

that he has included every public room in Indianapolis that ever boasted a platform for performers or a white sheet for the showing of movies.

The section devoted to pipe organs is of particular interest to THE-ATRE ORGAN readers. A number of stoplists are displayed including a Hinners tracker action instrument and the complete specifications of the Louisville 3/16 Uniphone which was installed in the Rivoli Theatre by Thomas Ferree in 1966. (Now gone, unfortunately).

It is our opinion that Mr. Gladson's work will be of most interest to theatre historical buffs and those enthusiasts living in the area of Indianapolis. □



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 Unless it's stated clearly on the letter "not for publication," the editors feel free to reproduce it, in whole or part.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 Sir:

I read with great interest of the return of the "Little Mother" from the West Coast to the East Coast to be installed in the Little Carnegie Theatre, and I thought perhaps some people might be interested in the early history of the organ. Most articles about the organ start with Ben Hall's ownership. Who could have known what the destiny of the little two-manual, five-rank Wurlitzer

would be when it was installed in the Lawler Theatre in Greenfield, Massachusetts, in 1928!

Fire had gutted the theatre which had been built for stage shows and vaudeville in 1913. Sound motion pictures had recently been installed, and some say that the picture *Too Hot To Handle* starring the "IT" girl Clara Bow, was just too much for the old place and it caught fire.

The "Little One," a Style 150 — 25th and one of the last that Wurlitzer built, was introduced to the public at a Gala Midnight Show. The reopening featured George Abel of the Garden Theatre at the cream and gold console; set in the center of the orchestra pit. The organ chamber was high in the right wall of the auditorium. The five ranks were Tibia, Flute, Vox Humana, Salicional and Trumpet.

After the crash of 1929, and the resulting depression period, the orchestra and the organist were the first to go, and by the early 1930's, the organ was silent.

About 1933-34, my brother Andrew and I got permission from the management to get the organ working again, and by 1934-35 it was being used to broadcast from the theatre over the local radio station WHAI. I cut my first "theatre organ" teeth on it and played a half-hour program on it every Saturday morning. Another fellow — Harold LaChappelle and I played the program for almost two years.

Again it fell into disuse when new management took over from the Lawler family. When I returned from service in the Navy during World War II, I found the console cut loose from cable and windline, and stored in the box seat area under the organ loft.

Later, I moved from Greenfield to Arlington, Virginia. It was then in 1958, that I heard that the theatre was to be torn down. But before that happened, the organ was removed and stored in a nearby Roller Skating Rink in Deerfield, Mass. It was never installed there and it was there that Ben Hall found "Little Mother," and took it to New York City.

That is a rough history of the organ (now) known to ATOS members as "Little Mother," prior to its acquisition by Mr. Hall. I have fond memories of it because, as I said, it was the first theatre organ I ever

played, and it had a delightful Wurlitzer sound in the 1100-seat theatre where it was originally installed. I hope it will be enjoyed in its new home in New York City for a long time.

Yours truly,
Howard O. Murphy



Dear Mr. Thompson,

I was pleased to see the news of Fred Feibel in the recent article about the organ safari to England and France.

And I wondered if your readers knew of the wonderful concerts (for charity) that Fred has given in Vero Beach, Fla., for many, many years.

I am enclosing the program of his latest benefit, presented in November by Fred and a number of talented entertainers. Although the organ is featured, Fred wisely adds others to keep the program at a fast pace.

All that's lacking is more seats. The "SRO" sign goes up practically every year.

Cordially,
Charles W. Fauroat
(Member G.S.T.O.S.)

Dear Editor Thompson,

My first letter to an editor abounds with musical enthusiasm for the man who not only opened the totally magnificent Tampa Theatre in 1926 playing the 2/8 Wurlitzer, but *re-opened* the restored theatre formally on the evening of January 22 to a capacity main floor audience which paid 75 cents for the evening's fare of formal speeches, roarin' twenties dancers, silent comedies, shorts and a complete feature running of *The Black Pirate* starring Douglas Fairbanks. Eddie Weaver played an

electronic installed for the reopening ceremonies, and played so well in both solo and silent accompaniment that I found myself listening and watching his work and paying little attention to the film! It was remarkable in that every few measures of music seemed to modulate beautifully and always in sync with the action on the screen. You had to be there!

Those of us, as patrons of the restoration of the place, were treated to a sight seldom seen these days . . . that gloriously beautiful theatre, all relamped and colorful artwork in plaster all fully restored. As I sit here now I realize it is impossible to describe the beauty of that place. As a Center for Arts now, we can all relax in the knowledge that the place is out of danger of being demolished. Patrons of the Renaissance of the Tampa were seated in the balcony with a spectacular view of the upper levels of the "Andalusian Bondon" as Ben Hall so adequately described it. But Eddie Weaver equalled the great showplace in popularity with an immediate standing ovation from the audience at the conclusion of the feature film he accompanied so brilliantly.

All in all, an incredible evening!
Long Live The Tampa!

Sincerely yours,
Terry Charles

Dear Sir:

As one who is more than casually interested in both the science and art of the construction of organ pipes, I have been reading the Weisenberger-Swanson-Weisenberger discussion with great interest. For what it is worth, let me contribute my own opinions on the subject.

First, anyone who is genuinely interested in the scientific understanding of the production and perception of sound should read *Fundamentals of Musical Acoustics* by A.H. Benade (Oxford University Press, New York, 1976, \$14.00). The author is both a scientist and a musician. Furthermore, his book is accessible to most readers in both style and content. I had the opportunity to study with Dr. Benade a few years ago, and was as impressed then as I am now with his ability to understand both science and his ears.

Second. The following articles have been moderately useful to me in my venture into the technical side of the organ pipe. They have all appeared within the last 50 years.

The Voicing of Organ Flue Pipes, by D.M.A. Mercer (Journal of the Acoustical Society of America, vol. 23, p. 45, 1951)

Initial Transients of Organ Pipes, by A.W. Nolle and C.P. Boner (Journal of the Acoustical Society of America, vol. 13, p. 149, 1941)

Nonlinear Interactions in Organ Flue Pipes, by N.H. Fletcher (Journal of the Acoustical Society of America, vol. 56, p. 645, 1974)

Transients in the Speech of Organ Flue Pipes - A Theoretical Study, by N.H. Fletcher (Acustica, vol. 34, p. 224, 1976)

These journals are not readily available at your local newsstand, but a good library should have them.

Third. My personal feelings in the matter are twofold. I enjoy the science of how and why an organ pipe sounds the way it does as much as enjoy listening to a pipe organ. Secondly, my ears impose the final

judgement in all matters. I could care less whether a pipe is the result of a long computer calculation of the scientific properties of a pipe or whether it is the result of an experienced artist. If it pleases me, I consider it a job well done.

Sincerely,
David G. Monet

P.S. As to innovations in the construction of organ pipes . . . I have always wanted a trumpet made out of glass or a vitreous ceramic material. Do any of you organ buffs have friends who are glassblowers?

Dear Lloyd:

Received my February THEATRE ORGAN yesterday and naturally was elated to see my biography in it. You did a wonderful job in editing it, really "dressed it up." The great two-page spread made it look good and the pictures were well spotted.

My sincere thanks to you for your efforts and kind cooperation.

Jack Skelly
Rye, N.Y. □

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