

for the new electronic/pipe series at a recent dealer showing in Chicago. "And that was only the beginning," commented company Sales Manager, Thod Madsen, "One dealer has already ordered his third instrument since November."

But is it easy to overcome some of the apparent incompatibilities of pipes and transistors? Company Tonal Director, Allan Van Zoeren, replies emphatically, yes! "Quite frankly, before joining Rodgers, I wouldn't touch an electronic organ with a ten foot pole! I thought they all belonged in nightclubs. Pipes and only pipes are what I would associate myself with." Said Van Zoeren.

Then came Carnegie Hall. Rodgers approached Van Zoeren, a noted voicer of some of America's most prestigious pipe organs, to see if he would voice their five-manual organ for New York's famous Carnegie Hall. Van Zoeren accepted, but now admits he took the voicing job in deference to Carnegie Hall. "I wanted the organ they installed to be the finest possible," Van Zoeren stated. "I was startled that electronics could be so convincing. I accepted the position as Tonal Director for Rodgers, moved from New York to Oregon, and am happier than I've been in my whole life."

Immediately upon Van Zoeren's arrival in Oregon, he began working out design ideas with Allen Harrah, Manager of Rodgers' Custom Division. Harrah had been instrumental in earlier successes combining Rodgers electronics with Ruffatti pipes, and worked closely with Rodgers engineers to provide a console control that could instantly tune the electronics to match the pipes (a major consideration that had not been addressed in earlier attempts to combine electronics with pipes by other organ builders).

Having a tonal director who thoroughly understands pipe organs, and engineers who know electronics, this combination has taken off like a duck to water. "WE realize that we're all trying to create an artistic entity that makes beautiful music," says Van Zoeren. And making beautiful music is not a bad thing for any organ company to be doing.

The preceding story was written for THEATRE ORGAN by James A. Walls who does promotional writing

for the Rodgers Organ Co. While Rodgers' pipe effort is currently applied only to classic models, considering the company's leading position in the electronic theatre organ field, we ask: can the swell box with a wind-powered Tibia and Vox to supplement electronic theatre organs be far behind? An inside source says the possibility is being considered. □



Allan Van Zoeren, Rodgers' Tonal Director, "adjusted" to electronic sound sources after helping with Rodgers' Carnegie Hall installation. To date, the firm has no plans for an all-pipe organ.

(Henry Ngan Photo)

This veteran pipemaker works on a wooden flute pipe in Rodgers 67,000 square-foot Hillsboro facility, working according to Aeolian-Skinner pipe scales which Rodgers purchased from the defunct Boston builder in 1974. We'll wager this man could turn out a mean Tibia Clausa.

(Henry Ngan Photo)



VOX POPS



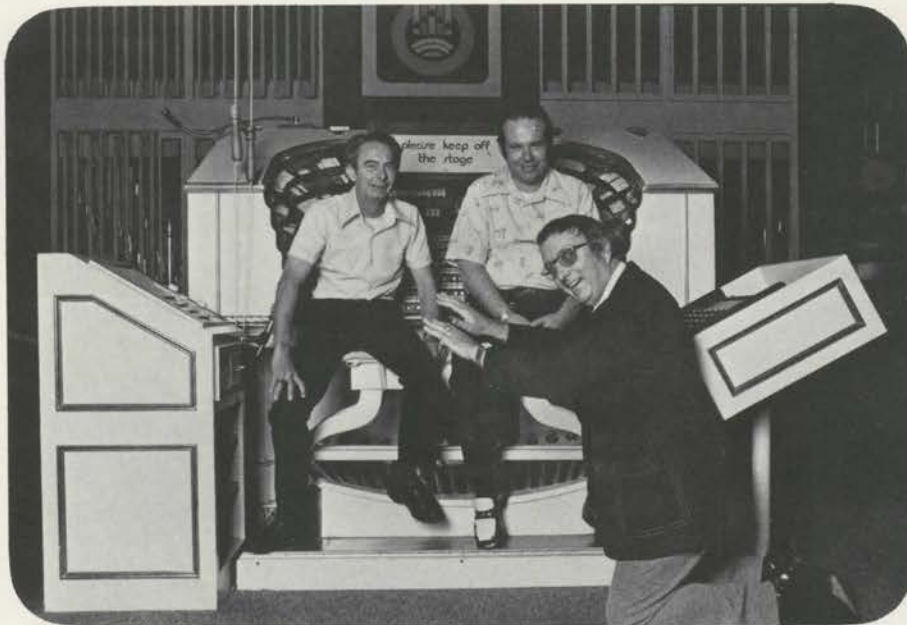
Conducted by Stu Green

Readers are encouraged to submit interesting sidelights on the organ hobby (exclusive of chapter news items) material they believe will be of general interest about local organ activities and installations and the people who work at the hobby. We know "there's VOX POPS in them there chapters" and it only requires a 9c postcard to get it to VOX POPS Editor, Box 3564, Granada Hills, California 91344. If the contributor can afford a 13c stamp, why not include a black and white photo which need not be returned.

While 1977 conventioners are in Chicago and have an idle evening, they might drop over to the Bismarck Hotel, about three or four blocks from the Palmer House, and listen to the refreshing organ music of Barbara Sellers, daughter of Preston and Edna Sellers, two of Chicago's well-known theatre organists of the big era. Barbara has been gaining a steady following at the Bismarck thru her musicianship and sparkling personality.



Sandy Fleet informs us of further changes in the Reginald Foort Moller in the renamed "Spaghetti and Pizza Pavilion" (formerly "Organ Power Pizza No. 2"). It will be recalled that the Pacific Beach installation was enlarged by the addition of an unenclosed Trompette en Chamade, 12 tuned pedal Kettledrums and a six-rank (style D) Wurlitzer located in a separate rear chamber which was playable from either the Moller console or its own 2-decker. Also, the



Sandy Fleet salaams organbuilders Gene Ginder and Wendell Shoberg for the hard work of the Foort Moller. (FOTO i Photo)

reportedly tubby No. 1 Moller Tibia was replaced by a Wurlitzer rank. That was the scene when Doric recorded Foort (the record has since been released). Since then, some important additional changes have been made to make the sound more theatrical, says Fleet.

The Stentor Principal (Diapason) has been removed and replaced by the smaller scale No. 2 Diapason, and a third still smaller scale accompaniment Diapason has been supplied by Moller to fill the No. 2 chest. In addition, Sandy has replaced all tremulants with more theatrical ones built by Moller.

The Style D Wurlitzer chamber has been eliminated (to accommodate the enlarged kitchen) and the pipework moved to the Moller's solo chamber. The Wurlitzer now operates from the Moller's blower.

Also, to meet complaints that staff organists played too loud for the dinner hour visitors, the upper and lower sets of swell shutters have been put on separate circuits so that the lower set can be switched to remain closed while the staffers play. But all swell shutters are operative for concerts. The San Diego ATOS chapter re-opened the house with a concert played by Maria Kumagai on April 25.

Sandy scotches a rumor that he has resigned from the eatery chain's board of directors. "The fact is," says Sandy, "I have increased my stock holdings from 32 percent to

80 percent. I have full confidence in the future of the project."

The interior of the Pacific Beach establishment has changed considerably. Gone are the benches and picnic tables, replaced by dining tables. Self service is also gone; waiters now serve the spaghetti. Next project is the re-opening of the Solano restaurant with a new menu and Rex Koury at the 4/20 Robert Morton for an opener.



From Pasadena, Calif., Bill Reeves reveals a long memory:

"I wonder how many readers will recall Glendale, Calif., in the early '20s? Two organists who played there at the time later became famous. One was Frank Lanterman who accompanied silent movies with astonishing sound effects on the TD & L theatre Wurlitzer. He later became a California assemblyman. Still active, he has a pipe organ in his La Canada home.

"The other was the late Paul Carson, who played at Howe's independent theatre on something like a big church organ which sounded lovely. He even accompanied the vaudeville acts on the organ. My father, City Manager of Glendale then, received a weekly free pass, which I, a teenager, used without fail. I sat in the front row, not to be nearer the show but to take in the artistry of Paul Carson, who also

played at the Presbyterian church on Sundays. Carson later went on to national fame with his around midnight *Bridge to Dreamland* broadcasts."

Thanks for the recollections, Bill. Carson's broadcasts are still remembered and many are still available by mail on Alma records, 18108 Parthenia, Northridge, Calif. 91324.



Back in 1937, a congregation in Salinas, Calif. needed an organ for their church. It was depression time and it was suggested they look around for an unused theatre organ, until they could afford something more appropriate. They latched onto the style 200 Wurlitzer (opus 1887) in the San Francisco Parkside (Taraval) theatre and installed the "stopgap" instrument in their church. The organist was Peggy Godsey Ponting, whose mastery of the instrument endeared her to the congregation. She never hesitated to use the trem'd Tibia and Vox if it would enhance the music. Over the years, church members became fond of their theatre organ. When times were better they built a new sanctuary, and instead of buying an orthodox organ, they moved the "stopgap" Wurlitzer into it. That was in 1950. Over the past three years, Cal. State Fresno student Tom Delay and members of the congregation have added seven couplers and put the organ in top condition, with Dick Villemin re-regulating the reeds and putting on the finishing touches.

But Mrs. Ponting who has been the church's organist for the entire 38 years, decided to retire recently, and her absence is being keenly felt.

"Her retirement has left a considerable void," said one congregation member. Theatre organ buffs owe Mrs. Ponting a debt of gratitude. Actually, it was her musical taste and skills which sold the church members on the theatre organ.



Young organist Lew Williams, back from studies in Europe, is now pursuing a master's degree in organ at Southern Methodist U. and living in Dallas. In March, Lew was confronted with a challenge; he had never accompanied a silent movie, yet he was invited to accompany two



Lew Williams. He discovered that silent movies can be rewarding. (Stufoto)

silent feature films during a movie festival in Dallas. The films were *Show People* and *The Crowd*, the latter being considered a classic by film buffs. The stinger was that the director of both films was present, King Vidor, best remembered for his *Big Parade*.

Says, Lew "I was a little worried, but I was able to see the films beforehand, so at least I knew what action was coming up. It went rather well and Mr. Vidor was very kind. I really enjoyed the experience, especially talking to the college age members of the audience who had never experienced a silent film situation."

The *Dallas Times-Herald* reiterated Lew's reactions, and went further: "... for many in the audience it was the first silent movie they had ever seen — and organist Lew Williams received a standing ovation for his masterful manipulation of mood."



In Los Angeles, Helen Dell was informed that she was to accompany Frank Sinatra on her trusty Conn 651 on the night he was set to sing the National Anthem before a baseball game at Dodgers Stadium. Helen admits she "quaked" a little. We've all heard stories about Sinatra's demands on fellow artists; he's a perfectionist. She needn't have worried. On the night of the game "old blue eyes" showed up in the press box (where the organ is located) and he and Helen had an informal rehearsal. Frank immediately put Helen at ease and she says she now fully understands why he is considered such a charmer. Alas, we have no photo of the two artists be-

cause Frank sang out front under the spotlight while Helen accompanied him from the pressbox.



For the past year, ATOSer Donald Craig Jr., has been playing a Wurlitzer electronic organ between shows at the 475-seat Cinema I in Cincinnati, thanks to the progressive management of Julian Mitford who gained a respect for the TO in his native England.

Don Craig observes, "The modern cinema structures of steel and concrete have a minimum of space (for an organ), are without stages, and have only the barest of decorative enhancement. The automated facilities, as well as the atmosphere, would seem to preclude the romantic environment of the old movie palace. And there are several generations of young persons that have never experienced live organ music in a theatre setting. I was pleasantly surprised to learn the predominantly young audiences thoroughly enjoy the live theatre organ experience and request many songs far removed



Don Craig. His electronic sits in for the real thing so that theatre audiences won't forget.

from the present generation. Over 15,000 persons have been entertained since June, 1976, and their continuing enthusiasm keeps the arrangement going."



George Wright is beaming these days. We cornered him shortly before his May 13 concert at the San



George Wright — "no sale."

Gabriel Civic Auditorium (3/16 Wurlti) and he told us how happy he is to be playing the Chicago Theatre Wurlti on July 4 which will be a CATOE affair taking the place of the customary afterglow. Why was he so moved?

"It's because of my acknowledged admiration for Jesse Crawford. The Chicago theatre organ was one of his favorites. From a sentimental standpoint it's one of the greatest thrills of my career," stated George.

He expects to have a record ready for release by convention time.

"It will consist of selections taped 'live' during my first concert on the San Gabriel Wurlitzer, on one side, and unreleased material played on the late, lamented Rialto theatre 2/10 Wurlitzer on the other. The title may sound a bit corny, but it fits — 'Wright On'," added George.

Any unfounded rumors to dispel? Only one, the persistent tale that George has sold his 3/16 Wurlitzer (or any organ parts) to Lyn Larsen for his home installation.

"I haven't even sold a regulator spring to Lyn," declared George.

George is still looking for a proper acoustical setting for the 3/16 Wurlitzer given him by an anonymous donor, preferably in the Hollywood area.



The New York ATOS Chapter has had some successful Sunday morning concerts at the Radio City Music Hall in recent months. On March 12, Dennis and Heidi James did the honors, Dennis at the 4/58 Wurlitzer, and Heidi on a grand piano which rose on the orchestra lift. In the words of Doc Bebko, "Lots of Gershwin and much variety



Heidi. Some guys would sacrifice their wind supply for her. (Bob Hill Photo)

and they really brought down the house. But, something occurred which never happened in my memory of over 40 years of Music Hall attendance. During "Rhapsody In Blue," the final number, a blatant reed developed a cipher. Dennis capably played over it, but when Heidi's solo parts beckoned, Dennis turned off the blowers, split seconds before and turned them on when his turn came again. This happened three times. If that isn't chivalry, then I've never witnessed it!"



For years our *For The Records* column has been trying to determine why British organists lard their discs so heavily with tunes from the USA's *Tin Pan Alley*. Veteran British organist Reginald Liversidge sent the first reply the column ever had to the query:

"I think it goes back to Jesse Crawford, his early 78s brought us an entirely new concept of producing sweet sounds by means of organ pipes through his then new style of playing — of course with the tremendous help of an Englishman, Hope-Jones! Then the 'talkies' arrived — 'all talking, all-singing, all-

dancing.' But — they were (at first) all American films with American hit songs — *The Broadway Melody* (1929), *Hollywood Revue*, *Movietone Follies*, *Syncopation* (1930). It was during this period that the cinema (sorry, theatre) organ really arrived over here, mostly Wurlitzers . . . These are (memories) of those early days, and are probably the reason we ancient Britons who are still around still play and record many American tunes."

We hope this is the first of many replies to our "mystery." Reg. Liversidge offers a solution in the case of console veterans, but there's still the case of the British organist in his early '20s who dotes on Kern, Berlin, Gershwin, Rodgers Mancini and Bacharach. We'll get to the bottom of this if only . . .



With the publication of *Pipes in a Mobile Home* (THEATRE ORGAN, April-May '77), we thought we had found the ultimate in compact pipe organs. But organist Bill Langford, who is the "regular" at Ye Olde Pizza Joynte in San Lorenzo, Calif., found traces of a smaller, and much older organ on wheels. Bill called our attention to an item which appeared in a recent issue of *Old Cars* magazine describing a 1936 Packard 12 which finished in 4th place in a race for vintage autos held at Ontario, Calif., late in 1976. The Packard revved up to 95 mph. The article



Bill Langford. He 'one upped' the VOX POPper in reverse. (Stufoto)

continued: (the limousine) "was once owned by jukebox king J. Seeburg. Under the hood is an instrument panel controlling the mechanism for the 14-key, air-operated organ. The bellows is in the trunk."

Well, anyway the little wheezer wasn't in a mobile home. So there, Bill Langford!



Mrs. Marvin Cook, enthusiast from Flint, Mich., informs us that the 3/11 Barton, once housed in that city's Capitol Theatre, has been removed, due to the theatre's closing. The instrument has been donated to the Flint Institute of Music, and was dismantled and moved by the Flint Capitol Theatre Organ Club with generous outside help. The club is now installing the Barton and hopes to have it playing by early fall.



Wichita Theatre Organ Inc. has announced concerts for the next eleven months: Reginald Foort on October 8, 1977, then to 1978 with Lee Erwin on March 11 and Billy Nalle on May 27. All three are familiar with the famous 4/37 Wurlitzer, Nalle via his circa 1958 "Swingin' Pipe Organ" record and recent Wichita concerts, Foort because of his engagement at the N.Y. Paramount in 1935 and Lee Erwin due to his 1976 performance at Wichita in the instrument's current home, The Century II Civic Center.



A voluminous contributor to this department is Lloyd Klos. It now appears that Lloyd is talented with more than the ability to use words effectively. He has just been accepted as an associate member of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) on the strength of his baseball pep song, "Let's Go, Dodgers," which was introduced at Dodgers' Stadium by Helen Dell.



Early 1977 seemed to be a rather depressing time for the theatre organ movement as several installations were closed, others were threatened with the wrecking ball, and the Kirk of Dunedin, Fla. suf-

ferred a bad fire. Therefore, it is refreshing to learn that what is lost in some places will be made up in other areas. For example, theatre owners Edward H. Bebko (the son of renowned Doc Bebko) and Alan W. Erenstoft have acquired the attractive 1500-seat Palace Theatre in Lockport, N.Y. At a dedication program on March 19, it was announced that the Palace will become a 7-day operation, a 2/10 Moller will be installed (a 2-manual Marr & Colton keydesk is already perched on the console elevator), and periodic vaudeville, country-western, rock and organ programs will be forthcoming. The theatre had a 2/10 Wurlitzer when it was opened in 1925.



Remember them? (Stufoto)

Where are they now? We found them attending one of Bill Thomson's organ seminars (he calls them "Love Ins") near Lake Tahoe, Nevada, and they agreed to pose for this photo. Both have enjoyed very successful careers as theatre and radio organists in the east. Both have prominently chronicled in this publication over the years. Both live in California. He's retired. She remains active in church work and is planning a new recording (she has released several in the past). Can you identify them? If you say they are Irma Glen and Milton Charles you win the Spitzflute's cuspidor.



In this business of playable theatre organs, the philosophy of "win one,

lose one" seems to exert itself often. For example, on Long Island, according to enthusiast Dennis M. Leight, the Beacon Theatre in Port Washington has been "tripled." That action rendered the 3/11 Austin therein unusable. However, the good news is that Leight and Thomas Sarkauskis have been busy since last May restoring the 2/6 Midmer-Losh in the Westbury (L.I.) Theatre. The instrument is playable, but much remains to be done. Volunteers are needed to speed the final work, says Leight. Plans are to use the organ for weekend intermissions.



One of the focal points of the 1972 Convention was the Virginia Theatre in Alexandria which housed a 3/11 Barton. According to Rosa Rio, her concert there on March 26 was cancelled as the organ was being removed prior to the wrecking ball's reduction of the theatre. Even though memories remain of the extensive heat which caused the organ to go out of tune in 1972, we can recollect the concerts which were played by Rosa, Don Thompson and Jean Lautzenheiser. Rosa adds that the future of the Baronet Theatre in Bethesda, Md. is on thin ice, too, and plans are being made for what may be "final" concerts on the 2/8 Wurlitzer there.



Organist Jack Skelly, whose memory is longer than an ostrich's neck, recalls when the New York Paramount Theatre employed three organ technicians: the famed Dan Papp and his assistants, Fred Helmers and Ralph Hitchin. "It seems anytime I was on at the house, it was either Ralph or Fred on duty. There was always a stand-by technician when the studio organ was on the air. One of them was always around mornings. Helmers was quite a jovial fellow. In the later years of the theatre, they may not have had three men, but Dan Papp was there to the end."



The 1976-77 concert season of the Rochester Theater Organ Society has been fraught with extremely bad weather. As an example, the

elements waited two weeks before venting their snowy wrath on March 18 when Rex Koury did the honors at the Auditorium Theatre Wurlitzer. The 850 who braved the elements were bountifully rewarded by one of the top programs of the season. Rex, a hard worker at the console, played accompaniments to two comedy shorts and filled the remainder of his well-balanced program with classical, semi-classical and popular renditions. His easy-going microphone presence was a decided asset on both the Eddie Meath TV show that morning, and at the concert. The attendees can be assured that the famed "Gunsmoke" composer will be back in Kodakville in a reasonable time.



Don Baker. Another one night stand.

(Bill Lamb Photo)

The Orpheum Restaurant in Clearwater, Fla., which opened last August, has closed its doors, possibly forever. Housing a 3/27 Wurlitzer, the place had a memorable opening night, complete with tornado which shattered a large window, soaked drapes and ruined the electrical system, cancelling the evening's second show. It was a blow from which the eatery never recovered. Don Baker had been the organist-in-residence.



It is the war year 1916. The young British seaman, high up in the foretop of the HMS Temeraire, can hardly believe his eyes. Before him is a panorama of war's destruction



Reginald Foort. His new record album includes an appropriately titled medley — 'An Old Sailor's Tale.' (Stufoto)

as British and German battleships wham away at one another, their 12" guns ablaze and the air rent with thunderous salvos. It is an encounter later to be known as the battle of Jutland. Our seaman gulps as a nearby British ship takes a direct hit, explodes, breaks in two and sinks. He clutches his telephone to the control room and shouts the direction of the incoming gunfire. His responsibility is a critical one; he is supplying the British gunners below with vital range correction information, and he admits, in retrospect, that he was "a bit scared." But the the British won the battle and never again would the German "High Seas Fleet" seek an open encounter with the British Fleet. The Germans were simply out-manuevered by the British. Our seaman was later discharged as a full Lieutenant, R.N.V.R., by a grateful country. Now he could get back to his chosen career, music. It would be a magnificent career. His name — Reginald Foort.

Just as she was so overwhelmingly popular in the great days of the theatre organ, and for twenty years afterward as a member of radio's *The Happy Gang*, Toronto's Kathleen Stokes can still get a standing ovation from audiences today. On March 22, the pert lady with bright brown eyes and a sweet smile, observed her 83rd birthday at the Casa Loma and a concert by Rex Koury. The audience soon discovered

Kay. On hand were Bobby Gimby, who served on the Happy Gangshow, and veteran organist Horace Lapp. Kay posed for pictures, seated at the Casa Loma organ which she played at Shea's Hippodrome Theatre years ago. She said that she still practices an hour a day on her electronic at home, and someday she may master "The World Is Waiting For the Sunrise," which was her theme.

A few years ago we ran a Vox Pop about a concert played by Randy Sauls in the high school auditorium at Van Nuys, Calif. Randy's playing was done on a Rodgers electronic but during the course of the evening the veteran silent film organist took note of the covered console of the run-down Robert Morton in the pit and mentioned that it would be proper to get the historic organ back in playing shape.

Apparently, his recommendation took root. In a recent issue of the *Valley News*, columnist Mendenhall told of the efforts of school librarian Hugh Rouse to raise funds for the repair of the organ. He appealed to the alumni, businesses, organizations and students. The community kicked in with \$1905. The school faculty and staff came up with \$1064. Two recent graduating classes totalled \$1000. the repair job, which includes replacement of the console, still



Randy Sauls during the 1972 concert when he put in a plug for a silent Robert Morton. (Stufoto)

needs another \$400 and the student body is raising it.

Repairs and rebuilding are being done by Bill Coffman and Bill Field, of Old Town Music Hall fame.

The 2-deck Morton was donated to the school by the California Organ Co. (then only a few blocks away) in 1916 and has played an important part in community affairs over the years. It fell into disuse when neglect diminished its effectiveness.

Mendenhall concludes, "... no one — but no one — wanted to see the organ pulled out." Chalk one up for our side!

Billy Nalle spent a couple recent weeks in Florida concertizing and was interviewed by Mary Shenk, music critic of the *St. Petersburg Times*, prior to his concert at Manatee Junior College on the 3-manual McManis organ. He explained his ideas on improvisation: "It gives you more freedom to follow your mood, to be creative. It's just more enjoyable." His ability to do this is partially a musical gift, plus the result of intensive training and experience. Nothing would please Billy more than to do a concert in the Tampa Theatre, recently reopened, if a pipe organ is available. He studied with former house organist Eddie Ford years ago and got his first theatre experience before audiences in that acoustically excellent house.

In Westwood, New Jersey there is a devoted group of Garden State chapterites who have been restoring the 2/8 Wurlitzer, Opus 1914, in the Pascack Theatre since November 1972. Sunday mornings finds the little band putting a lot of effort into the project. Among the tasks is literally glueing together a rank of Tibia pipes which they found in a Yonkers, N.Y. theatre, since razed. They were heavily damaged by water, and opened up like "overdone flowers." About 500 pieces were put into cardboard boxes and brought to Westwood. Real jigsaw pipework!

To show the wide disparity of occupations of the crew, two are airline pilots: Bob Quinn and Dick Orr; two are teachers: Joe Vanore and Roy Frenzke; a computer operator, Russ Fewell; and two electronics experts, Ed Unis and Warren Brown. A

couple others have helped out on the 1928 instrument from time to time. Although the Garden State Chapter has but 150 members, it has four restoration and maintenance crews. The other three are in Rahway, Trenton and West New York.



Former ATOS national prexy Dick Schrum is in his seventh year playing a Hammond B-3 at Seattle's Plaid Piper watering hole — that, plus frequent excursions to play the pipes at Pizza and Pipes (3 years) and the more recent Bellevue location. But what intrigues Dick most are his Saturday night Jazz Sessions, wherein Dick and 4 or 5 instrumentalists gather (usually where there is a pipe organ) and regale listeners and dancers with big band, dixieland, soft rock, modern jazz and bossa nova. The usual ensemble consists of Trumpet, Sax, Trombone, Drums and Organ, plus frequent guest instrumentalists.

Dick says, "The musicians are outstanding. The local ATOS chapter loves us because we use pipes. And the musicians are really digging the pipes. We have a whale of a time."

As Saturday night is usually a busy night for instrumentalists, Dick's clan can meet infrequently, so they sometimes get together on a Monday night at the Plaid Piper and jam around the Hammond.



Another theatre in western New York had a "grand opening" recently. After its leasing to two young men from Cattaraugus, N.Y., the new operators of the Hollywood Theatre in Gowanda had an observance on April 1. In a refurbished house with baskets of flowers on the stage and red footlights on the curtain, organist Harold Jolles played a half-hour organlude on the 2/6 Wurlitzer before the feature film. At the end of his stint, there were cries of "More, Harold, More!" Plans call

for the use of the organ often. Its maintenance is in the capable hands of Andy Jarosik.



The organization which has been making a supreme effort to save Buffalo's last remaining motion picture palace, "Friends of the Buffalo," have been dealt a series of severe blows by the winter of 76-77. Beginning in November, snowstorms continuously caused corporal's guard audiences or cancellations at the big theatre in a schedule which had promised a galaxy of entertainment. A ballet production, the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society, a production of *The Barber of Seville* and a Hungarian music and dance group were among those who felt the weight of an unbelievably tough winter which saw over 200 inches of snow pile up in Erie County. About \$50,000 was lost to The Friends due to pre-paid advertising, refunds etc. On top of this was

The Combo: (Top) Gene Allison (drums), Dick Schrum (organ); (Bottom) Pete Carrabba (trumpet), Wayne Torkleson (trombone), Wayne Simon (reeds). Guest drummer (right) is 'Hogan's Hero' Bob Crane. Photo was made during session at Seattle's 'Pizza and Pipes'. The organ is a 3/16 Wurlitzer. (Belston Photo)



\$10,000 damage from broken water pipes and a torn roof above the stage. Budget cuts from governmental sources haven't helped, either. As of the middle of March, things didn't look bright for the future of Shea's Buffalo Theatre.



Lowell Ayars. He hit the concert jackpot. (Stufoto)

Lowell Ayars, the Singing Organist, reports he had a great time playing a concert for PATOS on September 21 at the South Hills Theatre. "I found the audience the quietest and most attentive I have ever experienced. They don't even cough while the performer is playing! It is a warm, out-going group and very nice to work with, especially with combinations, lighting and special effects. The theatre is just about the cleanest in which I've been in at least 30 years. It is plain, but immaculately kept; the brass is polished, the stage floor shines, and the electric bulbs aren't even dusty. In this day and age, wow!" □

Music Review

by Walter J. Beaupre, Ph.D.

Al Hermanns, ORGAN-IZING LEFT HAND COUNTER-MELODIES, The Big 3 Music Corporation (available in music stores or Al Hermanns Music Studio, 1120 Union St., Reading, PA 19604, price \$3.50).

Al Hermanns, whose *Organizing Open Harmony* was reviewed in this column recently (Dec.-Jan. 76-77), has published two more "Organ-izing" books. One of them is of rather general interest to any student of pop organ playing who may be having problems apportioning beats where they belong. The second, *Left Hand Counter-Melodies*, is of special interest to the would be theatre organist. In my opinion Al Hermanns has tackled a major problem with his usual directness, skill and efficiency. Teacher/organist Al breaks counter melody into six strategies and then proceeds to demonstrate how each strategy works. Nothing that he suggests violates good, sound theory of counterpoint. Particularly perceptive, I thought, was his advice about using a major seventh "for a counter-melody whenever the melody is the second, third, or fifth tone of the scale." There is nothing "square" about Al Hermanns methodology.

This book, like others in the series,

contains special arrangements of pop tunes which illustrate what Al has been saying. Two are certainly adequate; three are really fine. "Release Me" works very nicely as a demonstration of double counter melodies. "I'm Thru With Love" is a delight to play and sounds more tricky than it is. "When I Grow Too Old To Dream" — once you get beyond the overblown intro — is loaded with integrity. The way Al winds up a tune leaves something to be desired, but perhaps he'll deal with snappy endings in a future publication.

Hermanns, the realist, doesn't avoid asking us to do "sitting up" exercises in his books, but again I found these exercises sensible, pleasant to play and immediately applicable. Keeping counter-melody and rhythm independent variables is the important technical hurdle.

The more of these excellent Al Hermanns "how to" books I see, the more I become convinced that the teaching of pop organ has improved tremendously since we were kids. As for the teaching of theatre style playing, it has surely reached the millenium! □

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See page 10



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