



Congratulations from Hector Olivera (right) bring a big smile from Ronnie Pedley, National Yamaha Festival winner in Chicago.

Yamaha Winner Bound for Japan

Another honor came to the Potomac Valley Chapter June 17 when 12-year-old member Ronald Pedley became the Junior Division Winner in the third Annual Yamaha National Electone Pops Festival. The 1000 nationwide contestants in 140 cities were narrowed down to 202 regional competitors in four regions. There were three divisions – Junior (under 16), Intermediate (16 to 25), and Pro/Am. One winner in each division plus four wild cards competed in the finals in Chicago's Conrad Hilton grand ballroom before an audience of over 2000. Steve Allen was the Master of Ceremonies. The impressive panel of judges included such notable musicians as Bill Irwin, Lenny Dee, John Seng, Fred Waring, Jimmy Smith, Sarah Vaughn, and Elmer Bernstein.

A medley consisting of "Joy" and "Jesus Christ, Superstar" was Ronnie's selection. He won first prize – an expense-paid trip to Japan for himself, one of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Dever Pedley of Springfield, Virginia, and his teacher, Jean Lautzenheiser. They will attend the International Yamaha Pops Festival for a week in Japan this October.

In addition to his interest in the organ, Ron plays trumpet in his school band, and took up piano six months

ago. But in baseball season music takes a back seat while this Little League catcher gives his best to baseball. □

Closing Chord

Jack Ward, 75, died suddenly in New York City on July 25. Associate staff organist at Radio City Music Hall for 16 years, he played on NBC radio previously for many years. He is survived by three children, Jack, Jr., James and Mrs. Mary Griffith.

A Requiem mass was held at Faith, Hope and Charity Chapel Annex in St. Patrick's Cathedral with burial in Pennsylvania.



JACK WARD

Laurens Hammond, inventor of the Hammond electric organ and America's first electric clock, died in July, after a short illness. He was 78.

A native of Evanston, Illinois, he invented the electric organ in 1932 and founded the Electric Organ Co. in Chicago.

Mabel B. Grierson, widow of Rochester, N.Y.'s best known theatre organist, Tom Grierson, died on June 11. Mr. Grierson, who had played theatre organs in Brooklyn, St. Louis, Toledo and Buffalo before he achieved his fame in Rochester as house organist at the RKO Palace Theatre, died in 1966.

Mrs. Grierson is survived by a son, Jack, and a daughter Mary.

George E. Codd, for several years the treasurer of the Rochester Theatre Organ Society, died on June 12. His wife, Ethel, two sons and two sisters survive him. □



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.

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TO THE EDITOR:

In the April issue you mentioned the movie *WICKED! WICKED!*, and the fact that a theatre organ was played and seen on the screen. There was a movie made about 3 or 4 years ago that had an organ in it. The movie was *ANGEL IN MY POCKET*, starring Andy Griffith. In the movie Andy portrays a newly ordained minister that scrounges an old theatre organ to replace a wheezing old pump organ. My question is, what make of organ was it, and where was it located? When I saw the movie years ago, when it was first released, I didn't know the dif-

ference between a Wurlitzer and a Hammond. I am particularly interested in finding out where the organ is and the make and specifications. That tune and scene in the movie started my interest in the theatre organ, and quite possibly in several other people. HELP!

Sincerely,
Bruce Gentry
Organ Technician, Capitol Theatre,
Rome, New York

DEAR SIR:

May I be allowed through your publication to enlighten your readers on the comparative merits of British theatre organists.

I am an English organist now working in the U.S.A. but will never forget, as a boy of 12, being taken to the Regal Marble Arch to listen to Quentin MacLean at the Christie. At this time I had been studying violin for 5 years, but this gorgeous sound coming from one man completely knocked me out and from then on I had to play organ or bust!

Mac was a veritable giant among organists, tremendous technique, a master of registration and was probably the greatest of all time. Also, with his great sense of humor, to hear him accompany a short comedy was sheer delight. Way back when record masters were made on wax, he recorded the "Rhapsody in Blue". You could swear there was a pianist playing with him but he did this all on his own with, of course, no dubbing. The BBC has a copy of this recording which they keep in moth balls under lock and key.

Compared to Mac I am afraid all the others were as children. Of course he was offered the post as BBC theatre organist, but as the BBC was not notorious for paying high salaries, they could not meet the price this man's playing merited.

When he left Marble Arch, he was followed by Reg Foort and later by Sidney Torch. Both these players made substantial "improvements" to the organ but it never sounded as good again.

Mac's last job in England was at the Trocadero, Elephant and Castle Wurlitzer. This audience, I might tell you, was the roughest in London, but it was nothing for him to come up on the lift and play the Overture to Mr. Pickwick, or introduction to Act 3 of Lohengrin and hold the audience spell-bound. He sounded like he had four hands — we

will never see or hear the like again. When Jesse Crawford visited London to open the Wurlitzer at the Empire, they took him to hear Mac at the Trocadero. Mac played for 40 minutes to Jesse. When asked what did he think of him, Jesse replied "He's UNCANNY".

The finest theatre organist in England at this time is Gerald Shaw. He plays a 5 manual Compton at the Odeon Leicester Square with some ranks I suspect "borrowed" from other installations. Anyone going over

should make a point of hearing this player.

Of the younger school, Brian Rodwell is outstanding. Some of the jazz organists over here would do well to hear him take off on "Sweet Georgia Brown" on his recording at the Granada Tooting Wurlitzer. He realized the 8' pedals speak more quickly than 16' and put this knowledge to good effect.

Kindest regards,
Don Lorusso
Schnitzelhaus, Milwaukee, Wisconsin



ALABAMA

The last two meetings of the Alabama Chapter have featured open console with more of the members getting to know the 4/20 Wurlitzer at the Alabama Theatre in Birmingham. For most of us, it is a thrill just to sit on the seat of that famous old organ, and the thrill of hearing ourselves play it is understood only by other organ "nuts."

We feel particularly lucky to have as a member, Mr. Norville Hall. Mr. Hall helped uncrate the organ and was the first to play it — as a boy of only 17. I didn't hear him play it then, but he sure hasn't forgotten how.

Mrs. Lillian Truss is another of our members with many memories of the old organ. Mrs. Truss played the organ at the opening of the theatre and was the organist for the silent movies there for several years. She is preparing a program to present to us at our August meeting.

Mr. T.T. Miller, organist at the Trinity Methodist Church in Tuscaloosa, was with us for the first time at the last meeting. He had never played the Alabama Wurlitzer, but no one would ever guess it. After hearing him play, the rest of us were ready to go home. He particularly held us spell bound with his rendition of "Some-

where My Love", and the small but enthusiastic crowd shouted for "more".

Focus is on the completion of the restoration begun several years ago by members of the Southeastern Chapter. The percussion section is the object of attention at present. At the last work session, the pneumatics for the harp were reinstalled after being releathered by the Coles. The Coles have also releathered the pneumatics for the xylophone and they are to be reinstalled at the next work session.

ALLEEN COLE

CENTRAL INDIANA

The "greatest spectacle in racing" occurs in Indianapolis every May with the advent of the 500 Mile Race, but CIC-ATOS is not to be outdone by this event, and most every one of our meetings can easily compete as the "greatest spectacle" in "pipe organing", keeping the theatre pipe organ movement alive and ever soaring to new heights of accomplishment.

The May meeting reflected no competition by all the usual race-oriented activities. Despite the fact that many had to travel a considerable distance, 60 members were present at this meeting hosted by Maurice and Carol