

Third A. T. O. E. Convention

The 3rd Annual ATOE Convention opened Friday afternoon, June 30, in Richmond, Virginia, with 187 members registering at the Jefferson Hotel and the Mosque. Due to a rather tight schedule many members were unable to register, but a count of members present at the Mosque and Byrd Theatre concerts indicated about 230 in attendance.

The Saturday afternoon meeting at the beautiful Mosque commenced with a few announcements by President Judd Walton, who then introduced the first artist, Leonard MacClain, Epic recording artist, one of the organists at the Wanamaker store in Philadelphia and better known as 'Radio Mac' in the hey-day of organ broadcasting. MacClain proceeded to put the magnificent 3/17 WurliTzer through its paces, presenting a varied program ranging from DIXIE to TENDERLY and KNIGHTSBRIDGE MARCH, and concluding with a TRIBUTE TO GER-SHWIN.

This 5000 seat auditorium with its wonderful acoustics is made to order for the artistry of Leonard MacClain, and the applause and enthusiasm of the audience were conclusive evidence of a performance par-excellence.

Following this, the second artist for the afternoon was then introduced as Eddie Weaver, resident of Richmond, Virginia, who had graciously agreed to fill in for Bill Thompson of Hollywood, the artist shown on the program, who due to unforeseen circumstances was unable to be present.

Eddie Weaver is no stranger to the WurliTzer pipe organ, having played at the Loew's Theatre in Richmond for some 23 years. His program, featuring popular, novelty and the classics was definite proof of real musicianship and showmanship. Registration, feeling and perfect execution bore witness as to why, in this age of almost non-existent theatre organ presentations, this man was able to continue this type of program up until this year. It is our understanding that the programs terminated because Weaver wished to enjoy a little family life, confining himself to one job at Miller and Roads in Richmond, Virginia, where he can be heard playing daily programs.

Our hats are off to Eddie Weaver, and the thanks of our membership go to him for helping to make our convention a success.

The next scheduled event was the Annual Banquet held in the ballroom of the Jefferson Hotel, with 174 in attendance. Following an excellent dinner, the Annual business meeting was called to order by out-going President Walton at 8:15. Thanks were given to all who had worked to make the convention possible, with a very special thanks to the Potomac Valley Chapter for hosting the

convention. The key man in this operation was Captain Erwin Young, who worked untiringly, making many trips between Washington and Richmond in order to set up the necessary arrangements for the use of the Mosque, the Byrd Theatre and the Jefferson Hotel, prior to and after the death of Harold Warner.

Thanks were also extended to Tommy Landrum, R. G. Pierce, Dick Barlow, Bob Carson and Don Lewis, who under the direction of Tommy Landrum carried on the excellent work started by Harold Warner on the Mosque and Byrd WurliTzers; also to Bob Coulter, manager of the Byrd Theatre, and Mr. Anthony of the Mosque.

Following introductions of guests at the head table, the financial report was read and a brief review of business transacted at the last Annual Meeting by in-coming President 'Tiny' James. Out-going President Walton then summarized his activities, making special note of the much improved schedule of THEATRE ORGAN.

The question of increasing the size of THEATRE ORGAN from 16 to 20 pages per issue, with a corresponding increase in dues was presented to the members at the request of the Board of Directors. Following a short discussion it was moved by Dan Schultz of Rochester, New York and seconded by Jay Quinby of Summit, New Jersey and the Mississippi River, that effective January 1962, THEATRE ORGAN be increased to 20 pages and dues raised to \$5.00 per year. This was carried unanimously.

Other business transacted covered the location of the 1962 Annual Meeting, the increase in the number of honorary directors due to increase in chapters, and the request that Jesse Crawford be made an honorary 'life' member.

The new officers, as elected by the Board of Directors, were then announced as W. 'Tiny' James, President; Richard Loderhose, Vice President; Frank Killinger Jr., Treasurer; George Thompson, Editor; and Bud Abel, Assistant Editor. It was moved by Ben Keller of Frederick, Md., and seconded by Laura Thomas of Lancaster, N.Y., that the names as read be accepted. The vote was unanimous.

At this point, out-going President Judd Walton turned the gavel of authority (a tibia pipe) over to 'Tiny' James, new ATOE President, who made a short acceptance speech pointing out the importance of chapters and membership participation, and commended the various chapter secretaries for their excellent work. This was followed by a few words from the new Vice President Dick Loderhose.

Mel Doner, first editor of TIBIA, was unanimously elected as Honorary Member

of ATOE for 1961. With this, the business meeting was brought to a close with the announcement of the final scheduled event for the convention. This was the program at the Byrd Theatre which was to start at 11:45 p.m., featuring Gaylord Carter at the famous 4 manual WurliTzer.

At approximately midnight, the house lights of the Byrd Theatre dimmed and on the screen was seen the WurliTzer factory film mentioned in the San Francisco Paramount article elsewhere in this issue. Following this short film, Gaylord Carter brought the console up to stage level with a mighty fanfare. And thus it was that most of us heard the Byrd WurliTzer in person for the first time. It was great, it was thrilling. It was terrific!

New President 'Tiny' James then introduced Carter, who is a well known theatre, radio and television organist, probably best known for his accompaniment to the 'Beulah' and 'Amos and Andy' radio shows. In that connection Carter was asked to play the "Amos and Andy" theme for the audience. The applause for this short interlude was proof that all present were thrilled to hear this famous rendition of "The Perfect Song", done as only Gaylord Carter can do it.

Carter then explained the fact that he was going to play the Snub Pollard comedy "cold" (without rehearsal), and went on to explain and demonstrate the themes to be used in playing the musical background for the silent feature, 'Mark of Zorro'. He then played an overture comprising all of the themes to be used with the picture, and with this went right into the picture.

Gaylord played the entire (86 minutes) with force, precision and the perfection for which he is so well known. Here is a true musical artist, and when at the end of the feature the organ rose out of the pit, sincere applause of over 200 persons sounded like 2000; a real tribute to an organist from people who understand and love music, especially when it emanates from a theatre pipe organ.

And so it was on this note that the 3rd Annual ATOE Convention came to a close. Sincere thanks go to artists Leonard MacClain, Eddie Weaver and Gaylord Carter, and all others concerned, for their efforts in making this convention a successful memorial to the late Harold Warner Jr., pipe organ enthusiast extra-ordinary.

Members in attendance represented the States of California, Arizona, Texas, North Dakota, Kentucky, Tennessee, New York, Virginia, Maryland, Ohio, Connecticut, New Jersey, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Illinois and Minnesota plus Washington, D.C.

Candid Shots from the Convention



Erwin Young, and Mrs. Ethel G. Cline.



Janice and Ida James, Mrs. Arthur Stovall, Erwin Young, Art Stovall, at registration desk of Jefferson Hotel.



Eddie Weaver, Leonard MacClain, and Gaylord Carter pose for pictures at the Mosque.



L. A. Waldsmith, of Dayton, Ohio, and Mr. and Mrs. H. Garratt Paul.



Jack Gustafson, Reg Watson, Lowell Ayara, and Tom Sheen.



Left to right: Mrs. H. Garratt Paul, Dottie MacClain, and Mrs. Dick Loderhose.



Dick Loderhose, Judd Walton, and H. Garratt Paul.



Left to right: David Miller, Clarence Roggmann, Don Curtis, George Miller, Mrs. William Street (seated).