

Pipes & Personalities



The console cake awaits its fate backstage.
▶ The Auditorium's console before the concert.

Rochester's Twenty-fifth

by Lloyd E. Klos

The Rochester Theatre Organ Society observed the 25th anniversary of its founding on October 13 through its monthly concert at the Auditorium Theatre. Because the Society does not have events in the summer months, the decision was made to observe the August 6, 1964, founding when a much-liked artist was scheduled.

At the 4/22 Wurlitzer was the "exuberantly" brilliant 27-year-old British phenomenon, Robert Wolfe, who entertained the 1608 concert-goers with a variety of selections, the majority of which were designed to get the audience attuned to the "Blackpool Bounce." Young Wolfe not only plays a pipe organ, he attacks it and with results which never fail to rouse his audiences with a vociferous response.

"I Do Like to Be Beside the Seaside," (Blackpool Ballroom theme of the late Reginald Dixon), "Washington Post March," "Happy Days Are Here Again," and "In the Mood" were but four of the many highlights of the program, all played without music by the artist. A standing ovation greeted him at the end which was

rewarded with still another bouncy rendition.

President Rollo Clark in his intermission remarks gave laudable praise to all those who have in the past, and are now engaged in making RTOS the finest organization of its type in the world, and expressed hope that the next 25 years will see continued progress. He also thanked the management of the Temple Civic Center for their assistance, co-operation and kindnesses through the years, without whose help RTOS wouldn't exist.

Following the concert, an on-stage reception was held. Four large cakes and non-alcoholic punch provided refreshment. One of the cakes was baked in the form of the 4/22 Wurlitzer console which elicited oohs and ahs from the several celebrants backstage.



Robert Wolfe plays up a storm for the 1608 present.
Gale Smith Photo



Murphy Didn't Make All The Laws

Everyone knows Murphy's Law: Whatever can go wrong will. We now have Polesy's Perverse Pipe Organ Laws, and we invite you to send your own additions to these Laws to the Journal:

1. A flawlessly performing organ during eight hours of practice won't be the next day.

2. The extra wire you end up with after soldering 97 connections belongs in the first octave.

3. That ciphering diaphone is always due to a defective primary in the lowest, most inaccessible note.

4. The fourth octave tuba reed you worked on for 1½ hours to get to speak has no intention of uttering a sound tomorrow.

5. The defective key contact on your console will inevitably be found on the second touch of the Accompaniment manual.

6. The console you cherish is never for sale in your territory; it is 2000 miles away and overpriced.

7. The leaky regulator that needs re-leathering can be reached only by taking out three others ahead of it.

8. The armature that flew out of the chest magnet cap will never be seen again.

9. Your tape measure has a built-in error such that you will always saw a windline one-half inch short.

10. After trouble-shooting non-playing notes in a rank of pipes for two days, somebody else has to tell you the problem is a disconnected common lead.

11. The gale blowing in your face under the Solo chests is never coming from the obvious; it's a microscopic wind leak two feet away.

12. If a stopper has to fall, it will fall all the way to the bottom and always in the CC pipe of the 16' bourdon.

13. The chances of two consultants agreeing exactly on how to install a pipe organ are precisely the same probability as the moon flying out of its orbit.

Puget Sound Has A Happy and A Sad Day November 5

by Margaret C. Hill

In the afternoon of November 5 we gathered at the beautiful home of Dick Wilcox in Gig Harbor. To quote President Randy Rock, it was a "Thank You/Retirement — sort of" party honoring Jane and Homer Johnson. More than 75 attended. Jane and Homer have been members and supporters of Puget Sound Chapter for many years and are well-loved by all. Numerous members who have known them for a long time related anecdotes and paid homage to them before playing the organ. Among the organists who performed were: Andy Crow, Don Myers, Bill Hale and Al Logan (from Canada), Dick Schrum, Thelma Barclay and Ed Zollman, Sr. Jane's "boss" for several years, Dick Daubert, owner of Tacoma Pizza & Pipes, paid tribute to Jane and expressed his appreciation for her many years of playing there. It was a most rewarding experience. Our host was even able to be with us. Jane is not retiring in the strictest sense of the word, but will no longer be a regular staff organist. She will, however, play occasionally, so we can hear her once in awhile.

During the afternoon it was announced that this was the last day that the Greenwood Pizza & Pipes would be open, so a large number of us drove around to Seattle. That's about fifty miles, since Greenwood is in the north end of Seattle. The place was packed! Staff organist Dick Schrum relinquished the bench to several of our members during the evening for a last chance to play that wonderful instrument. Most of those who had played at Jane's party took their turns at playing Greenwood, too.

After the "Concert" was over, owner Jack Laffaw talked briefly, thanking the artists and the audience for their part in making the place such a success for the past sixteen years. The fate of the organ is not yet known, but the building is to be stripped and a Mini-Mall installed.

Dick Schrum was the organist who opened Greenwood, so Jack commented that it seemed only fitting that he should be the one to close it. Dick played a beautiful arrangement of "Try to Remember" and "We'll Meet Again" before turning off the lights. It was an extremely nostalgic moment, and there were quite a number of handkerchiefs in evidence.

All inquiries regarding membership matters should be addressed to . . .
DOUGLAS C. FISK, Executive Director of ATOS
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Sacramento, California 95841



L to R: Jane and Homer Johnson, Jack Becvar, Mary Lou Becvar, Bob Otey at Greenwood.



Sentimental Puget Sounders at closing of Greenwood.



Dick Schrum confers with Greg Smith.



Homer and Jane Johnson at console of Wilcox organ.



Don Myers tells Andy Crow the "one about the traveling organ tuner." Frank Myers at left. Randy Rock Photos

News From Great Britain

by John Potter

Members of ATOS will have read in your pages of the loss of the console by fire of the 4/14 Wurlitzer from the Gaumont Theatre in Manchester, which the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust has had in store for over ten years since its removal from the theatre.

We are now pleased to be able to say that the first new Wurlitzer console ever to be constructed in this country is taking place, as the pictures show. Fortunately, when the Wurlitzer branch in the U.K. closed, the late Frank Holland of the Musical Museum in Brentford obtained several sets of drawings from the office, and among them the Trust were delighted to find some of the Gaumont Manchester console. However, not all the required drawings were in the batch, and some work has had to be done from photographs.

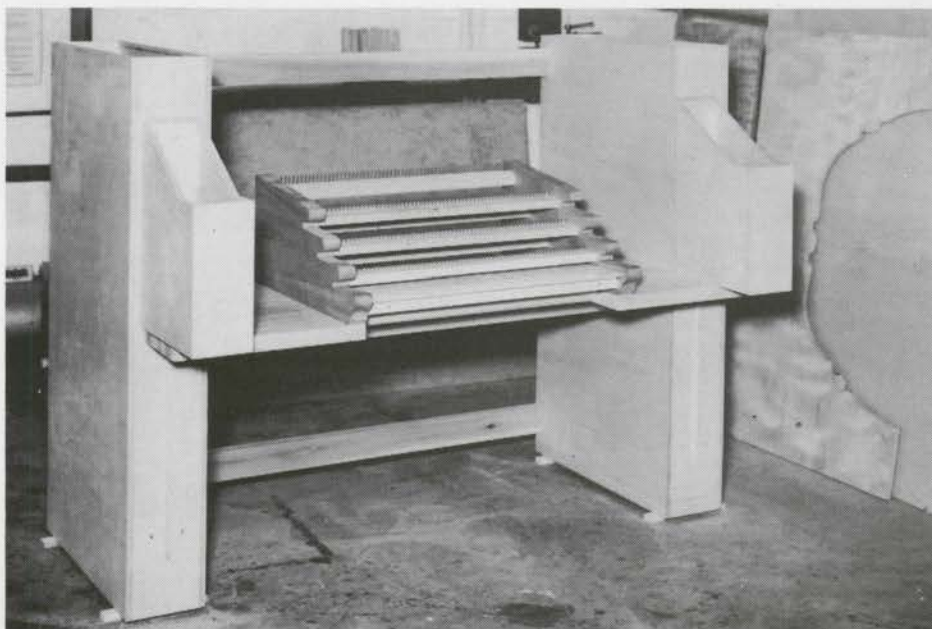
The console has been built by P and S Organ Supplies of Brandon in Suffolk and, as you can see, they have done a superb job.

All being well, the Trust also think they have found a new home for the organ in 1990 — we'll keep you updated as work on completing the console progresses and the installation project begins. As they say, "Watch this space!"



The original console in 1935.

Courtesy of Ron Curtis



This is the start of something big.

John Cooper Photo



Close-up of wood carving on console leg.

John Cooper Photo



The new console in bare wood.
John Cooper Photo



Reproduction of Wurlitzer name plate.

John Cooper Photo

LETTERS CONT. (from page 6)

the matter is the Style F went on to become the Style 200, not 190. Excepting the extended Tibia unification, the F and style 200 were stop-for-stop the same. All three, F, 190, and 200 were 2/8s, but of differing stop specifications. The only reason I make somewhat of an issue on this is my first Wurlitzer "love" was and is a 1928 style 200-special (special = preparation for a roll player that was never installed), opus 1887. True, the F and 200 may have lacked a buzzy color reed (or English Horn of the style 216), but they were a magnificent breed of Wurlitzer. Most Style 200s went to Great Britain.

With regard to the nineteen opus numbers for the 165/165-X, the following might be interesting for what it is worth:

Opus 1978, 165-X was factory equipped with an 8', 10" pressure English Horn IN PLACE of the "Style D #2 trumpet. This also applied to opus 1971 and 1982. When opus 1982 was moved to southern California, its English Horn was removed and replaced with a Wurlitzer Tuba, with the addition of a Dulciana. It was, I believe, installed by the late Lee Haggart.

Opus 1943 has been broken up for parts. The console, I do not know its whereabouts; the chests and some pipe-work added to a style 210 Special, with the relay, Diaphone, and some percussions a major part of the all Wurlitzer assembled style 216 copy installed by Sequoia Chapter in the Fox-Hanford Theatre, in central California.

Opus 1900 is still installed, though under different ownership, and has an added Orchestral Oboe and 8-4 Voix Celeste-Wurlitzer, on Wurlitzer chests. A separate Tibia Clausa tremulant was also added — Wurlitzer regulator and tremulant.

Opus 2926 was used for a "mid-west" regional circa 1970 or 1971. Where it is now, I have no idea.

Opus 1915 is most certainly a 165 but close inspection will show it does not have a Pedal 16' Bass/Diaphone. Opus 2068 *might* have also had this discrepancy but is difficult to really tell by the photo on 16. During the 1976 ATOS Safari I recall hearing another organ which I thought was a 165 in the area around Liverpool — some name like Dingle or some such. However, it was probably a single chamber, later opus style D — without the Pedal 16' Bass.

Congratulations on the foresight of George Baker to document what could someday become an extinct style of Wurlitzer organ — gobbled up in some giant 6/600 of every Wurlitzer rank built. Kudos particularly to Dave Junchen for driving home the point about saving what is left of the 165s — and his point regarding restoration. As a further matter

of point, opus 1900 WAS originally only equipped with two (count 'em!) tremulants: Main and Vox Humana. This opus literally came to life with the addition of a separate Wurlitzer regulator and tremulant for the Tibia Clausa. Original? Hell, no! Musically, vastly improved. There was absolutely no way the organ could satisfactorily have had a good "shake" under the original two-tremulant affair.

Another restoration case is my own diminutive 2/3 style 109C. After a concert on the thing, organist Larry Vannucci recalled similar organs in the Bay Area — all of them sounding worse than ghastly. He correctly suspected this opus 777 did not sound in the theatre like it does today. When it was reinstalled, there it was in all its ugly tonal state; Salicional Mirabilis, Vox Nannygoat, Flauto Mirabilis, and of course 18 notes of tuned door bells as Richard Villemin called them. Chimes replaced, the rest of the organ was carefully and fully tonally regulated. Even on a little 2/3, it was well worth it — offsets were removed from the ORIGINAL tremulated winding. Original? Of course not, "just" musical.

Sincerely,
Tom L. DeLay
Fresno, California

Dear Editor:

I was most interested to note from a letter in the September/October issue from George Worthington III that many of your theatre organs had been sold out of the country. I know of only one that has reached Great Britain, namely the Buddy Cole Wurlitzer/Morton organ. I should be pleased to hear of any others which have apparently had the same fate.

Over the years many British theatre organs have left these shores, having been sold to the highest bidder or, in some cases, to the only interested party. It is nice to know they are singing merrily away in places far afield as Canada, Holland, Switzerland, Germany and Australia. It is better they are installed as a whole unit than broken up for spares or for enlarging other installations.

Mr. Worthington says that these treasures are being "spirited out of the country by those who claim to love the theatre organ." In Great Britain, the majority of theatre organ enthusiasts loved the BBC Foort Moller organ, but where is it now? It is in the USA via Radio Hilversum, Holland. We didn't shed tears over this great loss — we were pleased to know this beautiful organ had found an excellent home and is being well cared for by our American cousins.

My best wishes to fellow ATOS members in the USA.

Sincerely,
Allen Moyes
Dorset, Great Britain

Dear Editor:

Having read the President's Message in July/August THEATRE ORGAN, I wish to suggest a new approach to promote the theatre organ. Mr. Ledwon suggested that some "shaking up" is in order, and I'm sure this will shake up more than a few people. We may be but one registration and a mere 16 bars away from having our favorite instrument heard nearly everywhere. Theatre organ can be, and SHOULD be introduced into the mainstream of pop music, but on pop music's terms, not the organ's. The history of theatre organ in recorded rock is the shortest on record (no pun intended). Although the classically voiced pipe organ has found its way into recordings of Yes, Emerson, Lake and Palmer, and Styx, to name a few, the only recollections of a theatre organ being recorded are in The Who's movie soundtrack of *Tommy*, a roller-rink style "Welcome to the Park," and on Lee Michaels' hit "Do You Know What I Mean" (and other songs from his album, "Fifth") both produced in the seventies.

Since much of today's pop music is laced with heavy synthesizer textures anyway, why not use theatre organ parts for that portion of the arrangement? There are some albums out, Santana's "Moonflower," for instance, in which the synthesists are heavily hinting at theatre organ registrations, maybe even without knowing it. A major hit of several years ago, Prince's "1999," was written around a keyboard theme perfect for a massive string-vox registration. Van Halen's "Jump" is based on a keyboard theme or "riff" that also could have been done on theatre pipes.

For mainstream pop acceptance, the organ will have to coexist with electric guitars, bass, drums, and pop vocalists. The theatre organ sound would then ride in on the coattails of sounds familiar to the modern ear. The style of performance would have to be more in the manner of today's keyboard styles. There is more than one way to play a guitar, piano, or trumpet, so there should be more than one way to play a theatre pipe organ. Theatre stylings, although more technically demanding, sound dated when brought head-to-head with today's music.

What of registrations? What pipe sound will capture the music listening public? If I knew, I would publish the registration notes right here and now, then go out on location and record this very day. One thing is sure, the *Phantom of the Opera*-type organ passages, or the old style theatre playing are going to have to be replaced by something more "hip." One sound, one passage, the right one with a musical "hook" could turn things around. If Buckwheat Zydeco could suc-

(continued on next page ...)

LETTERS cont.

cessfully introduce the accordion into mainstream pop Rock and Blues (he did — four albums worth), there must be a place for theatre pipes.

Mr. Ledwon mentions media exposure and advertising. The right group with a theatre organ in a Rock Video could have more impact than all previous publicity. Massive horseshoe consoles with three, four, or five manuals and hundreds of stops have endless artistic possibilities for video.

Do these suggestions sound "off the beaten path?" I'm sure they do, but as I interpret Mr. Ledwon's message, the "beaten path" is not leading us to where we want to go.

Les Knoll
Carol Stream, Illinois

Dear Editor:

In the Chapter Notes from Quad Cities (November/December) there are some important corrections to the items written about me: 1) I became a professional musician in 1949 not 1969; and 2) at Augustana College, I also studied piano with Gladys Southwick — studied organ with Dean Swanson, who was a former theatre organist.

Thank you for setting the record straight.

Sincerely,
Charlotte McCoy
Davenport, Iowa

(Editor's note: We received several letters from members correcting information in the article by J. Marion Martin. Rather than print all of them, we have elected to mention the basic facts which are being challenged: 1) Jesse Crawford did not record on Blue Bird, but rather on Black Seal Victor; and 2) Crawford's appearance could not have been in 1933 as Hammond organs did not exist that year and the movie in the ad is for VOGUES of 1938).

Dear Editor:

I have decided to emerge from the distant past to re-acquaint myself with the National. As a dedicated long-time member (probably 30 years plus), I continue to hold our group in very high esteem for their undying efforts in continuing the preservation of such a fine and cultural entertainment medium.

I just received my issue with my good friend, "Tiny," on the cover. He was truly an outstanding person with so much talent. He most certainly will be greatly missed.

Also in the most recent issue, in the ATOS *International NEWS*, on page 2, "School Dedicates Donated Link Organ," that great baby, opus 616, was mine originally — I dubbed it the "Missing Link." My efforts to remove it and haul it home (26 days worth) were awesome, to say the least. Months of restoring and refinishing the console in wedding-cake fashion and cleaning years of coal soot from the more than ten tons of components was a staggering challenge, and thinking back 30 years ago I wonder how I ever accomplished the chore! Must have been my youthful strength and abundant enthusiasm!

It's really no big deal, I suppose, but I just can't figure how a dumb little four-letter work can get so bungled. No harm done since no one remembers me, anyway, but the name Arey (not Airly) has been in the ATOS Archives one way or another for a good, long time and is even mentioned in the *Encyclopedia of the American Theatre Organ*. By the way, the specs of the 616 were submitted by me way back when, while I was in the midst of restoration!

My best wishes to all my fellow ATOSers for now and the future.

Sincerely,
Duane D. Arey
Painesville, Ohio

NUGGETS cont. from page 18

GOLD DUST . . .

7/27 R. WILSON ROSS, Rochester's Victoria ... 2/35 ARTHUR CHANDLER, Jr. WLW, Cincinnati; JOHNNY WINTERS, WOR, Newark; HARRY E. RODGERS, WAAB, Boston ... 5/35 GORDON JOHNSON, WBEN, Buffalo; FRED FEIBEL, WABC, New York; LLOYD DEL CASTILLO, WEEI, Boston; FRANCIS J. CRONIN, WORC, Worcester, Massachusetts; HAL BECKETT, WOR, Newark; "EDDIE DUNSTEDTER Entertains," CBS Network; EDDIE WEAVER, WICC, Hartford . . . 7/35 MAURICE B. NICHOLSON, WBEN, Buffalo; J. GORDON BALDWIN, Rochester's WHEC ... 9/35 WILLIAM MEEDER, WJZ, New York; JESSE CRAWFORD, NBC Network; RICHARD LEIBERT, WJZ, New York; CARL COLEMAN, WKBW, Buffalo ... 3/37 "Organ Moods" with ANN LEAF, CBS Network; LEN SALVO, Chicago's WGN; TOM GRIERSON, Rochester's WHAM.

That should do it for this time. So long, sourdoughs!

Jason & The Old Prospector



With thanks to Mary Jane Secor of Indianapolis for the following as it appeared on the editorial page of the STAR on Wednesday, October 11, 1989:

His Songs Sang It All

IRVING BERLIN, for whom SAY IT WITH MUSIC was the theme of a lifetime, has joined the other American musical immortals. His probably was the most imposing presence in all of Tin Pan Alley.

It didn't matter in what situation you found yourself — there was a Berlin melody to fit the scene.

If you were ALL ALONE and it was SUPPERTIME, he would remind you, IT'S A LOVELY DAY TOMORROW.

We were told it was all right to be LAZY and to LET YOURSELF GO.

If there was a HEAT WAVE, why not think about the time when there would be a WHITE CHRISTMAS?

In the spring, always there was time for the EASTER PARADE. If you had insomnia, you were to COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS. Should it shower, he remarked, ISN'T IT A LOVELY DAY TO BE CAUGHT IN THE RAIN? Don't worry. There's always A FELLA WITH AN UMBRELLA.

When you kept telling yourself, SAY IT ISN'T SO, it was time for SOFT LIGHTS AND SWEET MUSIC.

THE BEST THING FOR YOU, I learned long ago was music by Irving Berlin.

GOD BLESS AMERICA for nurturing this marvelous talent. After all, THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE SHOW BUSINESS. Will the world REMEMBER Irving Berlin? ALWAYS.

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