

certs sponsored by our local society. The artist was a well-known supper club and concert performer who I would estimate to be in his mid-thirties. However, when the evening had ended, I was wondering if instead he was a well-preserved sixty!

Why? Simply because this gentleman's repertoire virtually excluded anything written within the past twenty years. One could almost conclude that he felt it would be a desecration to the noble instrument to "defile" it with so-called "pop" music.

This is, to me, regrettable. Too many theatre organists today insist on pretending this is still the 1920's. It is one thing to revere the majestic achievements and standards of integrity bequeathed by legendary greats such as Jesse Crawford (the first name which invariably springs to mind) but am I guilty of sacrilege when I submit the view that too many of today's theatre-type performers are wallowing in the glories of the past? Surely, we must awaken to the unique versatility of this instrument, which to me is an open invitation, nay — a plea! — to interpret as only a theatre organ can — the sensitive, expressive and sometimes powerful ballads and other musical modes which have become popular in recent times. Just as Crawford was regarded as a trailblazer in his day, so should enterprising organists consider themselves today (Take heart Jim Leaffe, John Seng, and others!). Just as surely the way to win new converts, i.e. younger people, to theatre organ (and it strikes me they are badly needed) is not to forever dwell on the "good ol' days."

To reiterate the sentiments of a reader who, in a letter to the editor after last years' John Seng ATOS "mod" concert, quoted from the late Ben Hall. "We aren't in the nostalgia business any longer."

The Roxy and the Paramount are gone; Jesse Crawford is no longer with us; silent movies (Mel Brooks notwithstanding) are a curiosity of the past. Alone, the theatre pipe organ has survived, for it is bound not by time, nor by tradition, but only by the regrettable limitations imposed upon it by some of its inflexible, unimaginative masters.

Sincerely,  
J.B. Sherk  
Toronto, Canada ☐



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*Copy for April — May issue must be in by March 1*

**BEEHIVE**

While the members of the chapter enjoyed breakfast at their November meeting, they enjoyed the "live" music of Jesse Crawford. This was accomplished through the magic of an organ player attached to the Wurlitzer in the Organ Loft in Salt Lake City. Lawrence Bray, owner and builder, had been working for some time on this player, built in

the early 1900's. During the meeting that followed, members discussed at great length what could be done to recruit younger members into the group; then once recruited, what needed to be done to keep their interest. The progress of "saving the Capitol Theatre organ" became a very important issue. With the closing of the meeting, members were invited to play the Wurlitzer.

With the passing of a bond election a year ago to develop the Capitol Theatre in Salt Lake City into a performing arts center for the City and County of Salt Lake, there was some concern about the fate of the 2/10 Wurlitzer organ that was installed there in 1927. Since this is one of very few remaining original theatre installations left in the U.S., the chapter was very concerned as to the role it would play in the renovation and use of the theatre as a performing arts theatre by the Utah Symphony, Ballet West and various



County jail trustees move Capitol Theatre console out through the lobby.

(Vern Malstrom Photo)



Beehive chapter officers at Pipes & Pizza meeting. (L to R) Chairman Clarence Briggs, Sec./Treas. Maxine Russell, Vice-Chairman Vern Malstrom, Past Chairman Harry Weirauch. (Vern Malstrom Photo)

other performing groups. Close touch was kept by Chapter Chairman Harry Weirauch and the architect who was in charge of the renovation. Assurance was given that the organ was to be left in the theatre and the chapter offered to aid in the renovation of the console and chests during the work being done on the theatre. It would, of course, be necessary to remove the console and cable during the partial demolition of the stage and the subsequent rebuilding. This was accomplished in December by Harry Weirauch and members Eugene Breinholt and Wayne Russell who disconnected the main cable and fished it from the loft in the attic down through many almost inaccessible places, to the orchestra pit floor. The actual moving and storage of the console and cable was accomplished with the help of six trustee inmates of the Salt Lake County Jail. It will be stored in a room in the County Complex where the chapter can do the work of renovating the console.

On December 12, the election of officers meeting, combined with a Christmas party, was held at the Pipes and Pizza in Salt Lake City. Members were given a report on the removal and storage of the console from the Capitol Theatre. Committees were set up to work on the by-laws of the chapter and a publicity chairman was appointed. New officers of the Beehive chapter for 1977 are: Clarence Briggs, chairman; Vern Malstrom, vice chairman; and Maxine Russell, secretary/treasurer.

MAXINE RUSSELL

## CENTRAL INDIANA

We are proud to report another public concert presented on Nov. 5 and 6 at the Hedback Community Theatre. John Muri performed on the 2/10 Page theatre pipe organ to a near sell-out crowd.

John is one of the few honest-to-goodness oldtime theatre organists who never quit performing even after the golden era of theatre organ concerts began to tarnish with the advent of "the talkies." For more than fifty years now, he has been thrilling audiences nationwide with his outstanding talents.

In addition to his heavy concert schedule, he has found time to record several theatre organ discs, his latest being a superb capturing of the magnificent sounds of the huge Detroit Fox Wurlitzer. Just released, this record is being acclaimed in theatre organ circles as "one of the greatest ones." His record album was on sale during intermission, and was sold out by Saturday night.

The audience enjoyed the charm and sharp wit as he presented to our community his warm and wonderful musical abilities in "A Night of Comedy."

The chapter wishes to thank Phil and Betty Hedback for allowing us to present this concert and also extend our gratitude to Footlight Musicals for their support.

Our November meeting was held at Bill Lay's Music Store with an attendance of 75 members.

The slate of new officers for the coming year was announced by the nominating committee chairman,

Ruth Kirkpatrick.

Gene Gladson announced the availability of his new book on Indianapolis theatres at a price of \$6.95. Anyone wishing to obtain a copy please contact him at P.O. Box 20344, Indpls., In. 46220.

This meeting featured two of our own members, Eric Van Cleave and Mary Drake. Eric is one of our younger members, 14 years old, and performed on the 651 Conn theatre organ.

Bill Lay's Music Store now has an extra added attraction of completely refurbishing pianos — inside and out. The finished product is the work of beautiful craftsmanship.

Our gratitude is extended to Mr. and Mrs. Bill Lay for affording us the opportunity to hear and play the 651 Conn.

There was abundant time for open console and delicious refreshments were served.

The December meeting was held at Northwest Plaza office building thanks to Mr. Charlie Owens, one of our members. This being our Christmas party, it was very well attended.

It was announced that Manual High School will have an organ concert on Jan. 22, 1977 presented by Lee Erwin. A silent film, *The General*, with Buster Keaton, will be shown.

The slate of new officers was announced and we received a few words of wisdom from our new chairman, Carroll Copeland.

Our program was presented by Chuck Owens who is currently the organist at Market Square Arena. Chuck performed at the Lowery Organ, furnished through the courtesy of Wilking Music Company, and did a beautiful job.

Open console followed and a beautiful array of Christmas goodies, were served.

Ten of our members once again furnished organ music for the Children's Zoo from December 10 to December 19. It certainly was a beautiful sight with brilliantly lit trees.

This has become an annual event for CIC-ATOS and we want to thank all who played at the zoo, especially during this all too busy time of year. The organ was furnished through the courtesy of Wilking Music Company.

MARY E. DRAKE

## CENTRAL OHIO

COTOS plans are to start 1977 with our first meeting at Worthington High School, home of our RKO Palace Wurlitzer. Work and spending for the installation proceed rapidly. Worthy of mention is the financial assistance we are receiving from our members. The contributions from our younger members are most heartwarming as we recognize their funds are not abundant and are earned from long hours of work.

Our October meeting was hosted by Rosemary and Bob Hamilton of Zanesville. As usual, the organ was put in first class condition for our meeting, thanks to Bob and his son-in-law, Don Reighard of Dayton. For our playing members, Bob gave an introduction to his Robert Morton followed by an opening concert by Don Reighard — followed by an enthusiastic response from members.

November provided our first visit to "Cellar Cinema," a mini-theatre in the home of Frank and Thelma Babbitt. The theatre is complete with well-equipped projection booth and the original theatre seats that Frank purchased from the Ohio Theatre. The program opened with a sound film welcome from Frank, followed by a sound film interview by Thelma interviewing Gaylord Carter at his home (with view) in California. In addition to a few short subject films, the highlight of this program was Frank's sound film of our 1975 Regional Convention at the Ohio Theatre complete with interviews of some of our guest artists. This meeting was a fine change of pace from our usual format and thoroughly enjoyed by the membership.

Our annual Christmas party at the Ohio Theatre again gave our members the fabulous opportunity to play and hear the Ohio Morton through the generosity of Tom Hamilton and Carlos Parker. Refreshments for the party were arranged by another generous person, Ruth Shaw, who volunteered to be refreshment chairman for 1977, a vital part of all ATOS meetings. The opening concert was performed by Lois Hays, a local professional organist. Lois was modestly equally thrilled to have been selected as we were to hear her well prepared concert.

So ends 1976 with 1977 antici-

pated as the year COTOS joins the ranks of chapters who have realized the dream "to preserve the tradition of the Theatre Organ and to further the understanding of the instrument and its music."

IRENE BLEGEN

## CONN VALLEY

Don Baker has been to Thomaston! It happened on November 19 and 20 when Don played two concerts on the Opera House 3-manual Marr & Colton pipe organ. The concerts provided vivid evidence of why he was featured organist for so many years in New York City's premier movie palaces. You have to see and hear it to believe it; recordings alone cannot convey the ease and versatility with which this artist creates the enchanting musical arrangements we heard.

This writer heard the November 20 concert which was almost entirely different from the previous evening's program. Don is to be complimented for providing us in advance with a printed program, something too few of our current organists do. The evening included the music of motion pictures, musical comedy and operetta, mostly from the latter decades of movie palace full feature operation, which included stage attractions with pit orchestra and featured organist at the console.

After the scheduled program, Don played three encores. The choice of selections allowed Don to play lovely soft passages using delightful combinations of stops and then to come full organ with the likes of "Seventy-Six Trombones." The evening was a fitting finale to our 1976 concerts. We could not have done better.

Our concert committee deserves high marks indeed for their work this past year.

W. F. POWERS

## EASTERN MASS.

Don Baker, that magic name among the relatively few still active from the theatre organ era, delighted hundreds of members and guests at our two fall public concerts. These were held Saturday evening, November 13 at Babson College, Wellesley and Sunday afternoon at Stoneham Town Hall. Both Wurlitzers were "up" for his technical demands,

which were numerous, as he exploited each instrument.

F. Craig Johnson, program chairman, made the two introductions before Don launched into his two programs, both different, yet similar in his thoroughly musicianly approach. Don's Latin numbers have always been superb and his Babson opener "Cumana" was no exception. After a demonstration of the various individual voices of the organ, including the traps and percussions, and how they can be combined for the "big sound," he melded into the theme from *Exodus*. The program was over all too soon, but a standing ovation brought us a sensitively played Kreisler favorite, "The Old Refrain," as an encore.

The Stoneham concert had sunshine pouring in on the console and our artist announced his thankfulness for it that rather cold afternoon. Don again explained and demonstrated the resources of this instrument, adding one stop at a time leading up to an impressive full organ.

One of the most interesting aspects of this concert was Don's variations on "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" showing how adaptable it is to a waltz, tango, minuet and a march tempo. He learned this tune at two years of age on piano.

The program ended with another standing ovation and the resulting beautiful and untremed "All Through the Night" and a lively version of "Cheek to Cheek." Don Baker satisfied all with his variety of numbers, frequent tonal changes and meticulous execution — 73 years young and still as wonderful as in his N.Y. Paramount days!

Our chapter was invited by member Royal Schwieger for an open console field trip at the Stoneham 2/14 Wurlitzer on Friday evening, November 19. For the few who took advantage, it was an unusual opportunity to play and listen to this fine organ, just after its concert tune-up in an empty auditorium.

November 27, Saturday evening at Babson, about 100 members and guests assembled for our regular meeting. Playing members Bob Legon and Tim Bjareby entertained at our 3/13 Wurlitzer with a variety of selections prior to chairman Goggin and other officials' arrival. Once under way, both Secretary Rosalie Fucci's report and that of

Treasurer Gerry Parson's were read together with Concert Chairman Craig Johnson's comments on Don Baker's satisfactory twin appearances. Our top concert ticket salesman, Patsey Fucci, was called upon to give his "formula" for successful selling. Some ingredients are: belief in what you are selling; stress music which is universally accepted as opposed to selling an organ concert as such; be supplied with adequate change (even for a \$100 bill, which he was once presented!); suggestion of purchase even if unable to attend and give tickets to friends, Golden Agers or young people; division of prospects into two lists, spring and fall, and emphasis on one or the other (except those who attend both yearly). Pat's salesmanship certainly works, at least for him, as he turned in the proceeds for 248 tickets, one of his lighter returns!

It was announced that Hector Olivera had been engaged for a third time with EMCATOS next spring with concerts on May 21 and 22 at our Babson/Stoneham venues for our Club's 20th anniversary. With business adjourned, Bob Wambolt led off open console time and after many had their interesting mini-concerts, involving a wide variety of ages, talents and musical backgrounds, the final artist was chairman Goggin, playing in fine form.

Our December meeting at Babson was advanced to December 18 and a happy mood prevailed. Prior to the business portion, new former West Coast member, Jonathan Klee-field, MD., led off at the console followed by our "old pro" Al Winslow, and Bob Legon completing this group with his always listenable interpretations.

Chairman Goggin got the business started with the usual report readings and reminded us that the organ bonds should begin to be paid off in 1977. Our new slate of officers for next year were introduced to the membership. A totally surprised Arthur Goggin was then presented by incoming Chairman "Pete" Hoagland with a fine plaque on which was mounted a gavel and appropriately inscribed brass plate. This was a token from the club in appreciation for his two year's chairmanship and unstinting time and work on our organ installation. After giving thanks,

he announced that Bob Legon was to be our artist for the January 22 meeting. Bob then invited the membership to four concerts at the Lakeview Congregational Church, Waltham, where he and a few others are getting the 3/9 Kilgen theatre organ (ex-Embassy Theatre, Waltham) restored and installed. Business was then over and many availed themselves of the opportunity to play our organ. It was a joyful evening with much warmth inside as opposed to the clear, cold air and snowy ground outside — most appropriate for the season and finale for 1976.

STANLEY C. GARNISS

## LAND O'LAKES

Our bus trip to Chicago, in November, was a tremendous undertaking for our Terry Kleven (who used to live there). Tremendous also best describes our rating of the experience. About 54 Land O'Lakers participated. One of the best features of these bus trips is the opportunity to visit with old and new friends.

Our first event Friday evening was a superb prime rib dinner at the Matterhorn Restaurant, followed by a unique presentation by Frank Pellico and his trio. Frank plays a Hammond X-66, with several long cabinets around the large room, giving it a massive sound.

Early Saturday morning we visited the Pickwick Theatre, which has an interesting 3/11 Wurlitzer with a very nice big-theatre sound. We thank Tom Cotner for so ably showing us what the organ could do. Fred Kruse and his crew are to be commended for their excellent restoration and maintenance of the organ. Richard Sklenar, chairman of CATOE, was there to greet us, and our thanks go to him and the CATOE directors for arranging this event.

Our next visit was to a magnificent theatre, the Rialto, in nearby Joliet. It is almost beyond belief that a theatre of this size, with a gigantic, gorgeous round lobby, would have been built in a town with a present population of 80,000. It is even more unusual that it is still standing, and is even being improved. The 4/21 console is the prettiest we've seen, and the sound gets out very well. Dave Krall of JATOE deserves our sincere thanks for not only arranging

the visit and the enjoyable presentation on the organ by Rob Calcaterra, but he and his co-workers were even thoughtful enough to provide life-saving coffee and doughnuts when we *really* needed them!

Next on the tour was the superb 3/22 "All-American" organ in the Hinsdale Theatre, Hinsdale, Ill. (a suburb of Chicago). The name probably means the star performers from each team (make of organ) were used in this organ. This organ does everything magnificently; it not only speaks out with authority, somewhat like the Mundelein organ (featured in two ATOS conventions), but it has a full sound, plus gorgeous Tibias, and a 32 ft. Bombarde for good measure. Another rare and unexpected treat was hearing Dave Junchen in what might be called his concert debut. It seems to be very rare that an organ builder can play for the enjoyment of others. Dave goes far beyond that, and many of us feel that he ranks with the top few artists on the concert scene. We can only hope that Dave Junchen concerts will become a regular thing.

Around midnight, Kay McAbee graciously complied with our request and played a fine program on the Hinsdale organ, even though he was very tired from a long, hard day. It had been much too long since we had heard Kay, and his many devoted fans in Land O'Lakes greatly enjoyed hearing him again, especially on this wonderful organ. Congratulations to Jim Glass, builder of the organ, for such a fine instrument; you will be hearing a lot about this installation.

Saturday evening we were treated to a bus tour of downtown Chicago, and LSD (Lake Shore Drive), guided and narrated by Terry Kleven, whom we thank for such a fine job of arranging this whole weekend, overcoming many obstacles. Our destination was the famous Aragon Ballroom on Chicago's north side, where many famous bands held (swing-and-) sway during the big band era. We could see evidence of rock and roll now, along with the good news that a Mexican-American group is in charge and is preserving and improving this important place under somewhat adverse conditions. This group is a natural for the Aragon, whose interior resembles a Spanish courtyard. Our host, Stan Zimmer-



Kay McAbee (shown at the Patio Theatre Barton) whose concert at Hinsdale greatly pleased his many LO'L fans. (Claude Newman Photo)



Dave Junchen at the console of the superb 3/22 "All-American" organ in the Hinsdale Theatre. His concert wowed the Land O'Lakers. (Claude Newman Photo)

man, is manager and organist, and we appreciated his witty history of the place, and his delightful demonstration of the organ.

Sunday morning, bright (surely you jest!) and early we headed for the Hub (now named Axle) Roller Rink. It was a real change of pace in sounds, although it was surprising how theatrical the organ could sound. Of course the organ is plenty loud, at 20 to 25 inches of wind. Fred Arnish, a teacher, engineer, organist (and maybe more) has done miraculous things in rebuilding the organ, and can explain them very interestingly. We enjoyed this event very much. Once more, we are indebted to very thoughtful hosts for providing that staff-of-life, coffee and doughnuts.

Our last visit was to Downer's Grove High School Auditorium, which houses CATOE's chapter organ, a very nice 3/10 Wurlitzer in a live acoustical setting. Our soloist was again Tom Cotner, with a completely different program which sounded just fine on this organ. Our

thanks to Tom, and to Doug Christensen and Bill Barry for their valuable contributions to making this event a success.

Paul Lagergren played a fine October concert on Byron Carlson's 5/21 Wurlitzer. A great talent, such as Paul's, when applied to an excellent pipe organ, namely Byron's, just has to result in a delightful afternoon of music. Highlights were Paul's *South Pacific* medley, and "Confessions of Love" by a young European winner of the Yamaha Organ Contest. The bonus of Byron's fine playing, and the lovely organ-piano duets with his wife Lillian, made it a superb musical experience. We are most grateful to all three.

JOHN ZETTERSTROM

### LAND OF LINCOLN

Everything was progressing smoothly for our first public Christmas concert. Rex Koury had sent some special arrangements for choir and organ and he arrived in plenty of time to practice with the sixty-

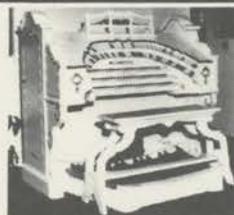
voice choir of the Winnebago High School. Dixie Leden, director, and Rex had gone over the program with the group and Rex was winding up his own rehearsal.

It was three hours till show time and then it happened. Our faithful 49-year-old 4/17 Barton decided it had worked hard enough and refused to go on. Hurriedly Orrill Dunn and Rex Koury rushed to the electronic organ dealer in the same block with the theatre, only to find the door was already locked. A few hard raps on the door and one of the salesmen appeared and let them in. The owner had gone home for the day, but they reached him by phone and he told his salesman to show them the location of their dollies, Leslie speakers, etc., to give them the key to the front door and they could take whatever organ and equipment they needed if the pipe organ could not be used.

Back at the theatre a crew consisting of Gene Wolfe, Duane Austin, Bob Coe and Bob Weirick, were already up in the lofts at work trying to discover why our Barton refused



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Rex Koury at the Coronado Theatre Barton organ.

## LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles chapter has enjoyed a spell of being "girl happy" recently, with concerts by two charm-ers. The first was played on the chapter's 3/16 San Gabriel Auditorium Wurlitzer by Maria Kumagai on October 29. She offered a varied program, including a few cuts from the album she is currently preparing. There has been a big improvement in Maria's command of the English language during her emceeing. It will be recalled that she came to the USA only six years ago and felt that learning to play the organ took precedence over mastering English. This was her third concert for the chapter.



Maria Kumagai. Music came before language.

to play. One of our regular crew members, Bob Tuttle, had completely restored the theatre's Schumann Grand in time for the show was busily engaged in last minute tuning or he would have been up in the lofts along with the others.

The chests were leaking air so badly it was down to less than 1/2 its normal pressure. By tightening every screw on all the chests, and completely reworking one of them they managed to get the pressure back to near normal within a half hour of show time.

The audience was unaware of the frenzied efforts and the show went on — on time — and one of our best programs went off without further incident. After an encore, Rex Koury personally thanked the crew that performed the miracle. (We found out later an employee of the theatre had inadvertently drained the air conditioner which was used to supply humidity to the theatre in the winter and the chests had dried out allowing the air to escape. All has now been restored to normalcy.)

It was a happy group that assembled on the stage for the "Afterglow" as members and friends of LOLTOS enjoyed the refreshments and had a chance to meet Rex Koury. It was a cold night and the Wassail prepared by Vera Walling was especially welcome. Her committee, consisting of Jerry Adams and Mark Fuhrer, had charge of the refreshments and decorations. Their decorated Christmas tree and life-size Santa Claus added to the festive occasion.

Our Barton came through again, thanks to the dedicated crew — but I secretly think "our old girl" — the Barton — discovered we might have used a "plug-in" and decided to give her all.

Our sincere thanks must go to Rex Koury who would have performed the show on a "plug-in" or a leaky Barton, or even a piano. In the true tradition of the theatre he assured us that the show would go on. It was a wonderful show by a truly great performer.

ORRILL DUNN



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Carol Jones. Besides looking pretty, she plays pretty. (Bob Hill photo)

The other feminine gender concert was played on Nov. 21 by Carol Jones, a lovely from nearby Covina who now plays an almost continuous string of concerts for the Conn Organ Co. across the land and sometimes overseas to England and France. Carol also played the San Gabriel Wurlitzer as that's the only auditorium organ we have available until we can complete the stopkey re-arrangement on the Wiltern theatre Kimball, a project now over one year in the works. Or comes the time when we can get the Hollywood Warner theatre 4-deck Marr and Colton installed in the Pasadena Municipal Auditorium. That takes lots of volunteers — and time.

Carol presented a well-received concert of pops and standards, and her arrangement of "Melancholy Baby" left retiring chapter chairman Bob Hill an incoherent hulk. He loved every minute of Carol's music — or just looking at her.

Our January 16 concert will star Bill Thomson at San Gabriel, and it's Ramona Gerhard on Feb. 20.

Next time we meet, there'll be a whole new roster of chapter officers — perhaps including a literate chapter notes writer.

EFFIE KLOTZ

## MIAMI VALLEY (OHIO)

In mid-November, those of us in Southwestern Ohio celebrated "Lee Erwin Week." Lee started the week in the Bob Ralston audience at the Ohio Theatre in Columbus, moved on to two performances at Stan Todd's Shady Nook restaurant, appeared on Bob Braun's syndicated TV talk show, joined the private party of Dennis Werkmeister to give an inspired Thursday evening to friends and guests at the 2/17 Wurlitzer, and then Friday night brought the silent screen alive in Springfield, Ohio. This event, celebrating the start of the 50th anniversary year of the State Theatre, included the mayor giving recognition to Mike Chackeres (owner of the theatre chain) for his contribution to the community, and then Lee Erwin splendidly re-created the mood of opening night with concert, sing-along, and accompaniment of a Buster Keaton epic. The mighty 3/7 Wurlitzer stood up and pranced under Lee's direction. Cheers to Bob Cowley and Dave Marshall, et. al. for their promotional efforts.

December 11, we were again the guests of Dennis Werkmeister, for the annual Christmas celebration. We had a fine mixture of fellowship, munching, sipping, playing and listening, and once again proved that organ fans can have a fine time without an elaborate structured program.

JOHN M. GOGLE

## MOTOR CITY

The sights and sounds of the ATOS Organ Safari to England, Wales and France were presented by Dave Lau in a synchronized slide and tape show for our Second Sunday event at the Michigan Theatre



Herb Head at the now 2/6 Wurlitzer in the Punch and Judy. (Majone Allen Photo)

in Ann Arbor in November.

The December program in Ann Arbor was a Christmas Open House, "Home for the Holiday," at the Michigan Theatre. Regular intermission organists Henry Aldridge, Bud Bates and Rupert Otto were joined at the console of the Barton by Jackie Aldridge, Mitzi Mullinex, Scott Smith and Gregg Yassick in a program of popular Christmas music.

Scott Smith was the artist for our Fourth Sunday program in November at the Royal Oak Theatre.

Our Annual General Membership Meeting was held in November at the Redford Theatre. Among the topics of discussion was a proposal from the owners of the Redford that we purchase the theatre which we have been managing for the past two years. The membership voted to allow the board to continue negotiations. Following the business meeting, a pot-luck supper, coordinated by Virginia Duerr and Marge Muethel, was served in the Redford lobby. After dinner the sound of the 3/10 Barton resounded throughout the auditorium as several members each took their turn at open console.

Hector Olivera returned to an en-



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Larry Gleason, accompanist; Betty Mason, director; and Marge Harris, choral member who presented Betty with a bouquet from the entire chorus. (Majorie Allen Photo)

thusiastic audience at the Michigan Theatre on November 18 in Ann Arbor. The film was *The Blacksmith*, starring Buster Keaton. As expected, Hector's program at the Barton pipe organ enthralled the audience. The identical program was repeated the following night to a capacity house at the Redford Theatre in Detroit.

Christmas at the Punch & Judy Theatre in Grosse Pointe seems to have become a tradition with our chapter. This year being no exception, members gathered at the Punch on Saturday morning, December 11, to hear Herb Head at "Little Sister" (so dubbed by the late Ben Hall); except that now it is a 2/6 Wurlitzer, thanks to the addition of a new Diapason rank, installed by Chuck Heffer, Herb Head and Mert Harris. The newly refurbished Motor City choral group also made its debut, directed by Betty Mason, with Larry Gleason accompanying at the organ. Refreshments and decorations were the contribution of Betty Heffer and her many fine volunteer assistants.

Officers for 1977 are: Ron Werner, chairman; Larry Gleason, vice chairman; Enid Martin, secretary and Holly Prim, treasurer.

DON LOCKWOOD

### NIAGARA FRONTIER

November 23 found Hector Olivera back for his second appearance at the Riviera. In spite of an early winter storm, a large crowd began arriving early, each to select their favorite seat, not only for their listening pleasure, but also to feast their eyes on his magnificent foot work.

On Wednesday, December 29, 1926, the day before the Riviera Theatre opened for the first time, Rudolph Wurlitzer Mfg. Co. had a full page ad in the Tonawanda paper. Part of the copy read as follows. "The Wurlitzer Organ, like all Wurlitzer musical instruments, is the best that skill and money can produce. Come to the new Riviera Theatre. Hear the effects of a full theatre orchestra produced by two hands on

this great keyboard. You, too, will be thrilled."

Well, Frank Olsen sure plays it like the Wurlitzer Company intended it should be played and we are thrilled. It has become a tradition that Frank play our December Christmas concert. It is a shame he has confined his recital and concert playing to a radius of 300 miles from Buffalo. I feel that the rest of ATOS is being cheated by not having had an opportunity to hear this outstanding artist.

Frank is the only one that has a recording made on the original 11-rank Riviera organ and the expanded 16 ranks. He also made several recordings in England before coming to Canada eight years ago.

In January, we are proud to give another young professional organist an opportunity to play his first paid public theatre organ concert, Colin Cousins. For many months now, he has been second organist at the Organ Grinder in Toronto, sharing the bench with Don Thompson.

The one and only Dick Smith, without question the all time crowd puller, will be back at the Riviera on February 16.

In the last issue of THEATRE ORGAN I said, I would tell who my favorite organist is. I intended this to cover only theatre concert organists. I have eliminated classical organ recitals and a couple of theatre organists who spent too much time playing heavy classics in concerts. A couple of other organists were also eliminated for playing full organ for the entire concert, with never a change of the tabs, and chamber shutters wide open. After these eliminations it was very easy to pick my favorite organist, it is the one I am listening to at the moment . . .

STEVE CROWLEY

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Russ Chilson at Benson High School. (Claude V. Neuffer Photo)



Jonas Nordwall and daughter Jenny. (Claude V. Neuffer Photo)

## OREGON

For our November meeting, we were the guests of Mr. & Mrs. Milt Keiffer near Vancouver, Washington. Thanks to a very accurate and detailed map, and directions provided by Chairman Gerry Gregorius, we found their beautiful home in the pines.

The trip was well worthwhile because we heard Jonas Nordwall play a very fine and generous program. Jonas is on the staff at the Organ Grinder Restaurant and is organist and choir director at the First Methodist Church. He is nationally known through his recordings, including one made in Australia. It is hard to believe how much this competent artist can do with two manuals and nine ranks!

This Wurlitzer organ was originally installed with seven ranks in the Roxy Theatre in Irvington, N.J., and later transferred to the Catholic

Church in Union City, N.J. It was located there by Dennis Hedberg and purchased by Milt Keiffer who moved it to its present location. An Oboe and a Clarinet have been added, making it an ideal size for a home. Couplers have also been added and the mutation pitches are now from the Tibia rank. Thanks again to Jonas Nordwall and the Keiffers for a wonderful afternoon.

Our annual Christmas pot luck was held at the Benson High cafeteria on Sunday, December 12, with lots of good food and fine company. These dinners provide an opportunity to visit and make new friends and that is not easy to do at a regular concert.

Following the dinner we went upstairs to the auditorium where the new officers for 1977 were named. Bill Peterson is to be chairman.

Our artist for the day was the talented young Russ Chilson. Russ

was pipe organist at the Imperial Rink and is now on the staff at the Organ Grinder. His program included Christmas songs and an excellent variety of new and older popular music. Of particular interest was his skillful use of answering voices between the two chambers of the big Kimball.

BUD ABEL

## POTOMAC VALLEY

Our October chapter meeting was held on a dreary, rainy afternoon. But that was on the outside! The warmth and friendliness of the Wagner's home in Glen Arm, Md., made up for the bad weather. We let the outside elements take their course and sat back and enjoyed the afternoon listening to the great sound of their 2/8 Wurlitzer with the expert playing of John Terwilliger at the console. About 120 chapter members enjoyed listening to John playing

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a number of sets of favorite and familiar music. There was something for everyone in his selections. An added attraction was the introduction of John's wife, Wanda, singing "Wanting You."

The 1977 officers elected at the October meeting are: Al Baldino, chairman; Bud Pedley, vice chairman; Dick Haight, secretary; Marion Long, treasurer.

As usual, Jimmy Boyce performed on his own 4/34 Wurlitzer as only Jimmy can. Keeping in mind that his Wurlitzer is unenclosed, he succeeds in manipulating the stops on the console to accomplish the necessary color and variety needed in theatre organ styling. The Alexandria Roller Rink Wurlitzer was in tip-top shape for our meeting thanks to Jimmy and his work crew. About 170 chapter members and their guests enjoyed the concert of standards and Broadway tunes. Jimmy also played his own composition, "On Broadway."

On December 11, Santa Claus visited the Virginia Theatre in Alexandria to see if the members of the chapter were good boys and girls. Santa (Bill Alexander) passed out gifts in the form of door prizes to the lucky winners and promised everyone that he would be good to them this Christmas. About 120 members and their guests attended our first in-theatre Christmas party. The musical program was done by most of the 1976 monthly meeting performers. Frank Lybolt came up from Norfolk to be with us and began the evening's entertainment. Edith Evelyn, Susan Pedley and Mike Brit followed at the Barton console. A sing-along of traditional Christmas music, with slides provided by the writer, was accompanied by Frank Lybolt. John Terwilliger and his wife Wanda completed the first half of the program. The buffet

dinner was just great thanks to Larry Goodwin and his dinner committee. The second half of the entertainment was begun by our very own Potomac Valley Chapter Chorale. They sang homemade lyrics about the Kimball restoration project to old familiar tunes accompanied by John Terwilliger. Steve Anderson, a junior at Jefferson High School, gave us a demonstration in magic to the delight of the audience. Doug Bailey was next at the console of the Barton. Doug told us he, by chance, performed on a theatre organ recently in Anchorage, Alaska at a Pizza Parlor. Ron Pedley played some Christmas selections followed by one of our chapter masters on the console, Earl Sharits. Everyone had a grand time at our Christmas Party and all will want to do it again in December of 1977!

AL BALDINO

### PUGET SOUND

The last quarter of the year was enhanced for chapter members by the ever-popular home tour, then a concert-silent movie program featuring Gaylord Carter, closely followed by the annual Christmas party.

A home tour October 17 combined the best of the new and the nostalgic. After lunch at the Holiday Inn east of Lake Washington, we proceeded further east to Issaquah (Iss-uh-cwaw) and the home of Lloyd and Pearl Nelson and a new 3M Custom 340 model Rodgers organ with full theatre and liturgical sound. Designed by Jonas Nordwall and Dennis Hedburg, it features authentic Chimes, Glockenspiel, Piano, and an especially beautiful Tibia. A short concert by Dick Schrum was followed by open console.

From there we proceeded south to Kent and the home of Jack and



Dick Schrum, Thelma Barclay and friend, Gaylord Carter.

Marilou Becvar and the 2/9 Wurlitzer which came from the Seattle Blue Mouse Theatre. The basement installation has 3 chambers, the third housing the large-scale percussions, except for the Chrysoglott, which is mounted outside. Program Chairman Thelma Barclay presented a short concert, followed by open console.

The November 28 meeting was to have featured Helen Dell, but a stint in the hospital prevented her coming. Gaylord Carter roared to the rescue, bringing four silent comedies which he accompanied in his usual zesty style. The locale was Big Bob's Pipe Dream in the old Burien Theatre which is ideally situated with its screen, projection booth and 4/42 Wurlitzer. The program was further enhanced by a plentitude of Italian pastas and suitable beverages.

The Christmas party followed on December 5. Annabel Browning and Nell Hill organized the food and punch at Haller Lake Clubhouse, and Dick Schrum's informal combo played for listening and dancing.

GENNY WHITTING

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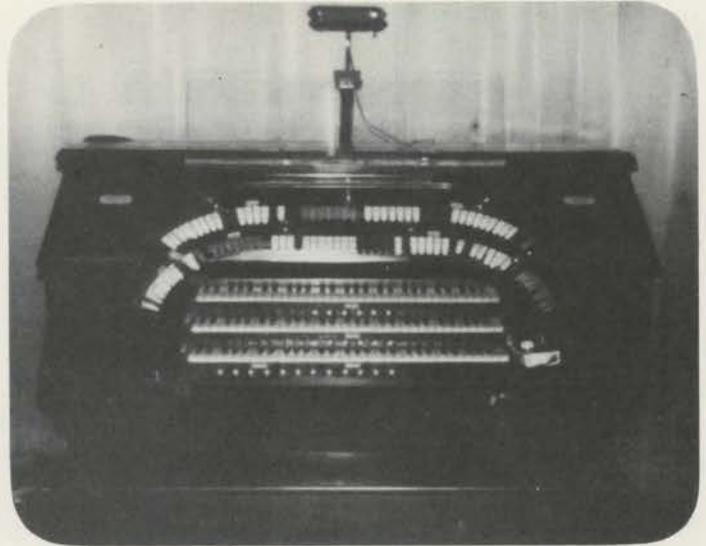
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Aladdin Theatre work crew. (L to R) Jack Walden, Frank Gandy, Don Wick, Ron Graham, Bill Johnston and Ron Patterson.



Aladdin Theatre — Denver, Colo. The 3/14 Wicks is being played and renovated at the same time.



Marquee advertises ATOS Concert/Overture at the Aladdin Theatre, Denver, Colo.

### ROCKY MOUNTAIN

In 1973, work started on the restoration of the 3/14 Wicks in the Aladdin Theatre in Denver, Colo. It is the only theatre left in Denver that has a playable organ still in better than fair condition. Many things had to be replaced, repaired, moved and the worst part — a church held services in the theatre for a period of time and proceeded to sanctify the organ. Wires were cut, tremis disconnected, etc., etc. It took a great deal of time to undo what was done so that more than flutes, strings and diapasons were able to speak.

The Alladin Theatre celebrated its fiftieth anniversary on October 28. Ms. JoAnn Hallett, manager of the theatre, arranged for several special events, some of which included organ interludes played by members of the chapter.

The Denver Newspapers and *Box Office Magazine* took notice of the Aladdin's anniversary with considerable space devoted to the history of



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the theatre. *Box Office* credits Viola Lee as the organist who opened the theatre fifty years ago.

## SAN DIEGO

On October 29, Gaylord Carter christened the 4/20 Robert Morton at the new Solana Beach "Theatre-Restaurant" (Organ Power #3) with a performance of *The Phantom of the Opera*. What a thrill to watch this beauty come out of the pit, have the curtains part to reveal the pipes and listen to those luscious sweet tones. Jack Jenkins from Illinois is the talented young organist who is pleasing the public at this beautiful console which was originally in the Midland Theatre in Kansas City. Congratulations, Organ Power, on another fantastic installation.

Our November concert featured "Tiny" James at the 5/28 Moller at Organ Power #2. His clean and precise theatre styling completely captivated a most receptive audience. His love of the organ and relaxed style of playing makes for one of



Sandy Fleet accepts Honorary Membership plaque from Vern Bickel.

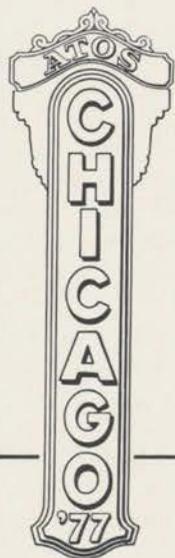
(Ed Minder Photo)

those especially pleasurable evenings. It's no wonder that ATOS has shown such growth through the years when we have musicians of this calibre as charter members. Do keep us on your list for a future appearance, "Tiny."

Besides these activities, we were privileged to hear Reginald Foort in concert on the Foort-Moller organ, November 8. How fortunate for the public to again hear this great man perform at his beloved Moller.

Our business meeting in December at the new Solana Beach Theatre was a very special event. Chairman Vern Bickel gave a complete annual report of our 1976 accomplishments. To name a few: we sponsored 11 concerts (distributing 44,000 flyers to promote them); we were approved by Federal, State and the U.S. Postal Service as a tax-exempt nonprofit organization; and we initiated an educational-cultural program for the students of San Diego County by mailing 500 letters to educators in-

viting them to bring their students for "A Trip Through The Organ." Our purpose is to familiarize students with the music, sound effects, installation and history of the theatre pipe organ, and to create an awareness and appreciation of this instrument. Organ Power is most graciously cooperating in this venture. We now have 146 members. As the founder of our chapter and in recognition of his invaluable assistance to the chapter, Sandy Fleet was made an Honorary Life Member. Election of officers followed and our new board members are: Lois Segur, chairman; Vern Bickel, vice chairman; Marge Greer, secretary; Ruby Sinclair, treasurer. As these new officers were installed, Vern presented them with "Pipes" (real ones) that he had restored and polished so beautifully. On each pipe is the name of the office held and each year they will be passed to succeeding officers. To his 1976 board, Vern presented very special plaques with



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New officers — Jerry Sullivan, Vern Bickel, Ruby Sinclair, Lois Segur, Marge Greer, Ronnie Santalo, and Bob Brooks. *(Ed Minder Photo)*

pipes and brass nameplates. Beautifully made, they must have taken hours of his time, and I know will be cherished by each recipient. No wonder such a close feeling of friendliness exists in our chapter. Thank you Vern, from all of us.

Bob Lewis gave us a fast "tour of the organ." Earl McCandless played some especially beautiful music, and Sandy Fleet told many interesting facts about how the 4/20 Robert Morton was originally taken out of the Midland Theatre and then announced open console. What a way to end the year! We all went home knowing in our hearts that we would continue to work hard towards a successful and rewarding 1977.

LOIS SEGUR

### SOUTHEASTERN

The November meeting of the chapter was held at the new Gulbransen dealer in Atlanta, The Organ Stop. Through the courtesy of owner Howard Dennis, members were able to inspect and play the full line of Gulbransen electronic instruments. The show stealer was, of course, Walt Winn and Bob Van

Camp (a "spy" from Allen Organ) performing stints at the console of the company's new "Rialto II" theatre organ.

December's meeting stands as a highlight in this chapters history as Bob Van Camp took the Atlanta Fox Moller up for the first formally scheduled concert with general ticket



Bob Van Camp *(Bill Lamb Photo)*

sales featuring this most gifted veteran theatre organist. A date for the heavily-booked theatre became apparent in late November, giving less than two weeks for promotional work by theatre management and some of the chapter's most dedicated members including James Jobson, James and Mary Thrower, and Joe Patten. In spite of the limited time framework, Bob received a generous amount of air time, especially from his professional alma mater, WSB Radio and Television, and on Sunday, December 5, at 3 p.m., "Christmas at the Fox with Bob Van Camp" broke all Fox records for a scheduled organ concert, according to house manager Ted Stevens. It was reported that over 1,200 tickets were sold within an hour of the performance at the box office in the theatre arcade. The chapter cleared nearly \$5,000 — all of which will go to the burgeoning "Save the Fox" fund set up by the chapter.

To an audience of well over 2,000, Bob extended his usual polished style, both in his commentary and in his music, choosing to categorize his Christmas repertoire, including snow songs, the "commercial Christmas" tunes, and the organist's Christmas gifts to special members of the audience. After a brief intermission, he launched probably the most successful sing-along at the Fox since opening days, prompting the audience to not only applaud the organist, but itself as well.

After a tremendous round of applause and a standing ovation by the audience at the end of the program, Bob Van Camp encoored with a capsule version of George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" — complete with some expertly done solo piano passages using the Moller's companion "phantom grand." Bob,



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a living legend to Atlantans, and certainly the high priest of the Mighty Fox Moller, was touched by the warm sea of faces, and in his usual subtle and quiet style, he saw this as payment enough for the donation of his time and talent for this, one of the most successful Fox Theatre benefits yet.

JOHN CLARK McCALL, JR.

## SOUTHERN ARIZONA

Our last meeting of the year was held on Sunday, December 5 at the Eldorado Town Homes Club Room in Tucson. Results of our election of officers: Mrs. Helen Staininger, chairman; Bea Kotasek, vice chairman; Helen Bowers, secretary; and Lois Seamands, treasurer.

The program was chaired by Lois Seamands and started with a rousing sing-along with Christmas Carols led by Roy Ives after which our artists for the day performed. Grace Hamilton, Pearl Anne Lane, Helen Bowers and Allen Guirl displayed their talent.

A few of our members journeyed to Mesa Arizona for the Valley of the Sun Christmas party and open console on December 11, 1976, followed by Lyn Larsen's fourth annual Christmas concert held in Phoenix the following day. A good time was had by both groups.

Our new year starts with our February meeting.

BOB HIGH

## SOUTH FLORIDA

The chapter was thrilled at the December concert by Hector Olivera. The crowd of approximately 200 enjoyed Bob and Vivian Andre's 260 Wurlitzer and their hall including the newly painted "sky" (Andre

Hall is being styled similarly to the original Olympia Theatre in Miami). The stars in the "sky" twinkled as "clouds" drifted across the "moon." Hector provided an evening of entertainment, both with his wit and his playing. For many, it was their first concert by a premier artist and folks were standing around in amazement at the end of the first half of the program (and for quite some time after the final encore). Hector played the Wurlitzer for all it was worth and for more than most of us felt it could do — including some Bach! The whole evening is one that South Florida Theatre organ fans will not forget. Hector, too, seemed pleased with his efforts and expressed that he found the Andre Wurlitzer quite to his liking.

Special thanks go to those who worked to put the instrument in tip-top shape including Art Venecia, Ralph Anderson, Jim Burke and many others.

The year 1976 was a good one for the South Florida Theatre Organ Society. We became a corporation in the State of Florida, and final preparations are under way towards putting the console for the Olympia 260 Wurlitzer back in Gusman Hall (formerly the Olympia).

JOE LOEWY

## VALLEY OF THE SUN

The November meeting was held at Don Olds Piano and Organ in Phoenix. Bill Carr gave a talk on organ registration that inspired us all to try some new combinations and ideas.

Guest organist for the evening was Mr. Chris Gorsuch from San Diego. We all enjoyed his performance on the Gulbranson Rialto theatre organ. We hope to have Chris come back to give a concert for our chap-

ter. Thanks to Don Olds Piano and Organ, there were plenty of consoles to play for open console.

We were so fortunate to be able to use the Organ Stop Pizza #2, Mesa, Arizona, for our first Annual VOTS-ATOS Christmas Party in December. The salad was delicious, the pizza was superb and the music was greater still. Al Davis and Bill Blasik entertained the guests on the 3/23 Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ. Dr. Greg Bailey gave us some facts and information on the organ.

Members of the chapter and the guest chapter from Tucson lined up to take advantage of open console on the Wurlitzer. We hope to get together again soon with the Southern Arizona Chapter.

Our chapter has begun a new service to its members. Since dropping monthly business meetings, in favor of monthly board meetings with quarterly chapter business meetings, we have started publishing a monthly newsletter for all members. We hope this will be a big step in expediting business and communication in our chapter.

JANICE PERRY

## WOLVERINE

On November 28, we gathered at the Royal Oak Theatre, to hear Scott Smith perform at the 3/16 Barton organ. We were treated to a beautifully arranged program with the emphasis on the Big Band Era, opening with "Who Cares," featuring a solid left hand melody with sparkling arpeggios in the right. Ballads displayed Scott's deftness in the art of registration and to paint musical pictures, complimenting the composers work in "Midnight Sun," "Who Can I Turn To," "When Sunny Gets Blue," "Send In The Clowns" and "Breaking Up Is



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Wolverine's 1977 officers — Barry Rindhage vice-chairman/treasurer; Richard Swanson, secretary; and Scott Smith, chairman. *(George Gejhart Photo)*



Left — Warren O. Wardwell, Lansing, East Lansing City Manager for Butterfield Theatres, retiring after 45 years of service. Right — Walter Reukucki is the new manager. *(Ed Corey Photo)*

Hard to Do." These songs allowed Scott to show his talent for jazz improvised progressions.

The Big Band Sound is one of his forte's. "Tuxedo Junction," "One For The Road," and "Don't Be That Way" made one remember that great era.

The Barton organ, the artist, and the program all rate excellent in this guest reviewers opinion.

FR. JIM MILLER

After a fantastic performance by Fr. James Miller at the Detroit Fox

4/36 Wurlitzer, on December 5, the chapter met at the Voydanoff-Rank residence for the annual Christmas potluck dinner and business meeting. The excellent 3/6 Wurlitzer installed therein was played by a number of organists for several hours. All home installations should sound this good.

A vote was taken and approved to raise the dues for the upcoming year — an unfortunate but necessary move. A new slate of officers was elected for 1977: Rick Swanson, secretary; Barry Rindhage, vice

chairman/treasurer; and Scott Smith, chairman.

Outgoing Chairman Lawrie Mallett and Vice Chairman Edward Corey are to be greatly commended for their hard and unceasing efforts in the last three years for literally taking the Wolverine chapter from near extinction to the great organization that it is today.

Our thanks to David Voydanoff and Glen Rank for once again opening the doors of the famed "Wurlitzer House" to the Wolverines.

SCOTT SMITH □

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