

theatre organ

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF THEATRE ORGAN ENTHUSIASTS

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Gentlemen:

I wish to make a correction in the list of radio station pipe organs appearing in THEATRE ORGAN, Summer 1962, Vol. IV, No. 2.

I grew up in Kansas City, Mo., and was a good friend of Mr. P. Hans Flath, Musical Director and organist for KMBC.

He did nightly broadcasts on the 3 manual *Robert Morton* until it was dismantled when the station moved from the Pickwick Hotel to its present location.

I have a recording of Mr. Flath's last broadcast on February 4, 1951. After the broadcast he talks with the announcer about the organ being dismantled. It was never played again, and Mr. Flath has since died. He was a wonderful old school theatre organist, composer, arranger and conductor.

Mr. Flath told me the organ was bought from a theatre in Oklahoma, after he and Mr. Arthur B. Church, station owner, went there and inspected it. As far as I know an organist in Kansas City has the organ in storage in his garage at this time.

Sincerely,
Don Keilhack
5830 Lindo Paseo
San Diego 15, Calif.

Gentlemen:

Those who chuckled over the poem, "The Wail of the Theatre Organist", by P. Hans Flath that appeared on the back page of the ATOE 1962 Convention Program might be interested in the following recollections evoked by the sight of this name in print.

In the early 1920's a new WurliTzer Model 235 was installed in the Miller Theatre in Wichita, Kansas. The first organist to play an extended engagement was P. Hans Flath. As a 12 year old lad in the Wichita area at that time, my first exposure to real Theatre Organ was Flath at the Miller. This produced a case of Theatre Organ fever from which I have never recovered. I was never able to get my hands on the Miller Organ, though I have a vivid recollection of the Methodist Minister leading me out of the church by the ear after catching me trying to emulate the Flath styling of "The Doll Dance" on the church Austin when I had slipped in and fired it up without permission.

The Flath engagement lasted several years, and many afternoons were spent by cutting school classes and slipping down to the Miller to hear "Flath at the

WurliTzer". This billing always shared equal location on the Miller marquee with the movie of the week and the current Fanchon & Marco Idea. It represented, in addition to playing the picture, a generous Organ interlude and a "bouncing ball" presentation of the current pop tunes. I can still recall every glissando in the Flath rendition of "Pretty Baby", one of the first things I heard him play.

In the late 1920's Flath moved on to Kansas City where as I recall he spent several years at the Midland Theatre. He was followed at the Wichita Miller Theatre by Roy Cato.

I left the Midwest in the early 1930's and lost track of P. Hans Flath. Since he seemed an old man to me as a boy, I suspect he has by now reached the Valhalla for organists. I would be interested to know if any other ATOE buffs ever knew this accomplished artist of the Theatre Organ heyday.

Yours truly,
Wilfred N. Wallace
4001 Stone Canyon Ave
Sherman Oaks, Calif.

Dear Mr. James:

The Theatre Organ Society of Australia wishes to express its regrets upon the death of Jesse Crawford.

Jesse Crawford was familiar to us thru the many delightful organ records released in Australia, and the name "WurliTzer" and "Jesse Crawford" became synonymous.

We feel that the Theatre Organ world wide fraternity has suffered a grievous loss.

Yours sincerely,
J. Clancy, Hon. Secretary
The Theatre Organ Society
of Australia
N.S.W. Division
10 Caloola Road
Wentworthville, N.S.W.

Dear Sirs:

Eureka!!, someone else has tried to rewind WurliTzer black cap magnets! (Q. & A. Summer issue 1962).

I have had very good luck doing just this for the past four or five years. May I pass on a few hints that might make less work for some of your readers?

For a coil form I use a piece of ordinary wax paper soda straw cut to 1-3/4"

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