

a poet uses words. Like Crawford, she can do more with two stops than most organists can do with twenty! Exquisite combinations on ballads are her forte; and the silence of her audience was marvelous as minute combinations sent her melodies soaring out of the chambers across her rapt audience. Upon her release of the last eloquent note, the audience actually sat quiet, not wanting to destroy the beauty of the moment. But the applause broke out, and another ovation became history!

Her programmed finale was "I'll See You In My Dreams," which was her signature tune years ago as she closed her pro broadcasts. The organ literally sang as she coaxed from it every melodic nuance possible — it was beautiful. And, with a slight pause, she played a poignant "Auld Lang Syne." As the last reverberant echoes faded away, the applause again broke out, and the entire audience gave her yet another standing ovation that went on wildly for several minutes. In a touching exit, she was escorted out of the orchestra pit and through the center aisle, surrounded by the audience who loved her music and her magic performance.

Often, celebrities are accorded great laurels in one era and disappear in the next, knowing that they could be celebrities only under the circumstances of one particular era. Perhaps some are granted status which is wholly undeserved. But in the case of Hildegarde, she is as great as ever! And, the instrument she played, truly *her* Wurlitzer, was in better voice now than it ever was in the past! If there was a great past for the Fargo Theatre and its pipe organ, then there is now assurance for an even greater future, thanks to people like Lance Johnson, Lloyd Collins and, of course, Hildegarde. Under the capable direction of Chapter Chairman David Knudson, youthful and energetic programs have inspired the membership to double! The chapter has purchased a three-manual Wurlitzer which is being enlarged to an ultimate twelve ranks, and will be installed where it can be heard by the public at regular intervals. The theatre organ is assured a place of prominence in the Midwest: Hope-Jones would be proud! □

'SAVE THE FOX' MAJOR FUND UNDER WAY

The first 18 months of operation of the Atlanta Fox Theatre as a performing arts auditorium have been solidly successful. A variety of attractions ranging from ballet, symphony orchestras, Broadway shows, organ concerts, to rock shows have played to large audiences. The theatre is operating in the black under the capable leadership of General Manager Ted Stevens and Technical Director Joe Patten (both ATOS members). The owner of the property, Atlanta Landmarks, Inc. has been able to meet interest payments on the 1.8 million dollar loan. But the principal amount will fall due in mid-1978. This amount will have to come from major grants and Landmarks is implementing a major drive to get this money in place. So far there is a challenge grant in the amount of \$400,000 from an anonymous donor to become available when 1.4 million in other grants is obtained. The showplace is operating efficiently with good patronage, but the most critical period in saving the historic landmark lies directly ahead.

Since the dark days of '75 when

the fate of the Atlanta Fox hung in the balance, local ATOS members have worked hard to contribute time, talent and effort in guiding tours, cleaning the theatre, repairing seats, decorating display areas, and most importantly sponsoring benefit performances. Indeed the December 1976 interest payment on the 1.8 million dollar loan could not have been met but for the \$10,000 accumulated by the chapter from benefits by Lyn Larsen, Dennis James and Bob Van Camp. The March payment was assured by a benefit (not ATOS sponsored) by Arthur Fiedler and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. The next deadline is late June. The April 3 Keyboard Colossus — twelve grand pianos, harpsichord, 4/42 Moller organ all playing at the same time — is a major fund-raising effort. Organ concerts and possible silent movie series are under discussion. A souvenir record album featuring artists who have played the Fox; Lyn Larsen, Dolton McAlpin, Linda Kent, Ron Rice and house organist Bob Van Camp, has been assembled under local ATOS sponsorship. *The Many Moods of The Mighty Mo.* □

Closing Chord

William (Bill) Peterson, chairman of the Oregon Chapter, ATOS, passed away at his home in Portland Oregon, February 6, 1977. He was born in Hamilton, Montana, July 21, 1922 and came to Portland in 1941. Bill always had a keen interest in the movie palace and the theatre organ but didn't become actively involved until the early 1960's.

Bill served as co-chairman of the Western Regional ATOS convention in 1964 and the National Conventions of 1966 and 1973. He served one year as publications coordinator for ATOS and for many years authored the Acre of Seats column in *THEATRE ORGAN*. Bill was co-manager of two Portland theatres, the Oriental and the Colonial. He was also the motivating force behind



William Peterson

Gamba Records. Bill's occupation was also another hobby. He was director of the very successful Portland Roadster Show, a custom car exhibition. Bill Peterson is survived by a brother, sister-in-law, niece, and two nephews of Everett, Washington. □