



Master of Ceremonies Don Hall (L) and organist Don Scott. (Gale E. Smith photo)

The little group continued to hold informal concerts at the Palace on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Following the 1964 ATOS National Convention in the area, it was decided to organize a formal club to hold monthly concerts from September through May, to issue a newsletter (*The Blower*) and to promote the cause of theatre organ and its music before the general public.

In March 1965 it was announced that "The Showplace of Rochester" would be razed to make way for an apartment complex, but the idea never materialized and the site is a parking lot today.

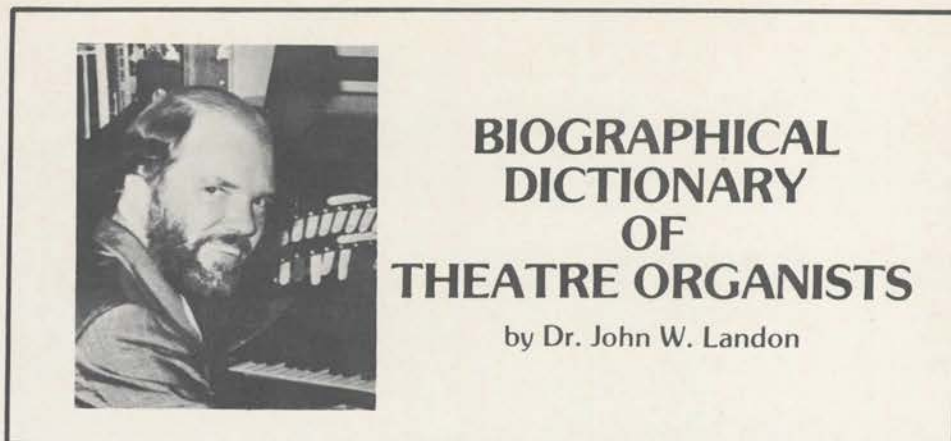
RTOS was determined to save the Wurlitzer! The 150 members issued \$1 shares of stock in "musical nostalgia," sold cookies, illustrated books on the Palace, and a recording of the organ. They also held benefit concerts and garage sales until their goal of \$10,000 was achieved. The club was fortunate to find a repository for the instrument, the Auditorium Theatre. Its classic organ was removed and went to a church. After months of adapting the chambers, installation and enlargement of the organ (Post Horn and piano added) under the supervision of Danny Schultz, the first concert was held on the now 4/22 Wurlitzer on January 21, 1967, with Don Scott as the artist.

There have been 193 RTOS-sponsored concerts since that date by 104 artists of local, national, and international repute.

The society also maintains a 3/10 Wurlitzer in the 400-seat Eisenhart Auditorium which lends itself to silent film festivals, social affairs and intimate programs. Our membership has stabilized at the 1550 level, and the number of people necessary to conduct the affairs of the organization ranges from 50 to 75, depending on the type of concert or program being produced.

Looking to the future, we are certain that as long as both venues continue in operation and competent artists continue on the circuit, and if the supply of willing, dedicated workers continues, the success of the Rochester Theatre Organ Society is assured. □

MAY/JUNE 1987



BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF THEATRE ORGANISTS

by Dr. John W. Landon

CARTER, GAYLORD

Gaylord Carter is among the best-known theatre organists on the concert circuit. Born in Wiesbaden, Germany, in 1905, he spent his boyhood in Wichita, Kansas. His family had come to this country to open a conservatory of music in Wichita, and his father took a post as church organist.

When Gaylord was sixteen years of age, the family moved to Los Angeles. Carter soon obtained an after-school job playing the organ for silent pictures. In 1926 he took his first important post as organist for Grauman's Million Dollar Theatre in Los Angeles. Carter played other theatre engagements at the downtown Paramount, United Artists, Warner's Hollywood and Egyptian Theatres in the Los Angeles-Hollywood area. He also played the Seattle Paramount Theatre. By 1935 he was becoming deeply involved in radio broadcasting. He played for such radio shows as "California Melodies," "Hollywood Hotel," "The Packard Show," "The Second Mrs. Burton" and "Breakfast in Hollywood." He will always be associated in the public mind with the "Amos and Andy Show." For seven years he introduced the show playing "The Perfect Song," which was its theme.

Carter was on active duty with the Navy in WWII. Since then, he has been busy with radio and television work. He has been associated with the major networks in such programs as "Bride and Groom," "The Hal Sawyer Show," "The Big Payoff" and "Glamour Girl." The very popular Pinky Lee Television Show also featured Carter's artistry. In addition, Carter has found time to do some church organ work.

In recent years, Carter has toured the country accompanying silent films in his famous "Flicker Fingers" presentations of Buster Keaton, Harold Lloyd, Douglas Fairbanks and others, a series of top-flight, action-packed movies, and they continue at present. He began these presentations in 1961.

Carter has played at several American Theatre Organ Society conventions and has an increasing number of long-playing and stereo records to his credit.*

**Biography from: Landon, John. Behold The Mighty Wurlitzer; The History of the Theatre Pipe Organ. Greenwood Press, 1983.*

CARTER, GEORGE B.

Organist of the Park Theatre in Newburgh, New York, in 1924.

Gaylord Carter



CARTER, WILLIAM R.

Carter was born in Philadelphia, May 2, 1908. He attended the Temple University School of Music. He accompanied silent films on theatre organs in the Philadelphia area and later did piano work in small bands, doing night clubs, radio and television work. He composed and published a number of songs.

CASSELBERRY, HARRY B.

Organist of the Fox Theatre in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1926.

CASTERLINE, LYL A M.

Organist of the Char-Bell Theatre in Plymouth, Indiana, in 1926.

CATERWOOD, JOHN

Organist who alternated with William Mollema at the 3/22 Barton in the State Theatre in Kalamazoo, Michigan, regularly in 1973.

CEIGA, GEORGE

Organist of the Evanston Theatre in Evanston, Illinois, in 1924. He moved to the Capitol Theatre in Whiting, Indiana, in late 1924. In 1926 Ceiga served as organist of the Orpheum Theatre in Gary, Indiana, and later moved to the Orpheum Theatre in Hammond, Indiana, where he was playing in 1930.

CENTER, EDWARD

Organist of the National Theatre in Boston, Massachusetts.

CERINI, CATHERINE

Organist of the Montlake Theatre in Seattle, Washington, in 1927.

CHADBOURNE, JOEL

Played a five-rank Robert-Morton organ in the State Theatre in Benicia, California. He was once asked to substitute at the 4/36 Wurlitzer in the San Francisco Fox Theatre. He went down to the theatre, took a look at it and said, "It frightened me so, my bowels almost moved." He didn't play it.

CHANDLER, ARTHUR, JR.

Born in 1899, probably in Cincinnati, Ohio, Chandler studied accounting in high school and at the University of Cincinnati, and took piano and organ lessons just for fun. A friend of his father's who ran a small theatre rushed him in as a substitute when the house pianist became ill. After a few days, Chandler decided upon a full-time musical career and eventually graduated from Cincinnati College of Music. He played some of the theatres in the Cincinnati area through the 1920s, including the Capitol Theatre. In 1929, he joined radio station WLW as a staff organist where he played piano and organ for twenty years and was organist for the famous "Moon River" program. He died in Cincinnati October 25, 1972, at the age of 73. (A great many organists played at WLW and on the "Moon River" broadcast during the same years. WLW had four staff organists and three Wurlitzer pipe organs.)

CHAPLAIN, CHARLES

Organist at Loew's Elsmere Theatre in New York City in 1927.

CHAPMAN, KEITH

A concert organist who occasionally performs at theatre organs, Chapman came to national prominence when he was appointed as head organist at the John Wanamaker store in Philadelphia which houses what is reputed to be the largest pipe organ in the world. Chapman began organ studies at age five in San Francisco and became assistant to his teacher, Richard Purvis, at Grace Cathedral. He accepted a scholarship to study at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Having earned his Bachelors, Masters and Doctors degrees in music, Chapman is admirably suited for his present position as head of the Graduate Organ Department at Combs College of Music in Philadelphia.

Chapman has appeared regularly with the Philadelphia Orchestra under a number of distinguished conductors, at Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall as well as at many prestigious churches in Philadelphia and San Francisco. First among the locations where he has given organ concerts would be Rochester, New York, where he has appeared on several occasions.

Chapman frequently utilizes his pilot's license to fly to his out-of-town concerts. He and his wife are renovating a century-old Victorian house in the Philadelphia area.

CHAREST, LORETTE

Organist of the State Theatre in Nashua, New Hampshire, in 1928.

CHARLES, MILTON

Born in San Jose, California, Charles first studied classical organ before beginning his theatre organ career. His first theatre position was at the Jewel Theatre in San Francisco.

Milton Charles went on tour for Turner and Denkin theatres in Fresno and Stockton. Eventually he went to Grauman's Million Dollar Theatre in Los Angeles as assistant to C. Sharpe Minor.

Charles followed Jesse Crawford to Miller's California Theatre and then followed him on to Chicago where he worked at various Balaban and Katz theatres. He held forth at the Tivoli and worked a relief shift at the Chicago Theatre, occasionally doing the Sunday Noon Concerts. He also played the Uptown Theatre there.

When the Metropolitan Theatre in Los Angeles was reopened as the Paramount, Milton Charles went back as chief organist. The year was 1929. After a year and a half, he returned east to Philadelphia's Mastbaum Theatre. By 1936 he was becoming deeply involved as a broadcasting organist over CBS, Chicago. After the beginning of WWII, Charles moved to Los Angeles, remaining with CBS. One of the many radio shows with which Charles was associated over the years was the "Dr. Christian Show." For ten years, until it went off the air, he furnished the organ music. After this he began doing freelance work and for a



Keith Chapman

period of about twenty years he played the organ nightly at the King's Arms Restaurant in Los Angeles.*

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CHASE, RILEY

Organist of the Clemmer Theatre in Spokane, Washington, in 1923, □

Milton Charles

