

## FATHER OF THE THEATRE ORGAN

(from page 5)

Sliders were all but obsolete when this organ was built. They were not needed to isolate the stops from others on a common key action, for there were no other straight ranks and a switch would have done as well anyway. And any ulterior objectives which Hope-Jones might have had, such as later brought the renaissance of the slider chest, could have been achieved by chest design which would channel the air in the same way without the defects of slider stop control.

Without the background of Hope-Jones' personal capriciousness and even his love of the unusual, his work is inexplicable. He was a pioneer, but he was also a determined non-conformist. In the case of the crescendo pedal, he maintained that the tone-producing elements of the organ should be individually capable of their own crescendo, as are other instruments. It should not be necessary to add them up for dynamic effect. The concrete chamber with its heavy shutters was the answer. He held to this position consistently except in his largest instruments and the limited number of stops in his organs made a register crescendo more rough than in the standard organ. But that never solved the problem of getting the stops on in sequence while playing with both hands, as every organist must, time and again, whatever the expressive powers of individual stops! Lack of a crescendo pedal could never conceal the inescapable difficulty in building up the registration of a small unit orchestra, for whether by hand or foot, it must be done.

Hope-Jones' methods of enclosure were similarly mystifying until one perceives their underlying personal motives. It is almost self-evident that an expression chamber or a manual is effective to the extent that it can be used, and that the better stops are distributed in several chambers, the more flexible they will be according to Hope-Jones' own philosophy. So when we find only one or two stops given a private expression chamber and a fourth manual (Ethical Culture, N. Y., St. Johns, St. Paul, Minn.) it can only be understood as a dramatic gesture, a way of saying "Look and see how important these stops are; they have an expression all to themselves and can be played from their own manual!" To play a tuba solo against the rest of the organ as an accompaniment did not require such expense as that.

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## Improvisation . . .

To the Editor:

I believe I can shed further light on the exciting announcement in your Fall, 1955, issue, concerning the Quinby Orgyphone Laboratory's startling new organ. By a fortunate coincidence I was passing through South Insomnia on a business trip to Ho Ho Kus, New Jersey, at the time the prototype instrument was being voiced.

The instrument is an ingenious combination of all the bad features of pipe and electronic organs. It is, in reality, a compact pipe organ tuned as closely as possible like an electronic, and with the various stops cased in simulated radio speaker enclosures. The effect is amazing.

During my brief visit to the laboratory I was able to watch the forming of the Choir organ's 8' Horribellow stop. This is an interesting hybrid, the resonators being of wood, triangular in shape and with leatherette-covered tongues. The resonators are capped with conical, spotted-metal hats which, I understand, are being furnished quite economically by the Continental Can Company. The stop is a realistic imitative voice very close to that of the pastoral Guernsey, though with overtones of the Holstein in the higher registers.

One stop which is not listed in the advertisement but available in the Swell organ is a most delightful two-rank celeste consisting of a 4' Gaboon and a 3' Spits Flute. The combination produces a sharp, almost metallic beating that blends well with the 16' Vulgaria in the Great organ.

A unique feature of the laboratory, which certainly points up the thoroughness with which Mr. Quinby conducts his operation, is the laboratory chimney which is an actual, working 128' Sub Tibia Sewera. This, perhaps, was an important contributing factor that influenced the recent decision by the citizens of South Insomnia, formerly called Pleasantville, to rename their town in honor of Mr. Quinby's Orgyphone Laboratory.

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## GEORGE WRIGHT

(from page 9)

including the luxuries of English Post Horn, Krumet, Saxophone and other stop names that titillate the ATOE imaginations. Twenty-two ranks may seem to be a lot of organ for a 1220 seat auditorium, but it was installed so as not to be overpowering. This is really an outstanding theatre organ, and to the best of my knowledge is still used regularly.

"The following year came this message: How long can I stay on at this school in a post-graduate capacity? The authorities were more than willing, but I felt the urge to try my wings in the commercial field. I had spent every possible spare moment for five years in diligent practice and work, work, and more work. The big city of San Francisco beckoned. I ended up in Oakland, just across the Bay.

"The fledgling landed in a Chinese night club at another Style D. Wurlitzer. Some of my experiences at the New Shanghai Terrace Bowl on 10th Street and Broadway would defy telling and postal censorship regulations. For one thing, I shared a dressing room with a fan and bubble dancer named Lotus Lee, formerly Lea La Rae, née Hortense Rozelia Estorga. No, that wasn't a magenta spotlight focused on my face during the floor show organ solo—merely the remainder of a teen-age blush. The establishment had its good points, including a nightly broadcast over an Oakland radio station, and the invaluable experience playing for shows. The organ had been installed with saliva, Scotch tape and baling wire, so my schoolday installation experience put me in good stead. Never a night went by that I didn't have to clean the generator commutator, recover a pneumatic, fix a cipher. Invariably during the day the rats had increased their population inside the console, so this meant a nightly adjustment of the stopkey contacts. All of this, too, for the magnificent sum of \$56.50 weekly, paid by my ever-loving boss Dr. Fong Wan, whose favorite expression was '... Hammond awgun go aw, ee, aw. Wuhlitzuh pop