



Pipes & Personalities

The Mole Hole

by Scott Smith

One of America's finest, most unusual gift stores can be found in Central Michigan, in the charming village of Marshall. Known as The Mole Hole, this particular shop offers unusual gift items, a large selection of cards, and a two-manual Barton organ.

The organ was originally installed in the Garden Theatre as a 2/4 in 1927, replacing a "DeLuxe" model Bartola pit organ, also in Marshall. Sometime during the sixties, the organ was removed and went on for two brief stints in residences. Finally, Mike and Penny Kinter purchased the instrument and brought it back to Marshall, where it remained in storage for some time. When the idea of the gift



Organ classes.

store came into being, the notion of incorporating the Barton organ into the plans for the store seemed like a logical and novel idea to the Kinters, as well. And so it went on for ten years. That is, until disaster struck!

On October 24, 1987, a fire broke out near the furnace and soon engulfed nearly every corner of the store. When the firemen broke through the front doors, the intense heat was measured at 1,200°F! Miraculously, the fire burned around the single organ chamber, badly scorching the exposed 16' Bourdon extension and the console. While most small businesses would have given up completely, the Kinters simply began rebuilding from the ground up, and on September 1, 1988, The Mole Hole once again opened its doors for business, an incredible comeback story. This time, the organ chamber was enlarged, and a Kimball Tibia and Tuba were added to the original Barton ranks of Vox Humana, String, Diapason and Stopped Flute. As a result of the fire damage, the console required new keyboards, re-engraving the stop tablets and a complete refinishing. Although refinished as well, the exposed 16' Bourdon extension still reveals a bit of scorching around the top portions of the pipes, a grim reminder of the fire.

Visitors to the store may be lucky enough to hear house organists Victor Barz or Scott Smith play the Barton Organ live, or via the magic of the digital playback system within the instrument. The Mole Hole is located at 150 W. Michigan Avenue in downtown Marshall, just one block east of Fountain Circle. The village of Marshall is very near the intersection of I-94 and I-69, and is accessible from either highway. For store hours or further information, call 616/781-5923.

Organ Classes At Pasadena City College

Pictured is the first theatre organ class (fall 1989) at Pasadena City College. Gathered around the LATOS-owned 3/23 Ross Reed Wurlitzer with instructor ATOS President John Ledwon are the students (in alphabetical order): Elizabeth Beller, John Dandurand, Virginia Flaherty, Paul Gaddis, Donn Linton, Phil McKinley, Leola Norman, William Norman, Shirley Obert, Shirley Panzer, Clarence Tice, Frank Way, Richard Whitman and Anna Wright. Not pictured is class member Lillian Gann who took the photo.

Starting in February this year two theatre organ classes are being taught at PCC. Both classes meet on Tuesday with the introductory class from 5:30 to 8:30 and the advanced class from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. (there is an hour and a half overlap as both classes are taught by Ledwon in Sexson Auditorium). The 18-week courses cost just \$25 each and provide "hands on" lessons on one of Los Angeles' largest and finest theatre organs.

For anyone wanting to learn to play an organ, the college also offers a beginners class using a small two-manual Moller in the Music Building. It should be noted that class members John Dandurand, Paul Gaddis, Donn Linton, Phil McKinley and Frank Way were part of the LATOS volunteer team that helped install the organ. Donn Linton served as LATOS President in 1989 and currently is Chairman of the Board while Paul Gaddis is a Board member. Frank Way is not only Sexson Auditorium Manager but also serves as LATOS Vice-President, and Shirley Obert is LATOS Treasurer.

Ralph Beaudry



Mike and Penny Kinter and their Barton organ.



Donna Parker at the console of the Renaissance Theatre Wurlitzer.



Marjorie Allen and Charlie Balogh in Phoenix.

The Renaissance Theatre

The Renaissance Theatre in Mansfield, Ohio, began its 1989-90 organ series on a crisp Sunday afternoon in November.

Donna Parker returned again to the console of her old friend the former Kearns/Carson organ. She had spent many hours there as a student. Now again there she sat in her purple-sequined dress and began to entertain us with a varied lively program. "Ecstasy Tango" and "Baby Elephant Walk" got her fingers warmed up. Then came the beautiful soft sounds of "Wind Beneath My Wings." The 3/20 Wurlitzer can always give such mellow tones.

We could all tap our toes to "Slaughter On Tenth Avenue." The applause brought her back for an encore. But she could have played on and on had she had more time. We needed many more in attendance to give her the rousing applause she deserved.

The following concerts will bring back more old friends. Dave Weingartner comes on March 25. Tom Hazleton returns on April 29, 1990. Tom Wibbels will close the series on May 20. Our audiences will certainly have a variety of artists. We would hope that most of the 1400 seats will be filled. We invite you all to visit us as you travel around.

Virginia White

D.T.O.S. Brings Juice Newton to the Senate

Country super-star Juice Newton, whose "Juice" album rocketed her to fame by going platinum, will give two benefit concerts for Detroit Theatre Organ Society. These are scheduled for 7 and 9:30 p.m. on March 31. The supporting act will be John Lauter, who will take the Senate's 4/34 Wurlitzer "country" for the night. Joe Wade Formicola of Detroit's WWWW will emcee. For details phone 313/894-4100.

Allen Completes Organ Installation in World's Largest Church

The Allen Organ Company announces the installation of a large three-manual organ of 84 stops in the Basilica of Our Lady of Peace in the city of Yamoussoukro, Republic of the Ivory Coast, Africa. As featured in *TIME* Magazine and on CBS Television's "60 Minutes," this huge Roman Catholic edifice, located in the administrative capital of the Ivory Coast, is said to be the largest church in the world.

The basilica was constructed by 1,500 artisans over a period of several years. The structure is 525 feet high and contains 36 windows of hand-blown French stained glass, each approximately 90 feet tall, and 272 columns, some 14 stories high. The church is situated on an esplanade of 7.4 acres of Italian marble designed to accommodate over 300,000 worshippers.

According to officials at the basilica, the Allen Organ was chosen for two principal reasons. First, reliability of Allen equipment in a remote, tropical environment was proven by the installation nine years ago of a two-manual Allen Digital Computer Organ in Ecclesia Catholic Church, also in Yamoussoukro. Allen is well known for its modular construction and plug-in circuitry, which have enabled the company to make reliable installations in nearly 60 countries on seven continents. Second, after touring Allen installations in Europe, basilica officials concluded that Allen was best qualified to build an organ whose tonal design and sound would be appropriate to the largest church in the world. In the words of the CBS commentator: "It dwarfs any house of worship in the world . . . It is probably bigger, grander, and more ambitious than any single enclosed space ever built by man."

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