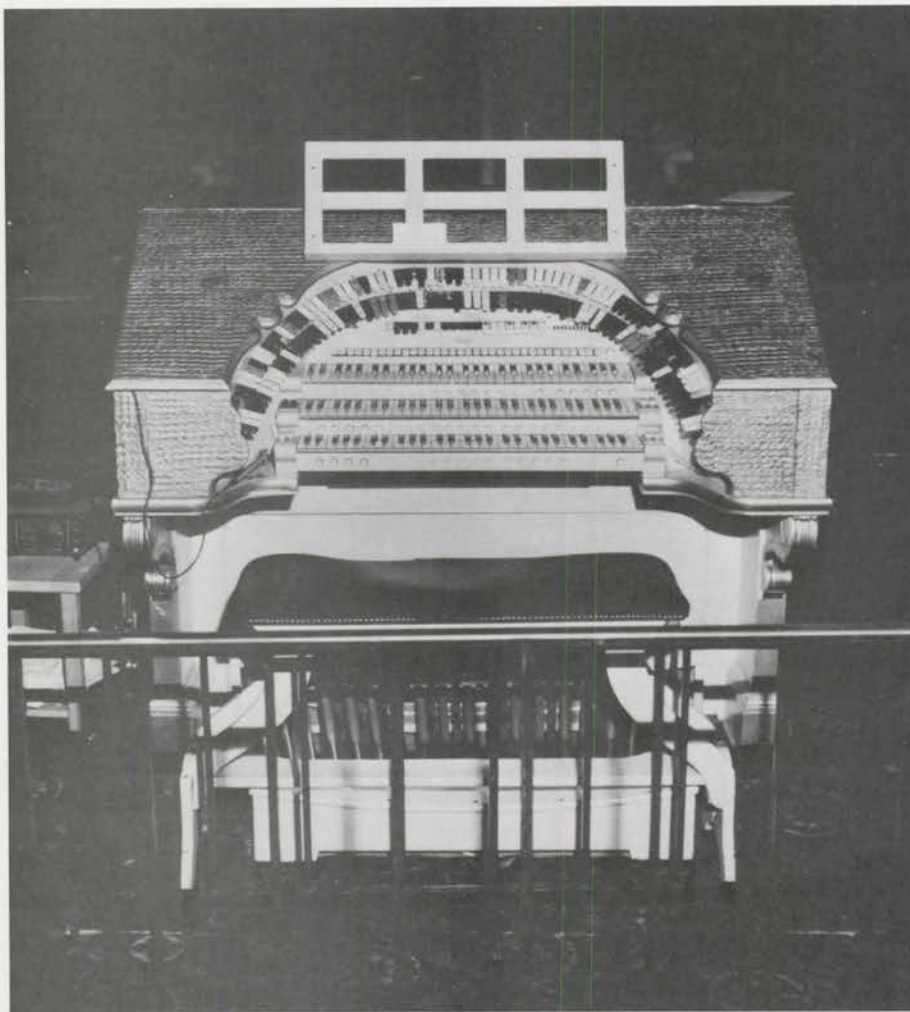


Uncle Milt's



Pipe Organ Pizza Company

by Gerry Gregorius

The elegant gold console at Uncle Milt's once entertained patrons of the Oriental Theatre in Portland.

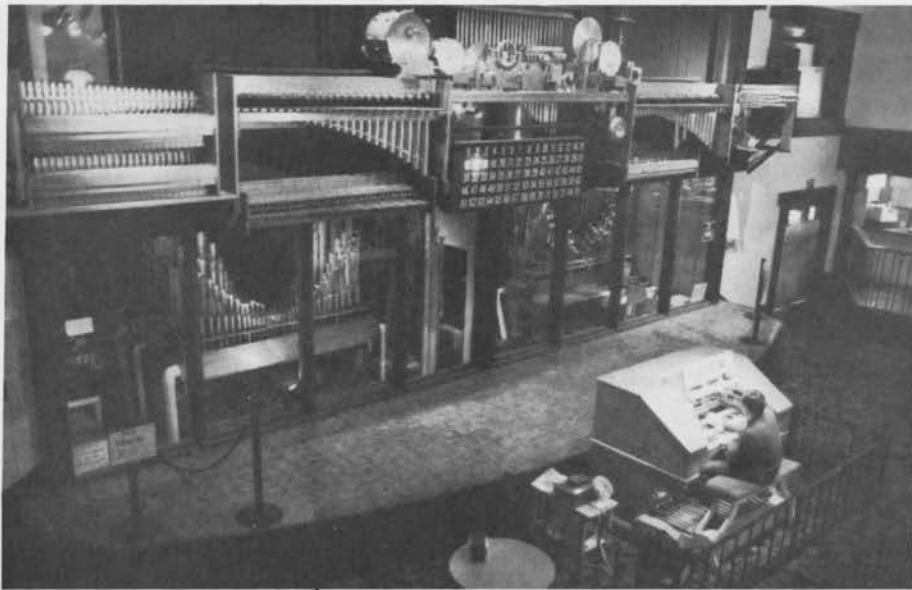
Claude Neuffer Photo

The Wurlitzer organ in Uncle Milt's Pipe Organ Pizza Company was originally installed in the Orpheum Theatre, Seattle, Washington, in 1926, boasting three manuals and 13 ranks of pipes along with a full complement of percussions. Shortly before the theatre was razed to make room for a new hotel, the organ was purchased by a local hobbyist and placed in storage. About 12 years later, "Uncle Milt" Kieffer purchased the organ for use in a proposed pizza restaurant in Vancouver, Washington.

A suitable building was located. Milt happened to drive by and saw it empty and boarded up. Originally constructed as a church about 1954, it had been vacant nearly four years. The large building with a balcony and ideally located choir loft made it a natural for the project. It was purchased, and reconstruction and installation of the organ began in May 1978. The grand opening of the restaurant was August of 1979.

The original 13 ranks from the Orpheum are still in the organ, but as is so often the case, additional pipes and percussions were necessary to make the organ more suitable for use in a pizza restaurant atmosphere. Suitable components were found from the organ in the Coliseum Theatre, Seattle, Washington, which had been disassembled for parts. The English Posthorn came from Big Bob's Pipe Dreams restaurant in Burien, Washington, which had closed and the organ sold. Increased wind was necessary and a larger 10 hp blower from the Paramount Theatre, Portland, Oregon, replaced the original blower. The original electro-pneumatic relays were replaced by a much larger system from the B.F. Keith Memorial Theatre, Boston, but even that proved to be inadequate to realize the full potential of the organ; consequently, a custom solid-state electronic relay was constructed and installed. The console came from the Capitol Theatre in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

The organ, now 18 ranks, is installed in the front of the room, which had originally been the choir loft. The two glass enclosed chambers contain all the pipework with all percussions exposed and suspended across the entire front above the windows. Swell shades are placed high directly behind the percussions and the egress of sound into the room is complete and well balanced.



The chambers at Uncle Milt's were once a choir loft.

Don Feely Photo

Because of an on-going program of improvement and additions, it finally became necessary to obtain another more sophisticated console. In 1986, the Capitol console was removed and replaced with the one from the old Oriental Theatre in Portland, Oregon. This rebuilt console also saw several years of service at the Organ Grinder Restaurant in Portland. It has three manuals but utilizes every inch of space for more efficient use of additional stop tabs on the rails and controls installed in the key cheeks.

As you walk through the unusual entry, the organ is the main focal point. The spacious room has lots of wood with massive, solid timbers supporting the balcony and organ percussions. Tables with comfortable chairs and wrought iron railings complete the decor.

This organ will be heard in concert at the '88 Convention in Portland



The Pink Panther entertains youngsters of all ages at Uncle Milt's.

Don Feely Photo



The Pink Panther poses with organist Mark Gerlach at Uncle Milt's.

Don Feely Photo



The crew at Uncle Milt's has as much fun as the customers.

Don Feely Photo

Chamber Analysis:

MAIN	SOLO
Brass Saxophone	Brass Trumpet
Tibia Clausa	Tuba
Diapason	Oboe Horn
Salicional	Orchestral Oboe
Viol d'orchestra	Tibia Clausa
Viol Celeste	Vox Humana (1)
Clarinet	Vox Humana (2)
Posthorn	Kinura
Flute	
Horn Diapason	