



The Community Theatre building was designed primarily as a legitimate stage theatre for the production of plays. Seating capacity is 203. The stage is equipped with a full rigged fly gallery — built mostly from equipment recovered from the Seattle Orpheum Theatre when it was demolished in 1969. Included will be provisions for electronic stage lighting, movie projection equipment, a fully-equipped work shop and scene construction shop, extra rehearsal space and a community meeting place.

## Theatre Pipe Organ to Enhance New Bremerton Community Theatre

by Lloyd E. Klos

Those of us who attended the 1971 ATOS Convention in the Seattle area remember the concert at the Bremerton Masonic Temple by Byron Melcher at the 2/8 Wurlitzer, and the exhilarating ferryboat ride back to Seattle. Noted for its U.S. Navy facilities and mothball fleet, including the famed battleship "Missouri," Bremerton, small as it may be, is still a community with a heart. It soon will have another theatre pipe organ playing.

In late 1976, a group of 16 enthusiasts, realizing their city needed a theatre organ which the public could

enjoy, pooled their funds and purchased the 2/13 hybrid from the estate of the late Dan Adamson. Mr. Adamson had collected parts from several instruments and had a substantial organ in his home's basement at the time of his death.

At the time this item went to press, the group was busily engaged in installing it in Bremerton's new Community Theatre, located at Lebo Boulevard and Juniper Street, overlooking the Washington Narrows.

The console is from the Wurlitzer, Opus 537, installed in the American Theatre in Walla Walla, Wash.,

in 1922. It has room for 55 tablets on the horseshoe and 29 on the second-touch stop rail.

There are chests for 13 ranks, of which 11 are filled as follows: Tuba, Diapason, Tibia I, Tibia II, Clarinet, Viol d'Orchestre, Viol d'Orchestre Celeste, Flute, Kinura, Vox Humana I and Vox Humana II.

The Diapason, Flute, Viol and Vox are in a chest which was installed by Robert Morton in the Liberty Theatre in Pasco, Wash., in 1921. Lew Wells, who is helping the Bremerton group install the organ, played the Morton for about a year

in the early twenties, and assisted in its removal to the Catholic church in Moxee, Wash., in 1935. The other chests are Balcom & Vaughn, Smith and Robert Morton.

The percussion department includes a Liberty Harp, a Morton Xylophone and Glockenspiel, and a Wurlitzer Xylophone, Glock and Chimes. Traps are well represented in treble and bass.

The new Community Theatre is being built by funds derived from several sources. From the EDA, has come \$152,000 in federal money. Community Theatre donors have contributed over \$50,000. The city of Bremerton will contribute \$35,000, mostly for construction costs. Additional funds will be needed to finish the interior and to buy the projection and stage equipment. A novel way to accomplish this will be by "selling" seats in the auditorium for \$200. A brass plate, bearing the donor's name and address will be affixed to the back of the chair.

The big red upholstered chairs originally came from the loge of Seattle's Music Hall Theatre, and are being completely renovated.

The organ pipes, percussions, etc., will be housed in stacked chambers. Eight ranks will be housed in the lower one, and the upper chamber will contain five ranks, plus percussions, traps and the relays. It is planned to eventually have the console on a lift in the orchestra pit.

Many ferry trips were made across Puget Sound to dismantle the organ and move it to Bremerton. The con-



Storage in Mel Retzlaff's rec room. Most of the pipes are stored here. Objects on shelves are *not* part of the organ.

sole had to be disassembled in order to remove it from its basement location. To Roger Hoffman go many thanks for donating his truck with lift for the operation. As the work progressed, a model railroad layout and 10 fish tanks had to be removed as more pipes and regulators were discovered, spotted about the basement.

Progress in the installation work is slow as volunteers work in their spare time. However, it is hoped that part of the organ will be playing by late summer, with completion scheduled by the end of the year. Chamber

work was 75 per cent completed in January. Extensive rewiring was needed in the console, relays etc.

The theatre can be used for organ concerts and club meetings when other events are not scheduled. At least two silent movies a year are planned.

The new organization, the Bremerton Pipe Organ Society, is here to stay; it is not a fly-by-night outfit. Its officers are: Mel Retzlaff, president; Bob Arnold, vice president; Ellena Retzlaff, secretary; and Marlin Mangels, treasurer.

The society is fortunate in having Lew Wells as its technical advisor. Retired, he was an employee of the noted organ-building and repair firm of Balcom & Vaughn for 10 years. He also played theatre organs in the silent movie days.

Since a number of the Bremerton group belong to the Puget Sound Chapter, a harmonious relationship between the two organizations is anticipated and some meetings of the chapter will possibly be held in Bremerton.

To the members of the Bremerton Pipe Organ Society go ATOS wishes of good luck and many years of successful operation of their new enterprise.

(The writer thanks Genny Whitting of the Puget Sound Chapter who supplied the information for this feature. □

Wurlitzer console will have all new key contacts and combination pneumatics as well as new console-to-relay cable.

