



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 6¢ postcard to get it to VOX POPS Editor, Box 3564, Granada Hills, California 91344. If the contributor can afford an 8¢ stamp, why not include a black and white photo which need not be returned.

Conducted by Stu Green

Rex Koury returned to the Old Town Music Hall in El Segundo, Calif. in November for his second concert there, and also to present his original score for the epic Cecil B. DeMille film "Kings of Kings." He played three presentations on the 4/24 Wurlitzer, and suffered but one cipher. He was delighted that proprietors Coffman and Field had installed a huge "en chamade" Chinese gong because the film calls for that sound. Rex is enthusiastic about living in Reno where



Rex got the gong. — (Stufoto)

he moved to escape the smog and rat race of Los Angeles living.

Al Emola and Paul Loomis, who maintain the Link organ in the Roberson Center for Fine Arts in Binghamton, N.Y., had a 4-day organ tour in November in the Philadelphia-New Jersey area. They visited the Jim Carter, George Allen, Lowell Ayars and Al Bizik home installations, Wanamaker Store, Brookline Theatre, Tower Theatre, Dickinson High School, and Longwood Gardens. Could this tour be aimed toward a bid for the ATOS convention in 1976 which would mesh with the USA's 200th birthday? Some in the Delaware Valley Chapter are willing.



Doc Bebko at the 4/15 Barton in the Coronado Theatre.

Ah! The power of the press! In August 1970, we reported in this column that organist Doc Bebko had discovered a 4/15 Barton in the Coronado Theatre in Rockford, Illinois, and that the management was willing to let proven enthusiasts restore the 1926 instrument. CATOE members took the bit in their teeth; for much of the past year, they have diligently applied their efforts to this task. During Thanksgiving weekend, Doc Bebko returned to Rockford and performed an hour-long recital for an audience of 100 friends and associates of theatre manager Russ Stevenson and West W. Wilcox, old friend of the organist.

"This is one of the most immaculate and beautiful houses I have ever seen," says Doc. Vincent Price appeared there a few months ago in conjunction with one of his films and admonished: "Whatever you do, do not ever change one particle of this theatre. It is magnificent. Absolutely unbelievable in this day and age." Doc says that the organ still needs some work, but the crew, led by George Smafield, is bound

to make this instrument one of the best on the concert circuit. Though Doc had no time to acquaint himself with the Barton (the first he ever played), the response encouraged him to promise a return engagement next year.

Another word about the restored Coronado Barton comes from organist Stanton A. Hyer of North Miami Beach, Florida. Stan invested his vacation in a trip to Rockford where he remembered the Barton from early boyhood and later played it for interludes during high school days. Stan found theatre manager Russell Stevenson most cooperative in showing off his restored treasure. Stan writes "the theatre was a joy to behold. Clean, no chipped paint or plaster, thoroughly lamped and as sparkling as when new. The Barton has the same lush tone I remembered. CATOE's Orril Dunn came in while I was there and played several selections so I could wander through the auditorium and soak up the sound. The morning passed in what seemed like moments and I emerged from the Coronado with a big lump in my throat. Thank you messrs Dunn and Stevenson and CATOE for one of the nicest days of my vacation."

Ann Leaf continues to be busier than a one-armed paperhanger. Following her eastern tour to Detroit, Rochester and Binghamton in October, she returned home to Los Angeles to start scoring, and then to play for two showings of "The Student Prince" at the First Film Exposition of Hollywood at the Chinese Theatre, a 10-day showing of all classes of pictures. She also sat in with a 23-piece orchestra to cue "The Ten Commandments." The "Mighty Mite" is indeed a bundle of energy.

Another gal organist with a lot of moxie is eastern organist Rosa Rio, whose concert schedule seems endless (she played eleven concerts in 1971). Rosa was set for a concert on the 2/10 Wurlitzer in the State theatre, Waterbury, Conn. on January 14, and on April 28 and 29 she'll titillate a Rodgers during two public concerts to be held in the Congregational Church at Huntington, Conn. Then on May 16 its

back to pipes for a stint at the No. Tonawanda Riviera theatre's 3/15 Wurlitzer (yes, it has grown) for the Niagara Frontier Chapter.



Dewey Cagle — (Photo by Jimmy Connor)

Many ATOS members, especially those in Central New York State, have been wondering what has happened to the ex-Loew's State Syracuse 4/20 Wurlitzer, which was sold to an organ broker in March 1965 and spirited away before the Syracuse enthusiasts, who had restored it, could have a chance to bid on it. It is now owned by San Lorenzo, California "Ye Olde Pizza Joynt" operator, Carsten Henningsen, who has it in storage. Carsten says it will go into a new Pizza Joynt when a suitable location is found. "But the location must be right — like the No. 1 spot," he says. According to Dewey Cagle, the walking encyclopedia of west coast installations, "Henningsen knows this business as no one else!"

Syracuse's favorite theatre organist, Carleton James, reports that a standing-room-only crowd witnessed his accompaniment to a silent movie comedy program at the New York State Fairgrounds (ex-Keith's 3/11 Wurlitzer) on December 12. Laurel & Hardy and Buster Keaton films provided the merriment. Carleton has moved into a new ranch-style home, and is now collecting data and pictures for his biography to be published in THEATRE ORGAN.

When the ATOS conventioners in Seattle last July stopped at Steve's "Gay 90's" in South Tacoma for their smorgasbord lunch, they saw the makings of a fine Wurlitzer installation. The 3/8 organ is now operating, and

the display ads run in newspapers emphasize the instrument with a picture of the console backed by pipes. "The gang at Steve's welcomes you to old-fashioned fun, plus old time favorites at the mighty Wurlitzer organ — the Northwest's only variety show. Two shows Friday nite, and three on Saturday nite with can-can girls and all the gang in a nostalgic trip back to the good old days." Puget Sound Chapter: When do we come back?

Canada's "Mr. Theatre Organ," Clealan Blakely, reports from his visit to the Roberson Center in Binghamton, N.Y. on November 21, that the organ sounds vastly improved since his visits of a year ago. Lee Erwin did the honors, and his concert was described as "most enjoyable."

The Rochester Theatre Organ Society had its annual meeting on December 3. Directors elected are: Joahn Fox, Stuart Moffatt, Don Hall and Jack Fulreader. Among plans for the following months are the hoped-for installation of a 3/8 Wurlitzer in an auditorium in the city, an expanded education program and revision of the constitution and by-laws. RTOS membership enjoyed a 14% gain during 1971 and was reported at 726 family memberships.

Billy Nalle's head has been "in the clouds" between concerts and his seventh annual week in Hartford, playing Christmas music at a bank. Cause for this elation is his learning that his Project 3 album has surpassed in sales all previous theatre organ albums released by the standard commercial record firms. This includes sales of all single commercially-released albums in the stereo era which spans 17 years. Billy is getting good mileage also from his article, "Renaissance of the Theatre Organ." MUSIC JOURNAL was the third major magazine to reprint it. Incidentally Billy used waiting periods during September jury duty in New York criminal court to plan his programs for his October 22 Indianapolis Rivoli concert as well as the Nov. 6 bash at the Dick Kline studio in Frederick, Maryland. This may account for the snatches of Prisoners' Song and We're Hanging Danny Deever which are said to have haunted both concerts.

Mary Bowles reports that Dick Kline's big Wurlitzer installation in his Frederick, Md. home is nothing short of fabulous. She was in attendance with 260 others who jammed themselves into Dick's spacious abode to hear Billy Nalle. "What an installation; what a setting! Simply incredible!", she says. That's Mary's testimonial for an installation which is slated to be a focal point during the ATOS Convention in July.

It is reported that veteran radio and theatre organist Fred Feibel is still walking a foot off the ground because of his election to the ATOS Hall of Fame. Fred whose Organ Reveille radiocasts in the '30s made getting up a little less painful, has applied for ATOS membership, stating "I'm looking forward to being a member and enjoying your fine publication." The news that Fred made the Hall set former radio organist Bert Buhrman to pleasant reminiscing. Now organist/teacher at the School of the Ozarks at Point Lookout, Mo., Bert recalled the old, hectic radio and early TV days in New York; "Fred is such a nice guy. We both worked at CBS and he always volunteered to play my spots during my vacations — even to covering for those organists I was subbing for."

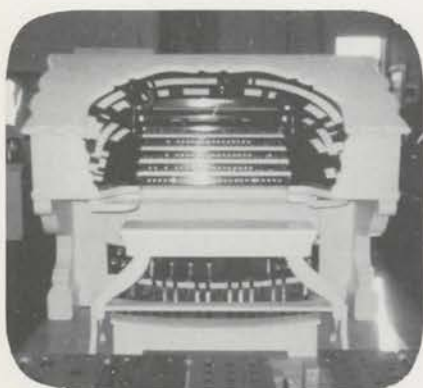
Our recent Harry Blair Legend kicked up more dust from veteran organists than any other recent article. The two part story prepared by organist Rose Diamond presented the tribute



Eddie Dunstedter (caught during a tape-to-disc transfer of tunes he recorded). (Stufoto)

of a representative group of organists, more than enough to tell the basic story of two wonderful people, but Rose was disappointed in the response to her initial effort to collect information; only a few of the organists Rose contacted by mail replied. Others begged off — “too busy.” Rose, who lives in California, had no way of contacting the New Yorkers other than by pelting them with letters — until Rosa Rio volunteered to do the East Coast leg work. But the publication of the two installments got a rise from a whole raft of Blair friends Rose didn't know about. Notes have been received from Bob Mack, Fred Feibel and a phone call from Eddie Dunstedter who has some accolades to add. And, wonder of wonders, Jack Ward has dug up a photo of the Blairs. So, it looks as though we'll have another installment as soon as enough material accumulates.

For over 2½ years, the Seattle firm of Balcom & Vaughn has worked to build an authentic replica of the New York Paramount Wurlitzer console to replace the original destroyed by fire in Wichita. According to Bill Bunch in an illustrated article in the *Seattle Times* on November 11, his firm will ship the console by furniture van to Wichita. About 95% of the one-ton keydesk was made in Seattle. Manual keys were made in England, and the hand-carved and painted designs on the console will be done in Wichita. Total cost: \$50,000.



\$50,000 worth of console ready for shipment. — (Photo by H. A. Sommer)

What is promised as “one of the country's great pipe organs”, is now being installed in the Concert Hall of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington. The \$200,000

Aeolian-Skinner will be dedicated early in 1972 with Paul Calloway, organist at Washington Cathedral, at the console. Mrs. Catherine Filene Shouse secured the grant for the organ from the Filene Foundation of which she is a trustee. Sounds like another interesting installation to visit during the ATOS convention in July.

One would never believe it, but the well-known “Dainty Miss”, organist Helen Dell, says she has been doing “funny things lately.” She played the music for the internationally-televised Mexican boxing matches, in which she reports “the better participant emerged triumphant.” Then, she joined the “horsey set” and played for 10 performances of the International Horse Show. All this in addition to her other concerts and the marketing of her many records have kept Helen hopping.



Bob and Alice Power. Their Rodgers-with-the-mostest went through growing pains. (Stufoto)

In Camarillo, Calif., Bob Power, owner of the most elaborate (and costly) Rodgers theatre electronic organ, took stock of his instrument. True, it was the nearest replica of a theatre pipe organ extant, yet Bob had a feeling that it could be brought tonally closer to pipe sound. But who would have the knowhow? Then he recalled reading here about the opening of Lee Haggart's pipe shop in Granada Hills, and made an appointment with Lee. It was a fortunate choice because pipe doctor Lee is also an electronics engineer who was once on the Hammond design staff. Lee arrived with Harvey Heck and tackled the “Style 260” Rodgers in only two areas — sound dispersal and tuning. Lee and Harvey required only one day to create an improvement in sound quality which defies description. It was good sound before; now it's often difficult to determine that the sound



Lee Haggart in his pipe shop. He helped tone generators move closer to pipes.

is very different from the pipe original. Comparisons aside, the new sound is extremely satisfying, sometimes thrilling.

Results: Bill Thomson came by and after a few minutes workout exclaimed: “I'd sure like to broadcast this baby!” Next came Lyn Larsen: “I'd like to record it again!”

For years this publication (and especially this column) has encouraged electronic organ builders to go to the source, the original, for their patterns; to study the theatre pipe organ in order to make electronic replicas. It seems like the most natural procedure, yet very few have done it. Even examining the merchandise isn't enough; an interpreter/translator is needed. The Rodgers Co., under the enlightened guidance of then prexy Rodgers Jenkins, is one of the few which used a theatre organ as source material (the now circa 44-rank mostly Wurlitzer on the Vollum estate near Portland Oregon). The Rodgers engineers and tonal advisors developed a basically fine instrument but it took the pipe and electronic knowhow of old pro Lee Haggart to accomplish what pipe factory men call “finishing.” The Rodgers now has a “high gloss” finish in its tonal spectrum.

Remember the recent article in this magazine announcing the establishment of a library of silent movie cue music and a collection of tapes on which prominent organists and those associated with the hobby would tell their own stories. Mary Bowles, the originator of the plan, visited various parts of the western USA following the 1971 convention and wherever she stopped she broached her plan. Result: In Southern Calif. Mary's commercial was so effective that she has



Organists Rose Diamond and Arlo Hults interview one another in Arlo's garage studio for the tape library project. — (Stufoto)

organists interviewing one another, and the tapes are piling up. From the Hollywood area she has received taped interviews with Randy Sauls, Rose Diamond, Lee Haggart and Arlo Hults — and one with Eddie Dunstedter is in preparation. Stu Green has been tossing the questions for most of the interviews.

Hot Rumor Department:

Looks like Phoenix Arizona might soon be a home for ex-giants of the theatre! Bill Brown has the five manual Chicago Paradise Theatre Wurlitzer in his home, and now our underground information channels say two more big ones are to be playing in Phoenix soon. One, said to a 4/37 Wurlitzer, just might be (by the process of elimination) from the gone Brooklyn Fox. It has already been purchased and shipped. The second one is described as a 4/42 Wurlitzer. 4/42 Wurlitzer? Kick that one around for a while.

Approximately 1700 enthusiastic patrons gave a standing ovation at the Rochester, N.Y. Auditorium Theatre on November 13, when organist Dennis James, in his third appearance, this time with the Singing Hoosiers from Indiana University, presented a new approach to a theatre organ concert. The 48-voice group, led by Rochester-born Robert E. Stoll, showed new ideas in presenting old and new songs, sprinkling them with choreography, humor and organ accompaniment, all tastefully executed. While in the city, Dennis appeared on the Louise Wilson TV show.

The Kiwanis Club of West Toronto, Operators of the famed Casa Loma, has begun to utilize the ex-Shea's Toronto Theatre Wurlitzer which has

been installed in the Casa by Toronto enthusiasts. On October 28 at its weekly luncheon meeting, Horace Lapp, who played the instrument in its original location, and later when it was in Maple Leaf Gardens, presented a program in which he played the organ and told of its history.



BILL WORRAL

The newest organmag editor/publisher

His part in the debacle disturbed him deeply. Organist Bill Worrall had been instrumental in promoting over 200 subscriptions in his home area (Long Beach, Calif.) to that much-promoted midwestern organ magazine — which promptly folded, its obligations to subscribers mostly unfulfilled. So, when Bill launched his own publication, *THE ORGANIST*, in January he entered a gratis one year subscription for all persons whose subscriptions to the dead magazine he had promoted. Bill Worrall is an energetic go-getter (his stint as editor-publisher of the excellent Long Beach Professional Organists "Stars and Notes" was a personal triumph) but one with an obvious sense of responsibility. We wish him well in his venture into the national publishing field. *THE ORGANIST* promises to be complementary to rather than competitive with most existing publications. Focussed on the interests of both amateur and professional organists, its forecast lists special organ arrangements, where to buy sheet music and records, profiles of prominenti, reviews of events (countrywide), how to get music published and recorded, where organ service is available locally, organ club news and lots more. One big advantage, says Bill, is that the monthly will not represent any one special interest

group, but all of them that space will allow. The cost is \$5.00 yearly (12 issues). For further info, drop a card to *THE ORGANIST*, Box 398, Lynwood, Calif. 90262.



Lyn Larsen retiring — (Stufoto)

A few issues back we passed on a rumor that Lyn Larsen had retired from the concert field. Glad to report the rumor had no foundation; the lad was merely loafing and storing up strength and ideas for his ambitious winter series of concerts which started with a December concert at the San Diego Fox 4/32 Morton and will end with the San Gabriel, Calif. Wurlitzer dedication during the Regional Convention in February. Between the two, Lyn has booked a slew of appearances which will take him far from his Hollywood headquarters — dates with pipes in Detroit, Rochester, Syracuse and Binghamton. Guess he got tired of retirement.

It isn't often that the organ hobby world is honored by a visitor from far off New Zealand. The last time Mat Matthews' freighter docked at Long Beach Calif., it was on the night Don Baker played a concert at the L.A. Wiltern, and hobbyists met the young ship's officer at the dock and spirited him to the Wiltern. That was two years ago. Late in the fall of 1971 the wind was right and we knew Mat's ship was nearing Long Beach again — with a new load of raw tuna. This time Mat was able to catch Carol Jones' winter concert. Obviously impressed by both the music and the girl, Mat muttered, "She's a lot prettier than Don Baker!" Mat had lots of news from "way down under": Addie Aiken's 2/10 Wurlitzer (from the Embassy theatre, Wellington) has been sold and moved from Tokoroa High School to Tauranga Town Hall. Len



Carol and Mat. A pleasant visit 'up over.'
(Stufoto)

Southward owns the 260 Special (3/16 with Posthorn) removed from the Auckland Civic theatre and is prepping it for installation in a Vintage Car Museum in Wellington. And the former Kosy theatre 6-rank Wurlitzer roll player, which for so many years was John Holden's home installation, has been sold to Len Southward. Finally, the Auckland Town Hall organ, once with 52 ranks, now boasts 97 ranks. Mat promised to return next year with more goodies — and probably another load of raw tuna.

A self-addressed, stamped (8¢) large envelope mailed to Junchen Organ Co., 401 First Street, Sherrard, Illinois, 61281, will get parts seekers a list of available chests, actions, toy counters, percussions, tremos, consoles, regulators, relays and both complete sets and single pipes. Great browsing.

In Los Angeles, the Wiltern 4/37 Kimball maintenance crew arrived the after New Years to give the old giant its regular rubdown. The blower switch was pushed and in a moment there was a cacophony of ciphers. The crew traced the trouble to the relays in a chamber damaged by the February 1971 earthquake. Several days of rain around Christmas had seeped through the damaged roof and soaked 74 pneumatics to soggy uselessness. Mold was all over the ruined leather. "It looked like a penicillin factory" said LA chapter program director Bob Carson as he reached for a phone to inform Tom Hazleton that his January concert would have to be postponed — probably until May.

From Long Beach, Calif., motorcycle merchant Joe Koons reports that his new console "may not be the

best but I'll bet it's the prettiest 3-manual Wurlitzer around". He has it mounted on the remodeled platform and figures wiring it in will take about a month of spare time between cycle sales. It's a hybrid, of circa 19 ranks and Joe plans to add a piano, 16' pedal Tibia and Posthorn to round it out tonally. It's a well balanced instrument. Sounded good on the Don Thompson record.

As if he didn't already have enough to keep him ridiculously busy, Ashley Miller seems to have taken a liking to basketball. In November he spent a

couple of weeks rehearsing and taping the 4/26 Wurlitzer in Long Island University's gymnasium (the former Brooklyn Paramount) for his new Reader's Digest album, and now he has gone all the way. Every Tuesday and Saturday night, as well as the odd Thursday night, New York area organ fans will find Ashley perched high above the basketball court in Madison Square Garden getting some marvelous sounds of the Rodgers Special theatre organ as the Knicks and their opponents dribble around on the floor below. Two hours of Ashley Miller's music is a bargain for the price of any basketball game.

Closing Chord

F. Donald Miller, member of our Hall of Fame, passed away December 2, 1971. Perhaps the epitome of Theatre organists, in all of his distinguished career, no appearance could equal his performance at the Detroit Convention in 1967. See article in THE-ATRE ORGAN BOMBARDE, June 1968, for an interview taped by Claude Sheridan.

Don Miller's passing is especially moving because he was one of the few remaining theatre organists of long experience who kept in touch with the theatre organ world until the end. His 1967 concert for the ATOE National Convention showed that he had not retired in spirit and practice although the passing of time had taken opportunities for public performance. He was one of the few who kept up with the times. He was a religious man, deeply concerned with our moral decline, so much so that he often wrote to government officials exhorting them to help make our country decent and beautiful again. He was a modest man, gentle in his criticism of other players and never vaunting his own performances. He was not guilty of the sin of pride. He loved beautiful things — the lovely ceramics his wife created, and the beautiful organ solos he played in Detroit. He was especially happy about a solo called "Blossoms" that he played at the Broadway Strand Theatre. Using lighting effects and actors and singers he presented "Apple Blossoms" (the music of spring), "Cherry Blossoms" (the loveliness of Japan), and "Orange Blossoms" (the flowers of weddings) in one lovely specialty. It was this kind of beauty that he stood for. His

passing brings sharply to our minds the values of art, style, and dignity that we shall have to try to foster without his presence.

John Muri

I met Don shortly after he came here from Saginaw, Michigan in the mid Twenties. He played at the Broadway Capitol and I played on the opposite shift from him. I was thrilled with his ultra modern arrangements of songs of those days. He was a handsome man and very kind and considerate. I remember a little incident that stays with me. My mother had given me a small hand mirror which I took with me to all the theatres in the dressing rooms. When I left the Broadway Capitol and went to the Palms State, I left the mirror by mistake in Don's dressing room. When I went to get it, Don said "Oh Marge can't you leave it with me? It has brought me such good luck."

Don went down South to play after that and later returned to the Fisher Theatre where he performed for quite a long time. After the termination of that job he went to the Dearborn Inn and was there for several years. To my knowledge that was Don's last professional engagement. He was an Honorary member of D.T.O.C. and gave several concerts which were magnificent.

I did not see Don for quite a while before his death but corresponded with him and was greatly grieved at his passing as I know the whole music world is.

Marge Nivens