

# PLEASE VOTE

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## A Message To All Chapter Presidents And ATOS Members:

The local ATOS chapter is where the action is, where individual members join together to further their aims and programs. But we must not forget that we are also part of the family of chapters and members at large who collectively extend their influence among a world-wide audience through the American Theatre Organ Society, the body whose health and growth depends upon the strength and involvement of its members.

Your national officers and Board of Directors are committed not only to coordinating the activities and goals of the Society, but also to assisting the chapters and members by every means possible in promoting the preservation of the theatre organ as a concert instrument in its own right and creating a public awareness of our efforts.

Every member has a responsibility in determining the future of this wonderful organization, and one of the best ways to discharge that responsibility is to participate in the selection of the members of the Board of Directors. Last year's election was determined by only 1100 ballots, not a very good display of interest and concern on the part of some 5000 members! This is an appeal to all chapter presidents and members at large to "get out the vote" — there is strength in numbers!

Russell Joseph  
Vice President and Chairman,  
Nominating Committee

# I FOUND IT!

by Kenneth R. Aultz

My search for a Wurlitzer pipe organ began in the fall of 1982. I had been bitten by the organ "bug" five years earlier, but I had to wait until my company had completed the installation and dedication of a 4/60 Aultz-Kersting pipe organ in the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption in Covington, Kentucky. When I did, at last, begin my search, I found an ad in the January 1983 THEATRE ORGAN classifieds for a 2/7 Wurlitzer in Manchester, Connecticut.

Following a month of correspondence and telephone negotiations with owner Irving Twomey, I flew to Manchester to inspect the organ and found it to be in immaculate condition. It had been in Mr. Twomey's home since 1968 and had been lovingly cared for by Mr. Mike Foley, a well-known pipe organ expert in New England. It took only a brief time for me to make up my mind before I handed Irv a down payment to seal the deal. And then the fun began!

As Twomey related some of the history of the instrument, I learned that the organ is a 2/7 Style E, opus 1712, shipped from the Wurlitzer factory on August 26, 1927, to the Park Theatre in Taunton, Massachusetts. Irv explained that the entire organ was in great shape when he bought it, except for the console, which had been badly damaged, and the cables, which had been chewed by rats. This had been a major stumbling block to its in-

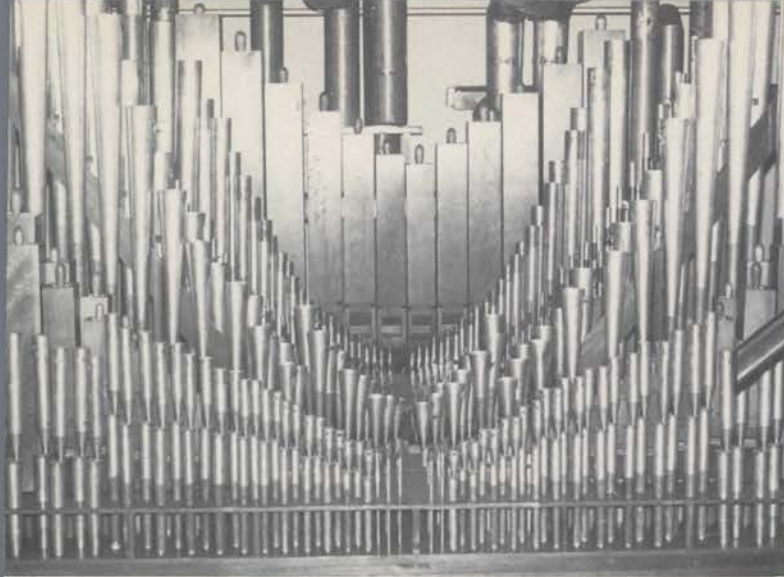
stallation in the Twomey residence. However, Irv called upon Mr. George Shaskins of Stamford, Connecticut, who had a two-manual Wurlitzer console hooked up as a "slave" to his larger Wurlitzer with a three-manual Kimball console, and persuaded George to sell him the smaller console. This two-manual console came from a 2/8, Style 220, opus 2074, shipped on September 30, 1929, to the Pickwick Theatre in Greenwich, Connecticut. These two organs were "married" and served Mr. Twomey from 1968-1983. When I purchased this instrument from Twomey, he included several original programs from the opening of the Pickwick Theatre on November 21, 1929, a stack of admission tickets from the Park Theatre and the original blueprints from the Park Theatre Wurlitzer installation. I consider these items to be worth their weight in gold.

The next challenge I faced was getting the organ 750 miles back to Cincinnati. The move had to be completed over a long weekend (Friday-Tuesday) in order to meet the scheduling conflicts of myself, my helpers and Mr. Twomey. A weekend was finally decided upon, the last weekend in April 1983. Eight pipe trays were built and loaded in a rented van for the fifteen-hour drive to Manchester. It seems now, as I look back, that it could not have been possible to disassemble the organ, pack and load it into the van and a 24-foot

Completely refinished console with new Devtronix Wurlitzer replica bench.

(Photo Arts Studio)





Head-on view of the chamber prior to installation of swell shades.

(Photo Arts Studio)



Gaylord Carter and Ken Aultz pose at the console after the dedication.

(Mike Detroy photo)

rented truck, drive the 750 miles home and unload both trucks in such a short time — but we did it! I had wonderful help from dear friends Richard Kersting and David Woessner. Irv helped load the trucks in Connecticut, and Jack Doll, Jr., and Gene Ostenkamp helped unload at the Cincinnati end.

All of the organ parts were taken into the basement of their new home except for the console. It was left in the garage for two reasons: there was no room in the basement with seven ranks of Wurlitzer scattered about, and, more important, it would not go through the door. That was a problem to be tackled later.

The organ required little rebuilding as it all functioned perfectly. The seven ranks of pipes — 8' Vox, 8' Tibia, 8' Trumpet (style D), 16' Flute, 8' Violin, 8' TC Violin Celeste and 16' Diaphonic Diapason — were racked, wired and winded. The full complement of percussions (xylophone, chrysoglott, glockenspiel and toy counter) were wired and winded, and the whole organ was tested from the original Wurlitzer relay.

Then it was time to move the console through the door and down into the basement. A console which is 36 inches wide has a very difficult time getting through a 30" door. At this point, I called my friend, Mike Detroy, who had faced this problem with his Wurlitzer, and he advised and helped me with this phase of the project. Basically, the console had to be broken into two separate pieces. The manuals came out rather easily leaving the contact rails with the base of the console, but the real task was to get the top off of the console base. The combination action chest had to be removed from the top section since it was cabled into the base. Once this "impossible" task was accomplished, there was still a handful of wires that had to be cut and tagged before the top could be removed and turned on its side to be carried through the door. The disconnected combination chest and associated setter board were securely tied to the base, and the scrolls were carefully broken off of the base. Even in this disassembled state, we were dealing with a clumsy, 400-pound console base which we

carefully carried down the basement stairs.

The console, originally painted antique white with gold trim, had severely yellowed with age, and I decided I wanted to strip off the paint and refinish it in its natural mahogany veneer. My friend, David Woessner, did this almost single-handedly. The bench that came with the console was not original, so a new bench was ordered from Devtronix.

The organ began to play in February 1984, less than ten months after its removal from Mr. Twomey's residence in Manchester. Chamber walls were built during that summer, and the entire basement listening area was completely remodeled with the help and advice of Jack Doll.

Many items were added to this installation to make the organ more versatile. Reisner electric switches were used for additional stops. The Solo manual now has added: 5 1/3' Tibia, 2 2/3' Tibia, 2' Tibia, 2' Fifteenth (Violin), 16' Coupler and 4' Coupler. The Xylophone is now switchable from single stroke to reiterating. The Accompaniment manual now has added: 2 2/3' Twelfth (Flute), 4' Coupler, 8' Tibia on second touch and Chrysoglott on second touch. The Pedal ac-

quired a Triangle (very useful in a residence installation), 8' Solo to Pedal Coupler and 8' Accompaniment to Pedal Coupler. The console is also prepared for a Post Horn as soon as one can be found.

All of this effort culminated in a gala dedication concert/party for friends and fellow organ buffs on September 26, 1984. Gaylord Carter did the honors at the console with a superb program. This dear friend put the Wurlitzer through its paces with numbers that ranged from Gaylord's signature piece, "The Perfect Song," to music he composed for the silent film *Wings* and for some of Harold Lloyd's old films. His encore was an unusually moving arrangement of "Memory" from *Cats*. Open console lasted until the wee hours of the morning, thus completing an unforgettable night of music which more than justified all the "blood, sweat and tears" that had gone into the installation of this Wurlitzer.

Since its dedication, the organ has provided many hours of musical pleasure for myself and my friends, including organists David Lowe from England and Tom Wibbels from Chicago, and I am proud to be counted among those who are called organ "nuts." □

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