

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-

ist there for 40 years.

If any member of ATOS knows of any music on the Barton organ would they please write to me with information. I would be very grateful for a cassette tape of this organ.

Thanking you most kindly.

Yours very sincerely,
Laurie Morley
21 Riversdene
Stokesley
Middlesbrough
Cleveland TS9 5DD
England

Dear Bob:

Dr. Walter J. Beupre was initially puzzled by Arnold Loxam's "March — Schiedam" ("For the Record," THEATRE ORGAN, September/October 1985). We Europeans recognise it as Arnold's tribute to the Dutch folk who have invited him to play for them on many occasions, frequently at the lovely Standaard 3/10 of the Passage, Schiedam (a Rotterdam suburb).

I don't have any inside information, but it would not surprise me to find him writing something titled "De Poort" to recognise another of what will soon be the four working theatre organs in the Rotterdam area.

Which reminds me. Oskar Heim, in the same issue, finds the word "Orgel" attractive. So do the Dutch, for whom it is the word for "Organ" (and the same goes for German, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian and Icelandic).

Sincerely,
Tony Bernard Smith
Rayleigh, England

Dear Officers and Directors:

Last summer while attending the ATOS convention in Chicago, I noticed an inscription on the side of a school building:

"The foundation of every state is the education of its youth." — Socrates

It is evident to me that this applies to ATOS as well as to our government. We must make ourselves known to all of the younger generation and not just to the young musicians. Your membership drive contest has sparked me and my wife to give this matter considerable thought, and along with our experiences of trying to get new members, we have come up with the following suggestions.

We have discovered that very few people have ever heard of a theatre pipe organ, let alone actually heard one played. When they hear you say pipe organ, they automatically think of church music and are no longer interested in what you have to say. They need to be informed.

1. It might be possible to have a TV show patterned after the show "Evening at Pops," which features the Boston Pops Orchestra.
2. Try to get the national TV networks to use bit parts featuring various theatre organs and artists.
3. Try to get some of our artists on some shows such as "Real People" or "PM Magazine."
4. Maybe a movie could be made about the

life of some prominent organist or organ builder or even about the history of the organ itself. We need to get the theatre pipe organ back in the public eye.

Chapters that have organ concerts should advertise them in nearby towns (150-mile radius) at least two months or more in advance. They should also enlist the aid of members that live in these nearby towns so they could arrange for group trips to these concerts. Travel agencies should be made aware of these concerts. Churches, YMCA, YWCA and public libraries should be notified. Hotels and motels could be informed for the convenience of their guests.

Individual members should invite prospective new members to their homes to explain to them what ATOS is all about. They could sponsor parties for young people to initiate them to theatre organ music (play recordings if necessary). Individual members and their families could take part in local community parades with posters advertising ATOS. Posters could be placed around the community on various bulletin boards in drug stores, laundromats, libraries and civic centers. Do not overlook music stores and music schools.

Individual members could also be encouraged to give gift memberships for birthdays or anniversaries or any other appropriate occasion.

Has anyone considered having a reduced membership fee for young people under, say, age 21? This would help generate membership among college students while their finances are at a low.

It might be possible to get some financial support from some of the foundations that provide financial aid to various nonprofit organizations, to help finance some of the suggestions that obviously could be quite expensive.

Last October while visiting our daughter in Virginia Beach, Virginia, we contacted some of the local members of ATOS and had a very enjoyable time. Unfortunately, we did not have time to meet all of the members personally. I believe this could add a new dimension to ATOS. It has allowed us to make new friendships and meet people who have the same interests without waiting for a convention.

Yours truly,
James R. Weber
Decatur, Illinois

□



CHAPTER NOTES

Edited by Grace E. McGinnis

ALABAMA Birmingham

205/942-5611 or 205/664-3606

WOW! How do you top a wonderful summer and an even better autumn? We have certainly had an exciting year, and 1986 promises to "top all." October's meeting held many surprises — our first "Home Show" — when many of our talented members who love to play, but don't want to do a full program, got to show-off on the Mighty Wurlitzer. Vice-Chairman/Program Director Gary Jones gathered (roped and tied?!) those members wishing and willing to participate and presented them as a group of exciting new "Stars." Some have even committed to solo work in 1986!

On October 27, Tom Hazleton brought the house down in a concert that will go on record as one of our most successful ever. A large, responsive crowd, a wonderful sounding organ and a gorgeous theatre only heightened Mr. Hazleton's dazzling performance. His beautiful arrangements, fresh styling and clean registration left the crowd begging for more. Chairman Cecil Whitmire commented that "it just doesn't get much better than this."



Hardworking Linda Bagwell boxing popcorn in the lobby of the Alabama Theatre. (Gary Jones photo)