

ATOE MEETS T.V.

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was far from dead.

The important filmed sequence which was the heart of the program would not have been possible without the herculean efforts of ATOE members, George Rice and Murray George. Dr. Beaupre is, of course, an ardent ATOE member himself, but readily admits that he would rather play on the instruments than clean and re-leather. Omaha ATOE members consider the program a huge success and a step in the right direction towards creating local interest in an ATOE chapter.

A BOOK REVIEW

By Ben Hall

PUT ANOTHER NICKEL IN--A history of coin-operated pianos and orchestrations, by Q. David Bowers. Vestal Press, Vestal, N.Y. \$15.00 248 pages; over 500 illustrations.

It has been said that if you scratch a theatre organ enthusiast you'll uncover part steam train buff, part trolley fan, part movie palace aficionado and part mechanical musical instrument devotee. Somehow, all these off-beat enthusiasms seem to go together, and the explanation is simple: all of us are nuts about things that go choo-choo, ding-ding, and toot-toot, that shake the rafters and light up, that require untold hours of tinkering and are gaudy relics of the days of America's lost innocence. One of the most heartening things about this close-linked circle of interests is the ever-increasing wealth of literature about them. A few years ago Harvey Roehl started his Vestal Press in upstate New York and dazzled hobbyists everywhere with his Player Piano Treasury, a book that is already a classic of its kind. Now the Vestal Press has done it again with Q. David Bowers' handsome Put Another Nickel In.

Following much the same formula as Roehl's player-piano compendium, Bowers' book is made up from facsimile advertisements and pages of marvelous old catalogues, amplified with a sprightly and informative text and rounded out with present-day photographs of instruments in private and public collections around the country. The name, Wurlitzer, naturally predominates, not merely because Mr. Frany Wurlitzer, chairman of the board of the company that bears his name, has given the author his enthusiastic cooperation, but because Wurlitzer was the giant of the coin-operated industry in the same way it led the theatre-organ field. As Bowers writes, "Upon leaving Mr. Wurlitzer's office during one of our visits, Harvey Roehl noticed a bulky package wrapped in brown paper. On the

outside was marked AUTOMATIC MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS--OUTSIDE COMPANIES. Responding to our interest, Mr. Wurlitzer until the package. What a treasure trove it held! Sometime before 1920 someone had gathered together several dozen catalogues issued by the Wurlitzer Company's competitors. Catalogues of Seeburg, Hupfield, Frati, Mills Novelty Company, North Tonawanda Musical Instrument Works--these and many other firms were represented. These were added to the wealth of information already furnished by Mr. Wurlitzer. Without his assistance this book could not have been written."

As one who knows well the pitfalls of research, the chases up blind alleys, the frustration of hearing "Oh, we had a whole room full of old photographs and ads and catalogues, but last month I told the janitor to take all that junk out and burn it". I can share, vicariously, the thrill of Bowers and Roehl when Mr. Wurlitzer opened that package. And you, as a reader, can share in it as well. Because Put Another Nickel In reproduces page after page of these goodies--there is the Hupfield Reisen-Orchestrion Helios V, a 1,500 pipe monster embellished with everything from kettle drums to castanets; there are deliciously nostalgic photos of the interiors of saloons from Cincinnati to Cairo, bristling with potted palms and handlebar mustaches and each one equipped with a Peerless, a Welte, a Wurlitzer, a Seeburg or the like; there is a photo of Clarence Eddy, grand-old-man of the theatre organ, seated somewhat self-consciously at a pull-chain Fotoplayer; there are shots of the unit orchestra departments at the Wurlitzer factory that have not been published before; on nearly every page there are samples of case-work and cabinet-making that have already become a lost art in our plastic production-line society of today, and there are stunning examples of art-glass panels, hand-painted scenes, and colored light effects. They don't hardly make 'em like that any more. But if they did, there is one thing I would like to hear: a little orchestra composed of a Mills Violano-Virtuoso, a Banjorchestra, a Wurlitzer Automatic Harp and a Wurlitzer Mandolin Quartette, playing in unison a tune popularized by the Andrews Sisters some years ago which begins: "Put another nickel in....In the nickleodeon....All I want to hear.....Is music, music, music...."

Put Another Nickel In is obviously a labor of love, for no one could have put together such a rich and fact-filled storehouse of musical machinery who wasn't personally hooked on these crazy instruments. Bowers has already gained an international reputation through his books on coin-collecting, and I think that in his newest book he has turned up the luckiest coin of all: the nickel. If the price,

\$15.00, seems steep---remember, that's only 300 nickels. And without any more Wurlitzer Pianorchestras in your corner saloon, what else are you going to do with all those five-cent pieces?

Ben M. Hall

MORE CHAPTER NEWS

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RED RIVER CHAPTER

By Lance Johnson



Lloyd Collins at the 3/34 Moller, Olivet Lutheran Church, Fargo, North Dakota.

The March meeting of the Red River Chapter was held at the new Olivet Lutheran Church in Fargo, N. D. at 4:00 P.M. Organist Lloyd Collins played four numbers to demonstrate the 3/34 instrument which is classically voiced. Being a theatre organ lover, he chose his registration very carefully to suit the music. Over twenty-five guests and members enjoyed "Indian Love Call", Valse in D_b by Chopin, a Chorale prelude by Purvis and a "Patriotic phantasy on The Battle Hymn of the Republic." After the short concert, members and guests were invited to inspect the organ in the balcony and try it out. Lloyd explained that the music had to be selected in such a manner as to not offend anyone in the church building as there were other events going on at the same time.

PIEDMONT CHAPTER

Paul Abernethy's home 2/5 Wurlitzer was the center of interest at the November meeting in Burlington, N.C. This was the final meeting of the year and officers were elected for the next year. Don Hall was re-elected Chairman and Nelson Guard took charge of the money and minutes for a second term. The organ was open to all and even some of Piedmont's "Pointer System" organists had a go at the basement installation in addition to the usual group of polished professionals.

First meeting of 1966 was scheduled in Winston-Salem, N.C. at the Goler Metropolitan Church. The church now houses a Mighty (small) Robert Morton 2/5 from the local Carolina Theatre. Organist was Sid Hellier of Greensboro.

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