

# 1986 ATOS Young Organist Competition

The second annual Young Organist Competition brought forth entries from 11 talented young artists. Their names and qualifications were known only to ATOS President Jack Moelmann, who duplicated the tapes for the judges, and to Lois Segur, Chairman of the Competition Committee. The tapes were numbered in sequence as they arrived, and the judges knew only the age of the contestant and the size of the pipe organ used.

The entrants this year were Richard Purvis, Tom Hazleton, Dennis James, Gwen O'Connor and Grant Whitcomb. Only Richard Purvis was identified at the outset; the names of the other four were announced after the final grading.

The entrants and their sponsoring chapters were:

#### Junior Division (ages 13 - 15)

Christopher M. Halon, 14, Puget Sound  
Neil H. Johnston II, 15,  
Southwest Michigan  
Frank E. Perko III, 15, Pikes Peak  
Jason A. Poteet, 15, Sierra

#### Intermediate Division (ages 16 - 18)

John J. Cook, 16, Eastern Massachusetts  
Terry Cunningham, 16, Valley of the Sun  
Colleen Feldpausch, 16, Motor City  
Neal T. Marple, 16, Cedar Rapids Area

#### Senior Division (ages 19 - 21)

Dwight M. Thomas, 21, Central Indiana  
Donald M. Walker, 20, Joliet Area  
Laura VanEyck, 19, San Diego

Dwight M. Thomas was the competition winner, as well as placing first in the Senior Division. He will be presented in a cameo performance at the Richmond Convention. Colleen Feldpausch was the winner in the Intermediate Division and Neil H. Johnston II won in the Junior Division. Each received an award of \$300 as division winner, and Dwight Thomas received an additional \$200 as competition winner. We offer our congratulations to the winners and our thanks to all who participated.

We appreciate the generosity of the judges, who so willingly gave of their time for this very important project. We hope their constructive comments will be helpful to these young people as they continue their musical careers.

LOIS SEGUR, *Chairman*  
*Young Organist Competition* □

## PIPES & Personalities

### SAVOY THEATRE, NORTHAMPTON, RE-INSTALLS COMPTON FOR REGULAR USE

An exciting moment in theatre organ history came on May 4, 1986, when Ronald Curtis brought up the Compton organ at the Savoy Northampton, England, for its inauguration. It was 50 years to the day after the theatre first opened.

Early in 1985 the theatre management made known its desire to have a Compton organ installed once again, in time for the anniversary program. In 1936, the Savoy opened with a 3/7 Compton with Melotone. That organ was removed in 1960.

ABC Cinema set about locating an instrument and an extensive search led to Mark Burgess, who owned the organ from the ABC Ritz Cleethorpes, as well as choice parts of several other organs. Mark agreed to lend the organ to the Savoy for a period of four years; one year being taken up with the installation.

A crew from the savoy, led by Kenneth Porter, Manager, and Ken Worley, Chief Projectionist, handled the task of transporting the organ to the theatre from its storage place 65 miles away. Following removal of the original Compton from the Savoy the pipe chambers were converted to dressing rooms, so it was necessary to reconvert them for installing the new organ. The original lift was still in place and in working order; it was only necessary to modify it to comply with current safety regulations.

David Pawlyn was employed to restore and install the organ. He has removed, installed or renovated many of Britain's remaining cinema organs, among them the ex-Trocadero Wurlitzer in the South Bank Polytechnic in London. The Savoy's new Compton is a 3/10 instrument, with the two string ranks played together. The ranks are: Flute, Diapason, Tibia, two Strings, Trumpet, Krumet, Oboe, Tromba and Vox Humana, together with Xylophone, Glockenspiel, Vibraphone, Tubular Bells and Toy Counter. One of the famous British "jelly mold surrounds" highlights the console.

The organ inauguration program began with newsreels of May 4, 1936, and featured Ronald Curtis in concert and accompanying a short silent film, with Michael Wooldridge also playing some concert numbers on the Compton. Other stars on the program were

singer Nigel Stephenson and mime Ellen Blueth. Tony Moss, well known in cinema organ circles, was master of ceremonies. The show closed with a duet featuring Ron Curtis on the organ and Michael Wooldridge at the grand piano.

There was a very unexpected and rewarding happening after the formal inaugural program. In the theatre after it emptied, a regular cinema audience of some 800 took their seats and Michael Wooldridge brought up the organ and played them in. All the heads of the ABC group who stayed for this event were staggered to find a young audience, average age 18, silent, attentive and open-mouthed at the dazzling display put on by Michael. When he took the organ down 20 minutes later, he did so to a standing ovation far surpassing that of the regular organ goes at the preceding program. This would seem to indicate that, when playing for a young audience with no prior knowledge of a theatre organ, it is possible to hold their attention and more with a virtuoso performance.

### OUT-OF-SIGHT SILENTS

In front of the cameras on the set of a new Woody Allen film, to be released this fall, all went as planned for organist Lee Erwin. But, later he literally found himself behind-the-scenes of two other movies and facing major obstacles.

Woody Allen's penchant for authenticity, down to minute details, included having new eyeglasses made for Lee set in 1940-type frames to complete his period wardrobe. So, of course a vintage Hammond organ was provided for him to play during the filming of this sequence at the Astoria Studios in Queens, New York.

Having played 68 silent film programs, nine concerts, seven TV and radio shows, besides recording tracks for two films, two ballet performances and doing two recording sessions with orchestra at RCA, Lee Erwin had experienced his share of the usual problems facing the professional organist. Soon, he was to encounter two unusual ones.

Scheduled to accompany two showings of *King of Kings* at Calvary Church in New York City, where the console of the organ does not permit the organist a front view of the screen, Lee had a TV monitor set up to allow him to synchronize his music score to the action on the screen. This method of viewing usually presents no problems for the performer — except when the monitor fails — which it did at Calvary Church five minutes before show-time. With a dead monitor and the back of the screen facing the console, Lee truly was behind the scenes. However, following the dim images leaking through the screen and reading the backwards sub-titles, the show went on.

The next challenge for Lee came in the form of having to record a music track without seeing the film at all! The D. W. Griffith opus, *Orphans of The Storm*, scheduled for a run at the Regency Theatre in New York, arrived without the music track it was supposed