

atos national convention

opus 19

PERFORMED IN DETROIT, MICHIGAN
JULY
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FOUR

Convention Chairman: Al Mason
Co-Chairman: Gerald McCray

All photos by Bill Lamb unless otherwise noted.

overture

They came from many geographical areas and from many walks of life, far too many to detail. But they all converged on the Sheraton-Cadillac Hotel in Detroit to attend ATOS' best-attended convention to date. Before the five-day confab-concert session was over, the attendance score was over 1100.

In addition to arrivals from many of the 50 states, there was a trickling of enthusiasts from overseas, including Great Britain and Australia.

Conventioneers started dribbling into the immense and well-seasoned downtown hostelry two days before the starting date, arriving at all hours of the day and night, many of them at

the Metropolitan Airport where there is no transportation between midnight and 4:00 A.M. for the 22-mile trip to the hotel.

Once at the hotel, interest picked up. By Friday morning, registration had started with a vengeance. For once, the electronic organ showrooms were sufficiently separated so

Detroit Skyline

(Ernest McKenzie Photo)





Alice Troyan and Doloris Frank welcome conventioners as they ascend the escalator to the Sheraton-Cadillac lobby.



Walter Strojny plays the CATOE "Traveling Organ" for Charlotte and Bill Reiger upon arrival in Detroit.



The Convention Committee was certain 1000 packets would be sufficient. Imagine their embarrassment when registration reached a record 1106!



Guess who? Vic Hyde decided John Muri needed the wig more than he did.



No folks, it's not out of the organ. Just one of the myriad of stange looking horns in Vic Hyde's collection.



Veteran Vaudevillian Vic Hyde says that "after you learn to play three trumpets at once, it's easy."

John Muri opened the convention at Redford's 3/10 Barton.



Lowrey's solo wasn't counterpointed by Conn's accompaniment in another key. Other exhibitors included Saville, Rodgers and Baldwin, all showing their latest and most attractive organs and complementary gadgets.

The renewal of friendships and establishment of new ones reached a high point at the Friday evening cocktail-and-palaver session held in the hotel's English Room. Playing the Conn was lovely Carol Jones, and others. The babble of conversation was punctuated by the clink of ice cubes and the lineup for the tickets which purchased a ration of dream-mist or a prosaic shot of soda pop, was congested for several of the get-acquainted session's hours.

But no one suffered, because the room was air-conditioned against the high outside temperature, so there was only the smoke of several hundred cigarettes to perfume the atmosphere. The party ran a long course breaking up around midnight, with the result that attending guests were integrated into one big, happy family.

first waltz

The first main event was an afternoon at the Redford Theatre, a well-maintained house, equipped with a 3/10 Barton organ with its console on a 4-poster lift.

There were two stars billed for the program. First came durable John Muri, who featured a quite different slide presentation, one which showcased old movie cue sheets and cue music which Muri played as it was shown on the large screen. John's treatise on film scoring ended with a sing-along with topical lyrics for old familiar tunes. He then played a quartet of tunes written by theatre organists, and followed this with a group of well known crowd pleasers. All selections were explained by John Muri with comments which enhanced their enjoyment.

Then came Vic Hyde. Words are inadequate to describe this seasoned vaudevillian and his array of offbeat musical instruments. He bombarded his willing audience with a mix of homely philosophy and blasts of music, played on a soprano saxophone, a couple of trombones, and one, two, three and four trumpets

CAMEO PLAYERS

played simultaneously. There wasn't a dull moment. Vic has the knack of arousing an audience to continual peaks of enthusiasm which they express in terms of laughter and applause. He truly went over with a bang, especially with the younger people in the audience who had never experienced the exhilaration of unadulterated vaudeville.

Vic Hyde would be difficult to follow for any act, but John Muri returned with what he described as "my classical offering." This proved to be a "composition" by "P.D.Q. Bach" and Muri's spoken introduction was funnier than the music which followed. The latter consisted of a loose conglomeration of familiar tunes held together by barely recognizable classical snatches.

A real musical laugh-getter. Muri wound up his program with Enesco's "Roumanian Rhapsody" and was immediately pounced on by amateur photographers just aching to shoot flash photos. The blinding moments which followed were to be repeated many times during the ensuing concerts.

Next, it was "cameo time" and non-professionals designated by ATOS Chapters took to the Barton to play their brief programs. Heard were David Pitts (So. Arizona Chapter via Australia), Hal Stanton (So. Florida Chapter) who played variations on "Yankee Doodle" on pedals alone, Connecticut Valley's Allen Miller, Garden State's Rick DeKarski, Niagara Frontier's Greg Gurtner, Ohio's Bob Hamilton, Leonard Winter from Eastern Massachusetts, Gerald Nagano and Candi Carli from Los Angeles. Miss Carli's performance was all the more remarkable because she was working under something of a handicap beyond the strangeness of an unfamiliar organ; unknown to her audience, Candi not only played the instrument with only 15 minutes practice, but also blind, a condition she's known since birth. Yet, she gave a flawless performance, with only the help of Gerald Nagano in setting up her registration. Twenty-nine chapters offered cameo players, but for lack of enough time, the nine heard were selected by lottery from the twenty-nine names.

When applause for the cameo players died down, it was time to board the fifteen 51-passenger buses for a return to the hotel for the evening meal.



David Pitts



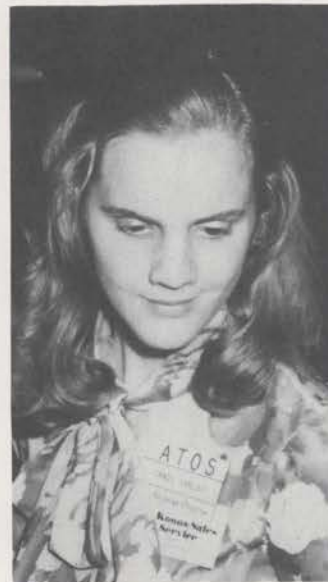
Gerald Nagano



Allen Miller



Rick DeKarski



Candi Carley



Bob Hamilton



Greg Gurtner



Leonard Winter



Hal Stanton

nachtmusik ohne magnetafon

A short bus trip brought the conventioners, over 1100 strong, to the Detroit Theater Organ Club's Senate Theatre and its 4/34 Wurlitzer (originally from the Detroit Fisher Theatre). Because the Senate has some 900 seats, Motor City Chapter members had been asked to stand in the back in order to provide seats for the visitors making seats available for all who wanted them.

The DTOC has rigid rules against any unsanctioned recording and visitors carrying any kind of parcel large enough to contain a small recorder were, in effect, "frisked", and any recorders found were confiscated and held until the end of the concert. At first glance, this procedure may have seemed a bit over-zealous. However, DTOC is a private club with a long standing "no recording" rule which is rigidly enforced and applies to all. There is another valid reason. A professional quality tape was being made, and the sound of clicks, snaps, pops and flapping of dozens of small tape recorders being turned on and off, and the brittle sounds of tapes being changed, covers being opened and snapped shut are picked up by the microphones to provide an unwanted percussive obligato of snap, crackle and pop, enough to mar the official recording. That's a convincing reason for the ban.

Prior to the program, ATOS national membership meeting was held. President Young presented a resume of the actions taken at the board meeting. See page 42 of this issue. He announced total membership at this date is 5025.

The attraction for the convention's initial evening concert was that duo which has been receiving rave reviews wherever they have played — Dennis and Heidi James. They combine the zeal of youth, sound musicianship, good looks and a knack for showmanship. The result is a boffo show. The James duo largely repeated the repertoire they have played in their numerous concerts during the past two years such as "Putting on the Ritz," "Maple Leaf Rag," "Victory at Sea Suite," "Warsaw Concerto," etc. plus piano solos by Heidi ("The Entertainer" and a Chopin selection). Without new material, the edge was somewhat



Organists Rex Koury, Ashley Miller, Lowell Ayars, Del Castillo and Larry Vanucci smile for the photographer in the hotel lobby.



"Oh Dear, which one should I buy?" The Music Store did a brisk business.



Richard Sklenar, Walter Strojny, Madeleine Borman, Maxine Coldwell and Marge Muethel "descend" for lunch.



Tom Jelf, Stan Whittington, Joan Jelf and Gladys Whittington came all the way from England.

Sally Johnson sells Henry Frohnapel and Earl Wiltse tickets for the Tuesday Luncheon, the Rex Koury Show and the Moonlight Cruise.



Dennis and Heidi James combine the zeal of youth and sound musicianship at the DTOC 4/34 Wurlitzer.



dulled for those who had attended a James concert recently, but for those hearing Dennis and Heidi for the first time, it was an incomparable experience. They are attractive young people with so much to offer, and they really drive it home.

Heidi is a definite asset to the act, musically and aesthetically. It was a hot, humid evening with no air-conditioning but Dennis and Heidi seemed to help their listeners ignore the discomforts of weather.

By the time Dennis and Heidi had finished beaching "Victory at Sea" and serenading beleaguered "Warsaw," it was a little cooler and the 17 buses were quickly filled to their capacities and whizzed back to the hotel where the showrooms were playing to full and continually rotating houses. At the Baldwin room, we caught Jack Doll doing a first-rate job of supplying the music for a Laurel and Hardy comedy made many years before he was born. And so to bed.

pagliacci airs

Sunday morning was bright and sunny, and the scheduled attraction was the Punch and Judy Theatre, its 2/5 Wurlitzer and the musicianship of Lowell Ayars. Some made a visit to David Voydanoff's 3/6 residence Wurlitzer and a look-see at Herb Head's miniature circus. The latter is a small wonder; beautifully scaled replicas of circus paraphernalia of yesteryear, even to the show's blacksmith shoeing a horse. In his basement, Herb had another surprise, a full-size 3/14 Wurlitzer. Its fine sound came through with

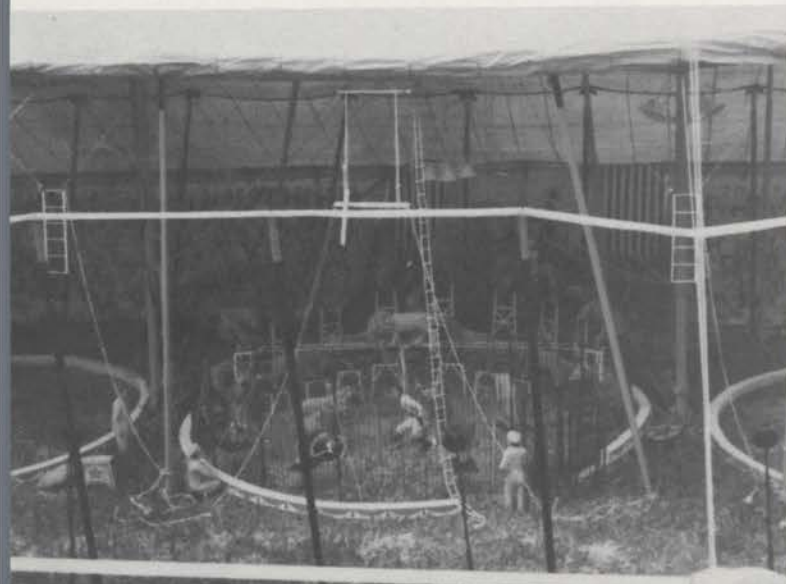


ATOSers board the busses in ninety degree heat at the Punch and Judy Theatre in suburban Grosse Pointe.



Lowell Ayars at the console of the Style B Wurlitzer in the Punch and Judy Theatre. Its five ranks were a pleasant surprise.

Besides opening his home for the Wurlitzer, Herb Head spent many hours assembling his authentic to scale circus for the conventioners to enjoy. (Clyde Reimer Photos)





Dr. Paul Abernethy, Al Mason, Judd Walton and Betty Mason congratulate Associate Editor Lloyd Klos on his selection as Honorary Member.



Outgoing President "Cap" Young acknowledges the support given him during his two-year term in office.

grandeur even when subjected to the digital ineptitude of Stu Green, who was pressed into service because an *organist* couldn't be found among the many visitors.

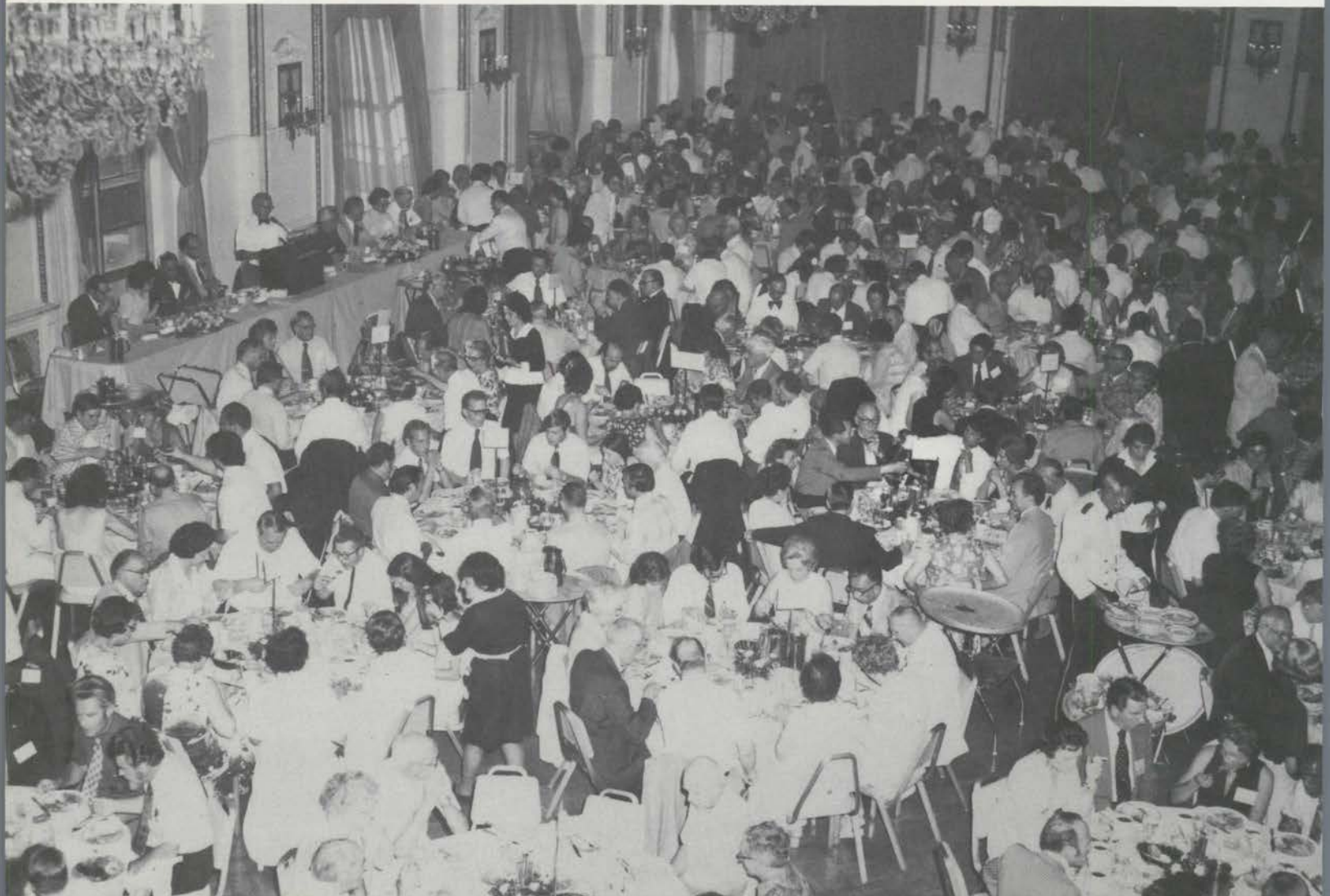
Then, on to the Punch and Judy Theatre and a pleasant surprise. The style 150 Wurlitzer isn't one of Rudolph's greatest although the Tibia complementing the usual Style B four ranks (Salicional, Flute, Tuba or Style D Trumpet and Vox) adds much needed color. But this one, thanks to expert restoration by Motor City chapterites, even sounded good when the Tibia was not being used. It's a one-chamber installation, and the resulting sound fills the 600-seat house nicely. Genial Lowell Ayars, a veteran of ATOS conventions, was never in better form. He pointed out that there were more small organs playing in the "Golden Era" than large ones and this five-ranker was an average-size "work-horse" of the type found in many theatres. Then he went to work to show how much variety could be

obtained from five unified ranks. Among his selections were "I Cover the Waterfront," "Why Can't You?" (a la Crawford), a "No, No, Nanette" medley, and what Lowell called an "X-rated" set consisting of tune titles with names of shady ladies prominent. It ended with "The Lady Is a Tramp" who Lowell wiped out with a tremendous smear glissando. Good show throughout, including Lowell's vocal solos.

Back to the buses for the rather long journey to the hotel and an afternoon free until 6:30 P.M. and the cocktail hour. The latter was held in the Founders' Room; a huge standing crowd trying to read each other's badges without being obvious, exchanging half-heard quips and guzzling their drinks. Johnny Kemm was featured at the Lowery for this event.

With the softening process completed, the multitudes wandered into the most crowded ballroom ever, to be seated, 10 to a table, with scarcely

A capacity crowd fills the Sheraton-Cadillac's Grand Ballroom for a banquet of prime rib. When the air conditioning ceased to function, off came the coats.



enough space between tables for a fat reporter to squeeze through. MC Judd Walton announced that the air conditioner was kaput and the best the repairman could do was to open the windows, which he was doing. He got a blast of applause from the sweltering diners.

The meal consisted of a seafood cocktail, a salad and a main course of string beans, potato and a fair-size portion of prime rib.

The humor started with Judd Walton's table-versus-table games, then the business of introducing the new officers and legislation took over. The memorable highlight was probably the announcement of the ATOS Honorary Member selection, Lloyd E. Klos, who has been a steady contributor and researcher for THEATRE ORGAN Magazine for many years. He became an Associate Editor in 1967. Lloyd accepted the honor with the humility and dignity befitting the event.

When all the speeches had been made, the conventioners dispersed to visit the electronic organ showrooms for awhile before retiring.

interlude in prose

By now, Dr. John Landon must know as much about Jesse Crawford as anyone living. For the past several years, John has been "living" the Crawford legend. The "Poet of the Organ" had been the subject of his research in preparation for a soon-to-be published biography. He selected Crawford's life and times for the thesis required for his post graduate academic work.

Some of the fruits of John's research were revealed during his one-man slide show and lecture presented in the hotel grand ballroom on the

morning of the convention's fourth day. Operating his slide projector and a tape playback loaded with vintage Crawford gems, John spoke of Crawford's humble beginnings and traced his career, step by step, to the most rewarding organ post in the world — the New York Times Square Paramount. The slide presentation was enhanced by a musical background consisting of the Poets stand-out 78 records and broadcast transcriptions.

John Landon's presentation was a well-coordinated exposure, and like any show, displayed a few rough spots in its first U.S. presentation. Considering all the controls John was operating to keep music, speech and slides moving, the presentation came off remarkably well. There were warm words of appreciation to John Landon for the effort invested in the biographical effort, plus many words which would please the Poet.



Banquet MC Judd Walton started table-versus-table games.



Dr. John Landon, biographer of Jesse Crawford, presents his one-man slide show on the "Poet of the Organ" in the hotel ballroom.



Convention Chairman Al Mason shows his gratitude for the standing ovation given him at the banquet. It was his high point of the convention he remarked afterward. He passed away barely a week later.

Judd Walton, Father Kerr, Russ Evans and Betty Mason dine at the headtable.



Larry Fenner, Shirley Hannum, Reba and Lowell Ayars at the Delaware Valley table.





Lyn Larsen at the DTOC 4/34 Wurlitzer.



Bill Benedict, Harold Wright and Norman Ray wait in vain for a barber to show up at the cocktail lounge just off the hotel's main lobby. (Could the barber have been in the Saville Showroom upstairs?)



Editor George Thompson and Circulation Manager Vi Thompson know as well as Betty Mason, that when time is of the essence the work never stops.

Bus Captains gather outside Hill Auditorium on the University of Michigan campus in Ann Arbor.



valse brillante

The afternoon session was a double-header at the Senate DTOC 4/34 Wurlitzer. Lyn Larsen was first. He said he was about to play a program consisting entirely of encores so he wouldn't have to play one following his program. He opened with a bouncing "Radetsky March" by waltz king Strauss, and followed through with a beautiful variety of tunes including Irving Berlin's rarely heard "What'll I Do?" Then the fun started.

Lyn Larsen is obviously a difficult musician to "spook." The distraction of a television crew moving in lights and poking a portable TV camera practically under his nose didn't seem to bug Larsen in the least. That took place about halfway through the program which was presented in the DTOC's Senate Theatre. TV men brought in tall stands with bright lights and the cameraman, with his portable resting on his shoulder, zeroed in on Lyn as he played "Waltz of the Flowers." The cameraman was naturally umbilicated to the audio man whose identifying fixture was a flash-light-shaped microphone which, for some reason, he kept aimed at Lyn as though the music were radiating from



Don Baker is no stranger to the DTOC Wurlitzer. He has been an honorary member of the club for many years.

the organist's chest. When the camera had examined Lyn from every possible angle, the camera and the lights were turned toward the audience to catch the applause which Lyn earned by not misplacing one semiquaver of Tchaikowsky's flowers, despite the distraction.

Lyn was dressed to the hilt for the occasion in off-white slacks and a tight, vest-like jacket, but it was his shoes which really stood out: the heels were equipped with sequins which flashed and sparkled as he waded through complex pedal passages.

On the somber side, Lyn played a moving rendition of Grieg's "Last Spring," but it was during his "Variations on a Theme by Michelle Souris" that the sequins flashed wildly. It turned out to be a series of novel variations on the old "Mickey Mouse Club Theme."

Lyn Larsen closed with the familiar "Rondo in G" by John Bull. The crowd would have loved him even without the sequined heels.

maestoso!

Don Baker's music might be described as "vintage wine." Yet, it never strikes one as being dated; Don is very effective in blending the old with the new. For example, he ends the current hit, which has the protagonist affixing a length of yellow ribbon to an ancient oak, with the venerable coda — "shave and a haircut — two bits."

Don's program was played at the Senate Theatre on the same afternoon as the Lyn Larsen concert. The weather had cooled some and the audience was physically comfortable. Claude Sheridan, who MC'd all convention shows, introduced Don Baker who appeared in a bright red jacket and cream trousers. Don went right to work, spinning his web of music magic which has charmed and inspired several generations of organ fans.

One of Don's specialties is the music he played in New York's Broadway theatres in the '20's and '30's, and "Lover, Come Back to Me" and "Look For the Silver Lining" were illustrative of the way he played them on the New York Paramount's 4/36 Wurlitzer during his more than 13 years' tenure there. Don Baker is a master of the swell pedal; his shading of the phrases which lead to the high point of each tune is one of the most impressive qualities of Don's approach to music.

This was especially evident during "Exodus." His closer was a peppy "Everything's Up to Date In Kansas City." The large audience illustrated the esteem Don Baker has earned over the years. The old maestro did it again.

l'opera comique

Rex Koury is a showman with musical roots in the waning days of the silent era but whose youthfully enthusiastic approach to his work keeps the kids interested. After a long stretch of Hollywood studio work, Rex took to the concert trail about two years ago, a return to his first love, the theatre organ. One thing about Rex' concerts, the repertoire is continually changing; and his convention show at the Royal Oak theatre was no exception.

To contrast with the straight concert concept which marked the majority of convention presentations, Rex put together an old time movie show, an evening at the local Bijou, Strand or Regent in the year 1927. He spoke in present tense as he provided the verbal color to enhance the music. His overture, played on the restored 3/13 Barton, was a mishmash of familiar passages from a dozen Von Suppe-type opuses, all skillfully assembled into "An Overture to End All Overtures."

Then came the newsreel music, the "Capital (Theatre) March," followed by a Larry Semon-Oliver Hardy silent comedy with a wild auto race which Rex close-cued for laughs, right to the finish line. Next, the sing-along. This featured the usual old favorite tonsil busters but also included some parodies (e.g. "Side by Side") with topical comments on the current state of the nation. Then, Rex closed the songfest with a rousing "Grand Old Flag." The great untrained chorus responded with enough volume to rattle the ancient theatre's timbers.

After a brief intermission it was time for the feature film, *College*, starring deadpan comedian Buster Keaton.

A simple tale but loaded with the sight gags of which Keaton was a master creator, it provided an excellent palette for the musical accompaniment provided by Rex Koury. The full house audience (it was a public show, too) really loved it. Rex Koury's "movie night in 1927" was a bullseye.

AUGUST, 1974



Official ATOS Photographer Bill Lamb relaxes on board the steamer "Columbia" during the Moonlight Cruise on the Detroit River.



Buses ready to leave after a performance. Jim Harrison, along with all the bus captains, did a great job.



Bill Worrell in the registration room at his display featuring the ORGANIST magazine.



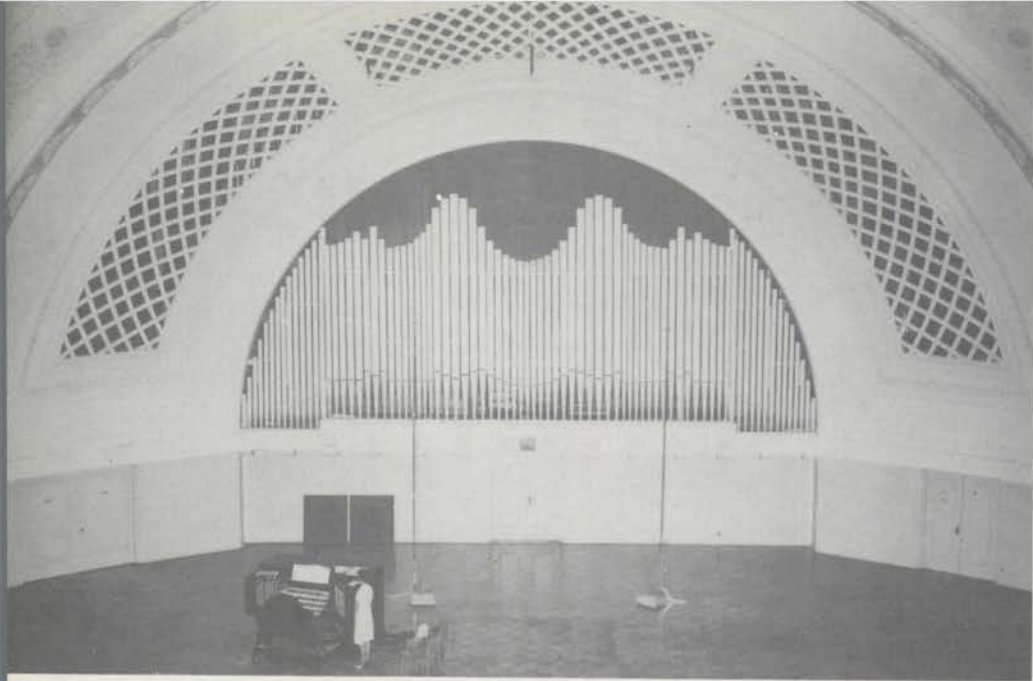
The suburban Royal Oak Theatre goes all-out to welcome conventioners.



The Rodgers Showroom was a popular place at almost any time.

Rex Koury at the 3/13 Barton at the Royal Oak Theatre. The general public helped swell the house to a capacity 1700.





The shell of Hill Auditorium, reminiscent of Radio City Music Hall, seems to dwarf Searle Wright at the console of the 4/117 Skinner.



Ex-AGO president, Searle Wright, at the console of the 3/13 Barton at the Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor.

Conventioners wait in the sunshine for lunch at the Michigan League in Ann Arbor.



excursion musicale

Tuesday proved to be travel day. The busses left downtown Detroit at 8 A.M. and returned at 5 P.M.

Upon leaving, they set a course for Ann Arbor, about 40 miles away. Arriving in Ann Arbor the busses stopped at the Hill Auditorium of the University of Michigan which contains a 4/117 Skinner.

The distinguished organist Searle Wright, an ex-president of the American Guild of Organists, presented a classical program for the ATOS'ers. The sounds emanating from the large Skinner seemed strange to an audience educated to hearing solo reeds, syrupy Tibias and lots of tremulants. However they listened attentively and many found an additional beauty available to them in the pipe organ.

Mr. Wright offered a program featuring works of Buxtehude, Bach, Franck, Langlais and others. Each reading was done with precision and clarity.

Following the program, lunch was served at the Michigan League, a facility of the University, located across the street from Hill Auditorium. After lunch a three block walk through a business section brought us to the Michigan Theatre and its 3/13 Barton.

Entering the well preserved and maintained theatre, odd sounds were heard. Closer examination revealed the existence of a band organ placed on the stair landing leading to the balcony. The delightful, merry sounding, instrument is the property of David Heitz, and was put in the theatre especially for the ATOS gathering. The auditorium was soon filled to near capacity with everyone eagerly anticipating the appearance of the charming personality, Helen Dell.

On schedule, the MC announced

Helen, the Barton console rose from the pit, the curtain raiser tune, "That's Entertainment" poured from the organ chambers and another afternoon of superb music was on its way.

The organ sounded extremely well regulated and tuned which seems to be the trade mark of Motor City Chapter organ maintenance and restoration projects. The instrument is nicely balanced with excellent reeds, notably the Orchestral Oboe and Post Horn. A nice Tibia also helped create an overall good example of the sound we travel hundreds of miles to hear.

Professionally, Helen Dell needs little introduction. She proved her ability to enchant listeners with her smooth, never over done rendition from a "South Pacific medley" to a "tone poem" by Purvis. She adds much to her programs by interjecting music that is rarely heard, giving the listener something fresh, which is always welcome. The Dell touch, a good instrument, presented in a well groomed theatre is a combination hard to beat.

Following, at 3:00 P.M. (on time)

Searle Wright made his second appearance of the day, this time at the same Barton which moments before had responded to Helen Dell. A public theatre organ performance by Mr. Wright is a rare event. The morning classic concert then a pop concert in the afternoon gave ATOSers a chance to compare at first hand the difference between the two. Needless to say there was some skepticism.

Searle, using his ability at witty remarks and unquestioned skill on multiple keyboards, soon dispelled any doubts as to the wisdom of the programming. If there ever existed a real gap between the AGO and ATOS, it must surely have been closed on this day. His program covered the spectrum from "Varsity Drag" through well known standards to the light classics. The light hearted, at times humorous, approach in his playing and registration was a crowd pleaser.

After Searle Wright lowered the console into the pit, a happy procession filed out of the Ann Arbor Michigan Theatre and bussed to headquarters to prepare for the evening.



Helen Dell at the Michigan Theatre Barton.

A restored Wurlitzer Band Organ intrigues ATOSers in the lobby of the Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor.





Del Castillo was preceded at the DTOC Wurlitzer by "Elmer Fumble-Fingers." They bore an amazing likeness to one another.



Claude Sheridan did an excellent job as Master of Ceremonies. Notice the notebook with the unavoidable list of announcements before each concert which seems inevitable at every convention.

Hector Olivera at the Mayan decorated console of the DTOC Wurlitzer.



vivace del castillo!

The final session of evening concerts was held at the DTOC's Senate theatre. It was started with a half-hour of slide-illustrated plugs for future ATOS conventions, during which an unspotlighted organist "cued" the scenes like a silent film. At the close of the commercial he was briefly alluded to as "Elmer Fumblefingers" and hustled off the stage. A few moments later MC Claude Sheridan introduced the scheduled recitalist, Lloyd del Castillo. Del bore a striking resemblance to "Elmer," even to being dressed in the same suit.

Del admitted that it was the first concert where he had played his own prologue. One of the Castillo trademarks is a keen line of humor and he likes nothing better than a play on words. For example, when he introduced "The Summer Knows" he added that he was suffering from a summer cold which resulted in "a summer nose," but he didn't blow it.

The program opened with a medley of marches. After a grandiose serenade to Gaylord Carter, Del played a thrilling "Pilgrims' Chorus" which generated a considerable wave of enthusiasm from an audience which by now was reposing contentedly in Del's palm.

In a satyric reference to the "identity crisis" which seems to be troubling certain segments of the younger generation, Del stated that it was just as proper for people of his generation to question their identity and to drive his point home he played a medley of "identity crisis" tunes: "Who?," "Why Was I Born?" and "Where or When?"

One of Del's finest selections was an understated "Fountain Reverie" (Percy Fletcher), then a barb at organists whose effort is toward the visual rather than musical with his pedal solo called the "B.G. Toccat." This turned out to be simply "Barney Google" with a pedal melody and much manual "toccaterly." Del's closer was the "Bacchanale" from the opera *Samson and Delilah* which Del explained was real "orjee" music, but in deference to the Wurlitzer it should be pronounced "orgee" with a hard "g." Del then proceeded to paint a music picture of Biblical time swingers and swappers in tones crimson enough to deserve an X-rating.

There's never a dull moment in a Del Castillo concert and the old maestro again proved he could produce music of interest to all ages. Not that "standing ovations" mean much since being done to death, but Del got one, spontaneously.

pas de cheval a pedale

Hector Olivera has a sure-fire act, one which alternates between dolce and fortissimo. The former applies when he plays the soft spoken Desi Arnez struggling with the English language, the latter when he sits down at the console. Not always, of course; when he goes into the Buddy Cole idiom (e.g. "Cry Me A River"), the results have all the beauty, restraint and shading of that late lamented genius of the theatre organ. The same applies to Dottie Whitcomb's original which was given a very ethereal setting.

Hector can be very poetic in introducing his selections in that almost shy voice as he seeks just the right

Stu Green is ready to take pictures of MC Claude Sheridan and convention Chairman, Al Mason with his wife, Betty, at the end of the final scheduled concert.



words. He found them while introducing "Pieces of Dreams;" he said the tune title reminded him of a disassembled organ he had seen laid out on the stage of a theatre — pieces of dreams.

Then there's the other Hector, king of the heavy brass and flying feet, the visual Hector versus the musician. Of course, some organists have discovered that console gymnastics go over big with audiences, perhaps because it makes the music making look more difficult. Hector has honed physical display to a fine art, mostly in connection with his amazing pedal technique; he appears to have as much facility with his feet as some organists have with their hands. To say that his showmanship is dazzling to the eyes tells only part of the story. His playing technique is spotlessly clean, his arrangements very individual.

There is no denying the Olivera conception is different. He throws his entire 98 pounds into the production, and his swing and sway about the console bench contains none of the type of "body English" which drives many concertgoers to laughter.

Hector was especially effective when he delved into the Spanish idiom with "Cumana." His conception of that tinkly little finger exercise, "Flight of the Bumblebee" was a brassy study in ankle dexterity. Composer Rimsky-Korsakoff would be startled to hear a piano tune which he wrote to last a little over a minute turned into a concert Tour de Force. The Olivera version is repeated over a span of several minutes. By the pedal thumping conclusion we have become transfixed by the terpsichorean aspects displayed by this Fred Astaire of the console. Thus, Hector ended his concert in a blaze of visual brilliance, his red jacket and cream colored slacks adding considerably to the eye appeal.

That the audience approved the Olivera showmanship was evident by the standing, clapping, howling mass of conventioners. Hector had put it to them where they lived.

ad lib

For those conventioners able to remain in the Motor City for yet another day there were two day-time options open on Wednesday, July 17. The Rodgers Organ Company and Musical Heritage, Inc. presented Lyn

Larsen at the Rodgers Custom Theatre Organ just installed in the Museum Theatre at Greenfield Village. Several chartered busses transported many ATOS'ers to the 260 acre setting in suburban Dearborn, begun by Henry Ford in the late 1920's as a collection of Americana.

Before introducing Lyn Larsen, Dr. Donald S. Shelley, president of the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village, told how the new Rodgers organ is the fulfillment of a dream the museum has had for many years, and that it will be used to accompany silent films at the museum theatre.

Lyn demonstrated the capabilities of this custom instrument, which includes an extensive number of percussion effects for silent film styling. The Laurel and Hardy film *Bacon Grabbers* gave Lyn a good opportunity to use the organ to underscore a picture. The program closed with guest soloist Alona Moon singing "God Bless America."

Following Lyn's concert, ATOS'ers were free to tour the Henry Ford Museum or Greenfield Village (the concert ticket included admission to



Eddie Osborn and Luella Wickham "team up" in the Baldwin Showroom.



The Conn Organ Showroom was a good place to find a myriad of talent.



Saville representative Tom Cotner and Detroitter Dennis Verner, of the Gustafson Group, enjoy the sound in the hotel showroom.

"Small World" is the tune of the day in the Lowrey Organ Showroom in the hotel.





Transportation Chairman Ed Lyon spent two years routing 16 buses over a 300 mile course. Bus company officials and police departments appreciated his hard work. And so did we.
(Don Lockwood Photo)



Amy Reimer, played seven concerts on the Masons' 3/10 Wurlitzer.

one or the other). While some chose to see the 12 steam locomotives and 200 antique automobiles, included in the museum's exhibits, others preferred to ride a horse-drawn carriage, a restored paddle-wheel steamboat or behind the oldest operating steam locomotive in the world and tour the nearly 100 original historic buildings brought from all over the nation and re-erected in a typical setting of early America.

rubato

If you were lucky to be an early riser, you got an A-1 home tour ticket, which meant that you left the hotel at 8 a.m. If you were a little sleepier than the rest you got bus A-2 which left a half hour later and followed the same route as A-1. These routes were worked out over the past two years by bussing chairman Ed Lyon, his wife Donna along with Harry and Virginia Hadfield. Hours and hours had gone into the routing, the timing and the ability of the busses to negotiate corners, driveways and other problems of a home tour route.

Tour A-2 — all aboard. With fewer than our capacity of 50 passengers, we left the hotel for Dave Brewer's home in Dearborn. Dave explained that this organ is a 3/16 Marr and Bartolitzer. His home, and also that of his parents, is in a secluded section of Dearborn, and the home shows no indication of what the basement holds in store for visitors. The console was on the west wall, the pipes were chambered in the north wall, a very fine working area was noted on the east wall and the south side was hidden by our bus



Dave Brewer (center) and his father (right) are proud of the Marr and Bartolitzer installed in the basement of their home.

Gary Montgomery at the 3/19 Marr & Colton in the home of Roger Mumbroe.



Dave Voydanoff's 3/6 Wurlitzer was available not only on the regular scheduled tour on Sunday but Dave opened his home on Wednesday for those who did not want to go on home tours or Greenfield Village.



riders who had assumed seated positions to hear the organ.

Our next stop was the Livonia home of Betty and Al Mason. Our bus driver negotiated those turns with precision and we were right on schedule. Amy Reimer put on a full half-hour concert at the Mason's 3/10 Wurlitzer. The bus captain asked Al Mason to describe the unique chambers which were designed into the house, deeper than basement level.

Our next stop, a long ride away, was the home of Floyd Bunt, in Bloomfield Hills. Floyd has a 3/9 Page in perfect condition, with a newly reglittered console. It is in a long basement family room which has sliding doors to the yard. Bus A-2 was fortunate to catch up to the previous bus at the Bunts and heard "Tiny" James at the console.

We then headed for the home of Roger Mumbrue in Bloomfield Hills, one of the country's finest installations. Roger also has designed his home for the 3/19 Marr and Colton. Gary Montgomery was demonstrating the instrument as we arrived and continued until we departed, while we listened, walked through the chambers or amazed ourselves with the collection of pin ball, shuffleboard and various coin operated machinery that Roger has collected in his basement, which overlooks his swimming pool and small duck-pond beyond.

We pulled into a Ponderosa Steak House, which gave us a \$2.29 steak for \$1.79 if we surrendered the map-coupon we had been using. No complaints were heard about the food and we caught up on our schedule as the A-1 tour was eating when we arrived

and we left exactly one half-hour after them to be back on schedule.

It was only 10 minutes by bus to the home of Mert Harris. The console now resides in his former front door area at one end of his living room. Lance Luce was the artist at this console. Mert's construction permits entrance to the chambers (in the former garage) while not disturbing those who are listening in the living room.

We moved on to Lee Hohner's 3/10 Robert Morton. Lee, himself, was there to play for us, in the home owned and occupied by his parents. This was one of the most recent installations in the Detroit area, the organ having graced the pit of Detroit's Riviera Theatre for many years. It was featured in the June, 1974 issue of THEATRE ORGAN.



Lance Luce played the concerts for home tours on the Mert Harris 3/11 Wurlitzer.



The only Robert Morton, a 3/10, to be heard is installed in the home of Lee Hohner's parents. Here Lee explains some complications he encountered in moving the organ.

Bus captain Henry Frohnapel watches as Amy Reimer plays the 3/13 Wurlitzer in Herb Heads' home. (Clyde Reimer Photo)



Floyd Bunt pictured at the 3/8 Page, the only organ of this make featured at the convention.



Chuck Harris, the son of Mert Harris, has the 3/11 Wurlitzer from the Six Mile-Uptown Theatre. The console is in his living room and an addition on the back of his home houses the pipes, which sound into a family room and up a stairwell to the console. At the Harris home we were treated to a performance by Wilma Steslick, while a television crew from Channel 7 filmed the event.

We made it back to the hotel about 5 p.m. with thoughts of the moonlight cruise later in the evening. □

moonlight sonata

The evening "afterglow" brought conventioners to the final scheduled event, a cruise on the river steamer *Columbia*, heading northward on the Detroit River to Lake St. Claire and return, an excursion of approximately three hours.

As the "twilight voyagers" came aboard, the strident music of George Aston's calliope smote their tympani. It was none other than Herb Head (the guy with the miniature circus model, remember?) and his trained air whistles offering a Show Boat style welcome. Up the gangplank strode hundreds of conventioners to the beat of Herb's sprightly tunes. Aboard there were three decks for the passengers to explore. The exposed steam engine was one focal point of interest, especially after the ship started to move and the pistons and rockers attained their normal speeds midst puffs of escaping steam.

There were other points of interest aboard, stands selling hot dogs, soft drinks, beer and watery mixed drinks. In the dance pavillion there was a 3-deck Rodgers organ which was played both well and badly during the voyage. Waning daylight illuminated the shoreline for about half the journey and the natives aboard the *Columbia* pointed out sights of interest on U.S. and Canadian shores to visitors. At one point three lads came by in a small motor launch and two of them created something of a sensation by "mooning" as their craft passed the *Columbia*, probably because the moon promised for the "Moonlight Cruise" was somewhere else. Even so, there's no reason to believe that the "bottoms up" salute was intended as a comment about ATOS.



"The beginning of the end" Herb Head plays the Calliope George Aston provided for the Moonlight Cruise closing the Notable Nineteenth. (Clyde Reimer Photo)



"All ashore that's going ashore." The steamer "Columbia" just before departure with 900 ATOSers and guests aboard the Afterglow. (Don Lockwood Photo)



What's this? — Stu Green in jail for libel? No, THEATRE ORGAN'S Editor Emeritus is just looking through the gate at the boat dock.



Lance Luce became the official photographer's assistant at the convention. He was a great help to Bill Lamb.

Weary chapter members (l to r) Donna and Ed Lyon, Gary Hitchens, Larry Gleason, Maureen Hitchens and Jim Casterson on board the "Columbia" for the Grande Finale.



As darkness settled around the good ship *Columbia* a whole new vista came into view. The boat became an illuminated island on the now dark river with hundreds of starry points of light passing in flickering array from two shores and reflecting on the gently rolling water. The dancing was now in full swing with some fine organists taking turns. Among those who volunteered dance music were John Muri, Lowell Ayars, Shirley Hannum, Gary Montgomery, Stan Whittington (England), Candy Carli, Bill Schumacher (Australia) and Tiny James. This was Tiny's only appearance as an organist; he had been scheduled for a convention concert but had to withdraw on doctor's orders.

Occasionally the *Columbia's* deep-throated whistle thundered out its 16 ft. blast to remind the dancers that they were aboard a real steamship, but they were too much involved with their fox trots, bugaloos and waltzes to notice. To liven things up they went into a fast polka, then, in twos and fours, they joined hands for a promenade around the dance floor while Betty Mason sought out replacements for tired organists.

Other voyagers sat by the ship's rail and watched the now shadowy scenery, or just gazed at the reflections in the water and talked with the person in the adjoining chair. All too soon the *Columbia* had berthed at her pier and the multitudes debarked to board the busses for their final convention ride. It was an enjoyable way to close the activities.

Even without all the returns in, the Motor City convention would go down in history as one of the most successful to date. The two years of planning and preparation by Convention Chairman Al Mason, and the coterie of able assistants, had pro-

duced a smooth-running show with a maximum of interest value. Their work would be difficult to follow, much less top.

coda: the song is ended

Next morning there was an exodus from the hotel resembling a De Mille mob scene with the long lines at the check out desk, bellmen scurrying around, carts containing mountains of luggage, and small groups of departing ATOSers saying their goodbyes to friends, old and new.

One veteran convention goer observed; "Every ATOS convention ends for me with mixed feelings, one of joy and one of sadness. It is a joy to relax after four or five hectic days, but it is saddening to shake hands, say goodbye, and realize it's all over for another year."



"Home base and pit stop." (Dan Lockwood Photo)

Detroit at Night.



The band organ placed in the lobby of the Michigan by David Heitz, an unusual added attraction in the theatre in Ann Arbor.



The Purser aboard the Moonlight Cruise was pleased with the sound brought forth by organists like "Tiny" James as compared to the music usually heard on the boat.



Candi Carley tries the Rodgers in the Grand Ballroom after the banquet.

