

DON BAKER PLAYS FOR OPENING OF NEW OAKBROOK THEATRE

"The days of old" when the theatre organ and its master at the console were headlined as star attractions were relived in Oak Brook, Ill., a western Chicago suburb, on December 18-20.

Don Baker, long-time theatre organist of yesteryear and now a Conn Organ and Kapp recording artist, and Balaban & Katz, Chicago based giant among the nation's theatre operators, teamed up for this revival of the old days. The event marked the special preview festivities for the new million dollar Oakbrook Theatre, the first new facility to be constructed by this chain since 1938.

Don played the new Conn Deluxe Theatre organ at all of his performances during the three days. His program was arranged to include something for everyone, regardless of age, and ran the gamut from present day pop tunes, to "White Christmas" and other all-time holiday

favorites, and selections from the theatre organ days of long ago.

Friday night at the Oakbrook was a special invitational affair for members of the press, radio, TV, movie industry and special guests only with an estimated 300 in attendance. Saturday and Sunday were billed as "open house days" for the general public. An estimated 6,000 took advantage of the opportunity to thoroughly inspect the 1200 seat house which rightfully boasts of many new innovations including: Rocking Chair seats with each row on its own level; unprecedented "stretch-out" room between each row; perfectly proportioned screen; foyers and lounges with continuous music and other luxurious appointments all keyed to the comfort and convenience of moviegoers, even to the extent of pushbutton telephones.



This smile of complete approval is worn by Don Baker, Conn Organ concert artist, as he sat at the console of the new Conn Deluxe Theatre Organ and turned back the clock recently to briefly relive his many years of theatre organ playing, which included a 13-year engagement at the famous Paramount Theatre, New York City. The event which prompted Don's smile here marked a 3-day "open house" on December 18-20 to herald the opening of a new million dollar theatre in Oak Brook, Ill., a western Chicago suburb.

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resonances of wood & metal pipes. We really don't expect that miracle nor can we expect our "plug-ins" to produce a sound that can compare with that of the beauty and majesty of well voiced pipes emanating from lofty chambers. But the deftly controlled loud speakers are still better than a blast of shrill whistles in the ear which can hardly be dampened even by tight closing swell shutters in the average living room. How many of us can afford the proper installation of several sets of ranks plus the monstrous consoles we all love? I'll venture to guess that 95% of all members and readers own and enjoy an electronic gadget.

I've said my piece and probably have trod on a number of toes, but this is the way I feel. I wonder how many agree with me?

Yours very truly,
Maurice Scharman
member L.A. A.T.O.E.

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Console, 3 or 4 manual with or without relay. Wurlitzer preferred. C.M. Henningsen, 4356 Gertrude Drive, Fremont, Calif. Phone Sycamore 3-4310.

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