

LONDON HOLDS ANNUAL COMPETITION

An exceptionally busy, exciting and rewarding year of musical enjoyment and fellowship was most effectively concluded with two chapter events within a few days of each other during November and focusing on our special objective of encouraging young people in the joys of theatre organ music.

The first was our third chapter-sponsored "Young Theatre Organist of the Year" Competition which was held this year for the first time at the Granada Kingston-upon-Thames and featuring the ever-popular 3/10 Wurlitzer — that was, in fact, the last British in-theatre installation in 1939.

Arranged with the full cooperation of Granada Theatres and good friend Mr. Jeff Curtis, manager of the immaculate Kingston house, the competition attracted eight fine young console exponents from throughout the country: Diane Coates (15) of Stevenage, Hertfordshire; Martin Fowler (16) of Walsall, Staffordshire; Lloyd Maidment (15) of Marlow, Buckinghamshire; Nigel Pattle (16) of Cannock, Staffordshire; Geoffrey Solman (14) of Sidcup, Kent; Amanda Stone (12) of Poplar, London; Michael Wooldridge (15) of Portlade, Sussex; and Karen Yeomans (15) of Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire.

The four adjudicators were: Walter Morris, lecturer in music at Richmond-upon-Thames College; John Norris, principal of the Southern Music Training Centre at Bromley, Kent; Malcolm Rudland of Chappell Music of Bond Street, London; and top all-round keyboard ex-

ponent William Davies — with Len Rawle as chairman.

As at last year's competition at the Gaumont State, Kilburn, the boys took the first two awards. Last year's runner-up Michael Wooldridge was first, with newcomer Lloyd Maidment in second place and much-improved Karen Yeomans third. All eight competitors collected numerous prizes including two LP records each that were kindly donated by Amberlee Records.

During the competition the good audience was treated to an impromptu demonstration of instant organ maintenance when a faulty key contact necessitated the console having to be stripped down and reassembled in record time. The two intervals

were filled with most professional entertainment at the Wurlitzer by Stephen Vincent, last year's winner of the handsome silver inscribed "Chain of Office," and delightful and competent runner-up Janet Dowsett, both of whom are now receiving numerous pipe and electronic organ concert dates.

All-in-all a thoroughly enjoyable and satisfying day, the event was considerably enhanced by the much-appreciated donation towards the competition made by our American members Maurice and Nina Adamson of Sheridan, Oregon, to whom we express our sincere thanks for their most generous gesture to our special cause.

Only a few days later, Stephen

Winners of the third annual competition were Michael Wooldridge, first; Lloyd Maidment, second; and Karen Yeomans, third. All are 15 years old.





Other participants in the competition were: (L to R) Diane Coates, 15; Geoffrey Solman, 14; Amanda Stone, 12; Martin Fowler, 16; and Nigel Pattle, 16.

Vincent was the featured performer at our last chapter club night of the year held at Wurlitzer Lodge, Northolt, Middlesex — the ever favourite venue of this highly successful series and home of our much-loved members Edith and Les Rawle, to whom we owe special thanks for the privilege of sharing their superb 3/19 Wurlitzer and hospitality throughout the year. Stephen has developed a fine exclusive style — as Silver Anniversary Conventioneers who saw him at the Granada Harrow Wurlitzer will testify.

Aptly complementing these two “young generation” events has come the exciting news that Pauline Dixon, winner of our first “Young Organist” Competition in 1978 has accepted four theatre organ concert dates in the Chicago area in the spring of 1981. These are: March 28 — Fred Hermes Residence, Racine, Wis. (5/36 Wurlitzer); April 2 — Coronado Theatre, Rockford, Ill. (4/17 Barton); April 4 — WGN Broadcasting Studio, Chicago (3/11 Kimball/Wurlitzer); and April 12 — Hinsdale Theatre, Hinsdale, Ill. (3/21 mostly Kimball).

In addition, Pauline will be playing various other home pipe and electronic organs. Her visit is a direct result of friendships made during the July convention and her excellent console appearance at the Granada, Harrow. A great personal thrill for Pauline, this is also most rewarding to our chapter and in wishing Pauline well we thank all those Statesiders for making it possible for her.

We look forward to an ever-widening bridge of trans-Atlantic theatre organ fraternity in the year ahead in our earnest endeavour to extend the international dimension to the British theatre organ scene. □



Len and Les Rawle repaired the faulty key contact and reassembled the console in record time.

Parents and friends wait for the doors of the Granada Kingston-upon-Thames to open the morning of November 23, 1980.

