

theatre organ

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF THEATRE ORGAN ENTHUSIASTS

WHEN YOU CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS

You won't want to miss your issues of THEATRE ORGAN when you move—so please tell us, well in advance, what your new address will be. Your local Post Office has a convenient form for this purpose.

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"

Please turn to Page 7.

IN THIS ISSUE

News and Views	2
Letters	3
Melody Mac	4
Wurlitzer List	8
Bill Blunk Marr & Colton	10
ATOE Annual Meeting	13
Chapter Activities	18
Eastern Regional Meeting	21
Quentin Maclean	26

A.T.O.E. Membership - \$5.00 per year - includes subscription to THEATRE ORGAN. Make your check or Money Order Payable to A.T.O.E. and mail to P. O. Box 248, Alameda, California.

A.T.O.E. HONORARY MEMBERS

1959 Jesse Crawford
1960 Farny Wurlitzer
1961 Mel Doner
1962 Leonard MacClain

EDITOR George F. Thompson
Associate Editor Bud Abel
Production Manager Phil Lockwood

STAFF FOR A.T.O.E.

PRESIDENT W. Tiny James
Vice President Dick Loderhose
Secretary Mrs. Ida James
Advertising Manager Dewey Cagle

THEATRE ORGAN is a quarterly publication devoted to the interests of theatre organ enthusiasts, and to publishing of official notes and proceedings of the American Association of Theatre Organ Enthusiasts. All communications and material should be sent to THEATRE ORGAN, P. O. Box 248, Alameda, California. Inquiries and all materials intended for A.T.O.E. should be directed to the above address and will be correctly routed to the proper office.

THEATRE ORGAN (title registered U.S. Patent Office) is published by the American Association of Theatre Organ Enthusiasts, President W. Tiny James, 2834 Santa Clara Ave. Alameda, California. All rights reserved. Entire contents copyright 1961 by A.T.O.E., Incorporated.

POSTMASTER: If undeliverable, send Form 3579 to THEATRE ORGAN, P.O. Box 248, Alameda, California. RETURN REQUESTED. Second Class Permit paid at Alameda, California.

cal sketch. But let us proceed to mention a few other accomplishments in the life of this amazing entertainer.

One of the greatest thrills of his life occurred one night when he was playing for the International Convention of Rotary at Philadelphia's Convention Hall. He played a 1/2 hour concert before the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy was to begin the main body of the program. When they came to the last number, Ormandy introduced it as "a march every American loves." It turned out to be Sousa's immortal "Stars and Stripes Forever." Mac reasoned that if he were to help the show end on a dramatic climax, he should join in with the 4-manual Moller. By touching low C on the pedal, he found he was in the same key as the orchestra. Then pushing No. 8 General which brought out all the stops, the whole ensemble really roared forth! The applause was deafening! Ormandy confessed to a friend that he never understood the tremendous applause for the final number.

Not only is Leonard MacClain "Mr. Theatre Organ" of Philadelphia, he is indeed "Mr. Organ of the entire Philadelphia Area." He has played for political conventions, the flower shows in Convention Hall for years, Philadelphia Inquirer Charities, Music Festivals, Liberty Real Estate Trust Co. programs on the bank floor prior to Christmas, and many other specific programs and events. He has been substitute organist for Wanamaker's store for about 20 years for special affairs, or as replacement for Mary Vogt while she is on vacation. It is a tremendous instrument, the largest concert organ in the world, and Mac does love to perform on it.

He has accompanied such noted people as Kate Smith, Lanny Ross, Conrad Thibau, Rosemary and Betty Clooney, Wilbur Evans, and many more. Over radio he has accompanied the Duncan Sisters and the Boswell Sisters.

He has coached many fellow organists, helping them in their careers. Among them are Jackie Davis, Eddie Layton and Jack Ward, the last an associate organist at Radio City Music Hall. With Scotty MacGregor he has made over 500 children's records, working nights cutting the records without benefit of arrangements—just improvisation.

He is a composer of note, having been responsible for "Yearning"; "Smile, Darn Ya, Smile"; "Be a Good Egg", etc. He has written musical scores for commercials and TV programs, among them the theme song for "Martin Kane, Private Eye", which starred Bill Gargan a few years ago.

Leonard MacClain has recorded for Valdoray Records, Master Marinka Series, Somerset Records, Palda Records, Harmony Records, and Epic, to name a few. In addition to "Melody Mac" and Leonard MacClain, he has used the names of Warren Averill, Ken Reed and Rodney Davis as aliases in his work.

Since 1953, Mac has been asked to give concerts on the beach at Wildwood, New Jersey. He did this for a couple of years, but has refrained recently in fall, 1962

or of travelling about the country, playing organs and visiting with organ enthusiasts. In 1960 he gave two concerts for ATOE members in California, one in Lorin Whitney's famous studio, the other in Joe Chadbourne's "barn". About 25 organs were played by Mac on that trip, a real busman's holiday.

Last summer, after a brilliant performance at the ATOE convention in the Richmond, Va., Mosque, he visited theatre organ enthusiasts in the Buffalo and Rochester areas. There, he and his vivacious wife, Dottie, gave their listeners two concerts they'll long remember. The writer spent a most enjoyable evening during their visit, reminiscing and discussing organs and playing tapes. As a story-teller, Mr. MacClain is unsurpassed; as an organist, he is an entertainer in the true sense of the word, playing music from Bach to Ger-shwin, and asking for requests from his audience, interspersed with humorous anecdotes.

Currently, he has a full schedule of teaching in the Philadelphia area at his Music Studio, and in Wilmington, Delaware. Pupils come from all the surrounding states. Interspersed are the special shows he is asked to do.

And so, in 1962, Leonard MacClain observes his golden anniversary as a professional musician. His father once offered him sage advice. "Never do anything you aren't happy doing, and don't ever work for anybody but yourself if you want to be a success." Leonard

made up his mind when he was a little boy that he'd be in music the rest of his life. He loves making music. He has realized all of his ambitions—to be an organist, to own his own organ school, to be a famous recording artist, and to direct music in a radio station. TV was not in his early plans, of course, but he has appeared on that medium, and has sung and MC'd shows in some of the theatres in which he's worked.

The writer strenuously urges all Theatre Organ Enthusiasts: If ever you have the opportunity of seeing Leonard MacClain in action, do not miss the opportunity. You are in for a real treat by a real musician—a musician's musician. This writer has heard him perform twice, and will not fail to hear Melody Mac again, should the occasion present itself.

The American Association of Theatre Organ Enthusiasts, members and chapters across the breadth of America salute Leonard MacClain on his 50th year as a professional musician. In tribute to this talented organist, the directors of ATOE at their 1962 Annual Meeting in Los Angeles unanimously nominated MacClain as Honorary Member. As ATOE President, W. 'Tiny' James has eloquently stated, "ATOE owes Leonard MacClain a lot, as Mac has given very freely of his time and talents for our organization." To which this writer adds, "May Leonard MacClain enjoy many years of success and happiness in the organ world which he so richly deserves."

LETTERS (continued)

long. This is slid onto an arbor about 3" long which is a brass tube .156 O.D. and is available in hobby shops. The arbor is chucked in a lathe which I set to about 360 RPM. Using No. 38 magnet wire, I leave a length of 2" or so for a lead and start winding. If the straw is marked off 1/8" from each end and the wire allowed to wind along the straw only to these marks and back again, I found that about 7 passes would produce a reading of 85-90 ohms, measured by scraping a small area on the wire and checking to the front lead.

Later I found that it is easy to forget whether 7 passes have gone by, so I used an electric clock and came up with a timing of roughly 55 seconds, which of course will vary with the speed of the arbor.

This may help someone who is glueing up paper tubes and searching for a quick method of winding. Good luck!

E. S. Bassett
312 Homestead Ave.
Waterbury 4, Conn.

(Accompanying drawing will give visual explanation.)

