



## CHAPTER NOTES

### ALABAMA

"THE MAGIC CITY" has been synonymous with the name of Birmingham, Alabama for many years due to the city's unbelievably rapid growth. It is no wonder, then, that the newest ATOS Chapter, born in the Magic City should get off to such a roaring start and triple its membership in only two months.

A small but enthusiastic group got together at the historic Alabama Theatre in Birmingham, Alabama on February 4, where we were entertained by the theatre's regular organist, Jay Mitchell, at the mighty Wurlitzer. He never ceases to amaze us with his ability to play, from memory, almost anything requested and he gave us all a chance to hear our favorites. We were also entertained by Mrs. Lillian Truss, who was one of the first persons ever to play the Alabama Wurlitzer. Then families completed applications, paid dues, and signed a letter of intent to form a chapter — these were mailed immediately to the National President, Erwin Young, along with a letter requesting our own charter, and a release from the Southeastern Chapter.

President Young immediately got the ball rolling for us and was present at our second meeting on March 11, where he read a letter authorizing our release from the Southeastern Chapter. Mr. Young then gave a very interesting talk about the history of ATOS. At that meeting we also pleased to have with us Tom Landrum from Richmond, Va., Mac Abernathy from Burlington, North Carolina, Joe Patten of Atlanta, Gordon and Linda Johnson, the Secretary and Treasurer of the Southeastern Chapter, and Bob Van Camp, organist at the Atlanta Fox Theatre. Mr. Van Camp played a beautiful program for us, including a medley from *Show Boat*, some Gershwin songs and very appropriately,

some "rain" songs, which certainly fit the description of the weather that day.

At the first meeting, Miss Riedel West and Mrs. Don B. Cole had been elected temporary Chairman, and secretary-treasurer respectively, for organizational purposes. At the second meeting, Miss West was elected as Chairman, Jay Mitchell as Vice Chairman (also to serve as Program Chairman) and Mrs. Don B. (Alleen) Cole as Secretary-Treasurer. A board of directors was elected to represent different parts of the state. They are James E. Dunnivant, Athens, Alabama, Dr. C. H. Prescott, Montgomery, Travis Cavnar, Huntsville, and Don B. Cole, Tuscaloosa.



Officers of the newest ATOS chapter. From left to right: Jay Mitchell, Vice Chairman; Riedel West, Chairman; Alleen Cole, Secretary-Treasurer.

After seeing Miss West in action, President Young had kind words about the enthusiasm of the officers and how quickly the chapter got underway. Miss West certainly had things rolling with the by-laws drawn up and ready for approval. She has already started a newsletter that is sure to keep enthusiasm high.

At our third meeting on April 8, we were advised that we had been granted Charter No. 44, the 38th active chapter. Our membership has grown to 30 families. Jay Mitchell again entertained us with a beautiful program. The console was then open to the members, with Miss West, Mrs. Cole, Mrs. Evelyn Jones, Mr. Norville Hall and Dr. Cecil

Prescott all taking turns on the Wurlitzer. We are all new at this, so we shared a lot of bobbles and a lot of laughs — but then that's what it's all about.

ALLEEN COLE

### ALOHA

Aloha from Hawaii!

Aloha Chapter members and guests were treated recently to a morning of organ movies featuring some of the country's fine organists. Along with the films, member Dan Engelhard gave some background information on the organs used.

Earlier this year, member Roger Angell invited chapter members and a few guests to his home for an afternoon with his 2/7 Robert Morton. Following a narrated slide presentation on the history of the instrument, members enjoyed a chamber tour and an open console session. The afternoon concluded with an entertaining concert by two fine organists, Frank Loney and Elbert La Chelle.

The chapter also met recently at the Waikiki Theatre, where Consolidated Amusement Co. staff organist, and Aloha Chapter Honorary Member John DeMello performed at the 4/16 Robert Morton. Chapter Chairman Richard Harger and Roger Angell then gave a narrated slide history of the theatre and the organ. Since the chambers are located at the top of a 25 foot ladder, the slides let everyone have a much easier "look" at the organ pipes.

Members Lorene Yap and Jerry Smith teamed up to present an enjoyable concert on the Hawaii Theatre Robert Morton for our April meeting.

Recently we have had the pleasure of showing several mainland visitors around the Island's organ installations. So if you're ever in Honolulu, let us know. Our Chapter host, John DeMello, may be reached at 373-3076, or by writing c/o Aloha Chapter, ATOS, P.O. Box 88012, Honolulu, HI. 96815.

Aloha!

LOWELL ANGELL

### CENTRAL INDIANA

The March meeting was held in the home of Bud and Ada Fisher in Indianapolis. A most interesting program included an interview with Dessa Byrd, recalling the glorious days of the theatre pipe organ when she played the Circle Theatre's "Mighty Wurlitzer", the 3 manual Barton at the



Indiana Theatre and the 2 manual Marr & Colton in the Fountain Square Theatre, all three in Indianapolis. Three selections were heard from the original recordings made by Dessa on these pipe organs. She also recalled her work on local radio shows. Dessa is affectionately called "Indianapolis' Pipe Organ Queen" and it is always a delight to have her participate in our programs.

Following the interview, members Ada Fisher, Steve Jones, Ken Double, Virginia Byrd Rechteris and Tim Needler each played his own arrangement of "Whispering". This makes a very interesting bit of listening — interpretations are varied and arrangements individualistic. We recommend you try it sometime — it's a lot of fun. The more familiar the selection, the more challenge to be "different". A discussion of each person's interpretation is equally interesting.

The Fishers have a 3 manual Conn Theatre Organ with electronic pipes, attached glockenspiel, and Leslie speaker — a really tremendous installation with all the features necessary to duplicate the "big sound" of the mighty pipes!

Eighty-one members and guests met in the Anderson Music Center in Anderson, Indiana on Sunday, April 8 for another truly reminiscent theatre organ session. Bruce Thompson, owner of the 2 manual Wurlitzer, Style D, Opus 647, installed at the Music Center hosted the meeting.

This was the 50th anniversary of the installation of this organ in the LaPorte Theatre at LaPorte, Indiana. Vivian Arbaugh, a member of CIC-

ATOS was the first organist who played this organ at LaPorte so it was only fitting that she play this 50th anniversary celebration. Her program included several numbers in a variety of styles popular at that time — 1923.

The program also consisted of a short silent movie *The Knockout* accompanied in great style by Jimmy Boyer, another of Indianapolis' well-known "theatre organ era" personalities. Jimmy also played a group of numbers from the early 20's. Prior to open console time, Jimmy explained the stops on the organ, chamber locations, etc. This was a most informative and entertaining meeting.

Our Education Committee is working diligently and planning many interesting things for us. There will be much more to add later about the seminars and technical sessions, as well as the emphasis they are placing on theatre music styling. A 30-minute program was carried recently over radio station WIAN-FM, Indianapolis, covering an interview with Lee Erwin made by Ken Double. Our chapter boasts two weekly programs over this station. They are hosted by Ken, who is majoring in radio and TV at Butler University in Indianapolis.

CONGRATULATIONS to Central Indiana, member Dennis James and Heidi Augsberger who were married recently in Bloomington, Indiana.

RUTH D. WARD

#### CHICAGO AREA

CATOE's first public concert of 1973 with Don Baker at the Coronado Theatre was sold out. Its second concert of the year was also a sell out.



Dick Smith tells Patio audience how Al Melgard influenced his style.

Dick Smith played the 3/17 Barton in the Patio Theatre to a full house of 1500 on March 27. Dick presented a well received program in his distinctive energetic style. A highlight was his medley of songs in Jesse Crawford style. Reviewing the show for VOX CATOE, Mark Noller said "... the musician who plays from the heart makes music rather than plays it." He was referring to Dick Smith, a musician who makes music by putting his heart, soul, and body into his performance. While in Chicago Dick made a new record album, "The Velvet Sounds of Dick Smith" on the 3/10 Wurlitzer formerly in the Ohio Theatre, Lima, Ohio, which CATOE installed and maintains at Downers Grove North High School. The album will be released soon.

Sharing the bill with Dick were Leon Berry (his first public show since his stroke), Ted Day and Russ Young. These well known Chicago rink organists are celebrating their Silver Jubilee at the console. Each played a few selections which were greeted by wild applause from the fans there to greet them. CATOE marked the event with appropriate plaques for each man.

The March social was at the lake-side home of Fred Hermes, Racine, Wisconsin. Fred's five manual Wurlitzer (ex-Michigan Theatre, Detroit), now up to 31 ranks, was well played by Tom Gnaster. Tom had the opportunity to use the newly installed console elevator many times as Fred used his Brenograph to create intricate



Don Baker at the Coronado 4/12 Barton during his Feb. 1 CATOE sell out.





During the Dick Smith Show, Leon Berry, Ted Day and Russ Young received trophies to mark their Silver Jubilees at the console.

moving patterns of colors and shapes on the screen behind the console. Fred Hermes Jr. played some good Gershwin during refreshment time. The only sour note was an inaccurate map members used to try to find Fred's home. Most got lost.

The four manual console at the Chicago Theatre has been returned to its lift after a two year rebuilding. CATOE work continues there. The Chicago recently used its stage for the week-long run of a live rock show.

The Chicago console will be seen and the Oriental Theatre Wurlitzer will be heard, for the Theatre Historical Society will tour there during its annual convention in Chicago July 20-22. The Granada, another ABC-Great States house, was recently sold to a local rock promoter. The Century Theatre has also been closed and will be converted to shops.

Gaylord Carter returns to the Chicago area on May 17 when CATOE presents its first public concert at the Deerpath Theatre, Lake Forest. The spring concert season closes on June 14 with Lee Erwin at the Coronado, Rockford. Proceeds will buy a new trumpet, the last stolen rank to be

replaced. Wicks will do the custom work. The Rockford group is so large and active that they have petitioned CATOE to form their own ATOS chapter. CATOE has gladly agreed to do this and paperwork is underway. Rockford intends to maintain some theatre organs downstate and both groups hope this will spark the formation of a third chapter there.

RICHARD J. SKLENAR

## DAIRYLAND

### Dairyland and CATOE Conclave

A beautiful day for travelling brought out a record crowd of theatre organ enthusiasts to the interchapter conclave March 18th at the home of Fred Hermes in Racine, Wisconsin.

Because the weather previous to the meeting had been bad, the trickle of early arrivals had found their way via muddy roads and detours around impassable lanes. The trickle of cars soon became a deluge, requiring the help of police to direct traffic in the neighborhood. Pilgrims driven on by the "prophecies of a West Coast fortune teller" (recent issue of *CONSOLE*)

came in droves to witness a rising young star.

Tom Gnaster did just that — on a newly installed Peter Clark console lift. The effect was overwhelming with curtains parting and console rising in a golden spotlight, organ playing "On the S.S. Bernard Cohen".

Tom outdid himself playing selections from *No, No, Nanette*, *Sunflower Babe*, and music from Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals. His musical arrangements were quite refreshing, novel, and extremely interesting such as many young organists of the concert circuit. Record sales after the program certainly bore witness to Tom's musical ability and rapport with the audience.

Many wet-footed but happy worshippers at the Five Manual Shrine sat with baptized soles — water at the edges of their shoes. Heavy rains coupled with a quick thaw caused much water seepage into the basement. Even with all the pumps operating, Tom's coattails were slightly dampened from water in the pit while being dunked in and out during the Brenograph show.

When Tom lowered the console into the pit, the magic of the Brenograph took the show with solo lighting effects as the organ played. One was a delightful stereo effect of moving Spanish dancers accompanied by a very rhythmic piece. "Virgil Fox and 'Heavy Lights' have nothing on Tom Gnaster and Fred's Freaky Brenograph" (April Vox CATOE Newsletter). "Bill" and "Silver Threads Among the Gold" were other pieces, these in the McAbee style, with Brenograph accompaniment.

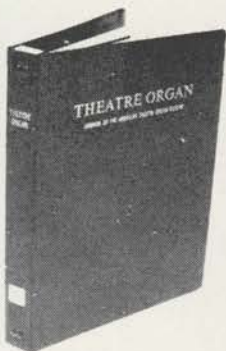
During the refreshment period, the console was "open" and other club members played. During this time Fred Hermes, Jr. also played some good Gershwin. CATOE furnished the artist and refreshments, with Dairyland furnishing the organ. Three years ago this conclave drew about sixty people — this year over two hundred!

FRED HERMES

## DELAWARE VALLEY

Though sometimes overworked, the word "brilliant" can be very aptly applied to the concert at Dickinson High School on St. Patrick's Day, when the giant of the trade, 6'4" John Seng (and that's in his bare feet!)

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made the scene.

Each entry in the "musical docket", as John called it, was played with equal technic and ability. Though sometimes unconventional, John's style treats each selection with finesse and with all the orchestral discriminatory single-stop shading that has made John the musical giant that he is.

John's tribute to Bach was manifested in "Fugue a la Gigue", the audience participation piece for the evening, wherein he requested that all clap on the beat while he played. His living metronome carried throughout the piece, but never dominated the organ.

Although this reporter is usually turned off by "The Candy Man", John's arrangement added a lot of flair to the otherwise lack-lustre melody line. Mulet's "Thou Art the Rock" provided the selection for an encore.

The Jolly Green Giant? Well, he sure ain't a leprechaun!

Our April meeting took us to Pt. Pleasant on the New Jersey shore to hear Al Rando at the Beacon Manor Hotel. Al Rando is one of those musicians that has true inborn talent. After all — anyone who can master a 9' Steinway concert grand piano, Allen Carousel, Hammond X-77, and Moog synthesizer in one tonal set-up with zillions of speakers must be in some way genius, anyone. Especially if the artist is blind, like Al Rando.

Al consistently has all his equipment balanced and totally under control. His musicianship, coupled with his enthusiastic, bubbling personality, easily captured the complete attention of all listeners.

The 50 or so TOSDV folks who were present will assuredly agree that the day couldn't have been more perfect — a beautiful sunny spring day for travel, and entertainment by one of the East's foremost musicians in a first-class tonal experience.

Lowell Ayers played an excellent benefit program for us toward the end of March on a Conn 650 electronic instrument. With selections of music ranging from the 1916 "Queen High" score through to the theme music from *Cabaret*, the program was well varied. The artistic evening was a study in the true theatre organ style that only Lowell can elicit from an organ. Even the old chestnuts in the sing-along segment were brought to new life. Our appreciation to Mr. Ayers for effectively taking us back in time to

the heyday of the theatre organ through organ music and excellent baritone vocals. An evening of nostalgic entertainment indeed.

Plans for the spring and summer include a concert by Karl Cole to celebrate the 10-year "second" life of the 3/8 Kimball in the Landsdowne Theatre, a jointly sponsored event by Dean Robinson with the Brookline Theatre, and a Hagerstown (Md.) tour to include the Moller factory, Frederick's Tivoli Theatre, and the Dick Kline estate.

SHIRLEY HANNUM

## EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

At last!! — Theatre Organ and Silent Films in Richard Knight Auditorium on the campus of Babson College.

Unlike the human or animal who comes into and leaves this world at a defineable point in time, Wurlitzers undergoing restoration come into being more subtly. They enter the world quietly and grow until they are mature enough to be noticed by someone. The 3/13 pride and joy of the Eastern Massachusetts Chapter has followed such a route and it was "noticed", although unpretentiously, with no fanfare or publicity (we'll save that for the dedication!), on Sunday night April 1, 1973. The Babson Film Soci-

ety, under the direction of Professor David Kleiler had scheduled two silent classics to be shown that night in the auditorium. The films were the *Cabinet of Doctor Caligari* and *Metropolis*. Although the Society's prime interest is understandably film oriented and is, in fact, a part of the academic program of the College, the potential which exists between our respective organizations is obvious.

Since our installation had reached a point where the Main Chamber was operational plus a couple of ranks in the Solo along with some tuned percussions, the chemistry was evidently just right to spark the impulse to use the organ to accompany the two films.

The Chapter Vice President Al Winslow handled the necessary arrangements with Professor Kleiler and the "show was on the road"! Al, a theatre organist for many years (when they were in demand) shared the playing chores with Bob Legon, a most capable and imaginative young man, contemporary in repertoire as compared to Al Winslow's traditional silent film style. The combined talent, enthusiasm and diversity of styles produced a most rewarding evening — not only for the chapter members who attended but also for those of the film society who have heretofore watched silent films just that way, silent.



The refurbished console (Ex-Loew's State, Boston) now the pride and joy of the Eastern Massachusetts Chapter, glows in ebony at the Richard Knight Auditorium, Babson College. — (J. Peters Photo)



As opposed to its original installation in the State Theatre in Boston, the organ now speaks through a total of about 75 square feet of shutter area per chamber resulting in a very wide dynamic range. Even in its partially completed state, the ethereal sounds of the Strings, Celeste and Kinura filtering through the closed shutters contrasted with the open shutter treatment of the thundering Tuba, Diaphone and Diapasons illustrated that this Wurlitzer, when finished, will not be one of the biggest but surely an instrument of great presence, dynamic range and versatility.

We all look forward to the time when the instrument will be fully operational complete with toys and other special sound effects so that we can really have fun with some of the lighter silents such as Chaplin, Keystone Cops, Fatty Arbuckle, and the other classics.

For this evening, the modest debut of our Wurlitzer, we have our Thursday night and Saturday installation crews under the direction of Art Goggin to thank for an extra effort to finish up some loose ends at the last moment and an extra thanks to Art for his hours of effort, tuning and retuning many pipes. It is this kind of unselfish giving of personal time by a hard core of determined people that will carry the Chapter's Wurlitzer to the final finishing and dedication.

The Society, perpetuating its dedication, has brought another Wurlitzer back from the era of its glory to be enjoyed once again by all who care to hear those wonderful sounds of the theatre organ.

DICK LINDER

## JOLIET AREA

Greetings from one of the newer chapters of ATOS — JATOE. — May we talk about ourselves and what we're doing? When JATOE came in to being late in 1970 we had a ready made project that was and still is a challenge. You see our number one love is the 4/21 Barton located in the Rialto Theatre in downtown Joliet, Illinois.

When the Rialto opened back in 1926 it was typical of the golden oriental splendor of the larger picture palaces of the 20's. The lobby was a full block long, with marble floors, totally mirrored walls, crystal chandeliers (motorized to be lowered for cleaning — and they were kept sparkl-

ing), gold leaf all over the place, red carpeting and down in the front of the auditorium, nestled beside the orchestra lift, the console of the Golden Voiced Barton Grande Organ and of course it was gold, too. Now the console is white with gold trim but ill, and you should see the scars from her "operations"!

Since 1957 when the Barton went out of regular use at the Rialto, much has happened. At that time it was intact and everything was working. Now? Well, this is why JATOE is busy and we are most grateful to some CATOE folks for their help. It would be easier, and much shorter, to list what's left of the 21 ranks to say nothing of stripped pre-set action, et cetera.

Concerts are our only source of revenue and to date we've had Larry Rouo and John Muri. Joliet has been called the City of Champions for many many years and it's all because of music. So last month one of our musical contingents, the Joliet Legion Band, which has around 20 national championships to its credit, put on a three-way concert at the theatre: (1) the Band, (2) a Joliet tenor Russ Wunderlich who was accompanied at the organ by Rick Locher, Treasurer of JATOE and husband of our Chairman Jan Locher and (3) organ solo — and for this segment, yours truly "crawled" out of about 30 years of retirement and loved every inch of what's left of the organ I knew so well when it was new. You see I was the "pilot" for many years when it became "air-borne" back in 1928. Let's quote from our dedicated chief of engineers of JATOE, Bob Verduin, as he wrote about the concert for our Newsletter:

"Shortly after eight o'clock on February 8, the house lights dimmed in the Rialto Theatre and two grand ladies appeared, rising from the pit. The two ladies were, of course, Frances Wood Irving and the Golden Voiced Barton. Fran played the true style of the 1920's, a style cherished by so many of us (myself included). Fran did many selections including "Honey", "Always", and something I know only as a theme from a well known show from the by-gone days of the Golden Age of Radio.

Fran displayed the lush and full sound of the Tibia, of which our Barton has the best in the Midwest. Of course she used many of the other

voices of the organ including a few well placed "splats" of the Posthorn and some of the tuned percussion.

The show continued with the Joliet Legion Band, not *one* of the best, but *the* best in the United States. Rick Locher and Russ Wunderlich were next on the program with organ and vocal work, all done with the precision and co-ordination of having worked together on many occasions.

Intermission followed and the second half opened with Fran again displaying her artistry by some delicate but beautiful use of the piano as a lead and the other voices lending soft support. Rick and Russ, and the Band came on just as strong in the second half as the first, and Fran closed the show — a great evening of entertainment."

We are sincerely proud to be a part of ATOS.

FRANCES WOOD IRVING

## LOS ANGELES

The artist for the March 18th concert at the Wiltern Theatre was David Kelsey, the talented young organist from the San Francisco Bay area. He presented an outstanding program which included a nostalgic "Show Boat" medley, the Widor "Toccata," and a medley of great show tunes from the Busby Berkeley musicals from Warner Bros. in the 30's. "By a Waterfall", "Forty Second Street", "Shadow Waltz", and "Lullaby of Broadway", brought back memories of Dick Powell, Ruby Keeler, and Jimmy Cagney singing and dancing their way thru those depression days. A fine Gershwin medley followed by "Blue



Dave Kelsey — (Bob Hill Photo)





Shirley Obert — (Bob Hill Photo)

Skies" and "I Wish You Love" topped off the program with style and flair. David also performed at the afternoon jam session at the Elks building where the 4/61 Robert Morton is kept in good playing condition by Dick Stoney and his crew. Local members who tried out the big Morton included Seth Anderson, Shirley Obert, and Paul Hamilton.

The spring business meeting of the chapter was held at the Elks Building on April 10th. Following the business meeting an excellent slide show was presented by Chuck Zimmerman who has attended most of the chapter concerts and ATOS conventions during the past ten years. His color slides of organs, artists, and organ activities using available light were outstanding and brought back memories of some of the great concerts that ATOS has presented over the years.

The concert artist at the Wiltern on April 15th was Bob Ralston, the well-known TV personality and member of the Lawrence Welk orchestra. He presented a very entertaining show with lots of great theatre organ music. He started out with a brief tour of the organ stops to demonstrate to his electronic-oriented fans that this organ is indeed different from the one he plays on television. The different sections of the organ were shown off to good advantage as he played "Love Makes the World Go Round" — the Tibias, reeds, strings, and percussions were all heard from. A Palm Sunday medley, an Ecology medley featuring animal tunes, and a soaring "Rhapsody in Blue", followed by selections from the Bob Ralston record albums brought the first half of the program

to a close. The Lawrence Welk bubble machine got into the act after intermission, much to the surprise of the organist. He coped with this in fine style and finished off the program with a "Holiday in Italy" medley, selections from his "most requested tunes", and a lovely "Easter Parade", closing with "Bubbles in the Wine", the Lawrence Welk theme. At the Sunday afternoon jam session at the Elks, more than fifty members and guests were entertained by Fernand Martel, Candy Carley, Al Yates, and Lyle Knight, among others. In recent months the "Pay & Play" plan at the Elks has been re-emphasized by the chapter as a great opportunity for members to play a really large pipe organ. In March, 28 members took advantage of this opportunity and the organ was used on 26 days during the month.

SAM DICKERSON

### MOTOR CITY

Motor City members gathered at the Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor on Sunday morning, March 4, for a program by chapter member Mary Harrison. Mary did an effortless job at the 3/13 Barton as she played a program of old favorites and blues tunes. She was joined by Betty Mason at the grand piano in the pit for a thrilling finale, "Rhapsody in Blue." Betty demonstrated what a really excellent pianist she is.

An open console session followed, with nine Motor City members taking their turn at the console.

Our second public organ show at the Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor was held Thursday evening, March 14. The date had been confirmed months earlier to coincide with the wedding of our artist, Dennis James and his bride-to-be, Heidi, held a few days following our program.

Word of our first show at the Michigan last Fall had apparently gotten around the University of Michigan campus, for a considerable portion of our audience of 1,300 was made up of cheering university students. A surprisingly good turn out inasmuch as our program was held during a student film festival.

Dennis gave the kind of performance that you just can't help but enjoy and a special duo-performance of "Maple Leaf Rag" with Heidi at the pit grand piano won the unanimous approval of our audience, especially

from the organ department at the university.

The film was *The Mark of Zorro* and Dennis James' accompaniment was superb, and resulted in a standing ovation. (Unaccustomed, as we are, to standing ovations for public presentations, it should be remembered that it was perhaps due to the young people present, whose enthusiasm is usually reserved for the guitar-oriented rock sound.)

On Sunday morning, April 8, we were entertained by Lew Betterly at the 3/10 Barton at the Royal Oak Theatre, an instrument which Lew played when he was the regular organist at the theatre in the early thirties. There was a well-filled house that morning due to invitations extended to Lew's customers and friends of many years.

Following our morning program at the Royal Oak, we moved to the International Gourmet, a private banquet room in nearby Southfield, for our annual spring banquet. Members took turns at the Conn electronic donated by the Lew Betterly Music Co. for the occasion.

Banquet entertainment was two Laurel and Hardy silent films, accompanied by several chapter members, each taking their turn at the organ. None had ever accompanied a movie, and found it is not always as easy to do as it looks.

Bright and early Saturday morning, April 28, some 34 chapter members boarded our chartered Scenicruiser for a trip to hear two CATOE installations. Our own member Reg Aldridge donated his services and drove the bus. The hours flew by, filled with fun and singing.

The purpose of our trip was to attend Hector Olivera's concert at the Downers Grove High School 3/10 Wurplitzer, installed by CATOE.

Sunday morning found us at the Patio Theatre where Walter Strojny played the 3/17 Barton. During the open console session that followed, a surprise — none other than Pearl White, who after a couple of short numbers, shows no signs of having lost any of her old zip.

We returned to Detroit, stopping enroute at Svoboda's Nickelodeon Museum in Chicago Heights. In an atmosphere from the turn of the century we found room after room of coin operated music machines, radios, phonographs, and you name it — they



had it. This tavern and musical museum has been operated continuously by the Svoboda family since it opened in 1908, and their great hospitality and friendly manner make it a *must* place for any family or group to visit.

All those who made the Chicago trip enjoyed themselves so much, that we are eagerly looking forward to our next bus trip, now scheduled for sometime in October.

DON LOCKWOOD

## NEW YORK

It had been some time since we had the privilege of hearing our own chapter director, Ashley Miller, in a full-fledged concert. However, on Monday evening, February 12, we presented Ashley at the console of the United Palace (formerly Loew's 175th St.) 4/23 "Wonder" Robert Morton theatre organ. Joining with us for this special event were members of the Northern Valley (N.J.) Chapter of the American Guild of Organists marking the first time our two organizations joined to sponsor a concert.

ATOS members were particularly pleased to see Ashley demonstrate, during the first half of the program, for the benefit of the AGO members, what theatre organ is all about. He played a musically-varied program, with emphasis however, on "our kind" of music so that AGO members could hear and enjoy it in its intended setting — a large and ornate movie palace.

Following a brief intermission, Ashley had a special treat in store for us. He revealed another side of his talent when he moved from the organ

bench to the United Palace's Grand piano. A rising, young artist, Jim Leaffe, took over the organ and together they performed George Gershwin's notable "Concerto in F". All in attendance certainly agreed that it was an exciting experience to hear this famous work performed with piano and theatre pipe organ! Ashley certainly proved that he is a talent at home in either the concert or entertainment mediums, and he has the unique distinction of being an ATOS artist holding the A.A.G.O. degree.

As in all our meetings at the United Palace, members of the United Christian Evangelistic Association's congregation were invited to share the program with us. We deeply appreciate the privilege of meeting in their church and to utilize their wonderful Morton for our programs.

HERBERT G. FRANK, JR.

## NIAGARA FRONTIER

On March 9 chapter members gathered at Boxie's Steak Pit in Lancaster, New York for the Annual Installation of Officers Banquet. After dinner, Chairman Randy Piazza introduced Vice Chairman Al Sliwinski, Secretary Elwyn Guest, and Treasurer Howard Fisher. The evening's honored guests were Ed Tucholka of WBEN-FM (through whose efforts our chapter has gained much publicity); Francis Kirton, host of a weekly organ program on CHSC-FM in St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada; and Harry Pickens, a local organist who is featured frequently on CHSC. When the formalities of the banquet were finished,



The "Big Band Sound" of Alex Rene at the Riviera in North Tonawanda, N. Y.

there was a piano and electronic organ in the room to provide entertainment at this successful affair.

Dennis James and Alex Rene' and his Big Band Sound joined forces at the Riviera on March 21 to present an exciting program to 1400 enthusiastic patrons. (Before the show got started, Dennis and Heidi, his bride of three days, were introduced to the audience.) Mr. James played the Mighty Wurlitzer for about a half hour and included melodies ranging from semi-classical to contemporary.

In the midst of his arrangement of "Moonlight Serenade" the great drapes parted to reveal Alex Rene' and his band, and wild applause rose from the audience. The Wurlitzer and 15-piece band ventured together in such hits as "Stardust," and "Sentimental Journey."

Mr. Rene's men played a tune called "In Heaven There is No Beer," and Diane McRae, Carol Piazza, and Shirley Cole dressed as waitresses, distributed schupers of the foamy beverage to members of the band.

Towards the end of this exciting musical program, Dennis and the band performed "When the Saints Go Marching In" and the three gals appeared on stage once again, this time dressed in angel costumes to lead the audience in singing.

On April 25 Rex Koury appeared in concert at the Riviera for the first time, and he was extremely pleased with the warm reception he got from the standing-room-only crowd.

Mr. Koury's enthusiasm was generated into his music from the first chord of his concert to the last. A medley from "Paint Your Wagon" included the seldom-played but lovely tune "They Call the Wind Maria," and "I Talk to the Trees."

Mr. Koury appropriately played



Jim Leaffe and Ashley Miller receive accolades after concert at United Palace. — (Herbert G. Frank Photo)



"Sabre Dance" when the Buffalo area was paying tribute to its Sabres hockey team.

Rex Koury played one of TV's most famous theme songs — his "Gun-smoke" theme, performed as only its own composer could play it — complete with horses!

There were other unusual moments too numerous to mention. But several things were clear: Rex was a big hit with his SRO audience; his registrations were always interesting, and this talented musician has a very listenable style of playing the Mighty Wurlitzer. Perhaps next year he'll make another tour to the Eastern US?

SHIRLEY COLE

## NORTH TEXAS

After a tire-squealing, "digout" type of a start for the 1973 year, the North Texas Chapter is settling down to normal cruising speed and still making good progress. Member Jerry Bacon is refurbishing a complete instrument, including several modifications and additions and installing it in the Fine Arts Theatre in Snider Plaza, adjacent to the SMU Campus in Dallas. Jerry has 8 ranks working and on Sunday, April 15, a dozen or more chapter members showed up in their best pre-Easter working clothes at 8:30 A.M. to help Jerry's project along. With the "old pro's" guiding the neophytes, they all worked on assigned projects in accordance with Jerry's planning. Some were busy refelting manuals in the console, others were building assemblies for new windchests and ranks of pipes.

The instrument may be best described as a "Bacon Special, Opus 10!" since Jerry is making use of everything he can to develop a real fine theatre organ for the Fine Arts Theatre. It's amazing how much can get done, with true craftsmanship, when the project is a "labor of love" with everybody doing something they really like to do. The beginners, including the ladies, are all learning a lot about the craft of organ-building with the experts leading the way.

Jerry's project will not be a short one. There's plenty yet to be done, and plans are "in the mill" to make this a monthly event. And it probably won't end with Jerry's instrument. There are a couple more instruments in the area in theatres which the club

might be able to refurbish. Negotiations with management are under way and hopefully some more construction and rebuilding will come our way; probably enough to keep everybody happy and working for several years to come.

Mark Munzel, who runs our Chapter Technical Committee and especially the "swapsheet" and available components listings, showed up in the alley outside the theatre stage door with a Shopsmith in the back end of his pickup truck. With Mark at the controls of the Shopsmith, several custom pieces of precision woodworking and cabinet making were turned out. Windchests, relay racks and even the console benefitted from Mark's craftsmanship. Although some sudden April showers forced moving the Shopsmith into the theatre, it didn't slow things down very much. Everybody pitched in to move the equipment around as necessary.

The work on the Fine Arts Organ was enjoyed by all participants, and yet it's not all the activity. The officers have met to discuss chapter business and by the time this appears in THEATRE ORGAN, our May meeting at the home of Dale Flannery will be history. Dale has a fine installation at his home and the afternoon should be a pleasant one.

We get a lot of chapter activities "sprung" on us in short time frames, but that's what makes life interesting. We just found out that the chapter is sponsoring a session at the Casa Manana Wurlitzer on May 13, Mother's Day. Mark Kenning, a chapter member, will be the featured artist. He was one of the last ones to play this same organ professionally in the Worth Theatre before it was moved to Casa to prevent its' being buried in the debris when the theatre was demolished. Jim Peterson, chief technician on the instrument, has it performing beautifully, and with Mark to tell it what to do and the organ to do the speaking, it will be a fine afternoon. This installation is the only installation listed in April, 73 THEATRE ORGAN as a working instrument in a theatre in Texas. Our chapter is the group lucky enough to be involved. As soon as some details can be cleared up, there'll be more concerts, chapter meetings and other pleasant happenings around this particular installation.

One of our problems is the detail involved and the distances to be cover-

ed in attending chapter meetings or other activities. Some of the other chapters are well spread out too, and if they have any ideas on how to make the travel problems and other such necessary detail lighter, we'd sure like to hear about it.

A good set of Chapter By-Laws has been developed, patterned after the National and the Oregon Chapter, and it looks like the IRS will be happy with our justification as a non-profit organization, which we truly are. If you don't believe it, ask our hard-working secretary-treasurer, Doris Garrett. Hopefully, through expanded membership and plenty of participation by all members, our efforts will lead us to an even better activity level, with full year-round activity and several sessions of various types every month. Wouldn't it be nice on some of the coming hot Texas summer days to sit in a comfortable air-conditioned theatre listening to your favorite theatre organ music?

JOE KOSKI

## OREGON

The chapter dedicated another fine home installation at their April 15 meeting, this one in the residence of Dr. Gordon and Kathy Potter, in Portland.

The business meeting was held prior to the concert. Dennis Hedberg called the meeting to order, then gave the latest details on the building progress of the Organ Grinder Restaurant. He hopes to start installation of the 34 rank Wurlitzer within thirty days. Bill Peterson presented the membership with the completed schedule for the



Jonas Nordwall poses at the console of Dr. Potter's home installation.



'73 Convention.

Dennis then introduced Dr. Potter, who gave a short history of his pipe organ. The organ was built by Gerald Duffy and Dr. Potter and assisted by Bert Hedderly. Also assisting was Jonas Nordwall on voicing and regulating. Dr. Potter's next door neighbor, Dr. Deane Hutchison also gave help in this department. Dr. Hutchison is a well known concert organist, who has a large Kimball concert organ in his home.

Dr. Potter's organ is a 3/18 Wurlitzer-Morton-Gottfried, with a fabulous 3 manual Robert Morton Console. The organ chambers are in a special 2 story building attached to the rear of Dr. Potter's home. Finally, the moment that 95 persons had been waiting for, the dedication concert by Jonas Nordwall. Jonas played a fine program as usual. He made good use of the sound of those two lush Tibias, a Wurlitzer and a Gottfried.

There is no doubt about it. The Oregon Chapter is a very lucky one indeed! We have some fine installations, and some really good organists to play them.

We hope that many in attendance at the Convention in July will take the opportunity to hear and play Dr. Potter's installation.

DON INGRAM

## PIEDMONT

Charlotte members hosted the first '73 meeting of the chapter on Sunday, March 4, when more than 100 members and guests entered the doors of Parker Gardner Music Company's Auditorium and enjoyed an afternoon of organ music and fellowship.

Ed Kent welcomed the group. Master of Ceremonies, Buster Richardson, suggested we borrow a phrase from the Rodgers Organ Co., "Let's just live a little!" as he introduced the program.

First performer heard at the Richardsons' Rodgers 33-E was Dr. D.E. MacDonald, in a delightful program of tunes played in true theatre style with comments interspersed about each number and its composer. His recently acquired "Posthorn" was used as he played "Sidney Torch Style." His "Salute To The Two Reginalds" — Reginald Foort and Reginald Dixon (signature tune) was a highlight of the program.

In the early 40's Dr. was the assistant organist at the Kings Theatre, later known as the Gaumont, in Dundee, Scotland, and for several years was organist at the Garrison Theatre.

Next Buster introduced the charming and talented Linda Kent as the

"Sweetheart of our group." As we listened and watched her skillful fingers glide across the keys with such perfection and maturity, it was hard to realize that Linda has just turned "Sweet Sixteen." Her Gershwin medley was most outstanding. Her final number was a duo, with Dr. MacDonald at the piano.

OPAL CANSLER

## POTOMAC VALLEY

St. Patrick's Day dawned dull and dreary but the weather couldn't dampen the spirits of 107 Potomac Valley members who were departing on the long-awaited Wanamaker-Dickinson trip. Travelling in two comfortable and full buses we arrived at the John Wanamaker Department Store in Philadelphia just in time for a nice luncheon in the Wanamaker Mirador Room. We were conducted on a tour of the chambers of the world's largest organ, led by Nelson Buechner, Organ Maintenance Engineer at the store. The sight of 88 ranks of matched Kimball strings in *one chamber* still has many of us drooling. Our party also enjoyed a slide presentation showing some of the less accessible parts of the organ, as well as some of the organists who have played the Wanamaker Grand Court Organ.

### JULY 1973

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

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The organ consists of a total of 469 ranks of pipes and speaks into the 13-story Grand Court of the store. It is played three times a day, six days a week, by Keith Chapman who became staff organist in 1966 at the age of nineteen. Keith migrated from San Francisco to the East to accept a scholarship at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. He earned his Bachelor of Music degree and shortly thereafter passed the examinations for the Associate degree of the American Guild of Organists. He also holds a Master of Music degree from Temple University. Mr. Chapman is the Director of Music at the United Methodist Church in Wayne, Pa. His great diversification in music is displayed by his success in approaching the world of theatre organ. Including the Wanamaker performances he has given over 5,600 recitals among which were several well-received theatre organ concerts, complete with silent movie accompaniment. Keith's 45-minute concert on the giant six manual Grand Court Organ made us want to return again and again to hear this fine organist.

Departing from the store at 6 p.m. we enjoyed hot chicken box lunches on the way to Wilmington, Delaware, where we attended an excellent concert by John Seng at the Dickinson



Left to right; Keith Chapman, Frank Vitale and Nelson Buechner at the Wanamaker organ.

High School Kimball. A tired but happy group returned in the wee small hours, singing the praises of Frank Vitale, our member who organized the day's activities.

The 2/8 Wurlitzer in historic Frederick's Tivoli Theatre is the last remaining in-theatre pipe organ in the state of Maryland. Potomac Valley's March 24 meeting featured member Doug Bailey at the fire-engine-red console of the Tivoli, through the courtesy of Dan Weinberg, owner of the theatre and organ. (See THEATRE ORGAN Dec. '72, page 33.) Listening to Doug one could be sure

that "Spring is Here." Birds were singing and there was a musical shower. We call Doug Bailey 'the old smoothie' although he is not old enough for such a descriptive phrase. He plays entirely by ear and mostly in the key of F#. Audience participation is 100% as Doug always includes us when he plans a program. A featured artist at the '72 Convention who played the Loew's Richmond organ, Doug Bailey is a chapter favorite.

Last year two important events occurred at the Tivoli Theatre: (1) the making of the Concert Recording CR0074 "Who Is Ray Brubacher And What's He Doing With Those Pipes?" which is receiving excellent reviews, and (2) Hector Olivera's now-famous debut to the theatre organ world during the Convention.

Piedmont Chapter joined Potomac Valley for a meeting in Richmond on April 8th. Some of the 22 attending Piedmont members drove six hours just to be there. In all, nearly 200 ATOSers from Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Washington, North and South Carolina journeyed to Richmond for the double-header.

Jane Sparks, "Sparky", a student of Eddie Weaver's and a member of both chapters shared the honors with Eddie at the Byrd Theatre's magnificent 4/17 Wurlitzer. Jane teaches organ in her

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home town, Durham, N.C. Her presentation was a good example of the high calibre of musicians Mr. Weaver turns out. Jane's playing was clean and fine, and displayed that unmistakable Weaver flair. This was Sparky's debut in the Potomac Valley Chapter and, judging from her reception, we should be hearing much more from her.

Following a brief intermission the console rose again under the capable hands of Eddie Weaver and a musical spell was cast. Eddie demonstrated the

Jane "Sparky" Sparks delighted Piedmont and Potomac Valley Chapters at the Byrd Theatre in Richmond. — (Richard Neidich Photo)



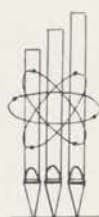
"Mr. Showmanship" — Eddie Weaver.

exquisite tonal qualities of the Byrd Wurlitzer with a well-rounded program of songs old and new. We were also treated to cats and dogs, trains, storms, rain, bagpipes, and a multitude of other sounds not normally considered organ sounds. The showmanship of this outstanding organist-entertainer is worth going to see, and he compliments his personality with some of the greatest musicianship to be heard anywhere. Eddie has been playing daily for 47 years to cheering theatre audiences, and appears nightly at the Byrd. The beautiful Byrd The-

atre with its breathtaking chandelier of everchanging splendor is a fitting location for the talents of Eddie Weaver. For the first time in the history of our chapter meetings, a standing ovation was given to our artist — a true master — Eddie Weaver. His musical spell ended all too soon.

We continued on to the Loew's Theatre in Richmond for the second feature of our double-header. Talented Dennis James presided over the gorgeous white-and-gold console of

Mr. and Mrs. Dennis James, honeymooners, at Loew's Theatre, Richmond. Congratulations Dennis and Heidi. — (Richard Neidich Photo)



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Loew's 3/13 Wurlitzer. His opener, "If My Friends Could See Me Now" instantly converted all of us to "Friends." And we liked what we saw and heard. There was an aura of love in the atmosphere as Dennis introduced his lovely bride, Heidi. Only another musician would go along with a concert tour for a honeymoon. Heidi is an accomplished concert pianist. She and Dennis perform together whenever both a piano and an organ are available. Dennis' technical expertise is as apparent as his rapport with his audience — a truly remarkable young man. Won't it be fun to be able to say "I knew him when . . .!" Our thanks to member Richard Neidich who secured the services of one of the most popular young organists for this tremendous concert.

Thanks also to the two chapter members who maintain the Byrd and Loew's organs, as well as the one at the Mosque — Tom Landrum and Dick Barlow. The cooperation of theatre managers George Stitzer and Mr. Sterling is also most appreciated. Former Byrd Manager Robert Coulter was made a complimentary Lifetime chapter member at the Byrd meeting.

It was our pleasure to share a most memorable day with Claude and Opal Cansler and the Piedmont Chapter.

JEAN LAUTZENHEISER

## SOUTHEASTERN

With the warm sound of the 3/9 Wurlitzer of Gordon and Linda Johnson, Southeastern Chapter members gathered on March 25 for a Sunday afternoon of film, concert and food fare.

The meeting was marked with a near-record attendance for a home meeting as over seventy people arrived

at the Johnson's home in Marietta, Ga. Chapter chairman and Atlanta Fox staff organist, Bob Van Camp, presented his own accompaniment score for a short silent comedy to mark the beginning of the afternoon's entertainment following the regular business meeting. ATOS secretary and host, Gordon Johnson and family, prepared a chili buffet and made their Wurlitzer (formerly installed in the

Bob Van Camp accompanying silent movies at the Johnson residence 3/9 Wurlitzer, during March meeting.



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The organ is yet to be completed, but is already impressive in its scope and voices. In addition to Bob Van Camp's deft handling of the silent film score, ATOS members Ned Marshall (a one-time theatre organist), Bob Clark, Jackie Brown, Walter Winn, and others showed their talent as proof that the chapter is certainly one of musicians.

Discussion of chapter member Joe Patten's East Point Theatre project (to receive a three-manual Moller organ from a Scranton, Pa., theatre), was a highlight in the chapter's business discussion. Some ATOS members are assisting Patten in a total cleaning and interior remodeling of the house, located in East Point, Ga., and built in 1940. Member Charles Walker is supervising the transformation of the rather "modern" interior into an auditorium in the Spanish style much akin to several Atlanta neighborhood theatre of the twenties.

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Joe Patten, owner of the East Point, is noted for his stewardship with another Moller — the famous Fox Theatre 4/42 organ in Atlanta. He has been responsible for the care and upkeep of the instrument since its "return to fame" in the fall of 1964.

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