

MOLLER SPECIFICATIONS (Concluded)

PISTONS

Manual

Acc. (2nd touch pedal)	20
Great (2nd touch general)	20
Orchestral	20
Solo	20

Toe

Pedal	5
Solo to percussion	
Cymbal roll	
Bird whistle	
Sforzando	
General canceller	

Traps

Sleigh bells
Police whistle
Bird whistle
Steamboat whistle
Surf
Firebell
Siren
Chinese Block tap
Chinese block repeat
Cymbal Crash

THEATRE ORGAN ON THE MOVE

(Concluded)

of sight, and the thunderous sound of the organ literally brought the house down.

World War II came, and as it progressed, moving of the giant organ became more and more difficult. Later, it was necessary to switch some pipes and leave the large string section behind in order to ship the organ by rail. During a week's engagement at the Empire in Liverpool, bombs were dropped nightly, usually during the second performance, and on the Saturday night of that engagement three incendiaries were burning in

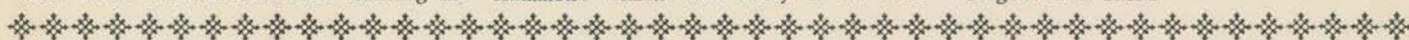
the roof space, but the show continued. It was the organ crew who saved the theatre.

During the war many theatre organists played an important part in keeping up morale during the air-raids, and BBC made full use of their theatre organ (a Compton) until one night in September 1940, when it was destroyed by a bomb dropped on St. George's Hall. This fact was kept a secret for security reasons, and BBC immediately started using a Hammond which was ready in an emer-

gency studio outside London.

Having encountered many hardships with the travelling organ because of wartime conditions, Reginald Foort, who had learned of the destruction of the BBC studios and the organ, in May 1941 offered his portable organ to BBC for the duration. Eagerly they accepted it, and the organ was installed in temporary studios outside of London, where it remained for several years. Following the war Mr. Foort decided to sell the organ outright to BBC. After a complete cleaning, etc., BBC re-erected the organ in Jubilee Hall, East Road, London, where it remains today. At this time the 16 foot extension of the Gamba rank was finally installed and put to use. These large pipes had remained unused and in storage because it was determined at the very beginning that they were too delicate to be subjected to constant handling. After approximately 167 trips, the organ is still in daily use... a fitting finale..

The foresight required to conceive such a large undertaking is certainly commendable, and while this may not have been the first travelling pipe organ, it was without a doubt far and away the largest ever built.



A Mighty Sound Revived!

Geo. Wright at Orpheum Theatre, San Francisco

By Al White

On December 13, 1963, the marquee of the Orpheum Theatre in San Francisco proudly announced, "It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World," intimating that the unexpected was taking place inside. By all accepted standards, it was. The big 4/21 Robert Morton pipe organ had virtually been completely overhauled, and for three days George Wright would perform for capacity audiences.

The Orpheum Theatre in San Francisco is the Cinerama showcase, and when the wide screen process was introduced, the remodeling had made the organ almost unusable for public shows by extending the stage out over the orchestra pit, thus covering the console and the foundation organ. Through the efforts of two local ATOE members, Ron Downer and Ernie Langley, the chief Cinerama projectionist, the management

was persuaded to allow an opening to be made in the stage for the console to once again rise and be visible. The first time the organ had been used since the Cinerama debut was in February, 1963, when Tiny James and Everett Nourse played for the opening week of "How The West Was Won."

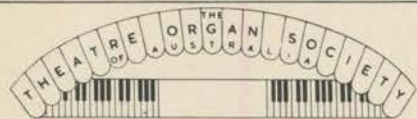
Late this year Radio Station KPEN-FM, which had sponsored the previous George Wright concerts at the late S.F. Fox, was investigating the possibilities of sponsoring another Wright concert at one of the theatres in San Francisco that still possessed a usable pipe organ. The Orpheum, with its 4 manual Robert Morton, was selected following a meeting with George Wright, Jim Gabbart and Gary Gielow of KPEN-FM, and Sam Pearlman, district manager for Cinerama.

George indicated what he felt needed to be done to make the organ ready for a concert performance, and under the supervision of Dick Villeman (ATOE-AGO), the rehabilitation started. Helping were Charles Hershman (who had originally installed the organ), Ron Downer, Bob Rhodes and Tiny James. The console required the most attention, as it had been liberally sprayed by water a few years back during a fire on the Cinerama stage. The four manuals had to be completely reworked and the many pallets in the console recovered, together with a complete overhauling of the combination setterboards.

Following the usual running down of dead notes, crossed wires, etc., the pipework was then completely gone over by Villeman, and the regulating and tuning completed just in time for the first concert. Of course, during the rehabilitation, the usual things that were not included in the original listing showed up: regulators blew up, tremulants gave up, and to top it all it was found that previous 'mechanics' had grabbed the key relay drawers and bent contact wires together or had broken them off entirely. This was one of the longest jobs encountered in the entire rehabilitation. The only problem that still exists is the matter of regulated heat in the four chambers, as this creates a terrific tuning problem. But plans are now afoot to correct this situation.

The series of three concerts featuring George Wright were scheduled for Friday and Saturday nights, with a matinee on Sunday afternoon. Prime evening time was available due to the theatre being closed to normal operations during the transition between Cinerama pictures. Promptly at 8:30 p.m., the house lights dimmed, George Wright sat down at the organ and the new combination of George Wright at the Magnificent Orpheum Theatre Robert Morton commenced. The concert, as all George Wright concerts are, proved to be full of surprises and a playing ability that is beyond approach.

The organ sounded tremendous. The



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Tibia and Strings are particularly outstanding. The Echo chamber boasts one of the nicest Vox Humanas to be found, together with a small scale Tibia and String. Villeman had moved the Bird Whistle out of the Echo chamber and mounted it on the outside of the shutter frame, thus creating an Antiphonal Bird Whistle which George promptly named Phoebe. There are two chambers located right and left of the stage which are high enough to entirely clear the giant Cinerama screen and curtain. The fourth chamber is located under the original stage where it had opened into the old orchestra pit. Since Cinerama makes a practice of covering everything in front of the screen, this chamber does not get out too well, and was therefore amplified through the original house theatre sound system. This amplification, handled properly, is quite effective.

The second concert Saturday evening was considered by many to be the best of the three. The remodeling of the theatre for Cinerama has rendered the entrance from a below stage level impossible, and thus the organist cannot seat himself at the console from the usual hidden entrance for a majestic rise on the hydraulic lift. George Wright solved the problem very neatly by walking out to the lowered console and very artfully jumping into the pit. A few seconds later he arose, bringing the organ to full height and producing the thrill that can only be had when a massive theatre console rises high into the air. The music encompassed a full gamut of music which George is very capable of performing. A highlight for many was Mr. Wright's "Crawfordsville" music, which was a meticulous interpretation of the music and style of the late Jesse Crawford. The evening was completed with a medley of Christmas selections.

The components that make the artistry of George Wright function appear to be fantastic imagination, flawless technique and the desire to entertain people with his brand of music. The components functioned superbly and the concert was certainly memorable. On Sunday afternoon, the hydraulic lift was misbehaving, and therefore had to be left at its top position. But after addressing a few caustic remarks to the lift, George began the concert in his usual fine style.

It should be noted that there were many comparisons made between the Orpheum Theatre and the now disappeared Fox. It is very obvious that there are a number of differences, the most important one being that through the process of Cinerama, the Orpheum Theatre is a profitable operation and will probably be on the local scene for some time to come, and it would probably be wise to make the most of this. It is sincerely hoped that this concert will once again be the means of having George Wright as well as other artists appear regularly in the San Francisco bay area playing theatre organ in its natural setting, the moving picture theatre.

Following the George Wright concerts, the organ, featuring Tiny James at the console, was used for the opening week of the latest Cinerama offering, "Mad, Mad, etc. World." In late February of this year, Gaylord Carter is scheduled for a return to the Bay Area, also at the Orpheum. He will present an evening of theatre organ music and will accompany the full length silent film "Safety Last," starring Harold Lloyd. Carter is not only an excellent organist, but his ability as an entertainer who can provide a wide scope of entertainment is untouchable. His appearance in the Bay Area and the presentation of the Harold Lloyd comedy virtually guarantee capacity attendance.

Obviously the Orpheum organ is going to be used extensively. Much of the credit goes to KPEN-FM, which now

boasts the largest listening audience of any FM radio station, and to Mr. Sam Pearlman of the Cinerama-Orpheum Theatre for making this all possible. It is also only proper to give a big vote of thanks to George Wright for his part in making this almost unknown theatre pipe organ an important part of the San Francisco organ scene.

Thus, a mighty sound has been revived. Its past is known. The future is what the people of San Francisco and the surrounding area make it.

It is this person's hope that this organ will not only be a strong voice of nostalgia but also a media for providing new sounds in the future.

Following are the specifications of the San Francisco Orpheum Robert Morton pipe organ:

<u>UNDERSTAGE CHAMBER</u>	<u>COMPASS</u>	<u>LEFT CHAMBER</u>	<u>COMPASS</u>
Bourdon-Flute	16 - 1-3/5	Oboe Horn	16 - 4
Diaphonic Diapason	16 - 4	Gamba	16 - 2
Trumpet	8 - 4	Gamba Celeste	8 - 4
Tibia (Small scale WurliTzer replacing Flute Celeste)	8 - 4	Dopple Flute	8 - 4
Clarinet	8	Quintadena	8 - 4
Violin	8 - 4	English Horn	8 - 4
Violin Celeste	8 - 4	Marimba Harp	
Chrysoglott			
All Non-tonal Percussions			
<u>RIGHT CHAMBER</u>			
Tuba Mirabilis	16 - 4	<u>ECHO CHAMBER</u> (Located in ceiling at rear of auditorium)	
Tibia Clausa	8 - 2	Stopped Diapason	16 - 4
Open Diapason	8 - 4	Viol Etheria	8 - 4
Kinura	8 - 4	Vox Humana	8 - 4
Vox Humana	8 - 4	Chimes	
Glockenspiel		Bird Whistle (Antiphonal ??)	
Xylophone		George Wright at the S.F. Orpheum Robert Morton as seen from the upper balcony.	



(See More Photos on Next Page)

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