

An original thought of Mr. Harmon's was the possibility of playing for the action of sporting events in the same manner in which action was accompanied in motion pictures, and this was the intended purpose of the organ.

Cost of the instrument was \$250,000. It is of the unit type and has 51 sets of pipes, 17 percussions and a drum section which consists of 6 bass drums, 6 cymbals and 12 snare drums. The wind pressures vary from 15 to 50 inches, there being 6 ranks of pipes on 50 inches pressure. The cathedral chimes have been adapted from Deagan church tower bells and are struck with 9-pound hammers, operating on 50 inches of wind pressure.

The console, painted a bright crimson, has 828 stopkeys, and weighs 7½ tons. All the combination pistons are duplicated by stopkeys. The blower is a 100 HP Orgoblo, and was the largest blower in the world at the time of installation, according to the Spencer Turbine Company.

The installation was made in the roof of the building in five specially built concrete organ lofts, the sound being distributed throughout the building by special deflectors.

When asked what organists have played it, Al Melgard, the house organist, says, "I had the contract in advance, but had to finish my WBBM contract, so Ralph Waldo Emerson opened at the Stadium until I took over. Both of us were with Barton Co. at the time. I have had several organ assistants and guests, but now, Ron Bogda is my regular assistant and is very fine. I have been there for almost 40 years. It could turn out to be steady, eh?"

The organ has been heard throughout the country via radio and television when National Presidential Nominating Conventions were held in the building. The instrument can easily be heard above the bedlam of 20,000 or more voices of those present.

If this writer's efforts to describe this behemoth of an instrument have been inadequate, we can only say that this organ cannot be described — it must be heard. It simply staggers the imagination! ATOE Conventioneers will have the opportunity to say "Amen" to that statement after they've heard the organ in July.

**SHOW TIME IN
CHICAGO
1969 National Convention
July 3-7**

As Chicago Stadium organist Al Melgard will be featured at the 1969 ATOE Convention, the following article by organist Henry Francis Parks in the February 1927 issue of *Jacobs Orchestral Magazine*, found by Lloyd E. Klos, is of interest:

There are mighty few organists in Chicago who enjoy quite the popularity which Al Melgard of the Barton Organ School in the Mallers Building, does. There isn't a better liked organist in the city of Chicago than Al, and it is not only because he lends a helping hand to every deserving organist who comes along, but because Al has yet to be heard passing an unkind remark about any other organist or criticizing even his own pupils. He is no "Yes" man either! Just one of those rare specimens of the *genus homo* who thinks of the other fellow's feelings before he opens his mouth.

DICK SCHRUM ENTERTAINS RTOS

Dick "M. L." Schrum, ATOE past president, wound up his mid-winter concert tour by presiding at the Rochester Theatre Organ Society's Wurlitzer on February 15. He had already done a most creditable job at the Radio City Music Hall on February 9, both as soloist and in duet with Ashley Miller. The big New York snowstorm caused Mr. and Mrs. Schrum to journey via Washington in order to appear in the Flower City.

The 2-hour program had several highlights. It is common knowledge that the baseball magnates are trying to change the structure of the national pastime. Dick changed the structure of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" by doing several versions: by imitating a calliope; by cha-cha beat; a la church organ; and finally as a marching jazz band with snarling posthorn. He performed, as he put it, "a deathless de-arrangement" of a popular tune, "The One I Love Belongs to Somebody Else Cha-Cha Rock," with the xylophone carrying the melody in solo throughout.

Dick performed several medleys, but the one which had nostalgia written all over it, was entitled "Those Were the Days — Memory Tweakers." It included "Destiny Waltz" which was the signature tune of the radio show "One Man's Family" and performed by organist Paul Carson for so many years; "Little Orphan Annie" which was done nightly by organist Larry Larson in the early Thirties; "The Perfect Song" which Gaylord Carter made famous on the "Amos n' Andy" show; and themes

That is one of the reasons why Al has opened many a Barton organ in new theatres throughout the country; why he broadcasts from WLS, the Sears Roebuck Company station operated from the Sherman Hotel; why the aces of the profession come in from all parts of the country to learn his tricks on the Barton instrument; why he really needs an 8-day week to teach all those who apply for instruction. There are other reasons. For instance, he has studied theory, harmony, counterpoint, composition and what have you? He has been a legitimate church organist. He has held some of the best movie positions in this section of the country. What more, I ask you, would *you* ask?

Above all, I have yet to see Al ruffled or rattled. Despite the many responsibilities he has, he keeps an evener keel than anyone I know of. Al Melgard is a mighty high-class fellow, a gentleman, and a real organist!

from the radio shows "Take It or Leave It," "Burns and Allen" and the "Bob Hope Show." A rendition of "Hard-Hearted Hannah" turned out to be a Xerox copy of the way a George Wright would perform it.

Having visited the local Strassenburgh Planetarium, the artist played an appropriate number, the beautiful "Stars Are the Windows of Heaven," remembered as a best-selling disc of the Mills Brothers and, much earlier, of Jesse Crawford. Following "Keep Your Sunny Side Up," there was a pause as Dick left the Howard Seat (first performer to use it) and the announcement of forthcoming artists (Lee Erwin, George Wright and Ann Leaf) was made.

And, here she came, Martha Lake in all her glory(?) With flying high-heeled shoes, crazy hat, bright green dress, love beads, and a vase of flowers on the console, "she" did her thing. "The Sabre Dance," "Spring Song" and "Paramount on Parade" were picked out of the wild montage.

Though Dick loved playing the 4-22, time was fleeting, and it was necessary to cut some numbers in the second half. A salute to the great British organist, Sidney Torch, was included, as were "Melancholy Serenade," "Satin Doll," and a dedication to wife Marilyn, to whom he became engaged nine years previously, "My Funny Valentine." An encore was "Lazy River," and the program ended with the console's lowering to "I'll Be Seeing You."

—Lloyd E. Klos