



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 a 5c postcard to get it to The BOMBARDE, Box 5013 Bendix Station, North Hollywood, Calif. 91605.

Remember the phrase "organ in a woodcarving shop" often seen in these columns a few years ago? That described the 4/24 mostly Wurlitzer assembled in a former Los Angeles wood carver's workshop by organists Bill Coffman and Bill Field. The pair made a hobby of introducing true pipe sounds to hundreds of members of plug-in organ clubs they invited in small groups every Sunday afternoon for several years. Then came the Watts holocaust and the organ was in a threatened area. The Bills dismantled it and put it in safe storage. They started a search for a permanent home for the instrument, a place where they could continue their "brain-cleansing" operation on a larger scale. They found just the right place, a long-dark theatre in the town of El Segundo (near LA) and for the past year they have been busy refurbishing the faded house and installing the organ, investing every spare moment (both are professional, in-demand night spot entertainers with long lists of club credits). As we went to press they were updating their guest list and giving the organ a final once over in anticipation of their first concert in the new series in the "Old Town Music Hall." Both Bills deserve much credit and a great measure of success in their venture which will include silent film shows as well as concerts.

The Bay area of California, already knee-deep in pipe installations open to the public is about ready to sprout

some more. Pipe aficionados already enjoy music at the San Francisco Avenue theatre (3/14 Wurli), the Pizza Joynt in Hayward (3/13 Wurli), The Cap'n's Galley Pizza in Santa Clara (3/12 Wurli), the Lost Weekend in San Francisco (2/10 Wurli) and Rudy's Supper Club (2/6 Wurli) in Vallejo. On the verge of opening as we put this issue to bed were a second Cap'n's Galley in Redwood City with the 4/18 Wurlitzer recently removed from the Seattle 5th Avenue theatre (over the protests of the Chapter there), and the Melody Inn in Los Altos with the 4/20 Wurlitzer removed long ago from the Oakland Paramount. And there are still more to come!

Chester E. Klee, former Rochester N. Y., theatre organist and Eastman School of Music graduate, was honored recently by the Olean (N. Y.) Civic Music Association, on completing 25 years as that organization's president. Chet, who once played the organs in Rochester's Eastman, Piccadilly, Madison, Monroe and Regent theatres, was praised by Olean's Mayor Schneiderman as having done more than any person to "Make Olean a cultural center of Western New York."

On a hot August Saturday morning, foreman Gene Davis gathered his crew of diggers (LA chapter volunteers) in the orchestra pit of the San Gabriel (Calif.) civic auditorium and told them what they were in for: (1) excavate a hole 12 x 12 feet by 9 feet deep so the console of the 3/16 Wurlitzer could be sunk out of view beneath the floor of the pit, (2) dig a smaller shaft about 15 feet down from the bottom of the 9-foot hole to accommodate the elevator screw. Davis, who 1968 conventioners will recall as the busy bus dispatcher in the Ambassador Hotel parking lot, admitted that a lot of dirt flew on that memorable Saturday but at day's end there was still quite a few wheelbarrow loads still to go. Since then they've gone.

In Syracuse, New York, the directors of the Empire State Theatre and Musical Instrument Museum presented veteran organist Carleton A. James with a key to the 3/11 Wurlitzer the group maintains at the New York State Fairgrounds, thus honoring the organist who played it through much of the silent era and into the '30s when it was installed in Syracuse Keith's theatre. Carleton, who joined ATOE in 1968, has played many concerts and silent movie shows for the ESTMIM since the organ has been placed in its permanent home.

Paul Fleming, one of the lads who spearheaded the removal of the 3/11 Wurlitzer from the Keith's Theatre in Syracuse to the State Fairgrounds, is back in the "Salt City" after a lengthy sojourn in Missouri. He reports that the organ crew was well prepared for the New York State Fair (the last week of August) wherein the organ got a 100-hour workout as it has for the past two years. The display of mechanical musical instruments at the Art and Home Center is being expanded to triple the area, because of the great reception it enjoyed last year.

Lyn Larsen's planned return trip to Melbourne, Australia (and another "resident organist" session at the Dendy theatre plus conducting an afternoon TV show) had to be postponed until early 1970 in order to accommodate a demanding concert and music writing schedule on this side of the briny. During the summer he completed several compositions, some on commission, ranging from serious music to novelties (such as the music for a commercial jingle heard on Australian TV). In the fall the concert business picked up and showed no signs of dropping off before Christmas. It started on Sept. 12-13 with a 2-night showing of "Phantom of the Opera" at the Sparta Theatre, Sparta, Michigan, which boasts a 25-rank "Wurli-Page." Early in October Lyn played a concert at Bill Brown's 4/24 ex-Chi-Paradise Wurlitzer in Phoenix (Oct. 5), then on to Tulsa for a session at the 3/10 Morton in the Cathedral of the Christian Crusade (Oct. 17) followed by a fast trip East to a concert for the Niagara Frontier Chapter at the Riviera theatre (3/11 Wurli) in North Tonawanda (Oct. 22), then to Detroit and a session for the DTOC and its 4/34 Senate theater Wurlitzer (Oct. 25). The series extends into November with a pipe concert in a Porterville, Calif. church (Nov. 2) then back across the country to Rochester for a concert for RTOS at the Auditorium theatre 4/22 Wurlitzer. Outside of those Lyn had nothing much to do this autumn.

Sorry to note that Ben Levy will no longer be doing concert reviews for the Detroit Theater Organ Club Newsletter. His colorful use of words made even "potboilers" seem enchanting. But when he was inspired by the artistry of a genuine console star, the results were often close to poetry — the 1969 Ann Leaf program, for example: "Her playing is as light as May wine and should be heard while dancing barefoot through the cool garden . . . Her regis-

trations range from something you could pour on waffles to a Kinura-Krumet cutting edge that could slice glass."



ANN LEAF — Barefoot through the waffle syrup.

Our correspondent Bob Wilson, of Yakima, Washington, spent a three-week summer vacation, traveling through Oregon and California and visited theatre organ installations along the way. At Bell, California, he attended a Gaylord Carter concert in Friends Church. "Since this is a church, I shouldn't play anything sexy", said the famous Flick Fingers star. So, instead of playing "Love is Blue", he played "Serenade in Blue", and "Spanish Serenade". A newly installed bird whistle was used for "Listen to the Mocking Bird." The tunes were sandwiched around a color film which Buster Keaton did for the Canadian National Railway, his last. In Tarzana, Bob spent an hour at Harvey Heck's installation, and saw 4 ranks of pipes and the traps and percussions destined for Lee Haggarts' home organ. Parts for another organ later installed in a pizza parlor at Reseda, the "Pipe 'n Pizza," were also being worked on.

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Readers of the Buffalo Evening News were recently treated to an excellent article by retiring theatre reviewer, Ardis Smith. It concerned his early days in Buffalo when he covered events at what was then the Shea's Buffalo theatre, about 1929. Describing what one might see on one of the grandiose programs in those days, he stated: "Then, zooming forth at the console of the giant Wurlitzer, came Henry B. Murtagh, 'poet of the organ' (sic), who invited the audience (of 3,000, if it

were a nice night) to lend their voices to "When the Red, Red Robin Comes Bob, Bob Bobbin' Along" and "I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now." Colorful days!

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Billy Nalle, always a busy young organist, is even busier this year. Following successes in Florida, Detroit, and other far-flung locations, he was signed by the Canton, Ohio AGO to appear at the Palace Theatre there on October 14 for a theatre organ concert. It's the first time an AGO chapter has contributed a theatre organ concert to a city's Art Festival. Billy was contacted out of the blue, and the event will be a part of the annual month-long Festival of the Arts. The organ is a 3/9 Kilgen with added Wurlitzer Posthorn. Billy, by the way, is also due back in Dunedin, Florida at the Kirk (Wurlitzer) on March 12 next year.

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"Our man in Louisiana," reporter Lew Williams earned his first standing ovation at a concert he played on a Rodgers organ for an audience of mostly teenage summer school students at the Howey Academy far from home (Florida). The youthful organist (16) played an ambitious program which ranged from the compositions of Bach to one by Stu Green ("from the sublime to the ridiculous," as one wag put it), but with plenty of time-proven standards, Jesse Crawford and George Wright arrangements to carry the day. The standing ovation caught Lew by surprise and he quickly learned to appreciate a byproduct of public acclaim which we hope isn't confined to Florida. Said Lew, "I never kissed so many girls in one night before!"

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The Hoosier theatre in Whiting, Indiana, undertook an ambitious fall series of concerts for the 3/11 "echo organ" (that's what it will be with relation to the Chicago Uptown theatre 4/28 Wurlitzer when that behemoth is installed there in the foreseeable future). First it was Australian organist Tony Fenelon on October 1 (that lad seems to be popping up wherever there's a winded console during his 30-day "Australian Crawl" through the "up over" world). Tony proved a hit with his skills at mimicry as well as his sound musicianship. Yet to come is Dick Smith who wowed the multitudes during a previous Hoosier session, but this time he's billed as "the incomparable young man of the pipe organ from Maryland" and Dick is asking for requests (no fair sending in such titles as "Beethoven's Ninth Symphony!", you guys!). Dick will play the embryo Wurlit on November 5. Then on De-

cember 3 it's John Muri and a touch of Christmas. A real variety of artists for the little theatre with the big organ plans, thanks to owner Bob Montgomery and his band of faithful helpers. (See TOB, June '69, page 20 for more about this installation).

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Organist Frank Olsen, who emigrated from Scotland to Canada not long ago returned to Glasgow for a vacation only to learn that the milder climate of the New World summer has decreased his natural immunity to "real cool" Scotland. Frank writes, "It's so cold here that I have to wear a heavy tweed suit — and I have fires going in all the stoves and fireplaces." Just before he returned to Canada he accepted an engagement to play the final concert on a 4/10 Compton organ about to be removed from the Glasgow Odeon theatre. Friends noted how "Americanized" Frank had become, traits probably picked up while attending the 1969 ATOE convention in Chicago with the Niagara Frontier contingent. That should do it.

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Up Quebec way, ATOE member Mario L'Esperance read that "Bombarde" is to be dropped from the magazine masthead, did a burn, and took quill in hand for a few gentle lines of protest: "I experienced a 'disappointed' feeling when I learned that 'Bombarde' would be dropped from the name of the magazine. THEATRE ORGAN-BOMBARDE seems very fitting; THEATRE ORGAN leaves no doubt about the kind of instrument and BOMBARDE enhances the title, giving it a striking note — one which fires the imagination. It was an odd decision to amputate the name if there was no legal problem to keep it as is." The TOB staff also has sentimental attachments to the name, Mario, because "Bombarde" is synonymous with "Stu Green" who has been our record reviewer, VOX POPer, "Disc Squealer", author, editor, reporter, photographer, photo captioner, and TOB's sense of humor for so many years. But "the old order changeth" and our board of directors is not immune to the demands of progress. Cheer up, Mario; only the name will change.

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In England, one of the longest playing engagements ever enjoyed by a pop organist will end on October 26 when Reginald Dixon plays his final session at the Blackpool Tower 3/14 Wurlitzer. Dixon, who has presided at the Tower ballroom consoles for over 39 years, decided to retire after his 65th birthday (October 16) but agreed to remain on for ten days following

that milestone to finish the season. Editor Ian Sutherland, writing in the "Cinema Organ Society Journal," summed it up neatly: (Dixon is) "the best known organist in Britain these days . . . we cannot imagine Blackpool without Reg. . . . For millions, during the 39 years he has been at the Tower, his signature tune, 'Oh, I Do Like to be Beside the Seaside' has become synonymous with his name . . . 'Mr. Blackpool.'" After years of almost daily playing sessions, 2,000 broadcasts and countless records, Dixon wants to take life easier. So he's mulling over a possible concert tour which may take him to the U.S.A. and Australia, broadcasts from Radio Hilversum (Holland), and the continuation of his BBC broadcast series, "Meet Me at the Tower." That's retirement?

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In Kenmore, New York, Bob Sieben faced a big job. For some time he had been planning a new home, one where there would be more room for the family pet to romp in. So he decided to build. Now he's in the process of selling his present home and the "pet," a three-rank organ Bob built from scratch, must be removed and stored until the move is complete. Then the 3-ranker must be installed in the New Home. Sound familiar?

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The Los Angeles chapter scheduled an extraordinary treat for September 9th, a rare appearance on pipes (the Wiltern 4/37 Kimball) by the one and only Don Baker. The Chapter cleared the date through Conn's district manager, "Buzz" Olson last Spring and Don was as eager as ever to return to pipes as a change from his regular routine of playing Conn-certs. (See review on page 38.)

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The New York Chapter's "Horse-shoe" newsletter advises that Gaylord Carter was scheduled for a return stanza to the Tower theatre in Philly on October 21, including his collection of sing-alongs, cartoons and silent movies which made his earlier show at the 3/15 Wurlitzer such a memorable occasion.

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Word from Sacramento, Calif., indicates that the "SRO" sign was up on both nights (August 25 and 26) that Eddie Dunstedter played the 4/15 Morton at the Carl Greer Inn. The event was given some advance promotion in local newspapers and through organ clubs, so the multitudes flocked in from as far away as "the city by the bay" (over 100 miles) to hear the famed maestro. One very hip guest was

George J. Kilgen of the organbuilding family who was lavish in his compliments to Don Zeller for the top condition of the organ. And it was good to hear Eddie again, said George, "Last time I heard him was on a 2-manual straight organ in the Kilgen St. Louis plant. And that was some time ago." Later, George, Eddie and Vee (Eddie's bride) huddled in a booth and hashed over old times, even promised our man in Sacramento, Major H. A. Sommer, a double interview for later publication. Again Eddie showed evidence of "writer's cramp" from autographing his "E.D. Plays Requests" album, but he wasn't complaining.

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In his "Dateline Hawaii" column, published in the weekly Honolulu "TV Time," Jack Wilson publicly thanked the group which rescued the 15-rank Robert Morton from the doomed Princess theatre. The plan is to set it up in a new home when one is secured. Jack writes, "We should thank this group . . . all too many of the nicer things of life — theatres in particular . . . are being converted to . . . parking lots. It's nice to know the big Morton will sing once again. Kudos to Alvin Watson and his dedicated group!" Amen!

The same Honolulu "TV Time" column revealed the whereabouts of a legendary character of the TO world who had slipped out of sight. Wilson writes, "How many have heard the delightful Alice Blue at Pearl City Tavern? She's an old time theatre organist who is going strong on a new instrument which looks like a cross between a rocket launching pad and a grease rack. Hammond tells us they call it the 'X66'. Alice is worth hearing." True — so true. Alice Blue has been worth hearing since she started cueing silent movies — years before the "fabulous '20s" began. She went to Hawaii two years ago to become a beach comber. But she couldn't stay away from music.

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The teenager made his appearance in a bright yellow oilskin raincoat and broadbrimmed "sou'wester" hat, winter and summer. As he stepped to the short keyboard on the top deck of the Ohio River steamer "Showboat," and opened the "throttle," the bank of bright brass whistles before him came alive with ear-shattering music. And the wisdom of the rainwear became immediately obvious to retreating on-lookers as the youthful calliapist became enveloped in billowing steam from the three octaves of tubular whistles. The lad grew up to be Johnny Duffy, long a bright spot in the TO world, mainly through his recordings

on the Joe Kearns and Columbia Square Wurlitzers. Johnny loves to teach and has hit upon the idea of distributing his brand of organ lessons beyond the confines of Southern California by means of individually tailored lessons via tape recording. You send Johnny a list of 25 of your favorite selections (this tells him a lot about your musicality), information about your grade (beginner to pro) and a check for \$14.95. From the information supplied, Johnny prepares and mails you a taped lesson (any standard tape speed or cassette) complete with assignment plus examples and tips on how to "make it happen." Then he watches his mailbox, biting his nails, awaiting your return tape breathlessly. And if you want to skip a lesson, just mail him a blank tape.

Of his Ohio River excursion steamer days as a calliapist, Johnny has few fond memories. "I sweltered inside that raincoat surrounded by clouds of steam — even on cold winter days."

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Our quip in the June VOX POPS column (page 33), suggesting that Lee Erwin send Billy Nalle \$2.00 for the flattering comments organist Billy made about Lee's cueing of "The Eagle" at the Atlanta Fox, got some positive results: Lee sent a surprised Billy Nalle two crisp, one-dollar bills in the mail. To the BOMBARDE, Lee confided, "It's a pleasant experience to find out that someone you suspect is a nice guy proves to be exactly that." Actually, there are two nice guys involved in this mutual admiration exchange, and the fact that the dollars involved are of the Confederate variety (received in change while Lee was in Atlanta) is no gage of Lee's penuriousness, or lack of it. He just knows that Billy is a southern gentleman who believes "the South will rise again."

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Organist Bob Vaughn reminisces about his contribution to the "golden era" between 1925 and 1929: "I studied under Roy Metcalfe, head organist at the Imperial theatre in Long Beach, Calif., in the late '20s — a wonderful film player. The big films came to the Imperial; Roy played them on a 2/12 Morton (if I remember correctly). I played the little houses in Long Beach; the Brayton (2-manual Marr & Colton), the Home (a very dinky 2-manual Smith), the Dale (2-manual church-type Moller, with console in the rear of the balcony!), the Ebell (2-manual Morton) and the Carter (I recall it as a 2/8 Wurlitzer). I was at the Carter when sound swallowed us. Not a very impressive roster of organs, but I missed playing very few of the big films."

After 40 years, Bob is back playing for silent films at the Avenue theatre in San Francisco, and loving it more than ever.



The curious inspect the curious instrument. All of the percussions are unenclosed for a 'go for baroque' effect at "Pipes 'N 'Pizza." STUFOTO

Sorry to report that "Monk's Musical Pizza" in Covina, Calif. (see story in Feb. 1969 TOB) has closed its doors, apparently from lack of patronage. At the same time we are overjoyed to announce the opening (in July) of "Pipe 'n Pizza," located in Reseda in California's San Fernando Valley. The owners are Ed Waters and Bill Geimke, both without previous experience with either pipe organs or with food handling, but who were inspired to emulate the "patron saint" of the "pipes and pizza" movement, Carsten Henningsen, whose "Pizza Joynt" in Hayward (near Oakland), Calif. is the home shrine for many similar disciples. The organ is a 2/10 (style 215) Wurlitzer installed in two floor-level chambers. Glenn Hardman was the opening organist, and Bob Garretson (who played at "Monk's until it closed) is the current artist. Business is great report the owners. Full story in the next TOB.



BOB GARRETSON
a switch in pasta parlors.

STUFOTO

From Canada, Terry Harvey reports a successful series of pop concerts he has sponsored in a Catholic Church in North Surrey, British Columbia, where he has installed a 2/6 Seeburg-Smith theatre organ with all the usual percussers. The series included pop con-

certs by Korla Pandit (twice), Gaylord Carter, Harold Ramsey and Dick Schrum. The instrument came from the Strand theatre, in Brandon, Manitoba and Terry has put it in tip-top shape. Although it is in the church proper, there is no restriction on the type of music played, and no resulting complaints. Terry is currently sketching out his 1970 series and is dickering with Johnny Duffy for a Saint Patrick's Day concert near March 17. If it jells it'll be a great musical day for the Irish, and for all who can crowd into the edifice to hear Johnny on pipes.

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British organ fans are still up in arms about the dearth of their favorite instrument on the government-controlled BBC radio and TV channels. A man on the Isle of Wight collected 43,000 signatures on a petition he presented to the BBC to stop plans to cancel Dudley Savage's once-a-month pipe broadcast from Plymouth. And in Britain proper, James Ward Stuchlik continues to collect signatures after flinging a petition with over 55,000 signatures protesting the lack of organ music at the BBC. The embarrassed BBC made a small concession with one new program entitled, "The Organist Entertains." "Not enough!" cried Stuchlik, merrily collecting ammo for another assault on the BBC programme department. On this side of the pond, wonder if there are any organlovin' citizens ready to take on CBS or NBC?

CHICAGO'S BILL BENEDICT — Man Extraordinaire

A man who possesses a seemingly endless supply of energy, a quick sense of humor and keen sense of responsibility . . . a peacemaker . . . willing to help out in any way . . . ran my errands to the printers . . . typed name tags . . . an educator . . . these are but a few of the comments expressed by CATOE members about our chairman.

It takes a rather special type person to co-ordinate a convention of the likes as just witnessed in Chicago and it takes foresight on the part of that co-ordinator to spot any stumbling blocks along the way and to iron them out ahead of time. Things came off smoothly and with the same quality that CATOE attempts to achieve in all its shows — first class entertainment. There were so many things going on all at once, but Bill seemed to always be there and on top of everything. CATOE is indeed fortunate in having Bill as our Chairman and are proud to have shared him with the national group.

Those of us who have had the good fortune to work closely with Bill are aware of his kindnesses and the amount of time he spends involved in CATOE activities. He is dedicated and has brought our group a long way. CATOE now numbers almost 300 — almost double what we were one short year and a-half ago.

Thank you, Bill, for your inspiration and thank you for a job well done — the Convention was handled beautifully!

Ellsasser Mending from Injuries

It has been learned from a source close to the organist that Richard Ellsasser is recovering from the injuries sustained during an automobile accident last December and has already resumed his concert career.

During the afternoon of December 5, 1968, the prominent organist (who is also an ATOEr) was involved in a head-on collision at Cambridge Springs, Pennsylvania. He had come there to play a concert that evening. His injuries

were serious and resulted in paralysis of his right side. An operation during the spring months was completely successful and on May 15 his doctors cleared the way for his manager to resume bookings. Among the first concerts since the accident were a series of two (July 23 and 30) played on the huge concert organ in the Great Hall of the Hammond Museum in Gloucester, Mass., long one of Ellsasser's favorites. □

ENGLAND

Keep abreast of the theatre organ hobby in England through the 'Journal of the Cinema Organ Society,' four issues (or equivalent) annually plus monthly newsletters. Current organ events in the British Isles, history, photos, stoplists, commentaries, technical articles, organists' biographies, news from overseas, record reviews, and more. \$5.00 (£1, 15s. Od.) yearly. Send money order to Mr. Len Hudson, 22, Oakwood Close, Chase Road, Southgate, London, N.14. England.