



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

Johnny Duffy took the medic's analysis sitting down. It seemed more like a death sentence to the TV and recording organist: the reason he could not coordinate his left hand and foot was because x-ray's revealed a tumor on his brain — and tests revealed the tumor was malignant. Unless immediate surgery was undertaken Johnny would soon become a senseless vegetable, then die. But even surgery could assure him only a 50-50 chance of



JOHNNY DUFFY

survival. Johnny was understandably scared, but he decided on surgery in the hope of turning up the plus side of the 50-50 coin. His hopes weren't bolstered when he was visited by the surgeon: "He was just a kid — not even 30 yet. And this kid was going to poke around inside my skull!"

But the "kid" knew his stuff; he removed the tumor and left Johnny breathing. For a few days Johnny's left side was numb and unresponsive, but that has since cleared up and he's feeling great. He's not out of the woods yet; tests are being made to track down any remaining evidence of malignancy but meanwhile Johnny is happy about his victory over the man in black. "It's great just to be alive! There's nothing much worse than a brain tumor and I've survived it's removal. The rest has just got to be easier."

Music Trades Magazine in its February issue carried an article by John McLaren, vice president of Yamaha Keyboard Div. in which he stated that 1972 should be a good year for the organ industry. "Basically, the organ market is still selling nostalgia to the over-40's and up who have fond memories of the theatre organ, skating rink organ and the like. The organ industry has not done nearly enough, it seems, to cultivate a broad-based taste for organ music among younger generations. This needs to be done soon. The theatre organ buffs won't last forever."

Wonder if he realizes how many young people are ATOS members or how many young artists are already on the theatre organ concert circuit? Perhaps ATOS must do a better job of selling itself — its concerts, activities and conventions, to the general public. At least it's encouraging to learn that Yamaha has discovered the theatre pipe organ. For years we've been predicting wonders when they did so.

A recent addition to the ATOS membership is Vic Hyde, a professional entertainer, billed as the "International Music Phenomenon." In his early years he was a church organist, then worked up a novelty vaudeville act in which he played 2, 3, or 4 trumpets simultaneously. His 43-year career included a tour with Olsen & Johnson, appearing in 67 cities during which "I fell in

love with the theatre organ." His act played the New York Paramount where he "got to know and enjoy Don Baker;" the Detroit Fox; the State-Lake, Chicago and Oriental theatres in Chicago; the Orpheum in Los Angeles; the Palaces in New York and Cleveland; and the Temple in Rochester. He remembers Jesse Crawford when the poet took over a dance band intact, added two white Hammonds for Mrs. Crawford and himself, and went on tour.

Vic says: "I should have joined ATOS 13 years ago; and as a new member, hope to be of some good to ATOS. I love to be put to work to make a club hum with enjoyment." He didn't identify the lucky chapter.

Accidents will happen to organists in proportion to those in other professions, it seems. California's Helen Dell had a painful accident to one of her fingers awhile back. And Gaylord Carter cut his thumb while using it as a beer can opener. Latest casualty is organist Doc Bebko. While in New York he was running across a street, jumped over a puddle, slipped and broke a foot bone. Doc ended up with a cast to his knee plus a Reece boot. His wife, Stella has been waiting on him a lot, "Which is wonderful," he says.

The name of Ann Leaf is a famous one in the theatre organ world. But how many know that she has a talented sister whose activities ran along the same lines years ago? On March 27-29, Esther Leaf Du Boff of Omaha, Nebraska played the accompaniment to Cecil B. DeMille's 1927 classic *King of Kings* at Omaha's Military Theatre. "It's been 40 years since I accompanied a silent film", she said, "But the audience is seeing the picture as it was then and hearing the original themes plus some of my own musical scoring, exactly as I played it years ago." Part of the proceeds went into a fund to maintain the 2/4 Wurlitzer, which is the task of the 30-member Cornhusker Theatre Organ Society.

Harry Jenkins had to make a choice. The veteran circus accompanist could remain at the Circus Museum in Sarasota, Florida, where he'd been playing two and three shows a day



COLONEL HARRY — The circus museum was confining. — (Lamb fotocomposite)

all winter, or go back "on the road" come spring with a choice of travelling circuses. The former AAF colonel weighed the factors carefully then decided he had been tied down to one spot long enough. The lure of the travelling show beckoned so "Colonel Harry" rejoined the DeWayne Brothers circus, touring the Northwest USA and southern Canada at the moment (see the June 1971 issue of THEATRE ORGAN, "The Circus is Coming!"). While playing for Museum performances he was visited by retired Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey bandmaster Merle Evans who was so impressed by the Hammond accompaniment of the circus acts that he sought Harry out to express his approval. The veteran theatre organist informs us that there are more circus organ jobs open than there are qualified musicians to fill them. As Harry once described the job, "It's like cueing silent movies but the film changes a little with each performance."



In Gaylordsville, Conn. youthful Peter Piliero, with an eye for historical perspective, did some digging in the files of the Danbury News-Times. He was rewarded with the discovery of a full page write up on the opening on Sept. 6, 1928 of the Danbury Palace with prominence given to the 3/10 Marr & Colton organ, The organist,

Norman Stuckey, invited the public to send in requests for opening night. Peter adds that the pipes, chests and relays are now the basic organ in the Opera House, Thomaston, Conn., but with a Kimball console, as chronicled in the Dec. '71 THEATRE ORGAN.



Dean McNichols — With a VW and the freeway, who needs an Orgoblo? — (Photo by Bruce)

When So. Calif. organist Dean McNichols had to take some pipes to Lee Haggart's pipe shop for doctoring he found his "sun roof" Volkswagen a useful vehicle for the 40 mile journey. He encountered only one difficulty; the "singing" of the pipes at freeway speeds became irksome, especially the growl of the 8' Bass C Diapason. So Dean stopped and covered the toe

holes with masking tape to shut them up.



Reports from Scotty's Castle in Death Valley, Calif. indicate that the Rex Koury concert sponsored by the U.S. Park Service on April 29 drew a record 100 to the isolated spot, with a good representation from ATOS chapters, especially the Sierra group. The 3/15 Welte (with Wurlitzer piano) was put in good shape by Fred Beeks. The district ranger, Wayne Schulz, impressed by the interest focussed on the organ, has expressed interest in a series of concerts to follow the Koury Opus. Rex's audience demanded "Rhapsody in Blue" and the patriotic medley which were such hits for him during the Great Western Regional Convention in Los Angeles a couple of months earlier. For the "Rhapsody" Rex was glad to have the piano working well.

Fred Beeks, who boasts a fine home installation in Reno, has been contracted by the Park Service to rebuild, restore, tune and maintain the instrument. It's one of the best-remembered impressions of Scotty's Castle and hasn't enjoyed regular maintenance since Lloyd Davey retired a few years ago.



When Helen Dell arrived at the LA Wiltern theatre for her winter concert she made for the dressing room she had used during previous concerts. But this time the room was filled from top to bottom with that stuff few theatres can exist without — cartons of popcorn. Stage manager Larry Jackson saved the day by inviting Helen to make her costume changes in his office, while he valiantly stood guard outside.



The 3/16 Wurlitzer installed by LA Chapter in the San Gabriel, Calif. Mission auditorium is attracting much local attention, so much that the city fathers have seen fit to schedule four summer concerts to be played by Lyn Larsen and with definite themes: "In the Good Old Summer Time" on June 24, "Hooray for Hollywood" on July 15, "Summer of '72" on August 19 and "The Roaring '20's" on Sept. 16. All fall on Saturday evenings at 8:30 PM. The series was launched with a press conference presided over by



Her Honor, Mayor Kennedy and Lyn: a busy summer. — (Stufoto)

San Gabriel's gal mayor and with promotion masterminded by Al White who is remembered for his standout promotion of the first George Wright sellout concert at the San Francisco Fox a few years ago. Lyn plans to include guest stars (vocalists and musicians), sing-alongs, and film clips from movie classics. Season tickets will sell for \$9.00 and \$12.00. For further info drop a card to Entertainment Concepts, Box 69630, Los Angeles, Calif. 90069.

"Guess I won't be able to 'retire' this summer" replied Larsen, who usually stores up steam for his always heavy fall concert schedule during the "dog days."

Another southern Californian with plenty to do this summer is pretty Donna Parker, the 16-year-old whose photo has appeared in this column often enough to rate a growl from the "Old Prospector" to the effect that we're turning into a girlie mag (old whiskers prefers burros!) Chances are that Donna will be photographed even more often now that she's been appointed official organist for all Los Angeles Dodger's home games. She has already gotten good coverage in the daily sports pages, including a photo taken at the Conn model 650 she'll be playing at the stadium. She's already been warned about bugging the umpires with "Three Blind Mice."

Arnold Bremler, who started his playing career by spelling the Foto-player he was paid to operate in a Bay Area nickelodeon, has long been a contributor to this column. Now re-

tired from running his Porterville, Calif. men's shop, he keeps abreast of organ doings locally, and in a town occupied by organbuilder Dick Villemain, they can be many. His latest squib is that Villemain has the Wurlitzer from the Oakland, Calif. Grand Lake theatre in his shop and is putting it in shape for a radiologist named Dr. Bell. With that cliffhanger, Arnold signed off to let the plot thicken.



Tom Hazleton — (Ehatpic)

A bow to CATOE's Bill Benedict for the very professional promotion announcing the Chicago club's public concerts. Well conceived flyers and press releases informed the public of Tony Tahlman's accompaniment of Chaplin's City Lights and Modern Times during March, Gaylord Carter's May 4th bout with the Coronado Barton Organ and Tom Hazleton's May 8 session at John Seng's 4/23 pride and joy installed in the seminary at Mundelein, Illinois. Chapter concert promoters can learn much from Bill Benedict's efforts. Perhaps a large self addressed stamped (8¢) envelope sent to Bill at Box 2103, Oak Park, Illinois 60302 might fetch a spare copy.

Mildred Alexander was selected to play the major concert heard during the second annual conference of California Council of Professional Organists Clubs held in Long Beach, Calif. May 21-24 at the Edgewater Hotel. Participation was limited to AFM members, according to advance publicity.

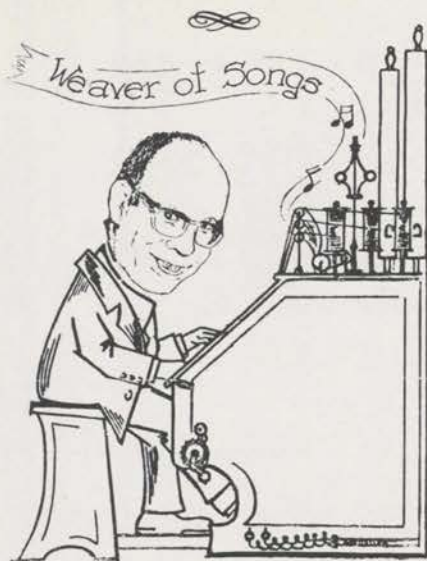
Geoff. Patterson reports that last Christmas season proved to be a bit much for Ashley Miller. In addition to his weekday duties at CBS churning out soulful fillers for Search for Tomorrow, he also played ten evenings in two weeks, including Christmas, and New Years nights, at Madison Square Garden for a series of college basketball games, sometimes two and three games a night. As if that weren't enough, his position as musical director of the Society for Ethical Culture called for full concerts each week during the holidays, all of which had to be carefully rehearsed.

Ashley spent a week in January recovering in the relaxing sun and sand of the Caribbean. On his return, Ashley plunged right back into the fray, and has reported a few Saturdays when he has been at the Garden console from one in the afternoon until eleven at night, only having to arise the next morning for a classical concert and service at Ethical Culture. The only rests he gets these days are the ones between the verses.

Peggy Wood, remembered for many famous roles from the first *Bittersweet* in London to such as the Mother Superior in the film version of *The Sound of Music*, also was the celebrated Marta Hansen, the family mama of the decade-long television series, *I Remember Mama*. She decided to celebrate her 80th birthday recently with a beautiful party at Manhattan's Cosmopolitan Club. She invited all the cast and production talent from the former show for a grand reunion. The theatre organ world was represented by Billy Nalle for Billy had played all the original music for the celebrated show from its beginning. It was an evening for memories and one to remember in its own right!

Jim Lahay, secretary of the Toronto Theatre Organ Club, says that the 4/15 Wurlitzer installation work is progressing in the third floor chamber at the Casa Loma. The city removed the plaster in the chamber openings, and shutters are being installed. A crew of nine has been working in an area with no ventilation, which forebodes a rough situation when the summer heat arrives. The boys are determined, however, and hope to finish the job by the end of the year. If not

then, certainly in the spring of 1973. The instrument came from Shea's Toronto theatre originally.



Eddie Weaver — The usual standing ovation.

A total of 1350 enjoyed Eddie Weaver's third concert at Rochester's Auditorium Theatre on April 21. A great favorite in Kodakville, Eddie had a program which encompassed the entire theatre organ spectrum. He played music from the classics (e.g. Poet & Peasant Overture) to the most recent pops (e.g. Archie Bunker theme). He also accompanied a sing-along, and a short silent, *Three Chimps Go To School*. The usual standing ovation was his reward.

The RTOS' new ushering setup under Ernest Weirich was inaugurated which provides a more professional approach to this phase of the operation. A more accurate head count is another benefit of the new procedure. Family RTOS membership now totals 790,

April 30 was a great day for organist Eddie Hanson; at 72 he had two recent records to his credit and a third in process. The theatre organ renaissance had discovered him and soon his fellow townsmen realized they had a celebrity in their midst. Local recognition came first from the ranks of Waupaca, Wisconsin's senior citizens, many of whom remembered Eddy's long career at Chicago consoles, dating from the early '20s. So, the 1972 Waupaca's "Senior Citizens' Day" honored Eddy by presenting him in concert at the Senior Citizens' Center.

The declaration stated "Waupaca citizens have a right to be proud of this Senior Citizen, and we feel privileged to present him in his 'Honors Concert'." Among the sponsors were the Mayor, City Council, Chamber of Commerce, Lions, Odd Fellows, Youth Center and a dozen other booster clubs. The resulting warmth was bound to hasten Eddy's recovery from recent surgery.

Porter Heaps, another name remembered from Chicago radio days, played his demo concert on the Saville organ moved into the Porterville (Calif.) Memorial Hall, then went to visit the pipe installation he'd heard so much about, the home of the Paul Moore's, located in the middle of an orange grove near town. Mrs. Moore (Marguerite) is the organ buff, he learned, and when he was ushered into the living room there were many organ buffs already waiting among the three consoles. It was a reception for Porter. He learned that Marguerite had installed the pipe organ in three years herself, after re-leathering it. The setup includes a 2-manual and 3-manual console, plus a plug-in organ for a "spare." "What a ball of energy" exclaimed Heaps, "She's in the retirement age bracket — but she doesn't know it."

Organist Bud Taylor came east to do his summer stint at the Surf City (New Jersey) Hotel Wurlitzer with a sense of well being based on the knowledge that back in California it had required three men to fill his boots as editor/writer/publisher of the *Los Angeles Pro Organist's Club* publication, OFF THE KEYBOARDS.



While playing the Surf City Wurlitzer, Bud couldn't help wonder how the triumvirate was making out — especially because one of them was none other than that illiterate ex-Bostonian whose "Elevator Shaft" column spindles these pages — Dinny Timmins!

From Portland, Oregon, Bill Peterson and Dennis Hedberg decided to try again, after the theatre they had counted on a home for the ex-Oriental theatre 3/13 Wurlitzer failed. Perhaps a restaurant next time.



Jim Melander at the 2/7. — (Stufoto)

When Jim Melander plays one of his infrequent concerts, those who savor gorgeous arrangements are drawn to the performance like ants to honey. So it was on April 11 at the Friends Church in Bell, Calif. Melander prefers to play concerts on small instruments and the very theatrical 2/7 Wurlitzer was ideal for the subtle, understated arrangements of pops and standards whose lushness is often achieved through great economy of registration. Jim, apparently unaware of his prowess as a concert draw, is content to teach organ. Luckily, many of Jim's students come very close to his very individual style.

Perhaps a few of the 2300 (a 4-year record) who attended the Keith Chapman concert at the Rochester Auditorium theatre remembered the long ago concert by the local Philharmonic during which feathers were released from the proscenium to simulate snow during the booming Tchaikowsky

"1812 Overture" finale. Chapman, who has played the Wanamaker store organ in Philly for six years, enlisted RTOS technicians to repeat the illusion, and then some. During the climactic moments of the old warhorse shotguns were fired into empty oil drums to simulate cannon, the shootin' irons being manned by two organists and a photographer. But the device rigged to release the feathery "snow" failed to trigger. Later, organ maintenance chief Doug Crocker came up with a leaky alibi: "Chapman's rendition of 'The Hot Canary' played before '1812' must have melted the snow!" How's that again?



From Sunnyvale, Calif. Jan Feller calls our attention to the Spring Conference of the American Federation of Information Processing Societies, representing some 20,000 computer professionals, held on May 16-18 in the Atlantic City Convention Hall, home of the world's largest pipe organ. A feature of the meet was a concert scheduled on the truly mighty Midmer-Losh played by 22-year-old Barbara Williams. After three days of perforated tape, spinning reels and digital philosophy galore, Barbara's direct digital audible excursions were no doubt welcome.



Randy smelled an organ in the wings, either pipes or transistors. — (Stufoto)

When Randy Sauls played his April 18 concert in Van Nuys (Calif.) High School auditorium he played it on a Rodgers model 340, the Hillsboro

firms finest transistor theatre model (actually the one stolen just prior to the 1971 Home Organ Festival, and later recovered intact, a loan from Rodgers dealer Phil Wickstrom). Yet Randy's mind was also on pipes; either a refurbishing of the ancient Murray-Harris straight organ in the hall, or its replacement with a donated theatre pipe organ a la the ATOS San Gabriel Mission Wurlitzer installation. Night School Principal Glenn Gardiner made a brief allusion to the idea while introducing Randy (who teaches classes there) and Randy barely mentioned the plan. Yet, when the well satisfied audience filed out into the night, quite a few dollars in donations were left behind to help make the hope become a reality.



Frank Lyboldt, who once played theatres in Long Island, Virginia and upstate New York, reports he recently had a great time at John Beck's 2/7 Wurlitzer in Dallas. Frank says that the organ has been juiced up with the addition of a Posthorn and an improved Tibia. Living now in Norfolk, Va., Frank is considering preparation of a biography for THEATRE ORGAN. He is also looking forward to attending the ATOS convention in July, and hearing Dick Kline's 4/28 Wurlitzer. "Dick and I have been friends for years," he says.



Clealan Blakely tells us that the console of the 5/111 Casavant in Toronto's Royal York Hotel Concert Hall has been disconnected and placed in storage. The hotel is involved in a \$2 million renovation program and the organ is in the way, so it is scheduled for removal. It was tentatively set to move it to Provo, Utah, but the deal fell through. Casavant, anyone?



The past few months have been noteworthy in the life of 21-year-old organist Dennis James. He has gone on tour with the Singing Hoosiers, a song-and-dance group from Indiana University. He has appeared in several concerts in the east. His new record was released by the Rochester Theatre Organ Society and is selling well. The day after his spectacular success at firing a shotgun during Keith Chapman's rendition of the "1812 Over-



Dennis James shows master classes how not to pose fingers for a digital romp among the ivories. — (Rochester Times-Union Photo)

ture" in Rochester, Dennis presided over a 4-hour master class of theatre organ instruction in the Auditorium Theatre. About 100 attended the session in which the styles of several organists were illustrated and analyzed. The class was a part of the RTOS educational program for those who want to learn as well as listen.



Bert Buhman and his colleagues at the School of the Ozarks in Pt. Lookout, Mo. were most happy with the lead feature in a recent THEATRE ORGAN concerning installation of their Wurlitzer. Other things have been happening for Bert and the box of whistles. In February, he recorded a series of sounds which will be used for background in Silver Dollar City's new attraction "Fire in the Hole", an enclosed ride and atmospheric attraction to open this summer. Then, for five successive Sundays in July, starting at 2:30 PM, Bert and the organ will be featured in "Music for a Sunday Afternoon." Contributing their musical talents will be singers Jean Parnell, Jean Fry and John Mizell; pianists Mary Bradley and Luis Rojas, and the Beacon Hill Theatre Chorus. A couple of silent films will be added during the series. Sounds like a good attraction for those enroute to and from the ATOS convention who must pass the area in July.

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