept down. The result was the organ as we know it today; 20 ranks which included two Tibia Clausa, two Vox Humana, and a Brass Saxophone and Brass Trumpet as well as the other more or less standard ranks found on the 3 manual 15 rank organs which were the largest standard models built in volume up to that time."

(Ed. note: Crawford was referring to the Wurlitzer Style 260).

The next question was obvious. "Jesse, why did you *not* include the English Post Horn which seems to be the only important rank missing from the design of an organ this size?" His answer is a classic. "To protect the patrons from the organist." He continued, "The English Post Horn has a



Opus No. 1848, shipped to the Minnesota Theatre in Minneapolis 2/14/28. This is one of two Roman style consoles built, the other going to the Toledo, Ohio, Paramount Theatre. The piano was installed in the Solo Chamber — whereas most were installed outside the shutters. This organ has the single row of stop tablets on the front rail and is now installed in the Reiny Delzer residence in Bismarck, North Dakota.

definite musical place in theatre organ playing, but it is grossly abused by most organists who do not know when *not* to use it."

Research and studies indicate this superbly designed organ was installed in some of the finest theatres ever built. The first of the series was designated as a special 4 manual, some were listed as "260 - 4 manual" and fourteen were shown as Publix #1 or Style 270. One was shipped as a Publix #1 Special.

The factory shipping list includes them as follows:



Opus No. 2170, a French design console, was shipped to the Odeon (Paramount) Theatre in Manchester, England, on 7/14/30. Clearly visible are the six stops added as a second row of tablets. The four black couplers were moved up from the bottom row, and the Vibraharp and Vibraharp Dampers stops were an added feature on the later issues of the Style 270.