

HENRY FRANCIS PARKS, Roosevelt in Chicago...10/27 MILTON CHARLES, Chicago's Tivoli...4/29 LEW WHITE, Chief Organist, New York's Roxy...3/34 JESSE & HELEN CRAWFORD, RKO Palace, Rochester, New York, on tour...12/34 STANLEIGH MALOTTE, WJZ, New York; DICK LEIBERT, WFAF, New York; ELMER TIDMARSH, WGY, Schenectady...9/35 FRANCIS J. CRONIN, WAAB, Boston; FRED FEIBEL, CBS at

noon; TOM GRIERSON, WHAM from RKO Palace, Rochester; ALBERT DAWELEY'S "Slumber Hour," WBEN, Buffalo; ELSIE THOMPSON with contralto Evalyn MacGregor and Baritone Roger Kinne, WABC, New York.

With this column go our best wishes for a most enjoyable holiday season and a New Year filled with happiness.

So long, sourdoughs!

Jason & The Old Prospector □

collar.

His comment on the duct tape is legitimate (*mea culpa*). It was temporary and should have been replaced with a flex collar during our experiments with windline lengths.

As to the careless installation inferred in his letter, the Grant Whitcomb review which I cited, and Mr. Hedberg's comment thereon, I refer to page 40 of the September/October, 1984, THEATRE ORGAN, where Mr. Whitcomb also said, "... probably the best installed and voiced of the convention." If Mr. Hedberg would read and absorb comments of organ experts, he would not so readily cast aspersions on ideas other than his own on an organ he has not seen, heard or played. In fact, Henry Gottfried, of the famous pipe-making family, sought me out following the Afterglow, to tell me that this was one of the most beautiful Wurlitzer sounds that he had ever heard.

Mr. Hedberg also refers to "skimpy manual chest feed lines," relative to my recommendation to replace large, wooden, manual wind trunks with 4" metal feed lines. No less an organ expert than Allen Miller, in the same issue (September/October, 1984), page 59, suggests the same procedure to replace the wind trunks with a 4" line. The picture accompanying the article shows a 4" windline feeding a four-rank chest manifold with two of the ranks fed by a 3" branch line... a "soda straw" (?) feed, yet it works, and believe me, it does make a more effective tremolo, as Mr. Miller says.

As far as our designing this trem system by "committee," over a period of many months our crew tried several different designs of trem runs — heavy regulator weights, light weights, no weights, less elbows and more elbows, no trem weights, light trem weights and heavy trem weights, and different lengths of runs on each of our eleven tremolos. When we made the last run on the brass chest, the present configuration, we turned on the wind and the trem started immediately with near-

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
4633 SE Brookside Drive #58
Milwaukie, Oregon 97222

Dear Editor:

Mr. Lineback wants to know why organ consoles are placed "on the left side of the stage." I assume he means the left side of the pit. The reason is that the organ on the left balances with the same amount of room used by the percussion members of the orchestra on the right. In 1920 when I took my first job at the Fenway Theatre in Boston, there was no orchestra and no pit, so the organ was placed in a small pit in the center.

Theatre architects weren't always as knowledgeable about such things as they might have been. At the Fenway, the organ chambers were built backstage on one side so that the organ sound had to fight its way through canvas. In the deluxe movie palaces of the 1920s the organ frequently showed up on the right. At the Rialto in New York City the organ had to be on the right as the only usable backstage area was on the right. The State and Metropolitan in Boston both had the organ on the left where it should be.

In the grand old days of Jesse and Helen Crawford, Jesse would rise majestically on the left console elevator while Helen would unobtrusively sneak onto the duplicate console on the right platform. After the 1930s, most organs found their way into pizza parlors. With the advent of sound in 1928, the great days of the silent theatre organist were over.

Del Castillo
Los Angeles, California □

Dear Editor:

I feel it incumbent upon myself to respond to Dennis Hedberg's somewhat vitriolic critique of my views on tremolos and the Emery Wurlitzer. ATOS and its journal is, and should be, a catalyst and forum for dignified discussions of technical ideas, not for recriminations. I am fully aware of Mr. Hedberg's reputation as an organ consultant and find it

hard to equate the caustic attitude in his letter to the fact that the systems have been recommended by both Dan Barton and Allen Miller, whom I will cite in this letter.

First, my article stated "no flex runs" which he quoted verbatim. A flex run, as any experienced organ man knows is a length of flex in lieu of a metal windline which can (and does) pulse with trem action, creating a secondary wave. A flex *coupling*, on the other hand, is not only acceptable, but is also desirable as a seal only, particularly in a trem line so a trem can be removed for service without having to take out flange-collar screws, often difficult to reach, and subsequent galling of the screw holes in the trem. When flex is used in this instance, opposing windlines are generally fitted about 1/8 inch apart, with the flex used only as a firm air-seal

*The members and guests were all nestled in seats
To await the coming of musical treats*

*When out of the chambers there arose such a chorus
Of melodious refrain; it was all right before us*

*The console in trim, ablaze in the light
Was ready to show its Wurlitzer might*

*To herald the season of good Christmas cheer
With Yuletide medleys; it was that time of year*

*As the artist's quick fingers flew over the keys
I heard him exclaim what I'm sure he believes,*

*"The Season's best wishes for each member here,
And to all of us present, a Happy New Year!"*

JOHN POLSLEY
Central Ohio Chapter

perfect beat, no adjustment required.

Mr. Hedberg stated that "with all this weight on the poor tremulant valve and skimpy manual chest feed lines, it's a wonder it works at all! . . . some professional organists say it doesn't." Please be advised that only two prominent organists have played this organ in its present trem/feed-line configuration which has only been operative the past 18 months. Previous organists played it with shorter original Wurlitzer trem lines and large wind trunks which did not work! As to the "weight on the poor trem valve," the valve opens against pressure so it is not detrimental to the valve hinge — so much better than umpteen pounds on a regulator, destroying the regulator's pressure control and rebound.

To further support this system, Dan Barton, in a THEATRE ORGAN article in November/December, 1985, advocates the same system; i.e., long 3" trem lines up to 30 feet, numerous elbows, etc., and weights on trem. In reference to the comment criticizing my use of the word "reverses" of air in the trem lines during operation, I should more properly have said "surges" caused by the continuing movement of air to the trem valve which suddenly closes causing the air pressure to temporarily build up in the wind box and results in a jerky, uneven regulator action. The long windline to the trem acts as a cushion to absorb this and results in a perfect balance and harmony between the regulator and the trem. The key word in this trem reaction is "sine wave," like a good coloratura voice rather than a "Bert Lahr-cowardly lion" unmusical quaver and forced uneven beat. A short windline requires much added weight on the regulator to satisfactorily achieve any trem at all (there are no weights in the Emery installation), so the only way to achieve any beat is by throwing more weights on the regulator — sometimes 100 pounds — which automatically destroys the fluidity of the regulator movement.

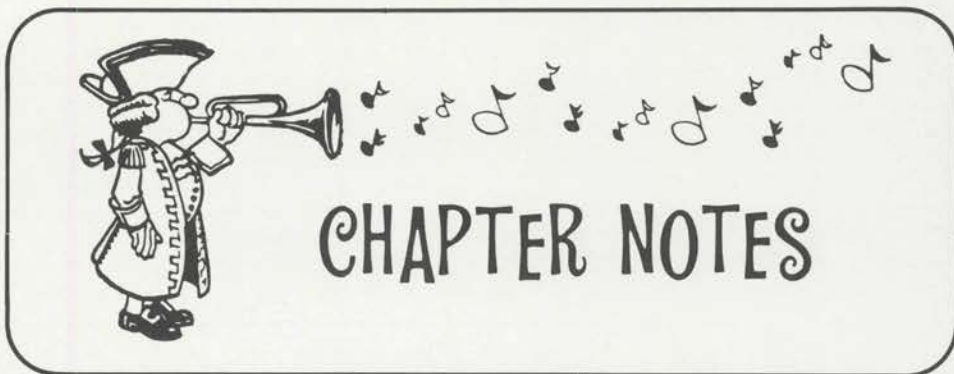
In conclusion, Mr. Hedberg seems to complain about many theatre organs in which he has not had a hand, inferentially insulting to many organ buffs; after all, the average organ buff is responsible for the resurgence of interest in theatre organs, without which many professional theatre organists would not have jobs. Those in the know should help them as a gift to their fellow hobbyists.

Mr. Hedberg says he will write an article with a different slant than mine on trem. I will look forward to reading it. Mathematical proof is not the factor in music — it's the feeling a beautiful, lush, even trem imparts.

As to my qualifications, I designed, sold, planned and supervised installations for a leading American pipe organ builder for 20 years and have been a consultant for 45 years. I have played, serviced and enlarged organs since I was 14 years old in the '30s, so I am hardly a newcomer to the field.

My suggestion to Mr. Hedberg, if he has an open mind, is — try it, you'll like it.

Sincerely,
Everard S. (Tote) Pratt
Cincinnati, Ohio □



ALABAMA Birmingham 205/942-5611 or 205/664-3606

We are based in Birmingham, and being from the "Heart of Dixie," take great pride in our Southern heritage and way of life. We also hold to the belief in "southern hospitality" — even for those from the North. The months of July and August were no exception as we extended our hospitality to two Northerners — Bill Snyder and Jim Wright, both from Tennessee (that is north of Birmingham!), marched southward into Alabama to perform at the Alabama Theatre. These two are certainly not strangers to our chapter, and in July, Dr. William (Bill) Snyder graced our console for the first time in several years. Bill is house organist at the Tennessee Theatre in Knoxville, the sister theatre to the Alabama. The Tennessee's Wurlitzer, a 3/14 Balaban 2, is decorated in the same style as its sister organ here (did I just call him a Northerner?), and Bill felt right at home. Dr. Snyder is Dean of the College of Engineering at the University of Tennessee, and we are always very pleased and fortunate to have him as our guest.

August found Chattanooga Jim Wright on vacation from college and right at home at the keydesk of the Publix #1. Jim is an organ major at Bob Jones University and is well-versed in both theatre and classical organ. He just keeps getting better year after year —

watch as he emerges into one of the finest theatre organists in the Southeast.

Work is progressing steadily on the Wurlitzer going in at the Birmingham Wedding Chapel. A three-manual console has been procured, rebuilding is coming along nicely, additional pipework and chests are being gathered and alterations to the pipe chambers have begun. Work crew foreman Gary Jones is very pleased with results, so far.

We wound down the Alabama Theatre's



Artist Jay Mitchell at his May concert for Alabama Chapter.
(Gary W. Jones Photo)



Dr. William (Bill) Snyder at the Wurlitzer Publix #1 console — Alabama Theatre.
(Gary W. Jones Photo)



Organist Jim Wright at Alabama Chapter meeting in August.
(Gary W. Jones Photo)