



The CIPHER HILL console. When Dean bought the organ, parts of the console were missing, including swell shoes and crescendo pedal. They were replaced by shoes from an Allen electronic. — (Floyd Tillman Photo)

To me, the Robinsons represent the ideal theatre-organ-loving couple. They have a beautiful piece of property with a panoramic view, a fine installation, enough work to keep busy. Yes, they even have a peppy Labrador Retriever called "Tibia." Dean continues to keep his hand in as an organist by playing a 3-manual Conn at the Dresden Hotel in Dresden, N.Y., and does an occasional concert for his ATOS brethren. What more could a couple want?

No, indeed, the Dean Robinsons are not "organ nuts". Just "extremely dedicated." □



Letters to the Editor concerning all aspects of the theatre organ hobby are encouraged. Send them to the editor concerned. Unless it's stated clearly on the letter "not for publication," the editors feel free to reproduce it, in whole or part.

*Address: P.O. Box 1314
Salinas, Calif. 93901*

To the Editors:

I wish to reply to Mr. Zabel's comments about "Painless Tuning". The intent of the article was to acquaint the reader with the necessity of tuning an organ, and the basic principles and problems involved; so that he could evaluate the methods and devices available to assist him in tuning with a reasonable degree of accuracy.

The Editors are undoubtedly aware that before attempting to write on

Pipe work in main chamber of CIPHER HILL organ. — (Dan O'Toole Photo)



such a subject, I investigated the normally encountered aspects from both a theoretical and practical point of view. This included over a year of experience with the various tuning devices, using each in turn to tune the same instruments. It was hoped that this would provide the fairest basis for judging the relative merits of each tuner, and I thank the manufacturers whose products I tested for generously supplying me with technical information and units for evaluation.

During the testing period, I overcame a prejudice against one type of tuner to the extent that I eventually bought one for my own use. My article presented the facts as I observed them, as unbiased as I could present them for the benefit of ATOS members, who could not normally expect to try each of the tuners for several months before buying one.

I have long been aware of inharmonicity in naturally vibrating bodies. Piano strings are a prime offender, and only within the past few decades have experts, such as William Braid White, explained this phenomenon in connection with "stretching octaves" when tuning pianos. This inharmonicity, or tendency for the harmonics to be slightly sharp of the fundamental and each lower harmonic can be seen in the strobe pattern. In tuning a piano, the problem is most prominent in lower notes, and is less pronounced the longer the piano is. While many professional piano tuners are not aware of the reason for stretching octaves, White explains that in actuality, the fundamental of a given note is being tuned to the most prominent harmonic of the note an octave lower. The strobe pattern usually shows up with greatest clarity or contrast on the band representing the *strongest* harmonic, so it is quite simple to tune the note until the most prominent pattern remains stationary.

The problem is almost non-existent in organ pipes as seen in a strobe pattern, and to include it in a discussion of tuners merely confuses the issue because no *one* tuning system is superior in dealing with the phenomenon. In reality, unsteadiness of speech, and unsteadiness of wind pressure present tuning problems of greater magnitude than the inharmonicity problem. Neither strobe nor audible tuner excels here.

Mr. Zabel somehow has the im-

pression that the Peterson 400 "Image Clarifier" eliminates all but the fundamental from the strobe pattern. This could be no further from the truth. No simple filter could eliminate all but the fundamental frequency. This switch merely cuts the intensity of the upper, and weaker harmonics which tend to confuse the pattern, and make the strong harmonics easier to see. It must be realized also, that the strobe pattern only shows those harmonics which are coincident with "octaves" of the fundamental.

My experience using the Schober Electronic Tuning Fork led to my using it with a tight-fitting earphone, although the article suggests using the earplug type. In my experiments, I was able to hear the beats clearly with an apparent location in the center of my head, much as listening to a stereo recording with headphones creates the illusion of the orchestra being located inside your head. Upon plugging the open ear, the beating stopped because I could no longer hear the pipe being tuned against the sound emanating from the earphone. My studies in neurology go no further than college psychology, and the physiology of sound and hearing, so I can't dispute the ability of beats to occur in the brain . . . or in the head, as I stated . . . or not. I experienced these beats with no strain, so if such beats must occur acoustically, and their location appeared to be "inside" my head, well . . . ?

In writing these technical articles, which I feel are a much needed, and important aspect of our organization, I do not pretend to be a sole source of information. I am fortunately surrounded in my work, by men who have a wide range of experience in the field, who are willing to share their knowledge and expertise in an effort to help the amateur, and I hope to continue to tap this wealth of information. I sincerely wish that more of our professional members would share their technical knowledge with ATOS through THEATRE ORGAN.

Mr. Zabel clearly shows his ability to explain technicalities in his writing, and hope he will share more of this with us. As for his own strong preference for audible tuners, I only wish he had taken a closer look at those strobe patterns before pronouncing them less useful than audible tuners. As a convert to the strobe pattern, I note that Mr. Zabel has fallen into the

trap he writes against, by taking a physical truth and misapplying it ". . . to inductively 'formulate' erroneous theories in order to explain the trouble he experiences in tuning . . ." with a strobe tuner.

Most respectfully,
Allen R. Miller

Dear Sir:

Thanks so much for printing John Muri's "To the Ladies." Although I always enjoy his writing, I could really identify with the ideas expressed in that article.

Granted, there are fewer female organists, and even fewer who play with authority and without fear of our beloved monsters. But as Mr. Muri mentioned, there are female organists who have definitely made a mark in what seems to be a man's world. There will always be outstanding organists. But included in that famed group will always be female all-time greats.

Right on, Mr. Muri!

Sincerely,
Shirley Hannum
House Organist, Lansdowne Theatre

Dear Editors All:

I was interested to see the reference in last October's THEATRE ORGAN, in John Muri's article, to Harold Ramsbottom and Harold Ramsay. Mr. Muri did not say, however, that both were one and the same gentleman. Clearly, the name change occurred about 1925-26. Harold R. was born here in England at Great Yarmouth. His parents emigrated to Western Canada when he was about 9 years old.

Harold held a number of Church appointments and toured Western Canada as a boy recitalist before being appointed chief organist at Broadway's Rivoli Theatre in 1923. He toured for Paramount-Publix, playing in many cities across the United States. He came to England for the summer of 1932, and returned here in the winter of 1932-33 to the Granada Theatre, Tooting, London. Several years later, he was appointed musical director for the Union Cinemas chain here, and was responsible for quite a number of Wurlitzers and Comptons being installed in their theatres.

He remained on this side of the 'pond' until after the 1939-45 war, and in the later forties, returned to the Calgary area of Canada. I understand

he now heads a University or college music dept. Mr. Ramsay's musical career spans a wide field including not only church and theatre organ playing, but broadcasting, orchestral conducting and dance band work (pianist with Ben Bernie and organist on tour with Paul Whiteman) as well. He has also published many compositions.

Whilst writing, may I express appreciation of John Muri's most interesting, out-of-the-usual-organ-rut articles. Long may he continue to write them.

Also whilst writing, perhaps I may take a general invitation to anyone visiting England to get in touch with us here, not only with regard to matters organical, but also for any help he might need in connection with his trip. The address below is actually that of my parents, which I use for permanency at present, and usually for overseas correspondence. It is about 93 miles from London, however, so my office telephone number is also worth giving to anyone interested: 01-580-4468, extensions 5362/5193. As well as my details, you could also give the address and phone number of Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Rawle at Wurlitzer Lodge, 47, Doncaster Drive, Northold, Middlesex, England, telephone: 01-422-1538. Their home is only about 13 miles from the center of London, and is in fact, near my normal place of residence, which I refer to as my "London Area Address."

Au revoir for now. My best regards to you all.

Yours sincerely,
Michael Candy
9, Warren Close,
Ringwood,
Hampshire BH 24 2AJ, England

Dear Sir:

In the June 1972 issue of your magazine, the article on Dessa Byrd mentions that she had made four LP recordings. Could you tell me where they may be obtained? Especially the number "The World is Waiting for the Sunrise".

Can you give me any information about several of the records that George Wright has made. I think he recorded for: "HI-FI RECORDS", somewhere in Hollywood, California. I do hope you can furnish the complete address for me.

Anson C. Jacobs

Dear Sirs:

I was glad to see the article in the June issue of THEATRE ORGAN concerning the Centre Theatre in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I was disheartened though to find that the boys from Minnesota who sort of invaded Dairyland Country could not relate the whole story of the Centre organ.

In 1962 after many years of silence, Warner Bros. offices in Milwaukee gave permission to Norm Burzlaff, Pete Townsend, Paul Quarino and myself to work on the organ and to play it after the show while the cleaners worked through the night. For about a year after that we were there almost every Friday, Saturday, and some Sunday nights. The organ was cleaned, some of the water damage in the right chamber was repaired, and the lower chest in the left chamber was releathered. Broken pipes were repaired, some missing ones replaced. The flute in the left which was water soaked was replaced with a Barton Tibia. All in all, many hours, much material, and time was spent fixing up the Kimball.

Norm got busy at home with his own organ, Pete got transferred to Germany by his company and Paul got married and moved to Minneapolis. As I do not play the organ I would make occasional visits to see that what was working still did and with the exception of Good Friday Noon each year the organ was silent again. I was always available to take visitors down to see the organ and many people came to town and played it after the show.

In 1969 Gary McWithey, a local organist, started playing the organ regularly again. This time even for the intermissions on Friday and Saturday evenings. Some work was started again and Gary cleaned and painted the console white with gold trim.

One evening in March of 1971 while I was home for the weekend, a call came in from the Minneapolis men that they were in town and wanted to see the Centre organ. I was working in Chicago at the time installing a new organ for Aeolian-Skinner Co. A week later they called again and wondered if I would have any time to work with them in doing some more restoration on the organ. I was so tied up with out of town work it was almost impossible. Since then, they "discovered" the organ, made a record, got hired to clean the theatre and the office building next door and spent a lot of

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time digging through the stuff stored in the dressing rooms and the lockers in the basement. Most of what was done was through the efforts of Fred Hermes, Jr.

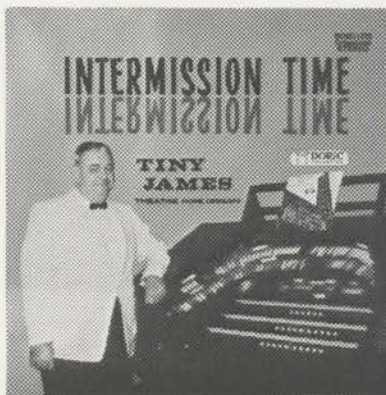
I am still gone much of the time for Aeolian-Skinner having just finished a 3/46 in Grand Forks, North Dakota. Maybe someday when I am back in Milwaukee permanently the Dairyland Theatre Organ Society will get together and take up on the complete restoration of this fine organ.

We rebuilt much of the Wurlitzer at the Riverside Theatre in 1965 and this organ is available most any time for playing in the mornings. The Dairy-

land Chapter also through the efforts of many members has rebuilt the Wurlitzer organ at the Avalon Theatre in Milwaukee. These are the three last organs in the city in theatres. The organ from the Elks club is now at the Schnitzel Haus restaurant and is played nightly except Monday. This is a 3/10 Wurlitzer which is presently undergoing some additions and changes.

Our policy has been to service the organs in the theatres free of charge as long as we can have access to the organ for both working and playing.

Sincerely yours,
William Klinger, Jr.
Owner, Klinger Organ Service



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