

# CONVENTION REPORTS...

## THE 1960 ANNUAL MEETING - THE ORGAN IN 'THE LOFT'

Like any piece of music, this story has its beginning and its ending. But just where it began and just where it ended may not be clear. In fact, we might not agree on these points. Does it begin with the long hours of arrangements? Or were the ideas that brought this dream to life a points of origin? Perhaps it was a forgotten song in the heart of a boy who grew up to be Larry Bray, or Gus Farney, or was it just one of those rare gifts put here by our Creator for our spiritual uplifting? And yet it surely embraced all these items and many others.

Nor can anyone give credit to all those whose help made this meeting the happy success it became. But, let the program speak for itself.

After days of careful tuning and regulating, the organ in The Loft in Salt Lake City sprang to life on schedule. The 3:00 p.m. starting time was observed when Judd Walton, President of A.T.O.E. stepped forward and announced the opening of the 1960 Annual Meeting. He then turned to Ralph Bell who introduced the program.

Gaylord Carter, who had practiced a bit before, carefully avoided anything he might have practiced and took the group on a musical tour through the chambers. He illustrated with the Children's Marching Song how mood, tone color, and arrangement were blended into what we love and know as theatre organ music. That Gaylord knew what we liked and how we felt about it was demonstrated with the thunderous applause that followed his guided tour. About that

time it seemed that Carter, too, was enjoying things. The magical ingredient in every inspired performance appeared with the opening note and lasted long after the playing stopped. Announcing his own numbers as he went along, Carter told us some of the history of the program and added details herebefore not revealed. And since these seemed so confidential, like how to stay on a Howard seat, it would hardly befit our putting them before the world here and now. His opening number, Great Day, got off to a wonderful start, just as any prologue should have. Toward the end of a wonderful group of selections, Gaylord relived in music some of the themes from 'Beau Geste' and 'Robin Hood'. Again, he illustrated the themes individually, then combined them as in the scores. Carter's personality sparkles through all he does. He entertained, thrilled, and the hour rushed into history.



Leonard Leigh & Gaylord Carter  
Solo Organists, afternoon concert.

Leonard Leigh explained his remarkable success in the organ world by mentioning, without change in facial expression, that he began his career utterly destitute and worked his way up quickly to abject poverty. But those words must have referred to something far from his musical acquisitions, for he launched the 5M/19R Wurlitzer into another ecs-

tacy. Playing in an entirely different style, Leonard managed to display remarkable talent and an equally advanced ability to entertain. Leigh's humor oozed from the organ with the same ease as from his words between numbers. And as he gave, so did he receive. With something over one hundred members present, the appreciation was unanimous and enthusiastic. And, drawing upon his years of experience, Leigh selected numbers which brought memories as well as the thrill of the moment. Once again, the hour passed with incredible speed. When Leonard Leigh finished, everyone felt that he had gotten a taste of something usually described as 'out of this world.'

One cannot come to intermission time without some acknowledgements. It is fitting that we call attention to Larry Bray's parents, Georgia and Dud (for Dudley) Bray whose encouragement and attention to details contributed so much. Maxine and Wayne Russell, also of Salt Lake City, helped with tickets, and other accounting details. These people also greeted the visitors as they entered the Loft. One might add, for benefit of those who were not there, that Maxine did distract a good bit from attention to the tickets--a few of the fellows just stood and looked, which was not a bad idea at all. For the flower arrangements and decorations we are indebted to Tom Crane--he arranged the garden patio also. Gordon Barton acted as a general chairman and helped in many ways not apparent because of the smooth running of the entire affair.

A meeting of the A.T.O.E. Directors preceded the banquet, and at that time the announcements of election of officers and other matters of policy were made by Judd Walton.

The evening concert was Gus Farney's appearance at his own organ. His complete mastery of the console and the obedience of that mighty Wurlitzer left no doubt as to the musical compatibility of this pair. A printed program with annotations aided the listeners in orienting themselves and held the non-musical

### 1960 HONORARY MEMBER

Mr. Farney Wurlitzer, Chairman of the Board of the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company, was unanimously elected as HONORARY MEMBER OF A.T.O.E. for 1960, at the recent Annual Meeting.

A staunch supporter of A. T. O.E. since its inception, Mr. Wurlitzer is one of the outstanding figures in the theatre organ field, from its very beginning to the present day. His election automatically makes him a member of the A.T.O.E. Board of Directors.



FARNEY WURLITZER



Gus Farney, Solo Organist, Evening Concert.

portion of the entertainment to a minimum. Gus went from one exciting number to another with speed and finesse. His great virtuosity and variety gave us the opportunity to hear this magnificent organ performing under every kind of musical attack. And one needs to mention that during the entire performances of that day, the organ itself proved an anxious to participate flawlessly as did the organists. This, indeed, was a demonstration of the loving care with which this organ had been groomed.

Gus Farney's music was characteristic of that long studied perfection that comes from tireless effort and practice combined with true dramatic musical expression. This was theatre organ music that flowed into the heart and soul of the listener. And when Gus took his last curtain call, he was visibly shaken by the tremendous display of affection which really came from the hearts of all who were there. Nothing needed saying right then, and nothing was done to interrupt this great tribute to a great organist.

From that moment until early next morning, about six, to be exact, the organ was turned over to any who wanted to play it -- or to try to. Most of us found that the simplicity with which our artists had handled it during the afternoon and evening had disappeared when they stepped away from the console. In spite of helpful suggestions, it sounded differently. But it was still the sound of a very mighty Wurlitzer, doing its best to please us all.

Among interesting highlights in this meeting was the presentation of dinner music by one of Gus Farney's students, Scott Gillespie who entertained us during dinner. This young organist did a superlative job, and we wished that we might have heard more from him.

Representation from all over the United States was at Salt Lake City on that Saturday. Claude Cansler from North Carolina probably made the longest trip to attend, but there were others from Washington, D.C., Minneapolis, Illinois, Denver, Phoenix, North Dakota, Washington, Oregon, and California. Of course, there was the usual contingent from the home town, Salt Lake City and vicinity. As night faded into dawn, and dawn brightened into day, the group dwindled and finally disappeared altogether. Each returned safely to his destination, feeling that once again, he had been entertained in the present by music and instrumental efforts out of the past. It was another glimpse of the immortality of music. It crept into our hearts and will be with us so long as we have the ability to remember, to love, and to appreciate beauty for beauty's sake alone. Thanks, Gaylord, Leonard, Gus, and thanks, too, Larry for what you gave to us.

## Candid Convention Views



Bill Brown (in sweater) discussing Theatre Organs (what else) with three unidentified members: Wayne Russell in the background.



Gus Farney, Judd Walton & Gaylord Carter talking it over.



Tiny James & Maxine Russell registering Reiny Dezzler of Bismarck, N.D. with Judd Walton looking on.



Bob Jacobus, Tiny James & Maxine Russell, reception committee, with that Tibia look.



Left to right: Mrs. Richard Simonton, Dick Simonton, Gaylord Carter, Bill Brown, and Reiny Delzer discussing the last number.

Pictures courtesy of Bill Lamb, Princeton, Ill.