

VOX POPS



Conducted by Stu Green

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.

Eddie Dunstedter was deeply touched early in August by his unexpected 75th birthday present from the Senate of the California Legislature. No one could deny he had earned the accolade represented by the Resolution prepared by the Rules Committee of that August body: "WHEREAS, Mr. Edward J. Dunstedter has earned the



EDDIE DUNSTEDTER - (Stufoto)

name over the years of 'Mr. Pipe Organ' there follows a page of highlights covering Eddie's music-rich career, and closes with, "RESOLVED by the Senate Rules Committee, that the Members commend Edward J. Dunstedter for the enjoyment he has brought to millions over the years." The very official document bears the Great Seal of California and is signed by Committee Chairman James R. Mills and two legislators from Eddie's home area, Lou Cusanovich and Frank Lanterman.

Interviewed in his Reseda, Calif. trailer park home Eddie observed that he had been promoted to "Official Minnesotan" long ago, and "now I'm an official Californian too, recognized by the state's highest body of lawmakers. It's a most pleasant experience."

Another pleasant experience for Eddie during August was the celebration of 55 years of matrimony to wife Viva, whose project these days is maintaining Eddie's health, following his recovery from a heart attack two years ago. Asked how he felt about living with one woman for so long, Eddie grumbled, in characteristic Dunstedter style, "I think I'll keep her."



In Erie, Pennsylvania, the publication of Gannon College, the Gannon Knight, took cognizance of a gift to the college by a member of its staff, a maintenance man with the descriptive name of Joe Luckey. A theatre organ buff since childhood, Joe kept a careful eye on the 3-manual organ in the local Shea's Theatre. Biding his time he waited until the theatre wanted to sell the well-preserved instrument, then put in his bid - \$300.00. It was accepted. Joe couldn't conceal his intended gift as a surprise; he needed a lot of space to store it, so he presented it to Gannon College. It was gratefully accepted. After 3½ years of rebuilding Joe has been installing the organ in a college building over the summer. It's set to be "premed" just about now. The Gannon Knight describes ATOSer Joe Luckey as "Gannon's most popular maintenance man." We think we know why.



"The Big Show of 1936" which played the San Francisco Orpheum for two weeks in August got mixed reviews concerning the vaudeville.

There was Jackie Coogan as a stand-up comic, Cass Daley and Beatrice Kay as song belters, the Ink Spots (still "honeychiling", Virginia O'Brien with her straight-on deadpan vocalizing, unclad Sally Rand and her famous fans, Allan Jones as MC and vocalist (yes, the "Donkey Serenade") and durable Vince Barnett in a plastered airline pilot skit.

The Chronicle's show biz reporter, Paine Knickerbocker, described it as "spirited and good humored" but lacking in comedy. The same sheet's columnist Herb Caen was less kind, stating whimsically that "... the show wasn't very good, because it wasn't half bad," whatever that means. But he was appreciative of the "Mighty Morton theatre organ" as played by Tiny James despite sometimes suggestive terms:

"Tiny James took his place at the mighty Morton organ, with its keyboards like the controls of a 747, and every freak and queen in the place screamed in ecstasy. What an organ! His hands caressed it, drawing one old song after another from its murky depths, a true master, his left foot snaking back and forth on the bass pedals. Mr. James is called 'Tiny' because he's so huge. Got the picture?"

Yes, NorCalChap ATOSers were deeply involved in readying the 4-manual Morton for the show.



An item from the Delaware Valley Chapter's newsletter, "The Lift," illustrates another milestone in the continuing relaxation between advocates of straight and theatre organs. The "Lift" announces on October 29 concert sponsored jointly by the ATOS chapter and the Southeastern Chapter



Shirley Hannum. Mediator in a no longer fashionable war.

of the American Guild of Organists (AGO), champions of the orthodox organ. It will be a theatre organ concert held at the Lansdowne theatre in Lansdowne, near Philly, and played on the 3/9 Kimball by youthful Shirley Hannum, house organist at the Lansdowne for six years and a student of the late, great Leonard MacClain. Her program will be purely theatre organ music with no emphasis on the untremulated Diapason because of the untrem'd guests. Shirley will also accompany a silent comedy, "Teddy at the Throttle."

Such difference-burying events are increasing in frequency and its good to see the hatchet going underground everywhere. It wasn't always thus; in the '20s, theatre and straight organ addicts were continually at one another's throats, fanned by national organ publications. The rancor generated died slowly.

So thanks, Shirley, the AGO chapter and the Delaware Valleyites, for your forward step for organophiles.

Our favorite circus organist, Colonel Harry Jenkins, recovering from an intestinal ailment in an Anchorage, Alaska, USAF Base Hospital, hated to relinquish his place at the plug-in which accompanies the DeWayne Bros. circus for even one show but he developed "a bellyache decidedly unlike the green apples kind" and it took surgery to unscramble his knotted tummy. He'll be back on the job by mid-September, cueing dog acts, high wire, trapeze artists, elephants, horse acts, clowns and monkeys. Son Harry Jr. (a former "gorilla" in the DeWayne one-ringer) will join dad to help with the heavy chores of wrestling speakers and console during set-up and striking operations. Colonel Harry's big top adventures were chronicled in "The Circus is Coming," June 1971 issue of this mag.

Central New Yorkers will have an opportunity to sample the enduring charisma of George Wright's individual stylings on Nov. 4, when George plays one of his infrequent concerts on the Rochester Auditorium theatre's 4/22 Wurlitzer. The booking was announced by the Rochester Theatre Organ Society's talent director, Gary Haines. George hasn't been heard much on pipes since his '71/'72 winter concert series was cancelled by the fire which



George Wright. Rochester bound. — (Stufoto)

burned out the solo chamber of the Pasadena Rialto theatre's now gone 2/10 Wurlitzer a few days before the series was scheduled to start.

But there's always the 1973 ATOS Convention in Portland for the rest of us. George is tentatively set for a convention concert.

The tuning tool that organ builder Dan Papp used for over 30 years on the famous New York Paramount theatre and studio Wurlitzers will be duplicated and made available to organ buffs if there is enough interest, according to ATOSer Jack Bethards. The knife-like tool was given to Ben Hall by Dan Papp during the installation of Ben's "Little Mother" Wurlitzer and, in turn, given to Bethards who found it ideal for tuning jobs with just the right length and shape for every hard-to-reach reed or flue. Bethards requests that anyone interested in having the 18-inch steel tool for \$8.00 postpaid should drop him a card at 472 Tehama Street, San Francisco, Calif. 94103. Send no money now because Jack must first determine whether interest is widespread enough to warrant production. If the interest is there, Jack intends to donate all profits from sales to the ATOS projects fund in memory of Dan Papp.

One of the pleasant aspects of an ATOS convention is the resulting communication among members who are normally geographically separated. For example, we have learned of the hospitality of our secretary, Mary Bowles. She met Joe Brite and Jimmy Cantu, respectively organist and manager of the Rialto theatre in Alamosa, Colorado, and after the convention invited them to the Bowles home in Lost Lake, New Jersey for a listen to her rapidly expanding library of historical interview of tapes with T.O. prominenti. Joe, who has been playing the 2/7 Wurlitzer at the Rialto since 1937, was especially impressed with a biographical interview Mary made with Milton Charles, who now lives in Southern, Calif. Such incidents, multiplied many times over, add much sparkle to our annual meeting; the theme being "Getting to Know You".

In California there's a Wurlitzer in a motorcycle shop. Clear across the country in Eatonville, New Jersey, there's a two-manual Robert Morton gracing Ed Mahn's bicycle shop. That's variety with a continental spread!

The Associated Press in June put on its nationwide wire a lengthy piece on the 3/22 Wurlitzer in Joe Koons' Motorcycle Shop in Long Beach, California. Joe can expect an increase of interested folks to drop in on Saturday evenings (no admission) to hear the monster. Also distributed to member newspapers was a picture showing a happy Joe at the console, surrounded by motor bikes.

The School of the Ozarks at Pt. Lookout, Mo. incorporated the feature about its theatre pipe organ, which ran in the February 1972 THEATRE ORGAN, in its brochure advertising its "Music For a Sunday Afternoon" programs during July. Organist Bert Buhrman was featured at the Wurlitzer in all five programs which often crammed 1200 in the 100-seat hall. He says that the staff virtually wore itself out doing publicity work for spots on nine radio stations, commercial-type spots on two TV stations, and interviews on a third. Bert and his colleagues benefited from effective promotion and publicity which are so essential to the theatre organ cause.



Debbie Lynn launches her musical career with a smile and confidence.

Speaking of George's Rialto theatre concerts, one was memorable for one of his capers. He always maintained two-way communication with his audiences. He'd ask someone he knew to be in the audience how long it had been since he'd heard the tune being played. The answer would usually come back in embarrassed tones. But occasionally George would pick a winner from the audience purely by chance. At one concert he saw a pretty little girl a few rows back and invited her to come to the console and play a solo. What results he expected aren't known, but the child marched to the console, seated herself and with much self assurance played as good a rendition of "Alley Cat" as the basic material allowed. Not one clinker sounded forth; she played with remarkable authority. It all came off so well that many in the audience thought it was a prepared act, but it wasn't. No one was more surprised than George Wright.

Now, less than two years later, Debbie Lynn, now pushing 13, has launched her own playing career with a concert played on a theatrical plug-in at the home of her grandparents in Riverside, Calif. Before an audience of 75 invited guests, Debbie played a variety concert with the confidence of an old pro, ranging from standards ("Old Black Magic") to current pops ("Love Story" theme) to such esoteric

and difficult works as "Fanfare" by Richard Purvis. Her encore was dedicated to her inspiration, George Wright. "Alley Cat", naturally.



Bad news from Toronto. Correspondents Dave Vuckson and John Holywell report that the 2000 seat Odeon-Carlton theatre there will be torn down next summer to make way for a high rise building. The 3/19 Hillgreen-Lane theatre organ is for sale (it is in the most recently built category - 1948). Organist Colin Corbett, who has played it regularly for years, is shocked by the development. Dave reports that the 4/28 Warren organ in the Imperial theatre is to be given by Famous Players to the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto to be installed in the Coliseum building, when the Imperial becomes six small houses soon. That leaves Toronto without an organ in a theatre. Of course there's Shea's Wurlitzer safe in the Casa Loma.

Enthusiasts must now go forth from Toronto to forage for organs to repair. Two have been located, long neglected in Hamilton, Ontario, theatres, the Capitol and Palace. A group headed by Paul Locke is working on one of them, reports Dave.



In New York, solid Wurlitzer exponent Dick Loderhose, with circa 42 ranks of Wurlitzer in his Jamaican Estates home (21 of them Crawford-nurtured), wondered what could be good about a Robert Morton organ. For years he had heard much favorable comment about the brand, but after all - Wurlitzer! Was there any other make?! Yet, so many knowledgeable organ veterans praised Mortons.

After hearing a particularly lush Morton during the 1970 convention in New York, he began to have second thoughts and when Dick Loderhose has second thoughts they build and build.

The curiosity culminated in the purchase in August of the 3/19 Morton originally installed in 1929 in Lowe's Fairmont theatre. Curiously, Dick had removed and sold the organ five years ago to several customers, mostly to fellow enthusiast Henry Holzberger. But, with Dick's new determination, like magic, all the parts were re-assembled and the adhesive magnate bought himself a Morton.

Evaluating the qualities of the Morton and comparing it with a Wurlitzer are still in the future, however. Dick has no room in his studio and plans to move West are still gathering. So the new acquisition was moved "temporarily" to Dick's glue warehouse, beside six other stored organs.

"I'm in a sticky business" says Mr. Loderhose.



During her well-attended 3-evening August garden concerts at a home in Pasadena, Calif. organist Mildred Alexander confessed she had taken drastic action to squelch any remaining supplies of a record which has returned to haunt her many times. Her "Thoroughly Fabulous Millie" platter, she insists, should never have been released, mainly because the left side of the pipe organ used was not in tune with the right side. She was horrified at the clash of dissonance during the playback but was assured that one side of the stereo track could be de-emphasized to decrease the fault. So, the record got into release but the flaw was still quite audible. It resulted in some quite negative reviews and has continued to haunt her wherever she meets discriminating organ fans.

Tiring of "the Albatross around my neck," Millie decided on drastic action. She rounded up all possible

remaining pressings of the offending disc. Then she took one out of its jacket and dropped it in a neighbors swimming pool; it sank. Armed with this knowledge she accepted an invitation for a cruise in the Pacific off San Diego. Her friends aboard the launch saw her lugging several heavy boxes. When the boat was well out to sea, Millie was seen scaling black discs over the waves. "Got six bounces out of some," reported Millie.

Thus ends the sad saga of the "Thoroughly Fabulous Millie" platter — except for one thing; her disposal of her stock now makes the platter a collector's item. Wonder if bootleg pressings will appear?

In Los Angeles, Ken and Jenice Rosen proved that patience and thorough canvassing of one's home area can still pay off. Ken, a solid pipe enthusiast, has attended concerts since he was in knee pants, always longing to own his own instrument. Now married and on his own, Ken Rosen determined to leave no stone in his home area unturned in his search for an organ within his price range and geographical area. Luckily Ken married a girl who shares his enthusiasm. It took a long time but finally the Rosens struck pay dirt only a few miles from their Northridge home. A North Hollywood church would part with its style D (divided) special (7 rank) Wurlitzer. Minus clackers, traps and sound effects, it was otherwise intact and well preserved although the original Orchestral Oboe is now a Dulciana. Ken learned

that the Wurlitzer had been moved from the Hollywood "Pig'n Whistle" restaurant directly to the church by organ man Pat Sullivan years ago. It will be some time before Ken and Jenice hear their Wurlitzer voice but the pride of owning a pipe organ showed clearly when they posed for a console photo.



Norm Bolton plays a few chords for Times-Union reporter Barbara O'Reilly before turning off the blower and fleeing before the rising Genesee River.

(Rochester Times-Union Photo)

The floods which followed Hurricane "Agnes" through the eastern seaboard during June, posed quite a threat for theatre organ owners when the water rose ominously close. In Chili, N.Y. near Rochester, N.Y. Norm Bolton had to evacuate his residence near the raging Genesee River. Inside remained a 2/6 Kohl organ which once played in Rochester's Empress Theatre. The water affected the blower, but the remainder of the instrument escaped unscathed. Norm employed fans to dry out the blower mechanism. It was reported in the daily press that AT&T used hair driers to dry wet cables, so if any ATOS owner of a pipe organ experiences similar difficulty in the future, this is a system which works for the pros.

ATOS conventioners are still talking about the remarkable artistry displayed by Dr. C.A.J. Parmentier. Equally at home on pipes or electronics, he showed his audiences what an old

master sounds like. Dr. & Mrs. Parmentier recently moved to Jackson Heights, N.Y.

Organist Esther Higgins, one of our faithful New Jersey reporters, advises that the October 1972 issue of "Good Old Days" magazine is scheduled to run an article about theatre organs in the "golden era" compiled by journalist Harry Wilkenson of Marblehead, Mass. It deals with such greats as Ann Leaf, Lew White, Jesse Crawford and Roy Frazier who played at Boston's Keith Memorial theatre way back when, with photos of each. If interested parties can't locate a copy on their news stands, drop a line to Tower Press, Box 248 Sealbrook, New Hampshire 02874. Unfortunately, usually reliable reporter Higgins omitted a bit of important information — the price.

One of the busiest young organists in the San Francisco area is Warren Lubich. This talented lad ranges the West Coast playing concerts, staff jobs and stints at pizza parlors. He has a recent 2-night concert at the Seattle Granada Organ Loft to his credit and just finished a 10-month engagement playing the 3/13 Robert Morton in the Marin "Pizza Pub". At present he's playing only one pipe job, a Friday night concert preceding the silent movie presentation at the Avenue theatre 3/14 Wurlitzer in San Francisco. Sandwiched in are numerous high-level offices in the Bay Area organ clubs, not to mention scattered plug-in demo concerts.

Wonder what he does in his spare time?



WARREN LUBICH



Ken, Jenice and their Wurlti.

Don Robinson, ATOS stalwart in Utica, N.Y., and mentor of "The Organ Loft" radio program, regrets having missed the July convention, but he enlisted the aid of Lloyd Klos, via tape recorder, to get a resume of the big show, which was aired for the program's listeners. This is the second year Don has enlisted Lloyd's help.

This year, Rochester's radio station WHAM is observing 50 years on the air. As part of that observance, a 2½-hour chronological program was aired on July 24. A segment was devoted to Rochester's best-remembered theatre organist, Tom Grierson, who was heard announcing and playing a classical number at the Wurlitzer in the RKO Palace in the early Thirties. The organ in the twenties and thirties possessed a sound unlike any Wurlitzer — soft and ballady. Since its ownership by RTOS and installation in the Auditorium Theatre, its voices were juiced up until it sounds a true Wurlitzer.

In Hollywood, Lloyd Del Castillo is still walking around Seventh Heaven after being informed of his being named to the Theatre Organists' Hall of Fame. "I'm very grateful and appreciative of this honor," he says. Del informs us that a new recording of his, done on the Joe Koons' Long Beach cycleshop Wurlitzer, for Concert Recording, is scheduled for fall.

It might cause a double take but there among the classical music events advertised in the Fine Arts Concert Series brochure was the unmistakable photo of a theatre organ horseshoe, and seated before it was South Eastern College faculty member J. Marion Martin, presenting "A return to the Palace," complete with a vocal group, a sing-along, and two silent comedies. Read on and discover that Mr. Martin was once house organist at Duke University's Quadrangle theatre, and that this is a return engagement "by special demand" for the past president of the North Carolina Chapter of ATOS. Nice to learn that the phrase "liberal arts" has finally taken on real meaning, another step toward cultural acceptance of the theatre organ. □



**"SCORPIO" SCENES FILMED
AT
ALEXANDRIA ARENA**

Alexandria (Virginia) arena, home of Jimmy Boyce's Mighty 4/34 Wurlitzer, was recently the location for filming of scenes for the movie "Scorpio" starring Burt Lancaster and directed by Michael Winner. Jimmy put theatre organ front and center as he played two special numbers entitled "The Spectators" and "Roller Rink" written by Jerry Fielding for the Wurlitzer pipe organ. Several skating scenes were filmed with many extras and featuring Jimmy at his fantastic Wurlitzer providing the music. The entire Wurlitzer pipe work was floodlighted permitting excellent shots to thrill all theatre organ buffs. At one of the breaks in the work Jimmy had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Lancaster and showing him the huge instrument. Jimmy Boyce has been staff organist at the Arena since 1950 and he installed this pipe organ during 1961 and 1962.

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