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be realized. By bringing new people to the instrument and bringing the instrument to young people (via electronics when necessary) we will be truly living up to our motto "To preserve the theatre pipe organ through exchange of information" and teaching (if the media would let us) a whole new generation how to play and care for our theatre organs. That's what we're doing in Berlin, New Hampshire. We are teaching a new generation how to restore and preserve the theatre organ. Next we are going to teach them to play it. It's as simple as that.

In the meantime, we applaud the national officers and others of the local level who took this small yet giant step forward for our favorite instrument. Theatre pipe organs forever.

Sincerely,
Robert K. Legon
Malden, Massachusetts

Dear Bob:

We who like to record at convention concerts wish to express our appreciation for the privilege. However, this is the first convention where we were compelled to pay for the privilege. No one seemed to be checking who was recording, nor were we given any special attention. At the final concert "Wanda" surprised us by having a special space reserved for us. Our special thanks to Wanda.

Much of the same equipment was visible, but more and more of the Sony WMD6 Walkman series appeared. We still have with us those who only change a tape after one side comes to an end and quickly reverse the tape to continue, all with excess noise. Too bad they don't take the time to learn how to do a good job and obtain a good recording. We had a few more of the "Boom boxes," the

most out-of-place recorder one could use.

Best regards,
Len Clarke
Park Ridge, Illinois

To all the members and staff of ATOS:

We had a concert in our ORPHEUM THEATRE on Sunday, October 14. We had Lillian Gish up here for her 88th birthday and had a silent movie of her on a screen and used our theatre organ. I wish to thank all of you for your support of this event, which I will never forget. We had a full house and Frank Mankin played the organ. It was a great job. We intend to have more of these concerts with organ. At any time anyone wants to see our beautiful theatre all are welcome. Being a ATOS member for some time, I am really proud of all members. Your support is always welcomed.

Yours truly,
Gordon MacDonald
Vancouver, B.C. □

Organists Bob Vaughn and Jonas Nordwall at the Avenue Theatre Wurlitzer, April 8, 1984. Vaughn cued silent films on this instrument for 16 years. (Ed Mullins photo)



PIPES & Personalities

Final Curtain for Avenue Silents

The 3/16 Wurlitzer in San Francisco's Avenue Theatre was silenced December 31, 1984, when the theatre ceased operating as a silent film repertory house. Operator Geoffrey Hansen notified the late Ben Levin's family that because of current downturns in the small theatre business, operation would not continue after the end of the year.

Inability to come to agreeable terms with the new owners, unsuccessful efforts to purchase the building, high operating costs, competition from cable television and video tapes, and a recession and instability in motion picture exhibition were several of the reasons for closing down. The organ has been put into storage until another suitable location can be found.

Nor-Cal Chapter ATOS held a final concert meeting there on November 18, with Jim Riggs as concert artist. Riggs recently recorded his new album, "Top Hat," on the Avenue Wurlitzer. The record album is destined to become a collector's item.

The house was originally equipped

with a Style D, 2/6 Wurlitzer, Opus 1626. Vern Gregory removed the Style 240, 3/13 Wurlitzer, Opus 1773, from Chicago's State-Lake Theatre in 1962, and it was installed in the Avenue in 1966. It opened October 7, 1966, with Tom Hazleton accompanying *The Lost World*.

Lyn Larsen was staff organist in 1967 and 1968. Bob Vaughn, "The Silver-Haired Daddy of the Silents," began accompanying silent movies there in 1968. Vaughn continued playing the pictures up to the end.

The Avenue was one of the first theatres to put an organ back in at a time when most of them were coming out (see "The Avenue Theatre, THE-ATRE ORGAN, May/June 1983). Jonas Nordwall played a concert there April 8, 1984, and most recently Tom Hazleton played on September 30.

The Avenue will be fondly recalled by ATOS members when it was featured at the 1975 and 1983 National Conventions. The organ may be gone for a while, but it will not be forgotten.

DR. EDWARD J. MULLINS

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Bill Wright was at the 3/16 Wurlitzer in the San Gabriel Auditorium on October 6 as the local chapter of SPEBSQSA presented matinee and evening concerts. Five quartets entertained a total of 1654, and according to all accounts, it was a most successful show. Comment cards were distributed, and according to the chairman, the pipe organ music was as favorably mentioned as the barber-shop quartets. Theatre organ music is alive and well in California, even with the closing of a number of pizza-with-pipes establishments during the past couple of years.

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The much-traveled organist, Doc Bebko, was recently in Erie, Pennsylvania, and visited the refurbished 2585-seat Warner Theatre, now known as the Erie Civic Center Auditorium. Its former Wurlitzer is in Grays Armory in Cleveland, but according to Doc, "a 3/15 or larger organ definitely will be installed in the

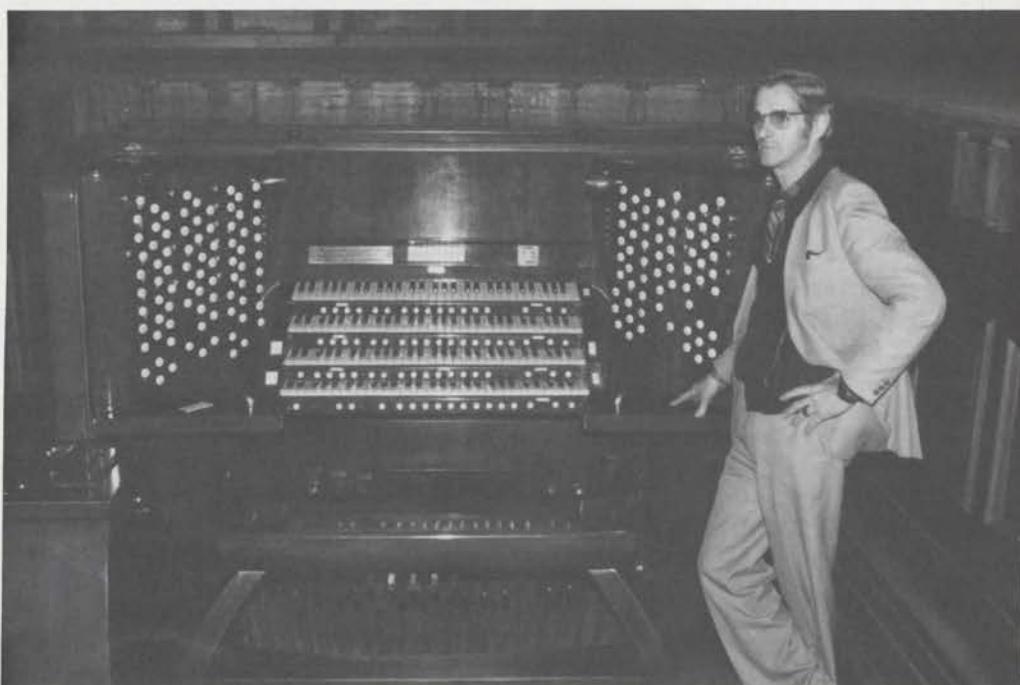
Warner. This is so important because here is where a theatre organ really belongs — in a theatre designed for one. The Civic Center Authority is doing a complete restoration, not a gloss-over. Rapp & Rapp-designed, it has a beautiful lobby, facilities for major stage productions, and an enormous screen for the films shown weekly on Tuesday and Wednesday. Jean F. Eisert is the assistant superintendent of maintenance, a true theatre buff who eats and sleeps theatre in most devoted fashion."

Organ Crawl in South Africa

On a trip to Africa in July 1984, ATOS member Bert Atwood and his

family enjoyed visits with several theatre organ buffs in Pretoria and Capetown. Bert says, "... the really fantastic part of the trip was the South African hospitality.

"ATOS member Dr. Albert Hovis had arranged with Pietre Delen, curator of the organ in the Pretoria Town Hall, for the hall and its 4/128 Kimball to be open for us. The organ is normally covered by an extension of the stage. Pietre had to get special permission from the town council to remove the heavy boards which cover the organ. The organ, which is one of the largest in the Southern Hemisphere, really fills the hall with a magnificent sound. Theatre organ buff Marius Roberts also accom-



Pietre Delen, who arranged the visit to Pretoria Town Hall organ.

(Bert Atwood photo)

Dr. Albert Hovis (left) and Marius Roberts, shown at the console of the 4/128 Kimball in the Pretoria Town Hall.

(Bert Atwood photo)





Pietre Delen's 2/5 home-built practice organ.

(Bert Atwood photo)

panied us. After we all took turns at the console, Pietre had us over to his house where his wife, Henna, served refreshments and we all took turns playing Pietre's very nice home-built 2/5 practice organ.

"A few days later we flew to Capetown. Through Marius Roberts' efforts, we were contacted in Capetown by Dave Cochrane, Chairman of the South African Theatre Organ Society. Dave was a host extraordinaire. He actually picked us up three successive nights. The first night he gave a quick tour of the city, plus a visit to his home and the home of SATOS members Eric and Renée Kieswetter. The second night was the monthly meeting of the Society held at Dave's home and attended by John Turrey, Colin Davenport, Bob Edwards, Robin Kidwell, Vera Wells, Joan Bond, Hillary Emerson, John Dales, and Eric and Renée Kieswetter. The first four played and I was called into action, also. Dave, incidentally, is a real Conn man — he has three of them. The third night Dave and his wife, Ilene, had us over for a South African braai (barbeque). We also got to hear the Cochrane daughters, Hazel and Laura, play a couple of duets on piano."

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Since 1972, Bert Buhman has been doing annual organ concerts for the benefit of the School of the Ozarks' scholarship fund. All have been SRO affairs, and the one on October 14

was no exception. "It was simply unbelievable, the response we had," says Bert. "The auditorium (which houses a 3/15 Wurlitzer) was sold out a week in advance. We opened a section of the balcony whose sight lines to the console are poor, and used closed-circuit TV for those patrons. That section filled also, and we had to turn people away.

"An hour before showtime, I talked to our parrot, Charlie, asking her to wish me luck. Rather than hold hands, she gave me a bite on my right index finger which bled like a stabbed pig. I explained the situation to the audience, mentioning we always say 'break a leg' before a show, but I had a bitten and bloody finger for good luck this time. It brought down the house!

"In preparation for the show, one of the TV stations did a two-part interview on theatre organs, getting their camera into the chambers. A lot of younger people showed up with kids, so maybe there's a future for the theatre organ outside of the pizza parlors. The program included a six-tune sentimental song medley; a five-tune autumn medley; 'Fifth of Beethoven,' which featured my 'twin, John'; some Gershwin; a silent film comedy, *Teddy at the Throttle*; and with election near, a sing-along of patriotic numbers, ending with the colors descending as I did the National Anthem. The entire house jumped to its feet when the flag began to descend."

Ex-Paramount Organist "Father" of Quiz Shows

Organist Bill Floyd, Sr., now a resident of Richmond, Virginia, spent most of his life at the consoles of the world's great theatre organs in the Broadway sector of New York City.

During depression years, while at the Beacon Theatre, when Bingo and food basket give-aways were the implements which brought hopeful patrons into the movie houses, Bill suggested to boss Monty Salmon, "Let's do something more entertaining than lucky drawings and give-aways — let's start a quiz show with music." This was the birth of the program "Musiquiz featuring Bill Floyd at the Mighty Wurlitzer." It was the first instance of a quiz show in the field of entertainment, and it was a solid success.

Years later, Bill had the opportunity to aid the ailing Wurlitzer organization by engineering a contract with Sylvania and Sears for TV cabinetry.

Still years later, Bill spelled out the idea of "Sing-along" television recording which doubtless earned millions for all involved except Bill. "That has been the story of my life," says Bill, "but at least my ideas were good and that is a great source of satisfaction to me."

"A friend of mine, who owned a theatre in Newark, had complained that after a sizeable investment in stereo equipment for his house, none of the films were coming in with stereo sound tracks, even though film credits made the claim. I had wanted to bring the magnificence of our Paramount organ to the average movie theatre via stereo sound in the form of our Paramount community sings.

"A call to Harry Rubin at our related ABC-Paramount Records was answered, "Gee, Bill, we're just too busy with rock and roll now." Next, I called the 'other' company and spelled out commercial possibilities from the motion picture, recording and even television angles. Here again the A & R man said, "Bill, we've too many organists on our roster now." The conversation ended at that point. A month later the "Sing-along" recordings and many seasons of TV shows were launched. However, the flavor of the community sing was never there because highly rehearsed

studio orchestras, singers and dancers flashed across TV tubes and certainly the luxurious sounds of the organ never happened."

At age 70, Bill is still climbing ladders, walking cat-walks along with other volunteers in the assembling of the largest theatre pipe organ ever in Virginia. It is the Wurlitzer installation now underway in the Virginia Center for the Performing Arts (formerly Loew's Theatre) in Richmond. Restoration of the theatre structure and installation of the organ is an \$8 million project. So many men from C & P Telephone Company have been involved that Bill calls the instrument not the "Mighty W" but the "Mighty C & P Organ." "In reality," he adds, "we have many fine volunteers from the surrounding communities, from every walk of life and we're a real family!"

After a lifetime on Broadway, not only as organist but also in scenics and lighting with the organ productions — productions so demanding of projectionists and stage men that at one point there was a momentary "strike" in protest, his career was interrupted for five years when he served as a surgical technician in a field hospital unit in World War II. "Almost as crazy as *Mash*," Bill recalls. "We had to be insane to survive — we saw the real hell of war."

Asked how he likes life in Virginia, Bill replied, "I loved the New York that was, but after my 17 or more years here, I am most content and truly feel at home, grateful for my children and grandchildren and all my friends. Yes, I'm happy just keeping myself involved."

R.C.

The BBC's "Pedals, Percussion and Pipes" Comes to Central New York

Alan Ashton, host and producer of the highly successful radio broadcast in England over the BBC in Manchester, "Pedals, Percussion and Pipes," produced and was host for a special one-hour documentary on the "Theatre Organ Scene in England." The program was especially prepared for ATOS member Don Robinson's "Organ Loft" program heard in the Utica-Rome and Mohawk Valley areas of central New York, and now in its 22nd year. The program traced the

formative years of the "Cinema Organ" and its early stars, the golden years on through the current rising stars. The documentary was highly praised by listeners, marking the first in a series of special features to be aired from the BBC's "Pedals, Percussion and Pipes."

Mr. Ashton is to be commended for his constant interest in the theatre organ activities of America, as well as the fine hospitality shown to visiting American theatre organists performing in England.

The "Organ Loft" recently reciprocated with a special feature for Ashton and his BBC listeners.

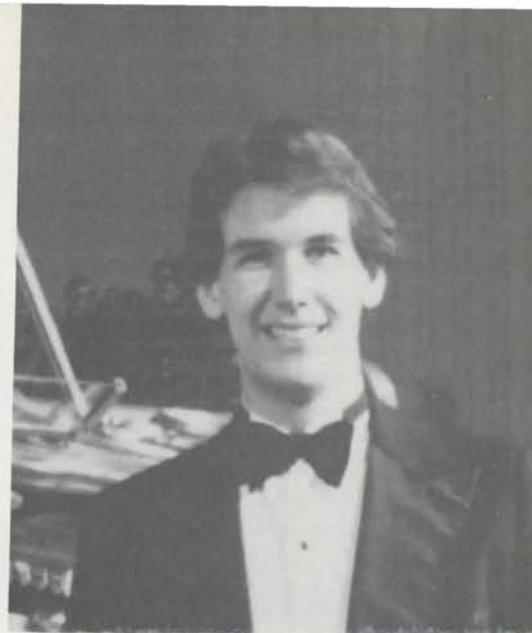
DONALD P. ROBINSON

Waukegan Theatre Organ Spectaculars

The Genesee Theatre in Waukegan, Illinois, home of Jack Benny and Jean Harlow, is rapidly reclaiming its rightful place on the big-time circuit. Jeff Weiler, a rising young star in the theatre organ world, has been featured in two recent shows at the Genesee. The theatre, built in 1927 as the premier showplace of Lake County, seats 1800 and is equipped with a 3/10 Barton, one of the finest installations of its type.

Weiler, a doctoral candidate at Northwestern University who has studied extensively with Lee Erwin, concluded his *Phantom of the Opera* tour at the Genesee Theatre on Halloween night. After having played to enthralled audiences at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., the Windy City Organ Club, and the Music Box Theatre in Chicago, Weiler brought his considerable talents to Waukegan for what turned out to be the event among this North Shore community's younger crowd. Over 50 semi-finalists were selected for the costume contest which kicked off the Halloween extravaganza. Weiler's keyboard mastery was the highlight of the evening.

On October 12, the Genesee Theatre presented "Lose It at the Movies," a vaudeville/silent film show produced by Dennis Featherstone, the theatre's production manager. A frolicking stage show, including singing, dancing, and a 20-piece orchestra was followed by Rudolph Valentino's silent screen classic *The Eagle*, accompanied by Mr. Weiler at the golden-voiced Bar-



Jeff Weiler

ton. Producer Featherstone was heard to say that Weiler's performance was the driving force behind the wildly enthusiastic response of the audience.

"Lose It at the Movies," which has been presented at Northwestern University and at the Pickwick Theatre in Park Ridge, Illinois, to nearly sold-out houses, will be "going on the road" in the near future under the auspices of Deco Productions, Ltd. Inquiries regarding Mr. Weiler and "Lose It at the Movies" should be directed to Mr. Featherstone at 312/336-0428.

SAM APFEL

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A letter to the editor in the September/October 1984 issue from Ronald Baltimore bemoaned alleged friction between ATOS and AGO members. This certainly was the case during the first era of the theatre pipe organ, when cinema organists were earning much more than their church contemporaries and enjoying their lot much more. However, in recent years, the animosity has been noticeably reduced and we quote from reviews of two writers who attended the San Francisco AGO Convention last June. Two thousand members attended.

"One official musical event was purely recreational: theatre organist Lyn Larsen played a midnight recital to a capacity crowd. More adventurous night owls found delight in the impressive talent of jazz organist David Kelsey who held forth nightly on electric organ, piano and syn-

thesizer (simultaneously) at the New Bell Saloon, just around the corner from convention headquarters. More than just a campy entertainer (which he certainly is), he impressed the crush of organists with his imagination and technique."

"It was astounding how many people survived the week and stayed to attend Lyn Larsen's midnight theatre organ concert at the Castro Theatre. By the end of the convention, however, everyone needed desperately to be entertained again, and entertained they were. After enjoying rhythm, colorful registration and familiar repertoire, not a few probably wished they had pursued theatre organ as a career. Maybe the next convention can include a workshop in performance practices of the theatre organ?"

* * * *

Vestal Offers New Catalog

Catalog No. 21 has just been issued by The Vestal Press, well-known supplier of books, recordings and memorabilia to buffs of many interests.

The new catalog is in the familiar Vestal 8-1/2 x 11 format, with 52 pages containing illustrations and detailed descriptions of the extensive line. Among the items offered are books and technical reprints on pianos and player pianos, orchestrions and other mechanical musical instruments, theatre and classical pipe organs, reed organs, music boxes, pho-

nographs and jukeboxes, carousels, band organs, amusement rides, antique radios, theatres and movie palaces. Vestal also offers piano and organ sheet music and scores, disc and cassette recordings, player piano rolls, posters, signs, decals and nameplates.

The catalog is available for \$2.00 from The Vestal Press Ltd., P.O. Box 97, Vestal 15, New York 13850. A \$2.00 merchandise certificate to apply on an order is included.

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We are happy to relate that another of the five "Wonder Mortons" is finding a new home. The 4/23 instrument, once installed in Loew's Paradise Theatre in the Bronx, New York, is to become the pride of Kansas City's Music Hall.

The Robert-Morton was built in 1929 and saw service in the theatre for only five years. From 1934 to the mid-1960s, the console was surrounded by slabs of concrete. The instrument was bought by a Nova Scotia man whose death precluded its restoration. Marian Miner Cook, who has saved many theatre organs, bought it and shipped it to a Detroit warehouse. Last January, the organ was moved to storage in Kansas City, and in October it was trucked to its final location, the Music Hall.

The structure was designed and built to have a pipe organ, with chambers on either side of the orchestra pit. The city is contributing \$25,000 for electrical work and a ramp to accommodate the organ console. The remainder, from \$75,000 to \$100,000, will be raised by gifts, grants and donations. Prime enthusiasts in the project are David Weaver, a retired metallurgist; Bill Wilson, a photographer; Dr. Marvin Faulwell, a dentist; and Bob Maes, a partner in a trucking firm. They are shooting for a completion date in 1986, and hoping to sponsor at least four concerts a year, plus silent movie programs. Also, it is hoped the quartet of buffs will form the nucleus of a chapter of ATOS. We wish them complete success in their magnificent endeavors.

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The latest report from Bill Floyd says that even with a rough neighborhood surrounding the Virginia

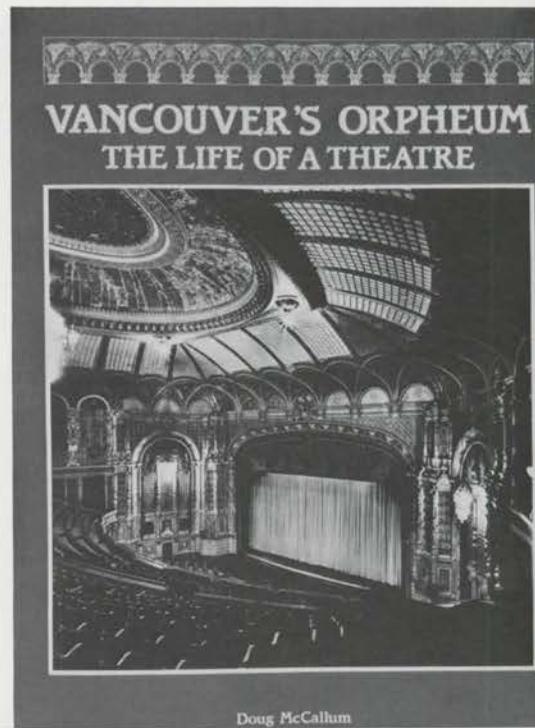
Center for the Performing Arts, which precludes his going there alone at night, progress on the Wurlitzer within continues. "The combination system is 100% in operation and works like a charm. There are two channels, one for theatre organ playing, the other for the 'straight' idiom. One of the most versatile of instruments was the two-console Möller in New York's Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, a three-manual horseshoe, and a four-manual drawknob. It was great in either category, and that's what we're aiming for in the center. The Tibias are 'straight' Gross Flutes, except for pressures, of course.

"The gingerbread on the console is being finished by Nick Pitt. Fred Berger handles the electric work in the console, while Tommy Landrum specializes in valves, springs, etc. Between the middle of October 1984 and May 25, 1985, there are 63 stage productions scheduled, plus those which may be booked later. We really have to bear down when clear dates permit. In this situation, we've decided to wind the main chamber first, so we can clear out 'bugs' while working the solo side."

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Bill Hale, Vancouver, B.C., writes: "On October 14 there was a showing of the Lillian Gish classic, *The Wind*. She appeared in person and was presented on stage with a huge cake in honor of her 88th birthday.

"The organ prologue and accompaniment was played by a local organist, Frank Mankin, who did an ex-





Ornate crystal chandelier, made in Italy, which hangs in new entrance portion of Vancouver, B.C. Orpheum. (Bill Hale photo)

cellent job of improvising, as there was no musical score for the film.

"A 20' portable screen was placed on stage, and a projector temporarily installed in what was originally the projection booth; it is now used as a sound and light control booth.

"A Tuba pipe developed a cipher less than ten minutes after the program started, so I had to make a hasty exit from the balcony, rush downstairs and backstage, climb a 26' ladder, undo a padlock on a chain on the trap door, while trying to hold a flashlight. Erskine MacPherson, who was in the balcony too, saw my hasty exit and followed me to lend a hand.

"I couldn't turn on the light in the chamber, as I did not have a special key to operate the switch; I have since acquired two of them.

"It took a few minutes to locate the offending pipe. There was a short break after the slide presentation, before the feature film started, while the Mayor, Mike Harcourt, made a speech on stage. I was standing with my back against the shutters, afraid that they would throw me off balance onto the whole chest of pipes! I was able to stuff a handkerchief in the pipe hole and stick the pipe on top of it. What a panic.

"There were about 2000 in attendance, the event sponsored by the City of Vancouver Social Planning Department. We had some prior pro-

motion on local TV."

Bill sent a copy of a beautiful book giving the history of Vancouver's Orpheum Theatre. It is filled with pictures and very interesting text. The book is available for \$5.00 (Canadian), presumably plus shipping, from the Social Planning Department, City Hall, 453 West 12th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., Canada V5Y 1V4. For further information, call Alice Niwinski, Cultural Planner, at 604/873-7135.

Fresno Organ "Bash" 1984

October 5-7, 1984, was the weekend of another successful joint meeting of four of California's five ATOS chapters. About 200 avid theatre organ enthusiasts were in for a treat of three pipe organs played by nine organists.

The weekend began with a varied program by Jerry Nagano at the 1928 4/14 Robert-Morton in the Warnors Theatre in downtown Fresno. After Mr. Nagano's program, enthusiasts adjourned to Pizza and Pipes for the nightly jam session at the 3/23 Wurplitzer. LATOS member and "Bash" organist, Candi Carley, gave a superb sampling of what was to be heard at her upcoming Sunday morning program. San Francisco Avenue Theatre's Bob Vaughn accompanied the Laurel and Hardy film, *Two Tars*. All left around 1 a.m., ready (but sleepy-eyed) to reconvene at the Warnors Theatre for a 9 a.m. program.

The first organist to play the Warnors organ Saturday morning was Tri-Counties Chapter organist John Brown. He treated the audience to some fine Buddy Cole-style arrangements. Sierra Chapter organist,

New facade and main entrance, Vancouver, B.C., Orpheum.

(Bill Hale photo)



Gary Konas, rode the much slower console elevator with a rousing opener. His musical standards were kept high throughout his program, presenting the score to Strauss' "Blue Danube." At noon, all left for Pizza and Pipes for a luncheon program presented by staffer Beverly Lloyd and Sacramento guest organist Jim Brown.

Ample time was allowed this year for resting, eating and, above all, visiting. Theatre organ folks from all over the west were able to attend, coming from as far away as Seattle, Portland and Reno to this central California city.

The afternoon continued with a classical/pops program by local organist Richard Cencibaugh. The organ was a 3/45 Möller/Casavant with loads of orchestral organ goodies (Vox, French Horn, Tuba, Clarinet, Celestes), as well as a new Great and Positiv with bright Principals and mixtures, unenclosed, in front of the enclosed romantic voices. An "en Chamade" human trumpeter played from the back of the sanctuary.

The evening performances were played at the Warnors Theatre by Bob Vaughn and Nor-Cal's Larry Vannucci. Mr. Vannucci presented a fabulous program under the most trying of circumstances. The car due to pick him up at the Fresno airport had a mechanical failure enroute, causing the organist to lose valuable hours of practice time. With precious little time to work out on the vividly-voiced Morton, Mr. Vannucci tore into the instrument and ultimately presented a fine concert with only two hours practice time. He was really "turned on" by this "dirty"-sounding Morton, producing jazz and blues that dripped with feeling. The silent picture was very well accompanied by Bob Vaughn. Harold Lloyd's *Girl Shy* was a bit long at the late hour (10 p.m.), but was well worth the screening. Again, after the evening's programs, the hearty die-hards left for more Vannucci-generated "jam" music at Pizza and Pipes.

Sunday morning opened with a stunning concert by Candi Carley. Ranging from jazz and blues to sweet ballads, she dedicated a number to ATOS charter member and "Candi booster," fellow organist Bud Taylor. Candi obviously enjoyed the organ and audience. Anyone who has not yet heard Candi should do so.



Fröhliche
Weihnachten
und
alles Gute
im
neuen Jahr

Munich, December 12 1984

Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year
to you and the total ATOS'
wish
your German member

Werner Scheppach
Gabriele Muensterstr. 15
D 8000 München 71
West-Germany

Werner Scheppach

A well-presented brunch was served at Pizza and Pipes and the attendees had a chance to meet new Pizza and Pipes owner, Bob Hogan. Bob and his father, Frank, are to be complimented on their allowing of the restaurant to be used at this year's "Bash."

The Grand Finale concert was played by Bash-veteran, Dan Bellomy. Bellomy, now organist at Portland's Organ Grinder, presented his always polished and well-played pieces on the Warnors Morton. Dan is known as a superb jazz organist and drove the 4/14 beyond belief. He opened the second half with an Organ Grinder "guest organist." After bringing up the huge Morton console, Dan dismounted and sent it down in the pit for the guest. A very Wright-like "There's No Business Like Show Business" roared out of the understage chambers with the console slowly coming into view with the organ's digital player and Organ Grinder monkey playing. Dan closed his program with Billy Nalle's composition "Showbusiness." The combination

of Nalle, Bellomy and Morton proved a fine, well-received ending for the Bash.

Never willing to say die, Bash-ers headed for an afternoon jam session at Pizza and Pipes. Once again, all were treated to the music of Candi Carley and Larry Vannucci, with an all-too-brief number by Sierra member and Bash promoter, Dave Moreno.

Fresno had a very hot summer and it took its toll on the Warnors Morton, with the early October weekend continuing the hot stretch. The chambers, we understand, were in the 90-degree range during the weekend events. It was a tough battle for organists, and organ crew members Tom DeLay and Dave Moreno. Fortunately, the 4/14 pulled through, and it is hoped that by "Bash-time" next year a new static regulator will have been installed at the blower. The organ, thanks to owner Frank Caglia, had received major work since last year. All reed pipes had shallots and reeds returned to their original condition. The over-blown, trumpet-like

strings had been restored and placed into correct balance with the rest of the organ. The English Horn also was placed on its own separate regulator, off tremulant.

With the Bash officially over, many buffs still would not let festivities end. Many groups split off to hear some of the local residence installations. One group was treated to Larry Vannucci and Candi Carley playing Tom and Jane DeLay's 2/3 piano-console Wurlitzer. Those who heard the music pour from the tiny organ will never forget it.

A sincere "thank-you" goes to the Sierra Chapter for again overseeing the affair. Events could not have taken place were it not for the tough, behind-the-scenes work by LATOS' Ralph Beaudry and Sierra's Dave Moreno. Organ preparation was carried out by Moreno, Lee Smith and Tom DeLay. All organists and attendees deserve the biggest thanks — without them none of it would have happened!

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Organist Bill Wright contributes another of his experiences. He calls it "The Night the Organ Bench Collapsed," or "My Most Horrendously Embarrassing Moment."

"It happened at the 1358-seat Jayhawk Theatre in Topeka, Kansas, about 1925. The house had a beautiful 2/10 Kilgen with the greatest-sounding Tibias I have ever heard. But it also had a rickety, creaky old organ bench which didn't seem to belong to the organ at all. I'd played other Kilgens, but they never had benches like this, and I kept promising myself to repair it to make it more sturdy. Procrastination was my downfall.

"One evening after the orchestra finished cueing the newsreel and cartoon, yours truly came bounding from the music room to play my solo, complete with pink spotlight. I slid onto the bench from the right side (as my teacher always instructed), hit the crescendo pedal, and then it happened. The bench collapsed under me! There I sat on 32 pedal notes, all sounding at once! What a noise!

"In California, they would have thought it an earthquake. The guys in the orchestra sat there, laughing like idiots, and the audience cracked up. I'm sure they thought it part of the act. I climbed from the debris toward

the pit, the projectionist keeping the pink spot on me until I disappeared. (Musicians and projectionists always took a dim view of organists anyway.) However, the stage manager nailed the bench together and I was back in business in an hour."

New Organization at John Landon's Church

During this past year Dr. Landon made an informal survey of his church congregation and discovered a sizeable number of persons over 65 years of age who had lost a spouse and were living alone. The result was a meeting November 3 and the formation of a new group called "Silver Saints."

Various social activities are planned. The first was a visit to the Paramount Theatre, Anderson, Indiana, for a special mid-morning concert on December 8. "A very high percentage of these people love theatre organ music," reports Dr. Landon.

Joan Strader Injured in Fall

In a recent letter from Jack Strader, we learned that his wife, Joan, suffered serious injuries in a fall while visiting a boat show at the Cincinnati Convention Center.

She had climbed some steps to board a boat on display. At the top,

she lost her balance and fell backward to the concrete floor, striking her head against the bow of another boat on the way down. She suffered a crushed third vertebra, three additional broken vertebrae, a chipped shoulder blade and some cracked ribs.

Her condition is slowly improving, helped considerably by her very positive spirit, but she is unable to do many of the everyday things which one does without thinking. Our very best wishes for a complete recovery go out to Joan.

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The accompanying photo shows Jesse Crawford at Swift's Bridge of Service during the Century of Progress World's Fair in Chicago in 1934. It appeared in Dr. John Landon's excellent biography of Crawford and was a copy of the original. Dr. Mel Doner supplied it to John. However, until recently, it was unknown who took the picture. It was snapped by none other than Charter Member and former ATOS president, Judd Walton, using a Kodak 127 Boy Scout Special folding camera. The picture is 50 years old, but sharp enough to show Crawford's profile and black-and-white shoes as he played the three-manual Kilgen in the outdoor setting. The organ is now in St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Chicago. □

Jesse Crawford playing the three-manual Kilgen organ at the Swift's Bridge of Service during the Century of Progress World's Fair in 1934. (Judd Walton photo)

