

CHAPTER NEWS, cont.

A Wolverine by birth, he got his early musical training in Michigan and had further study at Hope College in Holland Michigan. In addition to his theatre work, he has played electronic instruments in many clubs and restaurants over the country. Versatility at the keyboard won Webb his host of friends when he was featured artist for "Twilight Memories" a long time program on Radio Station WKBZ.

In 1961 as official organist for the Cincinnati Reds Baseball Club, he gave concerts before and after all the World Series games played with the New York Yankees at Crosley Field.

Although an accomplished artist on electronics, Webb's first love is the theatre pipe organ. As proof, he removed the large pipe organ from Keith's Theatre in Cincinnati, almost single handed—and again, just in time to save it from the wrecker's ball. It is now stored in his Cincinnati home, in mint condition, awaiting a suitable auditorium.

NEW YORK CHAPTER

On Sunday September 11, 1966 the New York Chapter hosted a meeting at the Brook Theatre, Bound Brook, N. J. Special invitations were extended to Delaware Valley and Connecticut Chapter members, as well as the general public. Over 250 people were present including 150 ATOE's, some coming over 150 miles from such places as Harrisburg, Pa., Albany, N.Y., and points in Connecticut.

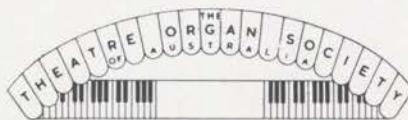
The organ is a 2/4 Wurlitzer, restored in the Spring of 1963 by local ATOE members. The first meeting and concert was held August 25, 1963 and was a fine success, with local members of the general public expressing great delight at the presentation of organ music. Since then



Entertainment is James Dexter, while Donald Conover turns the pages. Both men play regularly on Saturday nights. The organ is a 2/4 Wurlitzer, Style B, Opus 1519, installed in 1927.

Photo by LoSardo

the organ has been featured every Saturday night in a fifteen minute program before the picture. Cooperation from the Morecraft family, owners and operators of the theatre, has been enthusiastic and wholehearted. Miss Gladys Morecraft and members of her family did a splendid job of hosting the meeting, making all feel most welcome and comfortable. The owners of the Brook Theatre have made it a real pleasure to work on and use their instrument.



Membership cordially invited — USA — \$3.00 per year, includes a regular news magazine containing news items, record reviews, articles on electronic organs and specifications of theatre organs in all States of Australia.

Address all communications to THE HONORABLE SECRETARY, T.O.S.A., 10 Caloola Road, Wentworthville, N.S.W.

St. LOUIS CHAPTER MEETS AT THE FOX

Recently the St Louis Chapter of ATOE met at the huge Fox Theatre for a concert and jam session.

Stan Kann, Dale Zieger, and Art Edinger made up a trio that alternated between a grand piano, a plug in organ, and the huge 36 rank Wurlitzer Crawford Special.

One of the selections played was arranged by Stan, a concert arrangement of Spanish Flea with shades of Mozart, Chopin, and Rachmaninoff.

Members were allowed to play the organ and tour the organ chambers. The only mishap of the day required the need of a locksmith to free several members from a backstage mens' room.

*A very
Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year*

*From Your
A.T.O.E. Officers
and The Staff of
Theatre Organ
Bombarde*



Letters to the Editor concerning all aspects of the theatre organ hobby are encouraged. Send them to the editor concerned, Box 7404, Bitter Lake Station, Seattle, Washington, 98133. Unless it's stated clearly on the letter "not for publication," the editors feel free to reproduce it, in whole or part.

THAT BOUNCING BALL AGAIN!

Dear Stu: Mr. John S. Carroll states (LETTERS, October 1966)... the bouncing ball did not come along until most theatre organs were silenced." Not true. As far back as 1925 I played silent "singalong" films made by Fleischer featuring "Koko the Clown." The ball would appear at left screen, bounce to set the tempo, then land on top of the first word. I first encountered these tricky films (remember, the silent projectors had adjustable speed and an unsympathetic operator could play hob by changing speeds from one tune to the next) while playing at the Medford theatre, Medford, Mass., in 1925, later the Victory Theatre in Holyoke and the Shore theatre, Medford, Mass., in 1925, later the Victory Theatre in Holyoke and the Shore theatre in Gloucester. The sound tracks didn't come until circa 1930.

And song slides were not introduced because of incapability on the part of organists but because of the demand. Both theatre chains and music publishers originated slide novelties (made up by top organists, in the former case) which were distributed through circuits to organists. Public expected staff organists to originate a slide novelty every six weeks, which the originating organist played first, then circulated to other theatres. The slides were run by the projectionist on a buzzer signal from the console so the slide changes would be in step with the music. This was a more practical and exact procedure than the 'bouncing ball' films which sometimes arrived with many splices and missing footage, causing the ball to bounce too quickly, missing words and beats and generally upsetting the smoothness of the presentation.

Harry J. Jenkins, Pacoima, Calif.
(follower of the silent bouncing ball, '25 to '29)

(Continued Next Page)

LETTERS, continued

The editor can back up Mr. Jenkins' claim with bitter experience. Once while playing relief (circa '27), the organist leaving failed to mention such a film coming during the 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. stint and this neophyte organist was plenty shocked with a song entirely outside his meagre repertoire. The only thing to do was turn out the console lights and wait in silence until Koko ended by kicking the ball off the screen. Luckily, it was a supper shift and not many were in the theatre—the manager included, fortunately.

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"PLUG-IN" PINTO PANNED

MR: Editor: Aha! Suspicious confirmed, in the lower photo on page 37 of the October issue. That plug(nag) you are shown riding home from the Portland convention appears to be a PLUG-IN model! For shame! I thought you were a purist and would not stoop that low. If you can't find an airblown nag next time, stick to your unicycle.

Chard Walker
Summit, Calif.

We hope no one took that obviously faked photo seriously. It's the work of the nefarious THEATRE ORGAN editor who is still fuming about the expose of his misdeeds which appeared in the SUMMER 1966 issue of BOMBARDE. As for the unicycle, it doesn't result in the blisters that darn horse caused.

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THE BIGGEST BLASTER OF THEM ALL

Mr. Green: I've heard rumors about a fabulous organ, supposedly a theatre organ, located in a Southern California cemetery. It's supposed to be an open air installation on a very high pressure, perhaps 35 inches, for coverage of a large outdoor area. Is there such an organ or it just a rumor?

H. J. Canby-Gadsden, Alabama

It's true. It's a 17-rank Wurlitzer T. O. with pressures of 15, 25, 35, and 50 inches of wind! It was installed in four chambers in a building erected in the middle of Roosevelt Park Cemetery, Gardena, California, a long, narrow strip of real estate, in 1925. Installers were Val Holtziner, Henry Lythins and Francis Sullivan. It's still there and operative. The console is located in a sunken cubicle better than 75 feet from the chamber building. The organist opens the windows

to hear himself, although the closed cubicle offers some protection from the blast of heavy combinations. It was plagued by mechanical failures from the start, mostly connected with the unusual pressures (it can be heard a half mile away). Primary valves and magnets designed for 10 and 15" pressure were unstable on the higher pressures. Wurlitzer contracted with James H. Nuttall to correct the condition. Nuttall rebuilt the chests to get the high pressure off of the lower pressure primary valves, thus solving the action problems. However, the 50 hp blower required a fine water spray to cool it. It worked fine until someone forgot to shut off the water one day. Result: a floating console! Part of the chamber roof fell in during the Long Beach earthquake, damaging pipework. Little by little more and more of the organ became inoperable. It went entirely dead in 1959. Then patient hobbyists came along and today nearly all of it is in playing shape. And is heard on Sundays when the weather is good, played by local organists—classics and pops alike.

On the Wurlitzer shipping list it appears simply as "Opus 998, 4-manual special, 2/18/25." It is indeed a "special," one of a kind. The photos, made by Jim Lewis, give some idea of the size of the pipework. For example, the CCCC (32') Diaphone pipe is 42" x 42" at its wide end. The organ cost the cemetery \$50,000 but it was a financial loss to the Wurlitzer Company which spent easily another \$50,000 rebuilding and revamping it during the first years after installation. Tonally, it is more majestic than theatrical but it mellows as the listener backs off. At 500 feet it begins to sweeten. Even the full sets of percussions sound better at that distance. "Colossal" is the correct word. Editor)

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HOPE-JONES Helpers

Mr. Editor: I am curious about the artisans who followed Robert Hope-Jones to the US from Great Britain just after the turn of the century and gathered at Elmira, N.Y., to work at the short-lived H-J organ company, men such as Joseph Carruthers, David Marr, Meakin Jones, Theodore Ilse and James Nuttall. Nuttall's name, especially, keeps popping up wherever voicing developments are discussed. Is there any information available about Hope-Jones' (and later, most probably, Wurlitzer's) crew of organ experts?

Ralph T. Woodward
Wichita Falls, Texas

We've noted a recent increase of interest in "the men behind the scenes" dur-

ing the great days of theatre organ construction. Information is hard to come by but we're preparing several revealing articles about Hope-Jones' craftsmen. Editor.

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181 Christopher St.
New York, N. Y.

Editor,
Theatre Organ Bombarde

Dear Editor,

I was stunned to read in the last issue of your otherwise excellent magazine, a letter from Miss Martha Lake in which Miss Lake wrote "... I should have my sweetie, Bessie Hall, beat you up, down, and sideways...."

Now, I like to think of Theatre Organ Bombarde as a family magazine. Certainly it is not the place to air one's dirty linen (and I shudder to think of Miss Lake's teddies and camisole being aired anywhere) in public. I am referring to her indiscretion in telling the world that I am her sweetie. Martha and I had agreed to keep our affair a secret; meeting furtively as we have in such out-of-the-way places as Portland, Oregon and Richmond, Virginia, to steal a few moments of rapture far from prying eyes. It is common knowledge that she has been carrying on shockingly with Dick (for shame!) Schrum, with poor Marilyn becoming a figure of pity and scorn to all Who Knew. But I thought OUR romance would remain something secret and beautiful. Now she has seen fit to let the sordid details out into the open.

I deeply admire Miss Lake as a artist of rare qualities, and have done what I could to further her career—even to persuading her to return to the concert platform after many years of bottled-in-bond retirement. Frankly, she was on the skids until I happened to hear her in a obscure dive in Portland, known as the "Elk's Club" as part of a broken-down cabaret show I managed to get her a booking at the exclusive Empire Room in Richmand's Hotel Jefferson not long ago, and it looked as if she might be back on the road to stardom once more—to carry on in the great distaff tradition of Carmenza Von-delezz, Elsie Mae Look, Iris Vining, Julia Dawn, Mathilde Harding & Saint Cecilia.

But now it is obvious that Martha is back on the soup. Why else would she have been so callow as to betray our Great Secret? I'm not angry just terribly, terribly hurt—and I hope her Hammond blows a fuse.

Sincerely,
Outraged (Former) Sweetie

**1967 DUES REMITTANCE
ENVELOPES ENCLOSED!**