



John Nelson, probably Conn's youngest Factory representative, at the 3-8 "Waterfall" Wurlitzer console. "Woodshedding" on the 3-decker would pay off in the near future when the 3-manual Conn electronic theatre model is released.

Kansas City, for most people, has always been a city of surprises. First of all, the city is not in Kansas, but Missouri. This is the city either remembered for having an airport with runways so short that many planes have been known to dive over the Kansas City dike into the

CONN MAN PLAYS PIPES FOR KANSAS CITY HEARTS

by ALLEN WHITE

(Al White, former Northern California Chairman, was recently moved to Kansas City by his firm. Here's proof that it didn't take him long to get into the organ groove there.)

Missouri River—or as the place where everything's up to date.

Another pleasant surprise is the number of excellent theatre organ installations, among them the Plaza Theatre Wurlitzer. The organ is a three manual, 8-ranker which was removed about five years ago and re-installed in the Russell Stover Memorial Auditorium, a part of the University of Missouri's Conservatory of Music. The organ maintenance is an ATOE Chapter project, one of which the Chapter can be justly proud. The organ speaks from two chambers located at the rear of the stage area.

That was the scene where John Nelson presented a theatre organ treat which the town has not seen or heard for years, a special ATOE concert on the former Kansas City Plaza Theatre Wurlitzer on Dec.

10 last. It was sponsored by the Heart of America Chapter.

John Nelson has become well known in the Midwest in his capacity as a factory representative for the Conn Organ Corporation. His Kansas City concert was made up of requests from Conn concerts he has given as well as the introduction of many interesting numbers especially arranged for this program.

He opened the concert with much fanfare, announcing "So This Is Hollywood" and then modulated into an exciting version of *I Feel A Song Coming On*. He followed this up with *Moon River* and an excellently executed *Take Five*. At this point he made some remarks comparing the theatre pipe instrument he was playing with some unnamed plug-ins. The capacity audience, made up of many pipe organ purists, delighted at his clever handling of what is a perennial problem for many electronics pushers.

Included in the program was a great sounding *Roller Coaster Ride*, not the *Roller Coaster* which George Wright recorded but an adaptation from a turn-of-the-century piano number. It is an effective theatre organ number and John made it a delight. Also on the program was the jazzy Tijuana Brass number, *Jingo Jango*.

To many attending this affair, it was their first live exposure to a theatre pipe organ. John provided for them a most interesting and entertaining tour of the stops on the organ. This is one area that can be a bit tedious to those who have sat through such a "tour" previously. John's approach was unusual and yet based on simplicity. His vehicle for this was *Long, Long ago* with his left hand fingers frozen into a monumental "Pointer System Lock." He followed this up with George Wright's arrangement of *Quiet Village*, birds and all. John Nelson is among the few concert organists who take the time to give arrangement credits, even to including the publisher of the arrangement.



Heart of America Chapter members and guests listen as John Nelson puts 2-chamber organ through its paces. Chapter members keep the Wurli in top condition.

Credit must go to the local Heart of America Chapter of ATOE for this most excellent presentation. Not only did they get the organ into very fine shape, but they also staged and presented John Nelson in a most effective and polished manner; the sound of a theatre pipe organ performed on by a most entertaining artist.



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Further information about this authentic re-creation from the golden era of the theatre organ can be obtained from . . .