



Wonder Morton console on the erecting floor in Van Nuys factory, late 1920's. B'hend/Kaufmann Archives. Arthur C. Pearson Collection.

The Great Arlington Theatre Pipe Organ

by John Oien

Another Wonder Morton has found a home.

The great organ in the Arlington Theatre in Santa Barbara, California, is to be dedicated on October 1 by master organist Tom Hazleton. This event will mark the completion of a two-year restoration project by members of Santa Barbara Chapter under the direction of Stephen Leslie of the Newton Pipe Organ Company of San Jose and with the support of the citizens and businesses in Santa Barbara.

The Arlington Theatre, owned by the Corwin family, has been restored to prime condition, and the installation of the Wonder Morton is the final step in its renaissance. The Arlington was built to provide for such an organ and

has three chambers on either side of the auditorium.

In 1931 the "Fox" Arlington had a small two-manual pipe organ which was removed in the 1950s. In 1976, when the Corwins restored the theatre, a search began for a suitable replacement. It took ten years to locate an instrument that would do justice to the theatre and to Santa Barbara. This organ was built in 1928 by the Robert-Morton Pipe Organ Company of Van Nuys, California. It was one of five Wonder Mortons, given that name because of their size and power. All five were installed in Loew's movie palaces on the East Coast. This one

came from the Loew's Jersey City Theatre. It was removed ten years ago and given to the North Texas chapter of ATOS where it remained in a warehouse for lack of a suitable venue in which to install it.

The generous people of the North Texas chapter donated this instrument to Santa Barbara Chapter in order that it might once again be seen and heard in an appropriate setting. Members of the chapter have been volunteering their labor for months, repairing, sanding and refinishing the many pieces of this organ. The console was stripped down to bare wood and refinished to be an exact restoration.



The organ now consists of the ranks listed below:

MAIN ONE (Left)

- 8' Tibia
- 8' Salicional
- 8' Viole Celeste
- 16' Gamba
- 8' Gamba Celeste
- 16' Tuba
- 8' French Horn
- 8' Clarinet
- 8' Vox Humana
- 8' Krumet

MAIN TWO (Left)

- 8' Horn Diapason
- 16' Oboe Horn
- 16' Concert Flute

Xylophone
Glockenspiel
Chrysoglott
Toy Counter

Chinese Gong
Wind

SOLO (Right)

- 16' Diaphonic Diapason
- 16' Tibia Clausa
- 8' Tibia Plena
- 8' Concert Violins III
- 8' Trumpet
- 8' Saxophone
- 8' Kinura
- 8' Vox Humana
- 8' Orchestral Oboe
- 8' English Horn
- Cathedral Chimes
- Wind
- High Bell
- Low Bell

**PERCUSSION SHELF
(Left, Unenclosed)**

Marimba Harp
Bass Drum
Field Drum



Linnea Kindig and Debbie DeCaro removing old leather and rebuilding magnets.



Chapter President John Oien "hard at work."



Steve Leslie training session "Leathering 101."



Bill Irvine checks the "puff" before sealing the chest.

Tonal finishing has been done by Stephen Leslie, Jerry Nagano and Clark Wilson. Murry Burfeind and Robb Kendall also helped members of Santa Barbara Chapter with the installation.

These gentlemen, plus the 50 volunteers, have worked more than 30,000 hours to complete this project and are eagerly anticipating its debut on October 1.