



Virgil Fox.

this country and the world at large. They danced in the aisles and clapped in time to the "Gigue Fugue" and "stayed between God's walls forever free" in the "Prelude and Fugue in E Minor (the wedge).

They stood in lines and then sat in awe of the beauty of Bach's "Come Sweet Death" and "Sheep May Safely Graze," (both of which were played at his funeral services in Palm Beach and Dr. Schuller's crystal cathedral in California).

Flamboyance was his forte. No one can forget Virgil in his beret and cape taking his bows or standing on the pedals with his hand pushed heavenward at the end of a piece.

Best of all he was a friend of the theatre organ. It started when he was a boy in Princeton, Illinois. He played the theatre organ in his father's theatre and always took delight in the growing popularity of the theatre organ.

He made one recording on a theatre organ, the 4/37 "Dowager Empress" Wurlitzer in Wichita's Cen-

tury II Civic Auditorium. After this recording, even his classical concerts included arrangements from this album.

Simply, Virgil loved the organ as long as it was *music* and was brought to the world to enjoy.

Virgil Fox was unique, witty, wonderful and to quote the order of the memorial service, "A sunbeam has gone from the world." □



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 Unless it's stated clearly on the letter "not for publication," the editors feel free to reproduce it, in whole or part.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:

Page 18 of the Aug./Sept. issue of THEATRE ORGAN has a paragraph on Knoxville's Tennessee Theatre with several errors. Here are the correct facts:

The Tennessee reopened October 18, 1979, under the management of Bob Frost with the film *San Francisco* which played to capacity crowds for its 3-day run. The theatre originally seated 1,996 (not 1,984) and after being redecorated and resealed in 1966, reopened December 25th with 1,545 seats.

The Simpson Theatre organization has never had any connection with the theatre, being a competing company to ABC Southeastern Theatres that operated the theatre for many years until closing it November

1, 1977. A brief six-month operation, showing Hollywood classic films, ended in failure October 3, 1978, and the theatre was dark until Bob Frost and his father, Ralph Frost, leased it in 1979.

The theatre is owned by the Atkin Realty Co., which also owns the 11-story Burwell Building through which the theatre is entered. The theatre is of Spanish-Moorish design, and there are no "four-foot golden water vases circling the top of a narrow ledge" above the dome ceiling. Pictures in your Oct./Nov., 1978, issue (including a color cover) on pages 5 and 6 may refresh Mr. M. Lee Green's memory of the auditorium's appearance. There are four large celedon urns in wall niches — two on each side of the proscenium, framing the two organ chambers.

Mr. Bill Snyder, University of Tennessee engineering professor, is the house organist and plays for all movie intermissions. Films are shown on an irregular basis two or three times a month for a three-day weekend run including a Saturday matinee. Over 18 films and several stage shows have been presented at the theatre during the last year, and the 3/14 Wurlitzer has been constantly maintained and is in good playing condition.

Sincerely yours,
Wallace W. Baumann
Knoxville, Tennessee

Dear George;

Regarding the story in THEATRE ORGAN October/November 1980, "This Church Prefers Theatre Organ," there are a couple of points I would like to clarify. In the interest of accuracy, it should be noted the story constantly mentions 20 ranks, yet the specifications list shows only

Moving?

Send your change of address to ...

Lee Prater
ATOS Membership
Office
P.O. Box 45
Falls Church,
Virginia 22046



19 ranks. Through an oversight, either here or there, the 10" pressure Wurlitzer Diaphone/Open Diapason at 16-8-4-2 was omitted from the "main." Credit should also be given to Ed Avila for the color cover photograph. Also, the short paragraph describing the Style 100 Special was to have had an asterisk in the main story which would have called attention to the short paragraph at the end. With this minor change, the paragraph would have been pulled into context with the rest of the article. Forgive me, these are minor points in a fine magazine!

Yours truly,
Tom DeLay

Dear Mr. Thompson:

The London Chapter wishes to express their sincere thanks to all the ATOS members who supported the Silver Convention in London.

Your letters have been a joy to read and we were grateful and appreciative that you all travelled great distances to share with us the "British Scene."

We were pleased to see old friends and make new friendships, we also missed a few familiar conventioners, too.

May we take this opportunity of saying A Happy Christmas Holiday to Everyone, with a thought for 1981, "Stick to ATOS for the time of your life."

See you in Seattle.

From the Members of the
London and South
of England Chapter

Dear Sir,

I was privileged to be a part of the Organizing Committee for the 1980 London Convention, and I, along with my wife, Terry, enjoyed meeting you all.

My main objective in writing was for someone to put a name to the couple on the enclosed photograph. Sadly, my memory has deserted me on these two good people and I would like to get in touch with them. He and I had a little contest on who could consume the first beer of the day. I think it probably ended up all square because although I knew the best supply points, my friend had the better inbuilt capacity. At all events, we had a lot of laughs over it and in company with many others we had a superb evening at the Plough Inn, Great Munden which houses a fine



Can you name this couple? Taken at Father Kerr's church in Hornchurch during the convention.

Compton organ with Melotone and piano attachment.

A.B. Parsons
"Terr-Auguste"
69 Franklyn Road
Walton-on-Thames, Surrey
KT12 2LQ. U.K.

Dear Mr. Thompson:

Thank you for the interesting "Vox Pops" tidbit in the October-November, 1980, THEATRE ORGAN concerning Roger Nyquist's "new" pipe organ acquisition at the University of Santa Clara. Although it was not directly stated, I somehow got the idea that Mr. Nyquist acted as a white-hatted pipe organ savior who came to the rescue of yet another Glorious Instrument met ill at the hands of a church, who, with all aesthetic considerations aside, had been misguided by an organist probably lacking in intellect and ability (or at the very least, sensitivity). The organist may or may not have been unduly influenced by a typically black-hatted, glib tongued "plug-in" salesman. Just in case there were other readers who might have gotten the same idea from that article, kindly indulge me to the end of shedding, at least in my opinion, whiter light on the matter.

The instrument in question was a '60s 25-stop, 29-rank, 3-manual Phelps/Cassavant that had originally been designed for service playing in a room considerably smaller than the then-present church sanctuary. The church was faced with the task of further enlarging the sanctuary, moving choir and organ from the rear balcony to the front of the church, and augmenting the role of the organ from that of service playing to that of an additionally fully comprehensive recital instrument.

The church's organist was none other than Tom Hazleton, who, if we are to be swayed by the number of recitals played each year, was probably more capable than most to decide what was or was not a "recital instrument."

In my role as the "black-hatted, glib tongued salesman," I never once approached the church or Mr. Hazleton in an attempt to sell them anything. Rather, the church and Mr. Hazleton, after weighing the pro's and con's of a variety of alternatives, simply decided that a new 127-stop, 4-manual Allen organ was most appropriately suited to their total needs given physical and fiscal constraints and musical demands.

How any instrument of this immensity could ever be considered a "plug-in" is beyond me; certainly those involved for more than a year with its design, construction, installation and finishing would disagree with this specific application of that ambiguous vernacular. And how the Cassavant, with a specification including all of one 8' manual reed, could ever be considered by anyone as a "recital" instrument particularly suited to the playing of classic/romantic literature, is of equal question. While the Cassavant sounds noticeably bigger in its new University setting, the hall's acoustics are more favorable to the organ, and the cubic airspace is approximately 1/10 that of the present church sanctuary. Even given these facts, augmentations have already been made to the Cassavant and more are planned, including as you mentioned (and of all things!) a "plug-in" 32' pedal generator!

And concerning the price (not that it's really anybody's business). The \$20,000 as-is purchase price was extended to the University because the owners knew that the total costs involved (removal from the church balcony, installation at the University, replacement and/or new construction of chests and mechanisms, addition of new pipe ranks, etc., etc.) could easily have carried the price of the total project to approach four times the purchase price. It was the church's compassion rather than their naivete that made the instrument available at such a reasonable price. And the church was able to recover 75% of their 20-year-old original investment.

The long and short of it is that Roger Nyquist and the University of Santa Clara got a good deal. They got a 20-year-old pipe organ for what eventually will probably amount to a little more than half of what a new organ of similar quality would have cost. Tom Hazleton and his church got a good deal. They got an immensely successful, comprehensive 127-stop Allen organ for a lot less than what a new version of the 25-stop Cassavant would have cost according to your figures, or for a little more than what the University of Santa Clara probably will have paid to purchase, remove, install, refurbish and augment the 20-year-old Cassavant, according to our figures.

By your own account Roger Ny-

quist is justifiably "ecstatic." I can assure you that Tom Hazleton and his church and congregation are equally ecstatic. And I, having received compliments and unsolicited kudos on the success of the Menlo Park Allen, am also ecstatic. The Cassavant people are probably ecstatic; after all, their opus has found a new happy home in the University of Santa Clara. And the Allen Organ people are ecstatic since they have already sold a second "sister" organ based directly on the success of the Menlo Park installation. What could be better — a story with happy endings all around!

Very truly yours,
Robert C. Birnstihl
San Jose, California □

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE TECHNICAL SIDE

by Lance Johnson

Do you have any questions?

Send them direct to:

QUIZMASTER
and Organbuilder
LANCE JOHNSON
Box 1228
Fargo, ND 58102

Q. I am building an electronic replica of a Wurlitzer Style 260 theatre organ and enclose the stoplist for same. Would you please advise to which stops are normally connected to the crescendo pedal and the proper order?

A. Builders of pipe organs whether they are church or theatre oriented have programmable crescendos so that the organists (sometimes with the help of the technician) can program the stops in accordance with their own tastes. Wurlitzer provided a large patch panel for the great and pedal keyboards for the organist to patch in. There is no proper way to set up a crescendo. You merely set it up as if it were another combination piston but with an order that appeals to you.

Q. I have built a curtain valve reservoir 28' x 4' for my residence organ which operates on 2½" wind. The problem is the reservoir drops the pressure ¼" even by playing only a few pipes. After adding more pipes, the pressure does not drop more than ¼". If I place my hand on the top, the pressure comes back up. The top moves about 6" from the time the wind is turned on until the reservoir fills. The curtain valve is connected to a threaded wire which comes through the top.

A. Try adjusting your curtain valve rod up so that the top will fall to about 2" to 2½" from bottom position. Then you will have to use heavier springs to get your pressure back up again. Doing this will force your springs to work harder and apply more downward pressure when more air is called for from the pipe-work. □



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