



Ann Leaf. Vancouver likes her.

(Pegpic)

ary concerts on the style 240 Wurlitzer (3/13) in the Orpheum theatre. In the *Sun*, Lloyd Dykk's review was headlined "Little Organ Annie Charms 'em at the Orpheum." The *Province's* Ted Wing headlined his review "Ann Leaf an Entertaining Lady." In another issue of the same paper, Helen Bateson headed her article, "She's a Little Lady Who Makes Mighty Music." And radio station CHOM got into line with a very favorable verbal account of the two concerts. It was superlatives all the way. Like we said, those Canadian critics sure have good taste.



The grand guy of Chicago skating rinks, Leon Berry, now 63, is still going strong. We haven't heard too much about him of late, but in spite of a stroke awhile back, he still fingers the keys and taps the pedals of the Orbit Roller Rink's electronic in Palatine, Ill. Berry performs there twice a week, and is considered the best in the business by his employers. Well remembered are his "Beast in the Basement" series of recordings which were made at the time he played a pipe organ in the Hub Rink from 1950 to 1967. Now known as "The Dean of Roller Rink Rock," Berry has two loves in his life: his wife, Mildred, whom he married about seven years ago, and music played on a theatre pipe organ. Russ Joseph says, "It is heartwarming to see how ardently his loyal older, as well as younger, fans come out to listen to and skate to his lilting melodies, played with all the vitality and feeling which have marked his musical career." □



the letters to the editors

Letters to the Editor concerning all aspects of the theatre organ hobby are encouraged. Send them to the editor concerned. Unless it's stated clearly on the letter "not for publication," the editors feel free to reproduce it, in whole or part.

Address:

George Thompson
Editor
P.O. Box 1314
Salinas, Calif. 93902

Dear George:

You can be very proud of a beautiful magazine — it will stand up to anything published as far as I am concerned. I look forward to it every month.

Four years ago I was able to purchase, and install in my home, a 2/7 Wurlitzer Opus 1080 Model 105 which had been repossessed by the factory and re-installed in a church in Coldwater, Michigan, from where I obtained it. It had only chimes, in addition to the ranks, and I have managed to pick up a combination harp and orchestral bells and am trying hard to find a Toy Counter. The only way I was able to install it, having had little previous experience, was to copy exactly the way it was originally installed. Incidentally the organ was originally in the Elm Theatre in Philadelphia, Pa., and I would greatly be interested in any information about the theatre and/or the organ from any readers.

I have also gotten a small group of people interested in restoring the original installation organ in our theatre in town, a 3/8 Barton. The chests have all incurred severe water damage and will require a great deal of work. If this group does not do the work on the organ, the organ will be

left to rot. I would like to suggest that people in areas such as ours, which happens to be 90 miles away from the nearest ATOS active chapter, in Detroit, and without the knowledge and guidance of people such as that, need all the help we can get in a restoration such as this. A series of articles on restoration would, I believe, be of great interest to many of us "untrained" ATOSers. Thank you for any consideration you can give us.

Sincerely,

R.C. Rowan, M.D.
Albion, Mich.

Dear Mr. Thompson:

Ben Levy's letter in the April/May, 1978, issue of THEATRE ORGAN will probably, as Mr Levy suggests, incur the ire of some ATOS members; yet, I hope those who disagree with him are few. The fact is that many, perhaps most, of the few remaining theatre organs are indeed being desecrated. In item after item one reads of a 2/7 that is now a 3/49; owners pose proudly beside their Wurlli-Marr-Mort-Bart-Moll-Wick-Austins. At this very moment a highly-touted project of a local chapter of ATOS is the removal of an original Wurlitzer installation from a theatre and the installation of a mammoth Wurlitzer from another theatre in its place — a violation of both national and local by-laws, which suggest as a prime objective, the retention and restoration of theatre organs in their original locations.

True, an owner is entitled to do what he pleases with an organ he owns, but the ATOS rank and file ought not to applaud these selfish alterations — especially when the organ is still in a theatre or other public place. As a restoration crew member currently working on a 2/8 Wurlitzer in a local theatre, I have observed a procession of visiting experts who have suggested such improvements as adding strings, Tibias, and reeds; re-winding this chest; dividing that chest; adding tremulants; synchronizing tremulants; adding couplers; increasing wind pressures; and so on ad nauseam. Though I have steadfastly refused to consider such aberrations, the day may come when I am outvoted. Assuming that this theatre and its organ are around fifty years from now, I feel that the atreagoers in 2028 would prefer hearing the Wurlitzer as it sounded in the

year of its installation, 1928, not as someone in 1978 thinks it should sound. Do not we crew members have an obligation to preserve for posterity the sound of the theatre organ as originally conceived by Wurplitzer, Morton, Barton, et al.?

Authorities in the classical organ field have come to realize that it is the eleventh hour in saving the few remaining romantic, orchestral organs, such as those built by E.M. Skinner. The few remaining are being preserved. Where a more classic sound is required, a small tracker-action organ can be built in the same room (would that the Hope-Jones in the Ocean Grove Auditorium had been left intact and a second organ installed!). Theatre organ enthusiasts need to realize that theatre organs are no longer being built. Those remaining must stay as they are.

Another matter, related to the preservation of organs, should be mentioned for consideration. I have consistently heard theatre organ aficionados criticize the "classical" organ, degrade some of the greatest organists, ridicule the A.G.O., and condemn classical (usually called "heavy") organ music. A reviewer in the August/September, 1975, THEATRE ORGAN (p. 35), referring to the late E. Power Biggs, mentioned "those dullsville organs he so loves." Why cannot theatre organ and classical organ people alike realize that there are different organs for different kinds of music? Mr. Biggs had perhaps recorded music that the reviewer did not care for on an organ that the reviewer did not find appeal-

ing, but that is purely opinion. Many, myself included, number the organs on which Mr. Biggs recorded among the world's finest.

Let's live and let live and distinguish fact from opinion. Not bickering and sniping, but cooperation between popular and classical and amateur and professional branches of the organ world alone can save from oblivion the organs of America's past — tracker, romantic, and theatre.

Sincerely,
Roy E. Frenzke

Dear Mr. Thompson:

After reading Mr. Ben Levy's letter concerning the restoration by alteration of the once mighty theatre organ, I strongly suggest that in keeping with our present objectives, we change our name from ATOS to APOS (American Pizza Organ Society). Then we would no longer have to worry about what happens to the great organs after they are taken from the movie palaces.

Sincerely,
Miles J. Rudisill, Jr.

Dear Mr. Thompson:

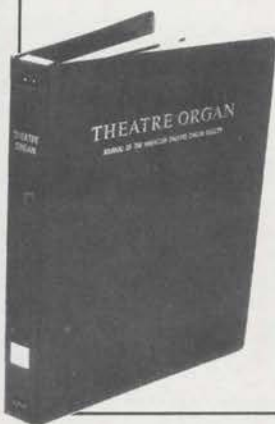
I was interested to read some remarks on Page 28 of THEATRE ORGAN February/March which were made in connection with a record review of Don Knight's *All Through The Knights Deroys* LPs. The reviewer states — "From all we have gathered over the years, this instrument (the Odeon Leicester Square London Compton 5/17 and Mel-tone) is mechanically and tonally

more straight than theatrical, and entertainment specialists must work hard to obtain a theatrical sound etc., etc." I would like to point out to your readers that this supposition is entirely wrong. The Odeon Leicester Square organ is a fully fledged theatre organ, a unit organ, and highly typical in character of hundreds of organs built at this period (1937) of the largest theatre organ builder in Europe. It is not and has never been straight or even partially unified. It has been my privilege to have as friends three organists of great repute in Europe who have been and are often called upon to play the organ the most famous "in theatre" instrument in the United Kingdom. Many years ago I had the advantage of discussing the organ with the great organ builder genius himself and his partner, the late Jimmy Taylor, who was principally responsible for the design which was based somewhat on the famous BBC theatre organ. The original instrument which was destroyed in the early part of the war. A friend of mine, Mr. James Pollard, who is probably the last surviving key member of John Compton's associates, supervised the meticulous installation of this organ which functions as well as it always has and is tuned and maintained professionally as ever. It is used for film premiers, organ concerts and hired by the BBC for frequent broadcasts. It has also been the venue for your ATOS 'Safari.'

Yours sincerely,

Ian G. Dalglish
Kent, England □

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