

career as a theatre organist at age 13 in Lewiston, Idaho. Later she played in theatres including the Pantages in Spokane and the Seattle Fox, and in clubs throughout the Northwest in addition to doing regular radio concerts.

Her repertoire ranged from popular to classical music and she was known to play continuously for up to six hours without the aid of sheet music.

During the late 1960s, she gave concerts at the Food Circus in the Seattle Center. She played many benefit concerts including some at a Rodgers organ in her home.

She was born in Denver, Idaho, and had lived in Seattle for the last 33 years. Her husband of 32 years, Samuel J., survives along with cousins. □



## the letters to the editors

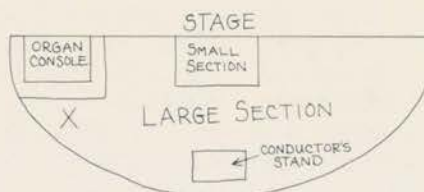
Letters to the Editor concerning all aspects of the theatre organ hobby are encouraged. Send them to the editor concerned. Unless it's stated clearly on the letter "not for publication," the editors feel free to reproduce it, in whole or part.

Address:

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

Dear Mr. Thompson,

Greeting from one of the newest members of ATOS. I just received my first issues of THEATRE ORGAN and what a pleasure it was to see the article "The Fox Is Saved." I have played in the Fox many times and as a bass player, my spot on the bandstand was just in front of the console of that fine Moller. I don't



The organ lift, the main orchestra lift and a smaller section were all controlled from switches on the conductor's stand. The smaller section had room enough for a 14-piece band with a baby grand piano. A 50-piece orchestra was generally used for pops concerts at the Fox but the Met used a 65-piece orchestra during their spring tour. The author used to play in stage bands for the Met, and usually sat near the organ console (marked X) when playing with larger orchestras.

think a person who hasn't had the opportunity to hear or play music in the Fox can really comprehend or appreciate the superb acoustics of that theatre.

At the time I played there, the organ was in sad condition and I used to think what a shame to let something so noble in voice deteriorate like it had then. It is nice to know that something has been done to restore that voice to its true grandeur again.

I have enclosed a drawing of the

bandstand in the Fox as it was then. In the April/May issue the picture on page 37 shows a bench, but when I played in the Fox it had a seat as shown with the console pictured on page 38.

Best Regards  
Jim Hopperstad  
Citrus Heights, CA

Dear Mr. Thompson:

I have been a member of ATOS for fifteen years and would like to thank your organization for the immense pleasure which it has brought to me during that time.

It has been most gratifying to see how ATOS has grown and matured over the years and how it has taken on the difficult task of moving from organ preservation to theatre preservation as well. Were it not for the efforts of ATOS, many cities in this country would be much the poorer.

As is the case with anything we care deeply about, we always want it to be better than it can ever be. I find myself wishing that all ATOS chapters could accomplish what the

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most active ones have done, and that all factionalism could forever be removed. I also wish that some fine efforts in theatre organ restoration could be publicized more, but there are always those modest souls who refuse to brag about themselves.

My strongest wish, however, is that ATOS continue with its fine work and the expression of that work through your magazine, and that it continue to excite and attract people of all ages and interests.

Very truly yours,  
Henry B. Aldridge, Ph.D.  
Ypsilanti, Mich.

Dear Editor:

Down through most all of your issues, which almost always contain informative and concise record reviews, I have found little disagreement with the record-reviewer. However, in the Feb.-March '78 issue, I can't share the reviewers disappointment concerning a recent record *A Lyn Larsen Concert* made on the former Fisher Theatre Wurlitzer which is now owned by the Detroit Theater Organ Club and is in that city's Senate Theater. Here, Lyn plays an excellent array of selections so popular on the big movie palace Wurlitzers in their hey-day. The reviewer claims Mr. Larsen has done much copying in re-creating the arrangements of Jesse Crawford and George Wright. Contrary to the reviewer, if you want the best in theatre organ sounds which help you dream you are back in the great movie palaces at intermission or concert time, you'll find Lyn Larsen's "re-creations" choice entertainment.

It's hard to believe that Lyn (who is too young to have played in the big movie palaces) knows something the reviewer doesn't. This could be the established surmise that, theatre organists like Jesse Crawford, Don Baker, George Wright (alphabetically) and many more, created these arrangements while practicing (if you will) with their back to an acre of empty seats in these darkened palaces of splendor. In the wee hours of the morning or late evening, after the show, these organists put together startling combinations and registrations as they were considering not only the size and decor of the theatre and the movie showing that week or month, but they tried to

anticipate the very temperament of the next day's audience. All of these considerations put together became the inspiration which these organist-entertainers needed to create these arrangements of the popular tunes of the day. These are the things which projected this attraction from the ivory and gold console, bathed in blushing hues, from the proscenium up to the box office, where the manager realized that his mighty Wurlitzer had become a very important part of the daily program.

While not neglecting a respect due all young theatre organists who, today are playing all kinds of things on salvaged mighty Wurlitzers in all kinds of public places, they are certainly keeping the king-of-instruments from becoming a curiosity in somebody's parlor. Until such a time that their efforts are recorded as the theatre organ sounds of an era, I'll look forward to any and all records like Lyn Larsen at the Senate Theater Wurlitzer, re-creating the music like it was played from the N.Y.

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Also looking forward to all future issues of THEATRE ORGAN, I remain

Your very truly,  
John Mecklenburg  
Central Indiana Chapter

Dear Sir:

I found the article by John Muri, "Our National Music," quite interesting. One thing which happened along the road to the selection of a National Song, or "Anthem," was overlooked. Mr. Muri was probably too young to have encountered it.

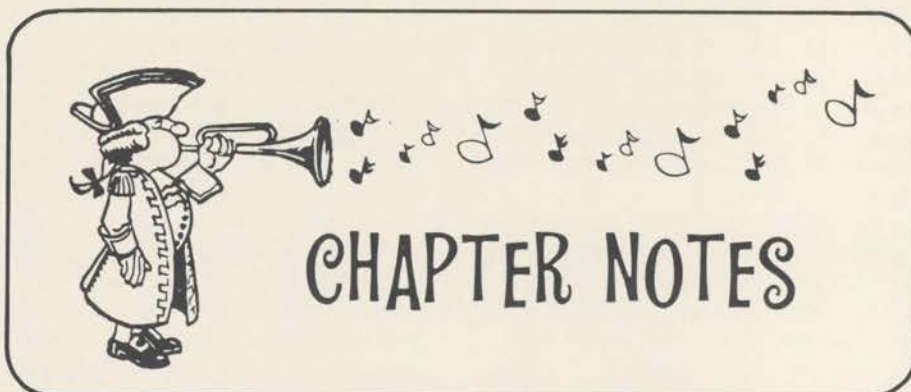
About the time I was in third grade grammar school (1911-12) a form of petition from the school children of the U.S. was being prepared. All school children were polled as to their preference for "The Star Spangled Banner" or "America The Beautiful." We were told that Congress would be notified of our vote when they took up the matter of legalizing our National Anthem. "America The Beautiful" won out because, to us, it was easier to sing and was more inspiring.

Congress voted the other way and the "Star Spangled Banner" was finally legalized as our National Anthem. The objection to "America The Beautiful," we were told, came from those with an anti-religion sentiment who complained that the piece appeared in "too many Hymnals" of different denominations. For that matter in recent years that has happened to "God Bless America" as well.

From years of playing in theatres, for large audiences, and, at the circus during patriotic pageantry, "America The Beautiful" brings the best audience participation, or response, and the most spirit. I, therefore favor that piece.

This same subject recently came up in the Retired Officers Association publication "letters" with somewhat similar results. It seems that there is a movement to finally make "America The Beautiful" our National Anthem.

Yours sincerely,  
Harry J. Jenkins  
Lt. Col. USAF, Retired  
San Diego, Calif. □



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and versatility of numbers at the Alabama Theatre Wurlitzer made for most enjoyable listening.

Our chapter was saddened by the passing of Norville Hall this past month. He was a valued and loved member of our chapter, having known the Alabama Theatre since it was constructed and actually helped to uncrate and install the Alabama Theatre Wurlitzer in 1927. We will all miss him.

RIEDEL WEST

## ALABAMA

May and June were very busy months for the members of the Alabama Chapter — all of us were involved in planning for the 1978 ATOS Convention. This is a team effort in every sense of the work, and I believe our chapter has the best possible members any chapter could want — nearly everyone has pitched in to make sure the "Alabama Day" is a success. Our monthly meeting for May was planned as open console to allow our various committees to get together and firm up the last bit of planning for the convention, and also to allow our members to try their talents on our 4/20 Alabama Theatre Wurlitzer. The music and planning were well-received.

For our June meeting, we were delighted to have Cathy Hoffman back with us. Cathy and her parents made the trip down from Bristol, Tennessee, and delighted our members with two programs. Her first stop was at the Don Cole's, in Northport, where she had a ball at the 2/6 Robert Morton that Don and Alleen recently installed. Our members in the western Alabama area were treated to a great performance by this young lady. Cathy's stylings, registrations



Cathy Hoffman, artist for the Alabama Chapter June meeting.

## CEDAR RAPIDS

This coming September 1, CRATOS extends a big invitation to join us in celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the opening of the Paramount. It is in unbelievably pristine condition, having just been completely redecorated to exactly like new. True, it doesn't have palm trees, minarets, an Arabian Nights motif, star-studded ceiling, or elephant heads taunting the patrons, instead it is a non-