

A NEW CHAPTER...

OKLAHOMA CITY

by Paul Haggard

In 1936 Radio Station WKY installed a 4/14 Kilgen theatre organ. The organ was installed and maintained by Paul Haggard during its tenure at WKY.

In 1951 WKY moved their headquarters and the organ was sold to the city (Oklahoma City) for a token fee. It was reinstalled in the Civic Auditorium. The auditorium was remodeled in 1967. The organ was damaged during the remodeling and neglect became the order of the day.

In 1976 civic minded Mrs. Jackie Carey decided to start a "Save the Organ" campaign and called on Paul Haggard to give an estimate of cost and feasibility. It was natural that Paul would approach the project with considerable enthusiasm.

We'll let him tell the story from that point to the present.

During the restoration project, which took eleven months, many people came by, quite a few more in-

terested than the normal person. It occurred to me one day that we should form a local chapter of ATOS. After some preliminary talks with Ray Snitil President of ATOS and "Cap" Young of ATOS National Office we called our first meeting with eleven charter members. The chapter has been growing each day since.

The chapter was very helpful in the dedication concert. They worked as ushers, in public relations, on the final stages of the organ, manned booths for memberships in the chapter and sold records.

We have been asked to join the Arts Festival Council in Oklahoma City, and they will co-sponsor a Hector Olivera concert with us. The Council is a 3500-member group of leading culture exponents here, and we will have their promotional and financial help in getting us started on our first paid concert.

From the beginning of the project, which he inspired, Mr. Walter,

"Bill" Ashby, manager of the Civic Center Music Hall, and a long-time violinist in the Oklahoma City Symphony, turned out to be one of the finest business managers I have ever run into. After 25 years with the old Geo. Kilgen & Sons, of St. Souis, and then 20 years with Aeolian-Skinner Organ Co., of Boston, in sales, service, installation and management, I ran across many types of business managers. I have never found one like Bill who had both the business management, and the aesthetic expertise to balance both. Consequently all problems that came up in the project were solved in our favor.

We had the full backing of Mayor Patience Latting and the city council. They proclaimed a "Kilgen Restoration Day," and issued framed copies of the proclamation to Ken Wright, who played the organ in the old WKY days. (Our chapter made Ken a lifetime honorary member, and presented him with a framed colored picture of the console.)

We had the backing and enthusiastic support of the chamber of commerce, the large City Art Department and the entire crew of the Civic Center Music Hall. The huge Kerr-McGee Foundation sent special photographers and a writer from New York and are publishing pictures and a story in their annual stockholders report, which goes around the world.

A grand reception was held on the fourth floor of the Civic Center, attended by 650 V.I.P.'s invited on special silver invitations.

The dedication was opened by the mayor presenting a large bronze plaque with the heading Kilgen Organ Restoration 1977, and inscribed with the names of the mayor, city council, organ committee, and builder, it has been installed on the wall of the beautiful entry lobby of

The 4/14 Kilgen in the Civic Auditorium, Oklahoma City.



the building.

The mayor presented the vivacious and efficient chairwoman of the organ committee to the audience, Mrs. Jackie Carey, prominent leader in the cultural world of the city.

Mrs. Carey then presented the most thrilling person of our whole dedication, our ATOS President Ray F. Snitil, who, accompanied by his wife, Dorothy, gave an inspiring talk to the audience, and in turn presented the OK City Chapter Charter to the writer, as chairman of the local group. This made our day complete.

Mrs. Carey then announced, "Here's Hector Olivera at the Kilgen organ."

The rest was glorious. Although I knew the organ had its potential, and was a success as organ building goes, I didn't know it could be brought out like that. I heard things come out of the organ I didn't know existed. We worked on the action for months, and it is naturally fast, but I didn't know that it would ever be called on to answer to that kind of technique. Standing ovations during extraordinary phrases, and three standing ovations at the end brought four encores. They still talk about it and through so much admiration for him, we decided to bring him back. He and his manager, Walt Molt, certainly are doing things to bring out the former uninterested listeners, from teen-agers to the older fans.

Our chapter has been fortunate in having the organ as our own home base instrument, and we have the full facilities of the entire city to promote the organ, use it, add to it or whatever we desire.

It is used with the symphony, and all events are urged to use it before openings and during intermissions. We are doing this with the week-long run of *Hello Dolly*, starring Carol Channing, with the city paying for two of our members, Lou Ann Rice and Curt Chambers. It was used for a bash for Ronald Reagan recently. It will be used for two large productions at Christmas for the mayor's Christmas program.

We have had the wonderful cooperation of the Sooner State Chapter who were specially invited to attend this program and have plenty of things planned in conjunction with them. □

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE TECHNICAL SIDE

by Lance Johnson

1. **I am helping my boyfriend set up his Wurlitzer theatre organ and he insists that all tremolos are winded directly to the regulator. I also know that tremolos drive him crazy when he tries to adjust them but he says that all the Wurlitzers he has seen had the tremulant connected to the regulator and not the windchest.**

Ans. To my knowledge, Wurlitzer never winded tremulant to regulators in theatre installations. It is possible that this was done on church installations. The ideal is to cause the maximum amount of shaking of the wind and get the source of the shaking (tremulant) as far away from the correcting device (regulator) as possible. Wind enters one end of the chest and the take-off for the tremulant is at the other end and connects to the tremulant pipe by means of a manifold. (Boyfriends don't like being corrected. Better handle this one with diplomacy.)

2. **Here is a tip from one of our readers, Ken Ladner of Howard Beach, NY. "I found that after fifty years, my theatre organ stop tablets needed a bath. I put them in hot soapy water only to have all the engrave fill come out. Bob Atkins, a friend of mine, suggested flat black latex paint. With a small cheap brush I painted over the engraving starting with about ten tablets at a time, allowing a half hour to dry. Then after applying scouring powder and water to my fingers, I gently rubbed off the excess paint. It will be necessary**

occasionally to apply two coats as the scouring powder may remove too much paint. This system does not seem to work well on pistons. I carried two tablets in my pockets for a few weeks to make sure the engraving would not wear off."

3. **Please suggest best Main or Solo placement for the following Kimball ranks:**

Ans. I assume you are asking for a Wurlitzer style arrangement of Main and Solo. (Below are the ranks submitted with the chamber designation by the Q & A editor:)

Diaphonic Diapason 16-4 M
Tibia 16-2 S
Flute 16-2 M
Violin I 16-2 S
Violin Celeste II 8-4 M
Tuba 8 M or S
Trombone 16-4 S
English Horn (Cor Anglais 8-4 . . S
Kinura 8 S
Clarinet 8 M
Vox 8—4 S
Harp Celesta M
Chimes, Orch bells, Xylophone,
Traps, Toy Counter S

4. **I have had two intermittent dead notes in my Wurlitzer Tibia Piccolo 4, for some time. I have worked the relay note and switch but can't find out why it should be dead off and on. Can you give me any help? The chest magnet and primary works perfectly with a test wire.**

Ans. Try the following process of elimination:

a) Make sure relay note will repeat rapidly with no skipping. If skipping occurs, it could be dirty contacts, either at the relay, switch bar or relay contact.

Do you have any questions?

Send them direct to:

QUIZ MASTER
And Organ Builder

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