

News from the
Unaffiliated
Groups

Lloyd E. Klos

RTOS



Dedicated to preserving the sound of the "King of Instruments"

Rochester Theater Organ Society (RTOS) — Rochester, New York
716/ 266-8251

Dr. John W. Landon, author of the definitive work on the life of Jesse Crawford, has prepared a series of fascinating slide shows which he has shown in England and the United States. In September he visited Rochester for a two-day appearance at the Eisenhart Auditorium.

His first presentation was "The Theatre Organ in Radio," and not only was John's pleasing narration in evidence between segments of slides, but recorded music and vocals were interspersed. The singing voice of Milton Charles sounded almost like Fred Astaire's. Another segment had Ann Leaf exchanging light banter with her announcer. From a collection of over 10,000 recordings and transcriptions, the listeners were treated to some rare material, all meticulously transferred to tape and timed with the precision of an expert technician.

The second half of the program was a re-enactment of a show once heard on KDKA, Pittsburgh. At the Eisenhart's 3/8 Wurlitzer, John played the role of organist Aneurin Bodycombe; Lauren Peckham, who provided the spring-mounted micro-

phone and allied equipment, was "engineer," Jess Littlefield, amid vintage trappings at home, "listened in" on a cathedral-style table radio and the writer served as announcer.

"The Life of Jesse Crawford" was the subject of the second show, and never fails to thrill the Crawford devotees. It featured many photos of the poet, his family, the theatre organs he played, interspersed with the music which every organist tried to copy but none succeeded. "The Forgotten Melody," "I Love to Hear You Singing," and the rousing "Maine Stein Song" which Mr. and Mrs. Crawford performed in duet, were the most stirring renditions. That the subject was thoroughly researched was proved by the myriad of dates and anecdotes which John Landon provided.

Following a question-answer period, John played a few numbers on the Eisenhart organ. If you are given the opportunity to witness a Landon performance, don't miss it! There's nothing comparable to it anywhere, and it will enrich immensely your knowledge of the theatre pipe organ and its performers.

LLOYDE E. KLOS

Empire State

theatre and musical instrument museum

(ESTMIM) — Syracuse, New York
315/492-0465

After being played at two State Fairs, our Syracuse-built W. J. Staub 2/9 tracker organ will have a new home in the Korean Presbyterian Church. The church is replacing its electronic, and we believed the tracker would get more frequent use there, where it was originally installed in 1902. Carl Shea supervised its removal from the Fairgrounds by a church men's group.

We opened our fall concert season on September 18 with Tom Gnaster, appearing here for the first time. He is a fine musician-showman, his program being enjoyed by all. Two evenings before, Tom played before KTOS in Kingston, Ontario, so Carl Shea, our program chairman, drove him into Syracuse to assure his appearance, public transportation between the two localities not being the greatest.

On October 16 Robin Richmond from France, and one of the real old-timers, made his third appearance at

our 3/11 Wurlitzer. He always gives us a great show, spiced with good music, devilish English humor and fine playing. He is noted for his medleys, sometimes seven or eight numbers at a time, selections not heard too often. His sing-along was a dandy!

Tom Anderson, serving as host for these artists, did his usual fine job.

CHARLIE RICH



(NFTOS) — Buffalo, New York
716/834-2712

We were pleased to present Frank Olsen in concert at the Riviera Theatre on December 8. Frank, who is well-known to the Riviera audience, entertained with an interesting variety of moods, countries and eras on the Mighty Wurlitzer pipe organ. He also accompanied a silent movie and a sing-along. There were some surprises, too, as he was joined in duets by Roy Simon on the grand piano. They play beautifully together.

Frank Olsen now lives in Port Colborne, Ontario, Canada, where he teaches organ. He holds many degrees in music and has cut several records. This past summer he spent considerable time on concert tour in England, Scotland and Holland where he was well received.

Future concerts at the Riviera will be Robert Wolf on January 19 and Stan Kann on February 16.

BETTY BOWMAN □

Closing Chord

Organist **Phillip DeSano**, 74, whose professional name was Phil Reed, died recently in Fort Myers, Florida. He had become ill the day of his death.

DeSano's introduction to show business occurred sixty years ago. During his career he played at the Brooklyn Paramount Theatre, and accompanied silent films and vaude-