

INDIANAPOLIS 1990: An Exercise in Excellence

by Steve Adams



Convention Chairman Tim Needler.

They made it happen . . .

Top right: Bus Captains: Gene Ward, Ruth Ward, Bill Griffis, Henri Harrell (standing), Joan Griffis, Warren York, Mike Rolfe, Barb Johnson.

Middle: Hospitality Desk: Bill Beam, Carol Andrejasich, Josie Beeler. JE photos



Registration: Tess Moses and Les Moses. JE
▶ Barbara Johnson and Hank Resner. JE



It was with a profound sense of satisfaction that I headed my car North out of Indianapolis on I-65 that Thursday in August. I felt like a cat lying in the sun after enjoying a particularly good mouse. As the lush farmlands of Central Indiana passed by, I began to recall the five days I had just spent hearing the best of music, seeing friends, and eating great food . . . all at the 1990 ATOS National Convention. Somewhere before Gary, Indiana, I decided I have to make it to San Francisco in '91. Hooked? I must be.

Where else can you spend five days listening to, talking about, looking at, and touching pipe organs?

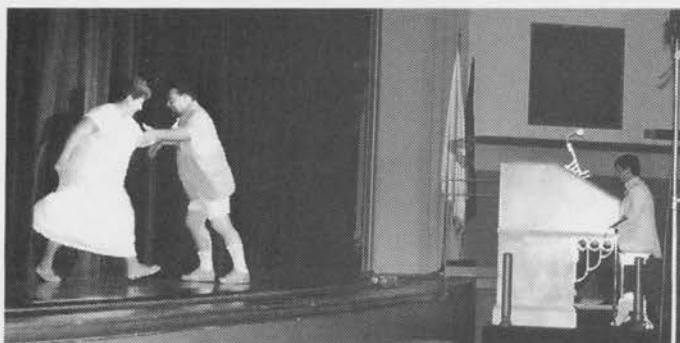


Ron Rhode at Manual High School. BH

SATURDAY

It all started on August 4. Getting no further than the Porte Cochere of the Hyatt Regency, I spotted Tim Needler, Convention Chairman and long-time friend. I knew I was off to a good start before I had even reached the lobby! Promising to talk later, Tim casually went on to greet other conventioners. I couldn't help but think that things were well under control.

The Hyatt Regency is one of those vast, atrium-style buildings with at least one bank, several fast-food emporiums, and the ubiquitous hotel gift shop. My room was on the 14th floor, and ideally suited to providing the perfect retreat from activities when I wanted to unwind. Leaving my room, I stepped back into the air of excitement always present in the atrium. Registration was on the third floor. A painless process, I was registered before I could fully enjoy the smile of the lady with the box of "A" packets. Next, off to The Porch coffee shop to look through my packet and anticipate the first event over a cup of coffee.



The "Chicken Polka" — Ron Rhode, Jim Koller and Cindy Diaz, Manual High School. BH

Ron Rhode

Manual High School Auditorium

For those who had accumulated a year's worth of activities and gossip, a traditional No-host Cocktail Reception provided the perfect opportunity to unload all that stored-up information. With just enough time for dinner, buses departed with more than 700 conventioners for Indianapolis' Manual High School Auditorium and the first concert of the convention.

The ever-elegant Ron Rhode, wearing white tails, brought the distinctively refinished console out of the pit aglow in the light of a follow spot. The unair-conditioned auditorium had taken on the day's heat and humidity, leading one to wonder how he could possibly wear his tuxedo coat through the program. But wear it he did, and through a marvelous program of selections which highlighted the many ensembles in the organ. In spite of the heat and humidity, the operation and tuning of the organ was flawless.

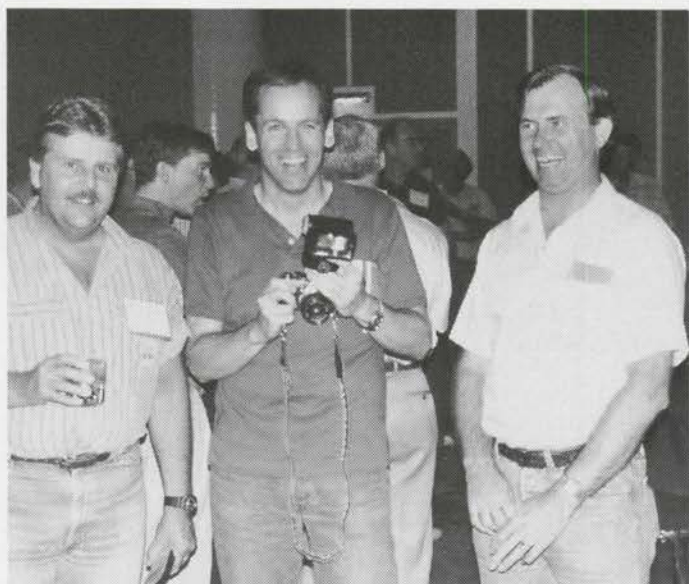
The shellac is still fresh on this 3/26 mostly Wurlitzer, installed in the high school's 1220-seat auditorium. No poverty job, this glorious instrument is a testimonial to the knowledge and perseverance of Central Indiana's Kevin Aikman and Carlton Smith. And no less a monument to those who spent long hours lovingly recovering pneumatics, and refinishing wood. Volunteers I spoke with are tremendously proud of this instrument. Ron played to this pride.

Following Ron's program, a reception/dance hosted by the YTOE, was held in the hotel, and the more hardy conventioners danced until the wee hours.



Opening Night Cocktail Party

*Allen Miller and his parents,
Mr. & Mrs. Preston Miller. PJQ*



Jim Stenke, Steve Adams, Dave Fielder. PJQ



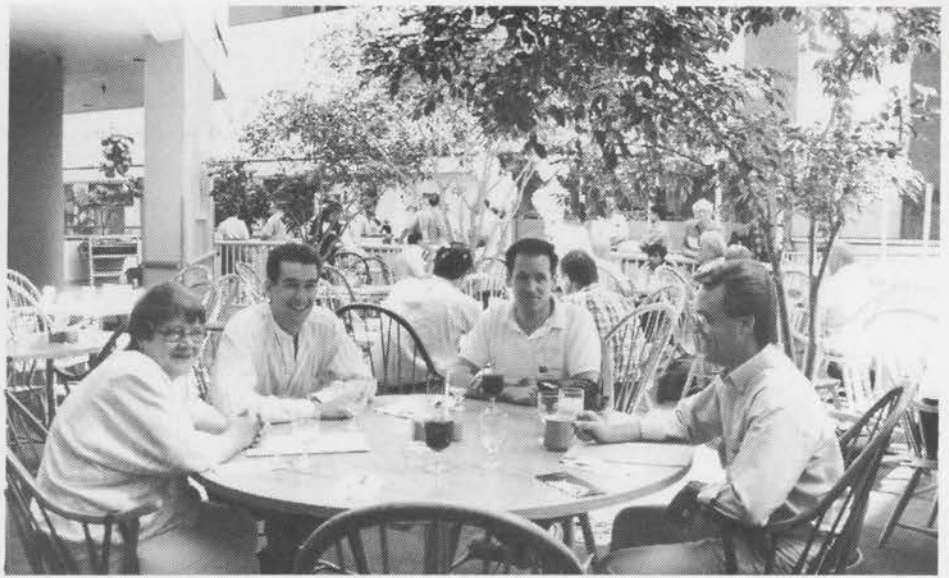
A contingent from Colorado. PJQ



On The Porch



Madeline LiVolsi and Ron Rhode. MLV



Grace McGinnis, Jeff Weiler, Steve Adams, Ken Double. PIQ



Solveig Littlejohn and Nina Adamson. PIQ

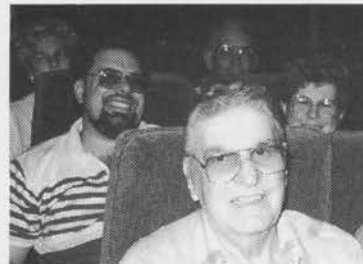


Laurel Haggart, Grace McGinnis, John Ledwon. PIQ

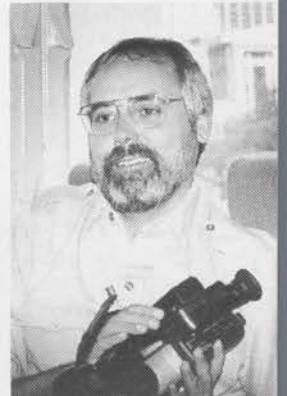


David Shephard, John Leeming, Tom B'hend. PIQ

On The Bus



Jim Koller, Cyndae Diaz, Jim Challander. MLV



Bill Taber. PIQ

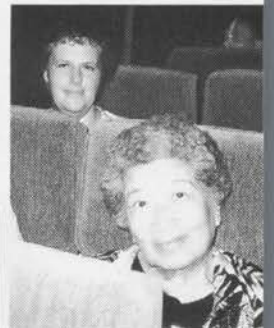


Walt Strony, Tom Lind, Barbara Sellers, Chris Elliott, Richard Rogers. PIQ



Larry Donaldson

Kim Nagano



Jan Challander, Sachi Amana. MLV



Donna Parker and Lee Erwin at Long Center in Lafayette. PIQ

SUNDAY

Donna Parker & Lee Erwin Long Center For The Performing Arts — Lafayette, Indiana

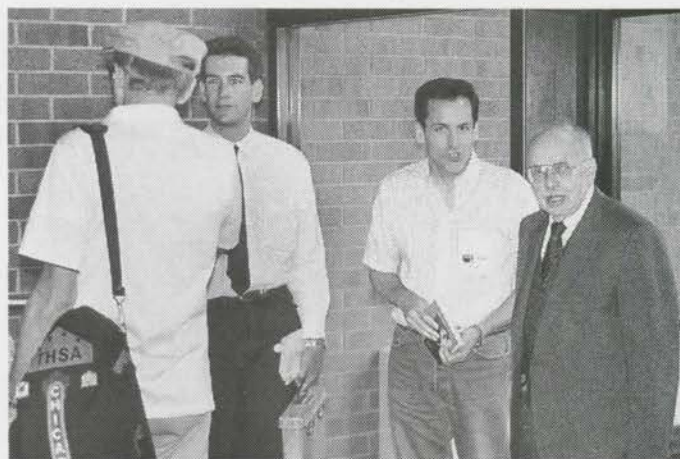
Twenty minutes north of Indianapolis is the community of Lafayette, our next convention venue. The Long Center for the Performing Arts began as the Mars Theatre in the 1920s, and like so many midwestern vaudeville houses, became a performing arts center in the past decade. Within this lovely theatre is a 3/14 with a new Wurlitzer console, and Wurlitzer pipework. Chests are from the original Marr & Colton, and are to be replaced with Wurlitzers in an on-going restoration effort. Maintained by the J.K. Aikman Company, this remarkably cohesive instrument spoke prominently in the room. It was a pleasure to see the beautifully restored console rise out of the pit, center stage.

The durable Donna Parker shared the afternoon with Lee Erwin, legendary silent film accompanist. Donna left no stone unturned in her program. From "March Grotesque" by Purvis, to a selection from *Little Shop Of Horrors*, the program contained something to show off every corner of this delightful instrument.

Switching channels at intermission, Lee Erwin brought the console back up to introduce the two silents he would accompany. First, a bouncing ball sing-along, "My Old Kentucky Home." Warned that the title may be familiar, but the lyrics a bit shocking, our attention was glued to the screen. Sure enough, there were several ethnic references that would not be tolerated today! Then Lee introduced the feature film, *Our Hospitality*, starring Buster Keaton. Beautifully accompanied, the film was a treasure of entertainment. A wistful "Good Night Sweetheart" played on an elegantly simple registration concluded Lee's performance. A veteran of the theatre, Lee left us wanting more.



Donna Parker, Carol and Max Brown at Long Center. BH



Jeff Weiler, Steve Adams and Lee Erwin in Lafayette. PIQ



Sunday morning Chapter Representatives Meeting. PIQ



Home pipe organ owners at Laurel Haggart's Get-Together. IE



Home organ meeting. IE



Bill Brown and Jack Moelmann at President's party. PIQ

► Russ Joseph, Les Rawle, Charter Member Charles Lyall, Edith Rawle, Kay Lyall at John Ledwon's reception. PIQ

Pipe Organ Owners Reception

Everyone in ATOS is a listener. But not everyone stops there. A large number of members own and restore organs for enjoyment in their homes. In an effort to bring these members together, Board member Laurel Haggart took on the task of registering organ owners and providing a social gathering at National Conventions.

Still in its fledgling stage, this group has attracted such notables as the James Krughoffs, Bill Brown and Richard Loderhose. A spirited debate over whether to include custom electronic organ owners in this group dominated the gathering, allowing for little opportunity to discuss other topics. Notwithstanding the heated debacle, many in attendance expressed hope that 1991 would provide a more satisfying agenda. A hearty thanks to Laurel Haggart for initiating this event!





Visiting Artists Session at Paramount Music Palace. PJQ



Steve Schlesing, Madeline LiVolsi, Jim Riggs. MLV



Kim Nagano, Faye Wheeler, Sachi Amano. MLV

Visiting Artists Session Paramount Music Palace

For many who have only heard of the Paramount Music Palace Pizza Parlor, the time had come to experience this 4/42 Wurlitzer in person. Only a short ride east of the Hyatt Regency, it wasn't long before everyone had something to drink in their hand and was seated at one of the tables.

Central Indiana Chapter member Ken Double brought the turntable lift up with full organ, sending chills through the room. A radio and television broadcaster, Ken is the emcee of choice when an event calls for a deep, commanding voice, and a winning style. He's also a first-rate theatre organist!

As if Ken were not enough, Ashley Miller followed at the console with several selections presented in that marvelous Radio City Music Hall style that has kept his name on recordings for almost 40 years. It seems as though there's nothing a Juilliard man can't do!

Jelani Eddington gave us yet another glimpse into the resources of this vast instrument. Jelani is becoming well known for his appearances at the past three ATOS Conventions, and was the winner of the 1988 Young Organist Competition.

Without a doubt, Kurt Von Schakel is one of the most mischievous harmonists on the scene today. Listening to one of his songs per day should stave off musical malnutrition! Make no mistake however, Kurt's artistry is hardly tongue-in-cheek. A life-long midwesterner, he's rapidly becoming internationally known through his appearances with Gerry Gregorius at both piano and organ.

With Kurt's colorful contribution, our musical cup was filled. As the stunning ebony and gold waterfall console twisted its way into the pit, weary conventioners headed for the busses.



John Ferguson. MLV



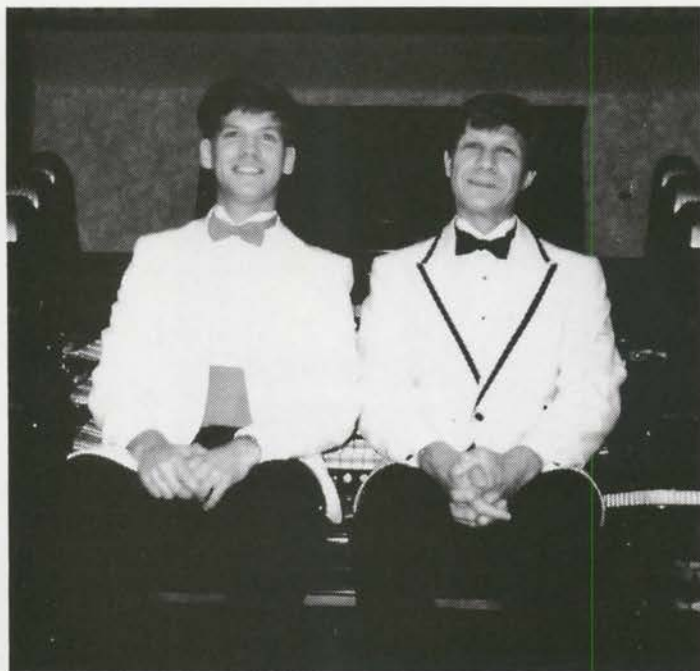
Clockwise
from top left:
Jelani Eddington
Ashley Miller
Kurt vonSchakel
Ken Double
JE photos



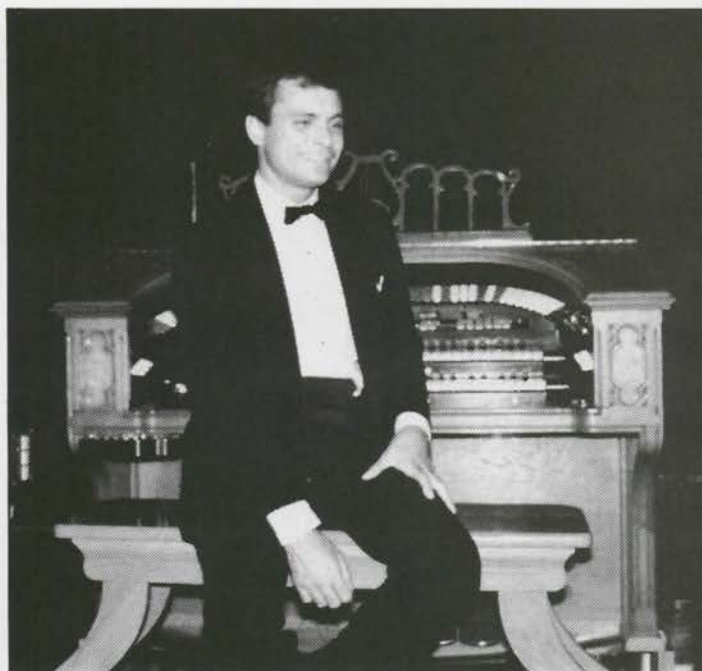
Harold Wright,
Ron Rhode,
Bill Taber,
Steve Adams.
PIQ



Bob Maes (left) Rudy Frey and Bill Brown. WS



Dwight Thomas (left) and Bill Vlasak at the Paramount Music Palace. BH



Lin Lunde at the Hedback Community Theatre. BH

MONDAY

Dwight Thomas & Bill Vlasak Paramount Music Palace

Anyone who has heard Dwight Thomas play and not been awestruck, hasn't really been listening. A shy, budding, musical intellect, Dwight is a staff organist at the Paramount Music Palace, and Associate Organist at Indianapolis' St. Paul's Episcopal Church. In a program of classics, novelties, and ballads, Dwight shared his joy, hope and excitement for life through his music. Through it all, the Wurlitzer performed perfectly, right down to steady wind for the classics.

Next, Bill Vlasak brought his favorite music to the console, proving once again that music is timeless in its ability to amuse, inspire, and excite. Flawlessly played, it transported us back to the 1920s to sample some of what kept the fringe moving on a flapper's skirt. Bill's personal quest for "unheard" music has led him to listen to BOTH sides of 78 rpm records, and he is thus becoming the King of Flip-Side Music. It's remarkable how much good music showed up on the other side of well-known-song recordings.

Lin Lunde Hedback Community Theatre

On the near north side of Indianapolis is a community theatre that specializes in presenting musical comedies. So successful are these thespians, that they have been generously given a legitimate theatre by Mr. and Mrs. Phillip Hedback. Recently deceased, Mr. Hedback was an avid theatre organ buff, and included a 2/11 Page in his gift of the building to Footlite Musicals.

It's been several years since Lin Lunde appeared at a national convention, making his concert on the Page of particular interest. With only 45 minutes to play before busses departed for the next event, Lin carefully chose his selections and limited his comments. Many in attendance longed for more time at the Hedback to better appreciate the unique qualities of the organ and the organist.



Circle Theatre. BH



Circle Theatre tour. JE



Walt Strony at Second Presbyterian Church. PJQ



Circle Theatre. JE



Waiting for the Strony concert. PJQ

Circle Theatre Tour

For conventioners with a strong interest in theatre preservation, the tour of the Circle Theatre added just the right variation to the convention programming. Just three blocks from the Hyatt, it was an easy walk past restored buildings to Indianapolis' historic traffic circle, and the Circle Theatre.

The 1916 Circle Theatre began as a premier vaudeville house, and by 1920, featured a Wurlitzer Style 260 played by Dessa Byrd. Dessa's popularity was widespread in the 1920s, but it was her marriage to the Circle's orchestra conductor that created the real publicity.

An impressive example of adaptive re-use, the Circle was purchased by the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra and restored for use as a concert hall. Preserving all architectural elements possible while adapting the structure to accommodate the different needs of a symphony orchestra, the building has stepped gloriously into a new era of use.

Tours of the building were guided by Symphony Society volunteers who were exceptionally well versed in the Circle's history, even to the point of information on the theatre organ once installed there. The Symphony Society is clearly proud of their accomplishments and their symphony.

Walter Strony Second Presbyterian Church

It's become traditional to have at least one event of classical music on a classical organ at national conventions. The challenge to an organist under these conditions is substantial: how to select a program that will make the best use of the instrument while playing music that has the broadest appeal. The number of artists equal to this challenge are few.

Walt Strony qualified himself for this challenge with every note he played. In a program selected to satisfy the romantic, the fiery, and the heroic in all of us, Walter played to appreciative conventioners and church members. Filled beyond capacity, church members joined the ATOS in celebrating the art of the pipe organ.

The organ is an Aeolian-Skinner of 81 ranks controlled by a four-manual console in the Gallery, and a two-manual in the Chancel. It was installed in 1967, and represents one of the last organs built by the firm. The large, vaulted, neo-Gothic sanctuary provided good acoustics, even when filled to capacity.



Fund-raising Seminar led by Tim Needler with Gary Jones (left) and Ken Double. JE

TUESDAY

Tips On Fund-Raising Seminar Tim Needler

It's been said that if one throws enough money at a project, something is very likely to happen! To help chapters wanting to find enough money to toss about on theatre organs, Convention Chairman and fund-raising pro Tim Needler gave a morning seminar to a room full of eager conventioners.

Joining Tim at the podium were Ken Double, Central Indiana Chapter, and Gary Jones, Alabama Chapter. Each of these gentlemen is particularly distinguished by his successful program to raise money to save theatres and organs. After hearing what each of these men had to say on the subject, it was clear that it IS possible to raise substantial amounts of money for theatre organ projects provided you have a well-organized and targeted program that will have a high visibility within your community. With only an hour allotted, discussions were just getting started when the end of the time came. With promises to continue discussions over coffee later in the convention, everyone left the session with a profound sense of optimism.

Playing Tips Seminar Ashley Miller

Few, if any, ATOS members have not heard of Ashley Miller, Juilliard graduate, Staff Organist at Radio City Music Hall, Organist at New York's Ethical Culture, and prolific recording artist, Ashley is well qualified to comment on the proper musical etiquette that's essential to the playing of theatre organ music.

The seminar was held in the demonstration room of the Allen Organ Company, which turned out to be much too small for the number of conventioners who wanted to hear what this master had to say. Dozens sat on the floor or stood around the perimeter of the room glued to Ashley's humorous and anecdotal comments on style, registration, and technique. Like everything Ashley does, this program was informative, entertaining, and far too short.



Ashley Miller "Playing Tips" Seminar. JE



Simon Gledhill at the Embassy Page. MLV



Lyn Larsen at the Embassy. BR



Lyn Larsen and Jack Bethards at the Embassy. BH

Simon Gledhill Embassy Theatre — Ft. Wayne

Perhaps the greatest sensation in theatre organ of the 1980s, British organist Simon Gledhill set foot in the 1990s in a most meaningful way at his Embassy Theatre concert. While expectations ran high about this concert during the two-hour bus ride to Ft. Wayne, no one could have anticipated what they would hear.

The Embassy Theatre is a classic motion picture palace that has survived Ft. Wayne's urban sprawl and a forgetful public. Equipped with its spectacular original 4/16 Page theatre organ, the Embassy is today what it was when new, thanks to a band of determined theatre organ enthusiasts who believe that the Embassy MUST survive. The marriage of organ and acoustics was made in heaven.

Sitting in the balcony with a small group of some of the most accomplished organists and organbuilders of our time, provided a unique experience. A critical lot, these men were held spellbound by the performance of a broad spectrum of selections, each played with the skill and wisdom of an organist many years older than the young man we saw at the console. Simon appeared to caress the keyboards with a love and skill that sent chills through one's arms. His dedication of the selection, "Two Cigarettes in the Dark" to good friend and mentor Jim Roseveare, brought tears to the eyes of those who also knew Jim. For some, this concert became the highlight of the convention, and a very personal theatre organ memory.

Lyn Larsen Embassy Theatre — Ft. Wayne

A truly magnificent dinner at the Ft. Wayne Marriott Hotel preceeded Lyn Larsen and Jack Bethard's evening performance at the Embassy Theatre. A great opportunity to talk with others about the Simon Gledhill concert, dinner was capped off with carrot cake, coffee, and a short trip back to the Embassy.

The significance of this concert demanded that it be open to the public of Ft. Wayne. Upon arrival at the front doors of the Embassy, crowds were waiting to purchase tickets. And inside the sumptuous lobby, pianist Dyne Pfeffenberger played music from the 1920s on a grand piano in the music salon overlooking the main floor. An air of luxury and anticipation was everywhere as conventioners mingled with patrons, all the while spellbound by the intricate decor of the lobby.

As the console rose from the pit, Lyn's traditional white tuxedo almost melded with the white and gold Page console. Lyn's stylistic imprimatur instantly recalls the man, his music, and the role they've played in shaping our tastes and expectations. There could be no doubt by anyone in attendance that thousands still love this man's artistry.

And as if this weren't enough, Lyn introduced an ebullient Jack Bethards who, with baton in hand, led an orchestra of the finest Ft. Wayne musicians through an evening of music from great films. Solos by Lyn were every bit the artistry we've come to expect. Solos by Jack and his orchestra were a thrill seldom experienced since the days of the Movie Palace. But it was the combination of orchestra and organ that really reached the satiated conventioner. Arriving back in Indianapolis between midnight and 1:00 a.m., those red eyes actually reflected the rosy glow from a day spent just this side of paradise.

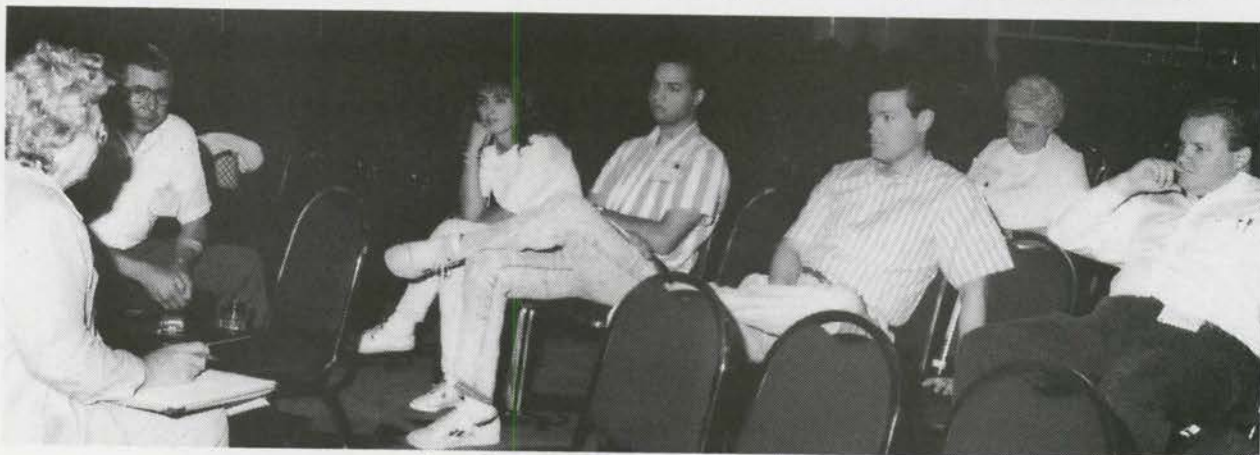


Embassy Theatre in Fort Wayne. BR

◀ Bill Brown and Charlie Balogh at the Embassy Theatre. MLV

▶ Walt Strongy and Charlie Balogh. PIQ

Embassy lobby. PIQ



Young Organist Competition Committee Meeting:
(L to R) Dorothy Van Steenkiste, Jack Moelmann, Melissa Ambrose, Jelani Edgington, Steve Schlesing, Charlotte Rieger, Jim Riggs. JE

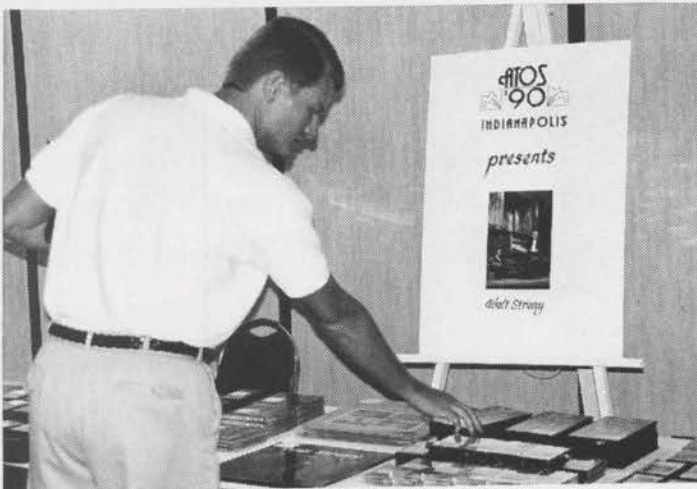


Bo Hanley



► (L to R) Martin Ellis, Ed Morris, Donna Parker.

▼ Gary Jones in the bookstore. PIQ



In the bookstore. PIQ



Allen Miller and Pat Lajko listen to Digital Pipes. PIQ



Pat Lajko explains his Digital Pipes. Don Myers at the console. PIQ



Paul Quarino plays the Digital Pipes.

INDIANAPOLIS 1990



Dave Junchen and Allen Miller at Home Organ Seminar. JE



Young artists Russell Holmes, Mark Aston, John Giacchi and Barry Baker at Manual High School. WS

WEDNESDAY

Home Organ Technical Problems Seminar — Dave Junchen

As the advertisement says, "You've come a long way baby." So has the quality of theatre organ installations in the past two decades. We've come out of the dark ages of the early hobbyist years and into the light of the informed organbuilder, so much so that the art of the theatre organ has been raised to higher levels than at any time since its invention. One might wonder what the Wurlitzers would think, hearing their instruments today.

The knowledge of theatre organ building today is due in large part to a few men whose careers called upon them to work in both the classical as well as theatre idioms. Dave Junchen is one such builder, and the moderator of a seminar on the technical ins and outs of theatre organs. To add perspective, Dave invited Allen Miller, noted East Coast builder, to join him at the podium. Their combined years (more than 50) of pursuing the illusive art of organ building provided the best possible answers to the questions of conventioners. Several years back, Dave Junchen led a seminar on theatre organ building practices that prompted this year's seminar. From blowers to console lights, a lot of ground was covered in a very short hour.



Home organ seminar. JE

Barry Baker and The Young Organist Competition Winners Manual High School Auditorium

The Young Organist Competition Winners concert at Manual High School provided a promising look into the future of theatre organ. Each year, three young men or women are singled out as the finest young theatre organists of the year. The annual convention provides these talented young musicians with an opportunity to perform under the same conditions as a concert artist, and on the same bill as the masters of the art.

The program began with a presentation by the Sequoia chapter heralding the coming regional convention in October in Fresno. A look at what might be expected at the National 1991 Convention in San Francisco was presented later in the program. This event will provide another opportunity for young competition winners to exhibit their emerging talent.

The nature of a theatre organist is improvisation. 1989 winner Barry Baker proved to be a theatre organist extraordinaire as he opened the musical portion of the program. Following emcee Ken Double's exciting introduction, Barry came down on his first note to find that the organ had not been turned on. Within moments the Wurlitzer was winded and Barry turned in a first-rate performance. It was Barry's "trial by fire" and a testimonial to the quietness of the organ. Barry and the Wurlitzer proved once again that show business isn't dead yet!

Previous competitions have created a coterie of new stars that will keep the theatre organ a viable art form in the decades to come. 1990 adds three new men to the burgeoning list of surprising talent: Russell Holmes (England), John Giacchi (Australia) and Mark Aston (England). Each has a remarkable talent, and when one learns that the oldest of the three is John Giacchi, at twenty years of age, one is impressed!

A career playing one of the most exciting instruments in the history of mankind awaits each of these young men. Watch for their names to appear on recordings and in convention programs. A hearty THANKS to Dorothy VanSteenkiste for keeping the Young Organist Competition so successful.



L to R: Dale and Mary Ann Mendenhall, Les and Tess Moses, John Ledwon. JE



Barbara Sellers. BR



Barbara Sellers at the Allen organ. BH

THE ANNUAL BANQUET

Barbara Sellers, Tony Barron Orchestra

The Indiana Roof Ballroom

The annual banquet was the best kept "sleeper" of the convention. When asked about the event, those working the convention would suspiciously shrug and say, "The food should be great." Quickly followed by a terse, "You ARE going, aren't you?" While dancing has never been high on this reviewer's list, food and ballrooms from the '20s are.

The Indiana Roof Ballroom is an oval ballroom atop the roof of the former Indiana Theatre. While the Indiana Theatre no longer exists as originally built, the ballroom is still perched on the roof of this former Paramount-Publix operation. A fanciful, atmospheric Spanish village, the ballroom continues to delight all who take the elevator to the sixth floor. If one didn't feel as if their head was in the clouds upon stepping from the elevator, the simulated thunderstorm in the sky above the dance floor would convince them.

Elegantly appointed tables occupied much of the dance floor, with just enough room at the stage end for those who wanted to dance later in the evening. Stars twinkled as clouds floated by against an indigo sky, and big band music seemed to come from everywhere. It was a delight just to think that such a place still entertained people more than 50 years later.

A truly sensational banquet of prime rib was served by an astonishingly efficient staff. Bill Vlasak played music from his inexhaustible repertoire at a grand piano on the stage. After dessert, chapter roll-call was called. Then Lowell Ayars announced the 1990 Hall of Fame nominee, William H. Meeder, and Organist of the Year, Jim Riggs. Alden Stockebrand presented the Technician of the Year award to Allen Miller. John Ledwon bestowed Convention Chairman Tim Needler with the Honorary Member of the Year award. And finally, John introduced Barbara Sellers on the main stage.

Performing on an Allen electronic organ, Barbara seemed to be right at home under the stars of the Indiana Roof Ballroom. Barbara is the daughter of the late Edna and Preston Sellers, legendary Chicago theatre organists. Calling upon convention emcee and veteran broadcaster Ken Double, she recreated one of her mother's WGN radio broadcasts for the 3 "B's" Bird Seed Company. ("For the feathers you love to ruffle!")

Ending her cameo performance with the piece, "Swamp Fire," the gold lame' waterfall stage drapes rose, revealing the Tony Barron Orchestra. Barbara and the orchestra played for two hours of dancing before playing the traditional Big Band ballad, "Good Night, Sweetheart," signaling the end of a magical evening under the air-conditioned stars of the Indiana Roof Ballroom.



Marian and Vern Bickel. P1Q



Charles and Kay Lyall. P1Q



Australians Maureen and Bill Poultney. P1Q



Dale and Mary Ann Mendenhall. P1Q



Ralph Beaudry and Hal Pritchard. P1Q



L to R. Jim and Sherrie Krughoff, Lee Maloney. PJQ



Steve Schlesing, Gary Jones and Dorothy VanSteenkiste. PJQ



Tom DeLay. PJQ



Chuck Wiltsch and Jack Moelmann. WS

PHOTO CREDITS:

- PJQ Paul Quarino
- JE John Ennis
- BH Bo Hanley
- WS Warren Sunkel
- RVS Ray VanSteenkiste
- MLV Madeline LiVolsi
- BL Bill Rieger

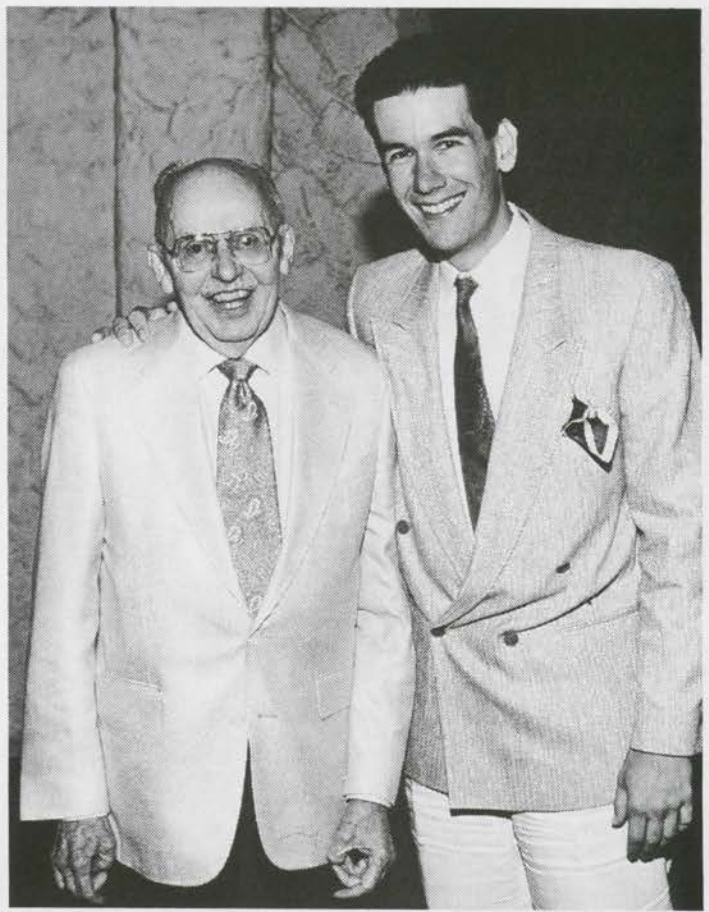
And a very special thanks to Claude Neuffer for invaluable advice and for making the needed prints. Ed.



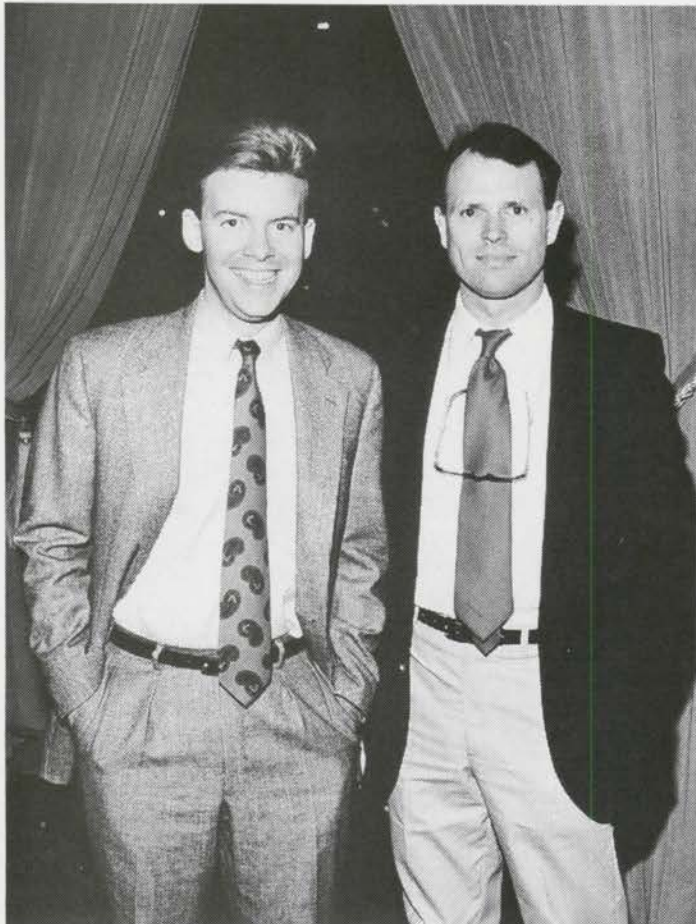
Steve Adams and Paul Quarino.



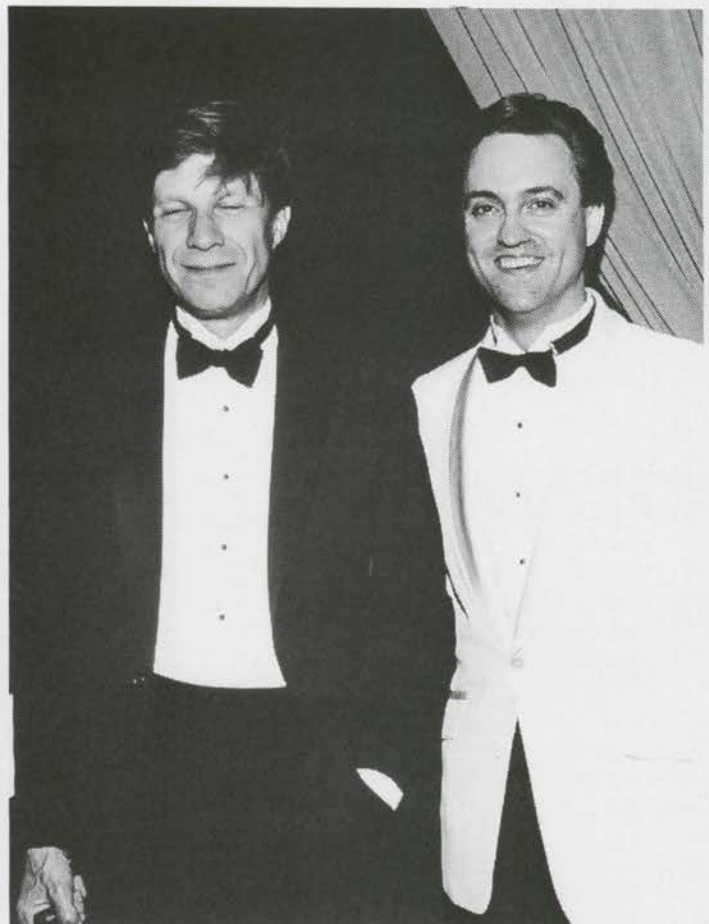
Allen Miller and Jim Riggs. WS



Lee Erwin and Jeff Weiler. WS



Chris Elliott and Lou Shindler. WS



Bill Vlasak and Ken Double. WS



Bill Vlasak played dinner music. PJQ



David and Michele Ambory. RVS



Tom Cronier, Judy Shortt, Gary Jones, Madeline LiVolsi, Larry Donaldson.



Simon Gledhill, Grace McGinnis and John Giacchi. WS

Personalities

The 1990 ATOS National Convention represents a national convention presented in a state near perfection. As anyone who has worked a convention knows this doesn't happen by accident. And a small band of friends cannot make it happen. It takes a team of dedicated volunteers, led by an articulate, caring, experienced individual. Tim Needler is Central Indiana's treasure and ATOS' good fortune.

With minor exceptions, the Hyatt Regency performed its task well, and inexpensively. Luxuriously appointed rooms carried a reasonable convention rate, and hotel services were excellent. Slow elevators and expensive coffee shop menus continue to haunt convention hotels, however.

Busing was a marvel of precision, assuring transportation even for the straggler. These were not school buses; they were the newest, most comfortable coaches made. They added immeasurably to the enjoyment of the convention. Alden Stockebrand lent his skills at planning and specifying equipment, and a team of Central Indiana Chapter members served as bus captains and coordinators.

Kevin Aikman and Carlton Smith should have taken several well-deserved bows for their role in assuring instrument readiness. Temperatures during the convention varied from the sixties to the eighties, and it was humid. Some locations were not air-conditioned, and yet the instruments performed well. A fine tribute to a knowledgeable team.

Simply scheduling buses to arrive and depart at venues over a five-day period is far from adequate to create a successful convention. Adding foresight, experience, and careful planning are still not enough to justify some of the high costs of attending a convention. But when showmanship is added to the list, the chances for a great convention go up. The presence of showmanship in Indianapolis was obvious. You didn't have to go to an afterglow even to feel an after glow!