

CLOSING CHORD

Phil Hedback

Entrepreneur, philanthropist, and theatre organ enthusiast par excellence PHILIP R. HEDBACK passed away suddenly on April 23 at the age of 79. An honorary member of the Central Indiana Chapter, Phil and his wife Betty owned the 2/11 Page/Wurlitzer in the Hedback Community Theatre in Indianapolis, Indiana. Having bought the building that originally housed the Indianapolis Civic Theatre and was located across the street from his highly successful heating/air conditioning distributorship, Phil's object was the parking lot next to the theatre. The theatre, however, became the home of an amateur musical comedy troupe named Footlite Musicals upon donation by Phil. He also renovated the facility, mostly at his own expense, and bought the theatre pipe organ for the 400-seat house and had it installed by the late Tom Ferree. Phil and Betty became members of CIC-ATOS and supported every endeavor with great vigor. Under the tonal direction of John Ferguson, they expanded the instrument and made it one of the finest smaller theatre organs in the country. Phil made it available to our membership for individual practice at no charge, and our membership provides musical interludes prior to each performance of Footlite Musicals. In addition to his interest and great support of theatre pipe organ, Phil collected antique automobiles and at one time owned a pair of Cords, an Auburn Boattail Roadster, a Packard Limousine, various Lincolns, and other vintage autos. He also sponsored for many years a race car at the Indianapolis 500. In addition to his wife Betty, Phil leaves two sons and a daughter and numerous grandchildren. His verve, enthusiasm, energy, and business acumen will be sorely missed. We have lost a generous benefactor, true, but we have more importantly lost a very good friend. May he rest in peace.

Tim Needler

Eloise Rowan Dilling

Eloise Rowan Dilling passed away on November 17, 1989, in southern California. She was 84 years old.

The name of Eloise Rowan was well known in professional circles during the great age of theatre organ, and her accomplishments were impressive. While she was still in college her family moved from Fargo, North Dakota, to Minneapolis. Her first encounter with the theatre organ was on a visit to the State Theatre where she heard Eddie Dunstedter. He

became her inspiration, and a career as a theatre organist became her number one goal — a goal she was to realize. From the State Theatre to radio station WCCO to the Denver Paramount Theatre, back to station KSTP in Minneapolis, Eloise Rowan stayed active in the world of theatre organ both as performer and teacher until failing health in the 1980s forced her to retire. (see THEATRE ORGAN, October/November 1980).

Eloise is survived by her husband, Charles, a daughter and a son.

Coulter Cunningham

E.W. Coulter Cunningham, a retired commercial airlines pilot, who was also an organist, died May 17 in the crash of his experimental plane on its first flight. Coulter and his wife Mildred lived in San Diego since 1968. He is survived by four children and nine grandchildren.

Coulter devoted much of his spare time to playing the organ and working on organs. He bought an electronic organ for their home and installed nine ranks of pipes, creating a powerful pipe organ.

Serving in the past as President as well as on many committees for the San Diego Theatre Organ Society, he helped restore the pipe organ in the California Theatre. At our last Membership Meeting at the California Theatre, Coulter showed another side of his talent by playing his trumpet along with Walt Slocumb on the pipe organ. Their selection of the "Last Chord" will never be forgotten.

Family and friends gathered at his home for a Memorial Service and played his favorite music on the pipe organ. The family shared very special memories of their Dad.

Coulter gave so much of his time and talent that Society members will never forget him. We thank the Cunningham family for sharing Coulter and all his love.

A Memorial Fund has been established in E.W. Coulter Cunningham's name. Donations may be sent to Theatre Organ Society of San Diego, P.O. Box 1788, Chula Vista, CA 92012.

Bob Norris: A Word of Tribute

The word is dedication. Bob passed away this winter, after a two-month stay in the hospital. And with Bob's passing, we have lost a man with a great sense of responsibility for our organ society. With our chapter, Bob was everywhere and into everything, with great gusto and sincerity.

Through his hard work, his accomplishments were many. He organized a number of events at the Rahway Theatre including the presentation of *Wings*, coupled with his publicity work and hustle, rendering a sell-out crowd. Bob worked hard with the people at Asbury Park Convention Hall for the summer concerts this past year. He was involved with programs and ideas for the War Memorial Concert Series. He was always looking for ways and places to expand the scope and range of our cause — the theatre organ.

Bob was active in the political ring as well. He served as Vice-President of Garden State Chapter for two years and President for one year. At best, with all of its points of view, politics is a rough and rocky road, but Bob handled it with dignity and pride as our President last year.

Bob's crowning achievement for Garden State was his devotion and dedication to acquiring grants from the New Jersey Arts Council for our organ society. The mountains of paper work, thousands of calls, and thousands of hours of labor that went into this effort resulted in several grants of several thousand dollars each. Bob, along with his wife Alice, had far reaching goals and broad horizons for our chapter, and the grants were a possible means to those goals. We thank him. Without Bob we have a gaping hole in the functions of our chapter.

It's an old cliché, but with sincerity and from the bottom of our hearts — "Bob, we'll miss you."

Bruce Williams

■ ■ ■
*All the disorders, all the wars which we see in the world,
only occur because of the neglect to learn music . . .
Were all men to learn music, would not this be the means of
agreeing together, and of seeing universal peace reign
throughout the world?*

MOLIERE, 1670

Gladyce Elinor Campbell — Musical Moma

January 2, 1904 — October 29, 1989

by Gladyce W. Bouley

When the dying Gladyce Campbell was told grand-nephew Otis might offer his fine tenor voice for her funeral services, she asked, "Who will play for him?"

A logical question, from a woman who played organ or piano for family weddings and funerals for decades.

Gladyce Elinor Kittredge was a child prodigy in Chicago, soon joining mother Elinor at the piano keyboard with father Rufus on violin. She played "Pony Boy" for company at age four and never forgot the applause. Proudly exhibited like a fragile Mozart by her teacher, she began composing at age nine, and went on to classical studies at the Chicago Conservatory of Music. Along the way, she fell in love with "the grandest instrument of all" — the pipe organ.

When the family was disrupted, the teen-aged performer's earnings helped her mother, alone in California with three daughters. Younger sisters Lucille and Elaine studied dance while Gladyce accompanied vocalists and dancers at recitals and played organ in theatres, adding to her classical, popular and sacred repertoire. In 1918 at age fourteen, she played a two-week engagement at Penny's Theatre in Los Gatos which featured the silent film *Four Years in Germany*.

"My first real job in 1920, at age sixteen," she wrote, "was in a silent movie theatre in San Diego, California." She played a Style 25 American Fotoplayer, sharing with two boys the honor of being youngest organists on the West Coast. The eighty-eight-keyed Fotoplayer had trap pulls for bells, whistles and drums; two chests held three ranks of organ pipes.

Young Gladyce played a variety of theatre organs, including a "Giant Wurlitzer," combining her classical background with new American music of Gershwin, Berlin, Cohan and Joplin, to match the drama, pathos and humor on the silent screen. "I still associate Strauss's 'Gold and Silver Waltz' with Elmo Lincoln or Frank Merrill as Tarzan swinging through the trees," Gladyce told Bertha Barron during an interview in 1981. Music of the 1920s forever summoned memories of screen idols Rudolph Valentino, William S. Hart, Lionel Barrymore, Corrine Griffith and Erich von Stroheim.

She recalled how reels of silent films arrived at a theatre with a stack of cue sheets, some scenes requiring but a line of melody. "In two days, I had the cues memorized. After that, I read a book while I played through the film."

Improvisation was her forte. Adapting classics for theatre organs to create moods for silent movies, she played waltzes, marches and excerpts from operas, including the Anvil Chorus from *Faust*, Strauss's E-Flat Waltz from *Die Fledermaus*, the Quartet from *Rigoletto*, dramatic arias from *Carmen*, the Sextette from *Lucia de Lammermoor*, tragic arias from *Madama Butterfly*, and emotional Wagnerian themes.



A student of the organ, and already an accomplished pianist, Gladyce (Kittredge) Campbell was a dedicated musician at age twelve, when this photograph was taken. Photo courtesy of family of Gladyce Elinor Campbell

Working for Fox Theatres in 1924, Moma wheeled my baby carriage into the orchestra pit for organ practice at the New Mission Theatre in Santa Barbara, where she played selections from *Aida* between films *Along Came Ruth*, with Viola Dana and Walter Hiers, and *My Baby Doll*. She used a harp effect in the overture to *Aida*, building drama into the stirring march with trumpets. In 1926 she performed with the original Fred Waring group and Rudy Vallee at the Stanley Theatres in Newark, New Jersey.

With her grace, artistic skill and depth of expression on piano and organ, Gladyce was a born concert artist. She

loved audiences, as they loved her. She transposed and rearranged music spontaneously, giving life to music the way an actor turns dialogue into an emotional experience. But throughout her life, our musical Moma sacrificed career for family, accompanying vocalists, performing endless Chopin on ballet studio upright pianos so some of us could have lessons, playing a theatre organ when she could. All too soon, "Talkies" relegated theatre organists to intermission interludes and church music.

Like many artists during the 1930's Depression, Moma held menial jobs and gave piano lessons, rarely collecting the twenty-five cents. She was thrilled when a Santa Monica movie house offered her a small fee to play the theatre organ for a silent film revival in 1934. During World War II she appeared as Kitty Kittredge on the Hammond and Thomas electric organs, then the rage in Southern California. Her theme, "Painting the Clouds with Sunshine," (from Chopin's "Fantasie Impromptu") began evenings at Ruben's and Jewett's restaurants in Long Beach. In 1946 she relished the rare chance to perform again on a Wicks theatre organ in the Orange Theatre.

Year after year, she gave patient instruction in piano and organ, many of those years at Delian Music Store in Westminster, California, proud of her students' performances at spring recitals. She was still conducting organ classes in her eighties.

Her feet did more on organ pedals than some hands do on consoles. Wistfully she rued, "I never danced — I was always the one playing the music." Her "tango" was done on the pedals, and there appeared no limit to her range, from opera to popular. Adept at classical and jazz, she loved the Big Band sounds of the 1940s. Whether a rag or sonata, Porter, Friml or Romberg, her special signature, *Heart and Soul*, was keyed into her registrations.

Musical lore has been added, at Gladyce's wish, to the American Theatre Organ Society Archives, including "Mars" and "Venus" from her unfinished suite on the planets; "Your Loveliness (Is Like a Rose)," a song she wrote when daughter Sally was born in 1928, and "Dear One!" (1939). Her spiritual, "Gwine A Ride Dem Clouds," deserved a full gos-

pel choir rendition — with a grand diapason on a pipe organ. Seeing the mathematical structure of music akin to the order of planets in astronomy, she developed her own system of rhythm and harmony and devised an instruction method with a folding keyboard, long before similar systems were marketed.

Theatre organs were her lifelong passion. She visited famous Wurlitzers and Kimballs with friend and enthusiast, Hugo Smith, retired film projectionist. She was an avid rockhound, loved to cook for "potlucks" among musical friends (doing much augmenting, diminishing and transposing of foods in her kitchen). When not at a keyboard, her hands, stiffened by arthritic nodes, crocheted, embroidered and did exemplary crewel work.

Moma studied composers, world religions, geology, American Indian art, mythology. And she wrote of places, people, food, health. Registrations for each musical instrument she touched: the Yamaha ... the pipe organ ... the Wersi ... the Conn ... the Allen. Notes for her organ classes. Lists of "sets" to play at musicales.

Perhaps her last decade at "Goforth Village" mobile home park in Orange, California was happiest. This haven for musical senior citizens houses several organs in its recreation room. Goforth owner Tom Caldwell says Gladyce was remarkable, "... a 'purist' as oldtime theatre organists are about electronic 'poor imitations for a pipe organ,' "and that with talent, she didn't need all that gadgetry to achieve her effects. But he said she was unable to resist the challenge of digital computerized organs and was soon having fun with the theatre Model 650 Conn organ (her favorite), a three-manual organ with American Organists Guild (AGO) concave pedal board.

Gladyce thought the Allen 675 at Goforth sounded like a real pipe organ, also enjoyed the three-manual Lowrey GX325. But she was really intrigued by the DX 500 two-manual Wersi, with its complicated computer combinations and stops, and undertook to learn the instrument, even joining a Wersi club. "There's nothing worse than a Wersi!" her letters moaned, but when we visited, she gleefully demonstrated Wersi's variety. In our last video of Moma at eighty-five in May 1989, she performs on several organs in the club room.

Most amazing was Moma's persistence in refining her musical skills. She adapted classic "curved fingers" into an arthritic stiff-fingered approach to the keyboard. Despite lower vertebrae fractures, bursitis, arthritis, two carotid artery surgeries, and falls resulting from osteo-

porosis — one requiring an aluminum hip replacement, another breaking the left hand (she continued practicing with the right) — she never stopped progressing with her music or learning new music. The will of steel in that small, delicate body kept her lucid, optimistic, caring and sweet up to her last agonizing days.

Mornings began with practice on her Serenate spinet piano — Chopin, Liszt and Beethoven ("I expect to meet Beethoven one day and want to be ready," she said). Then she was off to the recreation room to rehearse programs for organ group meetings and devise new combinations and effects. Until weeks before her death, she was active in "The New Dimension Wersi Club;" "Mo Sarts," Lowrey enthusiasts who meet at Mo's Music Store in Fullerton, California; "The Tuesday Night Club that Meets on Wednesday," as well as the "Organized" club meeting regularly at Goforth's.

At her funeral, praise and affection flowed from Gladyce's musical friends. At Goforth, she achieved the stardom that eluded her younger days. On a card crowded with personal messages sent to the hospital, her "landlords" and friends, Tom and Marge Caldwell wrote: "Everyone at the 'Sunday musicale' wants you to know we all love you and miss you ... (and) your beautiful music ... You have made our musical instruments come alive like no one else ..."

Gladyce's musical gifts and her gentle existence will enrich us throughout our days. A note penned during her last year says: "Be open to new ideas ..."



At the Wicks theatre organ, Gladyce Campbell performed in the Orange Theatre in Orange, California, in 1946. Photo courtesy of family of Gladyce Ellinor Campbell

That it has successfully invaded New York is an acknowledged fact, and above the keening of the local mourners, it has been accepted with whoops by the public. The writer was a resident of Chicago when the fateful invasion swept in from the coast. The cry of "To Arms!" was raised, and the faithful among organists rushed to defend their citadel, which they fondly and mistakenly believed to be the only bulwark capable of sheltering "good music." I saw many others join the invaders, and I'm happy to say that I was among them. The effect on good music did not bear out the forebodings of the Old Guard. It was not murdered by barbarian hordes, but tastefully bedecked and presented anew in a more entertaining if not quite so dignified a manner. The irreconcilables of the Windy City are still casting a sheep's eye at the past and bemoaning the sad state in which they find themselves.

We are prone to forget that people go to a show to be *entertained* — not educated. An organist with an itch for uplift should not join the ranks of the motion picture brethren. As a matter of fact, most of the latter are at the job because it pays well.

See you next time. So long, sourdoughs!
Jason & The Old Prospector

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