

place. It is almost unheard of to assemble 60 musicians and maintain harmony among the personalities. But there are no "prima donnas" in the GSU Music Department. It was complete cooperation and subordination of personal ego throughout to produce some of the most fruitful rehearsals and polished performances one could imagine. This was due in great measure to the skill in John Demos, conductor *par excellence*, who in real life is assistant professor of music and conductor of the GSU Band. There was some nervous anticipation of Mr. List's arrival only two days prior to the performance. Perhaps he might have different musical ideas. But no. He is the most charming and unassuming of all star performers — almost to the point of condescension. He was "one of the family" from the moment he arrived.

The result of all this organization and effort? Well, John McCall is now known as John *Gottschalk* McCall! Atlanta has discovered it has in Cary Lewis a solo pianist second to none, with particular facility in the technically demanding Gottschalk literature. John Demos is now a conductor to be reckoned in the top echelon. The GSU Music Department was given a showcase in the city it serves to display faculty, students and a high degree of scholarship. Atlanta Chapter had a ball. We worked like h---, but in that our group thrives. And no one enjoyed the dramatic staging of 15 pianos, harpsichord and organ on an 80 x 38 foot stage with five lifts any more than chapter members.

And how did the performance go? We do not have a qualified critical opinion since Atlanta newspapers' music critic was performing! The audience was obviously entranced. When that huge Moller console rises from the depths, bathed in a solo spot, Atlanta audiences sit quietly and pay attention, for they know pure musical ecstasy will be theirs. But the most dramatic moment came with the second selection, the overture to *Oberon*. The house was dark. The orchestra lift came into view with five concert grands and the conductor, individually spotlighted, as the music developed, the state curtain parted to reveal two additional pianos in front of a scrim lighted with red, white and blue



Eugene List, world-renowned concert artist who records for Columbia, Vanguard and Turnabout. List is known for organizing "monster concerts" of which the Keyboard Colossus is by far the largest and most elaborate.

spots. Further musical development was followed by raising the scrim to reveal four more individually spot lighted concert grands. Later in the selection the final three grands were lighted on the rear lift, revealing the entire complement of instruments and performers. The audience appeared too overcome to respond within the selection as the scene unfolded, but burst into thunderous applause at the finale. It was a respectful and highly appreciative audience of about 3,000 patrons who simply could not restrain themselves when, in the development of Gottschalk's "Banjo," the strains of "Dixie" could be detected.

The concert performance was professionally taped for delayed broadcast on WABE-FM stereo on April 30, 1977 at 9 p.m. A highlight disc recording can be made available to ATOS members provided demand is sufficient to defray expenses plus union recording payments. You may make your wishes known (no money yet, please) by writing to the chapter at P.O. Box 76404, Atlanta, GA 30328. While this is a "live" concert recording, the performance is unique.

Oh, yes! The box office. On a rainy, dreary day with dire predictions from the Weather Office, ticket sales filled over 3/4 of the house, with

a net of some \$8,000 after expenses toward saving the "Mighty Mo."

Closing Chord

E. Power Biggs, world-renowned concert organist, died March 10. He was 70.

Born in Westcliff, England, he received his education in Hurstpierpont College and the Royal Academy of Music. Coming to the United



E. Power Biggs

States in 1930, his debut was at New York's Wanamaker Auditorium in 1932.

Though primarily a concert organist on "straight" instruments, he was not unfriendly to the theatre instrument. He wrote the jacket notes for Ray Shelly's memorable recording on the Detroit Fox Wurlitzer in 1961, and within the last few years, made appearances at Radio City Music Hall.

His last public appearances were in two concerts at the 1976 AGO Convention in Boston.

Harry Everett Rodgers, Boston area theatre organist, passed away early in 1977 in Florida. He was 87.

His colleagues included Francis Cronin, Roy Frazee and Arthur Martel, and he was featured at such houses as the Scollay and Washington Street Olympia in Boston; the Central Square in Cambridge, and the Uphams Corner Strand in Dorchester. He also performed opening night presentations at Boston's Keith Memorial and Paramount theatres.

His radio credits were obtained over WNAC, WHDH and WLAW. In latter years, he performed many times on the ex-WNAC Wurlitzer, which was installed at Babson College in Stoneham, Mass.

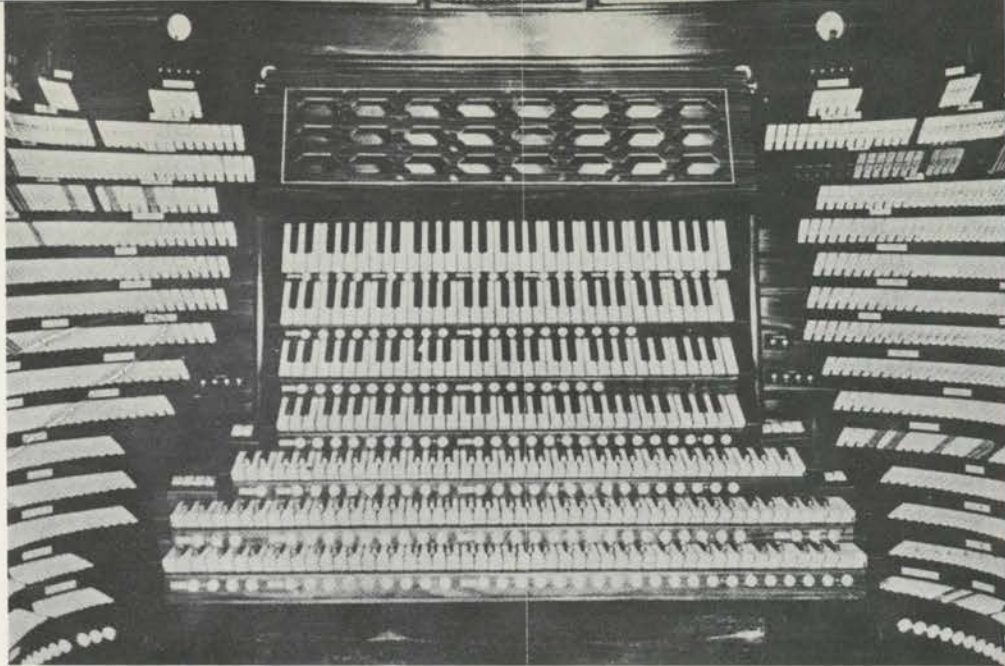
Richard H.M. Kullberg, New England theatre organist, died March 11. He was 65.

Mr. Kullberg was born in Providence, R.I. His advanced education was at Northeastern University in Boston and the Berklee School of Music. His early theatre organ training included a period with Jesse Crawford, and he also studied with Emil Velazco.

He performed in much of the Rhode Island area, including Loew's State in Providence, and a small theatre in Lansdale. He also performed in New York's Roxy Theatre.

When in London during World War II, he played several theatre organs including the Trocadero. Returning to the states, he was appointed staff organist for Loew's Theatres. In more recent years, he was a teacher of organ.

Mr. Kullberg is survived by his wife Inez, two sons, two grandchildren, a brother and three sisters. □



Console of the 7/455 Midmer-Losh.

Citizens Group to Restore Convention Hall Organ

by Charles Librizzi

In Atlantic City, an attempt to restore Convention Hall's pipe organ believed to be the world's largest, was launched yesterday by Atlantic City Renaissance, a citizens group.

Curt Haessner, of Sweetwater, who has been studying the organ design for the past year, estimated it would take \$300,000 to bring the instrument back to full working order. Currently, only a portion of the organ can still be played. It was built in 1929 by Midmer-Losh Inc., Merrick, Long Island, N.Y. for \$500,000.

Haessner said an additional \$300,000 is needed to seal the hall's seven-acre domed roof to prevent moisture from further damaging the 33,112 pipes divided into 455 ranks placed high up in the auditorium.

Howard K. Persina, hall manager, said there are no municipal funds available for the restoration, but the city has a federal grant application pending for repairing the roof.

John A. Petale, member of the citizens group, said it has arranged with Haessner, 41, chief organist at the 60,000-member Church of St. Joseph

of the Palisades, West New York, Hudson County, to record an album of musical selections on the organ as a fund raiser.

"There are seven chambers which are not playing and we are only using a fifth of the instrument but what is working is about equal to what is heard in St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York," Haessner said.

Petale said the album, expected to contain songs connected with the resort such as the Miss America Pageant theme and "On the Boardwalk in Atlantic City," is being produced by Rip Griffith of Milmay.

Griffith, head of his own recording company called Alphasound, said the pressing will be done in Nashville.

Singers Becky Bobbins, Ray Armstrong and Sonya Ruby, all from the resort area, also will be heard on the album.

Mrs. Emerson L. Richards, wife of the late senator from Atlantic City and the man who designed the organ, expressed her appreciation at the effort being made to restore the instrument.

"At one time they wanted to scrap it and put an electronic one in its place," she said. "The senator would have turned over in his grave." □

Reprinted through the courtesy of *The Evening and Sunday Bulletin* of Philadelphia.