

top-star Phil Kelsall are his star names today. Star name at the Tower Blackpool in Kelsall's case, but also Nicholas Martin at Turners Merry-Go-Round, and Robert Wolfe at Cushings Thursford Museum, the three most commercial players today, all under Bob Barratt's wing; what a job! Yes, each of the young players brings out a record each year: Kelsall's new one at the Tower is "Fascinating Rhythm," Nicholas Martin's is "I Can't Smile Without You," and Robert Wolfe's is "Dizzy Fingers." All are thoroughly enjoyable and, needless to say, well-recorded. The lads are all in their twenties and have fan clubs and all this fame.

Grosvenor Records has released an LP called "Happy Together," featuring 12-year-old Peter Holt at a 3/10 Compton in the Three J's Leisure Centre in Gomersal, Yorkshire. Peter has won numerous competitions already, such as the 1985-6 ATOS Young Theatre Organist of the Year. By and large, for a 12-year-old it is some feat! Grosvenor does a great job catering to us organ fans, either pipe or electronic. That's it for now. Next time we will take a look at yet another rebirth of a theatre organ in a major cinema chain. □

Closing Chord

Theatre organ buffs in the Southeast suffered an incalculable loss with the death on July 19, of **William Senton Granberry** of Laurel, Mississippi. Mr. Granberry was the victim of a heart attack. For more than 20 years, Senton was a member of ATOS and was a tireless promoter of the theatre organ hobby; he was the mainspring of many meetings, concerts and get-togethers at the 3/13 Robert-Morton in the Jeff Seale Studio in Laurel.

Senton was an avid recordist and photographer, and was responsible for our having audio and photo records of many theatre organ events. Several years ago, he recruited several of us into a tape-exchange group that came to be known as the Knights of the Round Robin, and which has enabled us to keep up with each other and theatre organ activities around the country. In "real life" Senton was a self-described country banker, being the senior vice-president and a director of the Richton Bank and Trust Company of Richton, Mississippi, as well as a director of Merchants and Manufacturer's Bank of Ellisville.

Senton's generosity and his wit were legendary among those who knew him, and his gentleness and openness endeared him to his dozens of tape correspondents in this country and in England. He is one of the few men of whom it can be truthfully said that he never uttered an unkind, harsh or derogatory word about anyone.

Senton is survived by his wife, Allison, and by two children, Allison and Bill.

DOLTON McALPIN □

IN SEARCH OF BETTER TIBIA TREMOLOS

by David L. Junchen

The tibia clausa is the one voice essential for successful performance of popular music on the organ. An organ without a tibia might be able to play jazz or orchestral transcriptions but is totally inadequate for romantic or sentimental popular tunes. The tibia is the backbone of the theatre organ's tonal structure just as the diapason is the foundation of the classic organ. And an organ with a bad tibia is almost as inadequate as one with no tibia at all. What makes a good tibia? Read on, MacDuff!

The tibia clausa was pioneered, if not actually invented, by a man often dubbed as the father of the theatre organ, Robert Hope-Jones. Without at all discounting Hope-Jones' contributions to the art of organ building, the author feels this sobriquet to be inappropriate. Hope-Jones never installed a theatre organ under his own nameplate, and many of the organs he designed for Wurlitzer, the firm which absorbed his bankrupt business, had no tibia at all. Those which had tibias were poorly unified, often appearing only at 8' pitch. (In contemporary practice, by contrast, tibias often appear at many pitches such as 16', 8', 5-1/3', 4', 3-1/5', 2-2/3', 2', 1-3/5', 1-1/3', and 1'.) As late as the early 1920s Wurlitzer was still producing standard models of organs as large as 2/7 without tibias (Style 185) and as large as 2/9 (Style 210) wherein the tibia appeared only at 8' pitch.

The relative unimportance of the tibia in early organs in theatres lay in Hope-Jones' concept of its place in the tonal hierarchy. He viewed it not as a solo voice but as a "thickener" to add depth and weight to other voices without altering their basic colors. Organist Jesse Crawford is often credited with pioneering the use of tibias as solo colors in their own right, not just as thickeners for other stops. Actually, by itself, the tibia is a rather dull and musically uninteresting sound because of the virtual absence of harmonic development. But just turn on the tremolo . . . and *voilà!* There's a sound which, more than any other,

endeared theatre organs to the general public and still tugs at our heartstrings today.

So what makes a good tibia? The secret lies in how the pipes are affected by the tremolo. The tremolo causes a variation in wind pressure at the pipes. In most organ pipes, lowering and raising the wind pressure causes the pipes to speak correspondingly softer and louder while their pitch varies relatively little. In a good tibia, however, the tremolo also causes a significant lowering and raising of pitch. It is this extreme pitch variation which the ear interprets as the characteristic tibia "sweetness." Two general factors determine the extent of that sweetness: 1) the degree of violence with which the tremolo disturbs the wind pressure at the pipe; and 2) the voicing of the pipes themselves.

Let's examine first the major mechanical factors which affect the effectiveness of the tremolo system. Keep in mind that the more violently the wind pressure varies, or "shakes," as I prefer to say, the sweeter the tibia sound will be. (By the way, the words 'tremolo' and 'tremulant' are synonymous and interchangeable. The use of one term or the other has no particular significance, representing only the whim of the author!)

1. Factors of the Tremulant Itself

- a) Degree of openness of the gate on the windline entering the tremulant: the more open the gate, the more effective the shake. On almost all tremulants except voxes the gate is usually adjusted wide open. In fact, the author often removes the gates altogether, thereby eliminating a particularly annoying source of leaks.
- b) Size of wind inlet hole: Anything smaller than 2" diameter will reduce the shake; 2-1/2 or 3" is better.
- c) Weights: Weight added to the tremolo bellows usually improves the shake.
- d) Trim height: This is the adjustment of how far open the trem bellows is at rest.