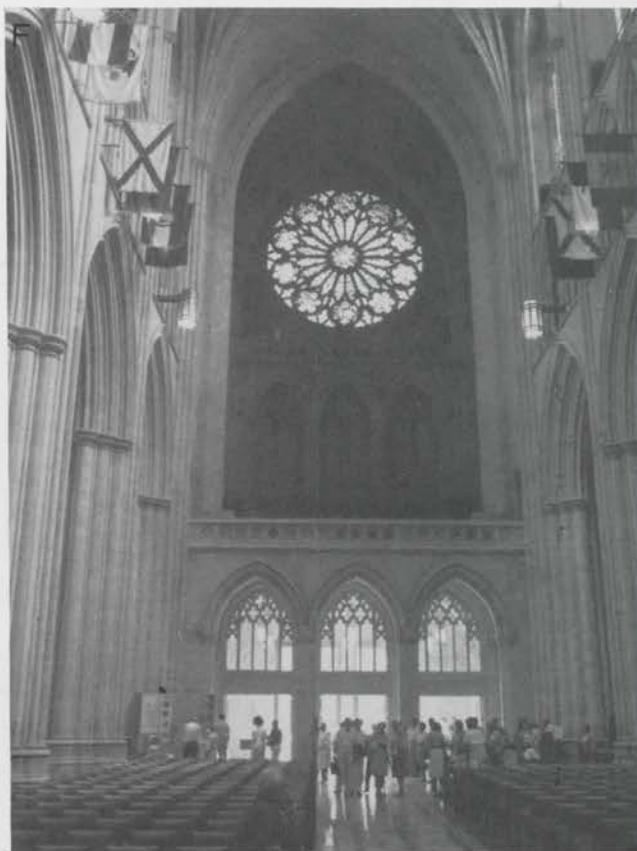
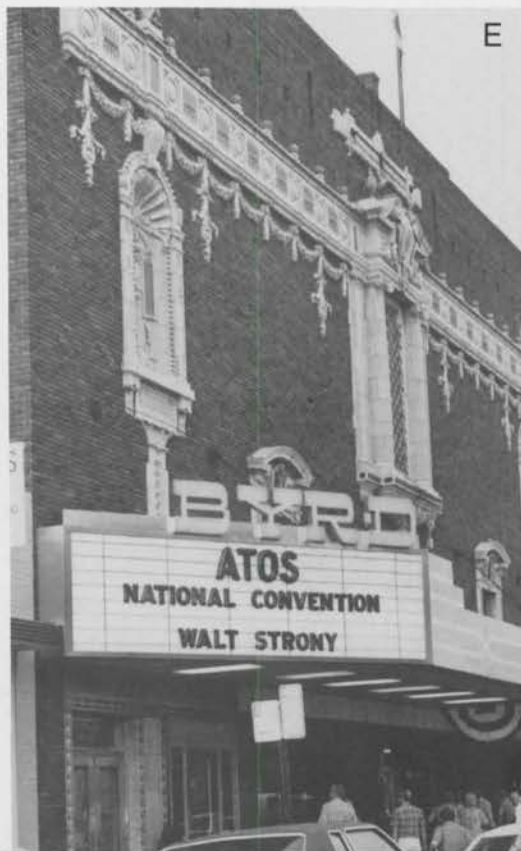




Rhapsody In Richmond ∞ Convention 1986



Our thirty-first convention was remarkable for several reasons, not the least of which was its leisurely pace; ample time was allowed for relaxing meals, for socializing, browsing and for sightseeing. It was also remarkable because, in spite of the fact that there were only two theatre organ venues in Richmond, we heard, on those two organs, six memorable and unique concerts. We were impressed, too, by the warmth and graciousness of our hosts from Virginia Chapter who always seemed to be right where they were needed. Dave and Sharolyn Heatwole and David Barnett were Co-Chairmen of the Convention, and they are certainly to be commended for the way they managed to keep everything running so smoothly. Even though that region was experiencing a record-breaking heat wave, the hardy ATOSers seemed to transcend the temperature and humidity and thoroughly enjoy the entire week.

Those who arrived on Saturday found that the Marriott parking lot had been turned into a Food Faire, and a curious group of early-birds moseyed across the street to wander through the booths only to discover some gourmet, home-style hamburgers for two dollars — such a deal! The festival atmosphere extended into the lobby where a dance band played during the evening while visitors and guests danced in the doorways.

On Sunday morning a contingent of conventioners accepted a posted invitation to attend services at the Centenary United Methodist Church where Ron Rhode was serving as guest organist and his brother, Chuck, was offertory soloist.

Sunday afternoon was a perfect time for lobby-watching; the comfortable chairs and divans were conveniently arranged for both conversation and observation. Virginia Chapter's hostesses were properly attired in authentic nineteenth century gowns which made them easy to locate if help was needed. The convention registration desk was located on the level below the lobby, and the open escalators provided another excellent meeting place for old friends.



Lucille Lunde at the registration desk talking to son Lin. (Ward)



Conventioners check the bulletin board in the lobby of the hotel. (Ward)



THEATRE ORGAN staffers Floyd Mumm, Grace McGinnis and retiring Editor Bob Gilbert. (Feely)



David Lowe from England, Lyn Larsen and Dave Junchen. (Feely)

Richmond mounted policeman watches ATOSers safely cross the street to their busses. (Feely)



◀ CAPTIONS:

A — Southern belles outside the Marriott main entrance with Paul Harris' Wurlitzer Band Organ. L to R: Glynne Keisler, Judy Metz, Joyce Harris. (Ward)

B — The registration desk manned by Virginia Chapter members (L to R) Stan Carey, Bill Balz, Judd Proctor, Mary Bentley and Carole Shereda. Sharolyn Heatwole, Joyce Harris and David Newman greet the conventioners. (Ward)

C — Conventioners in the Carpenter Center. (Feely)

D — In front of the Cinema 'n' Drafthouse in Bethesda. (Ward)

E — Arriving at the Byrd Theatre for the opening concert. (Ward)

F — In the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. (Feely)

Special Thanks . . .

To photographers Gene Ward of Central Indiana Chapter and Don Feely of the Oregon chapter for their patience and cooperation.



L to R: Lyn Larsen, Gib Petzke, Phil Maloof and Terry Hochmuth at the opening cocktail party.

(Ward)



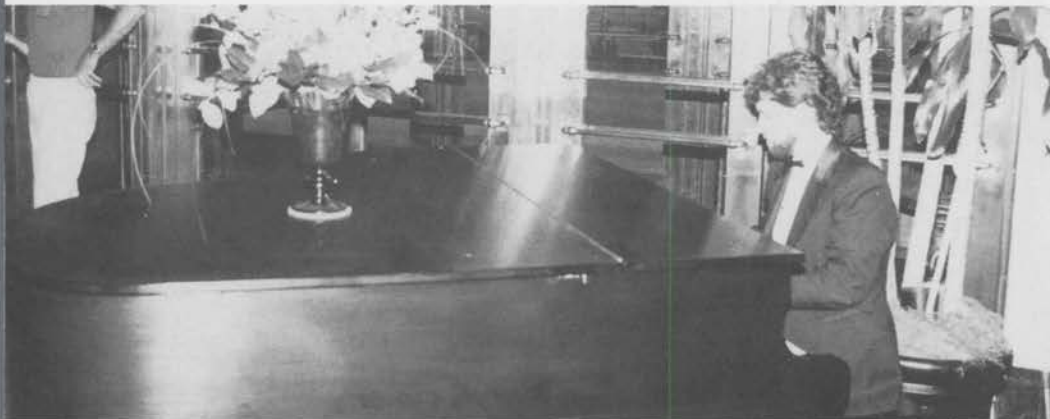
Virginia Webb and friend share ideas over cocktails.

(Ward)



Colonel Jack Moelmann of the Army of the Confederacy welcomes the ATOS to Richmond.

(Feely)



Pianist Frank Carley entertains in the lobby of the Byrd Theatre.

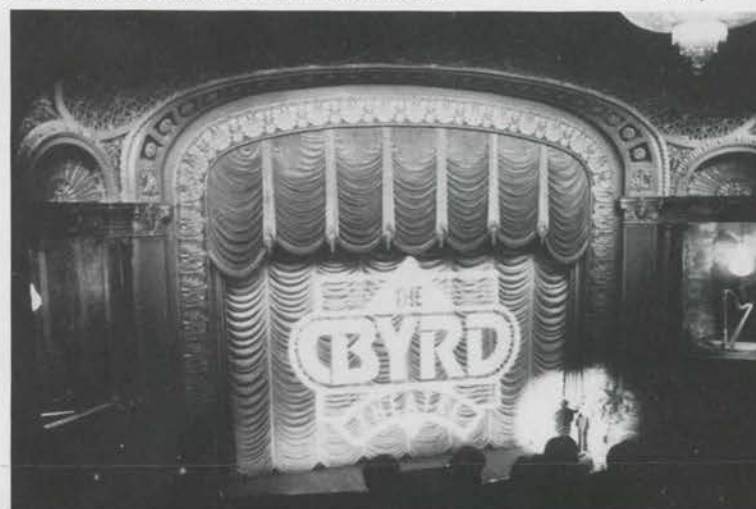
(Feely)

Adeline and Clyde Hook with Thelma Barclay represent Puget Sound Chapter.

(Feely)

David Barnett welcoming the ATOS at the Byrd Theatre.

(Feely)



The Rondo

At 6:30 conventioners began drifting into the Marriott Grand Ballroom for the opening cocktail party. There was an aura of summer camp about this first gathering, a bit like we used to feel when we renewed our once-a-year friendships and shared the past year's news with each other.

When the time came to load the first busses for the Byrd Theatre, we were delighted to see our "fearless leader" from past conventions, Alden Stockebrand, clipboard in hand, orchestrating the boarding and departure procedures, assisted this time by members of Richmond's mounted police who controlled the "civilian" traffic and enabled us to cross the street safely. It was evident, however, that "speed" and "hurry" are foreign words in the South, and the remainder of the week verified this observation.

As we arrived at the Byrd Theatre we were greeted by a staff of young people in formal attire, looking as if they belonged in another century. A handsome young gentleman was seated at a grand piano in the lobby and was providing a most listenable musical interlude. Entering the auditorium for the first time is an incredible visual experience. Pictures cannot do justice to the ambience created by the magnificent crystal chandelier and sidelights in this room. While we were waiting for the last busses to arrive, Virginia Chapter member Miles Rudisill treated us to a "light show" which rivaled anything we had ever seen. Hundreds of tiny colored lights inside the fixtures changed from yellow to blue to red or green, or combinations of these colors, and each different color altered the atmosphere of the auditorium. Convention Co-Chairman David Barnett welcomed us on behalf of the Virginia Chapter and Richmond's mayor, Roy A. West, who had officially declared this to be Theatre Organ Week in the City of Richmond. The next official to appear was a Confederate General in full regalia who welcomed us on behalf of the Confederacy; our own Colonel Jack Moelmann had turned back the clock to assume this new identity (we hope the Air Force isn't too hard on him) and to officially open the 1986 National Convention.

Then, a moment of anticipation and up from the pit came wonderful Walt Strony and the Wurlitzer with a warm and whimsical musical welcome. We knew that this was going to be a convention to remember!

Monday morning's schedule included two seminars; Paul Harris, President of Virginia Chapter, presented a fascinating program entitled "What's A Reproducing Piano . . . or, Why Is My Baby Grand?" and Rex Koury led a panel discussion on "Concert Planning, Production and Promotion." The panel included Walt Strony, Jack Moelmann and John Ledwon.

The Chapter Representatives' Meeting convened at 11:30, and we were pleased to note that ATOS is alive and well across the country and overseas. We are not standing still! If each of you will take some time to read the minutes of this meeting in this issue of THEATRE ORGAN, it will be quite apparent that we are an active bunch of enthusiasts!

Our afternoon venue was the Mosque, an elegant old building now owned by the city, where there is a Wurlitzer theatre organ. Eddie Weaver was the entertainer here. We thought we had lost him, at one point, when the back of the console "exploded" in a huge puff of smoke. However, it was merely an interruption by a Muppet-like creature who defined ATOS as "All Those Old Stinkers!" And all of us "old stinkers" loved it. A lively sing-along, however, brought out the summer-camper in each of us and contradicted the creature's definition. During intermission, Patti Simon narrated an intriguing slide show promoting the Rocky Mountain Regional to be held in Denver in October.

Monday night we returned to the Byrd and learned from David Barnett that Governor Gerald Baliles had officially declared this to be Theatre Organ Week in the Commonwealth of Virginia — it was good to know that both the city and the state were aware that we exist. Lyle Henry of the Los Angeles chapter previewed the 1987 Convention with an inviting slide show of what we can expect in Los Angeles. Our artist highlighting this event was Lyn Larsen who brought a Kurzweil synthesizer to create some heretofore unheard-in-the-Byrd sounds that probably set theatre organ ahead several years. A cameo spot by this year's Young Organist Competition winner, Dwight Thomas, should have encouraged young and old alike — there is a future for these grand old instruments! It should be noted, too, that Dwight's teacher, John Ferguson of Indianapolis, deserves kudoes for producing the first two first place winners of the National ATOS Competition.

Richard Sklenar, Walt Strony, Allen Miller, David Barnett and Jack Moelmann at the Chapter Reps' Meeting. (Ward)



"What's a reproducing piano . . . or Why is my baby grand?" seminar presented by Paul Harris.

(Feely)



Seminar led by Rex Koury on "Concert Planning" assisted by Jack Moelmann, Walt Strony and John Ledwon. (Ward)



Dorothy Van Steenkiste, Colleen Feldpausch, John Ferguson and Dwight Thomas.

(Feely)

Laurel Haggart, Bob Markworth and John Ledwon.

(Ward)





Sharolyn Heatwole confers with husband Dave to the amusement of Bill Balz and Lin Lunde.

(Ward)



Adeline Hook from Puget Sound chapter shares a smile with Chris Elliott.

(Ward)



Lois Segur lead a seminar on "Organizing A Young Artists Competition."

(Ward)



Allen Miller demonstrates how to clean reed pipes for interested organ buffs.

(Feely)

Officers and Directors at the Annual Membership Meeting hear from Archivist Vern Bickel.

(Ward)



A lively Jam Session began shortly after the concert, and we heard Ty Woodward, Patti Simon, Warren Lubich, England's Dave Lowe, Joel Kremer and Jack Napier in a musical potpourri that left us feeling like we could have "danced all night."

The first event on Tuesday morning was at the Mosque where Jim Roseveare did the honors. In spite of the morning hour, there were no heads nodding when this charming gentleman took the bench. The General Membership Meeting was held at the conclusion of the concert, and the minutes of this meeting are also to be found in this issue of the journal.

The short bus ride back to the hotel left plenty of time before the afternoon seminars were scheduled, and a large group of conventioners went to the Miller & Rhoads Tea Room across the street from the hotel to have "Lunch with Eddie." The store presents a daily fashion show, and Eddie Weaver entertains, during the noon hour — a pleasant interlude for shoppers — and ATOSers.

Lois Segur led a seminar on Tuesday afternoon which was designed to help chapters prepare and present their young artists for the annual ATOS competition. Lois enlisted the aid of Dorothy Van Steenkiste from Motor City Chapter and Edith Rawle from London who shared their experiences in running their competitions. A concurrent seminar by Allen Miller drew a large group of organ buffs who wanted to learn about cleaning reed pipes. These technical presentations appear to be very popular with conventioners.

In late afternoon, busses began a shuttle service to the elegantly refurbished Jefferson-Sheraton Hotel for a cocktail party reminiscent of the days of gracious living when time was not always of the essence.

Tuesday night we returned to the Byrd for a concert by Ron Rhode, and once again were mesmerized by the spectacle of the changing colors in the chandelier — a truly remarkable phenomenon. Ron is always a pleasure to see and hear, and this time he added a surprise when he introduced his brother, Chuck, also a musician, who contributed several vocal selections — bonus night at the Byrd!

The Roundelay

The only day requiring an *early* rising time was Wednesday; the busses were scheduled to leave for Bethesda and Washington, D.C. before 7:30 — some of us did not quite wake up between bed and bus and managed to arrive in Bethesda while still sleeping. Half of the group stopped at the Bethesda Cinema 'n' Drafthouse while the others went directly to brunch at the Ramada Inn. The artist at the Drafthouse was young Martin Ellis, last year's winner of the Young Organist Competition, at the console of an about-to-be-dismantled Wurlitzer. An hour later the two groups exchanged places by walking the few blocks, and about then the heat wave turned into a downpour that thoroughly drenched the slower hikers.

Riding the short distance to Washington enabled us to relax and digest both the food and the music before we disembarked at the National Cathedral for Tom Hazleton's program. The Cathedral alone could have been an all-day event as it is a vast and elaborate edifice, still under construction and filled with things to see and read and hear. But we were there to hear — and that we did! Tom ended his program with "The Star-Spangled Banner," and more than 600 ATOS voices sang with him for one of those unforgettable mystical moments we never forget.

We picked up box lunches for the return trip, and quickly learned how to juggle a meal on a bouncing bus while straining to see the White House and the Capitol and the Washington Monument. On the way back to Richmond, Mother Nature created a show of her own which rivaled the Byrd Theatre's lighting effects — lightning, thunder and more rain than one could imagine halted most of the automobile traffic, although the bus caravan was able to continue at a fair pace. Some of us, who had never experienced a storm such as this, were terribly impressed at its ferocity and quite thankful for the security of the large busses.

The evening was ours until 11:30 when the Byrd was available for a second Jam Session. Although we didn't have a light show, we did get to hear some wonderful organ music played by Paul Quarino, Lowell Ayars, Colleen Feldpausch, John Cook and Ron Rhode. A lovely ending to an unforgettable day!



Looking at an antique projector in the lobby of the Bethesda Cinema 'n' Drafthouse.

(Feely)



Patrick Shotton from London, a convention favorite.

(Ward)



Joe Luckey at morning coffee with Mrs. Charles Mathews.

(Ward)



Picking up box lunches outside of the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C.

(Ward)

Jim Roseveare explaining a point to Eloise and Jan Bouye and a friend.

(Ward)

Ruth Ward of Indiana with Edith and Les Rawle from London, and Brian Cross from Calgary.

(Ward)





Jack Moelmann thanks Hector Olivera for the after-dinner music. The Yamaha Corporation sponsored Hector's appearance, and ATOS is most grateful for their generosity. (Feely)



Colonel Jack Moelmann, ATOS President, wonders what to do with his Fried Chicken Award from Virginia Chapter. (Feely)



Dwight Thomas receives his award as 1986 winner of the Young Artists Competition. (Feely)



Two convivial ATOSers meet in Richmond. (Ward)



Patti Simon and Ed Zollman wait in line with Anita Caine and John McLennan from Australia. (Ward)

Tim Needer views the console of the mostly Wurlitzer in the Carpenter Center (Loew's Richmond). (Ward)



The Virginia Reel

Chris Elliott opened Thursday's activities with a 9:00 concert at the Mosque, and we realized once more that we are a very fortunate organization because we have such personable and talented young artists to perpetuate the theatre organ, and that hearing these people in live performances is one of the major benefits of conventions.

The Carpenter Center for the Performing Arts was opened at noon to enable conventioners to view the restored Loew's Theatre. The organ, which was not ready to play at that time, will make it worthwhile to return to Richmond when the installation is complete.

That afternoon at the Byrd was a showing of *Wings*, accompanied by Lin Lunde. The WWI story and the artistry of Lin's music combined to evoke a tremendous response from the audience — this was very definitely a three-Kleenex event.

The Allen Organ Company provided an organ, and Dwight Beacham added the talent, to entertain us at the pre-banquet reception in the Grand Ballroom. After dinner Colonel Jack Moelmann took command for the presentations, but not before he was given the Fried Chicken Award by the Virginia Chapter. Dr. John Landon then presented the Hall of Fame Award to Gordon Kibbee who was unable to attend the convention and asked Lowell Ayars to accept the honor for him. Dr. Landon then announced that Tom Hazleton had been elected Organist of the Year. The next award was a special recognition, by the Board, of Hector Olivera's ingenuity and creativity as shown by his OI Orchestra. Allen Miller presented the Award for Technical Excellence to Dave Junchen for his work as a designer, installer and tonal finisher of pipe organs. Colonel Moelmann announced that Bob Gilbert is the 1986 Honorary Member of the Year; Bob has just retired as editor of THEATRE ORGAN after five years in that position. Jack also presented Dwight Thomas, winner of the Young Organist Competition, with a check and a certificate from ATOS. When all of the food and festivities were finished, an extra "dessert" was served by the Yamaha Corporation — Hector Olivera was the "icing" and he "played us out" to end the 1986 National Convention. □

Dwight Beacham at the Allen organ entertained at the pre-banquet reception. (Feely)

