

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 reawakened 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



with, and also Dr. Jay Smith's "Little Magic Box," an independent coupling device, which he handled with equal mastery.

His repertoire proved to be one of the most varied programs ever heard in this town, ranging from a typically British classic "A Sailors Life," with its spine tingling wind and thunder effects, to a lovely Scottish medley, to the finest classical and light classic works by Lehar, Mozart, Chopin and others.

It would be impossible to review all the selections Frank Olsen played, but some of them, I feel, deserve special mention, such as the delightful Jesse Crawford tune "What Are You Waiting For Mary," as transcribed for Mr. Olsen by Mr. Harvey Elsaesser, and the George Wright classic "Dancing Tambourine," which has become somewhat of a local favorite.

But a real kick in the memory bank was Frank's good old fashioned rendition of George M. Cohan's "I'm A Yankee Doodle Dandy," which is a real sentimental favorite in Pittsburgh as it was the theme song of one of our own theatre organists, the late Johnny Mitchell.

I would be remiss to end this review without giving credit to another artist, our stage manager Bob Vuckich. His tasteful stage lighting effects made this show as enjoyable to the eyes as Frank made it for the ears.

Frank Olsen proved to be a master of the medley as he inspired one and all to sing along to the great standards, and it was quite a thrill to hear a theatre full of people singing again, for as Frank put it "When you sing you're happy," and happy they were.

After the finale the audience wanted more and Frank Olsen obliged with another great medley which began with "Nola," and ended with the appropriate "Auld Lang Syne," which was followed by a well-earned standing ovation.

PATOS now extends a real heartfelt thank you to a truly great artist, Frank Olsen, and anxiously awaits his return in the future.

**Irma Guthoerl Kilroy, Pittsburgh's theatre organ star of the Enright and Loew's Penn theatres, is still very active in the area as a church organist and a playing member of PATOS.* □



ALABAMA

The chapter featured Lillian Truss as our guest artist in May. Mrs. Truss was the first picture organist for the Alabama Theatre, and in the years that have passed, obviously hasn't forgotten a note, or a stop, on our 4/20 Wurlitzer. To have heard her concert was a lesson in being young at heart, for her program spanned the music of more than sixty years, all the way from the gay nineties up to the seventies, including the music of Cowan, Romberg, Berlin and Gershwin.

In June we were treated to a program by John Anthony Scott, a West



John Anthony Scott played in June, providing a virtual storehouse of theatre and classical talent.



Lillian Truss, first organist of Alabama Theatre, played in May.



Bernard Franklin, Alabama house organist rides the Wurlitzer up for a beautiful program in August.