

pretty good for a feller to be a musician, because he's makin' molla doin somethin he likes and mostly he's a-goin to keep on likin it no matter how old he gets. I ain't no great shakes as a musician, but sence I give up runnin elyvaters I been thankful that I took those pianner lessons last year I rote about, because I can get some fun now at the pianner even if I do have to pick out the tunes with one finger kind of. So I guess the moral is that if you aint fortunate enough to make your livin doin somethin that's fun like playin music, the next best thing is to have a hobby for when you quit work, and I guess for my money bein able to like music would be about up to the top of the list. □



the letters to the editors

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 Unless it's stated clearly on the letter "not for publication," the editors feel free to reproduce it, in whole or part.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:

George Thompson
Editor
P.O. Box 1314
Salinas, Calif. 93901

Dear Sir,

This letter is an appeal to all lovers of the theatre organ and the Wur-litzer in particular. Those who know anything of the work of Robert Hope-Jones may well have read about his organ in St. John's Church in Birkenhead, England, or even have seen the famous photograph of the maestro himself sitting at the console in the graveyard playing the

organ inside the church! The instrument was complete with the very first Diaphone and Tibia to be made and originally the organ had second touch and other Hope-Jones' innovations.

The sad thing is that the church was closed some time ago and a recent visit by the technical team of this Trust revealed that not only were broken windows allowing the weather to get at the organ, but that vandals had already been active in the building, fortunately at this stage without severe damage to the organ.

As a result the Trust has bid for this famous instrument and has been told that it can have it for a nominal sum. Therefore the decision has been taken to remove it and place it in storage until it can be re-erected, or at least the Hope-Jones' parts placed on permanent display. This project will place a strain on the finances of the Trust which has to raise all money voluntarily or by selling its records. The Committee appeals to friends on the other side of the Atlantic where the Hope-Jones organ developed into the Wur-litzer, to support us by sending a donation to our Treasurer at 4 High Elm Road, Hale Barns, Altrincham, Cheshire, England. Dollar cheques are acceptable, so, buffs, get that pen out and drop us a few dollars! We shall not waste them we assure you, but we do need your help!

Many thanks from your fellow buffs in England.

Yours Sincerely,
John Potter,
Honorary Secretary

Dear Sir,

I have just received the May-June Issue of 'THEATRE ORGAN' and upon reading through the feature — 'For the Records,' a feature I am always anxious to read each time as I have a great interest in collecting theatre organ recordings, I noticed some incorrect information, which I feel for the sake of justice should be corrected for the records. It concerns the review of the record by my late friend Gerald Shaw. Your reviewer in mentioning about Deroy 929. Gerald Shaw at the Odeon Leicester Square' says that the Melotone unit of Compton organs was used as an excuse for an extra manual and that is likened to a Solovox and that the Odeon Compton has a manual devoted en-

tirely to the Melotone. I'm afraid this is quite incorrect and I would be more than grateful for you to point this out to your readers, as this concerns a rather important issue regarding the leading builder of theatre organs here in Europe. The Melotone unit became part of the design of all but three theatre organs delivered between 1935 and 1940. It is the invention of Leslie Bourn the brilliant inventor of the Compton electro-static pipeless organs. No Compton organ has a manual devoted entirely to the Melotone as some of its tone colours are found on the solo manual, tones like the Melotone, Krummhorn, Cor Anglais and Musette. These can be used solo or in any combination of pipe ranks, whilst other stops on the unit provide the Vibraphone, Marimba, Chimes, Carillon and these are found on the accompaniment manual and solo manuals. With the usual couplers it can be used where one likes. In fact they are not designated on the console. Nearly two thirds of the Compton organs were delivered before 1935 it stands to reason that a large proportion of organs were equipped with the unit. The early model was equipped with a "Glide" stop which the organist could use for a most realistic Hawaiian Guitar effect the first time this effect had ever been heard. Some electronic organ firms are quite incorrectly claiming today that this is something new! The volume is controlled by the usual swell pedals. The large horn speakers being sited mostly behind the grille. The Forum cinema Southampton was the first cinema organ installation in the world featuring this wonderful integrated tonal system, which is sorely missed if it should be out of order as apart from missing additional tone colours there are then no Chimes, Vibraphone or Marimba as

moving?

Send your change of address to . . .

VI THOMPSON
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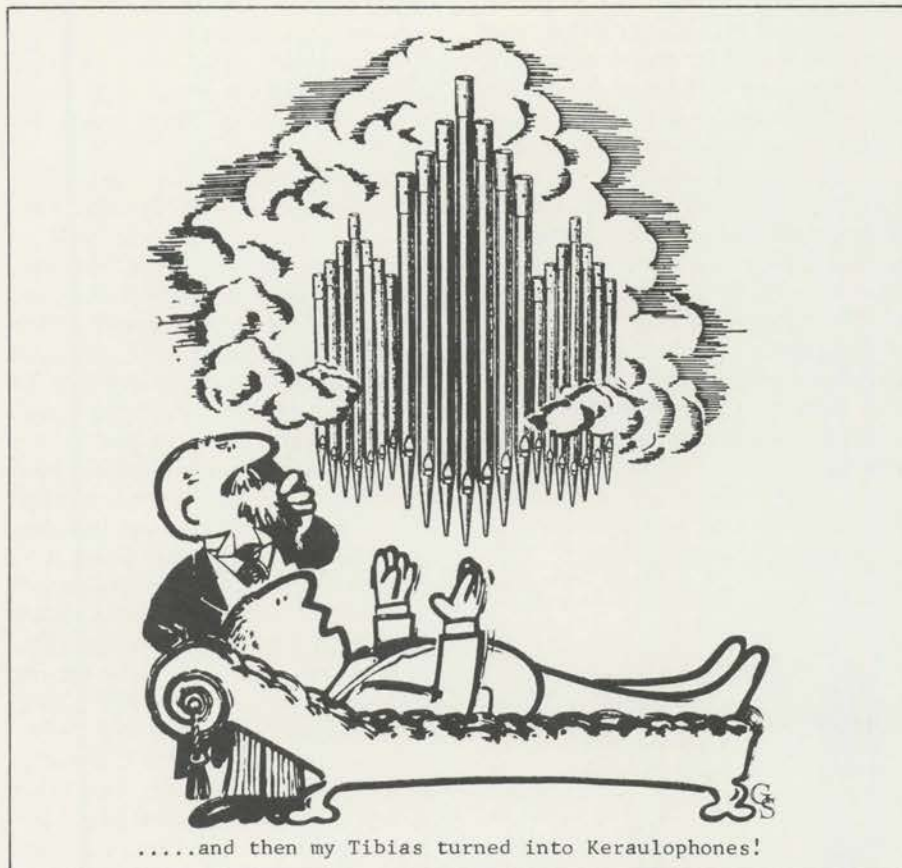
they were not of course duplicated in the chambers. Even some of the massive municipal concert organs were equipped with this wonderful invention. The Shaw LP was made from a live broadcast. It has been my pleasure to escort many of your fellow countrymen over the past several years to see the superb organ at the Odeon Leicester Square, London and they have without exception been most impressed by the Melotone unit which was specifically designed to work in conjunction and voicing with pipework. Entire electrostatic theatre organs played from normal theatre organ consoles were placed in quite a number of cinemas in Great Britain and abroad, the Rank Owned Sao Jorge cinema in Lisbon, Portugal being a famous installation. These appeared from 1935 also and were made into the 1950's and 1960's. Again Compton was the first organ builder to manufacture "Horseshoe" console electric organs 40 years ago. Other patents of John Compton included automatic piston setter devices, sustain stops and of course their second touch and cancel stop tabs. They introduced the first illuminated glass surrounds in 1932 and most organs of course feature this effect. As this is such a way of life over here I felt you should know.

Sincerely,
 Ian. G. Dalgliesh
 2, Ann Close
 Birchington-on-Sea
 Kent
 England. CT7 9BZ.

My Dear Mr. Klos,

I realize that I should write a formal and dignified letter to thank you for the great honor bestowed upon me. However, whenever I attempt it, all I come up with is "WOW — Is this *really* for ME???" I've had many surprises in my life, but this tops them all and I am humbly grateful.

I was astounded at the space given to the article Ron Rhode and Karl Warner wrote about me (April 1975 THEATRE ORGAN), as I've never thought of myself as being particularly interesting or important. It's true that I've played many pipe organs in various parts of the country, but that was way back in what is now



The North Texas Chapter has a newsletter called "The Keraulophone." Member George Stucker, who does the printing, created this cartoon for a recent issue.

known as The Good Old Days. I'm happy to announce that I'm back on the pipes, working for that fabulous organ buff, Bill Brown, and it feels just great after more than 30 years on electronics.

Please believe that I fully appreciate this wonderful thing your Society has done for me.

Most sincerely,
 Betty Gould
 Phoenix, Arizona

Dear Editor:

From the 'report' I've gotten concerning Johnny Seng's disastrous synthesiser concert during our recent convention in San Francisco, my opinion would be for ATOS to stay away from that type of entertainment.

My chapter, CATOE, uses discretion concerning modern modes of musical shows which should be mostly what our hobby is built on; 'the theatre pipe organ.' Case in point; at a recent CATOE show at Chicago's Patio Theatre, Frank Pellico presented mostly Barton pipes with just a taste of synthesiser.

This did NOT send my fellow pipe

buffs home in a grumbling attitude.

Too bad this happened to such a fine artist as Seng as we CATOE members have missed his fine playing on pipes these past few years.

Let us hope that future theatre organ shows concentrate on pipes.

Sincerely,
 Harry 'Pipes' Miller

Dear Mr. Klos:

Don't know how to say it! When my sister came into my room and handed me your wonderful, announcement (of Hall of Fame entry), she said: "I will let you read this if you promise not to cry." Which is exactly what I did before I finished reading the first paragraph. It was really timed beautifully, coming when it did. I have been out of circulation since last November when I had an accident, but it looks as though I may go home the middle of August.

When I showed the officers of Bethany Nursing Home the citation, they really were proud and had a meeting and dinner last night to tell everyone how proud they were to have such a celebrity in their midst.

Please extend my thanks to everyone for making me a member of the Theatre Organists Hall of Fame. It has made me the happiest gal in the whole world.

Mildred M. Fitzpatrick
Gobles, Michigan

Dear Lloyd:

Thank you for the exciting letter, announcing my selection as 1975 Theatre Organist of the Year and election to the Theatre Organists Hall of Fame!

This is a tremendous honor and I am carrying my head very high. Please express my appreciation and gratitude to the members of the selection committee and to the members of the ATOS Board of Directors.

I fully realize how many others are deserving of this honor. That is why my heart is brimming over with pride and humility at being the one selected. I also know how very important the support of the chapters and all the membership of ATOS has been in keeping me going as a theatre organist. We all need all the help we can get. And let me add that it has been great fun all the way.

Again, a BIG THANK YOU to all concerned.

Very sincerely,
Gaylord B. Carter

Dear George,

Now that this Wurlitzer Kid is in his last days as a resident in Nineveh-on-Hudson, he decided to go after facts, as opposed to fiction, and settle for his own records, once and for all, exactly how many ranks are found in the Radio City Music Hall Wurlitzer, in what chambers and divisions they are located and ask some of the right questions after hearing too many of the wrong ones for years. Armed with a preference for truth over speculation, opinion and low pedigree hogwash, I talked at length with the man who has known intimately well this organ and played it regularly for nearly thirty years, Raymond Bohr. Ray was most generous with his time and took care to give me detailed information. Given all the misinformation and assorted pontifications of self-appointed authorities who never do their homework, perhaps you may wish to share this with your readers:

What about those "tone shoots" which carry the chamber sounds

to the audience area? Add such to the lore of mythology; there *are* none. What about the number of pistons under each manual, fifteen, "of course?" Not so; there are *ten* under each manual and *above* the top manual (Solo) there are *ten general* pistons.

Number of ranks by chamber:

Great, 22 ranks
Orchestral, 23 ranks
Solo 1, 8 ranks
Solo 2, 5 ranks

By either the Old Math or the New, the total is *fifty-eight*. It has not been otherwise for forty-three years as to the largest of all the Wurlitzers. As ever, lots of good wishes to you and all who share love of Hope-Jones' miracle.

Billy Nalle
New York

Dear Sir(s):

For fifteen years or so now, I've been organist for several skating clubs in Eastern Mass. At present, the Wal-Lex in Waltham, a roller rink, and The Skating Club of Boston, an ice rink. I've always been interested in the theatre organ, but it was only recently that I became personally aware of the fantastic capabilities of the wonderful instrument, for entertainment and appreciation.

Now, my education regarding this beautiful instrument is somewhat limited (historywise that is) at present; but this I have heard, and question:

Although the theatre, or cinema organ, had its origin and destiny mated with the movie palaces, and much later in the pizza palaces, I am wondering, as the song goes, "Is That All There Is?." What about skating rinks (indoors that-is).

Don't they fit into the picture at all? After all, the organ is THE music of the rink! To my knowledge, there is only one rink using the theatre organ; which is the Hub Rink in Chicago; where Leon Berry is organist!

Aren't there any others, or is "The Skater's Waltz" destined to be pumped out of a speaker box for eternity!

Bob Wambolt,
Organist
Boston, Mass.

Editors Note:

There are several others, see "Pipe Piper" listing April issue. □

Frank Olsen Thrills Pittsburgh

by Fran Verri

The night of April 22 was indeed special for the Pittsburgh Area Theatre Organ Society. Special, because of one man, Frank Olsen. Frank re-awakened something that has been asleep for too many years — the art of theatre organ styling. Not since the 1930's when Pittsburgh theatres boasted such stars as *Irma Gut-therl, Johnny Mitchell and Dick Leibert, have they heard such true theatre organ technique.

This was the second concert held by PATOS in the South Hills Theatre, but was in fact a first since this was the first attempt by Program Chairman Shirley Flowers to bring in an artist not only from out of town but out of the country as well. When you've never done this kind of thing before you may be apprehensive and ask yourself such questions as, can we get people to come out, and if we do will they appreciate the artist etc.? But at 8 p.m. all the fears melted away, the program chairman became a part of the audience and Master of Ceremonies Randy Lafferty introduced our artist.

Mr. Olsen literally took complete command of the Mighty Wurlitzer, an instrument he is quite familiar

