of my English teaching duties to supervise the program and help with individual instruction when needed.

Although somewhat unwieldy, the organ is completely portable. For concerts, over 2000 pounds of speakers are rolled out along with the console, all of which is kept in the basement for teaching purposes. To raise the organ, there is a large stage elevator which we also use for the opening and closing numbers of most artists. A choir shell is used to properly direct the sound from the speakers.

We are now into the last part of the Fall semester and all members of the new organ class have indicated that they will sign up for the Spring session. Of course, we have to play it by ear (so to speak) in planning ahead because there is no precedent for this kind of class. And lest the hours of lonely practice tend to dampen the student's enthusiasm, guest organists — pop and classical — are invited to play from time to time, offering stimulation and motivation.

Personally, I'm in seventh heaven. This instrument is at my disposal most weekends and many evenings. In fact, I played a public sing-along and accompanied two silent movies in September. I may not be Gaylord Carter, but we all had a good time, nevertheless.

One final point. I'm interested in knowing how many other colleges offer an accredited music course taught on a theatre organ. Are we unique? □

TEACHING THEATRE/CLASSICAL/LITURGICAL ORGAN IN A COMMUNITY COLLEGE

by Chaumonde Porterfield

While seated one day at the organ trying to find the famous "Lost Chord" which always seems to escape to some unforeseen position of finger disarray, the telephone rang. It was a call that was going to change my life, as well as present a challenge and inspiration.

A very excited voice asked me to join the faculty at our community College of the Sequoias in Visalia, California. I could not believe my ears, for this was my alma mater calling me to come and join the staff. I had read in our local paper that the college had recently purchased a three-manual Allen Model 965 Digital Computer Organ for the newly-constructed theatre on the campus. I was quite impressed that a rural, agricultural town of 47,000 would consider such a thing. Having been born in Visalia, I was under the impression as a child that in order to have access to the latest invention, one would have to go to the larger cities of San Francisco or Los Angeles.

After graduation from COS I majored in music at San Francisco State University, studying piano and voice. There I was exposed to bigger and better organs. I had been playing as a church organist since the age of ten. My spare time in San Francisco was largely spent traveling from one organ concert to another. Although my study in music was considered serious, and I was known as a "purist" student, I didn't mind crossing over the bridge, so to speak, to hear the mighty theatre organs. I thought it strange that so many people were either classical supporters of the arts or labeled popular fans, never to pursue both at the same time.

After living in several locales I moved back to Visalia to become a private music teacher in organ, piano and voice. I also taught music in the elementary schools for a while, and returned to church music work as an organist and choir director. It was with this background that I accepted the post at the college.

I don't believe a course just like this has been taught before. It is titled "A Study of Organ Technique and Repertoire." True, there are many courses under the same heading, but not handling liturgical music (for church organists), classical (music majors transferring to four-year colleges) and theatre music (for home/career enthusiasts), all being taught at the same time.

The class is limited to 12 people in a session so that I can monitor the progress of each student, as each has an individual repertoire to suit his needs and level of achievement. The class meets as a whole on Monday and Friday of each week, and on the middle days of the week splits into groups of

Individual instruction on the Allen organ at the College of the Sequoias, with console at audience level and screen lowered. Speaker units on casters are seen on either side of the screen.

four, allowing individual tutoring on repertoire, manual and foot exercises, finger substitution, chordal structures and inversions. Worksheets, vocabulary puzzles, quizzes and visits to other consoles in the town are included. Several guest organists have been invited to visit the class, with a question and answer period after each appearance.

All that is required for enrollment is a minimum of one year of keyboard training, whether it be organ, piano or accordion. There are music teachers, housewives, nurses, dentists and a mortician in the class, as well as a man and wife team whose goal is to play organ and piano duets in their retirement. What a thrill to be able to teach and inspire all these different levels of talent and ability. They are of different ages and at different stages of achievement — all motivated to improve and learn. They proved that when the entire first class signed up for the second semester. A 100% follow-through is pretty hard to beat!

It is a joy to see the smiling faces every day. Wait till they find out we will be learning the 11th and 13th chords! The second semester will include more basics, as well as an introduction to "Chicago Style," open harmony, glissandos, transposition and modulation, and improvisation.

Those who have a flair for theatre organ music and wish to have concert experience before an audience are given an opportunity to play a three-manual custom Allen organ for a half hour before the Adult Education Travel Forum lecture and film series.

When the first year is completed, it will be time to compile the textbook for the class. At the moment it is all in my head. □

STATE OF THE ART IN "PIPELESS" ORGANS: AN IMPRESSIVE INSTALLATION IN VISALIA, CALIFORNIA

by Ron Musselman

Ever since the introduction of the Hammond organ in the 1930's, organ enthusiasts have tended to use the pipe organ as a yardstick in judging the merits of electronic organs. While absolutely realistic pipe sound has not been achieved to this day, some instruments, the original Hammond included, were never really intended to go head-to-head with the pipe organ in a battle for tonal equality.

Of course many makers of electronic organs have tried over the years to duplicate the sound of pipes, with varying degrees of success. The vast majority of instruments designed for home use have been built down to a price to place them within the reach of almost anyone. An organ in this classification is usually a loose approximation of a theatre organ. As an impressionistic attempt to simulate the sound of a pipe organ, they satisfy the needs of thousands of amateur organists without entailing an impossible expense. It is this affordability, along with modest space requirements and minimal maintenance that make the electronic organ such an attractive proposition for home use as well as for some public installations. These instruments normally generate a handful of voices from a single set of oscillators, the various voices being produced by modifier circuitry. A typical organ of this type often supplies a good flute and Tibia sound, a decent string and Diapason, with the other voices, particularly the more pungent reeds, sounding noticeably synthetic to even the most casual listener. And the ensemble sound is not what would be expected when the voices are combined. But this is not to criticize the average electronic. All of these perceived shortcomings are simply a function of price. And when one considers all that goes into the making of an organ selling for four or five thousand dollars, it is clear that the best instruments in this price range are ingenious and effective pieces of engineering.

While most electronic organs are built on the basis of compromise with the general consumer market in mind, a few firms have turned out organs designed to be a challenge to the real thing. Naturally, an electronic instrument *that* ambitious is going to be more complex, with requirements such as a set of oscillators for each individual voice for improved accuracy of each rank by itself, as well as a convincing ensemble sound that retains the integrity of each pipe, rather than dissolving into homogenized sonic mush. And each oscillator of the Posthorn, for example, is going to be comprised of more components in order to provide more of the harmonics and partials that are present in an actual Posthorn. A no-holds-barred electronic that strives for as much realism as possible is not inexpensive to build: The pursuit of perfection has never been cheap. But there have been enough customers in the market for premium electronics to make their manufacture feasible. In the case of the church, many congregations with

The College of the Sequoias Theatre.