



Manager Toni McSwain and organist Paul Quarino share a laugh before the show at the Egyptian Theatre in Coos Bay, Oregon.



Paul Quarino and former owner Stan McSwain stand to show the height of the birthday cake at the Egyptian's sixtieth anniversary party.

vided the information for this article, is a member of the tuning and maintenance crew for the Orpheum Wurlitzer.

The Egyptian Is 60

The Egyptian Theatre in Coos Bay, Oregon, celebrated its sixtieth anniversary with three nights of vaudeville and silent films on November 17, 18, 19. The Egyptian is one of six theatres on the West Coast that still houses its original theatre pipe organ in playing condition, this one a magnificent Wurlitzer Hope-Jones Unit Orchestra Organ installed in 1925. Portland organist Paul Quarino did console honors for the three nights of nostalgia.

Paul opened each show with a program of music from old movies and then accompanied a newsreel from the 1920s, a *Felix The Cat* cartoon and *The Playhouse*, starring Buster Keaton. The light and lively vaudeville shows featured seven acts including belly-dancing, comedy, singing and magic. Eighty-year-old Doris Curtis, who had been in the audience the night the theatre opened in 1925, sang "Some of These Days" and "Last of The Red-Hot Mamas." Toni McSwain, manager of the Egyptian, masterminded this extravaganza, and Bob Diedrich served as producer/director. Toni has been associated with this theatre since she was a child and her father owned it. She was, however, as surprised as the stage crew to find five original hand-painted vaudeville backdrops hanging in the flyloft in almost perfect condition. These were used as background for the vaudeville acts.

The theatre, which is now owned by Luxury Theatres, still has its original hand-painted Egyptian motif throughout the auditorium, and the lobby is flanked by two enormous seated colossi. The organ speaks from behind plaster slaves playing Egyptian harps, and 1925 melds into 1985 only in the modern pro-

jection system and the computerized ticket booth.

This celebration involved many individuals in the community, and the audience response was most enthusiastic. The residents of Coos Bay are hoping that Toni will make vaudeville and silent films a regular feature at the Egyp-

tian.

Toni will be happy to show the theatre and the Wurlitzer to any ATOS members who may be traveling along the Oregon Coast. She can be reached by calling the theatre at 503/267-6115.

GRACE E. MCGINNIS



Closing Chord



Squire Haskin, Buffalo, New York's best-known organist and pianist with the city's Philharmonic Orchestra, was murdered in his room near Kleinhans Music Hall on October 11. There was no sign of forced entry or robbery. A graduate of the Eastman School of Music, he was featured in the early years of radio on Rochester's WHAM.

Well known British theatre organ enthusiast **Reginald G. Mander** died October 12, 1985, of cancer. He was 64 years of age. He became increasingly ill during the year, and spent his last three weeks in St. Gemma's Hospice, Leeds. Early in the year, he took early retirement from work to cope with the situation, which also involved caring for his 91-year-old father, his invalid mother having died many years ago. In recent years Reg had been less able to participate in organ activities, but up to July he performed his duties at Ossett Town Hall, where he introduced the public concerts and operated the stage lighting, among other things.

Born at Peterborough, his parents moved to Leicester before he was two, and then to Chester, until settling in Leeds in 1932. Through hearing broadcasts and seeing some organs during cinema visits, Reg was already a cinema organ fan and had begun to collect records. He started work as an apprentice in the electrical trade, and during the war he served in the Royal Air Force, part of the time

in Australia, where he saw many organs and met several organists, as well as obtaining records which he brought home with him. Returning to his former work, he was soon to be-

Reg Mander, seated at the 3/8 hybrid organ in his home. Note the tone opening directly above the console. Photo taken in the mid-1960s.



come involved in office duties, which continued up to his retirement.

After joining the Theatre Organ Club in 1949, he attended organ events in all parts of the country, but he particularly looked forward to the annual Blackpool Rallies and enjoyed a personal friendship with Horace Finch. In 1948, the family had moved to Rothwell, near Leeds, and bi-monthly Saturday social evenings for the T.O.C. were held at his home, with record sessions and music on the pipe organ which was under construction. The start of this instrument was a two-manual-and-pedal reed organ which Reg had received when he was 21, and to which he added a set of Stopped Flute pipes and some percussions.

Upon meeting Frank Hare, consideration was given to something more substantial, first with a mixture of pipes and Aeolian reed chests played from a detached console, but gradually an entirely pipe organ with electro-pneumatic action was constructed to Frank's specification. The two of them spent thousands of hours over several years building the organ which resulted. In spite of low-pressure pipework, it sounded truly "theatrical," and included ex-theatre organ tonal percussions, traps, relays, manuals and stopkey units. It was arranged some years ago that in the event of Reg's death, the organ would be donated to the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust, and although changed circumstances will prevent the organ being used for the purpose originally in mind, the Trust is now arranging for its reinstallation in Lancashire.

Reg's vast collection of 78 rpm organ records from various parts of the world, together with his research into the subject, enabled him to co-compile (with Dr. Mel Doner) "Theatre Organ Discs of the World," which was published in TIBIA and THEATRE ORGAN in issues from 1956 to 1960.

His liking for dance and popular numbers of the '20s and '30s on records led to an interest in player piano rolls of the same period. He acquired a pianola and built up a large collection of rolls, and constructed a perforator machine to copy rolls for those who could not otherwise obtain them. Later, by taking extracts from existing rolls, he produced selections of music by composers, or with subjects in common. He even made a roll player for attachment to the organ, adding the extra perforations required for the pedal section and for the operation of the stopkeys and the swell pedals. His most recent publications have been listings of piano rolls, and he was sifting through new information while in the hospital, within a fortnight of his death. His reading matter included the magazines on his other "love," trams. Again, his knowledge of tramway systems was extensive, and in the old days he visited many of the places where they operated, as well as being an active member of the local society.

In the present day organ world, Reg is probably best known for his involvement with the organ at Ossett Town Hall. A committee member of the Northern Theatre Organ Trust from its inception, he participated in the ini-

tial negotiations with Ossett Corporation, subsequently becoming a member of the team which installed the organ over a 5-1/2-year period and has since maintained it. He assisted at the concerts over the past 15 years, becoming N.T.O.T. Vice-Chairman in 1975,

and the Chairman since 1980. On several occasions he talked about the Ossett instrument, about his own organ, and about general organ subjects on BBC Radios Leeds and Manchester.

FRANK HARE □

Letters to the Editors

Opinions expressed in this column are those of the correspondents, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editors or the policies of ATOS or THEATRE ORGAN.

Letters concerning all aspects of the theatre organ hobby are welcome. Unless clearly marked "not for publication" letters may be published in whole or in part.

Address: Editor, THEATRE ORGAN
3448 Cowper Court
Palo Alto, CA 94306

Dear Bob:

I read the last issue of THEATRE ORGAN which covered the 1985 convention in Chicago. I was surprised to see the collective review, but while I might have not been so direct, I feel the review, as printed, pretty well covered the convention performances.

I have just returned home from the Phoenix Festival, and it is sad that only 300 could be accommodated. Congratulations are in order to Valley of The Sun Chapter!

Sincerely,
Harry Heth
Houston, Texas

Dear Bob:

This is not primarily a theatre organ question, but perhaps someone who does a lot of organ recording can give me an answer.

I have many old reel-to-reel tapes that, despite great care, seem to be drying out. They become very noisy passing through the playback heads, and sometimes distort the sound.

Years ago there used to be a lubricant for the tape but I can no longer find any, though I have written to 3M, Tandy Corp. and others.

Can anyone tell me what to do about this condition?

Thank you,
Bob Longfield
371 Tahiti Street
Morro Bay, California 93442

Dear Editor:

What must an artist do to receive proper recognition for a job well done at a convention?

For the 800 conventioners attending the concert at the Pickwick Theatre, Tom Wibbels did not disappoint them. Concert offers were being made before Tom left the theatre.

Carroll Copeland, Program Chairman at the Long Center for the Performing Arts in Lafayette, Indiana, said it best when he printed his 1986 concert brochure to read, "Tom Wibbels is a master of improvisation and a real crowd-pleaser. Received a standing ovation and calls for 'more!' at the 1985 convention."

Within minutes Tom had his audience intrigued with his registrations and technique and relaxed with his audience rapport. There were many selections throughout the concert where Tom received over 30 seconds of applause after individual numbers.

What was the reasoning of not reporting any of these positive aspects of the concert to ATOS readers who could not attend the convention? Is this the press Tom and other very talented convention artists must look forward to even though their performances were well-done and well-received?

Impro International will stand behind the above statements by offering a free "unedited" tape of Tom Wibbels' convention concert performance to any chapter or concert promoter. Please write to Impro International, P.O. Box 1072, Elkhart, Indiana 46515, or call 219/679-4061.

Sincerely,
Trudy HERNICZ, Manager
Elkhart, Indiana

Dear Sir:

I'm the lucky and only owner of a duplicate of the Ken Griffin TV films from 1954/55 of the series "67 Melody Lane," made in the Wurlitzer studios (THEATRE ORGAN, May/June 1985). In one of the films there is a very clever organist named Margie Manor, playing the electrostatic reed Wurlitzer. I wonder if anybody could please give any information about this organist? I have never, until the films appeared, either heard about her or seen any picture in any of the organ magazines in USA and Europe. She is/was American, that's the only thing I know.

Sincerely,
Wilfred Hosteland
Welhavens Gate 12
N-5000 Bergen
Norway

Dear Editor:

I'm trying to get a tape of someone playing the big Barton organ in the Chicago Stadium. I'd love to hear what this big organ sounds like. I understand that Al Melgard was organ-