

PIPES & Personalities

Home Set for S.F. Fox Wurlitzer

A bright future is assured the former San Francisco Fox Theatre 4/36 Wurlitzer organ in the Lanterman mansion at La Canada, California, a suburb of Los Angeles. The big residence will eventually become the combination city hall and community center of the City of La Canada Flintridge under terms of a recent redistribution of the property by Lloyd Lanterman, last descendant of the community's founding family.

City officials, who now conduct their business in two rented suites at the Villa Real professional building on nearby Foothill Boulevard, envision the community center and city hall with the Wurlitzer as the centerpiece for musical recitals and other social events to be held there. The large ballroom on the second floor will also be a perfect place for conducting City Council meetings that are now held in the La Canada High School library. They are also seeking to have the mansion entered on preservation books and declared an historical monument. It is expected some of the rooms of the big home will be turned into exhibit areas. In this regard, it is possible the American Theatre Organ Society may be represented

Originally the largest share of the estate was to have been given to the University of Southern California, alma mater of Lloyd and his late brother, Frank. The remainder of the property was willed to a local church. Frank had purchased the big Wurlitzer in 1963 and Lloyd engineered its installation in the residence.

Not long after Frank's death in 1981, Lloyd began to wonder what would happen to the home after his demise. It was built in 1914 and constructed of cement hand-mixed on the site, using gravel scooped from the surrounding hills. The university was



San Francisco Fox Theatre 4/36 Wurlitzer being installed in the Lanterman home, circa 1967.

not interested in the structure, and the local church officials declared they would be unable to afford to preserve the property. This indicated to Lloyd the house would probably be destroyed. It was at this point Lloyd and his attorney, Harcourt Harvey, restructured distribution of the estate. Lloyd transferred his interest in the residence to the city, with the stipulation that he be allowed to live out the rest of his days there.

Lloyd, who is a spry and wiry 88, enjoys hearing the Wurlitzer whenever anyone stops by and asks to play it. Although it isn't heard too frequently these days, it is well cared for and will be a great asset to the city.

Communications between ATOS and La Canada Flintridge city officials is currently maintained by Stephen Ross of Los Angeles Theatre Organ Society. Just what part the organ society will play in the community center, once it becomes developed, is not clearly outlined. Talks cannot take place until the city takes possession.

Frank Lanterman, who was responsible for purchasing the Wurlitzer from Fox West Coast Theatres in 1963, was a retired California State legislator at the time of his death, and had been a professional theatre organist for the West Coast Theatre chain during the silent film era. He was chief organist for the circuit and resident artist at their Alex Theatre in Glendale. He was also engaged by one of the large Australian theatre circuits to open a large four-manual Wurlitzer in one of their new deluxe movie palaces. He subsequently returned to

his West Coast Theatres position.

While head of the chain's organ department, Lanterman was responsible for getting Wurlitzer to build their 2/10 Style 216 organ, many of which were installed in the West Coast houses. He once recalled that he drafted specification that ultimately became the Style 216 to provide organists greater flexibility over the 2/9 Style 215 instruments which West Coast Theatres had been ordering for their houses. "Farney wasn't at all enthused about building this model until I casually mentioned that Van Nuys, California, was just half an hour drive from my office. He knew I would get the Robert-Morton Organ Company (in Van Nuys) to build such an organ and they would receive contracts to install them for us!"

During his tenure at the Alex Theatre, Lanterman was also designated by Jack Warner to accompany all pre-venue showings of Warner Brothers new releases. Warner would bring the films to the Alex from the Hollywood Boulevard studio after matinee performances and Frank would run through them a single time, then play them at the special evening showing. On several occasions Warner would arrive too late for Frank to run through a feature and he had to play them "cold" for the special showing.

TOM B'HEND

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Warner Bros. Music recently announced that Dave Kopp, organist at Madison Square Garden, and con-

tributing editor/arranger for Sheet Music Magazine, was selected to arrange the smash hit, "We Are the World." All proceeds from the song are to be used to provide relief for the hunger crisis in Ethiopia. Written by Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie, and group recorded by nearly every well-known contemporary pop singer, the tune has already exceeded all sales expectations. Dave's easy organ arrangement is available in most music stores.

Back Issues of *The Console* Available

All remaining back issues of *The Console* have been donated to the Kansas City Theatre Organ, Inc. group, and funds realized from the sale of back copies will go toward the cost of installing the 4/23 Robert-Morton organ in the municipally-owned Music Hall.

Robert Maes, a member of the organization, hauled approximately 18 to 20,000 back issues of the magazine to Kansas City, Kansas, and has placed them in a warehouse. The issues, representing over 20 years publishing, have been arranged in monthly order by year and listings are available to anyone requesting them.

To facilitate mailing, it is requested that a large business envelope, stamped and self-addressed, be sent to Robert Maes, 1401 Fairfax Terrace, Room 331, Building D, Kansas City, Kansas 66115.

THS Chicago Theatre Book Available to ATOS Members

On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Chicago Theatre, the Theatre Historical Society of America published a special 50-page book with the theatre story by Peter Miller, the Wurlitzer story by George Wright and notes by THS Director Joseph Duci Bella. THS is offering this issue and other back issues to ATOS members at the same price available to their members until the supply is exhausted. Information as to availability and prices will be sent to any ATOS member by the THS Chicago office. Address inquiries to: THS Archives, 2215 West North Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60647. Include a stamped, self-addressed envelope. □

Closing Chord

Popular Portland organist Don Simmons passed away on March 3 having lost a lengthy battle with cancer. Don lived in Portland all of his 57 years except for a period of Navy duty during World War II. He spent close to 30 years as a skating rink organist.

Although he was best known as the organist at the Oaks Park Skating Rink, Don also played for the Imperial rink, for the Three Star and Anchorage restaurants, for local theatres, radio and television stations and, for 11 years, the Organ Grinder Restaurant. Don once told me that he remembered playing both rink organs in their original installations, the Oaks Wurlitzer in the Broadway Theatre and the Imperial Wurlitzer when it was in the Hollywood Theatre. He also remembered playing the Organ Grinder Wurlitzer when it was in the Oriental Theatre.

Don was known for this pipe organ jazz arrangements and had made several recordings of his jazz stylings. Another recording field that he excelled in was "music to skate by," and these discs are still in use in skating rinks all over the world. He also taught for many years in his organ studio.



Don Simmons

(Claude Neuffer photo)

Don always had a funny story or joke to tell, no matter what time of the day or night. My favorite one-liner from our Organ Grinder days was his classic at the start of each set, "If you need me, I'll be up at the organ."

Don is survived by his wife, Deborah; his son, David; and his parents Harry and Lucille Simmons of Portland.

PAUL QUARINO

It is on a sad note that I inform you of the passing of a true friend of the theatre organ in the Pacific Northwest. **Edward "Eddie" Pollock**, 36, of Mt. Vernon, Washington, passed away on February 23 following a short illness. He was a lifelong resident of Mt. Vernon, and his family has owned and operated the Lincoln Theatre there since its construction in 1926.

I met Eddie in 1977 when we decided to restore the Lincoln Theatre's Style D Special Wurlitzer. He later joined ATOS, and the theatre and Wurlitzer were always open to anyone who wanted to come in and play. When the Peace Arch Organ Society was founded in 1983, the theatre was always available for concerts or meetings, and Puget Sound Chapter could also meet there when they desired. Eddie was involved in many community affairs and was a substitute cameraman covering sporting events for some of Seattle's television stations. He also worked with the Forest Service and the Skagit County Sheriff's Department.

A get-together for family and friends was held of March 10 at the Lincoln Theatre. Jeffrey Fox was at the Wurlitzer providing the music. A friend to all and always willing to help, Eddie is survived by his father, Elden, two brothers and one sister.

Eddie, we will miss you greatly.

JEFFREY A. FOX

It is with sadness that Rocky Mountain Chapter notes the passing of **Guy C. Powell** on December 22, 1984 at the age of 69.

Guy graduated from Vandercook School of Music in Chicago in 1938, and taught in the LaSalle-Peru public schools in Illinois from 1938 to 1940. He attended Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where he was commissioned, and he retired from the Air Force in 1973 after 30 years of service. One of his jobs in the