

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.

Niagara Frontier Chapter's Randy Piazza reports the acquisition of a huge chandelier, which after being cleaned and restrung, will grace the Riviera Theatre, the chapter's showcase house in North Tonawanda. In addition, a grand piano reportedly built for the onetime King of Spain, Alfonso, is now on the Riviera stage. Also more spotlights, one more back-



Randy Piazza — (Stufoto)

drop and some new curtains. Randy reports that the chapter's concerts featuring the Riviera's 3-manual, ever-growing Wurlitzer continue to do well.



One of the weak areas which afflicts electric and electro-pneumatic organ action is cables. Strangely, there have been few improvements in organ cables from the beginning; the standard has remained the cotton-insulated solid copper strand, with its moisture absorbing qualities and tendency for conductors to short circuit within a cable for no apparent reason. The "runs" (e.g. notes sounding from the wrong keys) resulting from in-cable shorting have been a continuing headache to organ maintenance men, a condition aggravated by cable movement (such as a console on an elevator). In addition, "ringing out" conductors is time consuming. With more wire makers discontinuing the manufacture of cotton covered wire, ATOSer Henry Hunsicker decided it was time for a change. He is well qualified; his *Hunsicker Pipe Organ Service* has been active for three generations in the Reading, Pa. area. The cable Henry developed is an installer's dream, designed for a one person operation (and no ringing out wires). This trick is accomplished through a foolproof system of color coding and separating the conductors for each octave (plus spares) into gently twisted bundles, the whole being encased in a plastic sheath. Cable identification chart blanks are supplied with each order. Hunsicker has standardized on a No. 24 gage solid tinned copper conductor with plastic insulation which is suitable for nearly all home installations. Other gage wire is available on special order. While the cost of this specialized cable is somewhat higher than cotton covered, the initial expense, Henry believes, will be more than compensated for by the saving in labor costs due to briefer wiring periods, not to mention long, trouble-free service. Inquiries may be addressed to Berk-Tek, Inc., Morgantown Road, Reading, Penna., attn. Mr. Joseph Boscov.



The name "Alden Miller" will hit some familiar chords among veteran hobbyists. Alden, who lives in Minneapolis, was the first producer of a theatre organ hobby publication in the

U.S.A. Back in the early '50s Alden's Cinema-Theatre Organ Digest (later the *Kinura*; he changed the name every few issues) did much toward establishing communication among hobbyists everywhere who later combined efforts to form ATOS (then ATOE) in the mid-'50s. It was Alden's missionary zeal which brought to light the fact that there were enough dedicated organ hobbyists across the land to form the nucleus of a hobby organization. Then, in the early '60s, Alden's interest flagged and he bowed out of his publishing efforts in favor of another hobby — miniature railroading (he was once a railroad conductor). Over the years we heard from him occasionally, usually when he embraced another hobby (home movies are a more recent interest), then nothing, until early this year. A brief message said: "I'm back in the theatre pipe organ fervor with more zest than ever. Buying T.O. Records like mad again." The catalyst just might be the pipe organ in Cicero's pizzeria. Alden has been seen there, chomping pasta while the pipes help him recall the days when he was the U.S.'s only theatre organ mag. editor. Welcome back, Alden!



Jim Lahay, secretary of the Toronto Theatre Organ Society, had an encouraging message for organist Don Thompson. Jim reported that telephone response to selections from Don's "Fireworks" album was so intense during a Society-sponsored radiocast, that the station allowed the



Don Thompson. 18 minutes of overtime. — (Photo by Bill Lamb)

organ program to run 18 minutes into the next program slot so the record could be played to its conclusion. "Fireworks" is an unusual collection of classical selections played by Don on a large theatre organ.



Johnny Winters who played such theatres in New York as the Music Hall, Rialto, Beacon, Loew's Kings and Loew's Valencia, as well as performing on all major networks, is alive and well. Asked by the Old Prospector for material to be used in a biography for THEATRE ORGAN, he says "it will be necessary to dig deeply in the depths of my closets for old pictures to go with the material. I always felt the theatrical publicity was so phony."



Rochester, New York's 59-year-old Regent Theatre bit the dust in November. The 1600-seat house was the first large theatre in Rochester.

It boasted a 3/10 Hope-Jones Wurlitzer which wasn't used for at least 30 years. A group from the RTOS, on hearing of the theatre's imminent demise, acted to save the instrument. After a week of negotiations, club members worked several days on its removal and stored it in several places. They hope to utilize it in the Rochester area. One story has it that Hope-Jones worked on it just prior to his death in a rooming house a few blocks away in 1914.



Some New Yorkers may remember the organist who played the Midmer-Losh and later the Wurlitzer organ in the old Hippodrome Theatre. He was ATOS "Hall of Famer" Frederick Kinsley. He also played the Cameo, Albermarle, and Strand theatres in the big town, and then the RKO circuit. His daughter, Mrs. Edward P. Saling, Jr., lives in Manchester, Conn. and was elated when ATOS member William Hill told her of her father's election to the Hall.



Organist, Milton Charles in October began his twentieth year of playing at the Toluca Lake (Los Angeles) Kings Arms. "So many of our organ fans who came into the restaurant have mentioned the two-part story of my life which was published in THEATRE ORGAN. They didn't realize I was so famous!" Mr. Charles now lives in

Ojai, Calif., though he still has a home in Palm Springs. Anyone who passes through Los Angeles is welcome to drop in at the King's Arms where the organist plays Wednesday through Saturday nights.



The woodsy dunes of Pacific Grove echo ever more often with organ music. — (Stufoto)

California's Pacific Grove State Park at Asilomar (near Monterey), is becoming the central California mecca for organ workshops and events involving electronic organs. Discovered three years ago by Tiny James during his search for a site for the Annual Home Organ Festival, the location has served well as a showcase for that



Bud Iverson — (Stufoto)

event (See Dec. 1973 THEATRE ORGAN). Last year, Bay Area organist Bud Iverson moved in with a spring-time 3-day workshop with the cooperation of local Conn dealers. Bud will be back again this year with a five day session (June 4th through 9th). (Inquire: Bud Iverson Workshop, 608 Santiago, San Francisco, California 94116.) But this year Bud will have competition. Vivacious Mildred Alexander is moving into the park buildings with a battery of Hammonds for a four day live-in of playing improvement workshops and evening concert sessions starting on Saint Patrick's day, March 17. This will be a rare opportunity for all levels of players, from beginners to teachers, to savor the intense dedication Millie puts into her "learnin'" sessions, which are always administered with the southern charm characteristic of the Alexander make-up. Observers are rarely aware the seminars have run perhaps five hours; they come away with such enthusiasm.



Millie — (Stufoto)

At this writing the possibility of bus-ing the entire group to the Red Vest pizzeria in nearby Monterey for a listen to the all-new Wicks pipe organ, played by Bud Taylor, is being explored. Interested parties can obtain more info and an entry form by sending a stamped, self-addressed long envelope to Mildred Alexander Methods, Inc., c/o Bette Cantril, 1913 N.W. Lamont, Roseburg, Oregon 97470.

Yes, the 1974 Home Organ Festival will sound forth once more from the woodsy dunes at Pacific Grove come September.



In Chicago, Harry "Pipes" Miller was cussing his shortsightedness for

not getting a copyright on his "I Wonder Who's Kissinger Now" gag after the show-biz bible, *Variety*, reported that Vicki Carr was using it in her Las Vegas act. The line appeared in this column in a 1973 issue, after being submitted by Harry, who now wails, "Think of the royalties I could have collected! Woe is me!"



In Seattle, organ designer/scholar Eugene M. Nye was putting the finishing touches on the manuscript of his book, "Robert Hope-Jones, His Life, Career and Works." In addition to a penetrating biography it will include 34 specifications and a carefully arranged list of 150 instruments with which the father of the theatre organ was connected. Nye has assembled an imposing collection of Hope-Jones' personal letters, several of his lectures and a section on pipe scales. Although a biography of Hope-Jones would seemingly appeal to a readership limited to organ enthusiasts, Nye is encouraged by the interest shown by publishers even before the manuscript has been completed, even from aboard. "The interest in England has completely floored me," exclaims a very pleased Gene Nye. He expects to have the manuscript ready for publisher scrutiny about the time these words reach print.



There were plenty of silent classics among a selection of all-time great films presented at the Los Angeles County Museum during November and December, 1973. A Rodgers theatre model was loaned and the silent epics provided a cinematic field day for such masters of silent film ac-



Ann Leaf at the Rodgers, just before accompanying a silent movie show at the L. A. Art Museum. — (Stufoto)

companiment as Chauncey Haines (*Intolerance, The Crowd, Nanook of the North, The Big Parade*), Tom Hazleton (*The Navigator*), Ann Leaf (*Broken Blossoms, Greed, Birth of a Nation*) and Gaylord Carter (*The General, Sherlock, Jr.*). Most shows were held in the Museum's Leo S. Bing theatre. Admission was either \$2.00 or for free. The shows we caught played to full houses.



Bernie Venus admiring one of his 75-buck Brass Trumpets. Bernie is the first star of a movie made about the theatre organ hobby, "My Wife Said That's Enough!," which one might catch on educational TV when the wind is right.

In Buttonville (Ontario, Canada), Bernie Venus had cause for celebrating. It all started when his friend, organ builder Rolly Webb was approached by an elderly gentleman while Rolly was picking through some miscellaneous organ parts at a London (Ontario) organ Co.

"Need some Wurlitzer parts?" asked the man, a bit furtively. Rolly thought the man was probably a harmless nut, but humored him. "Whatcha got?"

"I took a Wurlitzer out of a theatre out west, back in '48. So long ago I can't remember the name of the theatre. I retired from the organ business 10 years ago — when I was 80."

"Where is your cache?" asked Rolly, his ears becoming pointed.

"It's all still stored in my garage. The church I fetched it for didn't want it all", said the man, "so I stashed what was left over."

Sure enough, he had a carefully preserved Harp, Marimba, Xylophone — and a complete set of Brass Trumpet pipes! Rolly purchased the stuff on the spot and resold the Brass Trumpets to Bernie for \$75.00 (a set of brass

trumpet pipes built from scratch could now run up to \$2,000.00. A used set recently sold for \$3500.00. Ed.)

"It was a steal" roared Bernie, letting loose one of his My Wife Said That's Enough horse laffs.



Little did he know that an attempt to escape temporarily from playing a mighty (4/20) Wurlitzer almost nightly at the Los Altos, Calif. *Melody Inn* would result in no vacation at all from such a "drag" for Paul Quarino — especially if he had his frau headed for Portland for Thanksgiving. As soon as he landed in the Oregon city he was pounced on by Dennis Hedberg and Jonas Nordwall and told he was going to play a shift at the *Organ Grinder* pizzeria (now with 25 ranks perking of a possible 40). After a long rehearsal time he played his shift without travail — other than being upstaged by a cymbal-banging mechanical monkey during "Stars & Stripes Forever." Then over to Bob Burke's home to help tune Bob's 3/12 Wurlitzer. That sort of schedule and pace continued for four days, after which Paul found himself arriving back in Los Altos just in time for his *Melody Inn* shift. But he'd had such a good time in Portland he decided to accept the offer made and join the *Organ Grinder* staff. So, he and wife Roberts tore down their 12 ranks (of a planned 27) of playing home installation, and moved to Portland, after three weeks of long distance commuting; Monday through Thursday at the *Organ Grinder*, Friday through Sunday at the Los Altos *Melody Inn* while the *Inn* sought a replacement. Paul reports that the growing *Organ Grinder* Wurlitzer is now used 60 hours a week, with plans for even more pasta pushing hours. And more pizzerias are in the planning stage, now that the *Organ Grinder* operators have acquired the Boston Met/Music Hall 4/26 Wurlitzer and the Boston Savoy 3/19 Wurlitzer, advises Paul Quarino.



How much does organ music mean to the ill and handicapped? The value that shut-ins place on such music was brought home to this writer when he was part of the crew drafted to move Associate Editor Peg Nielsen's Lowrey to the rotunda of a Los Angeles hospital come Christmas time year after year. The patients gathered 'round, many in wheelchairs, and

treated Peg with the awe usually reserved for Hollywood stars as she played their requests. Now we have evidence that performing on the organ as well as listening has therapeutic value. From Tucson, Arizona, Lois Seamands (one of the founders of the ATOS chapter there) writes about a prospective chapter member who lost his voice during an illness. The loss was doubly tragic because his profession is law, where discussion is part of the game. Forced to retire early, the man took up organ playing to keep his mind occupied. This brought him a new interest, new friends and new-found enthusiasm. Another prospect is blind. He states, "The organ has been my salvation." If there's a lesson to be learned here it's that organ music is something that can be shared with the ill and handicapped. A cue may be taken from the Los Angeles Chapter which recently invited a group of spastic children to one of its Wiltern theatre concerts, even provided the necessary wheelchairs. As Lois Seamands points out, "It's marvellous — discovering the people the organ reaches."



Lois Seamands. "Marvellous" — (Stufoto)

The energy crunch has many a home organ owner wondering about the electric power consumption of his pipes. Let's see how an organ blower motor compares, for instance, with a 100 watt bulb, an appliance familiar to all of us. One horsepower equals 745.7 watts but to allow for differences in motor efficiency we'll raise it to 1000 watts. Many home installations have 3 hp blower motors, so multiply the 1 hp watts by three and divide the result by 100 (watt lamp). The final figure indicates that a 3 hp blower motor consumes the same amount of electricity as thirty one hundred watt

incandescent lamps. The 5 hp blower is also popular in home installations. This size consumes the equivalent of fifty 100 watt lamps. Add to this the comparatively small power consumption indicated on low voltage rectifier information plates, if applicable. Motors and rectifiers are not such extravagant users of power as, say, resistance heating elements (e.g. stoves, toasters) but do we hear a motion for the revival of the Society of Organ Pumpers, should the power situation worsen?



Leroy Lewis. — (Photo by Dick Harold)

Hall of Famer, Dr. C. A. J. Parmentier had the opportunity to hear Leroy Lewis in October down in Barnegat, N. J. where the latter plays nightly. "Leroy is absolutely fabulous in his playing, his harmony, his sense of rhythm, his pedal and manual technique, and his inventiveness. He's in a class by himself."

From Underhill Center, Vermont, Dave Whitmore reports an unusual event; accompaniment of a silent film on a tracker action organ. On Nov. 18, Robert Ligonis was set to supply the music for the 1927 King of Kings, playing a 2/17 Jesse Woodberry & Co. tracker at Sacred Heart Church, Weymouth Landing, Mass., according to the Boston Organ Club Newsletter. Wonder how it came off?



After 40 years as Chief Organist, Dick Leibert has retired from the staff at Radio City Music Hall, according to information received from the Hall's advertising and publicity department. The organ staff now is comprised of Ray Bohr, John DeTroy and James Paulin, Jr. Speaking of the late Jack



Dick Leibert. A forty-year engagement ends. — (Stufoto)

Ward, Patricia Robert, director of publicity, says: "We miss his presence."



One of the most prolific song writers is Jack Yellen, who wrote such numbers as "Happy Days Are Here Again", "I Wonder What's Become of Sally", "Hulla Lou" (with Milton Charles) and "Hard-Hearted Hannah". Now living in Springville, N. Y. and in his 82nd year, he says, "It's been a long time since I've written a song. The hippies put me out of business, and like all the other old-timers I'm sitting on the curb, watching the parade go by. It was fun while it lasted. I have a lot of pleasant memories of the organists such as Jesse Crawford, Milton Charles, Henry B. Murtagh, C. Sharpe Minor and many others who liked the special song-slide lyrics I wrote for them."



Bert Buhrman and his musical cohorts at the School of the Ozarks in Missouri continue to utilize the school's Wurlitzer in various programs. On October 15, a special program with Bert at the console was presented in honor of the President's Council, a group of heavy donors to the school.



How many ATOS members have dreamed of taking a country wide theatre organ tour? John J. Edson, Jr. of Washington, D. C. came close back in October. Armed with a copy of April 1973's THEATRE ORGAN which contained the most recent Pipe Piper list of installations, John visited ten states in the middle west and east.

High point on his trip was a visit to Richmond, Va. "I managed to see all three organs there, and was permitted to play Loew's Wurlitzer for an hour. At the Byrd, I heard Eddie Weaver

play between two showings of an R-rated picture. The trip covered approximately 7,000 miles by bus, and needless to say, I had a great time seeing the various instruments. I only wish I could have had time and permission to try each one."

Rudolph Bartlett, Jr. of Milwaukee informs us that the Marcus Corp. has donated the 3/28 Center Kimball to the Milwaukee Trade and Technical School. The organ is undergoing restoration by the Milwaukee Tech Organ Club, says executive director Bartlett.



Lowell Ayars

What do the west coast's ATOSer Tiny James, the eastern seaboard's ATOSer Lowell Ayars and England's ATOSer Les Rawles have in common? An abiding love for the theatre organ, for one thing. But there's more; all three suffered heart attacks late in 1973 and we're glad to report that all three are recovering.

To stifle a persistent and errant report, Joe Patten declares that at the present time the "Mighty Mo" in the Atlanta Fox Theatre has not been, and is not, for sale. Joe, who is one of the protectors of the huge Moller, checked at our request.

A few columns back, we ran an item about Ernie Boyd of Richmond, Va., who figured military service would at least temporarily end his romance with theatre organs, only to discover a T.O. culture in Scotland, where his assignment took him. Back in Richmond, Ernie revealed that the Playhouse theatre in Edinburgh closed

on Nov. 24th. last. A Nov. 18 final concert was scheduled but at that time no plans had been made for the 3/45 Hilsdon organ in the house.

Billy Nalle writes that he was engaged to play an October concert on a Steinway grand piano as part of the celebration surrounding the opening of a new home in Farmington, Connecticut. What Billy didn't anticipate was the reaction of organ buffs in his audience; they were amazed that a top organist could also be concert worthy on the 88. It must have worked out well because Billy was called back for a Christmas encore on the grand.

Three concerts - three sellouts! That is the box score of success attributed to the Cedar Rapids Theatre Organ Society since its inception last year. On November 8, Rex Koury played for an SRO house at the 2500-seat Paramount Theatre. If this sort of thing continues, one of CRATO's officers would be the logical choice to explain how this enterprising ATOS chapter does it to a seminar at a future ATOS convention.

Organist Lee Erwin reports that his long-awaited book of organ transcriptions of 21 piano favorites will be published by Cadence Publications and should be available about the time this reaches readers, provided the music engraving arrived back from Italy in time. *Piano Classics Transcribed for Organ* will include selections by Chopin, Debussy, MacDowell, Mozart, Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Schumann, Grieg and Moussorgsky. Included are "Moonlight Sonata," "Minute Waltz" and "Claire de Lune," to name a few. Lee has been collaborating with conductor Archie Bleyer, prexy of Cadence, on the collection for more than a year. Practical Lee insisted on a binding which will remain easily open on the music rack.

Upper New York State enthusiasts may recall the playing of Betty Lee Taylor who performed at Loew's State in Syracuse and over WGY in Schenectady in the thirties. She now lives in Florida. Says Miami's Edward C. May, himself a former theatre organist: "She was just about the prettiest

girl who ever sat on an organ bench. She possessed a terrific personality, was an excellent musician, and was most kind to everyone. She still has all these qualities, and I never met anyone who did not like her."



Dick Simonton - (Photo by Bill Lamb)

Dick Simonton is well known as a world traveler, especially if a Mighty Wurlitzer or golden-voiced Barton is at his destination. In November, he visited the Boston area, and spent three days and nights at the Hammond Museum in Gloucester. Yes, he was locked in the big castle with the organ after the guard left at midnight. What a spot for *The Phantom of the Opera* to make an appearance!

On his return trip to California, Dick stopped at Wichita to hear Bill Thomson play the "Queen Mother" of all Wurlitzers. "The organ's sound is absolutely fantastic. Bill did one of the greatest concerts I've ever heard and I never had larger goose pimples! The Wichita people plan three full-scale concerts a year, and the townspeople pay \$9.00 for these on a subscription basis. At last count, they had 2,000 season members."

It happened at the Milwaukee Schnitzelhaus Restaurant where Don Larusso plays the Wurlitzer. Don announced that a famous New York organist was present and would take over the console. That was the first time visitor Doc Bebko received a cue to go on while in the men's room. Live organ music is piped directly into it, which has to be a "first". Doc played

an hour of requests and dance music. Owner Eugene Tenges asked him to return often.



Broadcast Music Inc. held a luncheon on October 25 at the New York University Club in honor of men and women who play music for sports events. Plaques were awarded to: Jack Shaindlin, music consultant for Madison Square Garden. Jane Jarvis, New York Met Organist at Shea Stadium and formerly in the same capacity with the Milwaukee Braves. Eddie Layton, organist for the Golden Blades at Madison Square Garden, Formerly N. Y. Yankee organist. Ashley Miller, organist for N. Y. Knickerbockers and for TV's *Search For Tomorrow*, Music Director of N. Y. Society of Ethical Cultural, and theatre organ concert artist. Toby Wright, organist at Madison Square, Yankee Stadium and Nassau Coliseum.



"America's Musical Sweethearts", the organ-piano team of Dennis and Heidi James, entertained an audience of 1975 on November 7 at the Auditorium Theatre in Rochester, N.Y. Although Dennis was making his fourth appearance for RTOS, for Heidi it was her first. With Heidi at the piano and Dennis at the piano, there were solos, duets, a sing-along and a silent comedy short, *Big Business*, with *Laurel & Hardy*. A stirring climax to the evening's program was the couple's performance of the "Warsaw Concerto". The talented couple has been selected for a concert at the Senate Theater during the 1974 ATOS convention in Detroit.

In December, RTOS tried a "first" — a two-concert weekend. On the evening of the 15th and the afternoon of the 16th (as a Christmas favor to Rochester's senior citizens), Lawrence Welk's organist, Bob Ralston, played his initial engagement at the 4/22 Wurlitzer in the Auditorium Theatre. The house count for these events was 1,915 and 2,010.

Though his playing is primarily on plug-ins, Bob proved that he was no amateur when it comes to working with pipes. The bulk of his program featured selections from his 13 records, finishing with the famous "Bubbles in the Wine" complete with bubble machine and simulated cork pop. *Wonaful!*



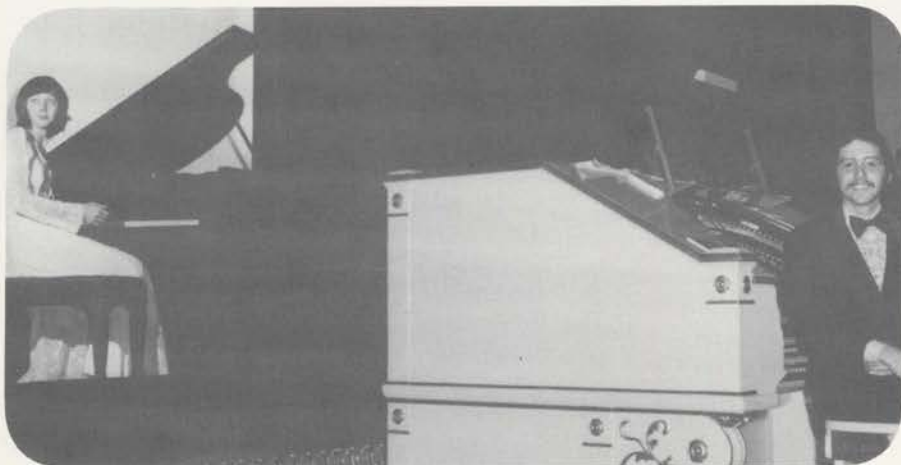
The crummy organ playing done by husband Walter during that December episode of CBS-TV's *Maude* was actually played off screen by Helen Dell, who sounded as though she might be wearing boxing gloves. The instruments used for both dummy and actual performance were a couple of rented Thomas models but they were not so identified in the credits.

"Considering the miserable quality of Walter's 'playing,'" explained Helen during a shooting break, "we didn't feel the Thomas Company would appreciate the publicity."



Hot line from Chapter Publications . . . New York Chapter's December HORSESHOE trumpets a Mediterranean-spiced fanfare for the club's annual meeting at the Suburban

Restaurant (3/17 Wurlitzer). The headline shouts "Posthorns & Pasta! Tibias & Tortellinis!, Voxes & Vermicelli!", followed by an invitation to sample host Jim Provissiero's "mutation of fine Italian cuisine and mellow Wurlitzer pipes." Then a note on decorum: "Although many (members) feel the necessity to genuflect when approaching the main chamber, a slight bow from the waist before the solo chamber will acknowledge the true believer." . . . Stu Hinchcliffe's EASTERN PIPES has serialized Paul Chavanne's *A Tale of Two Sisters*, a history of the Keith-Albee Boston and Keith-Albee St. James theatres. The well-researched story goes back more than 100 years for eastern Massachusetts theatre memorabilia . . . Organists who prohibit taping of their concerts may have second thoughts after reading Mark McDonald's review of Jeff Barker's concert at the North Tonawanda Riviera theatre. In the November '73 issue of *Niagara Frontier's* SILENT NEWSREEL editor McDonald states that he left Barker's concert "with a feeling of extreme disappointment." But, on listening to his tape made at the concert, Mark writes, "I realized how wrong I had been. Jeff's had been one of the most exciting and varied concerts presented at the Riviera." . . . December's VOX CATOE reports that 1973 Chicago chapter chairman Bill Rieger appointed Joe Ducibella as head of a committee to sponsor Al Melgard for the ATOS Hall of Fame. Former silent film organist Melgard is best known as the Chicago Stadium organist, a post he held from 1929 to June 1973 when he retired. 44 years of playing the world's largest unified organ in public adds up to a strong argument in Al's favor . . . Motor City Chapter's December BLOWER has praise for the husband-wife team of Bob and Linda Crowley who, nearly single-handedly, restored the long neglected 3/7 Wurlitzer in the State Cinema, Springfield, Ohio. Just locating an organ still in a theatre is a rarity these days; Bob remembered it from boyhood days. Back in service, the Wurlitzer is livening weekend shows at the State . . . ConVal Chap's DIAPHONE continues its serialized course on registration with sound advice and good humor (author unlisted). In the November '73 installment we are advised: "Never use the Tibia in the left hand when playing a rhythmic accompaniment as the wide excursion of



Heidi and Dennis James at the Auditorium theatre. They make pretty music together. — (Dick Harold Photo)

the Tibia trem will create a gasping laugh effect." (And we thought those laughs were coming from the audience! Ed.) . . . The Patzold's December DIAPHONE reprints a N.Y. Times article announcing the restoration of the famous Philippine Bamboo organ by the Klais Organ Co., Bonn, Germany. The organ, built for the Las Pifias church between 1816 and 1821 by Fr. Diego Cerra, was moved by boat and air to special rooms at the Bonn shop which were heated to the organ's home temperature in order to prevent cracking of the bamboo pipes. The article reveals that the organ has 22 stops (not ranks) and 836 pipes built from joined bamboo trees. The German restorers have much praise for the craftsmanship of Fr. Cerra, who had only local materials to work with. One detail remains unexplained: How did Fr. Cerra manage to fabricate pipes for the reed voice, Trompeta Real, from bamboo? Could he have had a knowledge of labial reeds at that early date? . . . The Southeastern Chapter's Fall RELAY provides an absorbing history of Atlanta's Howard theatre, with its two organs, first a Robert Morton (circa 3/18) in 1921, then, when Paramount-Publix took over in 1925, a Wurlitzer style 260 Special for film accompaniments. Edwin Sawtelle was the first organist, and his contributions were in connection with opera presentations, both as soloist on the Morton and supporting the orchestra. All gone now. "The theatre itself disappeared in 1960," sighs RELAY editor John Clark McCall . . . Piedmont Chapter's December REEDS & STRINGS carries a well written story about Duke University's 1930's school for theatre managers which centered around the institution's Quadrangle theatre. Former student J. Marion Martin reveals that the school's manager wanted a Moller organ for the Quadrangle but finally had to settle for a 3/10 Wurlitzer. However, the RELAY offers the original 3/10 Moller specification, not the Wurlitzer's (the latter was sold for \$100.00 in 1946!). The article lists many stage and radio shows which appeared at the Quadrangle during the '30s and their stars. Author Martin has a revealing comment on one star who soloed on the organ for one week: (Jesse) "Crawford was the most demanding and difficult person to work with that I experienced during my four years as production manager." □



ALABAMA

In November, the Alabama Chapter put the spotlight on the members. It all started with a work session on Saturday, when a larger than usual group met to work on the organ. On Saturday evening, Riedel and her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Maurice West, entertained the work crew at their home. We had delicious hamburgers with all the trimmings. The evening was topped off with a jam session at Riedel's Wurlitzer 4500.

On Sunday morning, following our regular business meeting, the console was open to members with Larry Donaldson, Connie Ann Boyd, Virginia Pace, Billy Henley, Alleen Cole, Lillian Truss, Norville Hall, Sandra Cavnar, Riedel West, Charles Durham and Jay Mitchell taking turns at the organ. If compared with open-console programs of the past, it would be easy to tell that in spite of a few knocking knees, we are all getting better acquainted with each other as well as the Wurlitzer.

December brought a special treat when our own "Wizard of the Wurlitzer", Jay Mitchell, brought us the Christmas program. Only Jay could get away with going from the light, airy "Jingle Bells" complete with sleigh bells, to the resounding Cathedral setting of "O Come All Ye Faithful" without losing a thing in the transition. During his intermission, we were surprised with a silent movie of Laurel and Hardy selling Christmas trees — with Jay making the movie come to life with his delightful organ score. Several of us had seen the movie before, and it is amazing what a difference the musical background made.

After the movie, Jay completed his program with a "Christmas Fantasy", bringing to a close a very memorable



Riedel West, Chapter Chairman, at open console. — (Photo by Thomas L. Hatter)

year for the Alabama Chapter and whetting our appetites for more of the same in 1974.

After the program, the regular monthly meeting was held with election of 1974 officers being the main item of business. Short work was made of this election when the existing officers were voted right back in with one blanket vote. It is easy to see why Miss West had no opponents. She has devoted the year to making the Alabama Chapter what it is today. She has brought the membership from 10 families to 47 in only 10 short months.

As Vice Chairman, Jay Mitchell has kept the programs interesting and varied. As Secretary-Treasurer — well, I just let the rest do the work and I