

Closing Chord

On Friday, April 26, 1974 an era came to a close. **Dan Barton**, the last of the great theatre organ builders passed away. He would have been 90 years old this May 30.

Dan Barton was a living tribute to the theatre organ business. Only a person like Dan could start out with the smallest of theatre organs and end by building the largest in the world today. He was the first with many revolutionary ideas. Not only was he a fantastic salesman, but his inventiveness was unsurpassed.

It takes a certain amount of imagination to be a good organ builder and Dan was abundantly endowed. For a while it seemed as though he had lived much past his time and place in the theatre organ field, but he never lost his undaunted and gallant spirit. He was one of the great theatre organ builders of his time and my admiration for what he did is undiminished.

In 1965, the ATOS elected him an honorary member for his achievements.

The funeral was held on Monday at the Seefeld Funeral Home, directly across the street from the site of the Barton Organ Factory.

Dan is survived by his wife, Helen, three sons, George of Oshkosh, Richard of Lubbock, Texas, and David of Leicester, England, 10 Grand-



Dewey and Lorraine, a longtime love affair. This photo was made during the first day of the 1967 Home Organ Festival by Ralph Ehat, hours before Dewey's first heart seizure.

children and three great-grandchildren. He is the son of Daniel and Wilhelmina Barton and was born in Amherst, Wisconsin on May 30, 1884.

Fred Hermes Sr. and Jr., John Hill and Peter Charnon represented Dairyland Theatre Organ Society and the American Theatre Organ Society. Fred Sr. offered his services, played the organ and sang a solo at the funeral.

by John Hill

Dewey Cagle was the unchallenged "Mr. Organ" of the Bay Area of California. He could be seen at every gathering of organ enthusiasts within a wide radius of San Francisco, either to aid in the founding of a new organ club, trouble-shoot an ailing one, or

just to enjoy a concert. He couldn't seem to get enough of pipes or plug-ins. He was one of those who spearheaded promotion of the first George Wright concert at the San Francisco Fox in the early '60s. In fact, the organization assembled for that purpose became the Pacific Council for Organ Clubs, an amalgamation of organ dealer's clubs in the Bay Area, which prospered for 10 years under the guidance of Dewey Cagle and Kay Bradley until ill health forced Dewey to resign. But he left a monument, the 15-year-old Home Organ Festival (now under the guidance of Tiny James). The Festival was personally piloted by Dewey and Kay during its formative years at the Hoberg Resort.

Dewey Cagle was born in the Northwest (Chelan, Washington) and was attracted to the theatre organ early in life (the one he loved is still intact and perking in the Chelan Liberty theatre). He came to San Francisco in the mid-30's to pursue an electronics engineering career. While living in a boarding house, Dewey noticed another boarder named Lorraine Cress. The ensuing romance survived World War II. The marriage produced a boy, John, and a girl, Eileen. It survived a continual round of organ events, in addition to Dewey's participation in the publication of THEATRE ORGAN magazine as advertising manager, and serving on the ATOS Board of Directors. Dewey also wrote extensively for the PCOC's TABS & DRAWBARS. His backlog of record reviews continues in that Bay Area publication.



Dan at Christmas, 1972 showing photo of stadium presented to Dan by Fred Gollnick. - (John Hill Photo)

In 1967 Dewey suffered a heart attack on the first day of the Home Organ Festival. He wisely turned over the Festival reigns to others but his interest never flagged. He took time off from his electronics engineering job as necessary. There were several more seizures, then the massive one on April 1 of this year. Dewey was 61.

The little Oakland funeral chapel was overflowing with Dewey Cagle's friends and colleagues, a veritable "Who's Who" of Bay Area organ enthusiasts who had come to bid farewell to the likable guy with whom they had so much in common.

STU GREEN



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.

*Address: P.O. Box 1314
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Dear Mr. Thompson:

A new era for theatre organ has begun and it would seem that the center of it will be Center City, U.S.A. That's why this citizen, in moving to Wichita, is moving to the future. For this Southerner, it will be going home spiritually, for the people there have proved to be as warm hearted, generous, lovable and music loving as people in the South. Their approach to each other and all of life makes for a life style in parallel to the great Southern traditions in which the writer was reared. As a matter of fact, the *only* thing Center City folks lack is a Southern accent! (Hmmm; perhaps that's my cue for teaching a language course on the side!) In ways both musical and personal, it will be coming full circle in this man's life . . . and the

time for that has come.

The exotic variety of challenges and satisfactions, the many musical successes and joys and the dear friends of New York, *all* will hold my heart ever in deepest gratitude to God for the years and ways in which Nineveh-on-Hudson has Blessed me. Now . . . I'm going to do exactly what the world famous theatre organ in the New York Paramount Theatre did and go to the city beginning its Century II. That wonderful old gal, the Statue of Liberty, will be the first to understand because, she is where she is for reminding us all to use our God given liberty well.

In Wichita . . . that clean, beautiful, happy city of blue skies and south Florida sunshine and Atlanta/Richmond traditions . . . is the genesis of a great new adventure in music and living. I want to be a part of and grow with that adventure . . . and so . . . I'm moving to the Future.

"Wichita Lineman,"
BILLY NALLE

Gentlemen:

Once again, I'm thankful and proud to carry my Charter Membership Card for 1974.

I regret that I'm unable to be with all of you at our National Conventions because of being ill and am down here in Las Vegas to recuperate. I had a stroke at the organ, while playing for a hockey game and Mrs. Melgard had a serious operation and after almost 8 months of absolute rest, our Doctor said we were doing very good and of all the darn things, I WOULD get the 'Shingles' and had to visit him twice weekly for 5 weeks more! Well, I'm pleased to say he gave us his O.K. and we are really going to see THE TOWN for a change!

When the weather gets warmer in Chicago, we will fly up there to visit the Wirtz'es and our close friends, etc.

Enough of our troubles, so back to you and thanks again for my Charter Member card and — May all that is GOOD come to all ATOS's and their families!

Sincerely,
"Al"

Dear Editor:

Mr. Walter Draughon, in the Feb. issue wonders about an organist _____ (?) Wilchar? Could it have been Louise Wilshire who I remember playing the "WOR" Wurlitzer

back in the early forties.

Incidentally the WOR organ was used frequently in that era by Kay Reed and Bill Wirges. Kay recently retired from radio station WNEW. I would guess she was with them for forty years.

Bill Wirges passed away about two years ago. He was one of the most active freelance organists in the radio and early TV days. He played the WMCA Organ (Now at the Kirkof Dunedin) at least three shows daily during the forties. This was sandwiched in with conducting jobs, and Hammond jobs at the Nets. Bill was also a prolific composer and publisher. One of his most successful numbers being the "Chiquita Banana" commercial which became a hit in the late forties.

Sincerely,
Arnold Nocks

Dear Mr. Thompson,

This letter will cover three topics, so I hope it will not be too long. Firstly, as a result of Bob Longfield's 'der Wurlitzer orgels' article in last June's T.O. concerning Telefunken organ records, I have sought information from Douglas Badham, Chairman of the Cinema Organ Society. The results are as follows: —

ERNST FISCHER: The records listed were two out of a total of fourteen 10"-78 r.p.m. disks of an unspecified Wurlitzer. Two others were issued on the 'Gloria' label of an unspecified Welte, one of which was also issued on the English 'Parlophone' label, number R1790, the items being "Spinning Wheel" and "When a Thousand Tiny Stars".

GERD THOMAS: The titles given by Mr. Longfield *appear* to be the 'A' sides of a couple of 10" Telefunken (the 'B' sides were by Ernst Fischer). Additionally, two more such Telefunken records were also issued, four on the 'Polydor' label and one on 'Gloria'. This last was re-issued on English 'Parlophone', number R1188, the items being "Greetings to Sanssouci" and "Vision of Fuji-San". All these records were of an unspecified Wurlitzer.

ADOLPH WOLFF: This organist recorded nineteen 10"-78 r.p.m. Telefunken records at an unspecified Wurlitzer.

HANS HORST OSTERLOCH: Mr. Badham has one 10"-78 of this organist on Telefunken, number M6310,