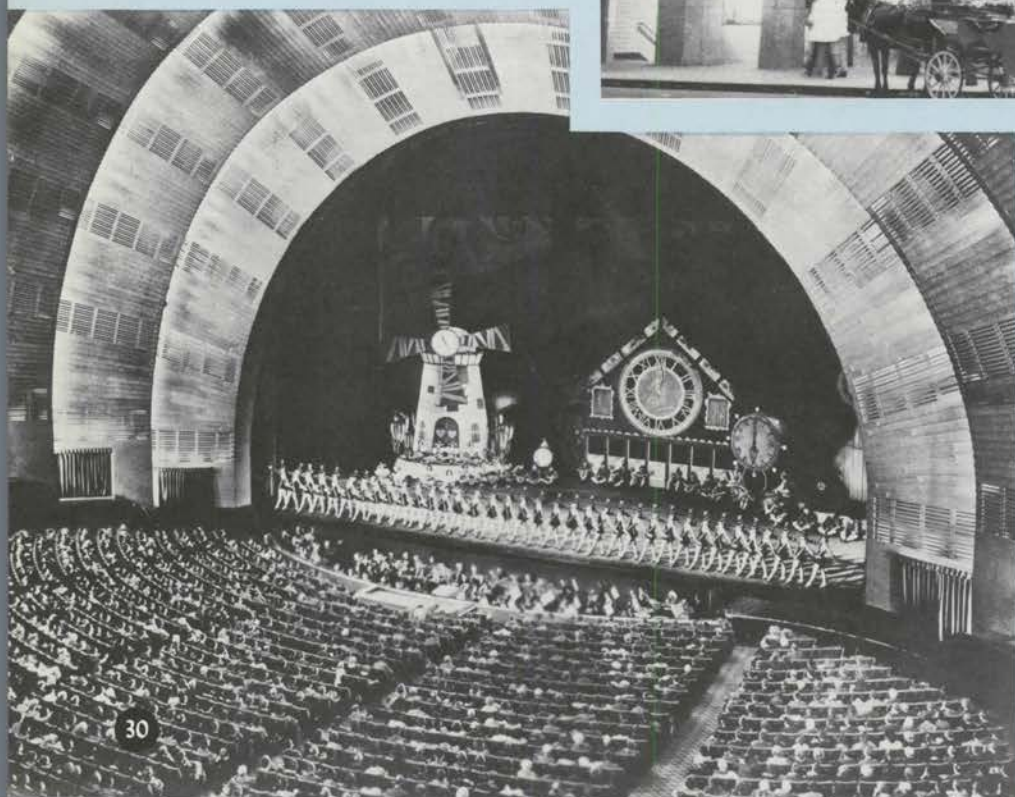


RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL MARKS 50th BIRTHDAY

Right: Exterior of the Music Hall. Photo taken in October 1972.

Below: Interior of the Music Hall, showing a typical stage show of years past, with the 36 Rockettes in one of their precision routines. Between the first row center seats and the orchestra is the booth containing the light control console, from which all the stage and house lights are controlled.



Many Happy Returns!

The Music Hall opened December 27, 1932. The opening show ran for more than four hours with no movie, just spectacle after spectacle on the stage. At the twin consoles of the mighty 4/58 Wurlitzer were Dr. C. A. J. Parmentier and Dick Leibert. Erno Rapee conducted the symphony orchestra in the pit.

Until very recently, the Music Hall maintained a policy of first-rate films and spectacular stage shows, and the organ was a part of every show. The theatre now is used for a variety of shows and concerts. Only special films, such as *Napoleon*, are shown. In March the Gershwin opera *Porgy*

and *Bess* will open for a four-week run. The famous Easter and Christmas shows are presented as always, and the Rockettes are still doing their precision dance routines.

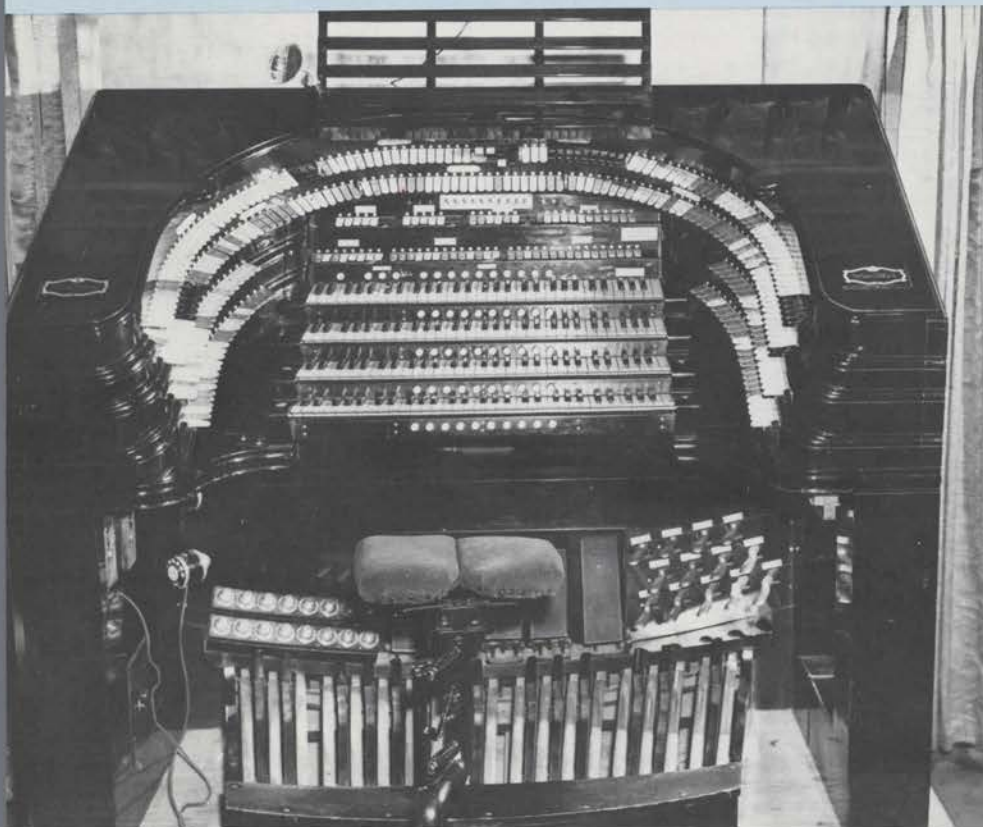
With Dick Leibert as Chief Organist for forty years, starting on opening day, many well known artists played there during the years. Ray Bohr was

second in length of service with 32 years. Jack Ward was a staff organist for 16 years, and Ashley Miller played for seven years. Deszo Von D'Antalfy, Alexander Richardson, Jimmy Rich, Dr. Edward Bebko (Eddie Baker), James Paulin, Betty Gould, Mildred Alexander, John Detroy and Rob Calcaterra have also played the



Cass Parmentier, Ray Bohr and Leroy Lewis discuss the Salute to Ray Bohr held at the Radio City Music Hall November 10, 1974, celebrating Ray's 27th anniversary at the Music Hall. (Victor Parmentier photo)

One of the twin consoles of the Music Hall organ. When the organ was installed in 1932, Wurlitzer had developed a console with simple lines, omitting the ornamentation usually found on their theatre instruments.



An unusual view of the left-side (prompt) console in roll-out position. While the organists generally prefer to reach the console through the stage curtains, backstage access is available through the square opening under the right stopjamb, necessitating a crawl across the pedalboard. (Geoffrey Paterson photo)

RCMH Wurlitzer.

The Music Hall is now operated by Radio City Music Hall Productions, Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Rockefeller Center. When the change in management occurred the position of staff organist was eliminated, and organists are now engaged for specific shows. During the showings of *Napoleon* Leonard Raver and Frederick Swann were the console artists. For the 1982 Christmas show the organists will be Robert MacDonald and George Wesner III.

Schantz is under contract to maintain the organ, and their representative, Ron Bishop, is Director of Pipe Organ Maintenance Services at the Music Hall. Ray Bohr is associated with Ron, and Lance Johnson is a consultant in a program of continuing renovation of the venerable instrument. No changes have been made or are contemplated; it is maintained exactly as it was installed, with much TLC. When needed parts cannot be obtained they are manufactured on the premises in the organ maintenance shop.

Unlike other twin-console organs, the two consoles of the Music Hall Wurlitzer are identical, fully operational in every respect. Each console has its own 73-note relay. The instrument can be played from either, or from both simultaneously.

In terms of hours of use, the RCMH Mighty Wurlitzer has undoubtedly seen more service than any other organ. Long may she and the Music Hall continue to thrill the public! □