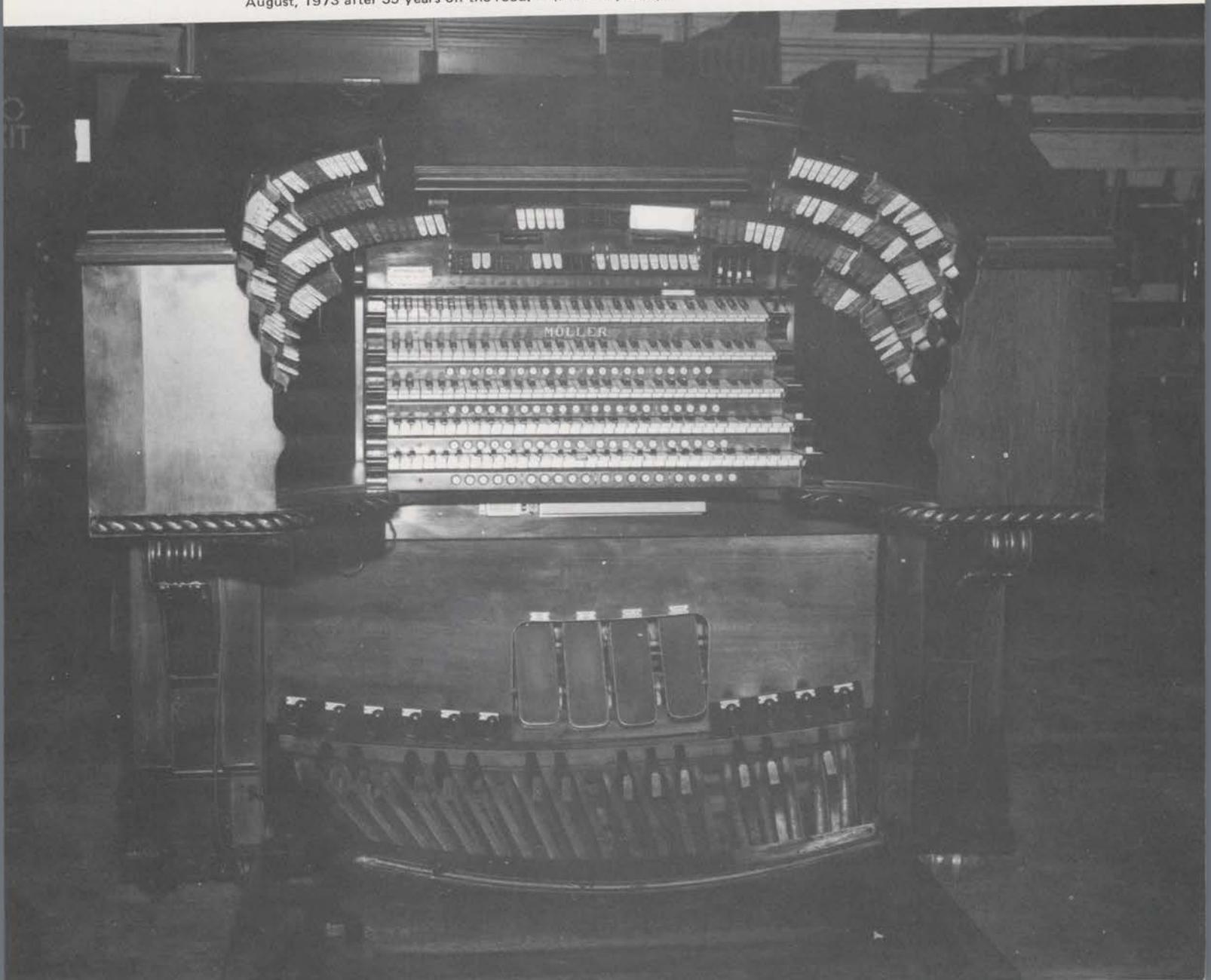


A GREAT TRAVELER COMES HOME . . .

# OPUS 6690

by Ray Brubacher

Console of the 5/27 Moller Theatre Organ built for Reginald Foort, back at the factory in August, 1973 after 35 years on the road. — (Photo by Raup)





Rebuilding wind chests for the Foort organ. — (Photo by Ray Brubacher)

Left to right Paul Kreglo, factory superintendent John Hose, vice president and tonal director; Reginald Foort, Adolph Zajic, head reed voicer; Howard Nalley, pipe shop foreman; W. Riley Daniels, Moller president. — (Photo by Raup)



Throughout the colorful history of organ building there have been many unique and one-of-a-kind instruments constructed. However, the story of Moller opus 6690, or what will be frequently referred to in this article as R-902, is one which is so fascinating (and at times mind boggling) that even though it has received mention in past issues of this journal, the story of its inception, its travels, and its arrival home merit renewed interest — and with its current rejuvenation will rank as one of the most important theatre organs ever constructed.

Part one of this narrative begins October 22, 1938 when the M.P. Moller Company of Hagerstown, Maryland, shipped opus 6690 — a five manual twenty seven rank portable, if something weighing in at over thirty tons can be considered as such — theatre pipe organ to the reknowned British organist Reginald Foort for use as a traveling instrument. Reginald Foort had designed this organ in cooperation with his close friend, the late Reginald Watson of Long Island, N.Y., to be portable in that all divisions of the organ could be set into place and put in operating order within a time period of less than twenty four hours.

Statistics tell us that Mr. Foort's grand organ entourage consisted of a staff of fifteen men and four large thirty foot road vans to move the Moller to all the various theatres and music halls that had booked Mr. Foort for concerts. All in all the organ was erected and dismantled a total of 187 times in the relatively short period the organ was in use from late 1938 until the involvement of Britain in the hostilities of World War II in 1940.

The British Broadcasting Corporation took a great interest in the Moller soon after their own theatre broadcasting organ (a four manual thirty six rank Compton) was destroyed in one of the first air raids on London. Mr. Foort, being unable to continue his touring because of dangerous war conditions, offered the Moller to the B.B.C. for the duration of the war and it was moved to North Wales. Shortly after the war began, Sandy MacPherson was appointed official B.B.C. theatre organist and held that post until the mid sixties when the B.B.C. disposed of the organ. The author remembers listening as a teenager to the North American and

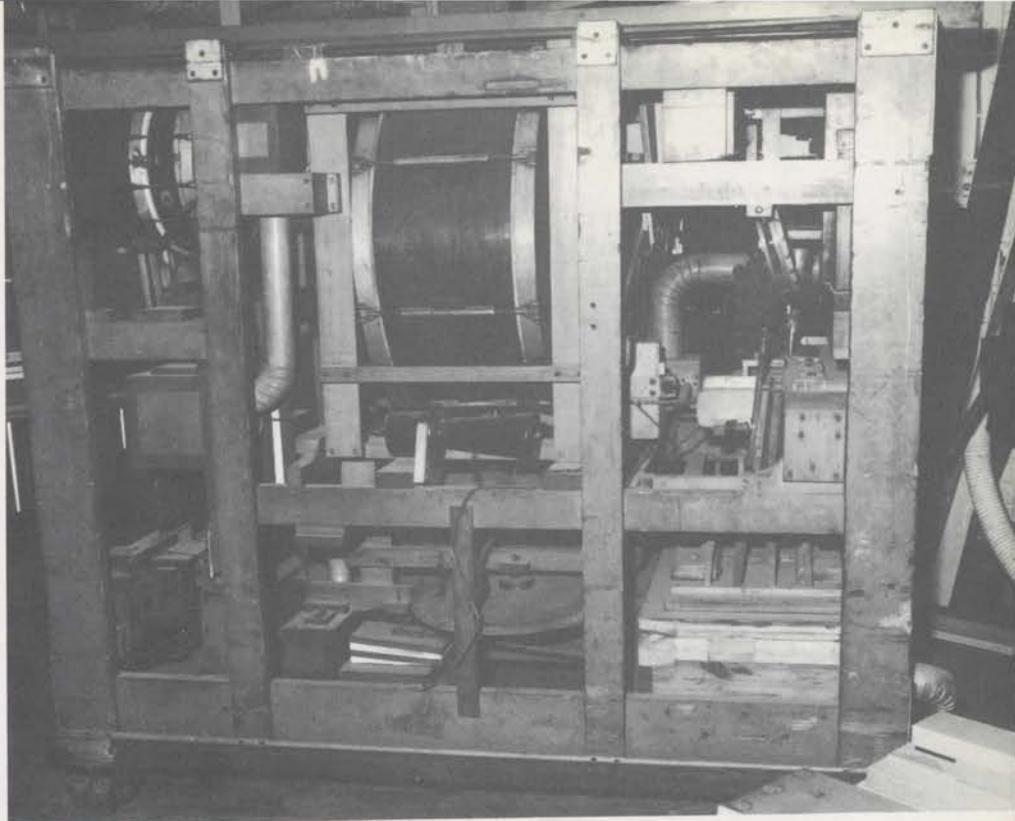
General Overseas Services of the B.B.C. when the organ was broadcast weekly by MacPherson and other visiting organists. It may be noted here that the final broadcast of the organ over the B.B.C. was given by George Blackmore.

When the B.B.C. sold the organ to the Dutch Radio at Hilversum, Holland, they placed the instrument in a church just as the British had done. The well known organist Cor Steyn was largely responsible for its installation, however, soon after the Dutch put the organ on the air, Mr. Steyn passed away. Due to the lack of suitable theatre organ talent to play the instrument, it remained silent throughout most of its stay in Holland.

## II

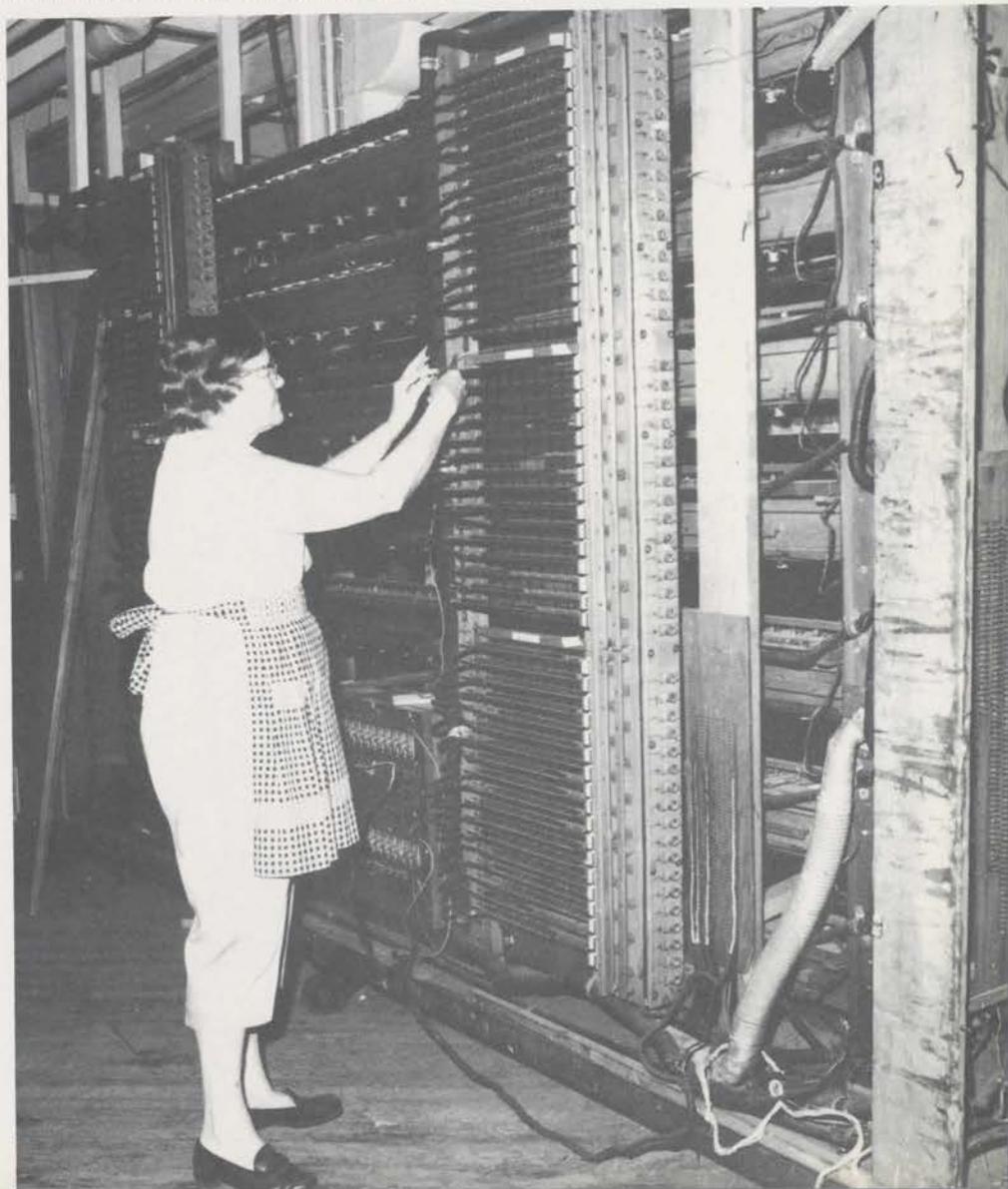
In the summer of 1973, Mr. Peter Daniels, secretary of the Moller Company, made a trip to Hilversum to make a detailed inspection of the organ for a prospective purchaser. Upon Mr. Daniels' return, Mr. Paul Kreglo, Moller factory superintendent, was dispatched to Hilversum to supervise the removal of the organ and arrange for its shipment back to Hagerstown for a complete restoration. Whereas Dutch tracker minded organ builders had taken two years to install the organ, Mr. Kreglo was able with competent assistance, to have the organ removed and packed for shipment in three weeks. The organ was safely in Hagerstown by the end of July and was assigned a rebuild number R-902. Shortly after its arrival, Mr. Foort came to the factory with the purchaser, to inspect the instrument. On September 7, 1973, the author made a trip to the factory to gather material and photographs for this article. Upon arrival, the feeling of enthusiasm and excitement from all employees assigned to R-902 was much in evidence. Seated in the company board room making notes, the sounds of "Finlandia and the "Light Cavalry Overture" recorded years ago by Foort on his Moller were heard from a tape machine in the distance.

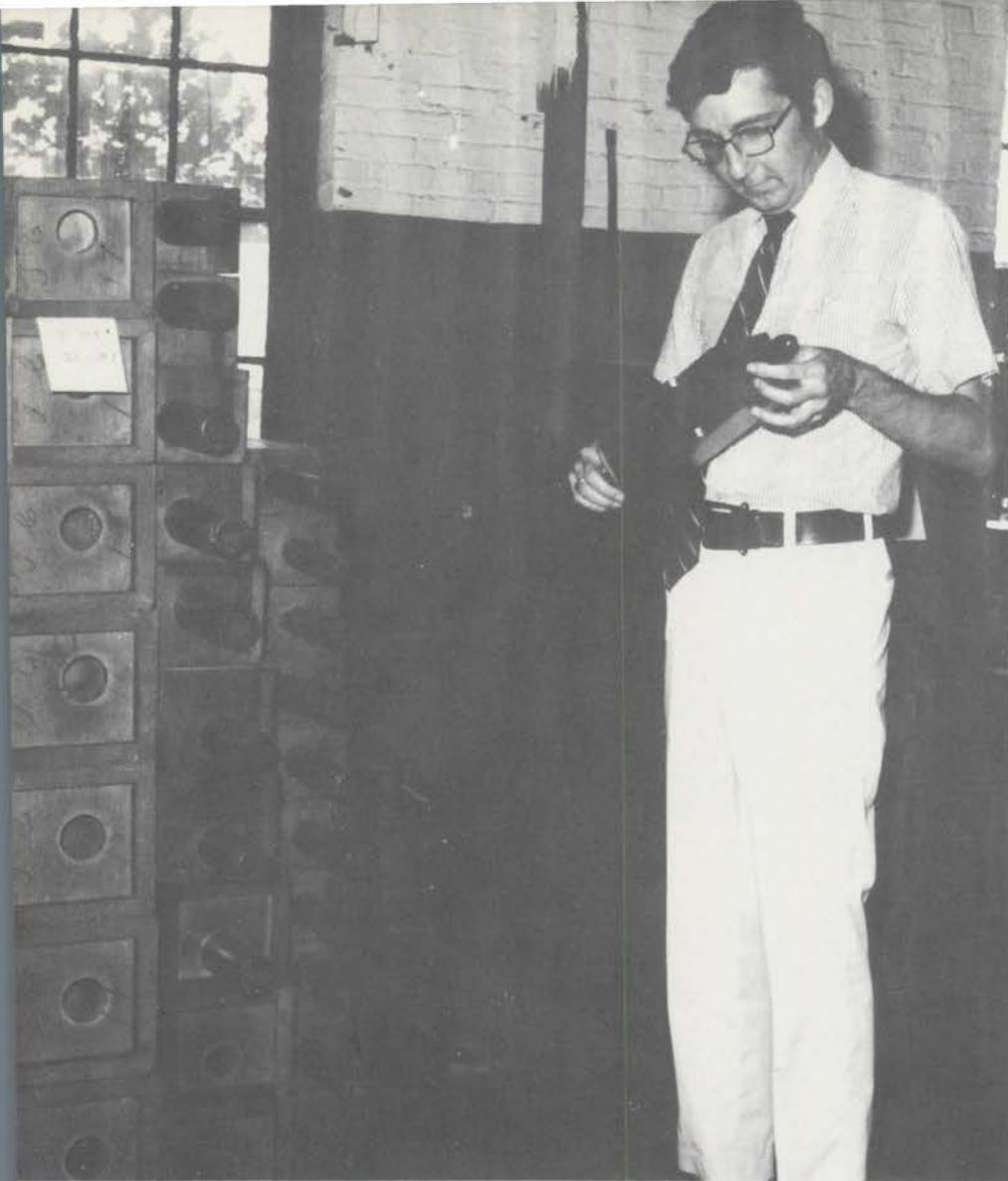
The Moller Company is going all out to make R-902 a continuing example of a product of the finest craftsmanship, the best materials, and technical knowledge. Every chest, reservoir, tremulant, percussion bar, trap effect and pipe is being refurb-



Trap and percussion case for the Foort Travelling Moller. — (Photo by Ray Brubacher)

Moller factory technician refurbishing relay. — (Photo by Ray Brubacher)





Peter Daniels inspects Solo Tibia I. — (Photo by Ray Brubacher)

Stop rail being reconditioned in the factory. — (Photo by Ray Brubacher)



bished so that when it is placed in its new home in Southern California, restaurant patrons will hear an organ compatible with any type of music that might be played on its five manuals and pedal.

A detailed description of the console and an analysis of the pipework follows:

#### THE CONSOLE

Five manuals and pedal. Manuals are from lower — Accompaniment, Great Orchestral, Solo and Bombarde. The Bombarde is a coupler manual. The orchestral couples to the Bombarde at pitches of 16, 8,  $5\frac{1}{3}$ , 4, 3  $\frac{1}{5}$ , 2  $\frac{2}{3}$ . The solo couples to the bombarde at the 8 foot pitch. All usual inter and intra manual couplers are present. There is second touch on the accompaniment manual with unison couplers to this feature from the solo and orchestral and a four foot great to accompaniment second touch.

#### PISTONS:

- 20 single touch affecting solo stops and couplers
- 20 single touch affecting orchestral stops and couplers
- 20 double touch, on first touch affecting great stops and couplers on second touch operating all pistons of corresponding numbers.
- 20 double touch on first touch affecting accompaniment stops and couplers on second touch operating the pedal combination of corresponding numbers.
- 20 single combinations affecting the pedal stops and couplers only. Cancel bar to each stop key group.

Toe piston on Percussion expression pedal connecting solo expression.

Toe piston for sforzando

Toe piston for Piano sostenuto

Toe pistons for first five pedal combinations

Toe piston for general cancel.

#### PEDALS:

Left to right, Solo Chamber, Main Chamber, Percussion Chamber, Crescendo Bar indicators for expression and crescendo pedals.

Non tonal trap effects are controlled by buttons in the key cheeks and on a box at the left of the

accompaniment manual. There are controls for eight tremulants and bar indicators for expression and crescendo pedals. The original dark finish of the console has been replaced with a new finish of white and gold.

### THE PIPEWORK

Notable here is the Tibia Clausa I. It's the largest Tibia ever constructed for a theatre organ being five scales larger than the solo Tibia for the N.Y. Paramount. A Post Horn extension to the 16 foot pitch is being added as well as a new replacement Saxophone and a French Horn to replace a Doppelflute. The ranks in the chamber analysis labeled 4 foot repeat on the bottom octave of the keyboard upon which it is drawn.

### SOLO CHAMBER

#### division I

Rank	Pressure	Pipes
16' Tuba Mirabilis	15"	85
16' Post Horn	15"	85
8' Solo Trumpet	15"	73
8' Tuba Horn	15"	73

#### division II

8' Tibia I	15"	85
8' Saxophone	15"	61
8' Tibia III	10"	85
8' Vox Humana I	10"	73

#### division III

8' Clarinet	10"	73
8' Orchestral Oboe	10"	73
4' Krumet	10"	61
8' Musette	10"	73
8' French Horn	10"	73

### MAIN CHAMBER

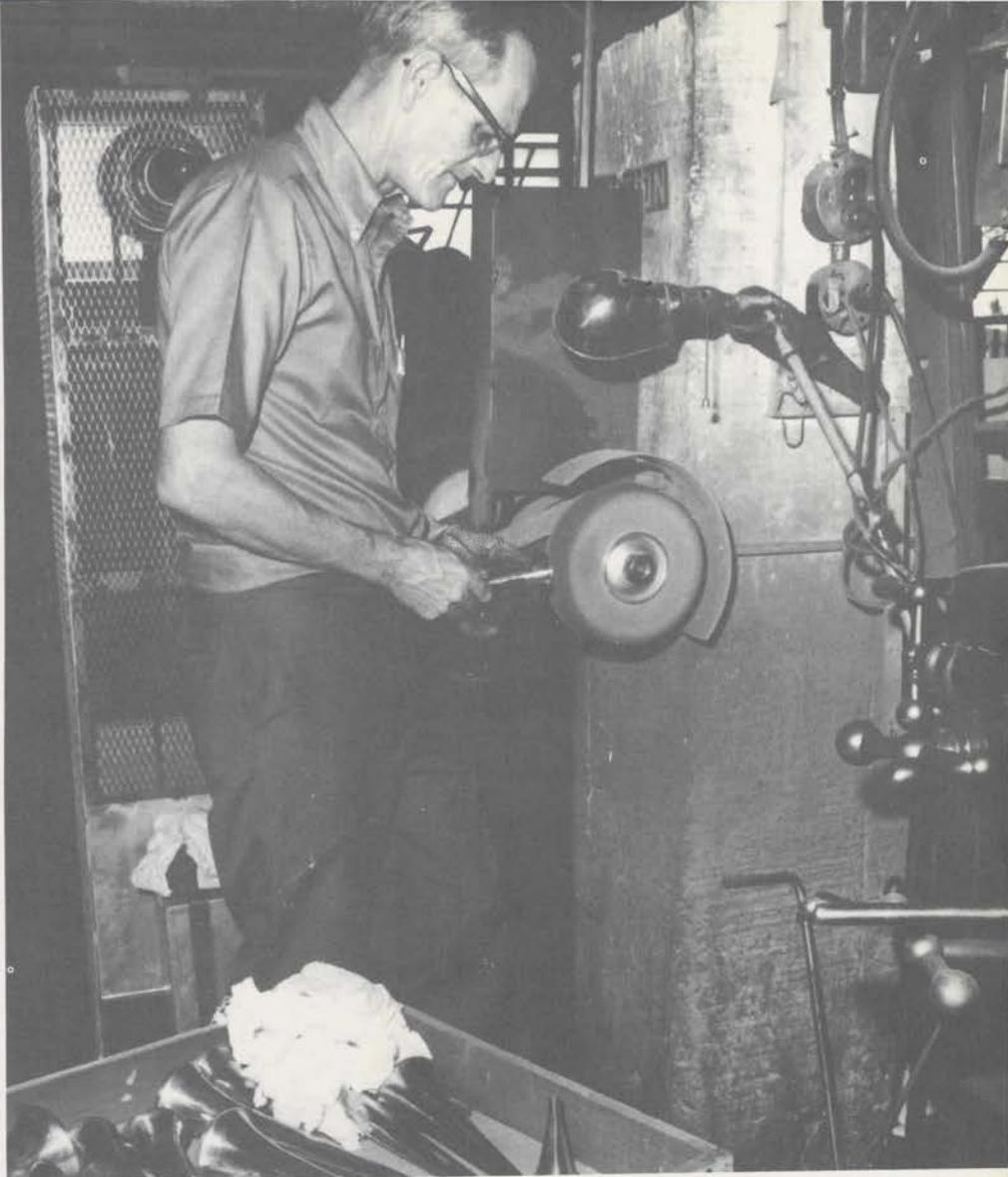
#### division IV

8' Open Diapason	10" wind	85
8' Concert Flute	10"	85
8' Viol d' Orchestre	10"	85
8' V.D.O. Cleste	10"	73
4' Orchestral		
Strings II rks	10"	122
4' Muted		
Strings II rks	10'	122

#### division V

16' Diapason Stentor		
principal	15 and 10"	85
16' Gamba	15 and 10"	97
4' Camba Celeste	10"	61

OCTOBER, 1973



Foot organ Brass Trumpet resonators undergo restoration at Mollers. — (Photo by Ray Brubacher)

Console "hardware" of Moller Opus 6690, the Foort Traveling Moller organ. Taken at the factory September, 1973. — (Photo by Ray Brubacher)



16' Chorus Trumpet	15 and 10"	85
16' Tibia Clausa II	10"	97
4' Vox Humana II	10"	61

#### PERCUSSION CHAMBER

Cathedral Chimes	25 bells
Xylophone	49 bars
Glockenspiel	
Orchestra Bells	37 bars
Chrysoglott	49 bars with vibraharp feature controlled at console

#### All drums and traps —

Bass Drum — roll and tap, Cymbal, Snare Drum, Triangle, Castanets, Tambourine, Sand Block, Chinese Block — roll and tap, Fire Bell, Train Whistle, Police Whistle, Crash Cymbal, Bird Whistle, Auto Horn (Klaxon), Surf, Boat Whistle, Siren, Sleigh Bells.

N.B. Those individuals desiring a more complete history of the organ when it was owned and used by Reginald Foort should obtain the Vestal Press reprint of THE CINEMA ORGAN, by Reginald Foort. This is obtainable from the Vestal Press, Vestal, N.Y. 13850. □

*Taken from the Daily Paper:  
"De Gooi-en Eemlander" June  
23, 1973.*

**Pizza-King Buys Mammoth-  
ORGAN from Netherlands  
Broadcasting Systems (N.O.S.)**

HILVERSUM (A.N.P.). Europe's biggest theatre organ, bought by the then Netherlands Radio Union (N.R.U.) from the British Broadcasting Company (B.B.C.) for a very considerable amount, has been sold to an American Pizza-King in San Diego at the price of US\$. 14,000,-. The organ, gross weight 25,000 kilos, will be installed there in a restaurant with an accompanying display showing the rich history of the instrument.

The Dutch organ players Cor Steijn, Bernard Drukker and Piet van Egmond used to play it regularly, also after it had been acquired by the N.R.U. in 1965 and installed as Radio Concert Organ in the Church of the Netherlands Protestant Union in Hilversum.

Especially after the death of Cor Steijn, the interest in the organ has greatly diminished and the last few years it has hardly been played. At present the immense organ is being dismantled in order to be shipped to the U.S.A. packed in several containers.

## Closing Chord



Harry Rupf

**Harry Rupf**, 35, of Kansas City, Missouri, passed away while hospitalized in July. Mr. Rupf was well known in the Kansas City area, having been organist for the former Kansas City Blues Hockey Team and the Omaha Kings Basketball Team.

He was an enthusiastic booster of theatre organ and played many events for the Kansas City group. □

**Bob Garretson**, 57, organist at the Reseda, Calif. "Pipe & Pizza," passed away in his sleep on August 28, apparently of a heart condition.

Bob was one of the founders in 1949 of the "Los Angeles Organists' Breakfast Club," and served several terms as vice president and president of the organization which promotes live organ music in the California southland. A recommendation by a visitor to one of the club's Sunday sessions, Jesse Crawford, resulted in Bob's initiation of an annual scholarship for young organists. He also started the club's monthly publication, now known as *OFF THE KEY-BOARDS* and edited by Lloyd del Castillo.

A native of Portland, Oregon, Bob graduated with a BA degree from the University of Oregon and completed

graduate work at USC and UCLA. He was seen and heard as organist for the *Ladies Matinee* on LA TV for four years, played piano in the pit orchestra with Ken Murray's *Blackouts* (three years), and did another three year stint as pianist with the LA Civic Light Opera Company. In recent years he played many cocktail lounge engagements in the LA area. He had never shown much interest in pipes until he was invited to play a concert for the LA Theatre Organ Club in the early '60s. After two weeks of almost continual practice on the then 4/34 Wurlitzer-Morton in the Lorin Whitney studio, he presented an outstanding concert — and also got hooked on pipes. He later played an engagement at Monk's Musical Pizza (2/7 Wurlitzer) in Covina, Calif. and moved to the Pipe & Pizza (2/10 Wurlitzer) when Monk's closed. Recently he had bought into the pizzeria, becoming a half owner.

Always a workhorse in the promotion of live organ music, Bob was responsible for much of the success of LAOBC. His genial, outgoing personality made the pizzeria a pleasant place to visit. His only living relative is a sister in Seattle.

Rose Diamond



Bob Garretson at work. He'll be missed. — (Stufoto)