

## Pipes & Personalities



### Donna Parker Joins Rodgers

Richard Anderson, Director of Marketing at Rodgers Instrument Corporation, Hillsboro, Oregon, has appointed Donna Parker as Product Specialist. She is involved in music arranging and publishing, writing owner's manuals for keyboards and organs, concertizing, and developing a music education program.

Donna, a native of Los Angeles, began her organ studies at the age of seven. She studied with some of the top teachers in the theatre organ world. At thirteen, she began classical organ instruction with Richard Purvis, former organist/choirmaster of Grace Cathedral, San Francisco.

Donna's organ debut was with the American Theatre Organ Society's Los Angeles chapter. At fifteen she recorded her first record album and was appointed the first Official Organist for the Los Angeles Dodgers baseball team. She majored in organ at California Polytechnic State University at Pomona, California. Subsequently, she was organist at the Organ Stop Pizza in Phoenix; the Roaring Twenties in Grand Rapids, Michigan; and, the Paramount Music Palace in Indianapolis, Indiana.

## Sequoia Chapter Hosts Organ Crawl

LATOS recently made a trek north to Fresno in another of their series of "Organ Crawls" that have taken chapter members to areas such as Phoenix, Santa Barbara, and now Fresno. Over 100 members of LATOS and Valley Organ Society from Burbank made the trip. Several others also made the trip on their own from as far away as Santa Barbara.

Attendees were treated to an opening dinner at Pizza and Pipes to the Post Horn-accented music of Ed Smtih. Ed, a veteran theatre organist, very capably played the 3/23 Wurlitzer and its 16' English Horn throughout the evening.

Leaving for the next venue, LATOS, Sequoia, and VOS members heard San Francisco's Warren Lubich at the recently refurbished 3/10 Robert-Morton in Bethel Temple Church. Though the organ is considerably smaller than the Wurlitzer he plays regularly at Redwood City Capn's Galley, Warren adjusted his registration to the Morton. Many folks took advantage of the open console held later at Pizza and Pipes, including Gary Miller, Warren Lubich, Shirley Obert, and trip co-ordinator Dick Sheafor.

Dave Moreno did the console honors on Sunday morning at Pizza and Pipes. The group then met in downtown Fresno at Warnors Theatre to hear ATOS National President John Ledwon play selections of modern music on the 4/14 Robert-Morton. During his concert, John stressed the need to keep the music of the theatre organ current and up-to-date. Following John was the one and only Larry Vannucci, whose music is always jazzy and up-to-date. Though many of his selections were out of the past, once the music passed through Larry's hands, it sounded modern and up-to-date. Though Larry's playing time had to be cut short due to a rigid bus schedule, he nonetheless made the absolute most of his 45-minutes at the Morton. One thing we learned a long time ago about Larry; you may have heard him play some songs previously, but his on-the-spot arranging is so fabulous, you are really hearing a completely different approach. Hearing Larry Vannucci is an absolute must!

Many thanks to Dick Sheafor, LATOS, and Virginia Klomp of Valley Organ Society for putting together a fast, fun-filled weekend.

*Tom DeLay*

*(Pictures of this adventure may be found with the LATOS Chapter Notes. Ed.)*

## Update on Gaumont, Manchester

*by John Potter*

(See January/February 1990)

The console is now complete in decorative form as it had to meet the deadline for the opening of a new complex where it is to be situated. This is shown on the black and white shot with the console up on the lift. The area that you can see is the foyer of "Projections" which is an extension to a major tourist attraction in Manchester where the television company covering the North West, Granada, opened some of its most famous sets to the public including Coronation Street (Britain's premier long running soap opera) a year or two ago, since when it has been a big success. Yes, the Granada Television Company is part of the Group that started with Granada Theatres and thereby hangs a tale!

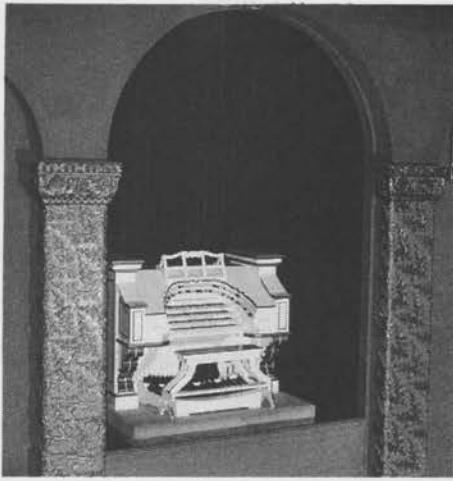
The Gaumont, Manchester which opened in 1935 was built for Granada Theatres and the architecture of the building followed closely the designs of their major cinemas built up to then and the interior of the Gaumont had many of the characteristics of the famous Granada, Tooting in London. The console of the 4/14 Wurlitzer similarly was of the style known as a "Granada Style."

Just before the opening in 1935, for a reason not known, Granada leased the theatre to Gaumont who subsequently purchased it, and the building operated as a Gaumont throughout its life, the organ being played for many years by the famous Stanley Tudor.

The Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust bought the instrument when the theatre closed in 1974 and the instrument was removed two years later. Since then it had been in store and a severe blow came in 1988 when the original console which had survived a bomb attack and fire during the war, was destroyed by fire together with many parts of the organ although fortunately not the pipework.

The Trust set about organising a rebuilt console and during this period the new proposals for an exhibition of the cinema past and future to be built in the Granada Studio Tours Complex in Manchester became known and the Trust worked closely with those responsible on the inclusion of the Wurlitzer in the project.

The entrance to the "Projections" building is a reproduction of the foyer of the Granada, Tooting. Here there is a montage of Sidney Bernstein founder of Granada and the reasons why he came to choose the name Granada. Here also



Console in Gaumont, Manchester ready for opening  
Norman Edwards photo

is a similar montage giving the background to Robert Hope-Jones who was born near to Manchester, who sub-contracted some of his early work to the Manchester organ builders, Jardine and Company, and who went on to become known as the father of the Mighty Wurlitzer.

From the foyer the public walk up two grand staircases into a Hall of Mirrors. At the top of the staircase are the chamber frontages and leading off the hall is the entrance to an old fashioned flea pit cinema where early films are shown on a postage stamp size screen. At the end of this presentation the audience moves into the cinema of the future with the Movie Master, brought over from the U.S.A., and featuring the full participation of the audience on moving seats linked into the actions on the screen. From this show the customers walk out into an area where souvenirs can be bought but this also includes a small museum of old showcards, clocks, uniforms and other memorabilia; and a mock-up operating booth (projection box).

In the few weeks that it has been opened it has already been very successful and the main attraction in the foyer is the Mighty Wurlitzer which has now, one might say, come home to rest with Granada!

Restoration of the chests and pipe-work is now proceeding and it is hoped to have the organ playing in about twelve months (all work is voluntary) and the Trust are grateful to several American companies for their contributions, namely Devtronix for the Multi-action organ control, Hesco for the stop tabs and labels, and Iesspro for the stop action magnets.

In order to complete the project the Trust are about to launch a major appeal for funds and contributions would be welcomed and may be sent via the writer at 9 St. John's Road, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 0DL, England.



John Muri, 1990 Hammond Achievement honoree.

## Hammond, Indiana Achievement Award

The Hammond Achievement Award was originated as a way for the City of Hammond to honor and give recognition each year to a living man or woman who was born, raised or educated in Hammond or spent a significant number of years in Hammond; who has achieved national or international fame in the field of arts, science or business and industry; and who was not from the same field of endeavor as the previous awardee. A plaque bearing the seal of Hammond and of the United States and listing the major achievements of the recipient will be on permanent display by the Hammond Historical Society in the Community Room of the Hammond Public Library.

The 1990 honoree is John T. Muri, educator and theatre organ music pioneer and concert musician.

John Muri, born in 1906 of Swiss parentage, came to live in Hammond at what is now 417 Logan Street. He attended Riverside School and graduated from Hammond High School in 1923. He began piano lessons at an early age, and while at the University of Chicago, became interested in the pipe organ.

Today this lively 83-year-old gentleman lives in Atlanta, Georgia, and continues to maintain his position as the nation's premier theatre organist. Having years earlier passed the doctoral exams for both French and German, he is now studying Chinese! And he is quoted as saying "I still the love the organ, and I shall play until I lose it in my hands."



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*Whence hath the church so many organs and musical instruments?*

*To what purpose, I pray you, is that terrible blowing of bellows, expressing rather the cracks of thunder, than the sweetness of a voice?*

AELRED, ABBOT OF RIEVAULX,  
Circa 1160

