

# Wurlitzer of a Thousand Memories

SEE SPECIAL INSERT - NEXT FOUR PAGES

To the newcomer in Minneapolis, there is a nice parking lot downtown. To the long time resident, this parking lot is the one time location of the Minnesota Theatre, later called the Radio City Theatre.

The Minnesota Theatre was one of the largest in the area. It was a famous showcase for the Paramount Publix Chain in association with the Minnesota Amusement Company, which, in 1928, following the policy of this large theatre circuit, installed a large Wurlitzer Unit orchestra commonly known as a "Publix No. 1".

The Wurlitzer Publix No. 1 model was an organ of 20 ranks controlled by a 4-manual console. The stops and unification of the organ were reputedly set up by Jesse Crawford, leading organist for the Publix Theatre Circuit. The design of the instrument was very carefully thought out and the installed results were wonderful to hear. The ranks and location were:

#### SOLO CHAMBER

Tuba Mirabilis, Brass Trumpet, Tibia Clausa, Orchestral Oboe, Kinura, Saxophone, Solo String, Vox Humana, Oboe Horn and Quintadena.

#### MAIN CHAMBER

Tuba Horn, Diaphonic Diapason,

Tibia Clausa, Clarinet, Solo String, Viol d' Orchestra, Viol d' orchestra Celeste, Dulciana, Concert Flute and Vox Humana.

The percussions and sound effects were distributed in the usual manner except that the piano and master Xylophone were unenclosed.

After being installed in 1928, this instrument fast became the musical wonder of the Twin City area, due mainly to the artistry of Eddie Dunstedter, who was featured at the ornate console from 1928 to 1933. Several of Eddie's famous Brunswick recordings of those years were made on this organ. Eddie also added to recording fame by his network radio broadcasts which were regularly featured during the Golden Era of theatre organs.

Upon Eddie's departure from the Minnesota Theatre in 1933, use of the organ became intermittent, then was completely stopped until 1950, when organ programs were revived for a short time. However, the theatre itself was doomed for destruction in the interests of parking needs and the once famous Publix No. 1 Wurlitzer was neglected and almost forgotten.

"Almost forgotten" means that it would have ended up as scrap, or at best cannibalized, had it not been

for Reiny Delzer of Bismarck, North Dakota, who happened to be looking for a good-sized Wurlitzer to put with the Marr Colton 2m/6r already in his home. Reiny's speed in closing the deal for this famous Publix organ can be imagined by any organ enthusiast who has ever traveled far and wide to locate an elusive theatre organ.

Before the organ was removed and the theatre closed, one last program was run and the organ featured. The house was filled to at least seventy-five percent of capacity, and many tears were shed by those who remember the roaring days when no show was complete without a Mighty Wurlitzer rising out of the pit to fill the entire auditorium with music.

Reiny Delzer removed the organ in 1958, re-installed it, (see following four-page section), completing the installation in 1960. Reiny felt his purpose had been accomplished in January of this year, however, when Eddie Dunstedter sat at the console of this organ for the first time in 27 years and poured out a two-hour program of the same arrangements he had used at the Minnesota Theatre. The Bismarck, N.D. and Minneapolis newspapers covered this program as a major news feature.

#### EDITOR'S NOTE

Reiny Delzer has very kindly supplied the following four-page supplement to THEATRE ORGAN. He asks that we call attention to the following errors that were not caught by his printer:

Eddie Dunstedter is the IDOL of millions, rather than "idle".

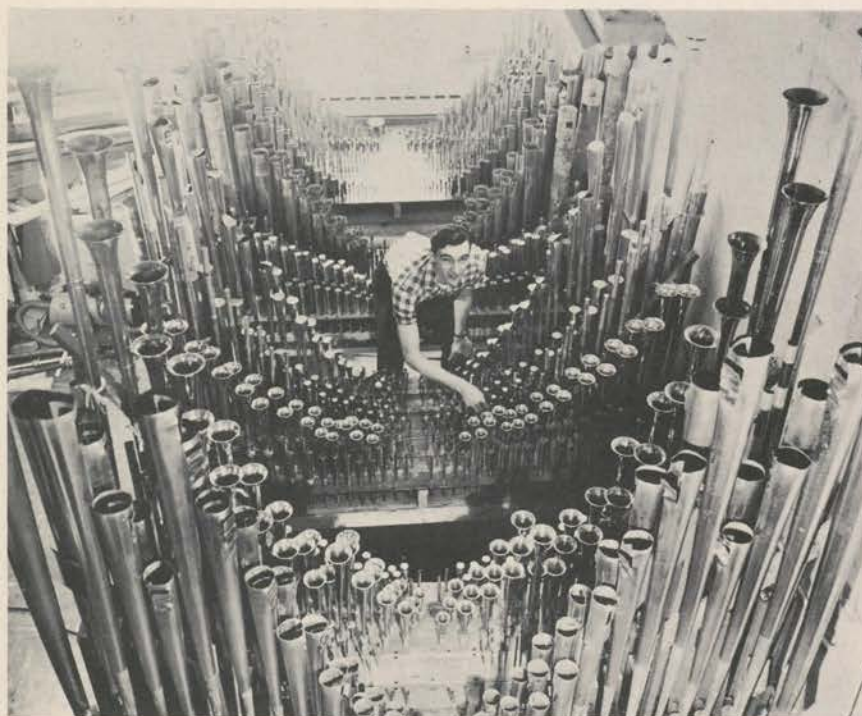
The word Marr is misspelled wherever mention is made of the Marr and Colton organ.

Reiny also points out that the fellow standing by the barricade (second page) has been in his employ for 25 years, while the one supervising the lowering of the console (fourth page) has worked for him for 35 years. Some record!

The ATOE staff wishes to thank Reiny Delzer for this wonderful contribution to our publication.

#### WHILE THEY LAST

The following issues of TIBIA magazine are available while the supply lasts at \$1.00 each: Volume I Number 3; and Volume II, Numbers 2, 3 and 4. Mail your request with remittance to ATOE, Box 248, Alameda, California



Gerhart Ehardt, organ mechanic, sorts and cleans pipes and chests of Minnesota organ in Reiny Delzer's shop.



# New Home for Publix No. 1 Wurlitzer



Now located at Reinhold Delzer Residence, 609 Avenue F West, Bismarck, North Dakota

The Wurlitzer Four Manual Twenty Rank was originally installed in the Minnesota Theatre, later named Radio City Theatre in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Organ located on ground left at left side of home in Amusement Room

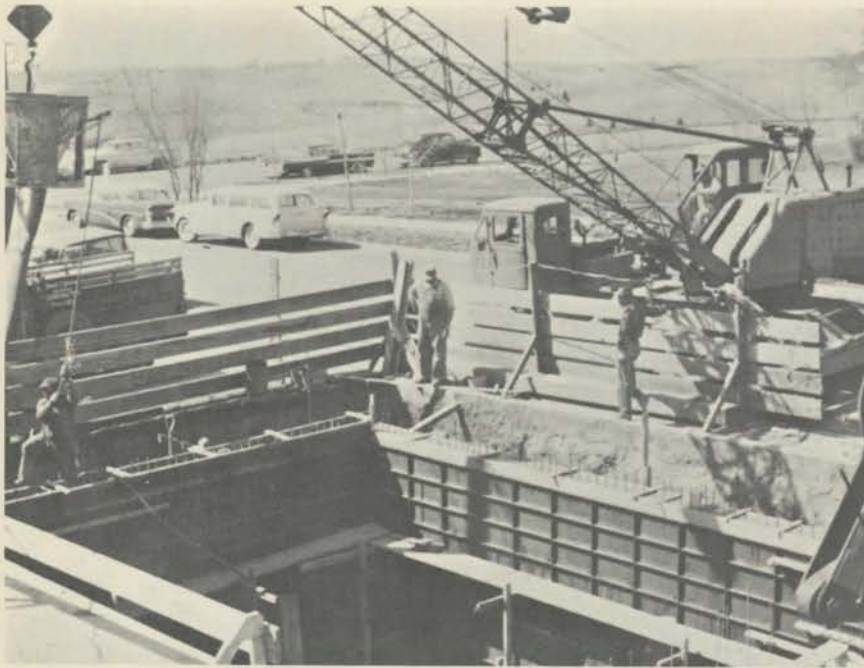
The organ was dedicated March 23, 1928 by Eddie Dunstedter, the idle of millions in the North Central States.

Safely tucked away in the chambers of this amusement room which can accommodate 125 persons.

Because of the reinforced concrete chambers and the room it speaks into, the organ has terrific expression and a tremendous Fortissimo from a whisper.



Colorful lighting system features the Organ in this handsome installation



Pouring Solo Chamber Walls

Special permission from the city commissioners was necessary to build chambers partially on city right of way.

The chambers consist of relay room, solo and main sections. 167 cubic yards of concrete with 22 tons of reinforcing steel assures permanent structure. Walls, floors and ceilings are damp proof.

Two inches of foam glass was used for insulation. The chambers total a space of 23 by 46 feet with approximately 13,000 cubic feet of space. No two walls are parallel to each other to break up the sound waves.

It was necessary to build concrete chambers with Bridge type quality to insure public safety because the underground chambers are tangent to the street.

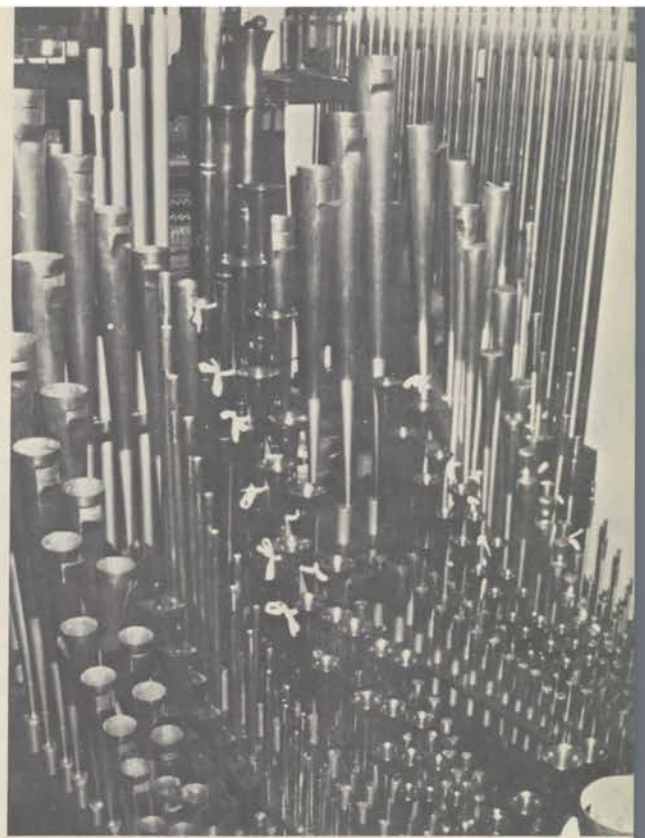


Solo walls are poured, footings for main chambers are being poured.





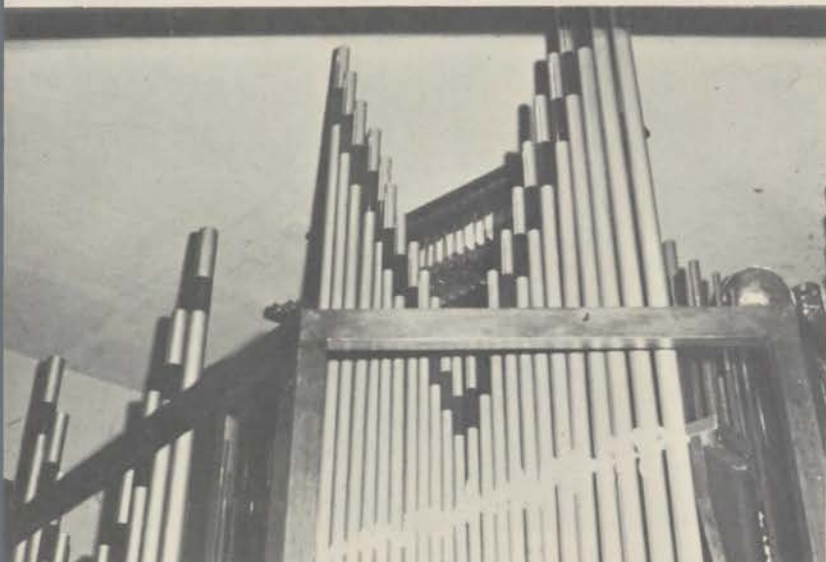
Solo Chamber



Another View of the Solo Chamber

Helen Crawford's Slave Console from the Paramount Studios purchased from Dick Loderhose will replace Morr and Colton Organ in Living Room. (See next page)

Main Chamber



The console will be wired to the Minnesota Organ and speak to the living room with Altec sound equipment.



It was more convenient to place console in this manner in lieu of dismantling it.



Living Room Morr and Colton will go to neighbor Charles Welch's amusement room.

Organ Enthusiasts are welcome to inspect and play this organ at the Delzer Home, 609 Ave. F West, Bismarck, North Dakota.

After two and one half years of refurbishing the Minnesota Organ, January 28, 1961, almost 33 years later this organ was re-dedicated by none other than the same fabulous Eddie Dunstedter, a most delightful event. Eddie praised the installation.

