



Seven past Presidents at chapter party celebrating 25 years. (Zimfoto)

# LOS ANGELES CHAPTER CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

by Ralph Beaudry

On August 28, 1961, a group of Los Angeles organ buffs met in the home of the late Richard Simonton in Toluca Lake to organize a Los Angeles Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society. Six years earlier, ATOS had been founded in that same home.

After a screening of *The Phantom of the Opera* with Gaylord Carter at the console of the Simonton Wurlitzer, the group was informed that Dick Simonton, organ buff Don Wallace and organist Ann Leaf had just negotiated an agreement with the Stanley-Warner Corporation to rebuild the 4/37 Kimball organ in the Wiltern Theatre.

With this incentive, our chapter was born and immediately set to work to prepare the huge instrument for the ATOS National Convention in June, 1962. To help organize the work parties needed to rebuild the Kimball, member Tom B'hend launched what became *The Console* magazine in January of 1962.

Now it is 1986, and we celebrate 25 years of preserving and presenting theatre organs to an increasingly aware Los Angeles public.

Malin and Lenore Dollinger offered their home for our party as it would accommodate more than the 200 expected guests. The Dollingers have a magnificent 4/26 Wurlitzer in their spacious home. Special guest artists for the celebration were our chapter's youngest and oldest "pro" organists, Chris Elliott and Lloyd del Castillo. More than 225 members participated in the event and shared the spectacular anniversary cake along with the great music and good fellowship.

During the afternoon, two of our "founders" were introduced, Tom B'hend and Lorin Whitney. Also present were seven of our past presidents: Ralph Beaudry (now serving his second term), Gene Davis, Sam Dickerson, Malin Dollinger, Bob Hill, Neil Kissel, and Jack Shemick.

Not content to rest on its past laurels, Los Angeles Chapter is currently moving ahead with plans to relocate its 3/25 Ross Reed Memorial organ in Sexson Hall, on the campus of Pasadena City College, in time for the 1987 ATOS National Convention. □



Lloyd G. del Castillo, now known as Del Castillo, plays the Dollinger's Wurlitzer at the Los Angeles chapter's twenty-fifth birthday party. (Tom B'hend Photo)

Charter members Tom B'hend (left) and Lorin Whitney reminisce at the birthday party for Los Angeles Chapter. (Zimfoto)



Chris Elliott plays for the birthday party of Los Angeles Chapter. (Zimfoto)

