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HARROW Col Logo



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WINDMILL "Wurlitzer" London



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DATE	MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING
SUN. 16th	Middlesex Day Registration 9 AM - 11 AM Buses leave 12 noon	HARROW GRANADA Concert 1:30 - 3:30 Wurlitzer D.1.Y. Meals	HARROW SCHOOL & TOUR OF LONDON. Concert 6-7:30 PM
MON. 17th	Buckingham. Shire AYLESBURY TOWN HALL Concert 11 - 12:15 Hybrid Arrange Buffet Lunch	STEVENAGE Concert 3-5 PM Christie Refreshments available	ST. ALBANS MUSEUM Concert 7-9 PM Rutt. Wurlitzer
TUES. 18th	Sussex Day GRANADA WALTHAMSTOW Concert 11 - 12:15 Christie Refreshments available	PORTSLADE TOWN HALL Concert 3:30 - 4:50 PM Compton D.1.Y. Meals	DOME BRIGHTON Concert Christie
WED. 19th	London Day City GAUMONT STATE KILBURN Concert 10:30 - 12 Noon Wurlitzer Refreshments	NEW GALLERY, REGENT ST. Silent Film 2:30 - 4:30 Wurlitzer	HOME TOURS Chorleywood. Piano Museum Plough, Wurlitzer Lodge Maybe preview BorehamWood
THURS. 20th	Berkshire Day ABINGDON ABBEY HALL Concert 11 - 12:15 Compton	BLenheim PALACE TOUR Organ Interlude	OLD WINDSOR MEMORIAL HALL Compton Arrange Dinner
FRI. 21st	Heritage Day ROYAL ALBERT HALL (Heritage)	HAMPTON COURT Chapel	D.1.Y. Free Evening
SAT. 22nd	South Wales W/E Leave for BARRY (Overnight Stop) 9:00 AM	BRISTOL CATHEDRAL 12-1 Surprise	BARRY MEMORIAL HALL Dinner & Dance Chapter Christie Organ
SUN. 23rd	CARDIFF CASTLE: WAVERLEY CRUISE or D.1.Y.	BARRY MEMORIAL HALL Concert LUNCH AT ONE O'CLOCK	Home to London Leave 6 PM

GRANADA TOOTING WILL BE INCLUDED IN ITINERARY.
TIMINGS ARE APPROXIMATE. EXTRA VENUES MAY BE PLANNED.

Information. Telephone: 01-422-1538. Price includes overnight hotel at Barry.

Please remit in English Currency.

INTERVIEW

Banquet attendees at the 1988 ATOS Convention were entertained by Dennis Hedberg and George Wright in dialogue about the world of the theatre organ and its music. A friendship between these two has existed since the early 1960s, and their dedication to the Philosophy of Excellence was evident in the remarks exchanged between them that night. We would like to thank George Wright for allowing us to share this interview with our readers. Thanks, also, to Randy Rock for providing the tape recording. Ed.



GEORGE WRIGHT

Hedberg: Some of the things I want to probe here might be a little provocative for some people out there, but in keeping with the theme of this convention, I'm trying to stir the pot a little bit. I'm trying to...

Wright: Intentionally be provocative?

Hedberg: Not to the point to degrade or be nasty about anyone or anything, but it seem to me that there are a lot of what I call "myths" that are being perpetuated by many people in ATOS concerning how well did people play in years back — and how well did the organs themselves actually play. I realize, George, that you are not old enough to — not to have been of the early silent era, but still close enough to it to see what was happening. And we hear that every little town had its Bijou Theatre and had a Wurlitzer, a Robert-Morton, or a Moller or Kimball or whatever. Were all of those instruments really that well-played?

Wright: No. So our friends here will get a more exact picture of where I fit in that time period — I don't — I was born in 1920 and I'll be 68 next month. And so I came along either too early or too late. I started playing the organ at a time when there were no organs to play — and no jobs. It was the depth of the Depression. I was, however, observing this musical scene — the organ scene — from an early age and, in retrospect, found that I was very astute, and I was gifted by being able to separate some of the wheat from the chaff. A valid and large part of my

musical education was gleaned from radio, and in the earlier days of radio there were more unsponsored periods of broadcasting than there were sponsored. And, of course, a good way for little stations in little towns to fill a lot of time was to have Miss Johnson go over to the First Baptist Church and play the organ. And she would sit there for two or three hours and play everything she knew and some things she didn't know. And when she was finished the guy would say, "Well, that brings us to the end of today's organ recital." I recall hearing some wonderful, beautiful music being played beautifully on organs that sounded wonderful. And I was also able to get so many little stations up and down the dial that were broadcasting these little "pip-squeak" organs with totally ungifted, untalented hacks playing them that the good became notable by comparison to the really bad. And there were some very, very bad players. I think that, at one point, anyone who could play diddle-diddle-da on the piano was delegated to come in and play for the matinee at the local showhouse on the three-rank something-or other.

I'm wandering on about this, but have I answered that question? I think there were both very good and very bad things going on in the theatres and on the radio.

Hedberg: Well, what do you think we are doing with it today? Do you think that the kinds of programs that ATOS presents show the good or the bad compared to the performances of years back?

Wright: This is a question that is difficult for me to answer, because I may not endeavor myself to certain segments of the population. I meant to say before this dialogue between us started that everything that I am going to say must be prefaced by the phrase, *in my opinion*. Okay? In my opinion, I have very mixed emotions about what the ATOS is doing. I think some of it is excellent, and I think some of it is kind of mediocre — ineffectual. I realize that there are small chapters that do not have any budget and may be off the beaten path and so on and so on. I just feel that, perhaps, there are a few too many concerts being played on a few too many organs that aren't really up to exposure to the general public, and I feel that some of the people who play are not as good as some of the others. I agree that there is a high degree of professionalism with some of the players and they do an excellent job, but it is a mixed bag — and of necessity it must be. Some people like Gershwin — others like Cole Porter. Some like marches — other like Strauss waltzes, and it is difficult to take the shotgun approach and have a little something that everyone will like.

Have I gracefully skirted that question? It's really a loaded one. I want to be honest. I think some of it is just excellent and I think some of it is quite mediocre. How could I be more outspoken?

Hedberg: Well, we've all heard some turkeys, and we've all heard some great stuff, too. I believe — in my opinion —