

ALABAMA CHAPTER SAVES IT!

ATOS VP Advocates New Name

To give ATOS a truly international identification, Vice President Russell Joseph advocates re-naming the organization *Theatre Organ International!*

His valid argument is based on the fact that the organization is now world-wide in scope and a name like *Theatre Organ International* would promote that image more so than the present one. It would be more in keeping with having world advisors and officers, and give recognition to all organists globally.

The official noted that when ATOS *International NEWS* was first launched, he envisioned the change in name and what could result with its adoption.

Mayan Too Small For Wicks Organ

Friends of the Denver Mayan Theatre have offered the three-manual Wicks organ from the Aladdin Theatre, also a Denver house, because the instrument could not be installed in the Mayan without massive and extremely costly rebuilding which, it is claimed, would destroy the value of the organ historically and musically. The offer to accept the organ had to be made before May 11. However, information may still be available to anyone who writes Friends of the Mayan, P. O. Box 566, Contract Station #2, Denver, Colo. 80206, or by telephoning 832-5777.

Ray Bohr Dies After Long Illness

Ray Bohr, who was chief organist at Radio City Music Hall up until the famed showplace discontinued its daily film and stage policy, died Friday, May 15. His death was attributed to a long bout with cancer. Funeral services were held at Grace Episcopal Church in Nyack, New York. Interment was private.

Fund Raiser Mag. Available To All

ATOS chapters interested in learning more about fund raising ideas can subscribe to *Fund Raising Management* magazine. Many subjects are covered in the publication which is produced by Hoke Communications, Inc., 224 Seventh Street, Garden City, N. Y. 11530-9990. There are

Conclave Count Up To Big 794 Total!

It will be a nice big bash in Los Angeles when conventioners congregate the 21st of this month for the ATOS National Convention. As of May 16th, registration count stood at 794. Convention Chairman Ralph Beaudry estimates between 850 and 900 members will attend the event.

Conclave Visitors, NEWS Gain In 'Wise' Move!

Upon learning the Encore show had been sold out and there were convention visitors on the waiting list to take any cancelled reservations, Angeleno Woody Wise cancelled his two reservations to permit others who have not been to San Diego to make the trip. He also decided to take advantage of the offer made to local members to save bus fare by driving to all events. This brought a sizeable refund. And what did he do with it? The last paragraph tells the story:

"I would like to donate this refund to ATOS *International NEWS*, which I think is the best thing to happen to ATOS in ten years."

Turn Out Your Own CDs Now!

Organists who have a yen to CD their music are invited to contact Robert Ridgeway, 2896 Erie Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45208, or telephone (513) 321-2697 to learn how it is possible to get private pressings of compact digital discs. He has an arrangement with a new CD pressing plant in this country which cuts release time from three months to about only one. Ridgeway stated the prices, including recording, editing and pressing are quite low compared to what others are demanding.

L. A. Orpheum Gets Post Horn

Installation of a Post Horn rank was made at the Los Angeles Orpheum Theatre Saturday, May 16th. The rank is on permanent loan from Member Kenneth W. Petersen as long as Los Angeles Chapter is involved with the 3/13 Wurlitzer.

Installed by Ken Kukuk, who voiced the rank, and members of the Orpheum maintenance crew, it was placed on the Kinura chest. That rank will be back in the organ after another chest is located for it. This will up the organ to 14 ranks.

The addition gives the instrument greater brightness, it was noted.

Alabama Chapter raised over the required \$100,000 to save the ornate Alabama Theatre and its 4/20 Wurlitzer organ by May 6th and will soon sign final papers insuring the structure will become an important cultural addition to the City of Birmingham. Alabama's governor also advised he is planning to create an appropriate designation for the deluxe movie palace. The Chapter also won commendation in the Congressional Record.

Having every reason to be proud of the chapter's achievement, Chapter President Cecil Whitmire disclosed that the theatre was saved through the tremendous efforts of the membership and that not one cent of chapter money was invested in the project. It is acknowledged that saving the theatre is by far the most extensive project ever undertaken by any ATOS chapter.

Approval was given May 6th to take over the theatre, but final signing is delayed due to a formality observed by the bankruptcy court to permit anyone wishing to contest the transfer to lodge a complaint.

There was no question about the chapter not having the needed \$100,000 by the closing day. Whitmire said that over \$130,000 was raised. This provides the chapter with enough to settle immediate indebtedness and also funds to operate the theatre for several months. By the middle of April \$56,000 had been raised, and less than a month later more than \$74,000 additional was brought in.

Anticipating continued cooperation from every quarter, Whitmire said the chapter has started signing up attractions which include stage shows, vaudeville and organ programs.

He also noted that with all the publicity given the campaign, it has helped increase membership. "And wherever the name Alabama Chapter ATOS is mentioned, everyone in the city now knows what it stands for!"

Governor's Pledge

Answering the chapter's letter advising him about the attempt to save the theatre, Alabama Governor Guy Hunt wrote: "Thank you for your recent letter concerning your efforts to prevent the mortgage foreclosure on the Alabama Theatre in Birmingham.

"The theatre is certainly one of Alabama's most valuable landmarks. I will ask the Alabama Historical Commission to help find a solution to the problem. Unfortunately, funds are not available at the present time, but a long-term solution does need to be found to fund and utilize it.

"Alabama already has an officially designated State Theatre, but I will have someone in my office investigate the possibility of making an appropriate designation for Alabama's finest movie theatre."

Congressional Record commendation cited the chapter for its outstanding effort in saving the theatre.

A grant of \$10,000 was given by

the City Council of Birmingham to the campaign, and Jefferson County Commission has requested that Alabama Chapter make a request for \$50,000 funding later this year. Over \$600,000 is still needed to clear the mortgage.

There were various publicity ideas utilized by the chapter during the campaign to raise the money. A complete account detailing the successful drive will be covered in a forthcoming feature article in *Theatre Organ Journal*.

Wehmeier Buys Nelson Wurlitzer

Ron Wehmeier and Dave Hazelton flew to Los Angeles from Cincinnati to supervise loading of the former Russ Nelson 4/24 Wurlitzer on May 8 and 9. Wehmeier purchased the organ and will build a new music room addition to house it. He sold his 3/19 Wurlitzer and has already re-installed it for a Cleveland buff.

The four decker will be increased to 30 ranks. The basic organ was the Fox Theatre Wurlitzer in San Jose, Calif., and the console came from the former Chicago Southtown Theatre Wurlitzer.

Ron Walls purchased the organ from Nelson and had it taken to the Crome Organ Co. in Los Angeles for rebuilding. It was first slated for a pizza parlor in Kalamazoo, Mich. This plan was killed and the next stop was to have been a pizza parlor in Livonia, Mich. Walls went bankrupt before the parlor was built.

Ken Crome and Russ Nelson then purchased the organ from the bank that held its mortgage. The instrument remained in Crome's shop until Wehmeier purchased it.

★★★★★★★★★ Don Baker At Bay June 27th

Richard Loderhose, owner of the Bay Theatre, Seal Beach, Calif., has announced an open house at the theatre Saturday Afternoon, June 27th with Don Baker playing a brief concert to be followed by open console. Doors will open at 1:30 and the concert will start at 2:30. The theatre concession stand will be open and refreshments will be available.



Rodgers Ups Man In Marketing Job

Richard C. Anderson has been promoted to Director of Marketing for Rodgers Organ Company. He has been with the firm over 10 years.

Silent Society Is Silent As Silents

Operating almost as silently as the films it screens, the Silent Society of Hollywood celebrated its first anniversary in May. The group presents monthly programs at Hollywood Studio Museum (the De Mille Barn), 2100 North Highland Avenue, which is directly across from Hollywood Bowl.

Organized by Randy Haberkamp, David Shepherd, Robert C. Birchard and Donna Fisk, it is the dream of the group to eventually have its own theatre. Asked if it would include a theatre pipe organ, Haberkamp acknowledged such an item would be welcome.

At the present time a piano has been purchased and is being restored for accompaniment of films. Robert Isreal, a local young organist, has accompanied Society films and also played with a small orchestra for one program.

Information about the Silent Society may be obtained by contacting Randy Haberkamp, 978 So. Muirfield Road, Los Angeles, Calif. 90019.

Two Artists Play Mundelein June 14

Jonas Nordwall and recent Young Artists Competition winner Dwight Thomas will appear in concert June 14th at St. Mary of the Lake Seminary, Mundelein, Illinois. Admission at the door will be \$8.

Juice Firm Squeezes Out 5 New Ones

Gulbrandsen Corp. introduced its new line of electronic home organs at the Anaheim (Calif.) NAMM Winter Market show recently. The organs are the DG series and consist of five different models ranging from single keyboard—the DG 150—to a luxury spinet, the DG 1200.

Embassy Head To Play Wurly

Bob Goldstine, head of Fort Wayne's Embassy Theatre, will be guest organist July 19 at the Sanfilippo Wurlitzer for Chicago Area Chapter. A picnic meal will also be part of the festivities.

Books On British Cinemas Available

Anyone interested in collecting books on British Cinemas can write The Railway Shop, Hugh J. Sykes, 78 Hawthorn Road, Kingstanding, Birmingham, B44 8QP, England for list and prices.

KNOW YOUR TECHNICIAN!

All ATOS members, especially those living in mid-west states, who are planning to upgrade their organs and expect to hire the work done are cautioned to know whom they hire. Before signing contracts, and definitely before advancing funds, insist on references and check them out thoroughly. By doing so it will help insure against being ripped off. Legitimate technicians usually furnish references without being asked for them.

Top Comedy Helps Build Capri Theatre

Excellent box office resulted from the first run presentation of *Crocadile Dundee* at the Theatre Organ Society of Australia South Australia Division's Capri Theatre in the Adelaide suburb of Goodwood. The film ran there for 12 months. "It has been an absolute blessing for us," declared Wayne Bertram, "and has enabled us to install a stage including an organ lift, and we paid an enormous amount off the mortgage on the theatre itself.

The new Harmonic Tuba was also installed in the organ in time for the national convention. Donna Parker, from Paramount Music Palace in Indianapolis, was the first conclave artist to play it.

Sheets Enhance Stage Shows

What do you do with your old white bed sheets? Probably toss them out, just as everyone does—except people in Pittsburgh. The Pittsburgh Area Theatre Organ Society collects them.

This rather strange avocation will presently pay off handsomely. The Society will sew them together, add necessary rings and, *Presto!*, there will blossom forth an Austrian curtain a-la Radio City Music Hall-style to enhance their stage productions in conjunction with organ concert presentations at Keystone Oaks High School. The Society has its Wurlitzer installed there.

Olivera Replaces Hazleton At Shea's

Regional Conclave was shuffled again last month with the announcement Hector Olivera will replace Tom Hazleton in one of the three Shea's Buffalo Theatre Wurlitzer concerts. Lyn Larsen and Dwight Thomas are featured in the other two programs.

Registration information will be published in the July/August issue of *Theatre Organ Journal*.

Dance Music On Wurly

Cyril Pearl plays dance music on the Moorabin Town Hall Wurlitzer—recorded live—cassette only. Information from Glen Hart, 73 Harrison St., Box Hill North, 3129, Australia.

Kiley's Record Was Released Under Many Labels And In Stereo, Too

Information was requested last month about a recording made by John Kiley. A veritable flood of answers inundated the NEWS office. Sorted out, it is learned: Kiley recorded Spinorama's *John Kiley Plays Gigantic Pipe Organ* (MK3024) on the 4/26 Wurlitzer in the Boston Metropolitan Theatre. (Several xerox copies of the record jacket were received).

Kiley made two platters on this organ—the other being Spinorama MK 3036 (Vol.II). These two discs were later re-released on Pirouette Records, Parade Records, Promenade Records, and Diplomat Records labels—and still later came out in stereo. They were also issued on Crown label with Kiley being identified as William Daly.

Next came a bit of disconcerting information—Kiley still lives; Kiley died a few years ago. The living report states Kiley plays—a Hammond with about 2-3,000 watts of power and 100 speakers at Fenway Park, Boston, when the Red Sox Baseball team is there. Another writer recalled skating at Morrie's Roller Rink in New Haven during war years. Kiley, reportedly, was playing a Hammond at the time.

There is one thing certain—Kiley can't record the big Metropolitan Wurlitzer anymore. Dennis Hedberg bought what was left of the organ and the console now plays his Portland, Oregon Organ Grinder Restaurant Wurlitzer.

The uncertain thing—Is John Kiley still with us? Answers may be sent to P.O. Box 40165, Pasadena, Calif. 91104.

Those who furnished information for the above: Robert A. Wilkinson, Reading, Pa., S. W. James, Rochester, N.Y., Douglas A. Jenny, Columbus, Ohio, William H. Smith, Charleston, So. Carolina, and David L. Junchen, Pasadena, Calif.

Chi Uptown May Get Wurlitzer

by Jim Koller and Cyndae Dias

Plans to renovate the once grand 5,000-seat Uptown Theatre on Chicago's North Side will require "approximately 12 months to complete" once work is underway, according to Steve Visano and Kurt Mangel, two young men who head the project. There have been proposals made to install the former Chicago Oriental Theatre 4/20 Wurlitzer in this Rapp & Rapp-designed house. It is also under consideration filling in organ chambers which run the full length of the Grand Lobby and have an organ in front of the windows above the main entrance.

Stage curtains, lobby curtains and carpeting are all being replaced with replicas of the originals from samples obtained by the two men. They have contacted local suppliers to furnish the new items.

Visano and Mangel declared they are being aided in their goal solely by private funds; no grants are involved.

Ultimate plans for the house are use as a performing arts center. Visano said the booking of rock concerts, ballet, classical concerts and big name attractions is being considered. The two men claim they have well-laid plans to control rock concert audiences.

They have also managed to get the theatre's old telephone number which was still used when the theatre closed in 1981.

Larsen CD Goes Special In Area

Continuing his starring role in CD productions, at least in Southern California, Lyn Larsen debuted extensively late in April (just after the NEWS deadline) with his latest ProArte compact disc *Give My Regards*. Recorded on Century II Wurlitzer in Wichita, the platter was offered in the 75-store chain of Sam Goody Record Stores—and at a special deal of \$12.99! Lyn seems to please his listeners in many ways.

Three Shows Set For Bay Theatre

Three pop concerts have been announced for the initial opening of the Bay Theatre Wurlitzer in Seal Beach, Calif. Each program will be held on Sunday with two performances slated—1pm and 4pm.

Lyn Larsen opens the series Sept. 20th; Tom Hazleton will be heard Oct. 18th; Chris Elliott plays Nov. 15th. Ticket price is \$10 and there will be no reserved seating. For complete information, write Bay Theatre, P.O. Box 1375, Upland, Calif. 91785.

Sales Tax Tears Up Roll Firm In Australia

Mastertouch Piano Roll Company, which was founded in 1919 as G. H. Horton & Co., Australia's only manufacturer of paper music rolls, was expected to go out of business at the end of last year. "Sales Tax has been the final killer," said Barclay Wright, who has operated the firm since the early 1960s. The tax imposed a price hike of more than \$2 per roll causing a drop in sales and erosion of profitable operation.

Several plans are being investigated in an attempt to keep the firm in operation.—TOSA NEWS

FOR THE RECORD

George Wright did not play Trenton War Memorial Moller in concert April 12th. Ron Rhode was contacted and presented a program in place of Wright. Rhode played a concert at Benson High in Portland, Oregon on the evening of April 11th, then flew to Trenton and played there during the next afternoon. It was not learned why Wright failed to appear.

Additional corrections have been reported for the two-volume *American Theatres of Today*. In Vol I, the drawing on page 2 belongs with plans shown on page 144. Also in Vol. I, on page 58, the lower left photo is not the Metropolitan Theatre, Boston—it is the foyer of the Capitol Theatre, Port Chester, N. Y. The same photo is correctly reproduced on page 15. In Vol. II, page 75, the photo shows the Grand Foyer of the Detroit Fox; it is not the Grand Lobby.

College To Offer T. O. Course

A new course, *The American Theatre Organ*, will be offered in the Fall Semester, 1987 adult enrichment series by Franklin & Marshall College of Lancaster, Pa.

Instructor for the course will be Glenn Thompson, a geology professor at a neighboring college. He is a member of Delaware Valley Chapter ATOS and also belongs to the Dickinson Theatre Organ Society of Wilmington, Del. In addition he is an active volunteer technician at the Colonial Theatre, Phoenixville, and together with his wife, Dayle, contributes weekly to the new installation project at the York, Pa., Strand-Capitol Theatre.

The course will consist of two lecture/listening sessions introducing the instrument, its history, playing styles and role in American entertainment. The third session will be at the console of the 4/32 Kimball in the Colonial Theatre. Final two meetings will be located at local professional concerts with "afterglow" coffee and analysis. Complete information is available from the Director of Continuing Education at Franklin & Marshall College.

W. E. Brown Makes Donation

William E. Brown of Kittanning, Pa., is another booster of this publication. He sent a donation during May and expressed the hope the NEWS is continued. Brown has a two manual theatre pipe organ in his home.

Mountaineer In Flatland June 7

Patti Simon, prexy of Rocky Mountain Chapter, Denver, wings it to Wheaton, Illinois June 7 where she will make her debut for Windy City Organ Club at the console of the Van Der Molen Robert-Morton organ.

Elco Theatre Will Continue To Operate

Elkhart, Indiana's Elco Theatre will continue to operate as it has in the past, it was stated by Phillip W. Miller, new company president of the operating chain. Owner W. P. Miller was shot and killed recently by one of his theatre managers. The Elco has a Kimball pipe organ that has been used for concert programs in recent years.

James Has Busy Show Schedules

Following his appearance at San Sylmar Museum for the ATOS National Convention at Los Angeles June 25th, Dennis James will fly to Ann Arbor, Mich. to play accompaniment with an orchestra for the silent film *The Three Musketeers* at the Michigan Theatre on June 26th. He will present a silent film series July 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30 at Frauenthal Center in Muskegon, Mich.

Laterman Organ In First Public Show

First public presentation of the Lanterman 4/36 Wurlitzer took place Thursday evening, April 23 with Tony Wilson, local area organist, at the console. He played a brief concert for the La Canada/Flintridge Historical Society which was well received. Wilson has also been designated resident organist for future programs that will take place there.

Contestants Really Work For Honors

Great Britain's Theatre Organ Club will hold its 1987 Northern Young Theatre Organists of the Year Contest May 24 at Three J's Theatre Organ and Entertainment Centre, Gomersal. Six finalists will be required to play a simple sight reading test; a programme of music comprising a selection from a musical show played from piano copy; a light classical piece of music; and a rhythmic piece of music—all of this not to exceed 15 minutes.

Entry to the competition is by submitting a tape cassette of not more than 10 minutes, recorded preferably on a theatre organ, of one selection from a musical show played from a piano copy.

—from Northern News Sheet

State Barton Played For Senior Show

Kalamazoo's State Theatre Barton organ will be heard June 7th when Scott Smith and Ken Butela play it for a senior citizen show which features a sing-a-long and silent film presentation. The program is under direction of Southwest Michigan Chapter.

Carter Gets Religion In Church, Theatre

Gaylord Carter got religion during April. Early in the month at St. Matthews and All Angels Episcopal Church, Corona del Mar, Calif., he accompanied *Passion of Joan of Arc*, a 1928 French film. On April 30 he was in Boise, Idaho crowning *King of Kings* at the Egyptian Theatre.

David Shepherd, Hollywood Screen Directors Guild official, supplied the print of the French feature and served as Carter's projectionist. Carter's music maker for the church showing was a three-manual Abbott & Sieker classical instrument; at the Egyptian Theatre he played a two-manual Robert-Morton organ. It was also the theatre's 50th anniversary.

Chapter Dishes Out Free Ducats

San Diego Chapter uses a novel method to interest people in joining the organization. Members who have a friend or neighbor, "or anyone who has NOT attended any concerts" can obtain complimentary passes for them. The free ducat deal does entice some to join.

Tampa Wurlitzer Is Played Frequently

From October 1926 to the early 1950s Tampa Florida's Tampa Theatre, a John Ebersson atmospheric creation, had a nice 2/8 Wurlitzer. When it was removed the pipework went to a local church and the console wandered off elsewhere.

Around 1978, organist Charles Stanford and others convinced Tampa Arts Council to buy back the pipes from the church. This accomplished, a three-manual keydesk and four more ranks of pipes were purchased from the estate of Paul Sholomiki, a former ATOS member who was killed in an accident.

The restored 3/12 Wurlitzer now plays regularly for audiences in 15-minute solo spots before film programs. Central Florida Chapter members Ken Brown, Charles Coston, Al Hermanns, Rick Matthews, John Otterman and Rick Veague take turns at the console. The theatre also engages a well-known artist to accompany silent films several times a year.

Maintenance and additions are being made by Central Florida members Dick Chapman, Charles Coston, Bill Couch, Bob Foody, Mert Harris, Bill Hile, Don Jeerings, Ed Lawrence, Rick Matthews, John Otterman, Ed Szucs and (Pres.) Earl Wiltse.

Lack of Local Ads Keeps Patrons Out

An attempt by "Gee Dad, It's A Wurlitzer" radio show producer Hal Sanguinetti to learn why Southern Californians don't attend theatre organ concerts—or why they think others don't if they do—disclosed that many had never received announcements about organ shows. Several others wrote in saying they would not venture out at night for any kind of entertainment. Sanguinetti's show is heard over KPCC-FM, Pasadena, Calif., every Sunday evening from 8:30 to 10 o'clock.

Wilson Wurly Will Play In Theatre

Installation of the former Fresno, Calif. Wilson Theatre Style 235 3/11 Wurlitzer in a Sydney, Australia theatre was disclosed this month. For a short time the instrument was playing in one of the Organ Power pizza parlors in San Diego. After the parlor closed it was purchased and shipped to its new owner in the land down under. For several years there was a price tag of \$50,000 on it. The amount dropped and it was finally sold; the price was not divulged.

Elliott Plays At Hollywood Bowl

Organist Chris Elliott was appointed to play Easter Sunrise Service at famed Hollywood Bowl this year. He succeeded Dr. Robert Tall who had appeared there for several years.

Vaughn Praises K. C. Barton Organ

"Kansas City, Kansas has a rare jewel in the Barton organ installed in the Granada Theatre—and the theatre, too, is a jewel as well," stated organist Bob Vaughn on his return to San Francisco after playing for the Granada Theatre Historical Society.

"The Barton is a beautiful installation. I realize I am not technically inclined, and after this experience if one has THIS Barton, who needs a Wurlitzer!" he said.

Vaughn had gone to K. C. ostensibly to accompany *Birth Of A Nation*, but according to a news item in *Variety*, the film was not shown due to pickets, several of whom were members of the NAACP. They objected to the film being screened, although they admitted never having seen it.

Another Donation Made To NEWS

Douglas E. Owen, a member of the U. S. Department of State, made a special contribution to continue ATOS *International NEWS*. "Here's a donation to assist in this worthwhile publication," was his brief comment accompanying his check.

Slide Firm Does Not Produce Warblers

Custom song slides are not produced by Cinegraph Slides, Inc., of Garden Grove, Calif. The firm was listed in a story appearing in the March issue of *ATOS International NEWS*. However, Visual Horizons, 180 Metro Park, Rochester, N.Y. 14623-2660 does custom work and also offers ready-made song slides. Slide-A-Song, 5002 East Nisbet Road, Scottsdale, Ariz. 85254 has ready-made slides for sale. It is not known if this firm accepts custom orders.

Two Music Firms Have Big Stock

Many popular tunes are available in sheet music at Hollywood Sheet Music, 1433 Cole Place, Hollywood, Calif. 90028—telephone (213) 462-1095, and Glendale Sheet Music, 124 No. Maryland, Glendale, Calif. 91206, telephone (818) 500-8888.

George Brown, Twin Falls, Idaho buff, recently visited the Hollywood store and was able to purchase sheet music of an old popular tune he had been attempting to locate.

ATOS Archives is also another place to check out for sheet music.

Proctor's To Have Summer Film Fest

Proctor's Theatre, Schenectady, will unroll its summer film festival starting June 1. Both sound and silent features will be screened, according to a story published in *Variety*. It was not disclosed if the Wurlitzer organ would be used for silent film accompaniment.

Dendy Wurlitzer To Reopen In June

by Ian B. McLean

Reopening of the Wurlitzer organ in the new Dendy Theatre at Brighton Beach, Melbourne, Australia, is being planned for June. The 3/15 Style 260 instrument was removed from the Old Dendy when it was razed. During construction of the new theatre the organ was completely restored.

The instrument will fill the theatre and be Australia's best 'studio type' organ by virtue of adding little or no reverberation or colouration to the sound which means the organ will always be of the utmost integrity in tonal and regulation terms as there is no masking or muddying of sound by room factors.

Charles Turned Into Jesse At Billings

According to research done by the organizers of ATOS' newest unit—the Jesse Crawford Chapter in Billings, Montana—the famed 'Poet and Peacock of the Organ,' started his pipe organ career in Billings in 1913 playing the instrument in the Gem Theatre, first as Professor Charles Crawford. While there, he changed his name and became Jesse Crawford.

THE NEWS

News items appearing in this section were prepared by Tom B'hend, P.O. Box 40165, Pasadena, Calif. 91104, and Jim Koller, 9/2 Mari-Anne Travel, 9435 W. Irving Park Road, Schiller Park, Ill. 60176.

What Is Theatre Organ Music?

by Robert K. Legon, Malden, Mass.

What is Theatre Organ Music is like asking what is jazz? And, according to Gunther Schuller, former director of New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, jazz is defined as improvised rhythm music.

Theatre organ music is both improvised and written music designed to take advantage of the tonal properties of the theatre type pipe organ.

Theatre organ music comes these days in three common varieties—1—Symphonic, in which we treat the instrument as a symphony orchestra; 2—Dance Band treating the theatre organ as just that, a modern day dance orchestra in straight rhythm with improvisations as in jazz music; 3—Interpretive Improvisational in which the use of portamento, Tibia rolls, and most noticeable the use of rubato takes place.

Rubato, which often characterizes the styles of Jesse Crawford and George Wright, has its roots in silent films because of the need to stretch or shorten notes to keep up with the film speeds.

Rubato is defined as the alteration of the real timing of the notes without really losing the basic way they normally sound. It is the one way theatre organ music takes on our personal feeling about the song we play.

Theatre style is characterized by use of open block harmony in conjunction with certain combinations of tibias or solo flutes with deep tremolos and many others.

The theatre pipe organ itself is defined in this day and age as a mechanical orchestral pipe organ-like synthesizer, with special voicing designed primarily of the playing of popular music of the day.

Theatre operators called for a musical instrument played like an organ, but one that didn't sound like a classical organ. The Wurlitzer style of theatre organ with its solo flutes and orchestral voices with tremolos, and percussions, proved to be the sound they wanted.

Symphonic styling never really caught on in America as did the dance band style. As a result, few if any theatre organ clubs have ever restored the symphonic orchestral organs like Skinner and the early Mollers which preceded Wurlitzers and Mortons.

We in Boston, however, are making an exception to that rule by restoring one of the last theatre Skinner organs—the 3/35 at John Hancock Hall. Why is a true Skinner orchestral organ with numerous tuned percussions and complete traps being restored by Eastern Massachusetts Chapter? We'll tell you more later.

If all this does not answer the question, there's one once given by Ashley Miller that sums it up: "Theatre organ music is many things to many people!" Therefore, the theatre organ can be called the Universal Musical Instrument, in effect, all musical instruments rolled into one.

Organ Electronic Article Mis-Leading Buff Claims, But Says It's Timely

Gary Rickert of Oak Forest, Ill., has branded as misleading "but timely" the article published in the March issue which claims that pipe organ electronics needs expert care. His reasons are given below:

This article is timely but mis-leading. First, the article lumps all electronic systems together. There are electronic systems built by the local 'expert' in his basement and installed in the local Wurlitzer. The 'expert' builds it, installs it and maintains it. When he dies or moves away everyone throws up his hands and the electronic industry gets a black eye. It is virtually impossible for anyone other than the designer, or someone taught by him, to be familiar with the system. The 'expert' who designed it would most likely be unable to service his neighbor's home-designed system. The organ man would be fooling himself if he were to believe that he could become an electronics 'expert' without years of specialized study.

All is not hopeless, however. There are 'major' builders. Their systems come with service manuals, instructions, spare parts and service assistance. Peterson Electro-Musical Products offers a toll-free line for service questions which allows almost anyone to be an 'expert'.

Who is the quoted electronics designer (or, for that matter, what is an electronics designer?). True, new electronic marvels are coming out every day, but this does not make the earlier things 'royal junque'. Diodes are still diodes; transistors are still transistors; resistors are still resistors. No competent engineer would design a system without first knowing whether the parts he designed into his system would be available for an extended period of time.

The transistor and diode switch parts which are the heart of many electronic switching systems have been around for more than 30 years and are still being built today. Integrated circuits, while being relatively new, have been around long enough that an engineer can detect a pattern and select types which have broad useage in a variety of applications (other than organs) which would assure long-term availability.

There is no substitute for education but short of electronics training, educate yourself about who is supplying the equipment. Ask how long he has been building equipment for organs—how many units built—how serviceable are his units—what is the availability of spare parts—how available is he after the sale, ect.?

There are variables but you can feel relatively safe if you remember that you get what you pay for. Keep your eyes open, assume nothing and ask the right questions. (Editor's Note: A recognized expert in the field has been contacted to answer Rickert's comments next month).

Program Lists Stores

Published in *Pipedreams* program schedule is a listing of locations where organ recordings may be purchased. The program may be obtained by writing *Pipedreams*, Minnesota Public Radio, 45 E. 8th St., St. Paul, Minn. 55101.

Fine Radio Show Airs From Arizona

An excellent though relatively short organ radio show is heard weekly over KNAU, Flagstaff, Arizona. Titled *Lilac Time at the Bijou*, the program is opened by Mildred Alexander at the console of the Wiltern Kimball. Ruff Hammett, station manager, produces the show and, according to Hal Sanguinetti, who produces his own theatre organ program, "Gee Dad, It's A Wurlitzer" every Sunday over KPCC, Pasadena, Calif., the KNAU show features the music of one artist, along with biographical sketches between numbers.

The station is owned by Northern Arizona University. Sanguinetti rates the show highly and noted it is closed by Gaylord Carter. Ann Leaf was featured recently in a program.

Colored Song Slides Given To Archives

ATOS Archives Curator Vern Bickel announced this month the donation of a collection of Brenograph song slides from the estate of the late Chicago organist Russ Fielder. The collection will be indexed and added to the catalog as time permits. It will also be planned, in the future, to make 35mm slide copies of these since many are of the fancy colored border and illustrated variety.

†FOR QUICK SALE

Theatre Organ Style Arrangements by Organist Al Bollington are available on a close-out basis. Information may be obtained by writing him at Box 49, Woodland Hills, Calif. 91364.

New Group Public Entry Is Gradual

Entry into the public arena for Organ Institute of American will not take place with great fanfare. Going public will be gradual and concert presentations to start with will be in the classical field, according to David Elson, who is president of the new organ group in Los Angeles.

"We are not interested in presenting straight organ recitals," he said, "and intend to mount programs that offer music we are sure the public will enjoy. Most organ concerts are made up of music that is not entertaining and as a result public attendance has fallen off."

Several of the programs being planned will be presented in South Pasadena and will feature the organ and harp, organ and strings, etc. A children's show is being planned at Hollywood High School where a three-manual Skinner organ is installed.

OIA has received its IRS tax exempt status and is becoming active in new music and reprints which will be produced through its classical Organ Institute Press. Plans for an archive and museum are gradually taking shape.

It was noted in the April issue of *ATOS International NEWS* that OIA might be interested in installing a theatre organ in the now closed World Theatre (formerly Marcal) on Hollywood Blvd. Elson said the interest in theatre organ is being kept under wraps until the project is finalized and that it does not involve the old Marcal Theatre building.

Theatre Confabs Held Across U. S.

Preservation Mini-Conferences, a series of one-day gatherings across the country presented by the League of Historic American Theatres, is currently underway dealing with how to start a restoration program and what kind of technical expertise is available. Meetings have been held at Rahway, N. J., and Albany, N. Y. Remaining meetings will be held at the Strand Theatre, Shreveport, La., May 8; Michigan Theatre, Ann Arbor, Mich., July 18; Tampa Theatre, Tampa, Fla., Oct. 13; and Woodland Opera House, Woodland, Calif., Nov. 7.

Information is available by writing League of Historic American Theatres, 1600 H St., Washington, D. C. 20006, or telephoning (202) 289-1494.

Archives Catalogue For Members' Use

Puget Sound Chapter plans to purchase a copy of the ATOS Archive Catalog so that members can learn what is available "in the way of history, music and other material interest..." The unit secretary will keep the book and check it out to members, it was noted in the chapter newsletter.