

Tuba, a novel switch.

Although this recording was designed to demonstrate the many orchestral and organ voices of the instrument, the musical acumen of Johnny Kemm dominates. Recording is okay. The arrangements cover a very wide range of frequencies and they are grooved faithfully. We experienced some distortion during loud passages. This may be a fault of one particular pressing, rather than the initial taping.

During his recording career, Johnny Kemm cut nine discs, most of them (if not all) on Lowrey models. While we would like to have heard him on other brands just for variety and comparison purposes, if we had to choose one to remember him by, we would select this one. □

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE TECHNICAL SIDE

by Lance Johnson

Q. Our ATOS chapter takes care of the three-manual theatre organ in our local high school. We have a problem with tuning because of the great variation in temperatures. The school will not heat the auditorium unless there is to be an event. The heating system is tied in with the organ chambers, so we have to tune the organ with cold temperatures in winter. Do you have any suggestions as to tuning the organ with our handicap?

A. You will never have an organ that stays in tune if you tune the organ at different temperatures throughout the year. Much of your efforts will be wasted. I would suggest that you negotiate with your school to have the swell shades re-

Do you have any questions?

Send them direct to:

**QUIZMASTER
and Organbuilder**

**LANCE JOHNSON
Box 1228
Fargo, ND 58102**

versed if they don't already operate "normally closed." Then make arrangements for the organ chambers to have their own heating system. The least expensive would be portable electric heaters. You will have to consult with an electrician on this to make sure the electrical system can stand the extra load. If your school does not approve of this expenditure, your chapter would be much better off using some chapter funds to heat the chambers. You will reap great benefits, as you can at least tune the organ and keep it reasonably well in tune.

Q. We are about to refinish our chapter console in white and gold. We are uncertain as to the procedure for applying the white finish. Would you suggest paint, lacquer or what?

A. I am assuming that you have removed ALL the old finish down to the bare wood, and the wood has been carefully sanded, finishing with 220 grit, so all sanding scratches have been removed. Your first step is to prime it with gray lacquer primer. You can spray this generously so that it can be sanded and still have no bare spots showing through. Sand with 220 grit so that all wood grain texture has been covered over and the surface is as smooth as glass. Now you are ready for the white treatment. If you prefer an antique effect such as used by Wurlitzer, you will need to tint your white with a very small amount of lacquer yellow and lacquer brown. You should experiment by filling a small paper cup halfway with white and then just add a drop or two of the two tinting colors until you have found it to your satisfaction. Try it on a piece of wood, allowing it to dry sufficiently so you see the true color. To prepare the material for spraying, allow much more mixed material than you

think you need. The reason is obvious; if you run out, there is very little chance that you will be able to exactly match with a new batch. After you have sprayed three heavy coats (without sags) you are ready to prepare for the finish coat. Obtain some 400 grit wet-or-dry sandpaper, tear it in half along the short side and fold in thirds. Then using water with your paper, sand with the grain to remove any pock marks so that you indeed have a glassy surface. You then thoroughly clean the surface of all sanding dust and spray your finish coat. As you will be using gloss white lacquer which you have tinted, you may not want a high-gloss surface, but a semi-gloss antique look. The gloss can be reduced in one of two ways: Using powdered pumice stone and linseed oil on a rag and rubbing with the grain; or using 4-0 steel wool. The steel wool treatment will leave the surface less glossy than the pumice and oil. Whatever you do, *don't* use paint and *don't* apply your material with a brush. Good luck! □

Closing Chord

Llelyn J. (Lee) Haggart was born on June 4, 1905 in Pasadena, California. He attended grammar school in Hawthorne, and when he was ready for high school the family was living in Inglewood, California. In this third year of high school, he noticed a theatre being built. When he went around back, he found two men unloading a truck full of organ parts. "Want a job, kid?" The questioner would play a prominent part in Haggart's organ career — Frank D. Rogers. So would the other man, James H. Nuttall, a former chief reed voicer for Robert Hope-Jones in Elmira, New York. So, Lee Haggart started what would be a distinguished career, unloading Robert-Morton Bourdon pipes behind the Inglewood Theatre.

Lee had to make a decision. He was into athletics and in high school had distinguished himself in the high jump, discus, hurdles and shotput. His prowess was sufficient to rate an offer of an athletics scholarship from USC. But before he could graduate he was noticed by Morton's Leo F. Schoenstein.

Schoenstein, even then a big name in the theatre organ world, had observed Lee working on an installation. He offered the youth a job in the Robert-Morton factory at Van Nuys, California, west of Los Angeles. But Schoenstein wanted Lee to start in the Morton erecting room immediately, before Lee could finish high school. Lee opted for the Morton factory job and never regretted it. He started with Morton on October 13, 1923, at age 18. He would later earn credentials as an electronics engineer, and develop a pre-Leslie fan speaker to make a 1930s Hammond organ more listenable.

During this three and one half years at the Robert-Morton factory, Lee met the men who were then big in the pipe organ field. For example, Louis A. Maas, who would later distinguish himself in the organ percussions field. And Joe Klein, developer of the "chromatic drawl," a mechanical device which performed chromatic portamentos independent of the organist's digital agility. While working in the erecting room, where organs were assembled for final checkout before shipment, Haggart's supervisor was fondly remembered "Pop" Ferris.

Lee spent the final two years of his Morton stint as an installer. Often working with gregarious, outspoken Frank Rogers and the saturnine Briton, James Nuttall, Lee helped install a Morton model CX-200 (equivalent to the Wurlitzer style 210) in the Strand Theatre at 54th Street and Broadway in Los Angeles, helping Joe Klein. He assisted with Morton installations in such Los Angeles theatres as the Criterion, Mesa, Carlton and the Imperial Theatre in the Imperial Valley area of California.

Among the fabulous organists Lee Haggart met during the feverish installation days in the '20s were Albert Hay Mallotte (remembered now for his musical setting for "The Lord's Prayer"), Eddie Horton ("at the Robert-Morton"), both at the Criterion, and a young man named Chauncey Haines, who played in many Los Angeles theatres, until he was fired by each for not showing up on time.

In 1927, Lee left the Robert-Morton Co. to take a job as an installer with Jim Nuttall. Together, they installed a style 260 Wurlitzer in the Los Angeles United Artists Theatre, an organ which, many years later,

would become the nucleus of Buddy Cole's 3/26 studio recording instrument. At the completion of the UA installation, a small woman with a little girl's face came down the aisle where Jim and Lee were checking out the finished organ.

"It sounds wonderful," said actress Mary Pickford, sponsor of the UA Theatre. "I want my picture taken with you organ geniuses." Lee wished he had a print of the photo made at that triumphant moment.

Lee's last major installation was the 73-rank Moller organ installed in the Los Angeles Al Malaika Shrine auditorium in 1927. As usual, the team included Frank Rogers and Jim Nuttall. It was a huge auditorium and the two left chambers were a block away from the right chambers. Lee devised a pioneer electronic paging system, using audio wire transmission to tune ranks in unison with other ranks so far away.

After that, Lee studied electronics, including the audio systems which had made sound films possible and had put organists (and installers) out of work. There was still some maintenance work, but the great age

of pipe organ activity had ended by 1930. Lee had participated in the installation of 27 organs in California, including a number of residence organs. One Robert-Morton Lee installed in the home of Charlie Chaplin. Charlie used it to compose his scores for *City Lights* and *Modern Times*.

Lee's adventures in the electronic organ field were equally rewarding. When he went with Hammond, he was determined to improve the sound quality coming from the speakers. The result was a fan-equipped speaker which added some Doppler enhancement to the raw audio issuing from Model A speakers. Another inventor, Don Leslie, was working on the same problem, and eventually his "whirling tweeter" system dominated the industry.

Always an admirer of Jesse Crawford, Lee met the "poet of the organ" in the mid '30s. Crawford was planning a tour involving his Hammonds, one played by his wife, Helen. He needed a technician to go with him and set up the Hammonds for the best possible acoustic effect.



Lee Haggart.

This was before the "spring reverb" system had been developed, but resourceful Lee obtained reverb by placing auxiliary speakers in tiled mens' rooms, while diverting often frenzied visitors to other johns. The tour ended at the New York Roxy, where Jesse and Helen entertained large audiences at Hammonds which sounded much different from the home variety, thanks to the improvisational ability of Lee Haggart.

Many years later, Crawford spoke well of Haggart, "I couldn't have gotten along without him."

As Lee Haggart's electronic skills developed, he became a part of the electronics postwar boom in California's San Fernando Valley. The writer first encountered Lee when he was assigned to the next technicians' bench at Bendix Electronics in North Hollywood in 1954. Lee's conversation was spiked with organ terminology, so a bond developed. Lee later moved over to Lockheed as a full-fledged electronics engineer. It was a matter of self-education over the concern so many employers have for college diplomas. Lee made it on his own.

During his retirement years, Lee's home and shop were the mecca for organ buffs in need of advice, service, parts or just a jaw session about organs. He took on many projects, one involving a 16' pedal rank for George Wright's studio organ. And he put together an arresting 16' octave of Posthorns for John Ledwon's 3/24 studio Wurlitzer which have that ideal rasp created by a small boy scraping a barrel stave down the side of a clapboarded house.

In his late sixties Lee married organophile Laurel Ruby, following a courtship of only ten days. It was a second marriage for both, Lee having grown children from his first marriage which ended many years ago. Lee adopted Laurel's two teenage boys and a girl and helped raise them as his own during the period he lived in Granada Hills, California.

In deteriorating health Lee moved to Twin Falls, Idaho, with Laurel, in December, 1976, to escape the smog conditions of Los Angeles. He planned to write a book entitled "The Men Who Were Hope-Jones," a story about the many organ technicians who contributed to the Robert Hope-Jones legend.

But the marriage ended and Lee

moved to Porterville, California, in retirement. There he kept his hand in by doing some voicing for Dick Villenmen's organ fabrication and repair facility there. He broke his hip in a fall and had to have a replacement operation. He had suffered from a heart condition for many years and that was the probable cause of his death on February 15, 1982. He was 77. □



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:

Robert M. Gilbert
Editor
3448 Cowper Court
Palo Alto, Calif. 94306

Dear Sir:

After reading letters concerning recording of concerts, I offer an idea which has proved very successful for the Rochester Theatre Organ Society.

When an artist is engaged for a concert, he is sent a questionnaire which asks him if he will allow recording. If he does, mention of this is made in our newsletter. Those desiring to record are requested to set up their equipment at least a half hour before concert time in an alcove off the upper balcony lobby, far removed from the audience. We have a central system of outlets which can handle upwards of 20 tape recorders on a first-come, first-served basis.

Should the artist state "no recording," this is also mentioned in our newsletter, and the audience is policed by ushers for possible viola-

tions. Recorders are surrendered to us for the duration of the concert or their owners told to remove them to their cars.

Many installations may not have the setup for such a system, but in a nearby room, separated by a wall to obviate noise, one could be installed. Any good electrician can give advice as to costs, materials, etc.

It must be emphasized that the overwhelming majority of concert attendees come to listen. It is they who should be spared extraneous noises which are unavoidable in the recording procedure.

Lloyd E. Klos,
Secretary, RTOS

Dear Sir:

Referring to Ron Musselman's article, "Theatre Organ in Stereo," Aug./Sept./Oct. THEATRE ORGAN:

Mr. Musselman discusses at length why cassette tape recorders should not be permitted at theatre organ concerts. He then continues in detail as to which cassette recorders are the best to buy for good theatre tapes, including results of theatre organs he has taped. Why an article at all?

Mr. Harrison's solution to non-annoying recording in the Nov./Dec. issue is a good one. My idea of silent taping is to use a hand-held condenser mike with an On-Off switch. Flip the switch to "Off" and set the cassette tape recorder to its usual record mode before the concert. When recording simply flip the switch to "On." There is absolutely no audible sound.

For stereo, one of the new condenser mikes with two adjustable swivel heads works very well. Mr. Harrison's suggestion about using ninety-minute tapes and turning the tape over at intermission only is essential.

Imagine a vacation area posting signs which read "No photography permitted, it cuts the postcard sales." Unrealistic? Well, aren't a few of the theatre organ concert artists doing just that? In addition to my taping, I have always purchased all of the records available of the artist in concert.

Now, the other side of the coin. Suppose we were not interested in recording. What is to be done about people who talk continually, rattle popcorn bags, hum, flick the corner of their programs and even kick the