

an audience that will sit back and enjoy the music — and SHUT UP!" The audience agreed enthusiastically, so Reg. continued.

"I suppose you poor, misguided people think I came here to entertain you. I really came here to enjoy myself." He smiled and patted the console; the audience was welcome to share that enjoyment.

While introducing the *La Boheme* music he confided, "I love opera music but I can't stand watching an opera (with) all those singers standing around yelling at one another." Again, the audience indicated agreement. His *La Boheme* set was a thing of beauty — and no yelling vocalists.

Reg. was especially happy with the acoustical environment. Even with a large crowd, there is still plenty of liveness in the room. There have been a few changes made in the organ. The aforementioned Trompette en Chamade has been added, although there's an equally bright Trumpet in one of the chambers. Also the Pedal Division now boasts a rare octave of Tympani, which Reg. didn't use because he played no tunes which required Kettledrums this time. There were also the 6 ranks of pipes of the separate Style D Wurlitzer organ which are playable from the Moller console, but these were temporarily "out of order." That leaves the Wurlitzer Tibia which has replaced the original huge-scale Moller Tibia set of pipes.

"Frankly, I don't hear much difference" said Reg. "The Moller Tibia was made by the former Wurlitzer wooden pipe designer who, by 1937, was working for Moller. The secret is in the tremulant. Moller was never able to 'trem' a Tibia as effectively as, say, Wurlitzer."

For three days, following his concert, Reg. Foort taped many of his concert selections for Doric Records for eventual release in grooves. It was his first recording session since the sides he cut for a "Readers Digest" release (played on the now gone Kearns-Carson 3/26 Wurlitzer organ in Hollywood) in the late '60s.

In all Reg. Foort had more than 10 days in San Diego with his beloved instrument and, judging from the concert and recorded sounds, the affection between instrument and master is mutual. Both artist and instrument still "have it." □

RTOS SPONSORS

A GALA WEEKEND IN TORONTO

by Lloyd E. Klos

The past year was devoted to a number of safaris, tours, and trips above the usual round of organ activity. The Rochester Theater Organ Society was no exception, and on November 6 & 7, sponsored a weekend junket to Toronto for the purpose of seeing and hearing theatre organ installations in the Organ Grinder Restaurant and Casa Loma.

The affair was originally planned as a one-day venture, but wiser heads, fearing rush-rush atmosphere, moved to make it more leisurely. Though an excellent decision, it still required several weeks of meticulous planning.

General chairman of the event was RTOS Vice President Tom Lockwood, ably assisted by his wife, Marcia. Bus captains and their assistants included the writer, Ken and Elinor Evans, Ernest and June Weirick and Harold Hyland. George Lockwood served as official photographer.

Close to 100 had boarded the three Greyhound cruisers (appropriately named "Tibia" "Kinura" and "Vox Popper") on Saturday morning by departure time. Fortified by doughnuts and steaming cups of coffee, tea and cocoa enroute, the group was in happy spirits by the time the buses pulled up to the front doors of Shea's Buffalo Theatre. Curt Mangel, superintendent of the 3200-seat house,

gave a gracious speech of welcome, followed by theatre historian Dan Harter's synopsis of theatres owned by Mike Shea from before 1900 until his death.

The guests were led into the refurbished auditorium where they heard a few numbers on the 4/28 Wurlitzer by Bill Hatzenbuehler. The organ is slowly being restored, and it was evident that much remains to be done. Solo voices were nonexistent, and the entire brass and percussion sections were unplayable, due to a leaky roof which is undergoing complete repair. What was playable, however, indicated the nucleus of a very powerful organ, and with dogged determination of Messrs. Mangel, Hatzenbuehler and competent aides, the objective of a completely restored Wurlitzer will be achieved. One has only to view the immense amount of work accomplished in the theatre by Curt and the Friends of the Buffalo to agree.

Following the organlude, the visitors were separated into groups for guided tours of the theatre. Our hosts were most knowledgeable in answering questions and in describing all phases of the restored house.

The cold wind was fiercely blowing off Lake Erie when we reboarded the buses for Toronto. More hot coffee helped alleviate the chill in

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As the sun rises, Trip Commander Tom Lockwood awaits his bus captains and troops in the Auditorium Theatre parking lot. (G. Lockwood Photo)



Bill Haggey entertains the guests at Casa Loma. He had the audience tapping to some very sprightly tunes. (G. Lockwood Photo)



Don Thompson performs at the Organ Grinder console. Swell shades are profusely decorated, and the sound fills the room. (G. Lockwood Photo)

The enthusiasts file into the newly refurbished Shea's Buffalo Theatre. The re-bulbed marquee sparkled overhead. (G. Lockwood Photo)



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the marrow of one's bones. Arriving in Toronto, we checked in at the 33-story Sutton Place Hotel, and the group had several options: sight-seeing, shopping, or tours to Casa Loma or the Ontario Science Center.

The OSC was worth the trip itself, but due to the vastness of the complex, it is impossible to cover the myriad of exhibits, demonstrations and memorabilia in the course of a couple of hours. A minimum of a day is required. However, one can acquire much good walking exercise! Also weary feet!

Saturday evening found the travelers eating, relaxing or engaging in good fellowship in the Mayfair Room on the 33rd floor, overlooking the profusely lit Queen City.

Sunday morning was given to "sleeping in," church attendance, walking in the brisk air, or just loafing until the departure at 12:15 for the Organ Grinder Restaurant. Five long tables were reserved for us, and while the audience was eating, they were entertained by the two staff organists, Don Thompson and Colin Cousins. The 3/13 hybrid was

in fine condition, and the organists did a most creditable job. Both ran the gamut of marches, show tunes and other long-time favorites. Don did a capsule version of the "1812 Overture," which really had "the joint jumping."

The Organ Grinder Restaurant is a converted warehouse, with old artifacts, signs, pictures and other memorabilia providing color and atmosphere to the quaint interior. The organ console is on a platform at one end of the room, directly in front of the pipe chamber. The percussions and toy counter are spotted about, attached to the ceiling, so if you are not aware of this, and a bass drum booms above your head, it will cause a start, if not amusement.

The establishment is the first of several which the owners have planned. The second is in operation in Vancouver, and others are slated for St. Louis, Montreal and Ottawa.

After two hours, we left for hotel checkout, and as there was ample time while the staff at Casa Loma set up chairs for us, Tom Lockwood suggested to the cooperative bus

drivers a leisurely tour of some areas of Toronto. This offered a view of Chinatown, the boutique district known as Yorkville, the University of Toronto, many trolley cars (rare in the states) and a colorful parade which was earmarking Canadian Veterans' Day, we were told.

In time, we were at the gates of impressive Casa Loma, bathed in amber spotlights, and owned by the City of Toronto, but operated by the Kiwanis Club of West Toronto. Jim Lahay, president of the Toronto Theatre Organ Society, and his associates were on hand to make our visit a memorable one. Young organist Bill Haggey, late of Arizona, put the 4/18 Wurlitzer thru its paces for an hour. Bill hasn't been playing a long time, but he knows his way around a console, and he regaled us with some toe-tappers, from the opening "Under the Double Eagle" to "The Stars and Stripes Forever," which exhilarated the American audience.

Our weekend was drawing to a close as we left Toronto. Enroute home, we stopped at the attractive Beacon Restaurant for supper. We knew we were home when we saw a light mantle of picture-postcard material, commonly called "snow," which had encrusted on the windshields of the travelers' cars, parked overnight in the Auditorium Theatre's lot.

The first RTOS-sponsored tour was a huge success, if the many favorable comments from the participants were a barometer. Planning was the keystone for success, and Tom and Marcia Lockwood are to be heartily congratulated. The bus captains and their aides also are to be commended.

Though we were on a two-day jaunt, it gave the planners a hearty respect for those who engineer week-long ATOS conventions. One must be constantly alert to anticipate problems and knock them down before they disrupt the norm of things. Each tourist must be considered as "family" and the lines of communications kept open.

Success of the venture, however, is a two-way street. Cooperation by all participants is mandatory. People who board wrong buses, or who don't show without informing their bus captains, can wreck a schedule. Fortunately, this was held to a bare minimum in our recent venture. □

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