

Who knows? The time may come when our Chinese brothers will lose their sense of humor and protest our occidental caricatures of what we think is oriental music.

Ashley Miller's "Jet Stream" is still another novelty solo which, after the ultra modern intro with its thirteenth chords and assorted flatted fifths and ninths, takes off like a bat out of a solo chamber with Post Horn blasts calculated to bring out the Environmental Noise Protection League. The home organist may run into a bit of turbulence when trying to play the half note triplets against a four-four rhythmic accompaniment, but at supersonic speeds no one will notice much. The solo ends in a blaze of big chords and palm glissandos. "Jet Stream" is an admirable *tour de force*. It is not for the faint hearted amateur, but it does give the player an inside view of Ashley Miller's great talent as a performer. "Jet Stream" is worth the trip even at ground speed.

The fourth ballad in the collection "Tango By Candlelight" I found the most difficult to play. Interesting that Ms. Ann Leaf should be the one composer to separate the men from the boys! The tune is simple enough, but the counter-melodies are stacked up three deep in places. It is an organ orchestration in the true sense of the word. The pedal line is essential not only to the rhythm of the "Tango" but also to the harmony and

counterpoint. The accompaniment is solid and never quite predictable — you can't go wool-gathering for a measure without coming to grief. Chords are modern with progressions that make musical sense, and registrations are original and tricky. Will you enjoy playing "Tango By Candlelight"? Let's put it this way: careful study of this piece would probably teach you more about playing the theatre organ *well* than any other selection in the book; but if your pleasure is a "funky trip" rather than organ "push-ups," better save it for some other time.

If full organ sound at its romantic best is your bag, then you may well find Eddie Layton's "Portrait in Sound" the most satisfying solo in the collection. It comes closest to showing off the Mighty Theatre Organ in all its power and glory. The Layton "theme" follows the structure of tunes such as "Deep Purple" rather than the usual pop ballad with a bridge. Eddie stays with the key of G throughout. Variety comes with accompaniment changes and harmonic surprises. The modern chords are skillfully distributed to give the piece a rich, lush sound which builds slowly and dramatically to a spine tingling finale. Good show!

While we're on the subject of music expressly written for theatre organ, I have a *wish list* of great arrangements I'd very much like to see in print for present and future ATOS fans. Wouldn't this *Table of Contents* make one whale of a collection?

- "Dancing Tamborine" Don Baker
- "The Perfect Song" Gaylord Carter
- "Autumn in New York" Buddy Cole
- "Stardust" Lee Erwin
- "Sentimental Journey" Dennis James
- "You'll Never Walk Alone" Leroy Lewis
- "Serenade in Blue" Bill McCoy
- "All The Things You Are" baroque version by Billy Nalle
- "Londonderry Air" Dr. C.A.J. Parmentier
- "Twelfth Street Rag" Sidney Torch



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 George:

May I bring to your attention, a misspelled word that completely changed the meaning of a sentence, in my letter to your "The letters to the Editor" section, in the August-September issue of "THEATRE ORGAN."

The error was in the FIRST sentence of the THIRD paragraph concerning old Tally's Broadway Theatre. It SHOULD have read, "The space it occupied is NOW an extension of the May Co. Dept. Store, etc., NOT, not.

My best to you and your Staff.

Very Sincerely
Gaston Garneau

Dear George:

When reading the August-September issue of THEATRE ORGAN I read Geoff Paterson's letter with interest and recalled a quotation from a book which is part of my library. The quotation is indeed a pregnant one and does much to support the argument that calisthenics at the console are unnecessary. The opera world more elegantly uses the term "histrionics" which one prominent dictionary defines as "theatrical affectations."

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The following quotation is from an advanced textbook on the pedagogy of voice and was written by Van A. Christy.

"Unfortunately, stage appearance is more convincing than the sound of fine singing to many; i.e., more people still depend on sight rather than the evidence of their ears for musical judgement. The student can at least learn to act like an experienced artist, even if he does not yet sound like one to the discriminating ear."

Expressive Singing

Volume II

p. 113, col. 1, para. 4.

One does not go to the concert hall to see Horowitz or Rubenstein play the piano but rather to hear them play. Certainly some performers can command an entire audience by their mere presence but I suggest that audiences should judge a performer by what they hear rather than what they see because, after all, the instrument — ANY instrument — was conceived to make MUSIC.

Respectfully,
Tom Gnaster

Dear Sir:

I have just received the August issue of THEATRE ORGAN magazine, and see that it is full as ever of absorbing reading and pictures. Every time one comes in the mail, I'm lost for the next two days as far as normal activity is concerned!

Best regards,
Frank Pratt
Kingston, Ontario
Canada

Dear Editor:

In response to comments on the solid state trap relay in Mr. Kaemmerer's letter published in August-September issue of THEATRE ORGAN Magazine, he is correct in all points but he seems to have missed the basis of my design. First, it is simple and is a direct, wire in, replacement for a Barton or Wurlitzer electropneumatic trap relay as most organs were supplied with. Second, it does not require reversing the polarity of the feed and return to the magnets on the trap chest as would be required with an NPN driver. Third, the parts are easily obtained at any good parts store, inexpensively.

If Mr. Kaemmerer were to play

the organ from the stop tabs as he suggests, yes, there will be arcing. This is the same arcing that has been going on in organs for over 50 years! The diodes are on the circuit board to protect the transistor, not the contacts. If a direct short were to occur the diode would act as a fuse and blow, only if the stop were on.

I restate that this circuit has been in daily, commercial service, since the spring of 1973, without ANY problems.

Sincerely yours,
William Klinger, Jr.
(Owner)

Dear George:

Congratulations on the fine October-November issue of THEATRE ORGAN . . . one of the finest issues yet! Dennis and Heidi James' "England Tour Diary" was thoroughly delightful and all they said is absolutely true.

Joyce and I have recently returned from a six-week holiday in England where we were given a preview of the tour planned for ATOS members next July. This great tour shouldn't be missed by anyone who can possibly find the time to go. Our British cousins have arranged a magnificent experience for us and those who have not signed up for the trip should do so without delay. Not only will we enjoy the well-maintained "in-theatre" and home installations, but the other attractions scheduled are alone worth the price of admission. To top it off, the unequalled British hospitality must be experienced to be believed.

Anyone undecided should re-read Dennis and Heidi's account, particularly the last paragraph where they close with a fine tribute to Les and Edith Rawle who did so much to make our visit memorable also. I had always thought "southern hospitality" referred to an area south of the Mason-Dixon line but we found it to mean southern Great Britain. I guarantee all who go to England next July will agree.

Very truly yours,
Fred D. Mitchell, Jr.

Dear Mr. Thompson:

In reply to Mr. Wambolt's letter to THEATRE ORGAN, Oct.-Nov. issue may I present some comments regarding rink organs.

While there are some theatre pipe

organs which have been transplanted to roller rinks, there are at least several that I know of which were built by Wurlitzer specifically for rinks, and were therefore of different tonal design. The organ built for Madison Gardens (1931) was one of these. The unusual features of this 2/8 instrument were: most of the ranks were of extra-large scale. The Clarinet was 4" in diameter at 8'; likewise, the String and String Celeste, which were the quietest ranks in the organ. The Diapason was, or rather is, since it's still in existence, 10" in diameter at 8'. These pipes were a constant source of trouble because the languids presented a large surface to the 20" wind pressure and would bend out of shape, or, in some cases, break at the solder joint. The Flute was really a large scale Tibia Plena, open from tenor F#, and extended downward with stopped pipes through 16'. The Trumpet was like the usual Harmonic Tuba, except that it became double length at middle C instead of F#. The crowning glory was an English Horn (they didn't use the term *Post*) voiced more brilliantly than any I've ever heard. There was a sub and super octave coupler for each manual, and a coupler for each manual to pedal, unusual for a 2m console. The nomenclature on the stop keys was different too. The 16' of the Flute was called "Double Flute" instead of "Bourdon," and the 16' Trumpet "Double Trumpet." There were two reservoirs, therefore two tremulants which were wired together to just one stop key. This organ was moved to the Hub Rink and has undergone many alterations. Another instrument was built for Riverview Rink in Milwaukee. It had the same pipe specification, but a three manual console and a player roll attachment.

Rinks were not the only special customers of Wurlitzer. One was built for a very large and fancy horse riding arena. It was a three manual, and I think about 17 ranks. It had a Military Flageolet, Military Trumpet, and an extra set of oversized Bass and Snare Drums also termed "Military." This building was converted into an ice rink, and Mildred Fitzpatrick was the organist for many years. Eventually the building was acquired by CBS and made

into TV studios. The organ was sold at auction. The new owner innocently arranged for a piano mover to transfer it to his out-door rink where he planned to use it. At this point, he began to be educated on the finer points of pipe organ design, and found he had a tiger by the tail when CBS became impatient and threatened to charge \$100 for every day the organ remained on the premises. Ultimately, the late Herb Shriner got him off the hook by taking possession and moving the organ to his home in Larchmont, N.Y., where, I was told, the Solo String sounded like a Post Horn, with every thing else in proportion to that comparison.

As for fitting into the picture, when the Hub Rink came into being twenty-five years ago, many people heard a Wurlitzer for the first time; became, and remained devotees. Not only the skaters, but also hi-fi fans, because of the recordings produced on this organ. Incidentally, some of these recordings are still being produced and sold in record shops both here and abroad.

I am no longer organist at the Hub; however, I am playing an electronic in another new rink for the new owners, who built a chain of rinks around Chicago-land and changed the name to the "Axle Roller Rinks."

Sincerely,
Leon Berry

Dear Mr. Klos:

Imagine my surprise when I opened the October issue of THEATRE ORGAN to see your endeavors in print. It was beautifully organized and very good reading. My biography was like living those wonderful days again. The pictures came out very vividly and clearly. Many thanks for your interest and kind help.

I have retired as musical director of the Warren State Hospital but still make an occasional visit, especially to the new chapel. Now that I have more free time, I hope to attend some of the ATOS meetings and programs.

With best personal wishes, and hoping to meet you some time in the near future, I am

Most gratefully,
George Johnson

To the Editor:

I was the organist at the large downtown First Congregational Church in Washington, D.C., for 18 years. The church seated 1,200, and while it was built in the 1860's, it was still one of the largest churches in the District of Columbia. Calvin Coolidge attended this church while I was organist.

In 1927 some plaster fell on the head of a lady seated in the church. When the church was inspected for safety, they found the great beam supporting the roof of the church was only in the side wall a quarter of an inch. Just imagine the vibration of the powerful organ — a four manual Ernest Skinner. It is a miracle that the roof did not cave in.

While the church was being repaired, the congregation met in the Metropolitan Theatre, one block south of the church. This organ was a two-manual Wurlitzer. We worshipped at this theatre for about one year, while the church was being strengthened with steel girders.

Dr. Jason Noble Pierce was the pastor of the church, and he was interested in showing moving pictures in the church at the Sunday evening services. He had a large moving picture screen installed just in front of the organ pipes, with the organ console facing the screen. There was a large picture booth with two professional projectors in the balcony of the Sunday School Room. When not in use, the screen was raised with a counter weight into the ceiling of the church and could not be seen during the regular morning church service.

The first film shown was the silent religious version of The King of Kings, which ran for four weeks, every night of the week and twice on Sunday. Yours truly played a special score which I arranged for the picture on the four manual Skinner.

Thereafter every Sunday evening Dr. Pierce would feature a movie at the Evening Service and I was responsible for the music to fit the picture. I was aided by "cue sheets" which indicated music necessary to fit the action. Frequently we reviewed the picture before it was shown so I could get a better idea for the music. The movies on Sunday evenings went on for three years and we had large audiences to see them, free, with only their gift in the collection plate.

One Sunday evening the picture was being shown in the church, which was very dark, when suddenly there was a spurt of flame from the projection booth in the Sunday School Room balcony. Such pandemonium you have never heard! I thought the balcony of the church had fallen. I put full organ on and even though it was very powerful, you could not hear it over the din. Thank God, Thomas, the custodian, was near the switchboard and put on the lights, thus avoiding a panic.

I had played the organ at Keiths, Rialto, Metropolitan and Savoy Theatres in Washington, D.C. so was fully prepared to play the organ for the movies as well as the regular church services.

Sincerely
Paul D. Gable □

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