

News from the
Unaffiliated
Groups
Lloyd E. Klos



Toronto
Theatre Organ
Society

(TTOC) — Toronto, Ontario
 416/221-0256

Our last three concerts in 1982 were sell-outs. On October 18 we presented our second classical concert series on the Casa Loma's 4/19 Wurlitzer. Although officials of other clubs told us we'd probably be sorry for going classical, this was our way of trying something different. Both concerts went over Big! Frank Iacino, local organist, made the Wurlitzer sound like a classical instrument. The AGO-type concert may not go over for other theatre organ clubs, but it can be done

successfully in our area for sure.

We couldn't get a later date than November 29 at Casa Loma for our Christmas concert. This year it was entitled "In Memory of Kathleen Stokes at Christmas." A Hall of Famer, Kay, "The Grand Lady of Canadian Theatre Organ," passed away in December 1979. The artist for this concert was her star pupil, John Hart, of Barrie, Ontario. Never having played pipes before an audience, he practiced for several months, and performed what everyone said was a spectacular concert. He presented Kay's favorite selections during the first half, and Christmas music in the second.

JAMES W. LAHAY

RTOS



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

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

On January 14 the club sponsored the third appearance of Tom Hazleton at the Auditorium Theatre's Wur-

litzer. It was obvious that the organist enjoyed playing the instrument — he labeled it the finest on the circuit, and the 1337 attendees were rewarded by a somewhat longer program than is customary. Tom's program might be justly labeled "a salad," as he had something for everyone. There was considerable classic intonation, as well as tunes from the past 50 years. High point was his rendition of a six-tune medley of pieces written in 1929. The program was decidedly on the relaxed side, in welcome contrast to a couple earlier in the season.

A night later, 21-year-old British organist Bob Wolfe provided dance music in the bouncy Reginald Dixon style for a crowd of 325 at the Eisenhart Auditorium. The occasion was the club's second annual wine-cheese-dance event, the one attraction there which seems to bring out a goodly number. The 3/8 Wurlitzer, dedicated a little over four years ago, seemed to have two strikes against it because of the members' overwhelming preference for the 4/22 Wurlitzer in the Auditorium Theatre. So enthused was everyone for Britisher Wolfe and his sprightly music that efforts are being directed toward a return engagement of the artist for the Auditorium concert series next season.

On February 18 Barbara Sellers, Chicago-area restaurant organist, recently indoctrinated on pipes, entertained 1124 at the Auditorium. Accompanied to Kodakville by her Hall of Fame mother, Edna, Barbara presented a program of mostly ballad-type music. Best rendition was her lilt-ing-interpretation of Lehár's "Merry Widow Waltz." A medley of spirited World War I tunes and "God Bless America" wound up the program as a sing-along.

A novel five-week educational series for its members was instituted by RTOS on February 21 at the Eisenhart Auditorium. Its purpose was to inform the participants about the workings of the pipe organ and to provide basic instruction for those who may want to assist with organ maintenance. Subjects covered included the organ, pipes, wiring, wind and troubleshooting. Douglas Crocker was in charge of the program, assisted by several maintenance staffers.

On March 5, 14 RTOS members gained valuable media exposure for the club when they manned phones for WXXI in its annual membership



Doug Crocker explains a point for the participants in the second seminar at Eisenhart Auditorium. Frederick Parker is at the right. (RTOS photo)

campaign. The group, led by Tom Lockwood, gave varying lengths of time during the five-hour session over the air. As a spur to increasing WXXI's membership, RTOS matched to one-third the funds received for a stated period in exchange for considerable publicity. It is hoped that a few memberships will also accrue to RTOS as a result.

LLOYD E. KLOS

Empire State

theatre and musical instrument museum

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

Our January 16 concert was played by Robert Wolfe, 21-year-old British organist. He had the place bouncing with over two hours of almost steady playing. It was a wonderful program. Mr. Wolfe had played in Rochester the night before, and RTOS volunteer Ken Veneron drove him to Syracuse.

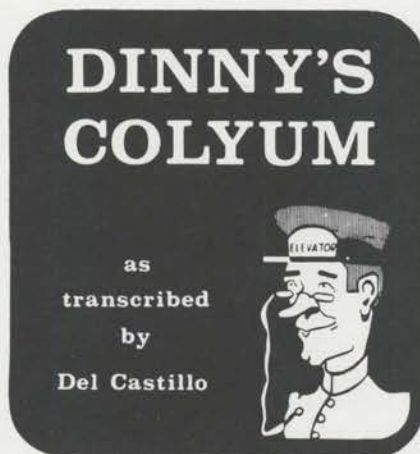
Tim Schramm played another fine concert on February 20, his second for ESTMIM. In addition to his numbers, he played for a sing-along, something our audience always enjoys, and accompanied a very funny Buster Keaton silent movie. Included on the program was a talk by Charlie Schubert, our former Director of Restoration, illustrated by slides taken by him and Tom Anderson. Very informative, the theme centered on Charlie's introduction to our theatre organ, its removal from RKO Keith's Theatre and its rebuilding and re-installing in the Fairgrounds' Art & Home Center in 1967. This program marked our 15th full concert season. Later on, we hope to make this story available for running in THEATRE ORGAN.

A few facts about our organization and its facilities may be of interest. Our 3/11 Wurlitzer is Opus 1143, shipped from the Wurlitzer factory on August 27, 1925. An upright piano, played from the console, was added in 1975. The console is on stage right, the piano on stage left. The Art & Home Center auditorium, named the Empire Theatre, is acoustically ideal for the organ, which is installed in two chambers at the rear of the stage, with blower, relays, etc., in a backstage room. The walls of the chambers are brick, reflecting the sound directly into the theatre, only a few feet above the audience.

Our stage equipment includes a

screen, two curtains and two annunciators. The projection booth has two 15mm arc projectors, a follow spotlight and slide equipment. All lighting, curtains, etc., are controlled from the booth. The organ and allied equipment are owned by our organization. The auditorium could accommodate about 500 with extra chairs, but it is usually set up for 430. We have a small museum on the second floor of the Center, containing automatic musical instruments, old 35mm theatre projectors, player pianos, etc. The Empire State Theatre & Musical Instrument Museum is chartered by the NYS Board of Regents.

CHARLIE RICH



I got to lookin at my old copies of when I first took to ritin for Mr. Jacobs musick magazines in Boston, and it come as a shock when I see that was sixty year back. Things was pretty different then. A feller could go out for a walk at nite and never have to worry about gettin mugged. And as for a nooclear war, we just finished the World War that was over in 1918 and Prs. Wilson he got the Leeg of Nashuns goin with a promise that they wouldnt be no more wars because they killed too many peepul. That gives you a good idea of how dum we was in those days. If a airplane could get five miles up that was as far as anybody thought you could go. And they wasnt no sound pictures so all the theayters they had organ players playin music to go with the pictures and they had them Wurlitzers that would go up and down on elyvaters for the organ player to play for song slides in the spotlight. And I was just a kid in my twenties runnin a elyvater like them organ players and spendin fifty cents to go to the movies

and lissen to them big organs.

Another way I got a shock was when I begun to read them old colyums of mine which Mr. Jacobs called The Elyvater Shaft. I been ritin those colyums off and on ever since, especially when Mr. Lloyd Klos he discovered them ten or fifteen years ago and got me to ritin them for the ATOE magazine. The shock is that I dont spel as good now as I did in 1924. The first sentence I ever rote was Dinny Timmins says I wish somebody'd tell me where in Tunket this here pampering of the movies is going to stop. Now that is pretty fancy english even for Boston. For one thing I dont know where Tunket is, sounds like some littel town on Cape Cod. And then that word Pampering, whered I get that from. I had to look it up in the Dicshunery which says it means Glut. So then I had to look up Glut which the Dicshunery says mean to gulp down. So it turns out that what I said was that when you are in Tunket you gulp down the movies. So rite there I give up. I should of went to Harvard when I had the chancet.

I get kinda sad when I get to thinkin of the good old days. They was them big Movie Palaces like they say which really was palaces with ushers who was dressed like the Palace Gard as you might say and big simpany orkestras of sixty seventy eighty men who come up on elyvaters oh them was grate days for elyvaters I tell you and they would play big overtures and sometimes the organ would join in with them and it jest about made the chills run up and down your back. And then they had the big stage shows with all them girls lookin alike and all kickin together in a strait line called the Rockettes. Even way back then I guess I was what you mite call a Organ Buff. Players like Mr. Jesse Crawford who played duets with his Mrs. who was on a second organ at the other end of the pit, and Mr. Lew White and Mr. Henry Murtagh who made up cute littel jingles that he put on slides and Mr. Parmentier who liked the classicks and so did Mr. Firmin Swinnin and then out here they was Oliver Wallace and Eddie Dunstedter. And now they is all gone and we got the sound pictures with everybody screamin at each other and usin langwidge you wouldnt want your sister to hear except that she uses the same langwidge too. Yep, times has certainly changed. □