

Falling on My Head." It got so monotonous that one theatre organ club requested organists not to schedule the tune on their programs. It would be of benefit to everyone, players and listeners alike, if lists of selections played (instead of subjective reviews) were printed in our publication in the way that *The Diapason* did with classical programs for years. Performers could learn therefrom what they should refrain from playing in the interests of freshness and variety. Prospective employers could learn a great deal more about players by studying their programs than they would from reviews too often expressed only in exuberant general terms. It might not stop some determined players from beating old musical horses to death, but it might make others give more serious thought to programming.

It is everyone's loss that much great and not-so-great music is no longer played. Theatre music was mostly second or third-rated material, but it pointed the way to more extended and better things. The pop music of the theatre age was of relatively high quality because the other music that was played in profusion was respectable, even if not of the highest quality. Today's pop music is what it is because there is little else with which to compare it. It illustrates again a truism that is now a cliché: if we neglect something, it will deteriorate. A legion of forgotten melodies could bear revival. □

**moving?**



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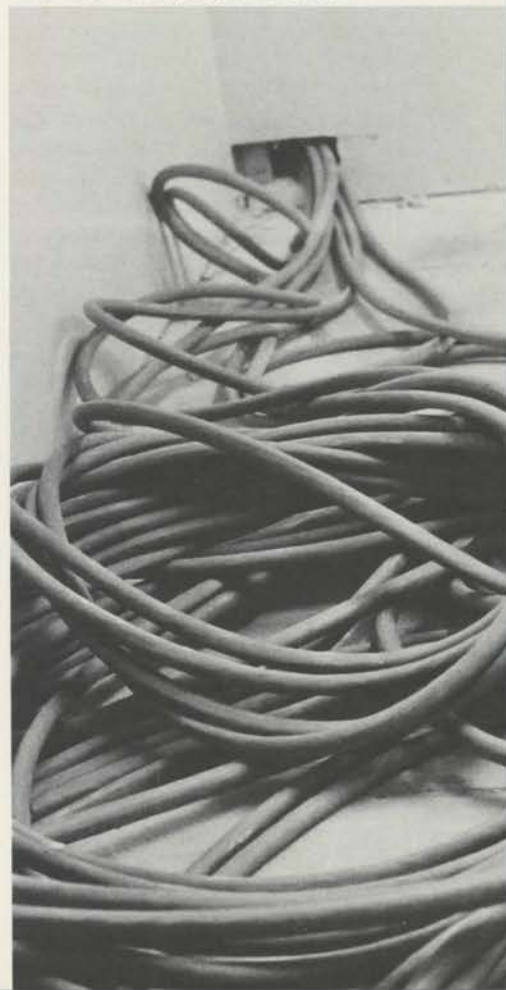
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# The Significance of the Mightiest Wurlitzer

When The Wurlitzer Company announced the construction of a theatre organ for their new corporate headquarters, theatre organ enthusiasts sensed something significant was happening. Indeed, the excitement has generated almost as many rumors as questions. Still, two questions remain unanswered. How significant is this instrument? And why is it being built at this time?

The answer to both questions lies in the history of The Wurlitzer Company. The Company can point to a long list of pioneering achievements in the American music industry. For example, Rudolph Wurlitzer was one of the first to streamline the distribution of musical instruments from manufacturer to customer, thus making music affordable to all Americans. At the turn of the century, the Wurlitzer Tonophone, which made automatic music at the drop of a coin, won a Gold Medal at the Pan American Exposition. We all know about Wurlitzer's leadership in theatre organ design and construction. Wurlitzer juke boxes set the style for public music from the thirties right through the sixties. And today, Wurlitzer is one of the world's leading manufacturers of

Huge cables snake out of the wall and into the orchestral chamber of The Mightiest Wurlitzer. Over 342 miles of wire have been laid to connect the console with relays, boards and chests.



keyboard instruments for homes and education.

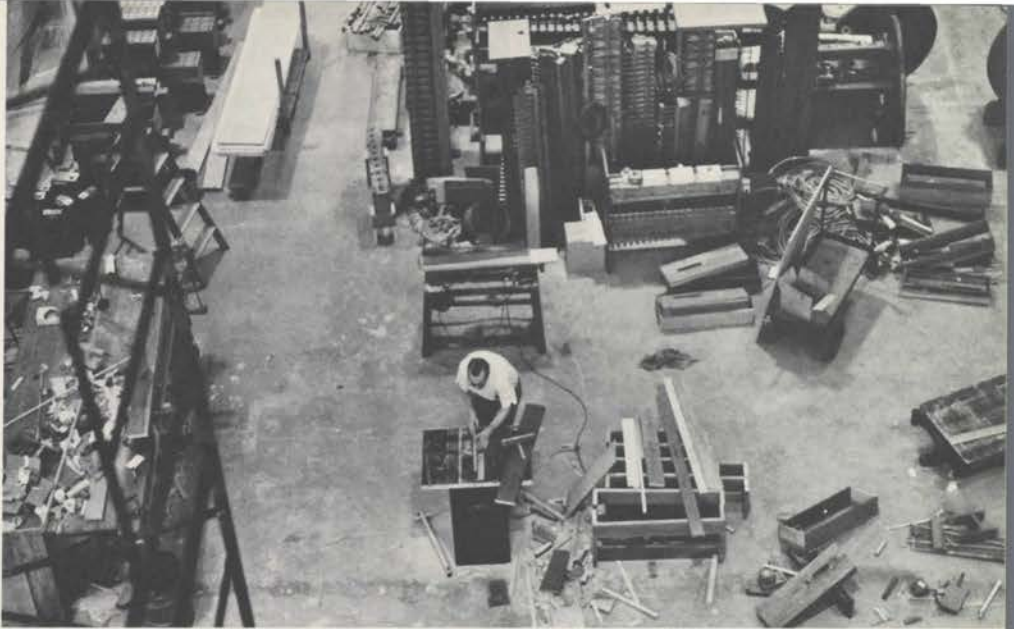
All of this activity took place over 12 decades in a number of different locations: Cincinnati, Chicago, North Tonawanda, DeKalb, IL and more recently Corinth and Holly Springs, MS and Logan, UT. Now that all corporate activities have been centered in the new headquarters in DeKalb, you might say that The Wurlitzer Company has built itself a home. And at the center of this home is magnificent Wurlitzer Hall, a fitting site for the ultimate theatre organ.

The organ's primary purpose is to preserve a uniquely twentieth century American art form — the design and construction of theatre organs. In fact, you might call it a uniquely Wurlitzer art, because Wurlitzer was one of the few organ builders who designed and constructed whole instruments, including all of their component parts.

But the art of theatre organ building was not static. During that third of the century when Wurlitzer was most active in making pipe organs, the theatre organ and its distinctive voices underwent a definite evolution. The Tibia and Vox Humana, for examples, although uniquely Wurlitzer in tonal qualities, sounded very much different in 1926, say, than they did in 1916 or 1921. Therefore, among the more than five dozen ranks in The Mightiest Wurlitzer, there will be at least five representative Tibia ranks and five Vox ranks.

This attempt to build an instrument that is representationally complete points up the reason for its size. It is Wurlitzer's intention to provide an instrument capable of producing historically authentic sounds from a number of different evolutionary points along the way to the ultimate Mighty Wurlitzer organs of the late twenties and early thirties. Typical Wurlitzer church organ ranks are also included in The Mightiest's specifications.

Now that Wurlitzer has consolidated its national and international activities in one centrally located headquarters, the theatre organ also has a home. The Mightiest Wurlitzer, then, is a significant tribute to both the organ maker's art and the organist's. Because now there will be one instrument capable of demonstrating the scope of both. □



The view from the open shelf of the Toy Counter of The Mightiest Wurlitzer. The carpenter working some forty feet below trims replacement parts to original Wurlitzer specifications.



Lou Rosa, friend and confidant to the late Fanny Wurlitzer, is still an active member of the Wurlitzer staff. Here he checks the relay wiring on The Mightiest Wurlitzer during installation at Wurlitzer Corporate Headquarters in DeKalb, IL.

Pipes, traps and chests laid out and inventoried on the floor of Wurlitzer Hall before installation. The Mightiest Wurlitzer will include typical examples of the evolutionary development of the theatre pipe organ.

