

THE PIZZA ORGAN

— satire —

by Fred Hermes

With all this to-do about placing large concert size organs in pizza joints of late, the magic formula seems to be one to one hundred or for every rank over the sensible six, with percussions and monster console, each additional rank will get you one hundred customers for the day's receipts. After discussing the problem with Wisconsin's famous theatre organ builder, Dan Barton, Dan graciously agreed to build a typical pizza organ of 65 spicy, no-holds-barred ranks. This instrument would have a real cheezy console of six manuals (at least) decorated in plaster-of-pork, with mushrooms and anchovies. Dan Barton's unique ability to build organs that are really organs will shine through.

The mammoth hundred horse blower features three sections, one to blow the organ, one to grind the sausage, and the third to get rid of the byproducts of the hundred horses. We won't discuss what went into the inlet of the blower, however in some of the more lavish emporiums the intake ventilated the kitchen, johns, and what have you.

The percussions are entirely unenclosed and a problem presented itself, where to place the one hundred bass drums! Dan had the best idea and suggested using them as tables with the beater plunging up through the floor. That way, all the beaters would be ganged under the floor eliminating air and action noise.

Of course there would be no organist what with the hearing impairment trends in pizza joints, but behold! a dummy would gyrate at the console and the instrument doubles as the world's largest orchestrion. No usual roll of rippy paper plays this whistle box, it is played in the manner of a disc music box by popping every 10th pizza into the changer mechanism.

Any resemblance to any organ installation, living or dead or planned for the future is purely coincidental: Ed.



Mr. Alva Wilson (seated, second from left) played this organ in Albuquerque's Sunshine Theatre back in the twenties. Artist Lyn Larsen is seated, center. Credit for the inspiration for recent concerts at NMMI goes (left to right) to Mr. Jessie Reed, and Cadets Dennis J. Alley, Stanley C. Gantz and Robert C. MacNeur.

Military Institute Features Hillgreen-Lane

For the second time this year, just under five hundred Roswell devotees of the fine art of pipe organ music attended the blend of silent film and organ recital which made up New Mexico Military Institute's second program of *Evening In Early Cinema* held on Wednesday night, October 10th, in Pearson Auditorium.

The audience, consisting of nearly two hundred NMMI cadets and three hundred Roswellites of all ages, responded enthusiastically to the skill and personality of organist Lyn Larsen of Phoenix, Arizona, and were enthralled by the viewing of a 35 mm. print of the original *Phantom of the Opera*, the 1925 Hollywood classic starring Lon Chaney and Mary Philbin. For most of the audience, it was a first-time experience of the cinema house shows as presented in the silent film era.

The pipe organ, belonging to New Mexico Military Institute, is a Hillgreen-Lane. (See THEATRE ORGAN June 1973.) Installed in the Sunshine Theatre in Albuquerque in 1928, it was donated to NMMI in 1940 while Pearson Auditorium was under construction.

Larsen's mastery of the three keyboards and 14 ranks was matched only by his stamina, as he played a wide variety of movements and numbers during a forty-five minute pre-show concert and then recreated those pieces traditionally associated with the well-known silent classic. Larsen moved from some of the earliest pieces written for organ through the most contemporary of jingles in his demonstration of the capabilities of the Hillgreen-Lane model built into Pearson.

A third organ recital, under a different format, has been set for December 5th. At that time, Mr. Dennis James, the April Concert organist, will return to present a Christmas season program of recital and short films — including sing-alongs — in Pearson.

James' December program will vary the format at the Roswell early cinema series to include seasonal selections in his "before the show" concert.

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