

admit it) does some fantastic work which has been grotesquely overlooked.

As a member of the American Theatre Organ Society and the Scottish Theatre Organ Preservation Society I would like to request that an alteration be made to the present feature or that an independent one be started. I feel that we have enough to support a full page as well as provide a series of articles from time to time. Your time and consideration will be greatly appreciated.

I remain,
Ernest N. Boyd

Dear Mr. Thompson

As a member of ATOS I have become interested in old films as well as theatre organs. A recent death in our family has sent me on a hunt for old films pertaining to the Phil Spitalny and Alex Hyde Orchestras.

My late Aunt, Carolyn Goeglein had played trombone for both the Phil Spitalny and Alex Hyde Orchestras between the years 1925 and 1936. I believe she played for Spitalny first in this country then with the Hyde Orchestra in Germany.

If any of our fellow organ buffs are also film buffs and would happen to know of any films available between those years of the two orchestras, I would very much appreciate hearing from them.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,
Thomas W. Wann
302 Toll Circle
Bluffton, Indiana 46714

Dear Editor,

I want to comment on the statement by Lloyd Klos, my friend, in your April 1973 issue, Volume 15, No. 2, on page 22, at the top of column 3. He says that a "64' Ophicleide Gravissimo" has been added to the huge West Point Cadet Chapel organ — mostly Moller — as a further enlargement of its resources.

As I frequently play this magnificent "monster" and have seen its well-maintained pipework, I know that no such octave of pipes exists in it. In talking to the organist, John Davis, and the two men who so conscientiously nurse its forests of spotted metal and teakwood, I am told that

there is no space available for such an octave of long bass pipes.

Their published specification makes provision for a unit of stopped Bourdons at 64', 42 2/3' (the deepest Quint), 32', 21 1/3', 16', 10 2/3', 8', and 4'. These pipes are all in and in use except the lowest octave from the notes called CCCCC up to BBBBB. There is no room for the pipes of the 64' octave (the profound low CCCCC would make only 8.17 cycles or vibrations per second).

Now where are the real full-length 64' pipes that don't turn out upon inspection to be the usual "Resultants" or "Vox Gravissimas?" There are two of them in the whole world. One is a real reed of brass and is the Contra Trombone 64' in Town Hall, Sydney, Australia. It was finished in 1896 and has wood tubes of great thickness, about four feet square in the low CCCCC. It is said by persons who have heard it to sound like "tuned thunder."

The one in this country is in Convention Hall, Atlantic City, New Jersey. I have often looked down its deep crevasses and Bill Rosser, its maintainer, has shouted at me, "Don't fall in any of those pipes, or we'll never get you out!" I once played "The Star Spangled Banner" on this 455-rank organ with every stop and coupler on. The assistant manager came running and the 200 workmen getting ready for the next ice show dropped their tools and no doubt any rats around promptly headed back for the nearby sea. The lowest CCCCC pipe is actually 67 feet long, and not just 64. It has a beater, and not a brass reed. It speaks promptly and the whole rank of 85 pipes is on 35 inches of wind pressure.

Stevens Irwin,
St. Petersburg, Florida

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.

On a tip from the west coast, organ collector Dick Loderhose faced a dilemma — to add another Wurlitzer to his collection, or not? The tip led him to the Jersey City Stanley Theatre and one of three 3/27's built in North Tonawanda for Stanley Theatres in the late '20s (the others went into the Atlantic City and Pittsburgh Stanley affiliates). With a 4/42 perking in his New York home, and three more Wurlitzers and a large Morton in storage, did he need another organ, especially one with the "Main shot" (his

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words)? The answer, naturally, was "yes". Now Dick Loderhose has four Wurlitzers and a Morton in his warehouse.

In San Francisco, silent movie organist Robert Vaughn (he plays accompaniments on the Avenue Theatre's 3/14 Wurlitzer) did a stint on ABC-TV's *To Tell the Truth*. He reminisced about the silent movie era, then cued a Monte Banks comedy on the Studio Hammond for the benefit of TV viewers, one of whom was veteran organist Esther Higgins who caught the show at her Collingswood, New Jersey home. Esther writes, "It was great. Bob Vaughn did a splendid job." It seems like only a short while ago that Bob received accolades from the elite deYoung Museum Society and Patrons of Art and Music (San Francisco) for his accompaniment to a screening for the Society of "My Best Girl" starring Mary Pickford, but that was way back in July '71. Bob, retired from the U.S. Immigration Service, describes himself as a "hobby organist."

Aside to New York Chapter: don't worry about member Jack Moelmann. He's doing fine, playing a 2/9 Wurlitzer in Shakey's Pizzeria, Anaheim, Calif., as often as his Air Force officer's duties permit — usually nightly. When we visited he was playing a slide-illustrated sing-along to a full house of enthusiastic pasta chompers. Said he misses his Eastern friends by the Wurlitzer keeps his mind off troubles.



Jack Moelmann, An Air Force Captain in a Shakey situation.

From Cheshire, England John Potter informs us that record sales by the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust have already figured in realizing the purpose of the non-profit organization — to save England's remaining theatre organs. To date, the club has released four recordings in its "Double Touch" and "Opposite Ranks" series. Reviews in this magazine have helped sales, according to Mr. Potter, with the result that when it was decided to "twin" the venerable Manchester Odeon, the club was able to secure it's 4/20 Wurlitzer for installation in Manchester's 2500-seat town hall. Potter, who is the Trust's Honorary Secretary, and a crew of Trust stalwarts were removing the instrument during late summer, encouraged by the City of Manchester's earmarking of 8000 British Pounds toward the reinstallation. The Acorn record project will continue with forthcoming records played by Ernest Broadbent and Len Rawle, plus a disc featuring unknown (but good) young organists.



Esther Higgins. Daytime TV viewer and silent movie organist.

Also from Esther Higgins comes a clip from the Philadelphia Bulletin about silent film presentations at Philly's old Walnut Theatre where a high school teacher named Paul Garabedian plays spontaneous, improvised piano scores to accompany film classics. Discounting the value of cue sheets and prepared scores, the 56-year-old pianist is fluent in his philosophy of film scoring: "My music reinforces the psychological image on both the conscious and unconscious levels. I'm able to dramatize the tonal reality of any visual image." With five years of now-and-then playing behind him, Garabedian is described by the

Bulletin staff writer as "one of the three silent film accompanists in the country." But Garabedian feels the word "accompanist" is a weak description of the versatile pianist. Rather, the staffer says, "He incorporates his talents in drama and music with psychology to create not what he terms an 'accompaniment,' but a 'complement' to the picture." All that — after only five years!



John Detroy (left) looks on while Ken Ladner has a go at the Plaza Studio 3/14. The padlock goes on the power switch.

In a recent column we sent out an SOS for information concerning organist John Detroy who does such a fine job of "filling in" at the NY Radio City Music Hall. Ken Ladner, who is refurbishing the 3/11 Austin in the Port Washington, N.Y. Beacon Theatre (it's now being heard during intermissions, played by Ken), provided the answer. Ken says that John Detroy's calling is publishing, books related to music for school use. He's been "subbing" at RCMH for about eight years. Through Detroy, Ken got to try out the 3/14 Wurlitzer in the RCMH Plaza broadcast studio, an experience which got Ken "hooked" on pipes. Ken describes the organist as "a warm, friendly chap, and fine musician." Visitors to the Music Hall have been consistently in agreement with that latter description.

Three bits of info came from Merle R. Bobzien of Burbank, Calif., who traveled about recently. The 2/9 Marr & Colton in the Chateau Theatre in Rochester, Minn. has been purchased and removed by a private individual,

probably for home installation.

Merle stopped in Phoenix at the Organ Stop Pizza, visiting with Bill Brown and Bob MacNeur. "The Wurlitzer installation is progressing nicely and was commanded spectacularly by Lyn Larsen."

In Fort Worth, he visited Dan Bellomy at the Casa Manana Theatre. "The dome of the theatre forms an auditorium with incredibly live acoustics. In fact, this is the most acoustically perfect organ installation I have ever heard."



Organist Doc Bebko, was greatly saddened "over the realization that my old friend, Jack Ward, is no more. He was a vital little fellow, and did not show any advance signs of his impending demise. He was planning on a busy season and had prompted me to look for a startling announcement concerning himself in the near future – which in light of what has happened, was prophetic. Of course, this is not what he had meant, I am sure.

"He was quite proud that during the 15 years he was associated with the Music Hall he estimated he had played for a total of 25 million persons. Jack was insistent that we never wait in line at the Music Hall, but immediately get in touch with him and he would guide us through the front of the theatre. That was the kind of guy Jack was – always helpful and kind.

"He was a lawyer who fell in love with the theatre organ, and never



Jack Ward, Fondly remembered.

practiced his first profession. He would rather talk theatre organ at 1:00 A.M., as he had done with me on occasion, than sleep. And all this at 78 years of age. In terms of age, he was the senior organist at the Music Hall."



The (Southeast) Piedmont Chapter's lively newsletter, *Reeds and Strings*, for August, informs us that Loews' theatres is willing to dispose of all its remaining organs at \$50,000 each, regardless of size or condition. The sheet also reports that organ buff Fred Pillsbury has purchased the St. Louis Ambassador Theatre's 4/23 Wurlitzer, an instrument described as being unified much more than the average Wurlitzer.



Wonder how many enthusiasts caught St. Louis Fox organist Stan

Kann's recipe session on the August 9 Mike Douglas TV show? Versatile Stan used fresh pineapple, bananas, sliced ham and Mozzarella cheese to make a "fruit flavored" pizza guaranteed to be free of indigestion-generating qualities.



Remember Chuck Baker's "Pipes Incorporated" steel warehouse organ often mentioned in LA Chapter news a few years ago? For the past couple of years the 2/9 Wurlitzer has been installed in air conditioned chambers built onto the Palm Springs home of Bonnie Carette. What brings it to mind now is that the leather is shot. Bills Coffman and Field, proprietors of the El Segundo "Old Town Music Hall," have been hired to re-leather chests, relays, and wherever the leather has deteriorated. But Coffman and Field are not using leather this trip. They found a plastic called "Perflex" to be reliable for most "leathering" jobs. And it goes on with a rubber-based contact cement, thus eliminating animal glue. Said ecology-minded Bill Coffman, "The life of this organ will no longer depend on killing animals," – as he bit into his lunchtime hamburger.



Bill Field – (Lamb Photo)

Organist Bill Field reports finding a brand new pipe organ-equipped pizzeria located in Rolling Hills (south of Los Angeles). Opened on Sept. 1, the "Pipe Organ Pizza" is owned by George Gregorius and Dick Starr is at the 3-manual console. Field didn't count the ranks but said it sounds like 10 or 12. He added that Nelson Ridgeway installed it.

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The Harold Lloyd Museum grounds in Beverly Hills will be more colorful for the enthusiasm of ATOSer Robert David Jackson whose business is plants. Bob and his associate, Helmut Iral, have donated hundreds of Geranium plants from their Malibu, Calif., Swiss Geranium Farms, where geraniums, which grace such southern California landmarks as Disneyland, Magic Mountain and Marineland, were grown. Jackson conceived the plant donation in memory of his parents. His mother, then Ella Fry, worked in the wardrobe department at Universal during the '20s and played bit parts in such films as *Phantom of the Opera* and *King of Jazz* when Carl Laemmle was the studio head.

Johnny Mack, who once was known as Johnny McCartney in the days he played theatre organs in the northwest, had planned to attend the Portland convention. In fact, his "two most ardent fans", his sisters, had offered Johnny and his wife birthday presents in the form of expense money for the trip. However, his not being able to go because of commitments in Illinois probably saved his life! He toyed with the idea of catching the Ozark Airline flight which eventually crashed with a loss of 36 lives. "Every disappointment has its justification", he says, and contented himself with reading details of the "Easy Livin' Eighteenth" in THEATRE ORGAN.

It is now "Dr." Edward C. May and "Dr." Carol M. Bachler, following that Miami father-daughter combination's being awarded PHD's in July. Once



PHD Eddie May. 'Call me Doctor.'

again, this organ duet was booked into the Deauville Hotel in Miami for six weeks, beginning on September 6. As soon as Ed's agent can fit it into his busy schedule, Ed will give an open-house concert at the new Presbyterian Church in Webster, N.Y. The duo's recording "Take Back My Heart, I Ordered Liver" (Review in April '73 T.O.) is selling well, and in February, they plan to issue a new one "One More Time".

Dr. John W. Landon of Taylor University in Indiana spent six weeks in Britain and the Soviet Union this past summer. He didn't find a theatre organ in the latter country, but he had a real ball in Britain. In Scotland, he played a 3-manual Hillsdon for intermissions June 16 and 17 at the 3,000-seat Playhouse Theatre at Edinburgh. The organ is preserved by the Scottish Theatre Organ Preservation Society (STOPS), under the tutelage of Gordon Lucas. A slide, projected onto the screen proclaimed "Direct from the United States: John Landon."

On June 18, John performed a 2-hour concert on the 3/10 Christie in the Bangour Hospital auditorium outside Edinburgh, to an almost capacity audience.

In London, he presented a slide-show on the life of Jesse Crawford before a capacity audience of Cinema Organ Society members, including that group's founder, Herbert Selby. Landon found that theatre organ fever is very high in the British Isles. "The audiences are large and enthusiastic, there are many T.O. records on sale in the stores, and there is much theatre organ music being broadcast, featuring such artists as Dudley Savage, Reginald Dixon, and Robin Richmond."

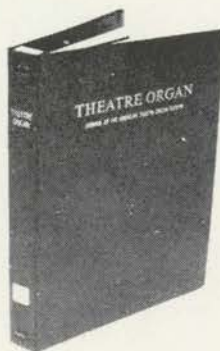
Organist Bert Buhrman is tossing around ideas for further use of the School of the Ozarks Wurlitzer, following the very successful July Sunday series. He has been approached for television, but the TV unit wants \$2,000 a show, which would involve a sponsor. Bert is also exploring the idea of a radio series which will give the organ and the school more coverage. More news on this situation as it develops is promised THEATRE ORGAN by Organist Buhrman. (Also see story in this issue.)

Readers of the Nuggets column in this magazine must have done a double flip on seeing the CBS TV news the evening of August 9. Charles Kuralt, known for his "On the Road" vignettes, had heard of an old prospector in Montana. Kuralt was told he could locate the man in area near the Yellowstone River, "in the most broken down shack in the state."

The old-timer, Earl McConnell, complete with long whiskers, miner's hat, pick and pan, was found and proceeded to show how he earns his living - panning gold in the Yellowstone River. He is the perfect living physical representation of the sketch atop this magazine's "Nuggets" column... Hi, "Panamint" Klos!

Rochester's Tom Lockwood continues to score as his area's only organ accompanist for silent films. On August 11, he performed before an all-age audience estimated at 6,500 in Rochester's Highland Park Bowl. Using a plug-in, he played scores to *Two Tars*, featuring Laurel & Hardy, and *The Navigator* with Buster Keaton. Publicity on radio, TV and in the newspapers, including a TV interview with Tom and the show's promoter,

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was greatly responsible for the excellent turnout. The promoter has promised more of the same, possibly this season, but certainly the next.



Dr. C.A.J. Parmentier was thrilled over his election to the Theatre Organists Hall of Fame. He first had a call from his friend and artist representative, Mary Bowles, the evening following his selection by the ATOS Board of Directors. Later he received an official letter confirming this. "It is wonderful to be so honored, especially while one is still alive and kicking," says "Cass."



"Cass" Parmentier. Fame finally caught up with him. — (Lamb Photo)

In St. Petersburg, Florida, organist Paul H. Forster was beaming over his elevation to the Hall of Fame: "MY name in the Hall of Fame! I am so overcome that I don't know how to thank ATOS." Then Paul posed a possible dilemma for the Hall nominating Committee by adding that perhaps he didn't qualify for the "inactive list" because he has come out of retirement (at 81) and gone back to work playing services in the St. Petersburg "Church by the Sea" where he did a 15-year stint prior to his "retirement." Check back issues for our prediction in this column that Paul Forster would return to music making at the time we announced his retirement. Perhaps the nominating committee needs a third classification for their selection guidance task — "retirement breakers."



An organ Paul Forster often played during the '30s had an encouraging workout during the New York State Fair (Aug. 28 — Sept. 3) this year. The



Karl Cole. A Fair deal.

former Syracuse Keith's Theatre 3/11 Wurlitzer was played each day in its current Fairgrounds home for a concert or silent movie accompaniment, or both. The artist for all Fair events held at the Empire Theatre Art and Home Center was popular Karl Cole.



Jack Bethards. Born too late

ATOSer Jack M. Bethards was the sole subject of Albert Morch's Aug. 26 column in the San Francisco Examiner. The column describes Jack's preoccupation with the U.S. culture of the '30s and his warehouse home which is crammed with artifacts of that era — including a Mighty Wurlitzer. Of the '30s, Jack, who is Executive Director of the Oakland Symphony, is quoted as saying, "... I've always felt left out — because I was born after it was all gone." Last year, in addition to his symphony

post, Jack was named director of Oakland's Paramount Theatre, new home of the Oakland Symphony, and put in charge of refurbishing the house to its former glory. Naturally, only authentic decorations and trappings will do, so Jack is always on the prowl for them.

Unmentioned in the Morch column was a windfall — donation to the Paramount of an almost complete Publix No. 1 Wurlitzer plus \$10,000 for its restoration, by J.B. Nethercutt (builder of the San Sylmar Museum). It's Opus No. 1123 from Detroit's Capitol Theatre and will replace the similar size original Wurlitzer now pumping out Pizza music at the Los Altos, Calif. Melody Inn.

All of this doesn't leave Jack much time to decipher, orchestrate and re-create (with the help of musician friends) perhaps an Anson Weeks or Ray Noble '30s dance band arrangement from scratchy 78 rpm records, nor to re-assemble, phrase by phrase, a Louis Forbstein Vitaphone orchestra accompaniment to a Busby Berkeley 1935 girl-speckled movie dance sequence — but he's still having long-ago fun.



Rex Koury at the Nethercutt Museum 3/25 console. — (Stufoto)

LA Chapter Chairman Sam Dickerson made arrangements following the October 14 Tony Fenelon morning concert at the Wiltern for the chapter to re-assemble at the San Sylmar Museum for an afternoon of Wurlitzer music played on the 3/25 by Rex Koury.



Hot-Line from Chapter publications: The Aloha Chapter Newsletter needs a new editor/publisher now that Bunny Schuyler has resigned. Chapsec Roger Angell has suspended publication temporarily... The August, Puget Sound Pipe Line pays tribute to Leroy Kastner, manager of the Bellingham, Washington, Mt. Baker Theatre for his interest in and support of the theatre's 2/10 Wurlitzer: "Roy Kastner has given invaluable assistance to the preservation of a fine instrument." That means Kastner paid for replacement leather and magnets out of his own pocket... VOX CATOE credits ATOSers Andy Haban and Fred Kruse with the fine restoration on the Chicago Pickwick Theatre's 3/11 Wurlitzer (now with an added Post Horn), and having it ready for the Sept. 13 concert by Conn's Wally Brown... Delaware Valley's LIFT editor, organist Shirley Hannum, writes in the August issue that former



Editor Shirley

Lansdowne Theatre (3/9 Kimball) maintenance man Bill Splane has landed a job with the Rodgers Organ Co. and has moved from Philly to Hillsboro, Oregon, where the Rodgers HQ is. Shirley writes "Bill's services are already coming in handy at Dennis Hedberg's (Portland) Organ Grinder restaurant-with-Wurlitzer."... The June issue of Eastern (Massachusetts) Pipes pays tribute to Edward "Izzy" Gilman, the still very youthful (at 84) organ technician who installed and maintained most of New England's Robert Morton organs. Izzy's been up to here in organs for 70 years, accord-

ing to Pipes writer Erle Renwick... The Connecticut Valley Chapter's DIAPHONE for August reveals plans for a living memorial to the late Mildred Rice, former ATOS national secretary. A search is being made for suitable property on which to build a theatre, which would house the Shaskan organ.



Lorin Whitney. ON THE AIR - Worldwide.

ATOSer Lorin Whitney may be the only organist to be heard daily on radio all over the planet. The station is WNYW, New York, Worldwide, and is heard on 11,805, 15,130, 17,760 and 21,525 khz. Program time is 21:30 to 22:00 GMT or 2:30 to 3:00 P.M. Pacific Daylight time (add an hour for each time zone going east). Music is taped on Whitney's Glendale studio Wurlitzer-Morton, now pumped up to a 4/36. Material consists of an interspersing of sacred and pop standards, all played in theatre organ stylings. Tunes are heard without interruption except for a station break at the 15-minute mark.

When Uncle Sam tapped Potomac Valley chapterite Ernest N. Boyd Jr. on the shoulder, the lad figured it would at least put a temporary end to his love affair with theatre organs. But it didn't turn out that way. After the initial unpleasanties applied to



Ernie Boyd. He found treasure in Scotland. (Hilsdon console) - (roseBUD Photo)

"boots," the navy scuttled him off to Scotland where Ernie discovered the Scottish Theatre Organ Preservation Society and their treasure, the 3/10 Hilsdon in the 3000-seat Playhouse in Edinburgh. With no language difficulties (well, not many) and the universal urge (to play a theatre organ), which respects no international boundaries, Ernie was accepted by the Scots. His navy hitch isn't turning out badly after all.



Reg. Foort - SURPRISE!

Things we'd like to have seen: the expression on Reginald Foort's face when, summoned from his Florida home to the Moller factory in Hagerstown, Md., he was escorted to the erecting room to see his beloved 5/27 "portable" Moller in the process of being reconditioned. The Moller was built for Foort in the mid '30s, for portable use (e.g. one-night stands) in England, and later replaced the war-destroyed BBC studio Compton. It's recent years were spent in a Holland broadcasting studio. (See story on page 4.) □