



THEATRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY GOES TO TEXAS

Austin's Paramount Theatre (nee Majestic) opened in 1915 — a John Eberson design like its San Antonio counterpart. It was built in the era of the pre-organ pit symphony orchestra, so began its theatrical life — as it ended it — organless. Now a \$600,000 grant has been given the theatre by the Economic Development Administration for its refurbishment as a performing arts center. Hopefully, there is an organ somewhere in need of a home that will find one here.

by Clifford Edge

Picture palaces, pizza parlors, millionaire's mansions . . . they all add up to eight different playable organs which will be available in concert, and for open console, in a four-and-a-half day whirl of activities across Texas in July. It begins as an afterglow to the Atlanta ATOS Convention and ends with the Theatre Historical Society conclave in San Antonio and Austin. Along the way are included over twenty theatres of every description, several museums and theatrical displays and some real challenges to organ diagnosticians and doctors!

ATOS members should reserve

Delta Flight #209 on July 13, known to Texan organ affectionados as the Robert Morton Flight, in identification of most of the region's instruments, which will take you from Atlanta to Beaumont, Texas. There you will be met by Al Sacker and the newly organized Southeast Texas Chapter of ATOS for a day-and-a-half of tours and organ happenings around that coastal city. The Houston Chapter of ATOS will be co-hosts of activities which will be climaxed by a 1927-style bash in the Jefferson

Theatre with a silent movie, organ concert, sing-along, simulated vaudeville and the works! Beaumont is now providing big vibes in its organ accomplishments, with plans on its drawing board to make a major city green with envy. (This town has only a little over a hundred-thousand population and is now developing projects which will give it six outstanding pipe organs.) Its ATOS people hope to spin off their enthusiasm into even greener pastures elsewhere in the state.

On July 15, a cross-Texas bus tour will be hosted by the League of Historic Theatres, and will include stops in Houston, Galveston and Columbus en route from Beaumont to San Antonio.

In San Antonio, the focus will be upon a study to be presented by leading architects and urban planners for the adaptive re-use of seven downtown theatres as a performing arts district. These, along with several additional theatres and points of historic interest, will be included in walking tours. The final day, July 18, will be spent in Austin, where a highlight will be a visit to the Hoblitzelle Theatre Arts Library, which contains much theatrical memorabilia. One of the last activities — to cap off many miles of travel — might well be a visit to Loew's Theatre in Canton, Ohio. Well, not quite. Its 3/11 Robert Morton will be in concert at an Austin restaurant to be visited by the group.

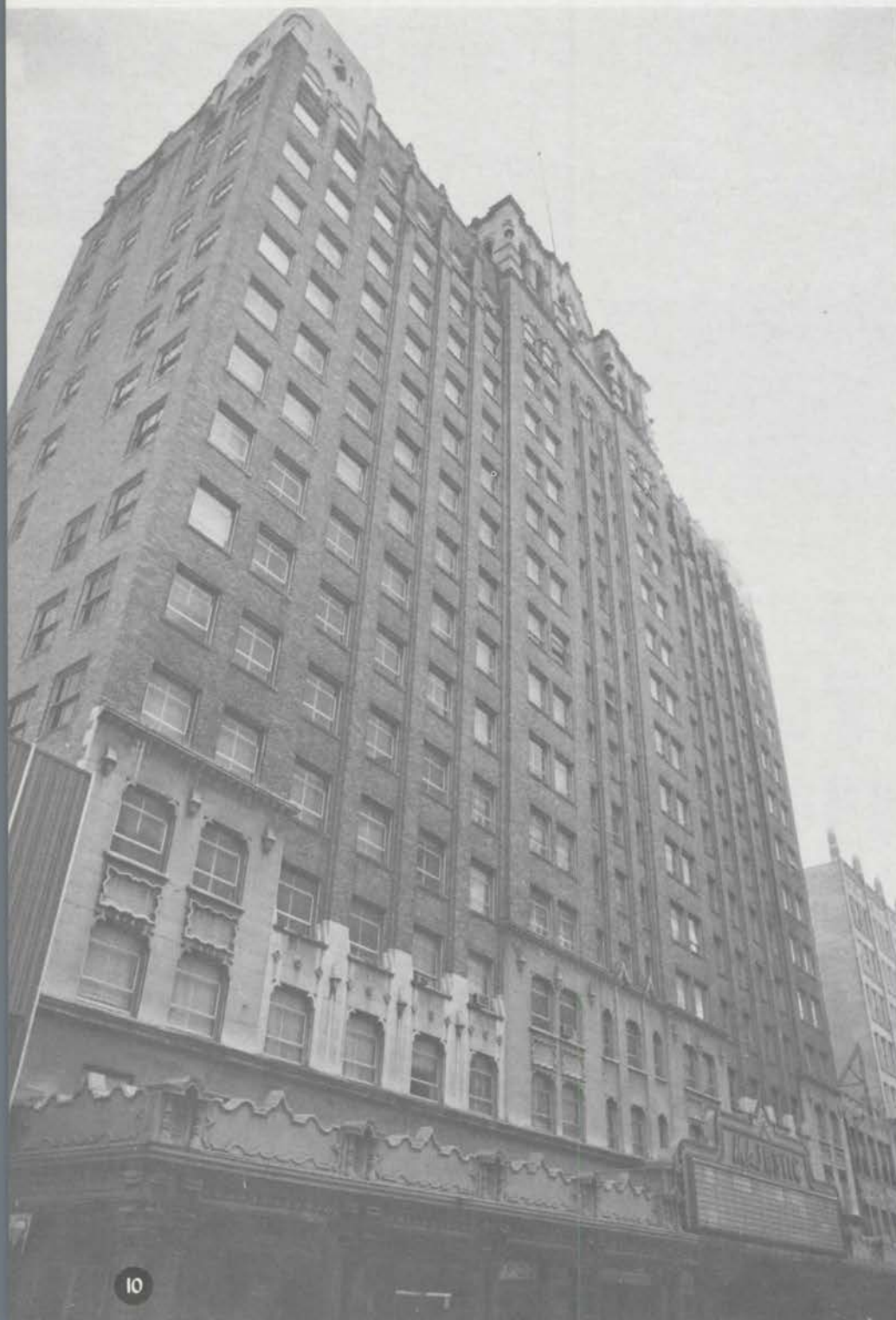


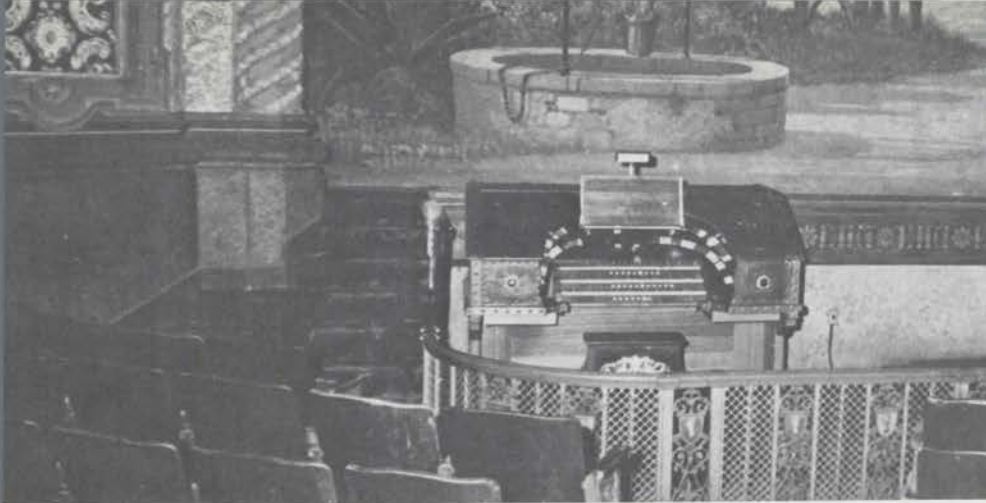
Registration information about the Texas activities can be secured from Al Sacker, Southeast Texas ATOS, Jefferson Theatre, P.O. Box 3925, Beaumont, Texas 77704; Clifford Edge, theatre Historical Society Headquarters, Gunter Hotel, P.O. Box 360, San Antonio, Texas 78292; or Robert Stoddard, League of Historic Theatres, 3208 North Monroe, Wilmington, Delaware 19802.



A major goal of the Texas activities will be the formation of an active ATOS group in the San Antonio area. Three of the downtown theatres have organ installations and two of these are literally awaiting ATOS people to bring them to life. Other state chapters are cooperating in ATOS promotional efforts, and there will be, during the San Antonio meeting, an affinity group of prospective ATOS members brought to-

◀ San Antonio's huge (3,700-seat) Moorish atmospheric Majestic Theatre will soon reopen as a performing arts center. Long asleep and silent within is its 3/11 Robert Morton organ, which has been waiting, like Sleeping Beauty, for its re-awakening. When its voice is again heard, it will be in an auditorium said to be acoustically perfect. Another Morton and a Moller are in nearby theatres.





The long-silent 3/11 Robert Morton organ may be refurbished when San Antonio's Majestic Theatre becomes a performing arts center.

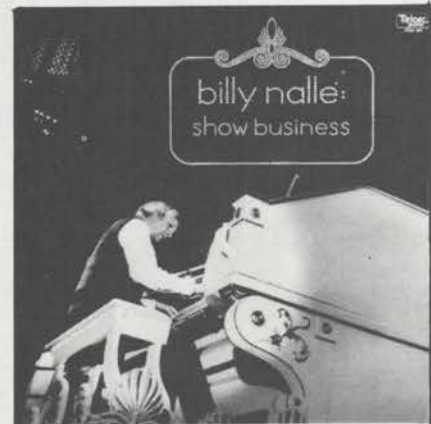


The Majestic Theatre, San Antonio, Texas, is an early Ebersson atmospheric.

ATOS members who have been keeping up with the 3/11 Robert Morton from the 1927 Loew's Canton, Ohio, Theatre will be happy to know that it is alive and well down in Texas where Dayle Harris, owner of Austin's Scampi's Organ Palace, installed it in his popular restaurant. Those who take part in the after-Atlanta-Texas trek will hear the instrument in the capable hands of head organist Leonard Woosley, shown here at the console. Through the summer he will be scoring the silent cliff-hanger serial *Lady in Gray* with the twice-nightly episodes changed each week.



gether for organizational purposes. To a person, those in the theatrical and conservation organizations which have brought about the theatre restoration projects are saying, "We can preserve theatre buildings but it takes the organs to bring life into them." It is an irony that while in many parts of the country ATOS members find themselves without theatres, in the Southwest it is just the opposite. And hopefully, ATOS will meet the challenge — which is decidedly the kind of opportunity it likes! □



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