



Harold Ramsay HALL OF FAME

The Hall of Fame committee selected the late Harold Ramsay as the 1989 entrant into the ATOS HALL OF FAME.

Mr. Ramsay (sometimes spelled Ramsey — also known as “Ramsbottom”) was born in Gt. Yarmouth, England, in 1902. He came to Canada with his parents when he was nine years old. A child prodigy, he was a church musical director and organist at the age of fourteen, and subsequently became the first Canadian broadcasting organist. He toured western Canada as a boy recitalist during WWI helping to raise funds for the Red Cross. Coming to the United States, he studied with the legendary Lynwood Farnum in New York City. He was appointed chief organist of the Rivoli Theatre on Broadway in 1923 from where he broadcast the first organ program. He was the first featured organist on Wurlitzer organs on Broadway.

From 1926 until 1932 he toured for Paramount-Publix theatres. He played New York, Boston, Indianapolis, Baltimore, Chicago, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Dallas, and many other large cities.

In the summer of 1932, Ramsay traveled to England. He returned there in the winter to the famous Granada Tooting. During the days that he was a staff organist for the Granada circuit in the London area, he was billed as Mr. X. Ramsay was one of four organists chosen to open the BBC Theatre Organ. Later he moved to the Union circuit and made further history by his broadcasts from the Regal Cinema, Kingston. Other English activities included touring with a Hammond.

Harold Ramsay returned to Canada in 1950 where he became organist at a church in Calgary. He then moved to the small town of Salmon Arm near Vancouver, British Columbia. In the 1950s he made two LP recordings on the Vancouver Orpheum 3/13 which were released on the Tibia label.

Mr. Ramsay died on February 2, 1976. Mrs. Ramsay left Salmon Arm several years ago to return to the United Kingdom in the county of Vale of Clwyd in Wales.

(Sources for this information were: *Behold The Mighty Wurlitzer* by John Landon [1982]; *Theatre Organ World* by Jack Courtney [1946]; THEATRE ORGAN, April/May 1976; and letters from William G. Hale and Erskine MacPherson [1989]).



John Muri HONORARY MEMBER

John Muri's dedication to theatre organ is clearly documented through his years as a performer, teacher and writer in this field. His career spans the era of silent movies as well as the contemporary concert scene. This year he served as the Prime Judge for the Young Organist Competition.

John was named Organist of the Year and was elected to the ATOS HALL OF FAME in 1977. He is still in demand as a concert organist and silent film accompanist. He wrote a page of commentary for THEATRE ORGAN for twelve years, and his advice is often sought by young and old alike.

The ATOS is pleased and proud to name John Muri as its Honorary Member for 1989.

1989 ATOS Awards



Ron Rhode ORGANIST OF THE YEAR

Ron Rhode is a native of Illinois where he began his musical career on the piano at four years of age. With a background of popular piano and classical organ, Ron moved to Phoenix, Arizona, in June 1973 to become the Associate Organist at Organ Stop Pizza. In June 1975 he was placed as the Featured Organist at Organ Stop Pizza in Mesa where he presided until November 1986. In July 1988, Ron again joined the Mesa staff as Associate Organist.

Ron is currently enrolled at Arizona State University, Tempe, where he is working to complete a Bachelor Degree in Organ Performance. He has also entered the College of Education where he is pursuing a degree in Early Childhood Education.

During his career as a pizza parlor organist, Ron has had many occasions to perform professionally across the United States and throughout the world. He has played nearly every major theatre organ in this country and has entertained audiences in Canada, England and Australia.

Among his greatest accomplishments, Ron has performed on stage at the Chicago Theatre, has played for eight ATOS conventions, was selected to play during the 1987 Papal visit to Phoenix, and has made eight recordings of theatre organ music.

Grahame S. Davis AWARD FOR TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE

Grahame Davis apprenticed organ-building in his native Australia. During a tour of England, he became enamored with the English cathedral organs and especially with their high-pressure tubas.

During a visit to the United States in 1978, Grahame gained an appreciation for the work of Ernest Skinner and became interested in the Mighty Wurlitzer. Attending the National ATOS Convention in Atlanta, he had the opportunity to meet several theatre organ personalities, including Bill Brown and some of the Organ Stop Pizza organists.

Bill Brown subsequently brought Davis to Phoenix to help maintain, rebuild and install instruments for his pizza restaurants. Grahame brought with him his wide base of organbuilding skills, and honed his expertise with Wurlitzers through his association with Mr. Brown.

Grahame currently maintains a number of instruments in the Phoenix area and New Mexico. Some of the results of his work will be heard at the Phoenix Regional Convention in November.

The Award for Technical Excellence is presented in recognition of exemplary contributions toward restoration and maintenance of the theatre organ as a contemporary art form. The award is intended to honor those who have raised the technical excellence of theatre organs which are regularly heard publicly.

The Technical Committee for 1989 consisted of the following touring organists and previous award recipients: Ken Crome, Tom Hazleton, Dennis James, Richard Taylor, Walt Strony, Brandt Duddy, David Junchen, Judd Walton, Dennis Hedberg, Lyn Larsen, Ed Stout and Ed Zollman.

Allen Miller, Chairman



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*The sense of
musical delight,
with the power of
producing it,
is a gift of
the imagination.*

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772-1834)

