

Ken Griffin and George Wright. He kept a telegram from Miami, dated 1927, offering \$175 a week, which he refused.

"His oldest sister always wondered where his parents stashed us four older children while they were trundling the baby about Europe on their tour. She also stated that it was very true that Al had to change his room number every few days to avoid female admirers. Shades of Elvis Presley!

"Al composed five songs: 'Black Maria,' 'Joan,' 'That's Me,' 'Whirlwind' and 'That's Where My Money Goes.' I am fortunate to have a recording of the first."

Eddy Hanson, an organist with a dry wit, relates the story of his contemporary. "Al

was appearing in a theatre where one of the acts featured a large troupe of Chinese acrobats. Dressing room space was limited, so they used Al's room for their overflow. Al fumed the first day, and then made up a bundle of shirts, opened their dressing room door, tossed it in, and barked: 'No starch, and have these back by Friday!'"

Toward the end of his days, Al Gullickson lived in a nursing home in Rosholt, Wisconsin, where he died at age 72 on June 13, 1979.

(Editor's Note: The author expresses thanks to Mrs. Eleanor Morgan, Dr. John W. Landon and Lloyd Gullickson for supplying the material and pictures used in this feature.) □

solo melody. A solo string, depending on the range, can imitate a beautiful violin or cello solo as well.

3) As the Tibia is the backbone of the theatre organ, the DIAPASON is the backbone of the classical or church organ. The Diapason does not imitate any instrumental sound, but is a tone peculiar to the organ. It is a full, round, but indefinite sound often used to add body to a full organ combination. The 8' Diapason also is a very good accompaniment (often in combination with Strings and/or Tibias). If you are playing a classical selection or hymn on a theatre organ, the Diapasons most definitely should be used at all available pitches to achieve the most "classical" sound.

4) The REEDS and BRASS are normally grouped together and color coded "red" on many theatre organs. Although orchestrally the sound is produced very differently, on a theatre organ they serve the same function — namely as solo voices, imitative of their orchestral counterparts. Be careful not to obliterate the solo sound you are trying to achieve by adding other stops with them. If you want a Clarinet to sound like a clarinet, use it alone. Any other stops will detract from its authenticity. Three "red" sounds worthy of special attention are the Vox Humana (human voice), Kinura, and Post Horn. The Vox is a very distinctive, pretty theatre sound when used in combination with Tibias and Strings. The Kinura is a raspy, nasty, biting sound, usually combined with a higher-pitched Tibia for clarity. The Post Horn is a very brassy, piercing sound that can be heard even over a full organ combination. It is often used for accents and "riffs." A 16' Post Horn also adds a great booming foundation to any full organ combination.

This is a very brief description of the four families of theatre organ sounds and their use. Remember to strive for variety by changing your combinations every eight measures or so. Strive for clarity and authenticity of sound by selecting the proper octave in which to use the stop you have selected. Strive for contrast between the melody and accompaniment, so both can be heard distinctly, but with the melody prevailing. The most important factor in registration is to select sounds that please you and your listeners. This is accomplished by many hours of fun experimentation. You have an entire orchestra at your fingertips and you are the conductor! As a final word of caution, don't be misled by organ arrangements that give registrations "for all organs." This is really not possible, and many times those registrations are not as good as what you can develop on your own instrument.

Do not underestimate the importance of registration as a skill worth developing. No matter how accurately or fancily you play, the end result will not be pleasing if you have not taken the time to carefully register your selection! □

KEYBOARD TECHNIQUES



by Cheryl Seppala



REGISTRATION

The art of skillful registration is of primary importance in good theatre organ playing. Let us define registration as selecting and combining the various voices and controls on the organ to produce the most desirable effect. This selection of sounds is a very personal matter to be sure. Each organist has his "pet" combinations he prefers to use. However, there are some combinations that are frequently employed. These are the ones we shall discuss.

First of all, let us agree that there are basically four different families of sound on an organ. They are Tibias or Flutes, Strings, Diapasons, and Reeds/Brass. Also there are the fun extras like percussions and toy counter. And there are also non-speaking tabs such as tremolo, couplers, and on many electronic theatre organs reverb, sustain, vibrato, etc.

Let us consider these four families of tone and how they might be used alone or in combination. We will assume we are all familiar with the pipe footage notation on stops, with 8' being the standard pitch, 16' one octave lower, 4' one octave higher, etc.

1) TIBIAS must be considered to be the backbone of the theatre organ. They create the beautiful, lush, smooth, throbbing theatre sound we know and love. In

fact, we love that sound so much, we are sometimes tempted to forsake all others and just use Tibias. They are such a comforting sound when we are practicing something we don't know very well yet. It is true they predominate in many theatre organ combinations because of their rich beauty. For example, open harmony is often played on an 8' and 2' Tibia. Blocking is often done with a 16, 8, 4 and 2' Tibia Chorus. Some beautiful solo melody registrations utilize Tibias. One of my favorites is Tibias 16, 4, 2 2/3 and Vox Humana 16 & 8. Tibias are also often used in combination with Reeds to add color or clarity. For example, add a Tibia 2 2/3 to an Oboe for an Oriental flavor, or a Tibia 4 to a Kinura for clarity and punch. And on many electronic organs, percussive effects are obtained by using Tibia sounds with sustain to create harps, music boxes, chimes, etc.

2) STRINGS add a full, rich, ethereal dimension to any combination. If you are fortunate enough to have a String Celeste, use it with your Tibias for a lovely theatre combination: Strings and String Celeste 16 & 8, Tibias 4 & 2. Strings also provide a beautiful accompaniment for a