

This reviewer had access to the cassette and found Bob's friendly, informal comments and his playing of the arrangements most helpful. Ralston only allows himself to be carried away once — a swing version of "Watch What Happens" which is fun to hear but bears little resemblance to the printed music.

The volume is quality printing throughout. Page turning has been avoided by eliminating a separate pedal stove; be advised that pedal notes appear on the bass clef staves.

One last consideration: could learning these Bob Ralston arrangements help the home organist create similar treatments of other tunes? Probably not, unless one has had considerable training in counterpoint. What the Ralston treatments will do, however, is to broaden one's perspective as to what makes for really good pop organ playing (*i.e.*, variety of approaches). This reviewer came away from *The Bob Ralston Touch* with a much better understanding of what separates the pro's from the dreamers. Unless you are truly satisfied with your present approach to playing pop standards, you'll welcome this one. □

Closing Chord

One of California's most beloved and respected pipe organ authorities, **Charles Hershman**, died in July at age 82 following a lengthy illness. He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Ruth.

Charles Hershman devoted over 60 years of his life to pipe organ building. He will be most remembered by clients and associates alike for his generosity of spirit and unyielding adherence to the highest standards of craftsmanship and business ethics. Toward the end of his career he devoted himself to giving freely of his knowledge to young people, who were ever grateful to receive the benefit of his unique experience.

Charles Hershman was thoroughly trained in all phases of pipe organ work from factory to installation and from church and concert instruments to theatre organs. He began his career with the M.P. Moller Co.

prior to the start of World War I. After serving in the Army overseas, he joined the Robert Morton Company of Van Nuys, Ca., becoming one of their prime installation and tonal-finishing experts. While there he was responsible for the installation of many of their most prestigious instruments, such as Loews New Orleans, the Orpheum (former Pantages) in San Francisco and the University of Southern California.

In the early 1930s, he settled in San Francisco to open his own pipe organ business which he continued until his recent retirement. Specializing in rebuilding and installation, his achievements were manifold and notable. He installed numerous sizable instruments for M.P. Moller, rebuilt and enlarged many instruments for prestigious churches and was a major participant in the theatre field, not only during the golden age of the movie palace but in the recent theatre organ revival.

Mr. Hershman often recalled as the highlight of his career his selection by the National Broadcasting Company to be fully in charge of all pipe organ installation and maintenance for the Pacific Network. In this capacity, he was responsible for two NBC organs in San Francisco, most notably the former Paramount Hollywood Studio Wurlitzer, which he so successfully reinstalled at the San Francisco Radio City studio where it was played by his friend George Wright.

What probably has become the most broadcasted and recorded organ in the world was designed, rebuilt and installed by Charles Hershman at the NBC Hollywood Studios. This was the famous "Bridge to Dreamland" organ built for Paul Carson and used on *One Man's Family*, *Amos 'n' Andy*, and so many other famous radio programs. This organ was created especially for NBC by Mr. Hershman, using the best of available pipes and components from both Wurlitzer and Welte instruments.

Charles Hershman was known and respected by numerous famous organists and organbuilders, as well as lesser-known musicians and enthusiasts. His ever humble and helpful attitude, knowledge and craftsmanship will be sorely missed by all who were fortunate enough to know him. □



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. Klos:

Your letter, notifying me of my induction into the Theatre Organists Hall of Fame, rekindled some fond old memories. Those early theatre days are among my most treasured remembrances.

I thank you for the honor of being included in the Hall. It's nice to be remembered. Please convey my thanks to the selection committee.

Bob Power gave me a dinner August 4th in recognition of the award, and he read your letter of notification to his guests.

Many thanks for your good wishes.

Sincerely,
Milton Charles,
Ojai, Calif.

Dear George,

I would like to take advantage of your column to express my gratitude to the fellows who took part in the jam sessions at the Music Grinder during the convention.

Many people remarked how well the artists played in the jam sessions, and everyone who attended got caught up in the spirit of having a good time. Rather than the artists being the stars of the event, the music was. This was exactly what we had hoped would happen.

Several of the artists who played

discarded their policy of never playing before or after another artist, and putting their inhibitions aside, they all worked hard for the music. Because of their unselfish gifts to us listeners, the musical "highs" we experienced instilled so much enthusiasm among national members that they expressed a desire to see such an event become a standard feature of the annual conventions. To that end, Walt Winn and I will be happy to furnish the format we used at the Music Grinder.

I'm sure all the artists would join me in a special thanks to Allen Miller for his superb voicing and regulating work he did on the Music Grinder organ, and to Dick and Audrey Weber for graciously letting us use the Music Grinder for the jam sessions. Special thanks should also go to Walt Winn, who thought up the idea of a jam session during the convention, and who helped work out the format each evening.

Sincerely,
Jay Mitchell
Atlanta, Ga.

Dear George:

As chairman of Connecticut Valley Chapter's Scholarship and Music Education Committee I must correct the information found in a "Vox Pops" item in the June/July 1978 issue.

Susan D'Angelo of Oakville, Ct., was the winner of this year's Roberg Memorial Theatre Organ Arrangement competition. The cash award was in the amount of \$100.00 and not \$150.00 as stated. The item further states that second and third prizes were awarded as well as an honorable mention. That information is false. Only one prize was given.

While this misinformation has appeared elsewhere in print it was without the knowledge of my committee, I felt that THEATRE ORGAN is the official magazine of ATOS and that the information should be corrected "for the record."

Sincerely,
Tom Gnaster,
Bloomfield, Conn.

Dear Mr. Thompson:

We wish to extend our "sincere thanks" for the review of the book on the Rialto Theatre — *Jewel of Joliet*.

We have received several orders which are probably due to the review. However, in talking to organists some are so busy they have not read the June issue! I can understand that because I find myself getting deluged.

The state legislature has now created the Joliet Metropolitan Exposition and Auditorium Authority of which I'm secretary/treasurer — appointed by the Governor. The Will County Cultural Arts Association's three-fold objective is just about completed. Landmark status should be coming within a few weeks — if the last report from the Department of Interior is correct. Our concern has created the impetus needed here.

The Authority has received \$500,000 from state funds. The transfer of property to the Authority should be completed about September 1st.

We have an enormous task before us as we (the Authority) are purchasing the entire Rialto complex with commercial and office space. However, the important thing is that the theatre is going to be preserved. The intention is to make it a cultural and performing arts center.

Again, thank you very much for your interest in our project.

Sincerely,
Dorothy Mavrich,
Will County
Cultural Arts Association,
Joliet, Ill.

Dear George,

On behalf of the "Friends of the Fox" in Detroit, I should like to clarify an item which appeared in the August/September 1978 THEATRE ORGAN Magazine under the Wolverine Chapter news.

The article gave the impression that the May 21, 1978 concert at the Detroit Fox Theatre was only the May meeting of the Wolverine Chapter. The program was actually a public show featuring artist Gary Reseigh, now playing at the Roaring '20s pizza parlor in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and was presented by the Friends of The Fox, Inc., the organization which is restoring and presenting programs on the mammoth 4/36 Wurlitzer.

We would like, however, to thank the Wolverine Chapter and its many members who have given us assistance in restoring the finest Wurlit-

zer remaining and the over 1000 people who came from across the country to attend.

Sincerely,
Greg J. Bellamy
Detroit, Michigan

Dear Mr. Thompson:

Mr. Ben Levy's excellent article, "What Will Happen," in the June/July issue of THEATRE ORGAN is a point well-taken. One other important point which should be made is the difficulty caused by the disparity of electronic control systems for pipe organs.

The difficulty of doing maintenance on original control systems (switch stacks and relays) on theatre pipe organs is somewhat facilitated by the fact that the controls for almost all original theatre organs were similar. Most control systems by each organ manufacturer were almost identical, with variations in size and placement. For instance, if you have ever repaired one Wurlitzer, you could repair almost any Wurlitzer. Also, different manufacturers had usually only slight variations between their product and the controls of other makers. For example, if you have repaired a Wurlitzer, you have a good idea of how the controls work on a Robert Morton, or a Marr & Colton, etc. Thus, there were very few really different types of organ controls.

Today, however, almost every electronic control system (sometimes referred to as computer control system) for pipe organs is different from all others, due to the many makers who originate their own designs. This means that working on one electronic control system usually does not give you much aid in trying to understand the controls of another pipe organ.

As Mr. Levy suggests, standardization of electronic systems and their components would be wonderful for the maintenance of pipe organs. In the meantime, there is a necessity to create (or have created for you if someone else is making your electronic control system) all of the needed documentation (circuit diagrams, parts lists, etc.) for any electronic systems installed on pipe organs. This documentation should be kept in a place which is easily accessible to the pipe organ, so that it does not become lost, and will be

available for later repairs or changes to the system.

Sincerely,
Paul Duerr,
Tarzana, Calif.

Dear Sir:

The thought occurred to me that possibly some of your readers might be hesitant about ordering records by mail.

I have purchased several hundred records by mail after learning about them through THEATRE ORGAN and other sources, and have never been disappointed. On only two occasions did I receive a record which was marred or broken, and both times I received a prompt replacement with no questions asked.

In my opinion, the record sellers are doing their best to make mail order buyers happy and satisfied.

Sincerely,
Dean J. Kehoe,
Milwaukee, Wis. □

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ALABAMA

The chapter was pleased to be host for one day for those who attended the 1978 ATOS Convention. We hope all of you had a great time in Birmingham and enjoyed Eddie Weaver and Don Baker at the Alabama Theatre Wurlitzer and Dr. Edward Tibbs at our Civic Center

Theatre. It was a long day, we know, but we certainly thank those who came to see us. Come back again.

Our August meeting was held on a beautiful summer Sunday morning, and our members had a great time discussing the convention. Our program was in the hands of a very talented young man from Birmingham, Mark Landers. Mark is a student at Samford University majoring in marketing, but he really can do a selling job on the Alabama Wurlitzer. He has been a music and organ student for several years, having studied with Bernard Franklin (who is house organist at the Alabama Theatre) and Dr. Tibbs at Samford University. He has played the Alabama Wurlitzer for some of the special student movies, and also is performing on the electronic organ at one of the local country clubs.

Mark's program for our August meeting began with a salute to the day, "Oh What A Beautiful Morn-



Mark Landers during his August program at the Alabama Theatre.

(Tom Hatter Photo)