

May we introduce . . . PETE SCHWEITZER



Pete Schweitzer and teacher Bill Blunk at the console of the Organ Grinder Wurlitzer.

(Claude Neuffer photo)

A 1985 graduate of Marshall High School in Portland, Oregon, Pete Schweitzer first performed in public when he was 11 years old and sat on the bench beside organist Bill Blunk who let him play "Charge" for the Portland hockey fans. Since that time, Pete has studied organ with Bill and is now heard at Uncle Milt's Pipe Organ Pizza Company in Vancouver, Washington, at the Portland Organ Grinder and at the Portland Winterhawks' hockey games and Beaver baseball games. He will enter Mt. Hood Community College this fall with a scholarship in vocal music.

Pete's first musical instrument, at age 7, was the accordion, but when he was 11 he "discovered" a Hammond M3 in his local Boys Club and convinced his parents that he *had* to own it. Pete credits his interest in theatre organ to Bill Blunk who owns a 5/24 Marr & Colton on which he was encouraged to practice until he was ready to play fill-in numbers on the Custom Rodgers at the Coliseum. Bill recalls that Pete's only comment after playing his first solo at a game was, "My legs turned to Jello!" Bill, who is a charter member of ATOS, is understandably proud of his young protégé who, he says, "is a determined and persistent young man."

Music has been the focus of Pete's high school career. He played the baritone and the tuba in the band and was a member of both the Madrigal and Concert Choirs. In addition, he has spent most of his spare time and vacation time working on and playing organs. He tells us that the two organists he most admires are George Wright and Jonas Nordwall, that he spent the summer of '82 helping Jonas work on the organ at First United Methodist Church and that Jonas, in turn, let him play the huge 4/44 Wurlitzer at the Organ Grinder. The summer of '83 was spent traveling cross-country with Bill Blunk and visiting the Wicks Organ Company, the pizza parlors in Indianapolis and the Denver Organ Grinder. Pete currently tunes and maintains a small Wurlitzer in the Cathedral of the Pines in Milwaukie, Oregon. He plans to continue in this field through college and to one day be a high school band teacher.

When asked what he liked most about playing theatre organ, Pete's reply was, "It's almost like an orchestra — like you're the director and you have a 200-piece orchestra."

Pete lives with his parents at 2609 SE 80th Street, Portland, Oregon 97206.

PAUL QUARINO and GRACE MCGINNIS □