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April/May 1978

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APRIL/MAY, 1978

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"Winifred," the 3/22 Wurlitzer at the Music Grinder Pizza Emporium in Marietta, Georgia. See story on page 5.

PAST PRESIDENTS

Richard Simonton
Feb. 1955 — Oct. 1958

Judd Walton
Oct. 1958 — July 1961

Tiny James
July 1961 — July 1964

Carl Norvell
July 1964 — July 1966

Richard Schrum
July 1966 — July 1968

Al Mason
July 1968 — July 1970

Stillman Rice
July 1970 — July 1972

Erwin A. Young
July 1972 — July 1974

Paul M. Abernethy
July 1974 — July 1976

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1959 — Jesse Crawford

1960 — Farny Wurlitzer

1961 — Mel Doner

1962 — Leonard MacClain

1963 — Eddie Dunstedter

1964 — Reginald Foort

1965 — Dan Barton

1966 — W. "Tiny" James

1967 — Erwin A. Young

1968 — Richard C. Simonton

1969 — Judd Walton

1970 — Bill Lamb

1971 — George and Vi Thompson

1972 — Stu Green

1973 — Al and Betty Mason

1974 — Lloyd E. Klos

1975 — Joe Patten

1976 — Floyd and Doris Mumm

1977 — Les and Edith Rawle

President's Message

In this issue of THEATRE ORGAN, in addition to many fine articles, you will find the current roster of chapter chairpersons and secretaries, the financial report for 1977, the 1978 budget and a preview of the Atlanta 1978 Convention.

The majority of chapters elect their leaders for this year in December or January. It is very interesting to see that a number of chapters have elected chairwomen and also women to serve in other offices or directors. I have always felt that

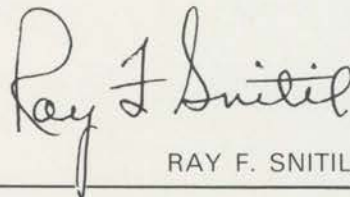
ATOS should be a family affair with the husband, wife and children all being active in all facets of furthering the aims and purposes of our society. The hard work that these here-to-fore 'silent' ATOS members have performed are now being recognized by their fellow members. They are the ones who prepare the refreshments, sell tickets, assist in the programs, help maintain the instruments like the men and the many other tasks that are so very important for the smooth operation of a well-run chapter. A hearty congratulation to all of the newly elected chapter officers, both men and women, who I am sure will have a great year. Also, a sincere 'well done' to those who have completed their terms of office because their work has been most beneficial to the growth of ATOS and their respective chapters.

Membership continues to grow with every report I receive from the membership department. In the past year, six new chapters have received their charters and presently there are two more being formed. It is so gratifying to have interested groups of members petitioning the national office for charters and bringing more members into our organization.

By the time this issue is received, the deadline of April 15, 1978 for nominations for Board of Directors will have passed. Ballots will be prepared and mailed to each member in good standing during the month of May, 1978. I hope that you will exercise your right to vote. Last year produced a record return and hopefully we will surpass that number this year.

The Atlanta and Birmingham Chapters are working together as a convention committee to formulate another great convention program in July, 1978 with beautiful theatres in Atlanta and Birmingham, great theatre and classical organs and a convention area that should have something to thrill all conventioners. We hope that many will be attending this great conclave.

Sincerely,



RAY F. SNITIL



“WINIFRED”

The Weber Wurlitzer

by James K. Jobson

THE THIRD DECENIUM of the Dick Weber family and their mighty Wurlitzer, “Winifred” was launched Sunday, June 12, 1977, when Atlanta chapter members were treated to a sneak preview at the Music Grinder Pizza Emporium. When the house lights dimmed, the shimmering gold curtains parted to display a fantastic array of pipes bathed in multi-colored lights under glass, with percussion presented in the magic of black light.

Walt Winn, spotlighted at the beautiful white and gold console, presented the organ in all its fabulous sounds and exciting lighting effects. The total presentation was so breathtaking it would be difficult to describe with words alone. You’ve got to see and hear it to believe it!

But let’s start this story from the beginning. It seems the Weber family is locked into a cycle of decades, the first of which began in 1957, with the purchase of the 3/15 Style 260 Wurlitzer from the North Park Theatre in Buffalo, New York. The instrument was in operation in Buffalo from 1926 until the middle or late thirties. Reclaimed by Dick Weber and his brother Bob, it was removed to Dick’s home on a hill overlooking Schenectady. As Dick describes it, the home was a large place designed while he was under the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright, with no right

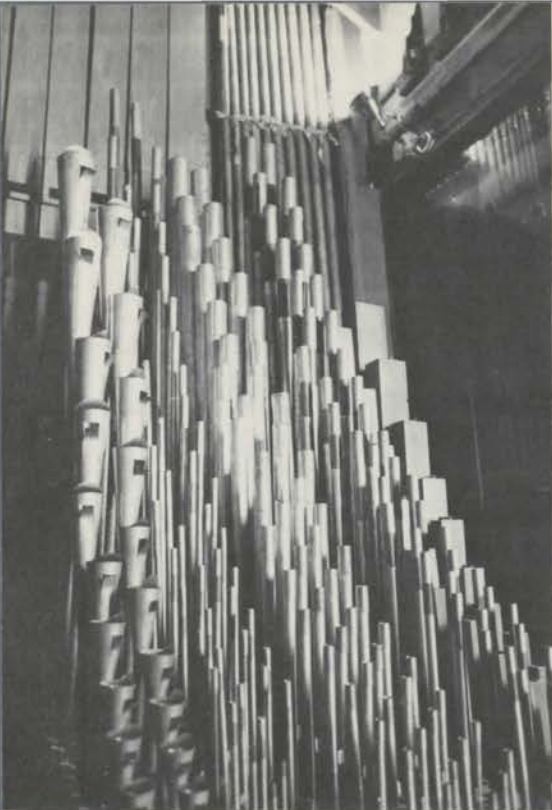
angles and a lot of glass. Winifred, as Billy Nalle dubbed the Wurlitzer, was thought of by the Webers as more economical to fill the huge home than with new furniture!

At any rate, Dick being a consummate diplomat as well as a confirmed organ addict, the family of three

daughters and wife Audrey were roped into helping with the rebuilding, installing and enlarging of the instrument with the addition of 7 ranks. The sound such an installation made in the large room with nothing but 120° angles and predominantly hard surfaces gave the

Winifred poses with “The Five Little Webers,” as Jay Mitchell affectionately calls them. A suitable third decade family portrait. (Tommy Thompson Photo)





Main Chamber under glass — some of Winifred's 25 ranks. (Tommy Thompson Photo)

family and many visiting organists a great deal of pleasure. You can hear that sound on Billy Nalle's recording, "Billy." Combine the sound with the spectacular scene through the glass wall of the Weber home overlooking the lights of Schenectady some 12 miles below, and you had the perfect setting.

Throughout the first decade after Winifred's "rebirth," maintenance and tuning were handled by the Webers — daughters Nancy, Sharon and Cindy, as well as Audrey, Dick and brother Bob. But, about 1964, Dick became somewhat uneasy with his complacency. Although it's hard for an outsider to understand fully, Dick explains he needed a change — to get away from the daily "grind" as art director for General Electric, the 12-mile trip each way every day to work. He needed a challenge in his life and a new interest all the family could participate in.

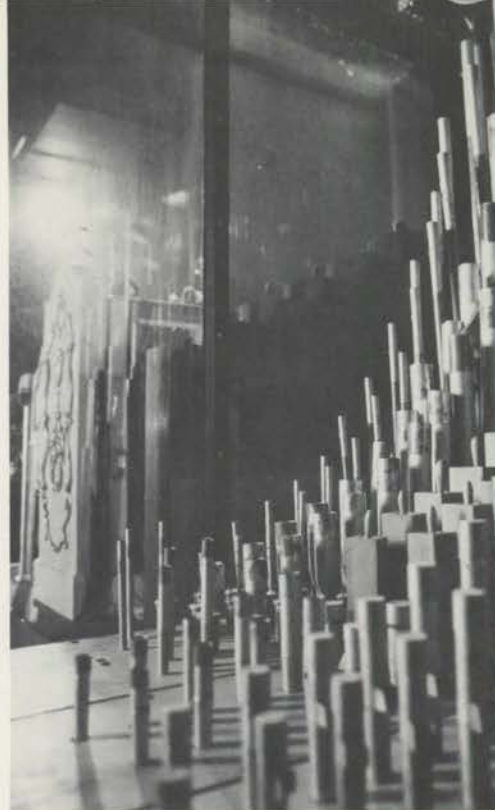
The itchy Weber feet led them to Plattsburgh, New York on the shores of Lake Champlain in the heart of the Adirondacks where they purchased the Strand Theatre and launched the second big decade. (complete story "A Family Affair" presented in August 1967 Theatre Organ/Bombarde Vol. IX #4) The entire structure was remodeled and modernized with air conditioning, new wiring and — of course — chambers for Winifred's 22 ranks

and a console lift. There followed in this resort area many stage productions of every sort including opera, as well as movies. The Strand became "alive" again, providing an outlet for the full-time impresario and his family to participate in Barbershop Quartets, Sweet Adelines, skits and other forms of show biz activity which, were it not for the enjoyment, might be called hard work. The "Winifred Sound" at the Strand is preserved on the RCA custom record set for *Readers Digest, The Organ Plays the Golden Favorites*, masterfully played by Billy Nalle.

By 1976, Dick, as usual began to take stock again. The daughters were growing up and would be fleeing the nest for their own pursuits; the family had enjoyed many rewarding times during their operation of the Strand, but the long, cold winters with heaps of snow were beginning to pall. In short, it was time to look for another outlet for the abundant Weber energy, and so they toured this country and Canada looking over the land with a view to locating a pizza emporium someplace where Winifred might be welcome, the climate a little more moderate, and the business of life simplified to an extent the daughters would have the freedom to develop in their own directions.

The place they found was on Franklin Road in Marietta, Georgia, just 16 miles northwest of Atlanta on I-75 at the Lockheed-Dobbins AFB exit — a free-standing building to accommodate the pizza operation with room for Winifred. The move

Walt Winn delighted Atlanta Chapter with his sneak preview of the mighty Weber Wurlitzer on June 12, 1977. (Tommy Thompson Photo)



Solo Chamber under glass — more of Winifred's 25 ranks. (Tommy Thompson Photo)

was started with the removal of the organ from the Strand in December, 1976 — all ten tons of it — during a blizzard which brought the chill factor down to minus 59° F. The wind was so high some of the workers were actually blown off the loading ramp. And in Marietta, the conditions were little better. The parking lot was unpaved and the area was in the midst of a rainy spell. The organ sat on the trailer in front of the building for 30 days before off-loading could be accomplished. And then the real work began.

The family got down to business again. New shutters had to be built and the chests had to be refitted to new quarters. Provisions were made for the addition of a second relay with switches for an additional 8 ranks in the new home — with all that extra wiring. Brother Bob was enlisted (along with his trusty soldering gun and the insulation provided by a bottomless martini glass) and they raised the first "noise" from Winifred just 5 weeks later. It was Walt Winn playing "Chattanooga Choo Choo" on the mighty Wurlitzer!

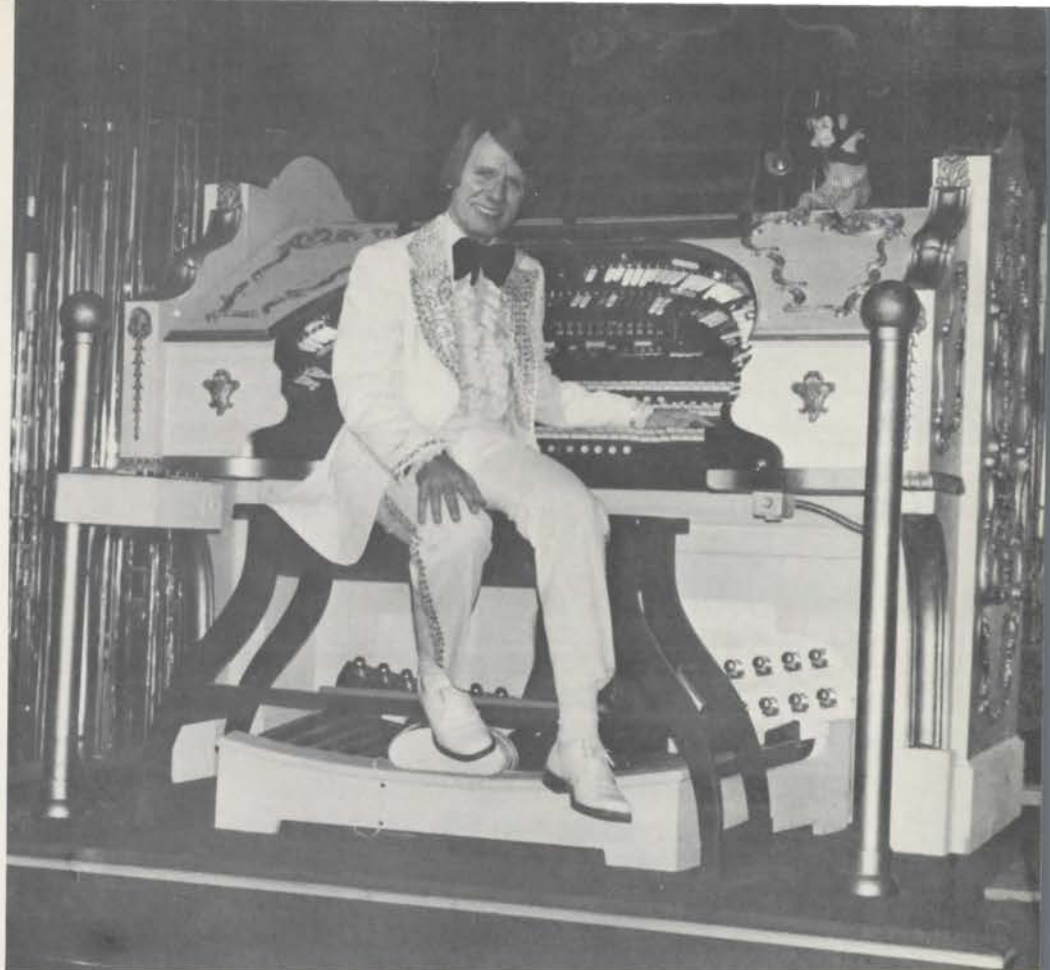
Now we Atlantans find ourselves the lucky beneficiaries of the third Weber Decade and are highly delighted to have these fine people among us. Chapter members find it impossible to visit the Webers in their Pizza Emporium less than once

a week — and when they do, sometimes overstay themselves until closing time.

Dick engaged Jay Mitchell, formerly staff organist for the Alabama Theatre in Birmingham, who, possessing the very special combination of talents required to handle this kind of instrument and its music, has built quite a following in the short time the Emporium has been open. His experience in the music field has given Jay a wide-range repertoire of both popular and classic works, and he handles the mike like an old pro, gaining immediate rapport with each night's audience. Something of Jay's personality and the Weber personality as well, has communicated itself to the public. Also featured is top-notch theatre organist, Walt Winn. Walt is a long-time Atlanta Chapter member who has been in evidence in the Fox tours, demonstrating the "Mighty Mo" with Bob Van Camp and has been very much on the scene, involved with the new additions to Winifred's ranks. Although he has his own sound-reinforcement business, we don't know when Walt sleeps — but when he is at the console, we let him worry about that.

The patrons at the Pizza Emporium are, for the most part, families. They bring the children — even the very young, who are fascinated by the light show, the lively music and an occasional silent movie. There has been no rowdyism, and the informality of the self-service operation maintains a level of restraint that speaks well both for the community and the Webers and their staff.

Atlanta Chapter is proud that the Webers will participate in the 1978



Jay Mitchell poses with Winifred for a formal portrait with the new king of the rhythm section, Henry, the mechanical monkey. (Dennis Naughton Photo)

Convention with a program at the Music Grinder. A most unusual experience awaits you with sounds and sights you'll never forget! Convention week will be a special time at the Music Grinder. Each evening of the convention, after hours, it will be open console for any professional organists who care to sample Winifred's charms. The jam sessions will likely go into the wee hours and promise to be a highlight of convention attendance.

Y'all Come! July 9-13, 1978. □

Exterior of the Music Grinder Pizza Emporium on Franklin Road, Marietta, Georgia.

(Tommy Thompson Photo)



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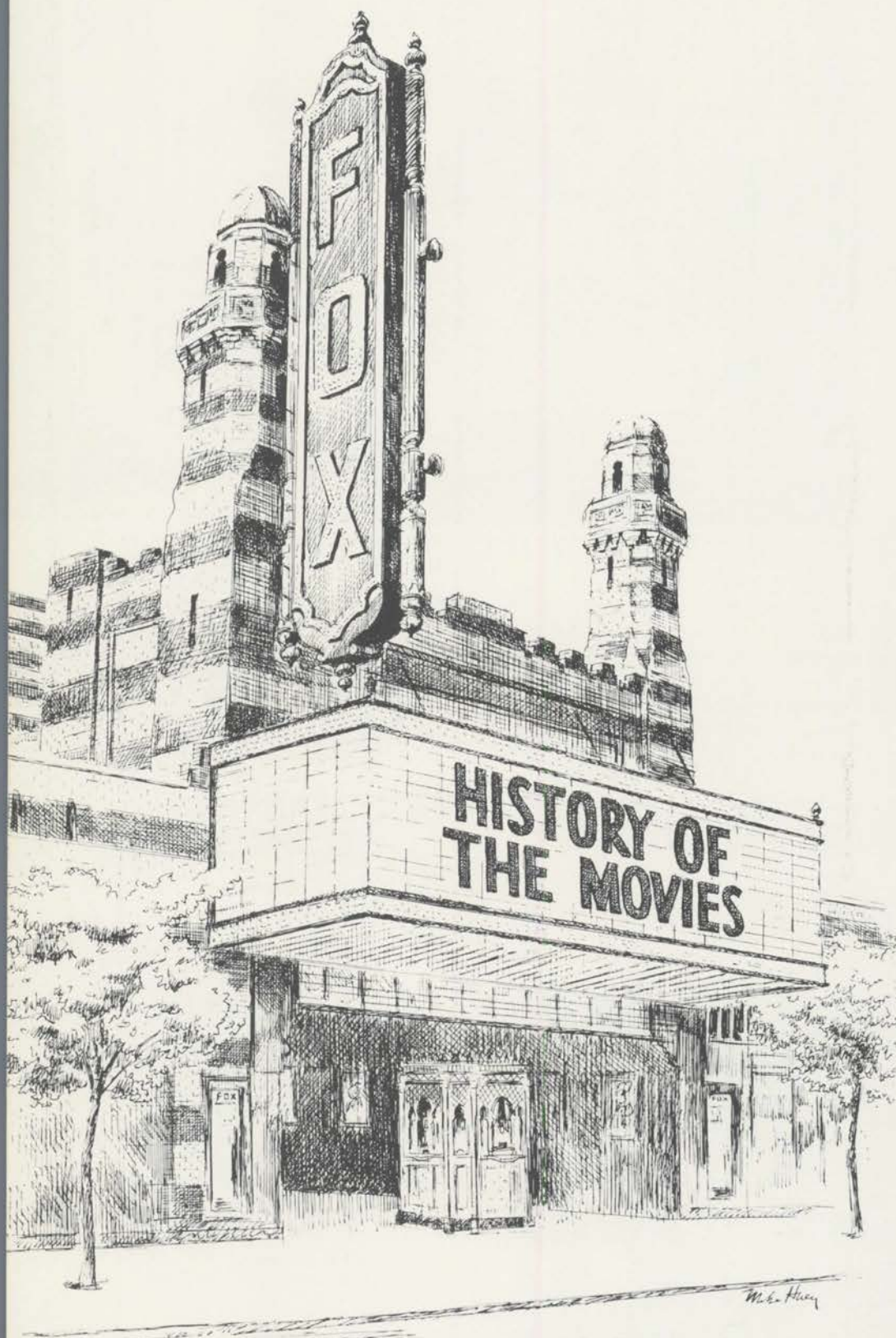
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THE FOX IS SAVED



Atlanta Landmarks paid off the \$1.8 million mortgage on the Atlanta Fox Theatre at noon on February 27, 1978! The following day at 11:00 a.m. in the Salon of the Fox, the formal announcement was made to the news media.

One point eight million dollars plus floating prime interest plus administrative expenses over a 3-year span is a lot of money. It's too early to know the exact total, but interest averaged about \$10,000 monthly, which would put the cost less expenses at about \$2.2.

It's been a long and laborious task and the ATOS members can be proud that were it not for the Organ Society this great edifice and its glorious 4/42 Moller Concert Organ would already be history. The love affair between the theatre and ATOS started more than a decade ago when arrangements were worked out with the theatre management for the local chapter to restore and maintain the organ in return for the privilege of occasional use for chapter meetings. That love affair continued and blossomed into a mutually rewarding experience for the chapter and theatre management.

It was only natural, then, for ATOS members to rally round the cause when the abrupt announcement of plans for razing the building was made in 1974. They became the pushers, die-hards, the tackles and strategists who played for delays and studies — who schemed and negotiated and ultimately came up with a viable plan to preserve the building. The form the plan took was a nonprofit corporation whose first project would be to save the Fox. Technically, the corporation — Atlanta Landmarks — assembled several parcels of adjacent property and traded this newly assembled package to Southern Bell for their new office building site. In so doing, Landmarks assumed a \$1.2 million loan at floating prime interest from five Atlanta banks, the mortgage

guaranteed by the former owners. Mosque, Inc., who would remain the owner of the Fox if Landmarks should default on even one payment of interest.

Then the fun began! Chapter members got busy with petitions, publicity and scrub brushes. While some were repairing and restoring parts of the building so it could open as a live entertainment showcase, others were putting together mailing lists from among the thousands who had expressed interest in saving the Fox through signature on petitions. It was an every-night affair from the time members left one job to after midnight and full time on weekends. They begged paint and materials — then applied the elbow grease to finish the job. Some moved their cots into the nether reaches of the underground complex and virtually lived in the building until the job was done.

Once open, the theatre was self-sustaining from the start, through rental for everything from rock shows to grand opera. But behind the scenes work was still in progress to get the interest money. John Clark McCall, Jr. wrote *Atlanta Fox Album*. He donated the book to help raise funds through sales to theatre patrons and others by mail. The second, third and fourth printings were done for material cost only by another member, adding full color to the four covers of the book. Over 20,000 have been sold.

Chapter members manned the concession stands, ushered, conducted tours, cleaned up after performances — any and everything needed to keep the ship afloat and profitable. While Landmarks ran the office and received the donations, chapter members beat the bushes, sold T-shirts, scrounged supplies and materials. Lyn Larsen volunteered to appear for a chapter-sponsored benefit, which he graciously performed at no fee. This was followed by a chapter-sponsored Halloween Happening featuring Dennis James and *The Phantom of the Opera*. In December, 1976 the chapter sponsored a Christmas Organ Concert on a Sunday afternoon to a good house. Then, in April, the Keyboard Colossus was masterminded by the Georgia State University Music Department and the chapter as a benefit with gala re-

ception, followed June 10 by a chapter-sponsored benefit with the donated services of Hector Olivera at the console of the Mighty Mo. In the meantime the chapter sent a solicitation letter to the national membership and published a stereo recording from its archives of previous concerts, both projects raising additional funds for the campaign.

For all the events sponsored at the theatre, the chapter paid full commercial rates on rent and fees. In the case of the Colossus, most performers donated their fees to the Save the Fox fund. In all the activities to date, the chapter grossed about \$40,000 and netted just over \$25,000 which was turned over to Landmarks.

Lest you get the idea the chapter saved the Fox without other help — it did not. It was in the van, however, with 14,000 loyal contributors of \$5, \$10, \$25 and more on a regular basis to keep the interest paid, the doors open and provide the necessary time to find the big money. Without that time, the big money would have been of no use.

What you will read in the press

about saving the Fox is about the National Endowment for the Arts grant and the few anonymous donors who gave substantial sums restricted to payment of principal only. But because this is the ATOS Magazine directed to its members, it is important to chronicle the part ATOS played in the enterprise.

In no way do we wish to diminish the vital contributions of the National Endowment for the Arts and the various donors to this worthy cause. When the figures are available, a supplementary statement will be furnished to show where the principal sums originated.

The smell of success . . . how sweet it is! Atlanta Chapter has had an education in fund raising and we don't want it to go to waste. You see, we have found this small neighborhood theatre close-in to the heart of the city that's already equipped with a Moller — we'll call it the "Mini-Mo." The complex is about the right size for our chapter — for meetings, for special presentations and maybe some silents. We understand the owner could be influenced . . . well . . . !!



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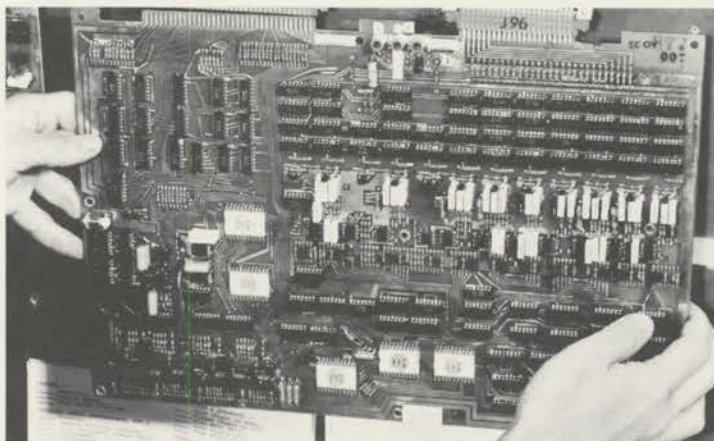
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THEATRE ORGAN

APRIL/MAY, 1978

GOODBYE TO THE CAL

by John Bigby — photos by John Bigby and Walter McCallum

Most would agree that the cultural blight of landmark desecration, so far as theatres are involved, started in earnest with the razing of the New York Roxy in 1959-60. Since then all of us are the poorer for the levelling of such representative theatres as the Dallas Palace, the San Francisco

Fox and Paramount, the Los Angeles Metropolitan/Paramount, the Rochester, N.Y. Palace, the Brooklyn Fox, the Portland (O.) Oriental, the Minneapolis Radio City — the list goes on and on. Here and there groups have formed to fight the "progress" of ever-expanding parking lots in

place of theatres, and they have had some success. But in most cases the theatre is lost. The story which follows was written by cinema enthusiast John Bigby and appeared in the August 17-23 News-Herald (Santa Rosa, Calif.), and is reprinted with permission.

On November 26, 1960, Jack Bethards held an ATOS (then ATOE) meeting and concert at the California Theatre. The house was the focal point of theatre organ interest in the Santa Rosa area for many years.

(POSTHORN files Photo)

To set the scene, an editorial. In an August 1977 issue of the newspaper, editor David Bolling bristled.

Culture vs Building Codes

It came as no surprise recently that the City of Santa Rosa rejected a thoughtful offer by fans of the California Theatre to stage a retrospective film program honoring the era of Cinema the Cal has witnessed and hosted.

The explanation offered was that the theatre had been previously cited for not meeting building codes.

If United Artists, the theatre's previous owner, was not willing to make repairs why should the city, which bought the building to make way for an urban renewal parking lot?

But the California Theatre, and all it represents, does not fit into a simple management equation. There is much more to consider than building codes and abatement policies.

United Artists was permitted to continue commercial use of the facility until a few weeks ago. It is



logical, therefore, to assume that no one in city government was alarmed enough about hazards inside the theatre to require its immediate closing.

Why then should not private interests be allowed to lease the theatre, assume all liability, and give the Cal and its fans the kind of tribute appropriate for the passing of a local landmark?

Maybe one problem lies with a prevailing national insensitivity to things that are old, outdated, no

longer particularly useful. We are a utilitarian society, we pride ourselves on American efficiency and on the technology that has spurred our extraordinary material progress.

But we simultaneously hide our elderly away in nursing homes, we channelize and build over our creeks, and we destroy the monuments that connect us to the past. We seem to be content if history can be relegated to text books and video tape.

Maybe this has something to do with our national rootlessness and

the fact that not enough of us ever live anywhere long enough to develop a connection to buildings and streams and people. In our headlong leap forward maybe we don't often enough look back.

That's what made the proposal by John Bigby and John Lambert, two local film experts, so attractive. They wanted to take us all backward, into the American past, recorded in films once shown at the Cal. Their retrospective was to have been an acknowledgement of where we've all come from and, implicitly, a statement about how our culture has evolved.

It could have been a beautiful experience, for the Cal, for film fans, for anyone interested in pursuing cultural roots. It won't happen now, and that's a shame. It's a shame that city leaders don't place at least as much value in cultural enrichment as they do in building codes.

Now to John Bigby's story, which we believe speaks for all of us who have experienced the destruction of a beloved theatre.

Gee Dad, It Really Was A Wurlitzer

The 1800-seat California Theatre was built in 1923. For half a century it gave downtown moviegoers a sense of their place in the world, a tangible touch with the illusions of the past and present. Over the years the grandeur faded here and there, and the pressures of the automobile, television, and simple economics threatened the Cal.

There are people today with both a sense of the past and a vision for the future, though, and they have saved the California Theatre. It has been thoroughly renovated and, in its glory, will serve as a link in one of the nation's most exciting urban redevelopment projects.

By the end of September, the Cal Theatre will own a Wurlitzer organ. Once again the great pipes will, in the words of theatre historian Ben M. Hall, "make the marrow dance in one's bones."

The only trouble with this scenario is that the renovated California Theatre is in San Diego. And its "new" organ is the one originally installed in our own 1612-seat California Theatre in 1923. Wurlitzer Hope-Jones Unit Orchestra (Style D-Special) Serial Number 0715 left Santa Rosa



Typical organ moving scene. The rented truck is ready to be packed with disassembled organ parts. Dick Grigsby and Sandy Fleet prepare pedal Diapason pipes for the long journey. Note the drum at right.

Some pipe organ components require muscle to move. The main chest is no lightweight.



August 6, 1977 in a rented truck headed south.

After 54 years on B Street, our Wurlitzer has a new home in a lovely old theatre. And our California Theatre is to be replaced by a lovely new parking lot.

Denied an opportunity to bid farewell to our Cal with a last series of great American films, denied even the courtesy of anything more than a two-minute telephone conversation by the Santa Rosa Urban Redevelopment Agency, a group of the Cal's friends had one last request: tell us when they are going to remove the Wurlitzer.

Urban Redevelopment, of course, didn't tell, but on Thursday, August 4, movie fan Wes Porter, manager of the new UA-6 and manager of the Cal before it was closed, placed a phone call: "They're coming at 9:00 tomorrow morning to take it out."

There's something very depressing about an empty theatre — all the more so when one knows it is never to open again. On Friday morning, three Santa Rosans who are involved in film in one way or another, and who happened to grow up in the Cal Theatre, met at the candy counter for the last time.

Tina Aslin, Walt McCallum, and I have decided to make, for ourselves, our own farewell to the Cal: a documentary film about the theatre. These are our reactions to two days in August 1977, inside Santa Rosa's last real movie house.

Friday, August 5

It is dark inside. McCallum comments that he had never thought about that: there are no bright lights when the show is over. It's always a world of shadows inside the Cal.

The rent-a-truck is backed up to the stage door. The Cal has a real stage, larger than the Oakland Paramount's we are told by Porter. It has dressing rooms, transient homes to vaudeville performers when they were riding the trains from one small city to another. It has a call board, an orchestra pit, and a band room under the stage. We find a bit of graffiti, dated 1929 — a mark left by some travelling saxophonist, more permanent than he must have expected, yet not eternal. By October the bulldozers will have erased what a half-century of dust merely obscured.

And the Cal has an organ. Two men have come with a truck to take it to San Diego. Introductions are wary: we don't want anyone fooling with our theatre, and they have had experience with fanatical organ enthusiasts in other removals.

The three of us — Aslin, McCallum, Bigby — are very depressed. So is Porter, though he won't let it show — a theatre manager in every best sense of the job, a man who cares for his films and his audiences, he cares for his theatre. He talks of

changes he had planned for "my lobby" to make the Cal even more pleasant.

The dismantlers are Wendell Shoberg and Bob Lewis, both of San Diego. We know nothing about theatre organs, and aren't going to give them trouble. They understand why we would want to film the place before it's gone. They understand movie houses and movie fans. We are comfortable with them now.

Shoberg goes to work. To us the organ is its visible self, the console



The movers gather for a formal portrait. Left to right: Fred Beeks, Ray Krebs (holding two Tibia treble pipes), Wendell Schoberg (one tiny Tibia), Sandy Fleet (with offset pipe chest), pilot Dick Grigsby Jr. (with Diapason pipe) and Bob Lewis (holding Tuba resonator).

Bulky switch stacks and relays are always a mover's headache. Fred Beeks (left), a veteran of many organ transplants, looks apprehensive.



in the orchestra pit. He's starting elsewhere, up in the chamber at stage left where the pipes are. That's the organ, we learn. Shoberg is a skilled worker, kidding the way journeymen do, careful to damage neither organ nor theatre, sure of himself.

Bob Lewis began playing theatre organs in a Phoenix movie house in 1930. He is gracious, willing to talk, yet bent on getting the job done. We learn much from both of them.

With them we explore the Wurlitzer's functions, written in Indian ink longhand on the fine wood fram-

ing in 1923. We spot the Trumpet, the Flute, the Cathedral Chimes. Piece by piece, wrapping each part as carefully as one wraps Christmas ornaments on New Years Day, they remove the Castanets, the Xylophone, the Glockenspiel. Backstage, over the next two days, all the Wurlitzer's effects — Kettle Drum, Snare Drum, Chinese Blocks, even the Automobile Horn — will rest, waiting packing, transit and patient reassembly.

There is a cloud on the horizon. We know that one Preston Fleet, wealthy San Diegan, has purchased

the organ. He is flying up to Santa Rosa to supervise and will arrive any moment.

Fleet will donate the Wurlitzer to the San Diego Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society, which will be responsible for its care. Like Shoberg and Lewis, he is a member of ATOS.

Accompanied by his pilot, Dick Grigsby, and another organ enthusiast, Ray Krebs, Fleet arrives. Perhaps in his late forties, youthful and unassuming in short sleeves and a CAT cap, Fleet wears an "organ power" button.

We like him. We are genuinely glad that these men have care of "our" organ. We learn that, until recently, theatres were actually bulldozed with the organs still in place. Fleet bought his first theatre organ seven years ago — "when nobody wanted them" — for \$500. The Cal's Wurlitzer brought \$8000, we had been told, earlier in the week. We do not ask if that is so; it seems unimportant.

Shoberg, Lewis, Krebs work away. The organ had been placed in its chamber before the plaster grill work went up, but Urban Redevelopment wants the plaster left intact (for the bulldozer?), so the heavy, bulky, musical machinery must come out the hard way. With muscle and patience, with rope and mashed fingers, the job continues. Everyone calls Fleet "Sandy." He works as hard as any of the crew; indeed they seem to be equals, bound by their concern for the instrument.

I'm captured on film holding the end of a safety rope. "You're helping them take it out!" someone kids me. "No, I'm trying to keep it here," I answer, and I see myself in a Buster Keaton scene — five strong men pulling a piano-sized piece of wood and pipes down a narrow stair, me holding a rope at the top of the flight and convincing myself I'm all that's keeping the thing from moving.

But I know I am helping, and I'm glad. It's late. The three filmmakers are tired, emotionally drained as the movers are physically; but we are no longer depressed. The enthusiasm, the skill, the kindness of the San Diegans have made us forget the bulldozers.

Sentimentality reigns. We see the Wurlitzer as a real, physical organ — the heart of the Cal, removed to

Final moment. The doomed theatre witnesses the loading of the console, bound for a more congenial atmosphere for theatre organs — San Diego.



give new life to another body. "It's an organ transplant" one of us quips. Sandy Fleet has no doubt heard that one before, but he smiles. So do we.

Saturday, August 6

The job was to take three days, but the Cal's Wurlitzer No. 0715 is in such excellent condition that the crew hopes to finish today. For many years organist Jack Bethards has carefully maintained the Wurlitzer. Only two years ago the organ astounded a new generation of moviegoers in accompaniment to the silent "Phantom of the Opera" at one of the Cal's special shows.

McCallum, Aslin, and I take more pictures. From the stage, the ceiling mural of Chinese moderne peasants looks all wrong — out of perspective. We sit in the front row of seats; the perspective is correct, as it is from the last row of the balcony.

There's not much for the filmmakers to do now, but we're intent on waiting until the console itself is moved out. That promises to be the best visual material for our film. And we have other reasons to stay.

They need more padding for wrapping pipes. Aslin volunteers to go home and get old newspapers. "I don't believe it," Manager Porter says.

Sandy Fleet tells us about the Roxy in New York, about great organists and great movie palaces. He heard his first theatre organ as a child when Ed Borgens played in Los Angeles. "Borgens was a showman — he's the man who first put

the candelabra on Liberace's piano." Fleet learned to play only after he bought his first theatre organ.

Since then he has performed on over forty music tracks to re-issue silent films. He is himself a film producer — he mentions "Cabaret," which he helped finance, and talks with warmth about "Shinbone Alley," for which he won an award at the Atlanta Film Festival.

An Urban Redevelopment carpenter begins boarding up the fire escapes. I'm very glad Wurlitzer 0715 has a way out. Like the Cal itself, it deserves better than the city of Santa Rosa has given it.

Carefully repacked, rearranged, the truck is ready for the console. We've been directed to a book, Ben M. Hall's *The Best Remaining Seats*, which discusses movie theatre architecture and organs: "... there were a score or more manufacturers of theatre organs, but the Wurlitzer basked in the same sweet sunlight of generic familiarity as the Frigidaire, the Victorola, and the Kodak ... to the average moviegoer ... its rows of colored tabs, lit by hidden lights, arched like a rainbow above the flawless dental work of the keyboards ... if it could imitate anything from a brass band to a Ford horn to a choir of angels — gee, Dad, it was a Wurlitzer!"

The console is to be brought up the aisle, through the lobby, and loaded under the marquee. It's dark now, and we are worried about light. We ask Wes Porter if he can turn on all the neon around the blank mar-

quee.

"Yes."

We're beginning to realize that the shot for which we have been waiting in the Cal two days is not really visually interesting at all. But it doesn't matter. It means a great deal to us all, for the two days as well as the two decades we spent in that place.

The console goes up the liftgate into the truck. Wendell closes the door. "Can you close it again? I missed it with my camera."

He is exhausted, sweaty, eager to leave. He smiles, opens the truck door, and closes it again with exaggerated gestures worthy of a 1923 two-reeler.

We smile, too. We're on the sidewalk, and we'll never be inside the Cal again. We smile and our eyes are moist.

Wes says, "You know, I ought to leave the marquee lights on all night."

Sunday, August 7

After midnight, our Wurlitzer well down the road, I return and drive up B Street, past the Cal Theatre.

The marquee lights are still on.

It's a gesture Urban Redevelopment would not have made.

Postscript, Dec. 20

The California Theatre in Santa Rosa is now a vacant lot. We watched with heavy hearts as the loge seats — the first rocking-chair loges in America — were ground into the earth by the bulldozer's tracks. I'm glad the organ escaped that fate. □

The Mighty Detroit FOX THEATRE 4/36 WURLITZER in Concert!

Friends of the Fox, Inc. (Detroit)
presents

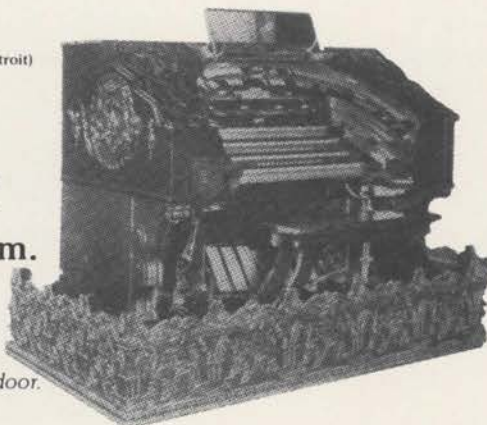
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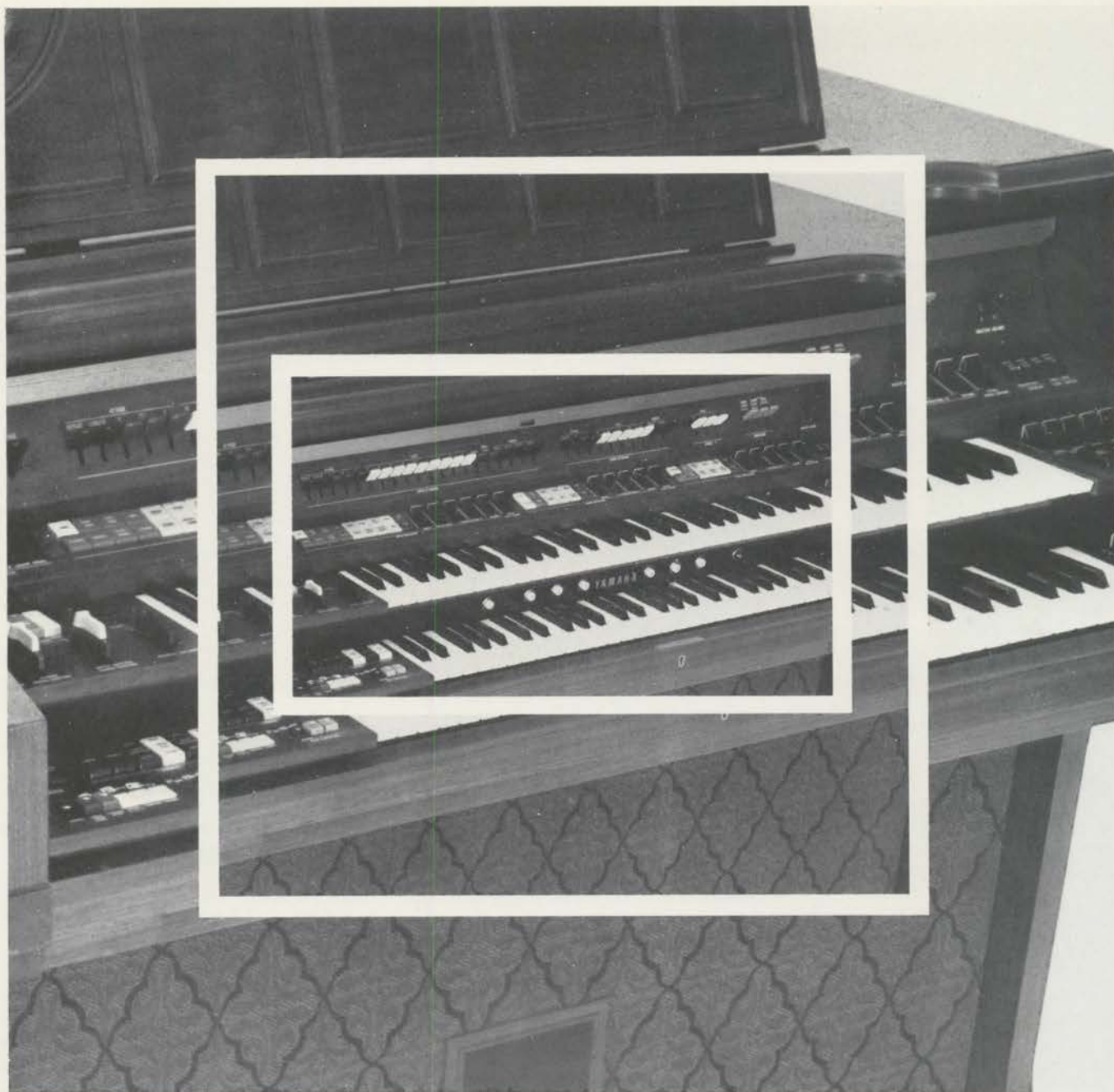
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The last remaining "Fox Special" Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ, in original condition and installation, is in the magnificent Detroit Fox Theatre. A great deal of work has been done recently on this amazing instrument, so that it **plays and sounds better than it has in decades!** Sunday, May 21, is your chance to hear this unique organ in concert, played by top-notch, up-and-coming organist Gary Reseigh. Tickets are available at the Fox Theatre Box Office or by mail. Send a check or money order, payable to **Friends of the Fox, Inc.**, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: **Friends of the Fox, P.O. Box 19081, Det., MI 48219.** Seating limited to 5,042.



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FORGOTTEN MELODIES

by John Muri

In a 1923 article, Chicago organist D. Kenneth Widenor gently criticized Jesse Crawford for continually improvising during picture accompaniments. Crawford often played new popular tunes during serious films, and the cause may have been that he was trying to memorize the pop material for solo use later. Widenor complimented him for invariably playing solos from memory. Others of us, the small timers, would play many hours a day, during which steady improvising would have been deadly. I know of no movie organist who did not possess a large musical library; the hours passed much faster at the console when one played legitimate music.

Since we are no longer asked to do marathon stretches, there is little or no need to know large amounts of good music. Consequently, there now exists a huge library of good material that no one plays. Part of the blame rests upon television and radio programmers, whose formats have become so rigid that little more than background noise is needed for anything other than shows like the *Boston Pops*, *Lawrence Welk*, and the like. FM stations get somewhat monotonous with their over-play of old musical comedy material, but most AM music is beneath contempt.

There was a standard repertory of material that every theatre organist needed to know. It fell clearly into nationalistic categories and mood groups. One had to have a few marches for newsreels, some light, capricious material of the sort available in the fine Schirmer Library of Musical Classics, some catastrophe music, and an ample quantity of romantic pieces. Operatic selections (mostly from *Carmen*, *Faust*, *Trovatore*, and *Aida*) were staples. Victor Herbert's music ("Gypsy Love Song," "Kiss Me Again," "Ah Sweet Mystery") was very popular. Everybody

played Rudolf Friml. Wherever you went, you could hear "Allah's Holiday," "Giannina Mia," "Rose Marie," and "Sympathy." His numerous suites were standards for both theatre orchestras and organists. Fine waltzes like Linck's "Spring, Beautiful Spring" and Waldteufel's "Skater's Waltz" were backgrounds for travel films, as were Edvard Grieg's shorter pieces, particularly the first Peer Gynt suite. The part of it called "Morning" was so overworked that orchestras used it for ridicule and comic effects. The list of ballads was interminable. One had to know dozens of songs like "Roses of Picardy," "Song of Songs," "On the Road to Mandalay," "Oh Promise Me" and "Because" for sentimental scenes. Offenbach's "Apache Dance" was needed so frequently that it would be a disgrace not to know it.

There were many fine album collections. Very good material was to be found in *Piano Pieces the Whole World Plays* and in Erno Rapee's 1924 volume, *Motion Picture Moods*. The latter volume, together with M.L. Lake's "Mammoth Orchestra Collection: Songs of the World," provided all the nationalistic material likely to be needed. The numerous Sam Fox Orchestra Folios included pieces that everyone had to play, like "Japanese Sunset," "Sparklets," and the unsinkable "Nola."

Classical material made successful solo work in many theatres, depending upon the cultural make-up of the community. Jesse Crawford used classics like Tchaikowsky's "March Slav" and Massenet's "Meditation" whenever he felt that the current

Mr. Muri's opinions expressed herein are his own and do not necessarily reflect the policies of ATOS or THEATRE ORGAN Magazine.

week's popular output wasn't worth playing in the spotlight. Bach, Vierne, Guilmant, etc. were out, however, as being too heavy or distasteful to theatre audiences, or too hard to play on small organs.

Operatic repertory was limited to a few works, because there was no popular radio before 1924 and no television before 1947. The prestigious Victor Red Seal Records, featuring the best-selling Enrico Caruso, Amelita Galli-Curci, and Luisa Tetrazzini (among others) made Donizetti's sextet from *Lucia* and Verdi's *Rigoletto* quartet so well known that organists could successfully play the transcriptions as solos for audiences that ordinarily did not care for classical music. Victor artists like Fritz Kreisler made their own recorded compositions famous, so that organists could transcribe "Liebesfreud" or "Caprice Viennois" to good response. Kreisler wasn't above recording pop tunes like "On Miami Shore," "Indian Love Call," "Deep in My Heart," and "Songs My Mother Taught Me."

A strange phenomenon was the widespread use of Ponchielli's "Dance of the Hours." It is not an easy piece to play, but the more unskilled the organists were, the more often they tried to play the piece (and mangle it.) There was a high correlation: the worse the organist was, the more he liked to attack the "Dance of the Hours." You categorized yourself by playing it.

There are hundreds of fine popular compositions that have gone unplayed for years. Many were the top tunes of their day. "Leave Me with a Smile" was an enormously popular hit in 1918. "Some Sunny Day" was a top tune on what would have been called the hit parade of 1924; it was played to death on the crystal-radio sets that were burgeoning all over the country. Chicago station KYW was on the air only one hour a night, from 8 to 9, and "Some Sunny Day" was played on it every night for a time. Few people today know of its existence. Walter Donaldson's "Changes," Mack Gordon's "There's a Lull in My Life," Louis Alter's "My Kinda Love" — all are too good to forget.

There is little valid excuse for performing repetitions of too-familiar material. A few years ago, organists went on a binge playing "Raindrops

Falling on My Head." It got so monotonous that one theatre organ club requested organists not to schedule the tune on their programs. It would be of benefit to everyone, players and listeners alike, if lists of selections played (instead of subjective reviews) were printed in our publication in the way that *The Diapason* did with classical programs for years. Performers could learn therefrom what they should refrain from playing in the interests of freshness and variety. Prospective employers could learn a great deal more about players by studying their programs than they would from reviews too often expressed only in exuberant general terms. It might not stop some determined players from beating old musical horses to death, but it might make others give more serious thought to programming.

It is everyone's loss that much great and not-so-great music is no longer played. Theatre music was mostly second or third-rated material, but it pointed the way to more extended and better things. The pop music of the theatre age was of relatively high quality because the other music that was played in profusion was respectable, even if not of the highest quality. Today's pop music is what it is because there is little else with which to compare it. It illustrates again a truism that is now a cliché: if we neglect something, it will deteriorate. A legion of forgotten melodies could bear revival. □

moving?



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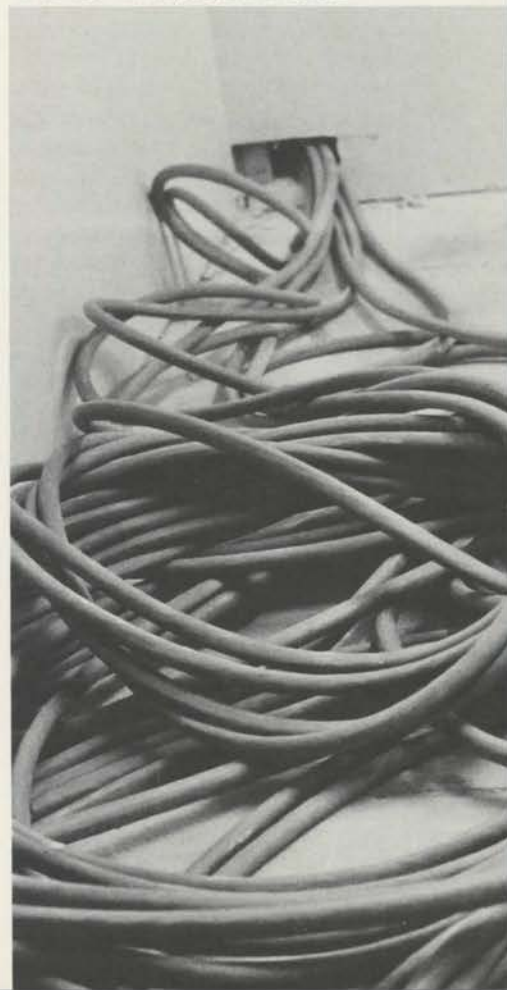
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The Significance of the Mightiest Wurlitzer

When The Wurlitzer Company announced the construction of a theatre organ for their new corporate headquarters, theatre organ enthusiasts sensed something significant was happening. Indeed, the excitement has generated almost as many rumors as questions. Still, two questions remain unanswered. How significant is this instrument? And why is it being built at this time?

The answer to both questions lies in the history of The Wurlitzer Company. The Company can point to a long list of pioneering achievements in the American music industry. For example, Rudolph Wurlitzer was one of the first to streamline the distribution of musical instruments from manufacturer to customer, thus making music affordable to all Americans. At the turn of the century, the Wurlitzer Tonophone, which made automatic music at the drop of a coin, won a Gold Medal at the Pan American Exposition. We all know about Wurlitzer's leadership in theatre organ design and construction. Wurlitzer juke boxes set the style for public music from the thirties right through the sixties. And today, Wurlitzer is one of the world's leading manufacturers of

Huge cables snake out of the wall and into the orchestral chamber of The Mightiest Wurlitzer. Over 342 miles of wire have been laid to connect the console with relays, boards and chests.



keyboard instruments for homes and education.

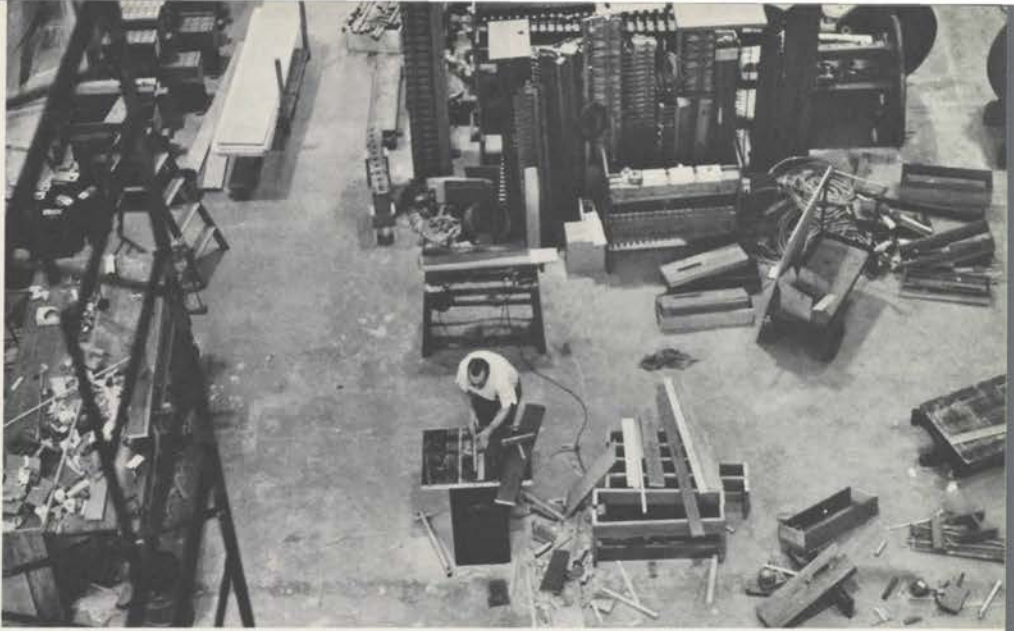
All of this activity took place over 12 decades in a number of different locations: Cincinnati, Chicago, North Tonawanda, DeKalb, IL and more recently Corinth and Holly Springs, MS and Logan, UT. Now that all corporate activities have been centered in the new headquarters in DeKalb, you might say that The Wurlitzer Company has built itself a home. And at the center of this home is magnificent Wurlitzer Hall, a fitting site for the ultimate theatre organ.

The organ's primary purpose is to preserve a uniquely twentieth century American art form — the design and construction of theatre organs. In fact, you might call it a uniquely Wurlitzer art, because Wurlitzer was one of the few organ builders who designed and constructed whole instruments, including all of their component parts.

But the art of theatre organ building was not static. During that third of the century when Wurlitzer was most active in making pipe organs, the theatre organ and its distinctive voices underwent a definite evolution. The Tibia and Vox Humana, for examples, although uniquely Wurlitzer in tonal qualities, sounded very much different in 1926, say, than they did in 1916 or 1921. Therefore, among the more than five dozen ranks in The Mightiest Wurlitzer, there will be at least five representative Tibia ranks and five Vox ranks.

This attempt to build an instrument that is representationally complete points up the reason for its size. It is Wurlitzer's intention to provide an instrument capable of producing historically authentic sounds from a number of different evolutionary points along the way to the ultimate Mighty Wurlitzer organs of the late twenties and early thirties. Typical Wurlitzer church organ ranks are also included in The Mightiest's specifications.

Now that Wurlitzer has consolidated its national and international activities in one centrally located headquarters, the theatre organ also has a home. The Mightiest Wurlitzer, then, is a significant tribute to both the organ maker's art and the organist's. Because now there will be one instrument capable of demonstrating the scope of both. □

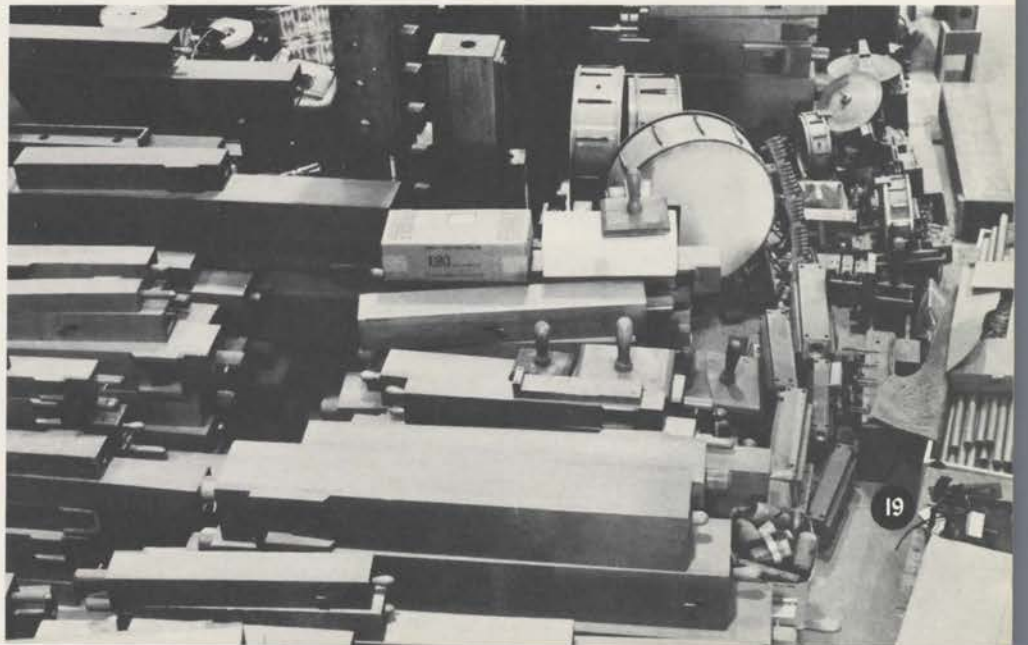


The view from the open shelf of the Toy Counter of The Mightiest Wurlitzer. The carpenter working some forty feet below trims replacement parts to original Wurlitzer specifications.



Lou Rosa, friend and confidant to the late Fanny Wurlitzer, is still an active member of the Wurlitzer staff. Here he checks the relay wiring on The Mightiest Wurlitzer during installation at Wurlitzer Corporate Headquarters in DeKalb, IL.

Pipes, traps and chests laid out and inventoried on the floor of Wurlitzer Hall before installation. The Mightiest Wurlitzer will include typical examples of the evolutionary development of the theatre pipe organ.



For The Records



Manufacturers, distributors or individuals sponsoring or merchandising theatre pipe organ records are encouraged to send pressings to the Record Reviewer, Box 3564, Granada Hills, California 91344. Be sure to include purchasing information, if applicable, and if possible a black and white photo which need not be returned.

MUSIC OF THE '20s and '30s, Al Sacker at the Wurlitzer organ. Stereo. \$6.50 postpaid from Robert E. Cormier, Box 16094, Houston, Texas 77022.

Al Sacker is the chairman of the newly formed Southeast Texas ATOS chapter, and rightfully so, considering all the effort he has put into saving the Jefferson theatre in Beaumont and its Robert Morton organ. In fact the voluminous jacket notes are devoted to the story of the lifelong love affair between Al and the Morton. Yet the music on this platter is played on an unidentified Wurlitzer which we'd estimate has about 13 ranks.

Al is an intermission organist of the old school who prefers the tunes written back when so many of them were good. His selections include: "Smile Darn Ya Smile," "Carolina in the Morning," "Five Foot Two," "Charleston," "I Want to be Happy," "Aint She Sweet," "Heartaches," "I'm Looking Over a Four-Leaf Clover," "By a Waterfall," "The Best Things in Life are Free," "Sonny Boy," "Little White Lies," "My Mother's Eyes," "Paradise,"

"Bye Bye Blackbird," "Makin' Whoopee," "Goodnight a Thousand Goodnights," and "When You're Smiling" — all those memorable tunes by DeSylva, Brown and Henderson; Gus Kahn, Irving Caesar; Vincent Youmans; Ager and Yellen, Sammy Fain and especially Walter Donaldson.

Al plays them in typical intermission style, mostly with a toe-tapping beat and no changes of key within a selection. In fact, there is little evidence of any special arranging; Al just plays the tunes in his exuberant and jingly style, mostly choruses with an occasional brief verse.

The "mystery organ" is well adapted to rhythmic selections. It has a bright presence and the prominent percussions indicate they are unhampered by expression. It doesn't fare so well during such ballads as "Sonny Boy," "Little White Lies," and "Paradise" when Al solos the Tibia, which has the hard sound of a rick "Stopped Flute" type of Tibia. The ensemble sound is well-knit, and Al solos a keen brass reed during "Paradise" and "By a Waterfall." The pitched percussions are used with restraint. Al is a tasteful player who keeps his obvious enthusiasm in check. He seems most at home doing the rhythm tunes and a little less so during some of the ballads. There are a couple of indecisive moments but they don't reach out to the listener.

As we mentioned the jacket notes have to do with the Jefferson Theatre which is not germane to this album,



Al Sacker and the 'mystery Wurlitzer.'
(Hockmeyer Photo)

yet the Sacker history is of interest; Al has been musical since the age of seven and organ-oriented since nine. From the over-all sound we would judge that recording engineer Robert Cormier overcame a number of miking problems to obtain the quality of sound presented here. The review pressing was good.

This one is for those old timers who invariably sat through two shows to hear the intermission organist twice. It was worth it, wasn't it?

WRIGHT ON! George Wright at the So. Pasadena Rialto Theatre 2/10 Wurlitzer and the San Gabriel Civic Auditorium 3/16 Wurlitzer. L112 stereo. \$7.00 postpaid (Californians add 6% sales tax) from Lurite Records, Box 27-522, Dept T, Hollywood, Calif. 90027.

The release of this long-awaited recording was beset by many of the delays and misfortunes which can overtake a new record company. Release date was announced as coincident with George's ATOS convention "afterglow" concert last July 4. But Lurite's supplier failed to come through with the album jackets until much later. Then it was discovered that a large number of the pressings were flawed. More delay while the pressings were replaced. Lurite was very open and frank with its impatient mail order customers, explaining the delay and apologizing — which must set some sort of precedent. We can hold no grudge toward Lurite in view of their aboveboard admissions.

Side 1 consists of excerpts from a concert held at San Gabriel Civic Auditorium. It's complete with audience reactions and banter by George, some of which would require the visual scene for the full effect. So, this side will be most effective with those who were in the audience in October 1976 for George's "return to the concert stage" (in Southern California, that is) as the jacket notes describe it. There are snatches of George's MCing prowess and some of his humor comes through, although he is too far from the microphones to be easily audible. But, as always, the selections are played superbly. The console riser is an energetic "Butcher Boy," spiked with applause. A side



George at the San Gabriel Wurlitzer. (Stufoto)

of George rarely heard in his more formal recordings is evident in the concert excerpts, as he amuses his audience with informal musical jokes and inserts sound effects, most notably during his "old soft shoe routine" with exaggerated stop time during "Tea for Two," "Cuddle Up a Little Closer," and "Pretty Baby." "The Vamp" gets some of the fun treatment, too. But he's dead serious playing "My Romance," "Stairway to the Stars" and "Goodnight Sweetheart," the console "sinker."

Applause is frequent and voluminous during and following selections. It adds to the live concert atmosphere but there's a technical rub; the balance of George's voice (too soft), the applause (too loud) and the organ (just right) keeps the auditioner changing his volume control setting. For all that, it adds up to a valuable record of George in concert. The only real disappointment is "The Stars and Stripes Forever." Considering what George has done with this selection in the past (with both real and organ piccolo obligatos), this 20 second version leaves us hanging.

We found Side 2 far more satisfying, not only for the titles but for a rediscovery of the 2/10 (plus) Wurlitzer in the South Pasadena Rialto Theatre, an instrument destroyed by fire in the early '70s. Tonally, it compares most favorably with the larger organ heard on Side 1, and the microphone placement gives it a more satisfying presence. The mellowness of the Tibia chorus, the blend of the Vox, as well as its ensemble sound when soloed, and the

clarity of the Tuba up in the Clarion range during "I Don't Know How to Love Him" provides a much-appreciated tonal reunion with an old friend. We suspect much of the organ's excellence is due to the freedom George had in molding the sound of the ranks to his needs. Whatever the reason, the sound is tops. "I Don't Know How" is played reverently, not campy.

The remainder of Side 2 (over two thirds of the grooves) consists of a medley of six of the most appealing tunes from Rudolph Friml's *Rose Marie*, including "The Mounties," "Rose Marie," "Through the Door of Her Dreams," "Indian Love Call," "Totem Tom Tom," and "Finale." George plays the selections in the spirit of the time when they were new, with touches of Jesse but more of George. It's a wonderful romp through the innocent nostalgia of operetta days, and it is complete; the verses are included. Arrangements are varied to fit the tempo and style of each tune, and George's attention to registration is in keeping with his reputation as a master in that art. The organ meets all of his requirements from snapping Posthorn to caressing Tibia, plus that "rising crescendo" cymbal emphasis effect peculiar to the Wright interest in orchestration. If we were asked to pick a favorite from these selections it would be the *Rose Marie* set.

It would seem that Side 2 is more skilfully engineered, probably because there was only the organ to consider.

Summing up, the maestro demonstrates he's still holding down the top of the mountain. As a reviewer in the Hollywood Citizen-News put it: "Where he differs from all other organists is . . . in the sheer aristocracy of his musical conceptions."

CONTEMPORARY WURLITZER, Greg Rister playing the San Gabriel (Calif.) Civic Auditorium 3/16 Wurlitzer organ. RTS-7701 stereo. \$6.00 postpaid from Rolling Thunder Records, Box 1384, Whittier, Calif. 90604. (Calif. residents add 6% sales tax).

We have observed the musical development of Greg Rister since he was a promising and ambitious teenager. To say he has arrived may be



Greg Rister. Not one dog among the titles.

premature but he most certainly is on his way. Greg has undertaken an ambitious program, from Modest Moussorgsky to Mason Williams, with Irving Berlin and Glenn Miller somewhere in the middle. In Greg's favor is the variety in his program: March from *Star Wars*, "Saturday Night at the World," "Moonlight Serenade," "Hungarian Dance No. 8" (Brahms), "When My Dreams Come True" (Berlin), "Friends" (Elton John), "Promenade" (Moussorgsky), "Carillon Waltz" (an original), "On the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe," "If I Loved You," and "Fiddler on the Roof" (selections).

Here is a record entirely free of the over-recorded tune syndrome. "Saturday Night at the World," "Friends" and "If I Loved You" (gorgeous Tibia) are the ballads, plus rarely heard "When My Dreams Come True," one of Irving Berlin's less successful tunes despite its use in both the stage and film versions of the Marx Bros' *Cocanuts* (1929) their first big hit. It's a good tune and well played, showcasing a solo reed. Greg has a special ability to make Gypsy music come alive, as he does with "Hungarian Dance" and later during the "Fiddler" medley. The Moussorgsky selection labelled "Promenade" is actually a portion of "The Great Gate at Kiev" from *Pictures at an Exhibition*. It's a majestic and thrilling tone picture of what might have been an imposing structure, had the Russians ever built it. But no matter. Greg's transcription of the maestoso work pictures the

gate in all its unrealized glory, with the Wurlitzer going straight briefly. The organist's original "Carillon Waltz" is properly peppered with Chrysoglott and chime tintinnabulation. It's brief but charming, in a minor mode. Not many organists can resist the temptation to add train effects to "Atchison etc" and Mr. Rister is no exception. His "choo choo" start is a convincing intro to an energetic boogie. About half of Side 2 is devoted to an absorbing selection from "Fiddler." The "Rich Man" theme, "Matchmaker" — all the major themes from the well-remembered score, complete with flourishes and Kazotskys, skilfully arranged for organ, provide a delightful closer.

But we haven't yet mentioned the magnificent opener, the "March" from *Star Wars*, played in a bravura style with enough thrills to start an R2D2 chirping in data bank baffle-gab. Greg gives it the full treatment and it comes out sounding like an English coronation march gone wild. To us, this is Greg Rister's best number.

So much for the favorable comment which applies to roughly 90 percent of the grooves. The one black mark is a very obvious one to those familiar with Glenn Miller's classic signature, "Moonlight Serenade." A repeated and jarring mischord of basic harmony simply spoils the whole thing. Omit this one and we have a most attractive set of selections.

Recording is good. So is the review pressing. Greg wrote his own jacket comments about the tunes. The 3/16 Wurlitzer has got to be familiar to readers as the organ recorded by Helen Dell, Gaylord Carter and George Wright in the recent past. It serves Greg Rister equally well.

DINING AT THE SUBURBIAN. Frank Cimmino playing the 3/17 Wurlitzer in the Wanague, New Jersey restaurant. HMR 1082, stereo, \$7.00 postpaid from HMR Productions, 574 West Court, Scotch Plains, New Jersey 07076.

Frank Cimmino is an institution at the Suburban restaurant. It was Frank who dreamed up the idea of installing a pipe organ there while pumping a plug-in for diners. So

Frank talked the Provissiero family into buying a Style 260 special from Dick Loderhose. The organ was premiered on the July 4th weekend in 1971, by Frank Cimmino, naturally. The organ has been a solid attraction to diners ever since, usually with Frank at the console.

Frank's selections are: "Tonight" (*West Side Story*), "If," "Tie a Yellow Ribbon," "Today," "Spanish Eyes," "The Way We Were," "All Because of Spring" (a Cimmino original), "Beer Barrel Polka," "And I Love You So," "Loco Locomotive," "Bridge Over the River Kwai" (Colonel Bogey March), and "The Party's Over."



Frank Cimmino.

(Stufoto)

Frank is an exponent of the full combination more often than solo stops. Variety in registration often depends on the adding and subtraction of percussions. Of course, the name of the album tells the intent; Frank is providing music to promote digestion. Yet, diners can expect a boogie-woogie steam train to run through the restaurant as they partake of the Lasagne ("Loco Locomotive") and perhaps Alec Guinness and his fellow prisoners will build a railroad bridge over the salad bar. In brief, it isn't all pipe generated Muzak; Frank does some absorbing soloing e.g. his original, "All Because of Spring," which becomes majestic in the Radio City Music Hall tradition in spots. There's nice understatement in "And I love You So," which features lush registration and a touch of solo voices, as well as some question and answer moments. As for "Kwai," the bridge gets

built in record time as Frank presides over a hurry-up version, with all the percussions whamming away full blast. But he incorporates great subtlety during "If" and "The Party's Over." The "Polka" gets the slambang treatment with everything going (wonder if Frank is aware that in Italy, from whence he sprang, that tune is a love song with the romantic title "Rosamunde?"). Frank puts great emotion into "The Way We Were" as he does with "Tonight." His "Spanish Eyes" is a smoothie.

If there is adverse criticisms, they would be limited to two areas: (1) key changes — Frank plays nearly all of his tunes in the keys of C or F. (2) the organ is just enough out of tune (especially with the tonal percussions) to cause a slight irritation among those with pitch-wise tympani.

Recording reflects the closed-in restaurant acoustics. We hear it the way the diners do, without added acoustical enhancement. Recording is good. Some high boost would have helped. Jacket notes give some Subbian and Cimmino background. Easy listening with some better than average moments.

REGINALD FOORT, LIVE, IN CONCERT — Played at the Orpheum Theatre, Vancouver, B.C. on a Style 240 - 3/13 Wurlitzer. Available from: Quest Organ Master Records, 6979 Curragh Ave., Burnaby, B.C. Canada VS/4V6, \$7.98 Canadian, plus postage.

The subtitle of this offering is "A Sentimental Journey Highlighting a 65 Year Career," which just about sums up the recording and its contents.

It is strictly what an organ buff would expect from Mr. Foort doing his final public concert; a grouping of orchestral favorites played in the precise manner that has always been a Foort trademark.

Heard on this disc are "Finlandia," "Jealousy" (record jacket spelling), reminiscences of Chopin, "In a Monastery Garden," "In a Persian Market" and a musical tour of Britain.

The finale of the disc is rather unusual and it is the first time we've heard it done on a recording of this type. Mr. Foort asked the audience of some 2800 to join him and sing

"Auld Lang Syne," and then Reg leads them into "God Save The Queen." The result becomes very inspirational as the audience really put their hearts into it.

The acoustics of the theatre are superb making the organ sound much larger than it actually is. This coupled with the engineering of Frank Killinger results in a disc of excellent quality technically.

Since this is touted as Reginald Foort's last concert before retirement, the record should receive good reception from Foort's fans and most theatre organ devotees will want it in their collection.

COMMAND PERFORMANCE, Lyn Larsen playing the 4/27 Wurlitzer in Organ Stop No. 1. Stereo. \$7.00 postpaid to the 48 continental states; \$7.50 to Alaska, Hawaii, Canada, Panama, England and Western Europe. Order from Organ Stop Pizza, 5330 No. Seventh Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85014.

It's always risky to base the tune-list for a record release on "most requested" selections. Usually, the most vociferous fans dominate and the common denominator too often plummets to the level of another version of "Alley Cat" (preferably with synthetic "meows"). Obviously, Lyn Larsen wasn't going to fall into that trap despite the "command" appendage. With the exception of such over-recorded chestnuts as "Lara's Theme" and "The Entertainer," the program provides a fitting palette for Lyn's variety of colors, and vivid they are. Rarely, since Lyn left the Malar label, have we heard such a fine example of his artistry.

Selections are: "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang," "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head," "Candyman," "Toccata in D Minor" (Bach), "Lara's Theme," "Pink Panther," "Nadia's Theme," "The Hustle," "The Entertainer," "Tie a Yellow Ribbon," "Evergreen," and "Fiddler on the Roof" (selections).

For some unexplained reason Bach's "Toccata" is listed as "Phantom of the Opera" although it is more easily identified with Captain Nemo, who played it on his submarine pipes in Disney's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. But we won't quibble if Bach doesn't. It's an imposing rendition and the ex-Harvey Heck Wur-

litzer rises to supply the big cathedral sound. All arrangements are tailored to best showcase the selections, and that brings up another point. A recent review took Lyn gently to task for borrowing musical devices from another organist. We are happy to note that this group of selections is free of the "borrowing" stigma; it's all Lyn. And the previous review cannot be credited with influencing this recording, which was completed before that review was published.

The pizzery organ never sounded better. It has been brought to an elegant degree of tonal excellence, especially in the realm of such basics as the Tibia chorus (we hesitate to use the overworked term, "lush"). But the reeds, strings and deftly used percussions score, too, bringing us some of Lyn's most sensitive balladry to date, especially during "Evergreen," and "Nadia's Theme" (with added synthesizer). The upbeat "Hustle" has all the excitement of one of the Arthur Lyman sexy "jungle" fantasies of the '50's, complete with synthesizer sworls and sizzles and added percussions. Happily, the synthesizer in no way injures the music values and one added effect which sounds like the exhaling of a dragon fires the imagination. All selections are beautifully played, with much at-



Lyn Larsen. By whose command?

tention to phrasing (a Larsen specialty), varied registration and the general artistry which makes Lyn's playing so satisfying. It isn't so much the titles as the way Lyn treats each selection. He can even make an overdone standard such as "Lara's Theme" listenable.

Recording is very good and jacket notes adequate. Incidentally, this will be Lyn's final release on this instrument, at least for the present; after five years he has left the Bill Brown establishment to go with a new Arizona eatery. He will have to work very hard to top the musical and technical quality in these grooves. □

Nigel Ogden demonstrates the Manchester Town Hall Cavaille-Coll Organ to the Safari members and The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Manchester during the second Safari last November. Sandy Fleet is next to the Lord Mayor.

The Cavaille-Coll will be playing a major part in the Manchester International Organ Festival to be held in the City in September. This Festival, sponsored by the City with support from the British Arts Council, will be the first Worldwide Festival to include theatre pipe organs, classical pipe organs, electronic organs and street and fairground organs. There is a classical organ competition open to any young organists and the entertainment organ side will feature artists of high standing on both pipes and plug-ins.

The main theatre organ to be used will be the newly-opened Publix No. 1 Wurlitzer in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester which has strong American connections, (apart from its country of birth!).

It is intended to hold this Festival bi-annually and it is hoped that America will be strongly represented both artistwise and visitorwise. (Manchester Evening News Photo)



North Texas Chapter Acquires a Wonder Morton

by Joe Koski

Santa Claus came early to the North Texas Chapter. In fact, he started several months back, when through the efforts of Chairman Jim Peterson, backed by the efforts of previous chairpersons, we established our "non-profit" status and were donated the Loew's Jersey City Wonder Morton, complete with its beautiful 4-manual console and 24 ranks of pipes. That was only the beginning, and it's a long way from "all over" yet. Along with the donation of the organ came the responsibilities for its removal from the theatre and transportation to Texas. Then, too, it had to be stored where it would be readily accessible for the renovative craftsmanship of the members, and, last but not least, a decision made for its permanent home, complete with accessibility for concerts and practice. And along with all the responsibilities came the need for cash to finance all these steps toward the goal of a real super theatre organ installation in North Texas.

An inspection trip was made to Journal Square in Jersey City by Chairman Jim Peterson and Gordon Wright, with assistance from Gordon's son, Chuck.

After careful analysis by the chapter's organ acquisition and installation committee, it was decided that a move by professional organ movers would be the safest, quickest and actually most economical means of getting the instrument to North Texas.

It was arranged for professionals to move the instrument, crate it and ship all 15 or 16 tons of it to Texas via piggy-back truck and railroad freight. This was no mean price tag in itself, despite a very fair and equitable price quote from the pro's who moved it.

When one considers all aspects of insurance, removal tools and manpower, crating and packaging equipment, local building and traffic ordinances, access, experience in the craft of organ removal and transportation, and the many other items

(like having members of the Stagehands Local in attendance at the theatre while the removal was in progress) the professional route proved to be most expeditious. In fact it was so expeditious that the two freight cars with piggy-back trailers of Wonder Morton parts and pieces arrived about 2 weeks before they were expected. This resulted in an emergency roundup of all available members at 4 p.m. of a Tuesday afternoon. To add to the emergency, the original planned storage site for the organ was unavailable because the space was in use, and some real fast action was necessary to locate a new site. Fred Sturm, who had been designated to arrange for the storage, came through in his usual capable manner contacting Baldwin Electronic Industries at their plant in suburban Fort Worth. They donated warehouse space for the storage. The chapter benefitted in other ways too. The contact resulted in Sterling Brandley, the BEI official who arranged for the space, joining the chapter.

The call went out to all members to assemble at the BEI warehouse to unload the van which held our precious Robert Morton! Some were there on time, some got lost but finally made it, and others trickled in after their offices and businesses closed, but a fine group of warmly-dressed ready-for-work members joined together to warehouse our treasure. Some were "carriers", some were 'straw bosses' as to storage layouts, some jumped into the van and with the air of Gordon Wright's trouble light, began to hand out to waiting hands. The heavier pipes, chests, and reservoirs, were handled by forklift. It was sheer talent that lifted the huge console out of the van, placed it on a huge dolly and moved it gently into a special corner of the storage area. Everyone got excited over the percussion section as it emerged piece by piece. The big bass drum, the marimbas, the glocks and all special effects looked great. It all turned into a sort of winter picnic when Jan Nichols took orders for hamburgers and the "break" whistle sounded.

A photographer from the Fort Worth *Observer* arrived for pictures and remained a long time, fascinated by our project. Ed Eubanks, special

What a console! The 4-manual Wonder Morton from Loew's Jersey City awaits tender loving care from the North Texas Chapter. (FW Observer Photo)





John Vaden at the manuals, Gene Powell at the left corner, and Chairman Jim Peterson at the right corner help unload the Wonder Morton console. (FW Observer Photo)

events announcer for Channel 5, also arrived with a cameraman to cover the event for future TV coverage. (Note: it appeared on KXAS TV the following week as part of their news coverage on the 6 p.m. news. Several shots of members working on the unloading project, Member Gene Powell at the console of his theatre organ, and an interview with Chairman Jim Peterson. It was a good plug for the chapter, the organ, and ATOS.) Finally the last section was unloaded (about 11 p.m.) and a tired, dirty group gathered in a circle to close out an evening of hard work filled with a special joy of accomplishment knowing the job had been well done despite the short notice, change in storage plans and the unexpected early arrival of the Jersey City Wonder Morton.

We mentioned earlier that the many steps involved in acquiring the organ required financing. The funding problems are not yet over by a long shot, but steps have been made in the right direction. It all began (the fund raising, that is) with the Bob Goodwin Concert at Casa Manana in Fort Worth in September. We had just received word that the organ would be donated to us and used that as a vehicle to raise some of the expense money. Instead of an expected 150 attendees, almost 2,000 showed up to hear Bob on the Casa Wurlitzer (formerly in the Worth Theatre in downtown Fort Worth). The refreshments committee had to make some emergency acquisitions from a local bakery and food store, but all were served at intermission, and containers were strategically

placed to accept any and all donations. Admission was free, but the donations were gladly accepted. This started the Wonder Organ moving fund.

A couple of weeks later Gene and Denece Powell held a 30-hour "Organ Marathon" at their Organ World store in Garland. They were assisted in arrangements by several chapter members and the actual 30 (count 'em) continuous hours of organ music was provided by the best organists in the North Texas area. More than 35 good organists and musicians were involved in the playing of everything from the 4-manual 16-rank Kilgen installed in the Concert Hall at Organ World, to several plug-ins including synthesizers, rhythm-makers, et al. The affair raised a considerable amount toward the "Morton Travel Fund," while Dick Nichols used a U.S. map with the route of travel graphed according to the donations received at the time of each "passing of the hat." Estimating \$300 to each 100 miles, the affair moved our Wonder Morton a good distance down the road from Jersey City to Texas.

While many of the guests at the Organ Marathon had their requests honored by the various artists, a unique one was submitted by "remote control." Lois Scott, age 68, a former vocalist on radio station WRR and others in North Texas was confined to her hospital bed and couldn't make the Marathon. So, she telephoned a request for "Indian Love Call" on Organ World's Kilgen. Gene Powell obliged, while the

telephone was held at the most strategic location to pick up the sound so Lois could listen. It was a touch of theatre organ nostalgia for Lois and the in-house audience, too. Lois showed her appreciation through a very substantial donation to the fund.

Thus the funding program for the Wonder Morton moved along at a pace, but there's still a good way to go. Plans are under way for additional concerts and money-raising events. Jim and his committee are making every effort to find an adequate home in the North Texas area for this fine example of theatre organ art. Several places are under consideration and no matter where in the area the instrument finally resides, somebody will be dissatisfied with the driving distance. Our chapter area covers some 1,000 square miles, and the most distant members in any direction are 150 to 200 miles apart. Hopefully it will settle somewhere near the center of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex area, with both Dallas and Fort Worth as possibilities, as well as all the area in between and around us. The committee has a real job resolving the problem, with auditorium size and acoustics, potential financial aid, access by members for both working on and playing the instrument and many other factors to consider. This is a North Texas Chapter project and that includes several cities and towns.

THEATRE ORGAN will report the progress of this most worthy project in future issues. □

Jim Peterson (left) and Stan Guy (below the console) help BEI, Inc. personnel guide the console into its' temporary storage position. (FW Observer Photo)



An Evening With Edna Sellers

PART II

Transcribed and Edited by Lloyd E. Klos

ES. — Well, here's another amusing incident: We got our music in those days direct from the music publisher. Fran Allison, whom I'm sure people remember from *Kukla, Fran and Ollie* days of television, was married to a music publisher, Archie Levington. One Halloween evening on the way to a party, they stopped at our apartment on Kenmore to deliver some music, dressed as Buttons and Bows. It was the cutest thing you ever saw!

Once in awhile, one of these things

In 1944, Edna had a stint at WKY in Oklahoma City for NBC. Here, she poses at the station's Kilgen console. (Sellers Call.)



will jump into memory. They're up there, but aren't accessible all the time.

FJ. — Did you keep a Diary?

ES. — No, and I wish I had! It would be interesting today.

FJ. — Where was Preston playing when he died?

ES. — He was out at Vosno's, a restaurant on Waukegan Rd. at Demster in Morton Grove. The place is still there, and I also played there. Barbara was up the road at the Glenview Country House. Preston was 68 when he died in 1962, the same year as Jesse Crawford, and both died from heart trouble.

RJ. — Did you have any interesting experiences with the Crawfords?

ES. — I knew them well. I attended a baby shower for her, and she came to mine. When I could spare the time, I went to hear Helen and Jesse at the Chicago.

FJ. — Was there much partying among the organists?

ES. — There was some, but I never went much, as I didn't have the time. I wouldn't stay up late at night, simply because my work was very important, and I didn't want to jeopardize it.

RJ. — People sometimes tended to idolize a person, not because of what he did, but because of the name they always heard. I heard Jesse Crawford when we'd visit Chicago, but I remember him more for the records he made. What did the average organist think of him? Was he one of the super greats?

ES. — He was great, but I believe Helen surpassed him in her rhythm. She played marvelous, marvelous rhythm.

RJ. — Jesse had a style which was very even and never changed.

ES. — He did, and it was of such good taste. There was no one who ever surpassed him on ballads. Never. I was so thrilled at a recent CATOE concert at the Chicago when they showed pictures of Jesse and Helen on the screen, a marvelous tribute to them. He was nice looking, and Helen was so pretty and so talented!

RJ. — Just to settle a point as we've been talking about the Crawfords and the Chicago Theatre. There is still a difference of opinion as to where the two consoles were in that theatre; where the original was, and where the second was installed.

ES. — The original was on the right, and Helen's was on the left. When



Preston was equally adept on an electronic as he was on pipes. Here he plays a Hammond at the time of his appearances in clubs and lounges.

(Sellers Coll.)

they took hers out, the original was moved to the left.

RJ. — The console which is up at Mundelein Seminary is supposed to have been the original console. There was an accident to one when it fell off the lift, I'm told, shortly after the theatre was opened, and it might have been replaced by the one now in Mundelein.

ES. — I can't be sure of that point. But, we had Helen's white console at the Marbro, however.

RJ. — Were the two consoles exactly alike?

ES. — No. The second had to be played with a great deal of memory, because it was dormant in some parts. One had to remember where everything was on the other console in order to get what was wanted on the second. On a piston, for example.

RJ. — It had separate setter boards in the basement. In a lot of the later two-console installations, the second was a dummy as far as stop tabs were concerned. They didn't even operate. The Fox second consoles in Detroit and St. Louis had tabs for decoration only, and the registration was done thru the pistons. The Chicago's second console had a most horrendous wiring set-up because they must have installed it in a hurry.

One thing: I can't find any trace of

a lift for the right-side console. Did it have a lift or was it on the orchestra lift?

ES. — It could have been on the orchestra elevator.

RJ. — The left side has a lift, and I always believed that here might have been the location of the original console.

ES. — No, the original was on the right, of that I'm sure. I never played the original when it was on the right. I did my work after it was moved to the left. The other was gone by then.

RJ. — The lift on the left is a very archaic, water-powered one and rises only about three feet.

ES. — The Marbro had a tremendous lift. They used to call us to play community sings for New Year's Eve shows. This was during the "black thirties" when work was scarce. I played the whole show when the organ lift was stuck in the basement and they couldn't budge it.

RJ. — Any more interesting anecdotes with performers?

ES. — I used to talk with Sophie Tucker, but she didn't have much to offer. A pregnant comedienne once came to my dressing room and asked me to stop practicing. She was nervous and couldn't take it.

FJ. — Was there anyone at the theatre who could work on the organ if something happened during a show?

ES. — The Nelson brothers used to service it. You phoned them and lived with the trouble until they arrived. They were always on call, however.

RJ. — What happened if you had a cipher?

ES. — You almost had to give up unless someone could go up to the chamber for you. Press and I did it. He'd go up, find the offender, lift it from the chest and stick a piece of newspaper into the hole. You'd have a dead note, but that was the only thing you could do until the organ people got there.

RJ. — How often did they tune the organ in those days?

ES. — Anytime you'd ask for it. They were very good about that, and

constantly traveled from one theatre to another. It was a big business then. One of the Nelsons is still alive, I believe. Art Temple from Oak Park was kept busy and was a very good man. Ken Simpson, who did a lot of maintenance work for us, went to the West Coast and last I heard was servicing George Wright's equipment. He was excellent.

FJ. — Your career happened before women's lib. Would they pay a woman as much as a man?

ES. — They would, some of them. I always asked over-scale, and almost always got it.

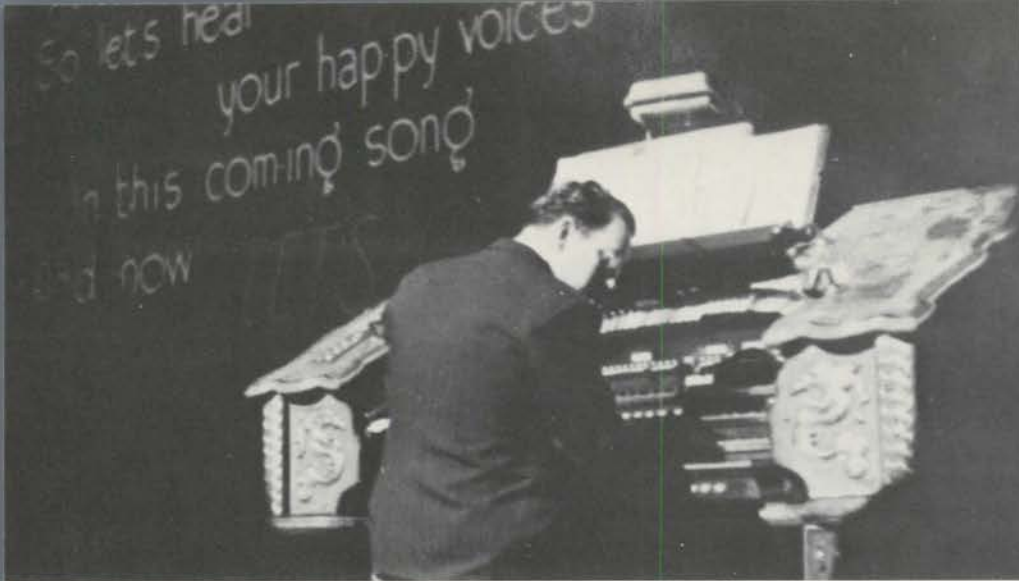
RJ. — There weren't more than a half dozen very prominent women organists in those days — Ann Leaf, Rosa Rio.

ES. — Ann Leaf. Oh, she was great! While I was working at WBBM with Milton Charles, he, Eddie Dunstetter in St. Louis and Ann Leaf in New York did a program, *The Three Consoles*. They didn't always relay it from the network in Chicago, locally, but if you were at the studio, you could hear it in master control. The program was something to hear. They were all so good! I believe Milton Charles played the smallest instrument of the three, but how he could play!

Irene Allan, Mildred Fitzpatrick (who was an attendant at my wedding), Helen Westbrook, and Basel Cristol were also fine musicians. Basel once played Sunday noon concerts at the Chicago with a small orchestra.

I think back to the men, too, who played in our era in this city — Arthur Gutow, one of Arthur Dunham's fine pupils; Albert Hay Malotte, one of the outstanding ones, well versed in the classics, and applied his knowledge to his theatre work; Henri A. Keates, who had a marvelous sense of humor and was so entertaining to be around; Dean Fossler; Arsene Siegel, a fine musician who later became an excellent arranger for radio; Len Salvo, whom I got to know during his days at WGN; and of course, Harold Turner of WGN who studied at one time with Marcel Dupre.

RJ. — When we were living in St. Louis, every Saturday afternoon I listened to organ music from the Edgewater Beach Hotel.



Preston accompanies a sing-along at the Oriental. He had great rapport with his audiences in getting them to sing. (Sellers Coll.)

ES. — I played there, too. The organ was a Moller, small but pretty. Believe the program was *Melodies of Yesterday*.

RJ. — No matter what I was doing on a Saturday afternoon, I'd stop to hear that program. I can still hear the announcer say: "... is playing the pipe organ in the Marine Dining Room of the Edgewater Beach Hotel, on the beautiful shores of Lake Michigan."

ES. — That's right. It was a remote show. They'd send an engineer out there with a truckload of equipment and he'd set up.

RJ. — I believe the Edgewater and the Drake were the only hotels in this area to have pipe organs. I faintly remember hearing the name of Sellers on those broadcasts.

FJ. — Did Preston play there, too?

ES. — He may have subbed for Herb Foote on occasion, but not as a regular stint. I subbed for Herb, who was a fine organist and was at the Edgewater for years. When he left, he did a stretch at WGN on a Hammond which led to other agency work which paid very well. He never went back to the Edgewater.

FJ. — Did you have to belong to the union?

ES. — Oh, Heavens, yes! I joined when I first came to Chicago. It was shortly after that when we had the first strike. Everything was so jumbled. Pres went to Buffalo as the strike lasted quite a while.

RJ. — I suppose if it hadn't been for the union demands in the thirties for

so many men in the orchestra pit, the theatre organs would have hung on much longer. The theatres couldn't afford an organist and a band when they didn't need them. So, they just shut down all the way.

ES. — And everyone couldn't get into radio, either. There wasn't enough work, so only the bigger names got in.

RJ. — There wasn't much broadcasting from theatres, either. The Capitol on the South Side was the only theatre I recall whose organ was broadcast regularly.

ES. — Yes, few installations were right for broadcasting.

RJ. — They didn't have the advanced mike equipment for proper pickup, either. Recordings were inferior, from a mechanical standpoint.

(At this point, the conversationists examined Russ Joseph's picture book on theatres and came upon some breathtaking views of the Oriental in Chicago and the Ambassador in St. Louis, both Rapp & Rapp-designed houses).

RJ. — The lobbies of both were very small. The Ambassador had a very unusual Wurlitzer, a special model, the only one of its kind. Like the Marbro, it had 21 ranks. The console had only four manuals, but it had an additional stop rail, and like the 36-rank Fox Wurlitzers, it had four banks of tabs on each jamb. Fred Pillsbury of St. Louis bought it, but I don't know its status. The theatre is still standing, however.

ES. — "Marbro" means Marks

Bros., and besides that house, they built the Marshall Square on W. Cermak Rd. and the Granada on Sheridan Rd. The latter is still one of the most beautifully preserved theatres in the city.

A manager of the Granada who knew Helen Crawford very well and had a high regard for her talent, was Roy McMullen who died in 1976 at 91. He used to pass the kids and me into the theatre when we lived in the vicinity. Years later, he came one evening to Henrici's Restaurant on Western Avenue, not knowing I was appearing there during the Christmas season. He almost keeled over when he saw me playing there!

Preston had put in one of our Hammonds with three or four speakers. He had a very good ear for sound and knew where to place them for maximum benefit. No matter how many he used, the music never got too loud or raucous.

FJ. — Did Preston play the lounges, etc?

ES. — Yes, he did.

RJ. — I would think after having seen the Granada chambers that it must have been a grand-sounding 4/20 organ.

ES. — It had a good sound, but not the quality of the 4/20 Oriental. The chambers were very open and it used to get so loud that I had to close the shutters considerably. I like the light touch.

RJ. — And a good sense of registration helps, too.

ES. — I remember one player who switched the xylophone and glockenspiel on and off — the only registration changes he did. I attended a concert one night and I thought I'd have a baby sitting there! It was horrible! I can't stand that. This organist never had the basics. Anybody does things like that when he's starting out, but as he progresses, he's supposed to improve.

RJ. — Like everything else, you wonder where people's sensibilities as to taste are.

ES. — It proves Dave Balaban's contention that 99% of the people are not intelligent and only 1% are. The average public does not understand. □

(CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE)

Ad Lib Convention in New York City

Log of Events
by Donald Schwing
Custodian of ATOS Wurlitzer
in Carnegie Hall Cinema

Thursday, March 2.

8:00 a.m. — Adjusted special lighting for today's shows at Carnegie Hall Cinema, Tuned Clarinet and French Horn.

9:30 — Lee Erwin and Lance Luce arrive to begin rehearsals.

1:50 p.m. — 1st show: Lance plays short program before film; Lee plays his score for *Broken Blossoms*.

5:10 — 2nd show. (good crowd).

8:30 — 3rd show. (full house).

Friday, March 3.

10:00 a.m. — Invited guests arrive at Carnegie Hall Cinema. Mostly New York Chapter people. "Open console" . . . Theatre management serves free coffee and pastries in the French restaurant in the lobby.

11:00 a.m. — Lance plays first half of scheduled short concert; Lee plays 2nd half of concert and continues until show starts. Organ now has 8 ranks playing, and this is the first formal concert since the "debut" almost a year ago.

2:30 p.m. — All invited to Rev. Ike's United Palace (former Loew's 175th Street.) Everyone has a turn at the console of the 4/23 Robert Morton. Lee arranged for Rev. Ike's building superintendent to give us the "\$2.00 tour" of the theatre, including the projection booth and the catwalks above the ceiling. Quite an establishment!

11:30 p.m. — Invited by Claud Beckham to sit in on rehearsal of Don Baker and Lee Erwin's twin console number for concert at Radio City Music Hall Sunday morning.



Lance Luce at the console of "Little Mother."

11:54 p.m. — House closes and we all go down to stage level. Big crisis! Organ seat of second console occupied by a "dummy."

Note: the second console has a mannequin rigged to organ bench to give the impression of two organists playing during first scene of Easter show. Lee was informed that "dummy" could not be removed because of union regulations. He suggested that he could easily knock the dummy off the bench by accident and then put it back after the rehearsal. He was told that no one except a

property man could touch it. They solved the problem, when Claud Beckham arrived, by removing the entire organ bench (with dummy attached), so Lee and Don rehearsed with Lee standing up in front of the console. For the performance on Sunday morning, a special property man was hired to remove the "dummy".)

Saturday, March 4.

10:00 a.m. — Carnegie Hall Cinema, Open House with lots of out of town guests and a few New York Chapter members. During open console everyone took tour of organ chamber located at stage level behind the picture screen, and, the relay/workshop room.

11:15 — Lee and Lance play short concert for ATOS guests and cinema patrons who begin to arrive for first show. Everyone seemed to like the sound of the organ. We do have more work to do with the voicing, regulating, etc., and the plan is to add one more rank and a harp. It will then be "complete" as outlined by everyone.

Sunday, March 5.

8:00 a.m. — Back stage at Radio City Music Hall, Don and Lee had a "talk-through" rehearsal. There is much activity, getting everything ready for the program.

8:10 — The audience begins to arrive; people are lined up all the way around the block. At exactly 8:45 the concert begins with Claud Beckham acting as master of ceremonies. The show included Mr. Beckham's demonstration of all the stage facilities. What an experience! Met all the Music Hall people, including

Lee and the problem "dummy."



Don Schwing listens attentively as Lee Erwin stresses a point backstage at Radio City Music Hall.



John Jackson and the executive vice president, Charles Hacker.

About 2000 people attended the concert. Then there was an intermission of about one hour while the regular audience came in and filled the house to capacity. We all stayed for the first stage show which started about 12 o'clock. It was a big day — and one that no one who was there will ever forget. □

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE TECHNICAL SIDE

by Lance Johnson

Do you have any questions?

Send them direct to:

QUIZ MASTER
And Organ Builder

LANCE JOHNSON
Box 1228
Fargo, ND 58102

Q. I have a 2/6 Robert Morton with the following ranks: Chamber I: Toy Counter, Xylophone, Orchestra Bells, Diapason, Tuba, Tibia. Chamber II: Tibia 1-12, Violin, Flute, Vox Humana, Chimes and Chrysoglott, I have heard that the Vox and Tibia must be in the same chamber. If I switch these ranks, the Diapason and Vox Humana, I will be in a very great deal of work opening the cables behind the console, cutting wires and using spares. Would a Flute-Vox registration sound different enough to merit the change? Also, what shall I call these chambers?

A. I can assume that your friends are trying to get you to arrange your

organ like Wurlitzers style D where the two chambers were laid out as follows: Main: Violin, Diapason, Concert Flute and, Solo: Vox Humana, Trumpet (or Tuba) and Tibia. This arrangement, although perhaps arbitrary at first, has worked out to be extremely successful. Of course Robert Morton arranged their pipework differently. You will have to decide whether or not you want a Wurlitzer style D arrangement with a great deal of hard work or to keep it strictly Morton. To exchange merely the Diapason for the Vox would not really accomplish anything unless you want a Wurlitzer effect. The small Wurlitzer organs divided their organ into two styles with respect to chamber layout; The Main chamber was the "church" side and the Solo became the "Theatre" side. In Wurlitzer Main chambers you would find mostly pipework that would be found in a typical 1920's church organ Swell division. The Church side held the Harp or Chrysoglott and the "Theatre" side would naturally have all the other tonal percussions and toy counter.

Q. On my Wurlitzer, I have two notes that speak only for an instant, like a pizzicato note. I tried testing the secondary pneumatic for leaks but could find none. I pushed the primary valve wire up manually and the note still goes "plup." What is wrong?

A. Sounds like a stripped leather nut on the valve wire. As the valve wire travels up it carries the valve part way due to the friction between the wire threads and the valve disc. When the wire hits the top position the valve does not completely exhaust the secondary pneumatic because of high pressure air still leaking into the exhaust channel. It will be necessary to remove the valve wire retaining strip and replace the leather nut. With the strip removed, it will be possible to check for proper valve travel and for any debris caught in the valve seat. Measure the diameter of the valve wire and order replacement leather nuts from Klann, Durst, or Reisner.

Q. I have an unusually noisy blower. I have installed a baffel between the blower and main conductor feed but still have motor and fan

noise which is intolerable. Can my Spencer blower be made quieter?

A. I would remove the hair felt pads and install springs under the blower mounts. Go to a truck parts dealer and pick up four heavy-duty valve springs and drill them into the mounts. You will have to experiment to get just the right tension so the blower will be off the floor. Then build a particle board box around the blower with a one square foot or larger intake flap which will open only when air is required. Line the box with 4" fiberglass blanket insulation. Make the box so that one side will hinge or slip off easily for motor service, this should cut out your motor and fan noise by 90 percent. Make sure that your motor noise is not due to worn bearings!

Q. Our church has a three-manual, 38 rank pipe organ that is untuneable, the blower is located in a furnace room where winter temperatures get up to 100 degrees. If the air is static in the wind lines when the organ is not playing why do the individual pipes being tuned go sharp?

A. Since the blower is located in a hot furnace area the conductor coming off the blower discharge will act like a radiator in reverse. The hot air around the conductor will heat the air within the conductor which will supplement the heat within the conductor caused by the air being in compression. Even though very little air is moving in and out of the system while you are tuning one pipe the hot air will rise through the conductors and the heat will quickly diffuse through the entire organ chamber. Since all conductors within the chamber are now filled with warm compressed air the organ chamber air will also heat up and compound your tuning problems. The only solution in your case is to move the blower out of the furnace room and place it in a normally heated room with an adequate fresh air supply. Some organ blowers located in furnace rooms have special intakes vented to another room which is normally heated if you were to only do this, you would only solve half the problem. The main conductor must pass through normal temperature zones so that the metal pipe can help cool the compressed air. □



THE MANSION OF 100,000 WELCOMES

by Al Sacker

Rarely is an ATOS Chapter privileged to be invited to a mansion, and rarer yet, is for that mansion to have a grande organ with two consoles! On November 6, 1977, the Southeast Texas Chapter was invited on a tour of this Georgian colonial mansion and to have open console at the beautiful Moller Pipe Organ. The story about to unfold is like a dream come true.

When Johannah Cunningham was a girl, she often used to hear her father exclaim the greeting that was the most popular in his home in Donegal, Ireland: "Cead Mile Failte — A Hundred Thousand Welcomes." That is why the greeting is carved into the doorstep of her home in Beaumont where at least 100,000 guests have been entertained.

John Henry Phelan of Charlotte, N.C. came to Beaumont in 1903 as a

manufacturer's representative for Heisig and Norvell. His soon-to-be wife, Johannah Cunningham of Chicago, was visiting her attorney brother in Beaumont at the time. In 1904, they were married and began an empire that had far reaching effects in the oil industry, even today. The original \$750.00 invested into an oil venture at the famed Spindletop Oilfield near Beaumont in 1926 turned into over \$48,000,000.00!

The story is recalled that Johannah Phelan told the young architect, Owen J. Southwell of Atlanta, Georgia, that if she ever became wealthy, he would build her dream home. When Harry gave his wife carte blanche to build and furnish a home, she spent two years planning with Southwell and Homer Fry of Boston, who designed the grounds with a Japanese sunken garden,

swimming pool, tennis courts, horse paths and walking paths, a 9 hole golf course and literally thousands of azaleas, camellias and semi-tropical plants, as well as palm, pine and oak trees on the spacious grounds. The mansion walls are 18 inches thick and the foundation can support a building of nineteen stories.

The Phelan mansion has been a show place of East Texas ever since it was built. Antique collecting practically became a vocation after a four-poster bed that was already 100 years old was purchased in New Orleans in 1904, and, through the years other antiques were acquired. A beautiful cut glass chandelier which once belonged to George Bernard Shaw now hangs in the gracious foyer of the mansion. Extensive visits to the art galleries of Europe, South America and the United States were made in



Al Sacker at the main console of the 3/27 Moller Artiste pipe organ, Phelan Mansion.

order to enhance the mansion with beautiful portraits. There were Gainesborough and Sargent paintings, Remington water colors, and furniture dating back to Louis XV. Messen and Cape da Monte china-ware filled the shelves in the court, and religious paintings of artists of the Middle Ages like Botticini's 15 Century Madonna and Child hung about a Cross of precious metal.

While the house was being completed, it was learned that an embroidery wall, begun in the first decade of the century for Empress Elizabeth of Austria, had been made available in Italy after the Empress' death. The artisans had done much work for the Vatican. Arrangements were made to have the embroidery walls and ceiling of pure silk put up in the formal room of the Beaumont mansion. Chairs and stools planned

THE PHELAN MANSION 3/27 MOLLER

GREAT ORGAN:

Open Diapason	61	Pipes	8'
Gemshorn	61	Pipes	8'
Dopple Flute	61	Pipes	8'
Dulciana	61	Pipes	8'
Violin	73	Pipes	8'
Concert Flute	61	Pipes	8'
Harmonic Flute	61	Pipes	4'
Flute Twelfth	61	Pipes	2-2/3'
Dulciana Twelfth	61	Pipes	2-2/3'
Dulciana Fifteenth	61	Pipes	2'
Dulciana Tiercena	61	Pipes	1-3/5'
Clarinet	61	Pipes	8'
Tuba	61	Pipes	8'

TOTAL PIPES 805

CHOIR ORGAN:

Vox Celeste	49	Pipes	8'
French Horn	61	Pipes	8'

TOTAL PIPES 110

PEDAL ORGAN:

Bourdon	44	Pipes	16'
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TOTAL PIPES 44

SWELL ORGAN:

Lieblich Gedeckt	97	Pipes	16'
Horn Diapason	73	Pipes	8'
Salicional	73	Pipes	8'
Vox Celeste	61	Pipes	8'
Viole d'Orchestre	73	Pipes	8'
Oboe	73	Pipes	8'
Vox Humana	61	Pipes	8'

TOTAL PIPES 511

ECHO ORGAN:

Muted Viole	73	Pipes	8'
Viole Celeste	61	Pipes	8'
Echo Flute	73	Pipes	8'

ECHO PEDAL:

Bourdon	44	Pipes	16'
---------	----	-------	-----

TOTAL PIPES 251

Harp	61	Bars	
Chimes	21	Tubes	
<i>(In Echo Organ)</i>			
Couplers	26		

Note: Organ is equipped with a reproducing player action.

TOTAL RANKS: 27
 TOTAL PIPES: 1271



Two-manual console in Chapel plays the echo organ controlling four ranks of pipes. The console features nine couplers.

The echo organ can also be played from swell manual of the main organ.

for the ill-fated Hapsburg family complemented the wall's decor.

There were many unusual rooms in the Phelan mansion, upstairs and downstairs, as well as the basement (that, too, was unusual, as Beaumont is only 24 feet above sea level, and "homes" do not have basements in Southeast Texas), but perhaps the most unusual room of all was the Music Room. That room boasted of two concert grand pianos, a golden harp and a fine Moller Pipe Organ. From the ceiling hung two massive Czechoslovakian cut glass chandeliers, and the chairs were red velvet tapestry with woodwork in gold leaf.

The other most unusual room in

the mansion was the Chapel on the second floor. There, among all the beautiful religious paintings and the Altar with the gold vessels used for the religious service, was the other Moller console that operated on the Echo Division of the grand organ.

Fifty years ago when the Phelan mansion was built, it cost \$250,000. If the mansion was built at today's prices, the cost would have been at least a 500% increase over the prices then — \$1,500,000.00 excluding land and furnishings.

It was in this surrounding, rich in the cultural background of the Western world, that the Phelans lived. Thousands of East Texans and their friends from all over the world have enjoyed the beautiful Phelan mansion. At their bequest, the mansion was gifted to the Roman Catholic Sisters of the Incarnate Word who now use the mansion as a convent. Where once was a nine hole golf course, is now a huge seven story, St. Elizabeth Hospital. The former Japanese sunken garden has been filled in for parking area, alas, the swimming pool too. But, the mansion grounds are still intact, exactly as it once was. The Southeast Texas Chapter has been granted permission to "take over" and maintain the magnificent Moller Pipe Organ with its two consoles and its re-producing player, in return for the privilege of having future meetings and recitals in the former mansion of the Phelan family which may be starting on its second 100,000 welcomes. □



ANN LEAF IN VANCOUVER — The 3/13 Wurlitzer in the Orpheum Theatre, Vancouver, B.C. came to life under the nimble fingers of Ann Leaf on February 11 and 12.

Playing two concerts, each program selection was an arrangement by Ann. Except for her theme "In Time," there were no duplications in the two performances.

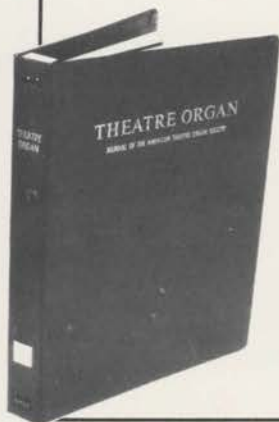
From the newspaper reviews it would seem that "Little Organ Annie" swept the critics off their feet. One review indicated the writer could not find enough superlatives to properly describe the performer or performance.

The Leaf program was the second of a series being produced by Herbert L. McDonald of Vancouver. The first of the series featured Reginald Foort (see THEATRE ORGAN, February, 1978).

The Ann Leaf programs were taped by Frank Killinger of Doric Records and recordings will probably be released later this year.

Mr. McDonald has announced that Rex Koury will appear at the Orpheum on April 29.

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NUGGETS from the GOLDEN DAYS

Prospected
by Lloyd E. Klos



After the end of the silents, theatre organs were used for solo presentations, some of them quite novel. In the following, we feature coverage of some of these organ programs as they appeared in *Motion Picture Herald*.

Mar. 27, 1929 At New York's Proctor's 58th Street Theatre, FREDERICK KINSLEY, director of organists for Radio-Keith-Orpheum, was guest organist at this house, and offered one of the most novel organ solos yet. A trailer announced the "Duo-Unique," an original organ novelty by Mr. Kinsley. Then Fred and Alan Moran, a well-known pianist with a Steinway Duo-Art piano comprised the duo. Kinsley at the organ opened with "Rhapsody in Blue," followed by Moran, who was seen through a scrim, playing a cadenza of the Rhapsody. They played "Blue Shadows" together. The curtain parted, disclosing the Duo-Art reproducing piano playing a cadenza of the Rhapsody. Kinsley and the piano then played the popular second movement of the Rhapsody. Moran followed with an introductory of "St. Louis Blues." The Duo-Art, playing a roll, joined in as did Kinsley at the organ. Kinsley's dialogue about the audience enjoying their experiment was interrupted by the Duo-Art, playing "How About Me?" Kinsley answered it and it followed with "I'll Get By," which it played wrong. Kinsley then shot at it with a cap pistol and it played "I Faw Down an' Go Boom," and finished with a funeral dirge. The comedy over, Kinsley and Moran finished with a fine rendition of the "Doll Dance."

Mar. 27, 1929 LEW WHITE has returned to New York's Roxy Theatre as its chief organist after an absence of nearly a year. During this year, he had devoted most of his time to teaching organ and also broadcasting and recording. White's first solo after getting back in the fold was offered as a straight spot stunt and featured "Theme Songs of the Photoplay." As the console rose, White played an introductory number of the "Fan Fare," following this with a modulation into "Lover, Come Back to Me." Two other famous theme songs, "Marie" and "Precious Little Thing Called Love," followed by "Lover Come Back" and played with full organ as the final punch, closed this fine arrangement.

Mar. 27, 1929 ARLO HULTS at the Brooklyn Kenmore Theatre offered a pleasing solo which consisted of a fine variety of fox trot, ballad and dance numbers. He called his solo, "Gypsy Melodies." Arlo used six title slides, opening with "The Second Hungarian Rhapsody." The balance of the numbers were "Gypsy," "Gypsy Sweetheart" and "Play, Gypsy." Hults closed with a pedal cadenza with the spotlight on his feet. This was very well done and received the whole-hearted response of the audience.

Mar. 27, 1929 JACK TAYLOR at Newark's Branford Theatre offered a clever community stunt called "A Sing-

ing Rodeo." Special slides with very clever lyrics helped everyone to sing. The program consisted of the following numbers: "The Sun Is At My Window," "Carolina Moon," "Me and the Man in the Moon," "Lonely Nights" and "Where the Sky Little Violets Grow." During the playing of each comedy slide, Jack played "Pony Boy." He got a nice reception.

Jan. 17, 1931 RON & DON (Ron Baggott and Don Moore), back at the Brooklyn Fox after a six-month engagement at the Fox in Washington, D.C. These boys' inaugural appearance called for a huge ovation, which necessitated their taking bows, even before their solo, as well as at the finish. Don, seated at the huge pit console, and Ron, seated at the baby stage console, were attractively dressed in white tuxedos, trimmed in black and made a pleasing appearance in contrast to the organ consoles which were draped in brilliant metallic streamers. Their first solo consisted of a number of singable songs, which the audience did justice to by lustily singing. The numbers were: "Let Me Call You Sweetheart," "I'm Yours," two choruses of "Never Swat a Fly," "Go Home and Tell Your Mother" and a final chorus of "Little White Lies."

Jan. 17, 1931 LOUIS WEIR at Boston's RKO Keith's presented a clever novelty which proved very entertaining to this audience. The title was "An Organ For Sale." The solo opened with a cleverly worded special parody on "Cottage For Sale," the words explaining and inviting the audience to sing the following popular tunes: "High Up On a Mountain," "Driving Me Crazy," "My Wild Irish Rose" and "Cheerful Little Earful." This singing type of solo is a new feature at this house, and after a few of the audience joined in the first song, everyone lustily sang the balance of the program. This audience proved its appreciation of Mr. Weir's efforts by offering him a very fine reception at the finish of the solo.

Jan. 17, 1931 At the Omaha Paramount Theatre, "An Auto Nightmare" is the theme of the program being presented this week to visitors of the theatre from the console by J. WESLEY LORD. While he plays, there are presented upon the screen the lines for his music. Various automobiles are mentioned by name and the music is a medley of familiar tunes, among which are "Marching Through Georgia," "Dixie," "The Rosary," "Comin' Through the Rye" and "Battle Hymn of the Republic." Included in the music is the sound of a musical four-note horn. To judge by the applause of a Sunday afternoon audience which had come to see Marie Dressler and Polly Moran in *Reducing*, Mr. Lord's program was well liked. Projected upon the screen while Mr. Lord played the introductory to the screen feature were many laughing faces.

Jan. 17, 1931 ARTHUR HAYES was at the Paramount in Waterloo, Iowa and is now at the Paramount in Cedar Rapids . . . DAVE TURSTON is at the Paramount in Nashville . . . ARLO HULTS of the RKO Chester Theatre in New York City, is taking TOM GRIERSON'S place for a week at the RKO Palace in Rochester because Tom is ill.

Perhaps we have given present day organists some ideas for more interesting programs while on concert tour. We hope so. We feel that many of the ideas which went well 45 years ago would win approval today.

Jason & The Old Prospector □

Coming . . .

ATLANTA '78

23RD ATOS NATIONAL CONVENTION

**SUNDAY, JULY 9 THROUGH WEDNESDAY, JULY 12
AFTERGLOW – THURSDAY, JULY 13**

Welcome to The South!

And after a winter like the last two, we expect to bask in summer glory with you at the 23rd National Convention.

You'll be in the heart of "uptown" Atlanta, headquartered in the beautiful Sheraton-Biltmore Hotel just minutes away from the headquarters theatre . . . the Fabulous Fox at 660 Peachtree Street, N.E. In the immediate vicinity are many churches of all denominations and many establishments catering to the needs and pleasures of the human species in the realm of food and drink.

While our activities will be centered around the grand installation at the Fox, there will be other delights. For example, the 3/11 Moller at the East Point Theatre, the 3/22 Wurlitzer at the Music Grinder, and the twin installation at Peachtree Christian Church (a 3/57 Ruffatti and 3/35 Pilcher).

By chartered bus we will go to Birmingham, Alabama on Monday for concerts by Eddie Weaver and Don Baker at the Alabama Theatre, a box lunch in the theatre, and then hear Dr. Edward Tibbs perform at the Birmingham Civic Center on the 2/15 Schlicker after which there will be a catered dinner in the Civic Center prior to departure by bus for Atlanta.

The line-up in Atlanta includes a special day, Wednesday, when two concerts will be presented at the East Point and two at the Music Grinder, with groups alternating at noontime. Lunch will be provided at the Music Grinder for both groups and two artists are scheduled at each location for each group. Trevor Bolshaw from Wellington, Somerset and Tom Helms from Pensacola will do the honors at East Point on the 3/11 Moller, and Jay Mitchell and Lew Williams will exercise Wini-fred, the Weber Wurlitzer at the Music Grinder (see article, this issue and front cover).

Lee Erwin, Ron Rhode, Helen Dell, Walt Strony, Tom Cotner, Hector Olivera and Lyn Larsen are lined up to treat you to a taste of the "many moods of the Mighty Mo" at the Fox. These great talents and the scope of the Fox Concert Moller will provide all the diversity any organ buff could wish for.

Of course, Jam Sessions during all "off hours" will be a feature of the demonstration rooms on the 10th floor of the Biltmore where exhibitors will be displaying both equipment and talent. Elsewhere in this issue you may read of another "jam session" after hours (12 midnight til ?) at the Music Grinder.

Y'all Come . . . and let us entertain you!

ARTISTS

1978 ATOS CONVENTION (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

LEE ERWIN — who really needs no introduction to organ buffs. Lee has played the Fox Moller on many occasions accompanying silents with his original scores, and has entertained Atlanta Chapter with his inimitable renditions of Scott Joplin and a whole catalog of theatre organ favorites.

RON RHODE — Chief staff organist at Organ Stop Pizza, played the Chicago Convention, and is rapidly making a big and good name for himself as a stylist who appeals to theatre organ enthusiasts.

EDDIE WEAVER — has played a theatre organ in a theatre longer than any living theatre organist! Like a Methodist preacher, he's done enough programs. It won't take study and practice to get a top-notch performance from Eddie.

DON BAKER — Don's another "old timer" who started formal music lessons on piano and was reformed. Recently cut a disc on the Alabama Wurlitzer. Former staff organist at the Paramount in New York. Reckon he could give us "La Campanella" on the organ?

EDWARD TIBBS — Professor of Music at Samford University in Birmingham, holds Bachelor of Music with Distinction from Eastman School of Music. Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Michigan. Instrumental in the design of the Schlicker he is going to play.

HELEN DELL — Organist for the Los Angeles Dodgers!!! Highlight of the Detroit Convention in '74. Seven (count 'em) records; fresh and novel arrangements. '74 Best Female Organist by Organist Magazine.

WALT STRONY — Staff organist at the Organ Stop Pizza in Phoenix, formerly of Milwaukee in a similar capacity. Well known among the rising young organists.

TOM HELMS — Staff organist, Saenger Theatre, Pensacola, Florida. Played the Fox Moller "cold" in late '77 to the amazement of Atlanta Chapter. His arrangements and musicianship are outstanding — the young man to watch!

TREVOR BOLSHAW — England's gift to our Convention comes from Wellington, Somerset. His style is a cross between British and American, but based on solid musical training and interesting arrangements.

JAY MITCHELL — Staff organist at the Music Grinder, formerly at Alabama Theatre. Winning personality, solid musicianship, wide repertoire. We have him tied to Atlanta, so don't get any ideas!

LEW WILLIAMS — Lew made the mistake at the San Francisco Convention of being overheard by the present convention chairman and treasurer when he played "In the Mood" in one of the demonstration rooms and they decided he *must* be heard by a full convention.

TOM COTNER — A somewhat new name in the theatre organ world. Those who heard him at the Chicago '77 Convention know this artist has made a special study of the styles of the '20s.

HECTOR OLIVERA — The fireball from Argentina! If you haven't seen or heard him do "Flight of the Bumblebee" (no hands!) you've missed the sight and sensation of a lifetime. Knows the Fox Moller from two previous concerts and has a new record on that instrument.

LYN LARSEN — Another veteran of two concerts on the Fox Moller, known for his ballad styling and clean registrations. A gifted arranger, personable entertainer and a veteran of conventions and the concert circuit.



4/42 Moller

The Fox

The majority of the concerts at this year's convention will be held in the fabulous Fox Theatre which was saved from the wrecking ball in 1974. Earlier this year, Atlanta Landmarks paid off the mortgage of \$1.8 million.

The 4/42 Moller has also been saved. See story on page 8.

A Classical Treat . . .

Peachtree Christian Church

Built in 1928 to the design of Charles H. Hopson, who at that time was considered to be the foremost authority on Gothic Architecture in America, it houses the largest collection of English stained glass east of the Mississippi. In addition, it possesses the only complete set of tubular "Tower Chimes" in the southeast. The chimes are played by automatic roll player as well as from both organ consoles. The church is only a short distance from Convention headquarters and originally was next door to the Rhodes Mansion, present home of the Georgia Historical Society.

The Pilcher Organ, originally a 3/40, presently a 3/35 (the 5 rank Echo division was removed when the

Ruffatti was installed) was installed in the church chancel in 1928. At that time it was acclaimed to be the finest church organ in the South. It possesses today these same fine qualities and truly is one of the best voiced instruments in the area. An Austin console was added in 1957.

The Ruffatti organ, a 3/57, is installed in the balcony at the rear of the sanctuary. It was installed in 1973. Truly a concert instrument, it is the only Ruffatti in the area that is not augmented with electronic pedal stops.

The combined effect of the two complete instruments is unique in this area and is the prime reason for choosing it for our classical concert.



3/57 Ruffatti - 1973



3/35 Plicher - 1928

ALABAMA'S

BERTHA

A CONVENTION FEATURE

by Jay Mitchell

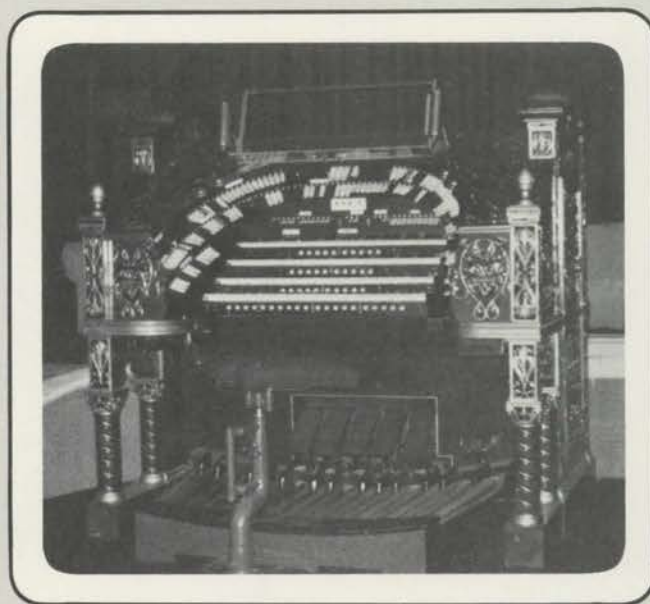
To be asked to write chapter two of a continuing history of the Publix 1 Wurlitzer at the Alabama Theatre in Birmingham sounds awfully clinical and smells too much of fresh paint and printer's ink. How does a guy write about an enormous mass of wood, metal and leather that he fell in love with as a child, and has loved more deeply with the passing of almost 25 years?

Enter the "Magic Spell," or should I say the word "time." Because with enough hours at the cockpit to qualify me for my commercial pilot's license, I could tell you still where the 2-2/3 Tibia is on the Bombarde stop rail in the dark! Or even in my sleep! But what I can't tell you is how much I love her. I'm a musician, not a writer. To know her is to love her, and to love her you *must* know her, intimately.

It has been my good fortune to have worked with her on that intimate basis. Though dampness or dryness affected her speech, she always filled the house with a good, solid, almost assertive power that was lacking in so many other organs I played. When I wanted that last ounce of Fortissimo, there was always that one last contact on the back of the main swell pedal that would open four more shutters in the main chamber. It had been a wiring mistake by Wurlitzer installers, I was told by Chief Larry Donaldson, and I enthusiastically came back with, "Leave it alone; it's great!"

Oh, Bertha has had her days when I cussed her, granted. She could out-do any temperamental Wagnerian you ever dreamed of — and she drove a lot of fellows to drink. Even with a new power supply that made her speak more promptly, I always had to show her who wore the pants. Sound strange? Not too much if you were to ask the other fellows who have given Bertha their best.

Bertha has been widowed several times, but the guys who still are around would probably tell you how much they are in love with her. Still around are Randy Sauls, Lee Erwin, Charlie Cox and Bertha's latest, Bernard Franklin. And certainly, Bernard Franklin



puts Bertha through her paces as few of us in the past have been able to do. He's well trained and possesses an incredible imagination for making old songs come to life as freshly as if they had been written yesterday and were new to our ears.

So what's the un-emotional side of this great old red-and-gold lady, folks? What *is*, in fact, the "clinical" side that makes this one so spectacular?

Simply this. Acoustics! The Alabama Theatre possesses some of the best acoustics in all movie theatredom. The organ is well-maintained, and when both are combined, a concert is indeed a rare treat to the ears. I'd trade my mother for the Brass Sax and my Grandmother for the Vox and Solo Vox. Certainly Jesse Crawford should have heard this installation. It was a product of his creativity and he would have been another one of us fellows who would have had a love affair with Bertha, that wonderful, wacky Wurlitzer.

Bronze Convention Metal

No. 1 (obverse) and No. 2 (reverse) shown here are models (actual size) of the bronze convention medal to be included in each registrant's packet. The medal will serve the function of admission to ticketed events as well as commemorating the 23rd National Convention. Orders for additional medals will be accepted in the Record Store for later delivery in pewter, silver or 24 carat gold.

No. 3 is the alternate reverse for No. 1 which will be struck in all three metals after the convention to commemorate the saving of the Fabulous Fox Theatre. A further announcement about the availability of this limited edition will be published later.

The metal was designed and the models executed by Atlanta sculptor William McCulloch. Mr. McCulloch studied at the University of Georgia, Ohio



1.



2.



3.

State and the Art Students League of New York. His training includes experience as studio assistant to Julian Harris and Paul Manship as well as informal study and travel in Italy and Mexico. His exhibitions include the Association of Georgia Artists, the National Academy of Design and he is represented in the Holbrook Collection of the Georgia Museum of Art. He has an MA in art history from the University of North Carolina and taught at Piedmont College, Columbia College, Lander College and the University of South Carolina. Bill is also a member of Atlanta Chapter, and finds time to pursue his interests in recording and hi-fidelity sound reproduction.

JAM AND BEER DO MIX!

by Jay Mitchell — Staff Organist, Music Grinder

If you organ fans lived in Atlanta, you'd naturally find your way out to the Music Grinder to hear our great Wurlitzer, Winifred, one of the spectacular instruments featured in *Readers Digest* "Golden Organ Favorites" when she resided at the Strand Theatre in Plattsburgh, New York.

But a visit to the Music Grinder will *open your eyes* as well as your ears. There are pipes behind glass, and percussions in the open where you can see them working. Coupled with all this is the most spectacular showmanship your eyes' mental palate can possibly absorb. The drama of electric colored hammers under black light! Vivid lipstick reds, hot pink, Egyptian blue, jungle green — oriental orange (!!!)

Special effects abound in variety, such as our dancing fire in the pipe chambers, even our ordinary curtain is made from thousands of strands of silver and gold Mylar® — they glitter and flash and move spectacularly as if they were almost on fire!

Coupled with the usual bubbles is Marvin, the unusual, moronic, mechanical monkey, doing his own act. And our staffers who cook the pizza also double on pizza pans and try to imitate Marvin's act. Sound crazy? Well, I've only just begun. The silent movies are fun fare, and coupled with our sing-alongs is one of the

finest and most complete slide libraries you'll find anywhere. So you've mastered the tongue-twisters, have you? Well, I've got a couple in the projector that I'd dare you to get through without biting your tonsils!

Now enter the jam and beer. What am I talking about? A jam session! And beer and wine — and of course, for tee-totlers (this is tee-totlin' country down here in Georgia, folks), Coke, Sprite, orange pop, water, and if you dare, Root Beer!

Jam sessions will be nightly at the Music Grinder from closing time into the wee hours and will feature the performing artists of the convention, as well as all the visiting pros. And don't be surprised when you run into some of your favorite "greats" sippin' & jamming away at the Music Grinder!

If you've never experienced the excitement of a jam session in the past where the pro's shed their inhibitions, let down their hair and take off into new musical horizons, then you ain't heard nothin' yet!

All in all, the beautiful Music Grinder backdrop, in its colorful splendor, the great Wurlitzer, the liquid refreshment, and most of all, the great artists who will be here letting their hair down promise you another fascinating feature of the Atlanta '78 Convention. Of one thing, you can be sure; Jam and Beer **do** mix!

Registration Form...

ATOS NATIONAL CONVENTION

ATLANTA



**SAVE
\$10.00
ON
CONVENTION
COSTS**

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Postmarked before
JUNE 1**

**only \$66 each
Including Transportation
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_____ **Registrations at \$76.00* each** \$ _____
(including transportation, 2 dinners and box lunch)
IF POSTMARKED BY JUNE 1 - \$66.00* each.

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(including transportation, 2 dinners and box lunch)

_____ **Banquet(s) at \$10.00** _____

_____ **Afterglow at \$10.00 each** _____
(including bus transportation for the morning)

TOTAL \$ _____

**Registrations postmarked before June 1, 1978, ONLY, \$66.00 each including transportation, 2 dinners and box lunch.*

***Children 14 years of age and under must pay registration fee of \$25.00 plus other fees for Banquet and Afterglow, if desired.*

Make checks and money orders payable to . . .

1978 ATOS CONVENTION

Mail Registration and Hotel Reservation to . . .

**1978 ATOS CONVENTION
P.O. Box 7098, Sta. C.
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SHERATON-BILTMORE HOTEL RESERVATION

Name _____

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_____ **Single (1 person)** \$30.00/day

_____ **Double (2 persons, 2 beds)** \$38.00/day

Send Hotel Reservation with Registration. Atlanta Chapter will send to the Sheraton-Biltmore. No advance deposit for room is required. Limousine Service every 15 minutes between Hartsfield International Airport and Biltmore, \$3.50.

23RD ATOS NATIONAL CONVENTION

Tentative Schedule

THE REGISTRATION DESK WILL BE OPEN SATURDAY AFTERNOON AND ALL DAY SUNDAY, MONDAY, TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY.

DAY	MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING
SUNDAY JULY 9	Church of your choice	LEE ERWIN Fox	No-host cocktail party & buffet dinner, Fox Egyptian Ballroom RON RHODE Fox • Music Grinder Jam Session
MONDAY JULY 10	Early Rise Bus Trip to Birmingham • late morning EDDIE WEAVER Alabama Theatre	Box Lunch • DON BAKER Alabama	EDWARD TIBBS Birmingham Civic Center • Dinner at Civic Center • Return to Atlanta • Music Grinder Jam Session
TUESDAY JULY 11	Board of Directors and Chapter Representatives Meeting • CAMEOS	Peachtree Christian Church Organists to be Announced • HELEN DELL Fox • Annual Membership Meeting – 4:00 PM	WALT STRONG Fox • Music Grinder Jam Session
WEDNESDAY JULY 12	TOM HELMS TREVOR BOLSHAW East Point • JAY MITCHELL LEW WILLIAMS Music Grinder	JAY MITCHELL LEW WILLIAMS Music Grinder • TOM HELMS TREVOR BOLSHAW East Point	Cocktail Party and BANQUET Biltmore Hotel • TOM COTNER Fox • Music Grinder Jam Session

AFTERGLOW

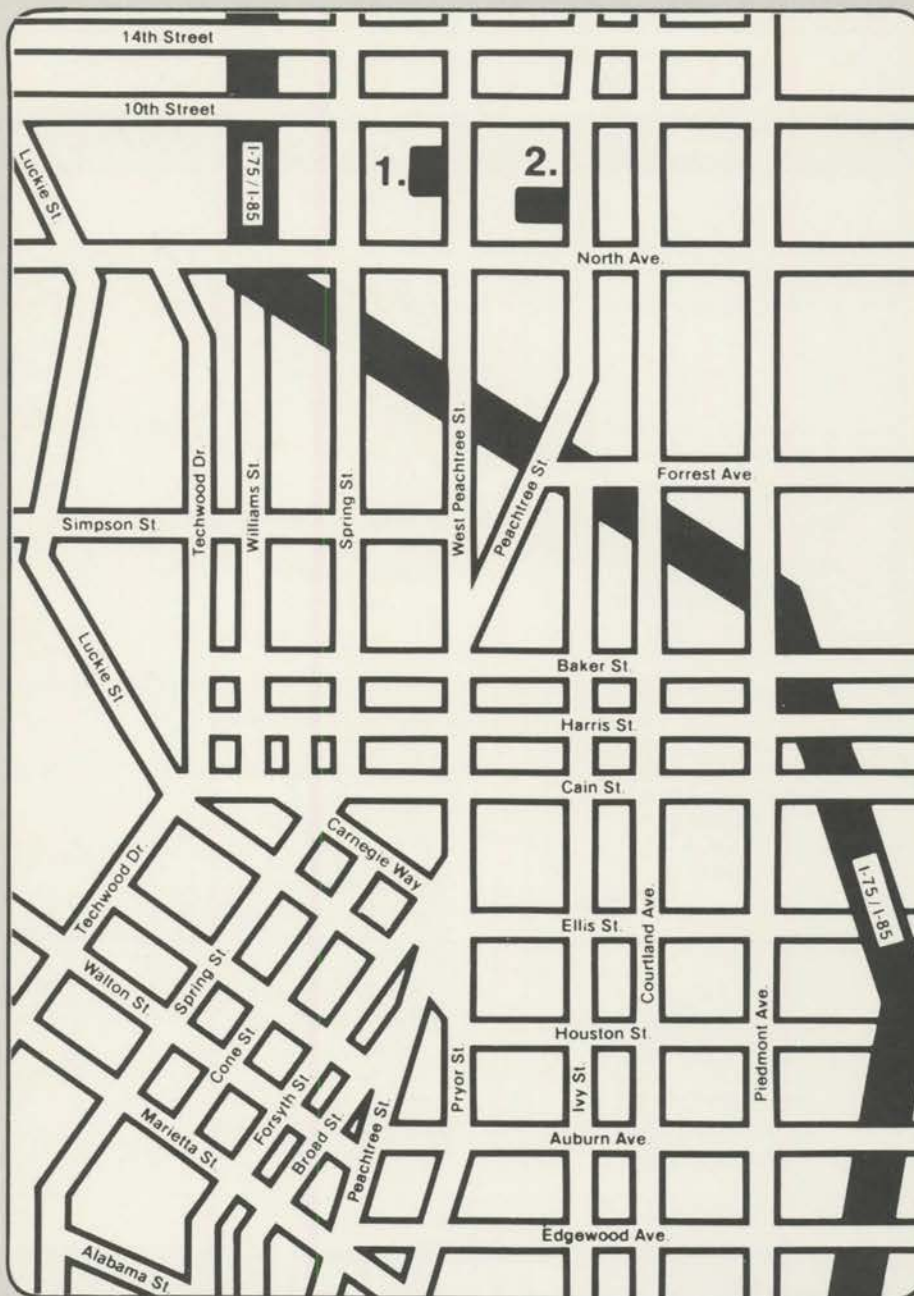
THURSDAY JULY 13	Optional Tours Homes and Churches • Stone Mountain • Callanwolde	HECTOR OLIVERA Fox	LYN LARSEN Fox
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**PROGRAM
SUBJECT
TO CHANGE**

If you have questions about the convention, write: . . .

1978 ATOS Convention
Ruth M. Jobson, Registrar
P.O. Box 7098, Station C
Atlanta, Georgia 30357

The Heart of Atlanta . . .



BILTMORE (1) AND FOX (2) IN RELATION TO I-75 AND I-85, DOWNTOWN

Entering the city from the north, exit at North Avenue (Georgia Tech), turn left on North Avenue two blocks to West Peachtree, then left to Biltmore. Entering the city from the south, exit North Avenue, then right 2 blocks to West Peachtree St., then left to the Biltmore.

VOX POPS



Conducted by Stu Green

Readers are encouraged to submit interesting sidelights on the organ hobby (exclusive of chapter news items) material they believe will be of general interest about local organ activities and installations and the people who work at the hobby. We know "there's VOX POPS in them there chapters" and it only requires a 9c postcard to get it to VOX POPS Editor, Box 3564, Granada Hills, California 91344. If the contributor can afford a 13c stamp, why not include a black and white photo which need not be returned.

Veteran California organ enthusiast Chard Walker sent in a clipping from the Union, New Jersey, Star-Ledger, which recently devoted an entire page to the announced closing of the Radio City Music Hall and the resulting impact on New Jerseyites associated with the showplace. Of course, there were photos of yummy Rockettes and ballerinas, but also shown were organ maintenance man Ron Bishop, inspecting a rank of pipes, and Ray Bohr at the console of the 4/58. The text expressed both past pleasures and future uncertainty about the 6200-seat house, on the part of employees. Ray Bohr spoke for many: "I don't know what I'll do. Nobody hires a 58-year-old musician." The Wurlitzer has been his companion for 30 years. The showgirls were apprehensive, for all their glamor. They discussed various ways of keeping the house open, such as getting the government to declare it a historical landmark, so it wouldn't be taxed. The ballet corp dance captain has organized many of the theatre's 440 employees into

"The Showpeoples committee to Save RCMH." We wish them well.

Most everyone knows that the Radio City Music Hall has come on hard times over the past ten years or so. The big events for the 6200-seat house were the Christmas and Easter shows which drew thousands. The remainder of the season was light, attendance-wise. However, there was one factor which kept the theatre going in recent years — charter excursions. Following conductor Raymond Paige's death, his widow, Mary, traveled up and down the east coast, publicizing the "Showplace of the Nation." This activity paid off as tours from Connecticut to Philadelphia swamped the streets surrounding the Hall, and \$300,000 weeks were common, from Thanksgiving through New Year's. Of course, the big drawing cards were the famed Nativity Pageant on stage, the Rockettes (reduced from 36 to 30), and the pit orchestra under Will Irwin, the only theatre to have one in daily use. Though the "Grand Organ" was no longer heard in half-hour concerts before the opening each day, and for playing out the last show at night, in recent months, it still was used in solo numbers and with the orchestra by Ray Bohr, John DeTroy and Cecil Benz.

James ("Jimmy") Boyce, after years of playing the ex-Radio City Center theatre's unenclosed 4-deck Wurlitzer for roller skaters in the Alexandria Rink, is entering the concert ratrace. One of his initial engagements entails quite a journey from Virginia. He's set to play for the San Diego ATOS chapter.

In the year end issue we ran a Vox Pop about Hector Olivera discovering a "Discus" organ in a church in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, during "shore leave" from a Caribbean cruise. No one had ever heard of a Discus organ so we dug deeper and discovered that a tape had been made. It bore not only some of Hector's music played on the ancient organ, but also a commentary by the South American organist. In Desi Arnaz accents he described the instrument: "There's a plate on the console which says 'Watkins and Watson, London' — and



Hector. He found the 'Made in Britain' trademark in Jamaica. (Bill Lamb Photo)

also 'Discus.' Guess that's the blower." Mystery solved. We must admit to ignorance of that brand of unified organ although the Discus blower is not uncommon. Hector listed the stops as Open Diapason (8' and 4'), Lieblich Gedeckt (16', 8', 4' & 2'), Dulciana (8', 12th & 15th) plus a 3-rank Mixture. No reeds. The pipework is in a swellbox and there's a Crescendo Pedal and a light tremulant. Olivera added that despite one dead pedal stop, it was in good shape. There's a story there. How did a conservative English organ find its way to the Jamaican Ocho Rios Baptist church?

Those who have been long-term devotees of the *Tonight Show* on television, recall when Lyle "Skitch" Henderson served as pianist and conductor. He was originally a studio organist in the days when radio stations had pipe organs. On a recent Mike Douglas talk show, Skitch mentioned his experience when he subbed for organist Paul Carson on *One Man's Family* for a week. During dialogue on one live show, he inadvertently brought his elbow down on a manual with a "wrrump!" So,

he turned off the organ blower. But when the director gave the split second cue to Skitch for mood music, he came down on the manuals to no music! As he stated, "I was way down the list of studio musicians even before the week started." Skitch, of course, went on to greater fame as a top pianist and conductor.



ATOS member Lawrence Birdsong describes himself as "surprised and pleased" to hear the names of Frederick Kinsley (1973) and Bernie Cowham (1977) announced as entrants to the Theatre Organists Hall of Fame. "Fred frequently substituted for Bernie, and I had a chance to try the Riverside Church's Hook & Hastings (before the Skinner was installed), where Fred was organist. In 1939, I asked Bernie where I could get a Howard Seat. He didn't know, but promised to will me his. Which he did, and upon his death in 1949, I received a letter from an attorney, stating the seat was mine."



Since the RTOS was founded in 1964, the club has been fortunate in having to cancel only two concerts. The first was in April 1975 when a freak April blizzard prevented Lowell Ayars' leaving Philadelphia. The second occurred a few months ago when Walter Strony was scheduled on January 26. This time, the artist was in town, but the forecast of "the worst storm of the century" (which never materialized in Kodakville) caused the closing of the Auditorium Theatre hours in advance. Fortunately, the following Saturday was open and 859 concertgoers were saturated with some pyrotechnics which proved that the 22-year-old Strony is on his way to becoming a star in the concert spectrum. His program was heavily featured with modern works plus a sprinkling of some oldies. High points were Walter's famous rendering of "Variations on a Theme by Oscar Mayer," the hot dog wheel, which brought the inevitable chuckles from the assemblage, and a flashy up-and-down-the-manuals interpretation of "In the Mood" which evoked memories of dancers in the aisles of the N.Y. Paramount when the Glenn Miller band played there in the thirties.



Walter Strony

Walter made use of the newly arrived Moller Post Horn (two months ahead of schedule). The stop richly complements the other voices but is not overbearing. Keep your eye on this developing personality! He has since replaced Lyn Larsen at Organ Stop No. 1 in Phoenix, Arizona.



Hall of Famer, Dr. C.A.J. Parmentier, who was incapacitated



'Cass' Parmentier. Back on the organ bench again. (Bill Lamb Photo)

awhile back, has returned to playing before audiences. On January 20, he was scheduled to play for the New York State Bar Association's annual dinner in the Grand Ballroom of the New York Hilton. The NYBA had written Local 802 for permission for him to perform, and the request was approved unanimously.



Oliver Wallace was famous as a west coast theatre organist from whom several other top organists, including Chauncey Haines and Jesse Crawford, got ideas for improving their playing. Wallace's prowess as a composer came to public notice after his theatre days when he composed music for Walt Disney cartoons and live feature productions in Hollywood. But his most famous composition remained the early '20s "Hindustan." Ollie had a humorous side, too. In 1942, he composed "In Nutsy Land" for a Donald Duck cartoon. Walt Disney changed the title to "Der Fuehrer's Face," and it was recorded by the late Spike Jones and His City Slickers. In a very short while, it sold 1½ million 78s at a time when the country needed a morale boost after several military setbacks. It also made "Spike Jones" household words, as his zany musical interpretations swept the country for ten years afterward. Now his records are being reissued by RCA, and once more one can hear the immortal "Chloe" being sought by her rough-neck lover with "Where are you — you old bat!"



We have a rather sketchy report that the Tennessee Theatre in Knoxville, was scheduled to reopen as a classic film house on March 15 with the 1936 film, "Grand Hotel," starring Lewis Stone, Wallace Beery, Jean Harlow and a supporting cast of MGM contract stars. Our source says the Tennessee's organ will play a major part in the '30s style programs.



Alert ATOS member, Matt Smith of Sullivan, Wis., believes he has found another pipe organ in a theatre. He was in the Ironwood (Mich.) Theatre last summer and spied a console, draped in the pit. He believes it to be a Barton as it has a 4-

poster lift. The 1051-seat house did have a 2/7 Barton originally. Matt made several trips to Ironwood but was unable to talk to the manager. "According to a few of the locals," Smith says, "it had been played up to a few years ago. Perhaps a change in the managership had something to do with it. This might be a good opportunity for the Wolverine Chapter to add another playable organ to the ranks of the Pipe Piper list."



Then there's the case of the unwilling organist, the fall guy, who because he's tops in another line of musical endeavor, gets pressed into service when the featured organist doesn't show up. It happened to orchestra conductor Werner Janssen when he was assistant conductor at the New York Roxy during its salad days. Janssen, who was given "Show Business" magazines 1977 Award "for superior artistry is the world of entertainment," was assistant to such baton wielding luminaries as Erno Rapee, Charles Previn and Joseph Littau. Rapee knew that Janssen had studied classical organ in Paris and Leipzig so one evening when the featured organist didn't show up for his solo and the assistants couldn't be located, Rapee pointed to Janssen, said "You're IT!" and handed him a piano copy of "I'll See You in My Dreams" because that was what was on the program.

"I climbed onto that five manual console, and up it went as I read the music from the piano copy. It was a full house — all 6000 seats taken . . . I don't think the audience was 'consoled' by my impromptu rendition — meaning 'to tear asunder.'"

Once wasn't enough. "It happened again at the Strand when manager Joseph Plunkett demanded that I solo a novelty tune called "Itching Fingers" on the organ because the regular man didn't show." Janssen would not disclose the names of the organists for whom he subbed.

As a lad, Janssen accompanied silents on the small organ in his home town theatre in Great Neck, Long Island — "Until I got fired." Reflecting on these unnerving experiences, Janssen says he decided to stick to composing and conducting. These areas of music won him acclaim



Werner Janssen. No more subbing.

throughout the musical world and his descriptive composition, "New Years Eve in New York" won him the Prize of Rome.

"But no more organ subbing, please," begs Janssen.



George Wright, whose "Wright On" record release is reviewed in this issue, informs us that the Great



George. Like being in the theatre

(Stufoto)

American Gramophone Co's first release of his cuts made at the Chicago theatre's beautifully restored 4/29 Wurlitzer will be available about the time this issue arrives in your mailbox. George says he is thoroughly satisfied that the direct-to-disc recording system (eliminating tape) is the way to go. "It's like being in the Chicago theatre while the organ is playing," says George. The company disced enough tunes for three releases. Meanwhile, George is getting more deeply into the concert scene. One engagement is an April 30 concert in England, playing the Gaumont State (Kilburn) 3/16 Wurlitzer.



For those who have been wondering about the whereabouts of the mysterious Korla Pandit, the *After Nightfall* column in the San Francisco Examiner had him playing for two Sunday concerts throughout February at the Pipes and Pizza in Serramonte, Calif. The column, conducted by "The Owl," reveals that Korla is a grand nephew of Nehru's sister, Madame Pandit. For those who missed the February stint, catch Korla at the Baldwin on Saturday evenings at Captain Anchovy's Pizza in San Leandro. The turban gets around.



How many readers living in the Denver area remember theatre organist Zoella Kees? She played for Fox Theatre's KOA radio from 1935 to 1945, five times a week on a 15-minute program, *Midnight Melodies*. It's been 32 years since she was making \$150 a week, and also playing the organ for vaudeville shows at the Denver Theatre. Now living in a Dallas apartment, she plays for friends on an electronic. When in Laguna Beach, Cal., she taught organ at Leisure World, and has a plaque from pupils addressed to "The World's Greatest Organ Teacher." As for teaching again, she says, "Honey, I'm 81. I played "Over There" on Armistice Day in 1918."



Not much has been heard from Stan Kann along the pipe circuit since he moved from St. Louis to Los Angeles. A two page spread in the Jan. 14 *TV Guide* made no mention of his musical prowess but concen-



Stan Kann. His future is on the tube. (Stufoto)

trated on his gadget gathering and TV talk show gigs. An interview in the Feb. 1978 *Keyboard World* by Bob Rubenstein is more revealing. It seems that Stan has switched professionally from music to comedy built around his collection of ancient vacuum cleaners, apple corers, mousetraps, wringers or what have you. His target is TV talk shows, and perhaps a show of his own. Another reason for his absence from the pipe spotlight is also revealed.

Said Stan: "I find I've suddenly grown rather tired of the theatre organ, because I've played it so long . . . When you play it for 20 years or so, and you have to play it, it's just not the same . . . It seems to me now that all theatre organs sound alike. I can no longer hear anything exciting coming out of a theatre organ." He added that his big thrill now is playing the electronic organ with orchestral accompaniment.



Bert Buhrman reports from the School of the Ozarks that the Christ-



Bert Buhrman at the console, and the School of the Ozarks' chorus await a cue during filming of the Christmas TV special.

mas TV special in which he, the S.O. Choir, and the 3/15 Wurlitzer were featured, was highly successful. The PBS station in Springfield, Mo. used its new mobile equipment, the first time such apparatus was used in that area. With originality, the technicians used shots taken above the console, close-ups of Bert's hands on the manuals, fadeouts and fadeins etc. The show began in Bert's study at home, showing his wife Denice's miniature nativity scene; a 1½-minute segment which took over three hours to film. Reception to the show was good, and most were of the opinion it was better than many commercial Yule shows on TV. If your local PBS station is desirous of running a first-class Christmas program next yuletide, get in touch with the School of the Ozarks at Pt. Lookout, Mo., and the wheels can be put in motion for a tape of the show.



Our correspondent-at-large, Doc Bebko, is at it again. Around New Years, he and Mrs. Bebko flew to Salt Lake City and while there, Doc sampled the sounds of three installations. First, he attended the farewell recital of Dr. Alexander Schreiner at the Mormon Tabernacle. "I first heard him in 1927 on CBS when our family got our first RCA 'dynamic speaker,' and have listened to him over the airways ever since. The governor of Utah declared December 30 as 'Alexander Schreiner Day.' I also heard concerts by the other Tabernacle organists: Robert Cundick, Roy M. Darley and John Longhurst. It was a dream week."

Another day saw Doc at the Pizza & Pipes where Bill Hagey presides

over the 3/31 Wurlitzer. "Bill did a great job accompanying a silent movie, and I was permitted to play a few numbers for my very young grandson, Todd. The piece-de-resistance was our dinner at Larry Bray's 'Organ Loft.' Joann Harmon came on at nine for dancing, and what an organist she is! Accompanied by a fine drummer, we had three hours of real dancing pleasure and good fellowship. The instrument is perfectly balanced, absolutely in tune, and in the hands of this great gal, it sings forth like a junior N.Y. Paramount dowager. Salt Lake City may not have quantity, but it sure has quality."



May 27, the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend, will provide a big night for organ fans in Wichita, Kansas. At 8:00 p.m. Billy Nalle will play a genuine theatre organ concert on the 4/37 "Dowager Empress" Wurlitzer in Century II Center. The exuberant Billy has rated high with past audiences there. No doubt he'll do it again.



When Hollis R. Upson of Batavia, N.Y. attends a theatre organ concert, which is often, he does so with a very discerning ear, both as to the instrument and the artist. Back in the twenties, he worked for an organ maintenance firm which was responsible for keeping the Schine Theatre organs in the Rochester area in tune. He remembers that the bulk of the instruments were either 5-rank Marr & Coltons or Style D Wurlitzers. "The Riviera, however, had a 3/11 M&C, and we tuned that one for Tom Grierson about 1925." Hollis further states that he joined national ATOS independently as Batavia has no chapter. "THEATRE ORGAN Magazine is well worth the money and is very necessary. Competing organ magazines print a variety of material, but are no substitutes for THEATRE ORGAN."



Friends of retired theatre organist, and for the past 10 years circus organist, Harry J. Jenkins will be glad to know the silent movie veteran is nearly recovered from surgery wherein a faulty hip was replaced by an artificial metal one. "I can play



Circus organist Harry Jenkins. The man with the iron hip. (Stufoto)

the organ again" says Harry. Just wait until he tries to go through an airport security metal detector with that iron hip!

Personable Edward C. May, "Mr. Music of Miami Beach," has made progress toward recovery of his health following a lengthy sojourn in intensive cardiac care. The organist was scheduled to return home the first week of 1978. His daughter, Carol, says it will be a long road back, but knowing Eddie's spirit and perseverance, he will succeed. All his friends, in Florida and elsewhere, are pulling for him.

Historical Loew's Grand Theatre in Atlanta suffered a serious fire on January 30. The 2500-seat house had become world famous on December 15, 1939 when it was the site of the premiere of what may be called the greatest movie of them all, *Gone With the Wind*. The 85-year-old Peachtree Street theatre which closed last June, was one of the city's most elegant, and once housed a style D Wurlitzer. Atlantans remember the festivities attendant to the GWTW event, amid the glitter of searchlights. Over 300,000 Southerners lined the streets that day, many in period costume. Six thousand attended the costume ball.

Among the stars who attended were Clark Gable and his bride, Carole Lombard; Vivien Leigh; and the author, Margaret Mitchell. It would be the greatest event in Atlanta until the ATOS convention in July 1978.

This probably belongs with the record reviews, but we can't resist telling readers that *Readers Digest* has reissued the set of four stereo organ records originally released about 10 years ago when reviewers gave it general approval. The organists are Virgil Fox, Ray Bohr, Reginald Foort and Reginald Dixon. The organs used are the Tower Ballroom Wurlitzer (Dixon, Blackpool), The Radio City Music Hall Wurlitzer (Bohr), the Kearns — Carson Hollywood studio Wurlitzer (Foort) and the Royal Albert Hall and N.Y. Riverside church classical organs (Fox). The "Organ Memories" set now sells for about \$14.50 postpaid from the mag's Pleasantville, N.Y. headquarters. Also available on two 8 track tapes for about \$3.00 more. Either way, it's a good purchase.

Our sharp-eyed correspondent in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Helen Kiley, caught a reference to a long ago radio organist in a recent issue of the *Ft. Lauderdale News* and clipped the item for us. The organist's name was then Belle Brooks. She is an organist and pianist and once had her own program on WHN, New York. Now the widow of vaudeville and recording vocalist Irving Kaufman (over 600 of his 78s went into release), Belle was trying to locate one of the singers who had performed on her broadcasts, an Evelyn Bennett. Belle had recently moved from Palm Springs, Calif. to Ft. Lauderdale and thought she had found a clue to Evelyn's whereabouts. Perhaps a reader can help.

It transpired in a relatively small southern California beach town on January 29, a concert, plus silent film shorts, played on an electronic organ installed temporarily in the 430 seat Bay theatre in Seal Beach. The organist was durable Gaylord Carter.

More than 300 people, mostly local residents, gathered in the at-

tractive auditorium on a Sunday afternoon to witness Carter's accompaniment of a frenetic W.C. Fields auto chase; Harold Lloyd's disastrous trial run of his new 1923 car; "Koko," Max Fleischer's cartoon clown, conducting the sing-along to the beat of his famous bouncing ball; newlywed Buster Keaton building a very non-linear house from tampered-with plans, and Charlie Chaplin in the most memorable scenes from *The Gold Rush*.

Between film clips, Gaylord soloed at the souped-up Conn 651 with selections from *Star Wars* and *Chorus Line* plus a lilting medley of Irving Berlin selections, ending with the audience singing "God Bless America."

So why does this somewhat remote concert, played on a plug-in, rate coverage in these pages? Mainly because it was a test program staged by the Bay Theatre's owner, Dick Loderhose, an experiment to determine how both ATOS members and locals would respond to the idea of organ concerts at the Bay. It was the local Seal Beach and Long Beach fans who responded.

The point is that this show was a harbinger of a far different setup — pipes. As many fans know, Dick



A late arrival points to the good news on the marquee. (Pegpic)



Theatre owner Dick Loderhose stands by his lobby display while the latecomer rubbernecks. (Pegpic)

Loderhose is the owner of a 4/42 Wurlitzer pipe organ, an instrument built around, and including the New York Paramount broadcast studio organ, Jesse Crawford's "dream organ." Until recently the instrument was housed in a studio on the Loderhose property in New York, where it often figured in ATOS activities. A few years ago, Dick and his wife, Jane, decided to move west. The huge organ is slowly being moved west. Dick has removed several rows of theatre seats to make room for backstage chambers, reducing the seating to 430.

Loderhose was encouraged by the local turnout for his initial concert venture and expects more widespread support after his pipes start perking (he is reticent about announcing a completion date). It's one of the few houses in the USA with a pipe organ going in instead of coming out, and the house is making ends meet on the income from judiciously selected art films ("No, not porno films!" roars Dick).

Last year, we mentioned in this column that the Jaques Cattell Press, a division of Bowker Co., publisher of reference books, was compiling a work on the Halls of Fame in the United States and Canada. Naturally, the ATOS Theatre Organists Hall of Fame is to be included among the musicians. While compiling the data, it was found that there are more than 750 Halls, honoring people in all walks of life. Therefore, the material will be compiled in three volumes. The first, with 1072 pages on 173 sports Halls of Fame, was published last year. The second,

on non-sports, including ours, will hopefully be finished this year. Ours, by the way, is the only hall devoted to honoring performers on a specific musical instrument. More on this when the volume is released is promised by our Hall's chairman, Lloyd Klos.



Rex Koury, "the Boy With Miles of Smiles," still has a warm spot in his heart for a theatre organist he met while in high school, Bill Meeder. Recently, a friend of Rex sent him a 1945 picture with clipping of Meeder, and it turned out to be the



Rex Koury remembers a friend. (Stufoto)

only one of his exteacher Rex has. Koury says that when he moved to the coast and his father sold their Cranford, N.J. home, all Rex's school things, memorabilia etc. were tossed out.

"It's a shame that ATOS people never had the opportunity to meet and know Bill," Rex says. "An outstanding musician in every way, yet quiet, gentle, unassuming and soft-spoken — a real gentleman in every respect. I owe him so very much. He was my earliest musical inspiration and ideal and I'm reasonably sure I would not have followed the course in life which I did if it hadn't been for him."



Those who attended the pre-glow event of the 1976 ATOS Convention, remember the playing of Robert Carwithen at the Hope-Jones organ in the Ocean Grove (N.J.) Auditorium. Both artist and instrument are still doing well. Last August 17, the Monmouth Chapter, AGO, sponsored a recital there. Mr. Carwithen, thru a unique organ stop which involves re-

lays of flashing light bulbs, simulated waving of the huge wooden American flag in the front of the auditorium while the audience sang the National Anthem. First half of the program was devoted to works of Bach, Bingham and other classicists. Second half featured light classics and popular works including those of Richard Rodgers and Scott Joplin. The "Allegro" from Widor's "Sixth Symphony" closed the program.

The organ was built by Robert Hope-Jones in 1907 and was among the first electro pneumatic instruments in the country. Originally 14 ranks, it was enlarged to 30 by ATOS member Ronald C. Bishop.



Just because he was named Organist of the Year, doesn't mean that John Muri has been resting on his oars. For example, his nine-year-old column in THEATRE ORGAN is continuing to attract readers with its lucid viewpoints. "I am amazed," says he, "to find after these years that I am not running out of material. There is enough for years to come." And apparently his talents as organist haven't abated, either, with numerous engagements scheduled



John Muri. (Garden Photo)

this year, including a concert in California (See Los Angeles chapter News).

Thirdly, John has been retained as a consultant to the Wurlitzer Co. for the installation of its 5/65 organ in the mammoth new complex in DeKalb, Illinois. He helped draw the specifications, assigned the ranks to specific chambers, and prepared music for the Mighty Wurlitzer Day last October. He says it will be quite a story, this "super installation", and we hope it will be shared with THEATRE ORGAN readers. □

Closing Chord

Joseph Henry Koons, a veritable patron saint of the theatre pipe organ, passed away in Long Beach, California on Saturday morning, January 28, 1978, following a long and disabling illness.

This is the same Joe Koons who provided the Mighty Wurlitzer and camp chairs in his motorcycle shop at 1350 East Anaheim Street in Long Beach and shared the music and camaraderie with his fellow man every Saturday night for the past ten years, no strings attached. All organists were welcome, from amateurs to old pros. Each had his few minutes in the spotlight, and the loudest applause came from Joe, from his easy chair in the row nearest the console.

From the beginning, Joe was infused with a great gusto for life. Born in Hardin County, Ohio, May 30, 1909, he was brought by his family to a ranch near Santa Ana, California at the age of six months. His love affair with motorcycles must have started shortly thereafter, for he started his first shop in the family barn in 1931, moving to Long Beach in 1944, and to the present location on Anaheim Street in 1949.

During this time another love surfaced, and he was married to Ida Mae or "Spud," as she prefers, on May 1, 1942. Spud will tell you their honeymoon trip was made, quite predictably on a motorcycle. During his ocean fishing days in the late '40s, he received as many prizes and awards as he did for motorcycle racing in his younger days.

To celebrate his 25th wedding anniversary on May 1, 1967, Joe Koons purchased his first theatre pipe organ and things have never been the same on Anaheim Street in Long Beach, California. Since it was too big to put in the living room with the Hammond and since he figured any self-respecting motorcycle shop should be blessed with a theatre pipe organ, that's where he put it. Right in the service department, in three chambers.

With the installation completed in 1968, the Saturday Night Open House custom was started. It has been going on, without interruption,



"Spud" and Joe Koons. Spud will carry on the tradition started by Joe.

(Bob Hill Photo)

since that time. The great and the near-great have played it. It's guest book is a Who's Who of the organ world. It has been recorded by such artists as John Scot, Gene Roberson, Ramona Gerhard Sutton and Lloyd del Castillo. Everyone, it seems, has played it except Joe, who, if he could do so would never admit it. But all would agree that Joe has been a one-man ATOS chapter, doing more on his own to foster appreciation of pipes than many a group.

Over the years, the instrument has grown from very modest proportions to a total of 34 ranks controlled by a 3-manual Wurlitzer console, which was added just in time for the 1972 ATOS Regional Convention in Los Angeles. And it is still playing every Saturday night, through the generosity of "Spud" Koons, who is also just a professional listener and wonderful hostess.

We can't imagine a more fitting memorial to Joe Koons.

Bob Hill

Alexander D. Richardson, former Radio City Music Hall organist, died in New York's Columbus Hospital on January 6. He was 81.

He learned to play the pipe organ from books, and in his youth, served as organist in his father's temple for seven years. With the aid of a scholarship, he was graduated from the Juilliard School in 1918. After military service, he was organist at New York's Rialto Theatre from 1920 to

1925. Other theatres he served were the Rivoli; Brooklyn Fox; Academy of Music; Roxy; and Radio City Music Hall, all in New York.

As a concert organist, he was with the New York Philharmonic under several conductors. He concertized extensively, recorded and broadcast. Prior to his retirement in 1973, he was organist in New York's Central Synagogue for 40 years.

Mr. Richardson is survived by his wife, Adele; a son, Robert; a brother, Louis and two grandchildren.

Word has been received of the death of **Viva ("Vee") Dunstedter**, widow of Eddie, in a San Fernando (Cal.) rest home early this year. The Dunstedter's daughter, Dodie, told us that her mother, Eddie's wife for over half a century, went into a decline soon after Eddie's death and her loss of memory made it necessary to place her in a rest home.

Besides Dodie, Eddie and Viva Dunstedter are survived by a son, Eddie Jr., who bears a marked resemblance to his famous dad.

Robert H. Coulter, Sr., retired manager of the Byrd Theatre in Richmond, Va., died in January. He was certainly one of the best friends ATOS ever had and in particular, the Potomac Valley Chapter. The chapter was always welcome at the Byrd and he was always ready to help.

During the war years when the or-

gan was not used, he would turn it on daily and run over every stop and key to keep it in working order. It was mainly due to his efforts the organ is still in use.

During the 1972 convention, he, as manager, was in the theatre at 7 a.m. to make sure the air conditioning was on before a 7:30 practice session took place.

As George Stitzer, the present manager, said at the funeral, "I don't know where Bob is going to be, but you may be certain that where-ever it is, he will be managing it."

As far as Bob was concerned, nothing was too good for the Wurlitzer or the men who worked on it or played it.

Johnny Mack (McCartney), over 50 years a professional organist, died of a massive heart attack in February.

Born in Metropolis, Ill., the family moved to Seattle in 1920, and it was in the state of Washington where Johnny's playing in the 1920's centered: Tacoma, Centralia and Port Angeles. He played the Blue Mouse Theatres in Seattle and Tacoma, and the Pantages, RKO, Paramount-Publix and Fox Midwest circuits.

When theatre-playing became passe, he toured the club and hotel circuit with an electronic, being based in Illinois. For eight years, he and his wife operated the Central Hotel in Metropolis, where, fictionally, Superman met his guests and entertained there.

His biography appeared in the August THEATRE ORGAN.

Harold Jolles, over 40 years a theatre organist, died in the Tri-County Community Hospital in Gowanda, N.Y., February 23. He was 81.

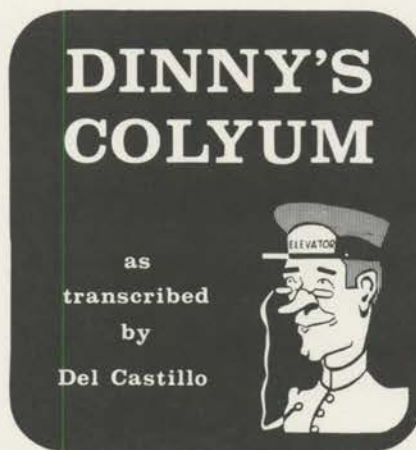
Beginning piano lessons at ten, he



Harold Jolles, shown at the console of the Marr & Colton in the Roosevelt Theatre, Buffalo, N.Y.

then became interested in the theatre organ. After some lessons with Henry B. Murtagh, he enrolled in the Eastman School of Music under John Hammond.

Following graduation, Harold played theatres in Jamestown, N.Y., New York City, and had a lengthy tenure at the Lerner Theatre in Elkhart, Ind. He turned to farming in 1935, but when the Marr & Colton in Buffalo's Roosevelt Theatre was restored in 1957, he played weekends there until the theatre's closing in the early sixties. Since that time, performed for Rochester, N. Tonawanda and Gowanda enthusiasts on several occasions. □



Maybe now Spring has come we canforget all about last winter, but wasnt it a dilly. I come out to LA so as I could get away from all that there snow and cold weather, but along about in Febuary they was times when it was a toss up as to witch was the worser, all them blizards in the east or the floods we was gettin in the west. Old man Noah would of felt rite to home the way those rains was pourin down. I had my old tin Lizzie out on the Freeway in one of them storms, and the rain was a-comin down so fast you couldnt see twenty feet in the front of you. And the wust part of it was that these crazy LA drivers was all tryin to prove that a little bit of rain wasnt goin to bother them so they jest slammed into it at 60 miles per hour and jest about knocked me off the road whizzin by and spashin me like I was in Niagary Falls in a barrel.

Rain storms and organ playin dont get along too well together neither. Jest ask Mr. Don Baker how he feels about it. I was to the Chicago

Convention the day they had the rain storm and that was the mornin he was givin a concert and all the the-ayter lites went out and the rain got into the cellar where the organ insides was and put em out of kilter and Mr. Baker he had to play in the dark with only about half the organ workin. If it had been me I would of told the people what was the matter but Mr. Baker he jest went rite ahead and did the best he could and I guess everybody appreshiated it. Later on that day after the rain had let up Mr. Lowell Ayers he give a concert and the first peace he had picked was On A Clear Day You Can See Forever witch was good for a laff.

Away back when I was still in Boston they was a theayter witch had put in a big fan in the roof like to blow cool air in on hot days, and they had been a big rain the day before and so they was a big puddle in front of the fan. They was a lady organ player and she was playin for the movies when they started the fan, and all that water swooshed down on top of her and drenched her so all her close was soaked. She had to stop playin while the stage hand rushed out with some cloths and soaked the water off the keys before it could get into the organ.

I remember they was a organ player there who was always comin in at the last minnit and one time durin the winter I was sittin there waitin for the show to start in the afternoon and the slide come on tellin what he was goin to play only he wasnt there to play it and all of a sudden he dashes in in his overcoat and galoshes and jumps over the footlites and lands on the organ bench and plays the whole peace with his galoshes on. Sounded pretty good, too.

I could never figger out how a organ player in cold weather like that could get his fingers limbered up enough to play anyway. You could drive a autymobile with mittens on and your fingers would still get so num they wouldnt be any fellin in them. And some of them organ players sounded like maybe that was jest what was the matter. Or maybe they was playin with mittens on, at that. □

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Send In Your Registration Today!
See Page 40

FINANCIAL REPORT

AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY, INC.

1977 RECEIPTS

1977 Dues Collected in 1976	\$34771.41
1977 Dues Collected in 1977	56120.43
First Class Mailing	925.96
Advertising	11011.32
Binders	842.90
Rosters	257.50
Back Issues Theatre Organ	1249.40
Extra Membership Cards	7.00
1977 Convention Profit	5807.06
1976 Convention Profit (Bal)	326.86
1977 Convention Advance Refund	3100.00
Savings Interest	150.00
Chapter Charter Fees	150.00
Misc.	944.38
	<u>\$115664.22</u>

Balance On Hand 1/1/77 \$ 1547.48
 Total Receipts for 1977 115664.22

Total Operating Funds for 1977 \$117211.70
 Total Disbursements for 1977 122556.97

Operating Profit (Deficit) for 1977 (\$5345.27)

NOTE:

Deficit shown reflects two large figures carried over from 1976. These were shown in the 1976 financial report as \$8383.50 for the December 1976 Theatre organ and \$3000.00 balance due on loan made in 1976. Without these abnormal carry overs we would show an operating profit of \$6038.23 for 1977.

1977 DISBURSEMENTS

Headquarters:

Contract Fees	\$3900.00
Telephone	1467.80
Postage	1243.22
Printing	781.04
Supplies	226.88
Transportation	780.11
Misc.	54.46
	<u>\$8453.51</u>

Membership:

Contract Fees	\$3500.00
Telephone	967.84
Postage	3221.38
Printing	2884.97
Supplies	1845.57
Transportation	168.00
Misc.	30.00
	<u>\$12617.76</u>

President:

Telephone	\$255.17
Postage	58.78
Printing	12.67
Supplies	11.74
Transportation	558.56
Misc.	220.94
	<u>\$1117.86</u>

Theatre Organ:

Contract Fees	\$4450.00
Telephone	1679.19
Postage	5772.55
Printing	66050.81
Freight	1145.12
Supplies	1358.96
Storage	615.43
Transportation	1175.13
Advertising Exp.	1967.60
Misc.	803.00
	<u>\$85017.79</u>

Insurance	534.00
Bond	111.00
Loan Repayment (Balance)	3000.00
Balance to Del. Valley Chapter 1976 Conv.	359.93
CATOE Convention Advance 1977	3100.00
Atlanta Chapter Conv. Adv. 1978	1500.00
Carnegie Hall 'Little Mother' Loan	1500.00
CATOE Share of 1977 Conv. Profit	2903.53
Legal Service	502.59
Tax Service	205.00
Transportation to Special Board Meeting Atlanta	1634.00
	<u>\$122556.97</u>

Total 1977 Expenses. \$122556.97

1978 ESTIMATED BUDGET

Income:

Dues (6000 at \$15.00)	\$90000.00
Advertising	10000.00
Back Issues Theatre Organ	1000.00
Savings Interest	800.00
Misc.	1200.00
	<u>\$103000.00</u>

Total Estimated Income \$103000.00

Expenses:

Theatre Organ Printing	\$60000.00
Theatre Organ Mailing	7000.00
Contract Fees	12000.00
Postage	5000.00
Telephone	4500.00
Transportation	3500.00
Membership Service (Computer)	1800.00
Misc.	5000.00
	<u>\$98800.00</u>

Total Estimated Expenses \$98800.00

OFFICIAL NOTICE

1978 ATOS ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

FOX THEATRE, ATLANTA, GEORGIA
 TUESDAY, JULY 11, 1978 AT 4 P.M.

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the letters to the editors

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

Address:

George Thompson
Editor
P.O. Box 1314
Salinas, Calif. 93902

Dear Editor:

To my regret I have noticed the recent tendency of certain correspondents to berate your recording reviewers and to denigrate Jesse Crawford. While it is not my desire to start (much less continue) any battle in print over these matters, I feel that I have valid personal reasons for speaking out against these injustices.

I have had numerous recordings reviewed in the organ and hi-fi journals within the past several decades. I have found the critics in those publications to be most fair and knowledgeable, generally speaking. If anything, they are occasionally inclined to overestimate the worth of many of the albums reviewed—some of my own included. A critic cannot be blamed for being offended when certain artists all but instruct him in how they wish their efforts to be reviewed.

Second, I cannot stand by idly and accept the desecration of the sacred memory of such a beautiful person and poetic musician as the late Jesse Crawford. To downgrade his musicianship is insulting to the many thousands of persons who continue to revere this beloved performer-innovator.

Jesse Crawford may be gone but he clearly is not forgotten. Wherever I go and wherever I play, young and old alike are intensely interested in the man and in his music. His song may have ended, but his memory vividly lingers on. Okay, so a certain English organist may have sold a million records in the 1940's, but Jess did it first in the 1920's commencing with "Valencia." Some younger persons of the present day have perhaps formulated their opinions of the great man from his latter day Decca recordings made in his twilight years on two pipe organs in

California — neither instrument of which I thought was completely or ideally suited to or worthy of his talents. In my opinion, the vintage Crawford recordings were made from the period of 1930 to 1933 when he had access to the then-incomparable Paramount Theatre studio organ in New York. Sure, there were a few public domain "dogs" recorded during those years, but those chestnuts were foisted upon the artist by tasteless "A. and R." men at Victor Records. When left to his own devices, Crawford was brilliant and unsurpassed in his own genre. When plagued by financial and domestic troubles in the middle and late 1930's, it seems to me to be understandable and pardonable that he occasionally may have performed in a perfunctory manner to place bread on his table. Haven't we all?

So much of today's playing — particularly in food emporia and in concert — passes for "entertainment." I find it difficult to believe that today's truly discerning musical public is content with and "entertained" by third-rate performances which are filled with total disregard for taste, tone color, tempo, technique and understanding of the intentions of the composers.

The Peter Principle applies where the shoe fits, certainly, but there *are*, thank God, other outlets for expression for music and musicians than in these special little narrow circles.

In closing, I plead that none of us be so uptight about fair criticism and so cavalierly condescending about an immortal genius until we can demonstrate talents at least equal to those so unjustly deprecated in these pages.

Most sincerely,
George Wright

Dear Mr. Klos:

Recently, I had the pleasure of visiting my other home in Wichita, Kansas where I was again privileged to share the hospitality of those who are responsible for the installation of the Mighty Wurlitzer from the New York Paramount. I thank them all again for making my trip so very special.

The concert by Reginald Foort allowed me the chance to again hear my favorite organ and to see that my Dan's work still lives on.

On October 13, my Wichita family helped me celebrate my 80th birthday with a beautiful party and many lovely gifts.

I am so thankful for all the hard work they have done with the organ, but more than ever, I appreciate the love they have shown me.

Affectionately,
Theresa Papp

Editor's Note: Mrs. Papp is the widow of famed Dan Papp, who was responsible for the maintenance of the Queen Mother of all Wurlitzers from 1926 to 1962.

Dear Mr. Thompson:

After being a member of ATOS for over five years, first through CATOE, then a charter member of LOLTOS with a cross country move and a membership with the Atlanta Chapter; I thought a letter would be appropriate to make known how one member became interested, enthused and hooked on theatre organs. For more than thirty years I did not know there was such a thing.

As a very young boy in the early 40's I am told by my parents that I attended one of the last vaudeville stage shows in Rockford, Illinois at the Palace. Surely there must have been an organ in use but I recall only some animals, a magician and a feature film.

In about 1953 I visited the Hub Roller Rink and recall Leon Berry at the console. The organ was impres-

sive but loud and I was there to skate, not listen. It was not too long after that that some theatre organ recordings were heard in mono on what must have been very poor equipment. I must say I was not impressed.

It was not until October 6, 1972 that I experienced a close encounter of the preferred kind. The Barton console rose from the pit of the Coronado with John Muri on the bench (or was it a Howard?) making an indelible impression. What a console, what an organist, even the seats were in motion from the powerful sound in that palace from the past. That old theatre suddenly had some meaning and value to me.

The people who have not yet experienced the thrill of seeing and hearing a theatre pipe organ in its original environment are missing one of the too rare treasures of life. ATOS and its chapters are working hard to insure that future generations will have some of the instruments to enjoy. Most will not be in theatres but some of the magic remains with the spectacular consoles, a hint of the original surroundings.

I have read with interest each letter to the editor appearing in THEATRE ORGAN since receiving my first issue. Many of the opinions expressed in that column I have neither shared or opposed to the extent of having a desire to add comment. The column is healthy for ATOS and is the proper place to air our views, pleasures and criticisms as well as those things which might not have a logical place elsewhere within the publication.

This past year I found the subject of most interest to me covered in a new column by Lance Johnson. I'm sure many other readers live many miles from the nearest source of technical information and welcome this addition but may not take the time to make known their appreciation. Putting and keeping those instruments in working order is a large part of what ATOS is all about.

Very truly yours,
Robert J. McKee

Gentlemen:

On the eve of the closing of the Beautiful Tennessee in Knoxville, I was very sorry to read the erroneous information about that house furnished to you by the Alabama Chap-

ter. Allow me to set the record more nearly in order.

The Tennessee's 3/14 Wurlitzer was being played for the public when I began studying with house organist Breck Camp in mid 1956. It was my understanding at that time that his teacher had played it before him. Camp remained with the theatre until late 1958. The management made a point of keeping everybody (even me) away from the organ until I opened as house organist on Saturday, April 4, 1959. I remained with the theatre until May of 1966. Several people played during a brief period after I left, and finally one Preston Spalding became house organist and remained with the house until it closed.

Yours very truly,
Stephen M. Brown

To the Editor:

This is just a thank you for the most honest review of the record that we sent to you by Alan Lowry, the *Secret Organ*. Your review was one that was an honest look at the record, and why it was made. Our hats off to you.

It is not every day that one finds an organ that hasn't already been recorded, and the Eaton's organ was one. We have found another organ in the Toronto area, and are in the process of getting the right to record it. You will receive a copy of it as soon as they are off the presses.

Again, thank you for being so honest in your review. We remain,

Sincerely,
E.P. Allen, Jr.,
Pinecroft Productions

Dear George:

The sad news of the probable closing of Radio City Music Hall and thoughts of the future of its world-famous organ moves me to write you regarding a matter I feel should concern all who are interested in the preservation of the theatre organ. I refer to what seems to be the increasing rate at which these irreplaceable instruments, after having been removed from their original locations in theatres, are being modified and re-modified for various purposes at the whims of owner after owner, some of whom may have little or no interest in preserving their original characteristics. In some cases completely unique and historically im-

portant organs have lost much of their original identity and character. In many other instances, the basic specifications have been so altered by the addition and substitution of ranks, revoicing or other changes, that it is no longer possible to identify them as Wurlitzers, Robert Mortons, or whatever.

I don't claim that all instruments produced in the so-called "Golden Age" were masterpieces that should remain forever untouched, like a Stradivarius violin. Ranks may have been skimpy or poorly selected. Voicing and regulation may have been mostly ignored. Nevertheless, each maker's work had a certain characteristic, and presumably represented his concept of how a theatre organ should be built and should sound, to the best of his ability under the press of commercial demands. Altering this concept arbitrarily in order to satisfy one's personal desire for more or different sounds, or simply for more ranks, may or may not result in an improved instrument from the standpoint of musical quality, or ability to impress the listener, or whatever was in the mind of the person or persons doing the modifying. What is almost certainly true, however, is that the identity of the original instrument has been lost. And unless extreme care is exercised in the selection and adjustment of added voices, or in the modifications done to the existing ones, the personality of the original instrument will have been lost also.

It is taken for granted that owners of antique or classic automobiles do not restore them by taking the engine from a Buick, the wheels from a Pierce-Arrow and the body from a Model T, putting them all together so the conglomeration runs and calling it "Classic Car." The result would be laughed out of every parade, if indeed it even got that far. Fortunately, perhaps, for the future of classic autos, such modifications, even if tolerated, would be difficult or impossible. Not so with theatre organs. One can all too easily add and swap ranks, throw out bass pipes and relays ("no space"), cut up mouths, open-toe-holes, etc., and call the result "Theatre Organ."

Will lovers of the theatre organ in future years find themselves searching for instruments that have *not* been subjected to the alterations I

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describe, so that they might hear and see a theatre organ of authentic design and construction? If so, we who lay claim to have saved the theatre organ will have done the future little real service.

It is particularly regrettable, I feel, when a great or historically important organ is involved in such a modification plan. The "Travelling Moller," intact for so many years, was installed in a commercial establishment and modified. Now it has, I understand, been re-sold. What will its eventual fate be? Will it still be the Moller it was? The famous New York Paramount Wurlitzer, which many claim was the greatest example of that company's product, has been saved — but now has additional ranks not on the original specification. Is this an improvement on the original instrument? Perhaps. I'm sure the present owners will express their indignation with me for suggesting that they might not have improved it. And perhaps they did. I will be first to extend to them my appreciation for saving it from the treatment that has befallen many another unsuspecting and innocent organ. What will happen to the RCMH 58-ranker? I'll leave it to your imagination.

Of course I recognize that if no one purchases the RCMH Wurlitzer, for whatever purpose, it will be junked or broken up for parts. Of course I recognize that without ATOS and other dedicated and hard-working amateurs, many or most theatre organs would not now even exist in any form. But I think that in our enthusiasm, plus the recent resurgence of a commercial use for these one-time curiosities, we may be guilty of drifting away from our original purpose, which I understand as being the restoration and

preservation of the theatre organ. In some cases, I submit our efforts may have resulted in more desecration than restoration.

I wonder if it might not be possible for the ATOS as a national organization to establish a policy regarding what we consider appropriate in the way of restoration. We can't tell the owner what he can do with his property; but we can, if we wish, evangelize and point out the precious commodity that theatre organs are, and give prizes to those owners or restorers who in our opinion have best followed our ideals. So far, I haven't heard or read that the ATOS even *has* any ideals.*(See Editors Note.) If not, it's time we got some. Furthermore, I believe we can do more than we have to encourage the preservation of large or important instruments by their re-installation, as tax-deductible gifts or other appropriate means, in municipal buildings, performing-arts centers, schools, universities and other locations where they may be heard again. I firmly believe that the pizza parlor organ has its place, and I'm glad that it has arrived as an apparently viable means of displaying our favorite kind of pipes. But the sums that are nowadays being spent on the purchase of existing large organs for these establishments could, it seems to me, go to organ makers for new instruments designed especially for the purpose. This would help them, and preserve existing instruments as they are.

This letter, if printed, will no doubt draw some readers' ire as being the means of a mossbound conservative, one who is down on progress; one step from the tracker-organ enthusiast. But nowadays adding and swapping ranks seems to be the order of the day; no one even questions its desirability. Perhaps it's time for a look at our objectives.

Sincerely,
Ben Levy

**Editor's Note: The ideals of the organization were set forth in the original by-laws and have not been changed. The article reads: The American Theatre Organ Society, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to, and organized for, the purpose of preserving the theatre organ and its music, and to further the use and understanding of this instrument through the exchange of information.*

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GEORGE THOMPSON
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Deadline for all material is the FIRST of the month PRECEDING Publication.

Copy for June/July Issue
Must reach George by May 1, 1978

ALABAMA

The weather may have been cold but the spirit of the members of the chapter could not have been warmer as we started this new year. Young Cathy Hoffman was in complete charge for our January program. Cathy and her parents stopped by the Alabama Theatre on their way home from Christmas vacation in Florida. They were headed back to Bristol, Tennessee, where Cathy is a second year pre-med student. She still keeps her hand in music though, as she proved with her great presentation ranging from the beautiful music of Fritz Kreisler to present day ballads. This young lady is a real talent and our chapter has been

fortunate to enjoy her musical growth over the last few years. She is a real joy to those of us who love theatre organ music and proof that the youth of today can be a part of this great music tradition.

For our February meeting, Cecil Whitmire took charge of our beautiful 4/20 Wurlitzer and gave us a program of some great old favorites — with a couple of newer pieces thrown in that promise to become old favorites in the future. Cecil's charm and humor provided us with some enjoyable listening. It's great to have such talented members in our chapter.

Chuck Hancock is heading up our work crew this year and he and his crew (ably helped by Larry Dolaldson when Larry can get down from Copper Hill, Tennessee) are keeping the Alabama Wurlitzer sounding as good as ever. Make your plans now to come to the National Convention this year and you will get a chance to hear this beautiful instrument for yourself. Our monthly meetings are held the second Sunday of each month (excluding July) at 9 a.m. If you get the chance to visit us, you are all welcome anytime.

RIEDEL WEST

ATLANTA

Dennis James was featured at the Fox on October 28 with the silent film, *The Monster*.

The chapter rented the Fox for an evening in November and was introduced to the considerable talents of young Tom Helms, resident organist at the Saenger Theatre in Pensacola, Florida. Tom had but a mere 45 minute acquaintance with the "Mo's" mighty keydesk. Our members know this instrument and are not easily impressed; but this young man definitely has both the guts to play the Fox "cold" and a tremendous amount of musicianship and talent to merit comparison with such luminaries as Larsen and Erwin. A fitting evening, indeed, for our first meeting in the Fox since 1974. A reception followed at Vice Chairman Jack Goodwin's home. A good contingent was present to hear Tom play a set at the Music Grinder Pizza Emporium the following evening where we closed the house around the witching hour, thanks to the generosity of the Dick Webers. Remember the name — Tom Helms. If your chapter gets a chance to be entertained by this artist, you're in for a treat!

December 4, Virgil Fox dusted the pipes at the Fox for his second encounter with the Moller. It was a sold-out performance with 165 standees who paid \$6 for the privilege. The event was marred by the theatre management permitting standees to lounge on the stage steps near the console (and in the spotlight) throughout the performance. Virgil's program was fast-moving and technically demanding, though somewhat "heavy" for theatre organ buffs. He



Cecil Whitmire at the Alabama Theatre Wurlitzer during the February program.



The 1978 officers and directors of the Alabama Chapter.



Tom Helms, organist at the console of the "Mighty Mo," Atlanta Fox Theatre, for chapter meeting in November. Helms is house organist at the Saenger Theatre, Pensacola, Florida. (Kelly Campbell Photo)

put in seven days of practice prior to the concert, and the few who were privileged to hear some of those great arrangements in the empty theatre are still ecstatic about the experience. A full-house audience has a considerable damping effect on reverberation and high frequency propagation, even in the cavernous Fox. Dr. Fox clearly is a master of the classical repertoire. Near the end of the first half he got the full attention of the ATOS contingent with a Jesse Crawford arrangement of "The Entertainer" by Scott Joplin.

Treat is the word for the December meeting at the Music Grinder to hear Jay Mitchell wind up the 3/22 Wurlitzer at 3 p.m. Jay has been playing this instrument daily for at least six months and knows it inside out. The recent addition of tuned sleigh bells and a new rank of Tibias enhanced the presentation. Following the prepared program it was open console til opening time when most of the members lingered for dinner of pizza and more Wurlitzer until the wee hours. This chapter may soon be faced with a merger with Weight Watchers unless Jay can get some of the calories out of his nightly concerts! (It *couldn't* be the pizza!) You Midwest members heading south on I-75 will drive within 1/2 mile of the Music Grinder! Why not break the trip overnight and hear a fantastic organ played by a fantastic organist, accompanied by the best pizza this side of the Forum?

The January meeting at Joe Pat-

ten's East Point Theatre featured a twin concert by Lyn Larsen and Hector Olivera! They were playing the Fox Mighty Moller by "remote delayed" broadcast, so to speak, through stereo speakers set up on stage. Sounded remarkably like the real thing and gave a small taste of the sound we expect to get from East Point's "Mini-Moller" when the 3/11 installation is complete in early April.

The meeting was really a business session to discuss work assignments and view the theatre. East Point will play an important role in the 23rd annual convention and the chapter has taken on the task of wiring, duct work on the heating system and cosmetics. Moller will complete the organ installation.

At this meeting the members, quorum present, voted to pursue the possibility of purchasing the East Point (with Moller) from Joe Patten. The secretary recorded the names of those present and a further report on this subject will be made after restoration is complete and negotiations ended.

The regular February meeting was hosted by Jim Scott Studios on Clairmont Road in Skyland Center where Emory Barns demonstrated the versatility of their Hammond, Conn and Yamaha line, after which those who dared kept the remainder entertained for an enjoyable couple of hours. Our thanks to Jim Scott Studios and Emory for a very pleasant Sunday afternoon meeting.

Otherwise, February's highlight was the appearance of Hector Olivera in person at the Fabulous Fox Theatre in a return benefit engagement. During this second visit to Atlanta, Hector laid down tracks for a new disc to be released in early spring. Contents of the recording are still under wraps, but the scuttlebutt is there are some fantastic sounds on the tapes.

Hector was his usual professional and informal self at the Mo console. The program duplicated only two numbers of the previous concert, and was quite inspiring to local buffs.

Just as entertaining as Hector's concert was the privilege of members to introduce him and Walt Molt to the delights of the Music Grinder Pizza Emporium where Jay Mitchell and Walt Winn regaled the full house with "Winifred's" winsome pizza music, and the Dick Webers and staff provided excellent food and drink for the evening. Somewhat after the patrons had left, Hector was coaxed to exercise the keyboards. It took him about 45 seconds to get his bearings and sail off with "That's Entertainment" and thirty minutes later end with "Flight of the Bumblebee." Winifred will never be the same. But workhorse that he is, Hector retired to the Fox at 1:30 a.m. to practice for the concert the following afternoon. No wonder he's a walking ad for Weight-Watchers!

JAMES K. JOBSON

CEDAR RAPIDS

The Closing Chord has sounded for members three times in the past year.

The first was for Pat Maynard who died in January 1977. He had a fine talent up to the end, having presented chapter programs in 1973, 1974 and 1976 on piano as well as at the organ. I am sure that this writer will not be alone in missing his counsel. The next was for Gordon Bagg who died last December. He, too, was a performing member and his input will be missed. His last chapter performance was in February 1976. Our chapter reporter, Byron Olson, died within a week of Gordon after a lingering illness that obviously prevented performance of his usual chapter support with enthusiasm.

The chapter continues its string of semi-annual "Sold Out" silent movie

nights. Hector Olivera made his third appearance in the Cedar Rapids last October to a wildly enthusiastic house. His comments regarding the condition of the Paramount 3/11 Style 235 Wurlitzer were sweet music to the ears of the maintenance crew headed by Jim Oliver and prexy Bob Burkhart.

Early in the year an extravaganza featured the umpty-four-year-old Del Castillo who amazed a packed house. What an ovation he received. Dinny should have been there to be impressed.

CRATOS joins the city of Cedar Raids and the CR Symphony in the celebration of the second anniversary of a feeling of security regarding the Paramount Theatre. Having slipped to the showing of "R" and "X" pictures, we faced an ominous future for the home of the beauty we had resurrected. The Paramount was purchased by local financier Peter Bezanson (now a member) and given to the city as a Theatre for the Performing Arts.

Since then, public subscription has resulted in complete interior redecorating, all seats refinished and re-upholstered, carpeting replaced, orchestra pit enlarged and a temporary stage enlargement. A beautiful house!

In the meantime, installation work is continuing by Howard Burton and his crew on the chapter's Style E Wurlitzer in Iowa Hall on the campus of the local Kirkwood College. The dedicatory program featuring Tom Cotner was cancelled by heavy snows which so far have prevented rescheduling. Tom had played the program for the August meeting at the Paramount and thereby broke a record for yours truly; the only performer in eight years at the Paramount with whom I could not spot a single fault in chord choice or registration. He is tremendous. Hear him whenever you have the opportunity.

In case we haven't mentioned it before, CRATOS is proud of Ray Snitil, now in his second year as ATOS National President.

LOREN H. FRINK

CENTRAL INDIANA

Due to inclement weather the December meeting was cancelled. Due to past inclement weather in

January the meeting was not scheduled. So now, at this writing, we are up to February and inclement weather is still with us, the remains of the Blizzard of '78. However the "meet-in" day was sunny and beautiful with only a forwarning of "you know what!"

Many interesting and entertaining projects are on the agenda for 1978. Artists scheduled for concerts at this writing are Lee Erwin at Manual High School at the Louisville Uniphone #314 and Kurt Schakle at Foster Hall at the Aeolian.

The biggest topic of the day was the future of the Indiana Theatre. It has, at least, been saved from the demolition crew. A discussion was led by Larry MacPherson on establishing a foundation to save Indiana Theatre Auditorium and a committee was formed to do a feasibility study on this subject. The City of Indianapolis is to take possession in August or September. They will have control and will attempt to save the entire building. However, there would be numerous changes made which might endanger the original design of the auditorium. This is a beautiful ornate fifty-year-old theatre that needs all the help it can get from any source to retain its original structure. The organ console was a Barton #317 and has been removed. Gene Gladson showed us some very interesting slides when the theatre was relatively new.

It looks as though at last "Indy" will be in the swing of things with a new Pizza Pipe Organ Palace with an Indianapolis resident as the owner. He has purchased the Paramount Theatre organ from Oakland, California, and has hired a manager and organist from Grand Rapids, Michigan.

It seems as though we are going to be doing great things this year. We are growing-growing-growing!

Now to entertainment of the day. Member pianist/organist Virginia Rectoris presented guest artist lyric soprano Bernice Fraction who has an enchanting lovely voice and manner. The selective repertoire was light and ideal for the occasion. The program was presented with an air of informality and humor. The "L" Steinway and Allen #417 console organ was in good hands with the nimble fingers of Virginia Rectoris. Wilking Music was kind enough to

provide the instruments and meeting hall for us. Ken Stoops, institutional organ salesman and pipe organist in his own right, was in attendance and also performed for us at the Lowry Theatre Organ.

Then, have at it! Open console time.

BEE BUTLER

CENTRAL OHIO

With pride, COTOS members read this *Columbus Dispatch* front page caption: "Backstage Maestro Directs Symphony of Light." Within the paper a feature article described the spectacular lighting effects created by Joe Worman, stage manager of the Ohio Theatre. Joe's artistry richly deserves the recognition he receives.

The Ohio Theatre's Robert Mor-ton, 50 years old this year, had a birthday party in February. Roger Garrett, resident organist from 1933 until 1942, shared the program with Dennis James, current resident organist. The original plans for the celebration included Bill Dalton, the Ohio's first organist from 1928 to 1933. Because of his death this past summer the program was also a salute and tribute to Bill Dalton. Dennis opened the program playing the "Ohio Theatre March" which is a Heidi James arrangement of variations of "Beautiful Ohio." Dennis located and played an original composition by Bill Dalton entitled "What A Moon." The tribute to Bill also included the number "My Bill."

Roger Garrett, appreciated, as always, by his audience, charmed us again. One of the best at sing-alongs he also put us through a whistle-along, in addition to his outstanding concert and showmanship. Roger and Dennis played to an almost capacity house.

A member of the theatre's original pit orchestra, Henry Cincione, playing trumpet, was dramatically spotlighted in a loge level theatre box. Playing "Cottage for Sale," he was accompanied by Dennis at the organ.

Unfortunately, the shortage of electrical power in Ohio has necessitated the postponement until fall of the 50th Birthday Party for the Ohio Theatre including the program of Dennis and Heidi James with the Columbus Symphony Orchestra.

Another postponement was our

January meeting, due to the great blizzard. Our hosts, Betsy and Bob Richard, moved the date up a week and we were able to hear Betsy's concert at her own Conn 651 with added speakers and Conn pipes.

Hosting our February meeting were Ed and Joanne Lougher. Pam Giehl, Joanne's organ teacher, presented the formal concert at the Baldwin organ. Her smooth style of playing, varied arrangements and choice of music afforded us a highly-pleasing concert.

Between David Love, Bob Shaw and Mark Williams (all of whom are now in the over-20 age group) we get some spirited musical compositions such as Mark combining the themes from *2001* and *Star Wars*. Betsy Richard, always willing to comply with our requests for her to play, did so and enhanced our musical evening.

The Los Angeles Chapter will gain from our loss. Thelma and Frank Babbitt are moving to that area. They were charter members of COTOS, instrumental in helping to save the Ohio Theatre and as part of the HBG Enterprises (Hamilton, Babbitt and Grover) produced concerts at the Ohio Theatre using the Robert Morton, developing public interest in the theatre and the organ. Thelma was the first COTOS secretary and Frank has held several offices including that of chairman. We are sorry to have them leave, but happy they are fulfilling the dream of going back to Frank's native California.

IRENE BLEGEN

CONN. VALLEY

Once again our annual Christmas party was held in Thomaston (Opera House) and Torrington (Di Leo's Grove). It was a grey, cold but clear winter afternoon which made the subdued lights in the opera house seem ever more cheery than usual. The beat was up, the organ was playing and all was right with the world. A chance to sit down at our beautiful monster (Golly Mom — it's a Marr & Colton!) was topped off with a mini-concert by our own Ev Bassett whose vast repertoire and fantastic memory produced some delightful nostalgia which blended perfectly with the pre-party mood of the day.

A brief "Mush!" northward



brought us to the now almost traditional locale of our year-end orgy known as DiLeo's Grove.

After a "happy hour" and a hearty meal, Santa (appearing incognito) distributed a present and a "peck" to each and every good little girl while Mrs. Claus (who looked a lot like Peg Ray) ably assisted in like manner with the boys.

An interlude of music with Ev Bassett and Joe Puskas at the Hammond gave those with Terpsichorean aptitudes some pleasant turns about the floor.

To top off the evening we were treated to a Christmas medley by Tom Gnaster, whose melodies brought us to reflect how beautiful they are when we have not been saturated with them as has sometimes been the case in years past.

As we left in the twinkling, crisp air we caught a glimpse of what appeared to be a sleigh pulled by eight reindeer arching across the sky. It trailed a banner on which several people will swear was written: "DENNIS JAMES — THOMASTON OPERA HOUSE, JAN. 21 and 22."

Saturday evening, January 21 and Sunday afternoon, January 22, Dennis James was the concert artist at the Thomaston Opera House organ console.

Selections included the music of Gershwin, Ellington and Joplin, with a fine rendition of the delightful "Sleigh Ride" by Leroy Anderson. The "Poet and Peasant" Overture concluded the first half of the evening's concert.

After intermission several numbers from the musical stage were followed by a delightful Gershwin medley. The piece-de-resistance of the second half of the concert was a mighty transcription for theatre organ of music from the score written

for the motion picture, *Gone with the Wind*. So well was this received that it took two encores to allow Dennis to escape from the console.

Our February meeting took place in the Windham Technical School, Willimantic, CT. It was our first meeting there, and long overdue, having been postponed at least twice because of unavoidable difficulties.

It offered our first opportunity to hear the mighty 3/15 Wurlitzer, transplanted from its original house, the RKO Madison Theatre, Brooklyn, N.Y. The installation has been accomplished (although not yet finished) under the able guidance of member Mike Foley, ably assisted by organ enthusiasts from Rhode Island, as well as by members of the student body and staff of the school.

It can be most satisfactorily reported that the organ sounded great, and is a fine monument to the efforts of all concerned. We look forward to hearing it again soon when the laborers will have had time to put the finishing touches on the installation.

We appreciated the console efforts of an accomplished quartet of artists — Mike Foley, Phil Stock, Tom Gnaster, and Ev Bassett. We could not ask for any better.

WALLACE F. POWERS

EASTERN MASS.

EMCATOS opened its 1978 activities at Babson College on January 28 on a different note, it being an infrequent Sunday afternoon meeting allowing some of our professionals to attend. The Board of Directors established an Education Committee to explore additional ways our club can fulfill its purpose as a nonprofit educational group, with Lucile Weston as head.

Paul Chavanne spoke of the valuable collection of silent film music and cue sheets used by the late T.O. Hall of Fame member Edith Lang, long-time Boston Exeter St. Theatre organist. These were left in the custody of Mrs. Eleanor Bowering, who now desires the material be placed in a music library for safety, preservation and availability. Paul suggested we establish such a library at Babson.

Among the guests were Allen Miller, active in the ConnVal Chapter and Mrs. Carol Moeller, daughter

of the late well-known Boston theatre organist and teacher, Lewis Bray.

With Dick Johnson at the controls of Knight Auditorium's new P.A. system, we enjoyed a tape of selections from Fr. Bill Biebel's Babson Christmas concert.

Craig then introduced our three artists of the day, Tom O'Brien, Lenny Winter and Phil Bourdeleau. The first two we rarely hear owing to professional commitments. Tom opened with a lively "Granada" and continued with a variety of Broadway musical selections, all nicely arranged. Lenny is a veteran theatre organist which was immediately apparent from his bright "That's Entertainment" to his "Paramount March." As a finale Gerry Parsons led the audience with a short sing-along of patriotic numbers. Phil, a promising young new member, who comes from a musical family, very carefully selected his piston settings for "It's De Lovely" and "The Blue Danube."

Many took advantage of open console, including Mrs. Moeller, first on the Steinway grand with Lenny at our 235 Special and later at the console with Bob Legon assisting in registration. Guest Allen Miller, whose artistry is well-known, was among those who "had a go." It was a nice way to spend a Sunday afternoon!

At our February meeting Al Winslow mounted the console bench to accompany a series of old silents (with an early talkie interspersed) supplied and introduced by our old friend Charlie Clark. Phil Bourdeleau completed the formal portion of the evening accompanying a short Charlie Chaplin comedy.

Customary open console drew many to the bench including Phil's guest, Mrs. Bertha Watson. She had earlier been introduced as a former theatre organist who played as Bertha de Pinquertaine in several Detroit theatres, including the United Artist. She later played some of the Manchester (N.H.) theatres. She has not lost that certain something of the spotlight past which shines through immediately. She remains active playing church pipes. Allen Miller was again present as guest of Garrett Shanklin and his artistry always makes for good listening.

This evening was a "double fea-

ture," but at the same time as open console, so there was a divided audience. In a nearby classroom, where the Wurlitzer could plainly be heard, Craig Johnson presented a slide show of the 1977 Chicago National Convention and his Amtrak trip en-route. The color slides and running commentary were excellent and who could wish for a better background!

STANLEY C. GARNISS

KIWI

What ever happened to 1977?

One thing certain, we are a year older and will shortly be celebrating our second birthday.

Our bi-monthly meetings are always well attended and thanks to members who open their homes on these occasions. We are somewhat envious of chapters in America who are able to meet in a cinema or a pizza parlour and enjoy the sounds of a mighty organ, but we do very well, for most of our members are proud owners of very fine electronic organs and open console at the meetings are a lot of fun.

Most notable event of the year was a concert presented by various members of the chapter and this did much to publicize the activities of ATOS. Taking part were Margaret Massey, Audrey Koke, Bill Mitchell, Ian Johnston and Norman Nazard.

An enthusiastic collector of old phonographs, Les Stenerson has purchased, on behalf of the Museum of Transport and Technology, an early model Wurlitzer, Opus 1748, one of the last to be shipped from Tonawanda in 1913. The 2/5 model, with piano console, requires much work to restore it to its original

condition and many parts are required. This will prove to be a very interesting project for chapter members.

Grace and John Jenkins, from the Aloha Chapter were visitors to this country. They were holidaying on board the Monterey on its last voyage and were accompanied by Dr. Ed Mullins from Wyoming, another keen ATOS member. We are always happy to meet and entertain members from overseas chapters.

NORMAN DAWE

LONDON AND SOUTH OF ENGLAND

As we complete our most exciting and action-filled first year of affiliation, plans are building up rapidly for what has already been dubbed: 'The British Theatre Organ Event of the Decade' — the presentation of the great George Wright at our favourite Gaumont State Kilburn 4/16 'Torch' Wurlitzer in North London.

In bringing George the 5,000 miles from his native California for a 'one only performance' on Sunday, April 30, our pride in pulling off such a scoop is matched only by our pledge and enthusiasm to fill the 1,500-seat auditorium and to bring to the British organ scene the sound that hitherto has only issued from their stereo speakers.

George Wright's only previous visit to the UK was in 1971 for a commercial promotion by Conn at the equally famous Granada Tooting in South London — but unfortunately not featuring the superb 4/14 Wurlitzer there (now sadly derelict due first to flooding and later the conversion of the theatre to Bingo).



John Ledwon signs the visitor's book for manager Bill Weir as ATOS Honorary Members Edith and Les Rawle look on.

Talented John Ledwon, chairman of the Los Angeles Chapter, got us off to a good start in 1978 at the Gaumont State in January. This was prefaced by our New Year supper at 'Wurlitzer Lodge' Northolt — home of newest ATOS Honorary Members Edith and Les Rawle — at which John also entertained at the 3/19 with a preview of his public concert.

On the morning of his return from the UK, John was the subject of an exemplary eight-minute 'live' interview on the commercial 'London Broadcasting' radio station, which also included two tracks from the fine new LP that he has recently made on his own home studio 3/25 Wurlitzer.

Before the GW concert, our chapter is presenting another unique first in Britain. This is a home pipe organ tour — by Lowell Ayers at the beginning of March and embracing five venues (including the Rawle Sr. 3/19 Wurlitzer and Len Rawle's 4/25 Wurlitzer at Chorleywood). Lowell's busy schedule will also include two 'theatre' venues visited on both UK Safaris — the 3/7 British Compton at the Regal Henley-on-Thames and the 3/13 Compton/Christie in the Town Hall, Ossett in Yorkshire.

Looking further ahead, we are already planning the welcome return of Dennis and Heidi James in September — and also to the appearance of their LP record featuring Len Rawle's Wurlitzer and Yamaha grand piano.

On the preservation side, our efforts to improve and re-voice the Tuba rank of the 3/10 Compton of the Windsor and District Theatre Organ Trust were recently heard to excellent effect in the hands of talented Northern organist Geoff Stephenson. Geoff's 'big style' is particularly well known in association with the most distinctive twin Balaban and Katz Style 4 Wurlitzer 3/19s of 1932 vintage with embossed consoles that are now so beautifully restored and preserved in the country of Norfolk in East Anglia, and both of which he has recorded. Formerly in the Paramount-Odeon cinemas in Newcastle and Leeds (Opus 2162 and 2169 respectively), they are now in the Kitchen Brothers Garage at Diss and the George Cushing Steam Engine and Organ Museum at



John Ledwon, talented Southern California organist entertains our new London and South of England Chapter.

Thursford. Claimed by many (including John Ledwon) to be among the finest Wurlitzer sounds to be heard anywhere, these gorgeous instruments were both played in their original locations by Jesse Crawford during his British tour of 1933, and are frequently broadcast. Most recently they were visited by a chapter coach party.

Chapter membership continues to expand and we hope to be able to top the hundred mark by our first anniversary in May. Monthly club meetings are also highly popular and well-patronised. Mainly held at 'Wurlitzer Lodge,' they are soon to be enhanced by the relocation of the organ console in the spacious new music room extension.

A forthcoming meeting there is to feature our well-known organ photographic members John (Doug) Sharp and his charming wife Mavis. Not so well-known is the fact that Doug was a member of the very notable 'Granada' team of organists in the late 1930s and notably worked with such great stars as Reginald Dixon (who toured his cinema circuit through three successive Winters out-of-season from his famous bench at the Tower Ballroom Blackpool) and Stuart Barrie.

We are therefore eagerly looking forward to entering our second busy year of Anglo-American theatre organ fellowship and pleasure — and the mutual exchange of organists, enthusiasts, records and all that makes our new chapter venture so enjoyable.

NORMAN BARFIELD.

LOS ANGELES

The excitement of being able to witness the musical marriage of a fine Wurlitzer — San Gabriel Civic Auditorium's 3/16 — and a fresh young talent is indeed a rare treat. It was a dimly lit theatre, the "orchestra" was doing its usual before-performance tune up — or so it seemed. The baton was tapped on the music rack and quickly all musicians were ready for the opening number. As the orchestra began to play its rousing opener, the elevator brought up the beautiful three manual Wurlitzer with Jerry Nagano conducting a cleverly done and well



Jerry Nagano at San Gabriel.

(Zimfoto)

thought out orchestral overture. No one noticed it was a gospel tune: the arrangement was "big orchestra."

That was the setting for our 1978 Concert Season opener. For the next two plus hours Jerry had his well attended program entertainingly spiced with humor, precise technique and spectacular pedalling.

Jerry's smile was indeed radiant at the chapter's response to his hard work — and rightly so. Many artists would be very pleased to receive one standing ovation, but to earn two in a single performance is a goal achieved by very few.

On February 12 Chicago organist John Muri was in black tie to play a delightful and varied program of rareties from the Golden Age of theatre organ music. John has a unique style, both musically and verbally. His comedy routine of inept organists is always fun to experience. He parodied the console tippler, the muncher, the punk musician and the wiggler. His selections ranged from tunes by Del Castillo to Bert Bacharach, from Crawford favorites to Gershwin's "American in Paris."

The program was well attended by LA ATOSers. It had been 35 months since they had heard the magnificent 4/37 Kimball organ in the Wiltern Theatre. The console has been completely redone to make the stopkey layout more standard for organists to play.

Four Los Angeles Chapter Board Members played a benefit concert to begin a scholarship fund for talented young organists to help further their musical careers. The officers playing

were 1978 Program Chairman Rod Skelding, Liaison Chairman John Ledwon, Chairman Bob Power and Vice Chairman Mike Ohman. The program was held at the Wiltern Theatre and all who attended agreed we have some talented officers. The proceeds from this concert will become the Joe Koons Memorial Scholarship Fund, in memory of a great man and friend of the chapter who gave freely and willingly of his time and instrument to benefit all of us (see Closing Chord).

Plans are being formulated for the installation of our Marr & Colton in the Pasadena Civic Auditorium. There are two schools of thought concerning it: (1) install it as it was in the Hollywood Warner Theatre as one of few remaining classic examples of the Marr & Colton organ; or (2) add pipework and a new console (and solid state switches) to approximate a 4/36 Wurlitzer, an undertaking which would require several years. While that matter is under discussion, a restoration crew is working on the M&C in a basement workroom in the Civic Auditorium building.

MIKE OHMAN

MOTOR CITY

Lowell Ayars, and his superb baritone voice were in good form when he appeared in January for a one-night performance at the Royal Oak Theatre. The film was the 1925 silent version of *The Wizard of Oz*, with Oliver Hardy as the Tin Man, and most appropriate accompaniment offered by Lowell at the 3/16 Barton.

All contributors of \$25 or more to our "Buy the Redford Fund" were invited to a special "I'm an Angel Show" with Lyn Larsen at the Redford Theatre on January 28. Despite the winter's worst weather, a sizeable crowd turned out for Lyn's program, which featured the Wolverine Chorus of Oakland County, a member of SPEBSQSA.

Bob Ralston pleased three different audiences at his reserved-seat engagement at the Redford Theatre in early February. He played just the kind of music they had come there to hear. Instead of retiring to his dressing room at intermission, he spoke to his admirers while signing autographs in the lobby, where record sales were brisk. Not a bad idea, judging from the enthusiasm of the crowd.

Artists for our Second Sunday program in January at the Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor were none other than Dennis and Heidi James, enroute to a concert engagement in Flint, Mich. As part of their fine morning program they showed slides of their recent trip to Hawaii, Australia and New Zealand.

In February, John Lauder made his second appearance as a Second Sunday artist at the Michigan Theatre's 3/13 Barton. Releathering of this organ will soon begin under the direction of Ben Levy and Grant Cook.

Our Fourth Sunday programs at the Royal Oak Theatre are also attracting good audiences with John Fischer the featured artist in January and Scott Smith performing at the 3/16 Barton in February.

Work at the Redford Theatre complex continues with a new roof on the office building, to keep our tenants dry in wet weather. Meanwhile, back in the Redford auditorium, a "new" stage lighting control system, a donation from the Pontiac Motors Division of General Motors, is being readied for installation.

In return for your tax-deductible contribution of \$25 or more to the "Buy the Redford Fund" you will receive an "I'm an Angel — I Helped to Buy the Redford" pin to wear at your next get-together. Your donation, in whatever amount, is still welcome at: MCTOS, P.O. Box 40716, Redford, Michigan 48240.

DON LOCKWOOD



During his western visit John Muri visited the organ studio-home of John Ledwon, in Agoura (near LA). Here he is made welcome by John and Carmella Ettaro. (Bob Hill Photo)



The Gordon Wright home in Dallas. The center door opens into the Music Room, complete with theatre Wurlitzer.

NORTH TEXAS

What was the January program for the North Texas Chapter? Well, mostly snow, freezing rain, sleet and ice, which sort of messed up any opportunities for a formal get-together. And it continued right on through February, giving us more snow for the year than has been recorded in any of the previous 100 years that weather data has been kept. But it didn't cool the interest in our recently-acquired Wonder Morton from Jersey City. See story this issue T.O. Page 24. Gordon Wright took over the membership pledge program for financing the delivery and storage of the Wonder Morton. This is mentioned so that anyone desirous of helping us achieve our goal of a super theatre organ installation in North Texas who wants to contribute, can send donations to our newly-elected secretary-treasurer, and past Chapter Chairperson Lorena McKee at 13406 Noel Road, Apt. 254, Dallas, Texas 75240. Lorena will see that any donations will be included in the project fund.

Work schedules for the refurbish-

ing operations have been in development and we'll all soon be meeting several times each month, some in Dallas and some in Fort Worth, to bring each piece of the organ back to brand new condition.

Sunday, February 26 was a beautiful day. Beautiful enough for the whole gang to show up at Gordon Wright's for a real good meeting and program. It was also the election of officers meeting, so there was plenty of activity. It was also our last opportunity to hear the Wrights' Wurlitzer, around which they designed their beautiful home. The present 9-rank instrument will be removed and a newly acquired 18-rank organ installed in its place.

Chairman Jim Peterson opened the business session with a couple of raps of the special gavel we've had since the days of Earl MacDonald's chairmanship. It's a gavel-shaped cutting out of a "Y" branching in a good ol' Texas red oak, and packs a lot of weight. A report on the status of the Wonder Morton program was given and then, after a review of "old

business," some discussion followed about the possibilities for an installation site for the Morton. Several members who had been assigned research projects reported. Currently there are about eight locations under consideration, each one with its advantages and disadvantages. The various reports emphasized that the site selection committee had a lot of research and planning ahead of it. They're going to have to come up with a location (and all the various agreements) to make the majority of the membership happy.

After that discussion, we got into election of officers. Under last year's by-law change, the chairman — elect automatically becomes chairman. Eric Parker submitted the nominating committee's recommendations.

The positions were filled as recommended by the nominating committee. Chairman Jim Peterson then passed the gavel to Charles Evans, who thanked the membership for their confidence in him, and proceeded to accept the position by playing the first numbers of the after-business session concert on the Wright's organ. Program Chairman Lew Williams then played a brief concert. Lew's performance at the console was his usual "top notch" musicianship. He was followed at "open console" by our transplanted Australian member, Reginald Peake, performing beautifully enough to want the members to hear more. Several other members, including Stan Guy, Grace Larner, and our new chairman, Charles Evans thus played and another great theatre organ afternoon for the chapter came to an end.

JOE KOSKI



Outgoing Chairman Jim Peterson congratulates new Chairman Charles Evans (left).



Chapter members listen in the Wright Music Room as Lew Williams plays.



Reginald Peake tries out the Wright Wurlitzer during open console.

OK CITY

Our Christmas party turned out to be a fantastically, beautiful musical and gourmet dream, almost beyond the imagination. Hosts Ed Thrower (our sec.-treas.) and Bill Blevens, (a charter member), left nothing undone in turning their home, and specially designed music room, into a yuletide setting for our gala affair.

We were met at the door by two Afghan hound doormen and, on entering the music room, beheld a beautiful white Christmas tree with 2700 lights and a revolving animated Santa chasing his sleigh around the top.

Surrounded by thousands of recordings, scores, and tapes of probably every organ and symphonic recording ever made, were two three-manual theatre organs, (Rodgers and Allen) and an ebony Yamaha concert grand. (The president of the Yamaha Corp., and his interpreter had spent a day with the instrument and pronounced it one of the six finest instruments the firm had ever built).

Bill's aunt, Dorothy Brochinski, prepared the gourmet dinner, with table after table laden with food that would have turned a Roman Emperor green with envy.

With Dorothy Hamilton, our historian-librarian, at the concert grand, Ed at the Rodgers, and Betty Yetter at the Allen, we had a concert that included "The Warsaw Concerto" and Christmas music.

Among our honored guests were John Strybos, Dean of the A.G.O. chapter in OK. City, and Joe Webster, the "Golden-Voice of the *Starlight Serenade* program that originated from the old WKY radio studios for the NBC network. The 4/15 Kilgen was always heard with Ken

Wright at the console, and Joe's voice is still as fine as in those days. Joe sang some request solos and led us in carols accompanied by the two organs and piano.

After much reminiscing of the old days we reluctantly said our "Merry Christmas" and headed for home, midst snow and cold.

Our Valentine meeting was held in the music studio-home of Dorothy Hamilton, one of our longtime teacher-organists, who gave a demonstration of her new Gulbransen theatre organ and Steinway piano. Then we had a sit-in at the console with Ben Bailey, Bob Boetcher and David Bridges doing the honors.

The upcoming Hector Olivera recital in April will open the Spring Art's Council Festival in OK. City.

PAUL N. HAGGARD

OREGON

On January 29, we traveled to the beautiful home of Mr. and Mrs. Milt Kieffer near Vancouver, Washington, to hear their talented daughter,



Wendy Kieffer at the 2/11 Wurlitzer in her parents' home in Vancouver, Washington.

(Claude V. Neuffer Photo)

Wendy, play their 2/11 Wurlitzer. Wendy is a former student of Don Simmons, and has just returned from an engagement in Anchorage, Alaska, where she played a 3/8 Morton at Uncle's Pizza Parlor.

Wendy's program was an excellent choice of old and modern numbers, played with fine registration and precision, followed by generous encores. Included were "Old Black Magic," "Weekend In New England," "When Sonny Gets Blue," "My Way," "Sophisticated Lady," with lush string and vox, "Little Green Apples" featuring complex left hand technique, and many others.

As reported for our November 1976 meeting, the organ came from the Roxy Theatre in Irvington, N.J. as a 2/7, but is now up to 11 ranks, with modern Tibia unification. A special feature was an electronic reverb system, brought in for this program.

Thanks to the Kieffers for their hospitality and fine music.

BUD ABEL

PIKES PEAK AREA

The chapter has been very busy through the late winter months. The move of the Chief Theatre Wurlitzer to its new home is progressing rapidly. Early in February the relay, switch stacks, blower and main chests made their way to the City Auditorium of Colorado Springs. By late February wiring was well on its way and the main chamber was nearly ready for winding. Hopes are for the main chamber to be playing from the console by May with the solo chamber to follow shortly thereafter.

Another project is the restoration of the projection equipment at the chapter clubhouse at Mt. St. Francis

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Convent. The twin projectors are original auditorium equipment. They were installed in the late 1920's and were the first Simplex sound projectors devised. After years of disuse they had become inoperable. When cleaning and restoration are completed they will be capable of showing all 35mm sound and silent films. Along with the new screen the restored equipment will add greatly to programs at the convent. We hope to have the 2/8 Wurlitzer playing at the convent by the end of this year and silent films with organ accompaniment will be certain to follow.

SCOTT CHRISTIANSEN

POTOMAC VALLEY

The PVC's Third Annual Christmas Party was held December 18, 1977 in the Chesapeake Room of the Center for Adult Education at the University of Maryland. The Center's theatre will be the new home of the chapter's recently acquired 3/10 Warner Kimball pipe organ. A major portion of the restoration of the organ has been completed. The start of the installation phase will soon be a reality.

Outside, the evening for the meeting was cold and rain drenched. Inside our large, attractive hall was the warmth of the conviviality of the holiday spirit. Each table was decorated with an intricate, handmade centerpiece arrangement of a miniature rank of organ pipes trimmed with holly. These were donated by members Shirley and Harold Andrus and offered later as table prizes.

The program of entertainment began with a group of timely and relaxed organ cameos played by our own members, Rick Maryman; John Terwilliger, including a superb vocal solo by John's wife, Wanda; Earl Sharits, and Todd Strickland.

The affable Todd Strickland again wore "two hats" (see THEATRE ORGAN, Page 62, October-November 1977). First, seated at the electronic organ, he invited the audience to stroll down the street with him, by ear, on a musical tour of church congregations of many faiths, to hear individualistic sounds of the holiday season. He recalled another nostalgic reminder of Christmas past — the playing of an old time Salvation Army band.

A brief intermission followed while Todd and his equally talented wife, Marie, with magic wand in hand, prepared for the second feature, a sparkling excursion into the enchanted world of magic. The couple had laboriously brought along the contents of three large cases and a trunk load of 'props' which had to be unpacked to set the stage for a generous treat of tricks, mystifying magical effects and illusions.

Occasionally Todd harmoniously combines his duo of professional experiences by playing organ for magic shows. As a long time member of the Yogi Magic Club of Baltimore, he recently served as general manager for the 23rd Annual Yogi Magic Show, a public performance which took place December 3, 1977 in Baltimore, Maryland. He also provided a pre-curtain and intermission time organ concert, and organ accompaniment for a stimulating three-hour program of magic classics and variety acts performed on stage by members of the Yogi Club. In a forthcoming issue of THEATRE ORGAN we hope to bring you a documentary on what it takes to organ-ize a full-time magic show such as the Yogi effort.

We were treated to two old-time silent movie comedies: *Coney Island* starring Fatty Arbuckle, Buster Keaton and Mable Normand, a film

of 1917 vintage; and *Pale Face* starring Buster Keaton, 1921. Our new chairman, Bob Stratton, at the organ, accompanied the films with theatre sound and sound effects of the silent days drawn from his years of theatrical experience. Though Bob had not had the chance to review the films before projection that evening, he did a remarkably exacting and seemingly effortless job in realistically cueing and following the action on the screen. The Gulbransen Rialto was provided through the courtesy of Gordon Keller Music of Alexandria, Virginia.

For the January meeting, about 90 members joined a Pipe Organ Concerts, Ltd. sponsored bus trip to Wilmington, Delaware, to see and hear the delightful piano/organ duo, Dennis and Heidi James, at the 3/28 Dickinson High School Kimball theatre pipe organ. I was unable to attend, but Bob Stratton reports that the Dennis and Heidi James concert "was about as professional as one is likely to see and hear." Bob's report continues, "The writer had heard them at the same location during the Philadelphia Convention, and while they were certainly very competent at that time, they did not excite their audience to the extent that they did last Saturday.

"The program was very well balanced, containing something for everyone, and their ensemble work was near perfect. Dennis accompanied a Laurel and Hardy comedy as well as some early trailers (coming attractions), one of which was for *The Phantom of the Opera* with Lon Chaney. The closing number brought the audience to its feet. It was the first movement of the Grieg "Piano Concerto in A Minor."

HAROLD R. RICHMAN

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RED RIVER

Greetings from the very frozen North. Quite a few changes have taken place on the organ scene here since our last Chapter Notes.

The plan for installing our chapter Wurlitzer at Moorhead Senior High School has been postponed indefinitely as the costs for the project keep getting higher. Latest estimates have been around \$8,000 and the school is not able to help us with that burden, even though they are in favor of our putting the organ there. Along with this project, we were gathering all the information needed to complete our tax exempt application. This has now been done and we should have the good word on the acceptance of this in a few weeks.

The bright spot in our search for

a home for our chapter organ has been a very recent development — mainly since the new year. A proposed Heritage Bridge complex — a cultural center linking Fargo (ND) to Moorhead (MN) by a bridge over the Red River — has excited the two communities and it may include our chapter in a big way. There will be a heritage center, museum, an art gallery, studios for public radio and educational TV and a performing arts concert hall. The concert hall is in phase three and the Heritage Bridge Task Force has had members speak at our chapter meetings about having us possibly install our organ there. The concert hall will seat approximately 1200-1400 and will have all facilities for the symphony, opera, and other theatrical events, and maybe a pipe organ. Lance Johnson

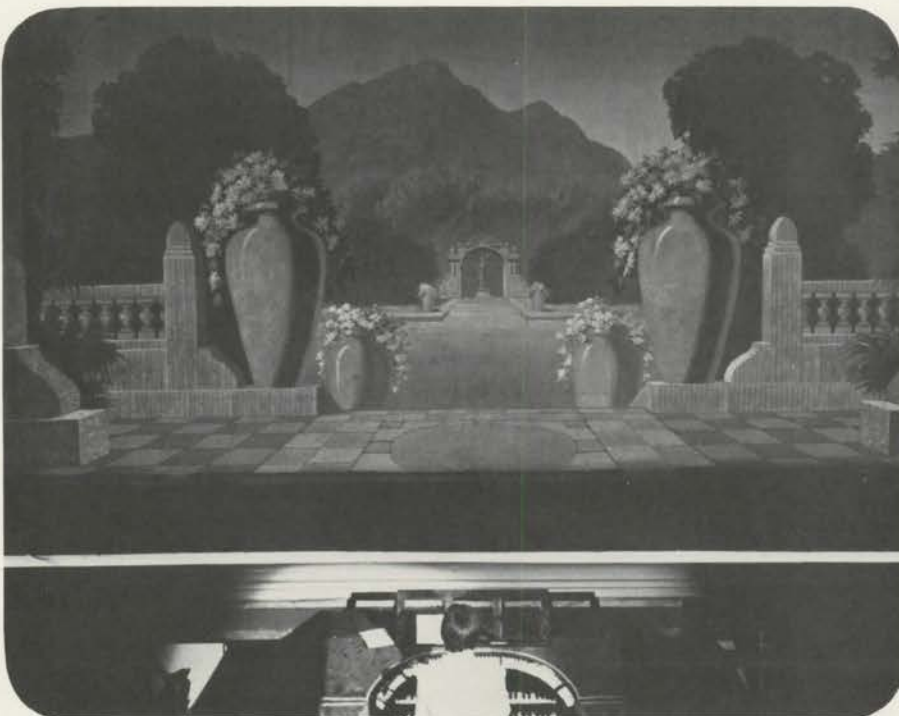
has met with the architect and detailed what our chamber and lift requirements would be. It means waiting quite a while to install, since this building is in the last phase, scheduled tentatively for 1981. It would be well worth the wait to have our chapter organ in such a prestige-filled setting. It also gives us more time to improve and add to the organ, which will possibly be 18 ranks.

Our immediate goal is getting ready for our spring show at the Fargo Theatre in April, our seventh there.

Yours truly Amtraked to Milwaukee the end of January to spend the weekend. Evenings were spent at Pipe Organ Pizza listening to Gary Hansen play and especially to hear Walter Strony one last time before his departure to Phoenix. Pipe Organ Pizza has been the scene of many good times. The food is great, and the de Luca family has always been extremely friendly. I also attended a Dairyland Chapter social at the magnificent Victorian mansion belonging to Greg Filardo.

Our annual election of officers was held in January.

SONIA CARLSON



The beautiful vaudeville curtain is still in use at the Fargo Theatre, location of the November concert featuring Bob Richards at the Wurlitzer.

(Shawn Leer Photo)

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Smith, and Margaret Ann Foy donated a Hector Olivera record that was won by Johnny Rowe. All proceeds went to the chapter to cover expenses.

December brought about our election meeting at Fred Riser's place. We had a good turnout despite the cold weather. The officers for 1978 were elected and several special committee heads were appointed. We even have an official chapter historian, Ken Tillotson. Chairman Don Wick and our new chairman of education had a visit from Cathy and Harry Koenig as they were passing thru Colorado on vacation. Jack Walden, the education boss, took Cathy and Harry to his place where he has a 2/12 Kimball in great shape. Harry charmed everyone for an hour making the old Kimball really sing out. A great organist is Harry.

The 2/7 Wurlitzer at Fred Riser's is really moving now. The crew from Loveland is completing the wiring of the relay and the wind trunk is about ready to mount under the chambers. Next will be the connecting of the 15" blower and lookout below when we fire it up. "Everything but Chickens will come Flying out," Fred says. The console is ready to connect, and then we can play Pointer System Book Two.

We formed a board of directors consisting of the present officers and past chairmen, also the committee heads and our director Duane Searle. We had the new agenda for 1978 to work on at a meeting at Don Wick's house in January. Now we are really moving. On February 23, 1978, The National Railway Historical Society presented a 1925 silent at Denver's Paramount Theatre where Bob Castle cued the film at the Mighty Wurlitzer. We planned a display in the lobby on ATOS to wake up the

public to the fact that theatre organs are not dead. The movie was made in Colorado and MGM released the film for this special showing. This was a benefit for the Railroad Society in which we took part.

Member Pat Ryan, who teaches music at Golden High School in Golden, Colorado, is going to install a "straight" pipe organ at Fred Riser's place. The work is being done by Mr. Ryan and his students as an educational program.

We have six new members since December 1977 and several are playing organists that we will put to work very soon.

FRANK R. GANDY

ST. LOUIS

Many inquiries about our chapter has prompted this report on the highlights of the past year.

The happiest event in many years for chapter members was the grand



Stan Kann, an all-time St. Louis favorite.

(R. Abeln Photo)

opening, in February, 1977, of The Old St. Louis Noodle and Pizza Company which offered the only daily theatre pipe organ music in the area since 1975. Further jubilation was created by the fact that Stan Kann would return from California for this opening and continue as featured organist for two weeks. Before going West Stan had been the busiest television, recording and theatre organist in this part of the country and from 1950 to 1970 was resident organist at the St. Louis Fox Theatre where he thrilled millions of devoted fans as he masterfully played the 4/36 "Crawford Special" Wurlitzer.

Following Stan Kann, Philadelphia's Andy Kasparian dazzled pizza eaters at the 3/11 Barton until November when Stan returned for one more week. After this, Chicago's Tom Cotner followed and initiated sing-along slides and Wednesday evening silent movies. On the days off for these featured organists, the entertainment was handled superbly by Gerry Marian, resident organist at the St. Louis Fox from 1970 through 1975. Later in the year Marc Eyestone substituted at the Fox until the sad day in February 1978 when the organ was removed.

The beautiful tones of the Fox organ were heard on September 2 when Stan Kann returned for a benefit performance for the St. Louis and Chain of Rocks Railroad Museum. This consisted of a mini-concert and the presentation of the silent movie *The Phantom of the Opera* with original score composed and played by Stan on the famous 4/36 Wurlitzer. Mike and Gerry Marian worked many hours preparing the organ for this program since it had not been played for so long.

Leo and Sally Kikendall staged a fabulous show for chapter members

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Stars of the show at Kikendall's "Wicks Theatre" in Springfield, Ill. (L to R) Organist Les Mathews, dancers Litta Lynn Lawler, Cherry Hoffman (winner of two scholarships to Ill. Sate U.) and Mark Caine.

(Ernie Laws Photo)

on September 18 at their home in Springfield, Illinois. Over fifty members traveled by bus and car to the Kikendall's home and their own "Wicks Theatre" complete with a 2/5 Wicks (plus harp) theatre organ. Printed programs announced the events of the day including an organ novelty number by Leo, organ selections by Les Mathews, a sing-along with slides and a mini-vaudeville performance by students of the local Sansone Dancing School. After the show there was open console and loads of delicious food and beverages.

Members Paul and Billie Coates traditionally hold our Christmas party in their home and the last one was another huge success. Jack Jenkins, a former San Diego pizza parlor organist now living in this area,

gave an impressive performance on the Coates' organ which is a ten-rank (with tuned sleigh bells) hybrid designed to eventually accommodate forty ranks with a four-manual Kilgen console. Paul operated some of his other instruments such as his cylinder phonograph, nickelodeon, player violin, player reed organ and many others much to everyone's delight. Erwin Oehlert played his violin accompanied by Betty Tyler. Chairman Ken Iborg and Joe Page accompanied the entire group as they sang Christmas carols.

Chapter meetings are held at different places and this has certainly provided variety. At one, Albertina Weygandt, a harpist for over twenty-five years with the St. Louis Symphony, after explaining the intri-

cacies of her instrument, gave a concert and received a standing ovation. In January, Joe Barnes and Chuck Wiltsch presented a program using Chuck's 2/3 Wicks which is completely self-contained (except for blower and trem) in a cabinet about half again the size of an upright piano. In February, Bob Ellison treated members to a brilliant musical program on a most unusual Hammond located in Joe Dallavalle's home. Joe modified his C-3 by adding a horseshoe top complete with tabs to the original console plus an array of solenoids. Now the C-3 and also a Hammond spinet can be played from the one modified console.

BILL ANTHONY

We have finally found a home for one of our organs. The beautifully sounding 2/8 Wurlitzer will soon be installed in the former Kingsland Theatre in South St. Louis. An agreement for mutual use of organ and building has been reached.

Joe Barnes has been the group leader in the complete rebuilding of the organ and installation in the theatre. The Wurlitzer was acquired about five years ago by the chapter from the Majestic Theatre in East St. Louis, Illinois. Since then all leather has been replaced in chests, relay and console. Joe has almost single-handedly rebuilt the console along with refinishing it. The main chest is already installed in the chambers along with the shutters. Many magnets still need replacing and the job of wiring, followed by installation of the wind lines, is still ahead.

The size of the theatre is ideal with its 80 foot width and 128 foot projection distance. There is a balcony 30 feet deep and the stage is 30 feet deep and 32 feet wide at the pro-



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scenium. Seating capacity is approximately 1,000 as the original seating has been revised to provide wider spacing between rows. The lobby has been remodeled and the auditorium redecorated in a deep red and black motif with bare brick on the lower part of the inner wall.

The organ console will not be on a lift, but rather a moveable platform and covered with a beautiful heavy cloth cover fabricated by member Mrs. Gorman Selbert. The ranks are Open Diapason, Tibia, Salicional, Flute, Trumpet, Vox Humana, Clarinet and Orchestral Oboe. (The last two start at tenor C.)

The Gateway to the West Evangelistic Crusade which owns the theatre was largely the inspiration of the area's well-known Lester family. The Lesters have had a gospel singing group for many years that has a large following throughout the country, and they have appeared on television and radio many times. Harvey and Opal Lester and son, Herschel, also operate a music store and teaching studios plus a complete professional recording studio.

These friendly, ambitious people and the members of the Gateway to the West Evangelistic Crusade are doing a beautiful job of restoring and remodeling the old theatre into a modern auditorium useful for church and public programs. Our mutual use agreement now provides a home for another magnificent Wurlitzer which will after many years of silence be heard again and enjoyed by the public.

A more complete feature article will be written when the installation is completed. We will then be able to say that the St. Louis Theatre Organ Society is no longer an organ moving and storage club, but once again has a real live organ going.

DON ULLRICH



From left to right: Charles Porter, program chairman; Marjorie Greer, chairman; Ramona Gerhard Sutton, organist; Gerald Sullivan, publicity chairman at Organ Power in Kearney Mesa. (Ed Minder Photo)

SAN DIEGO

Some folks may have been singing "I Get The Blues When It Rains" the night of our January concert; but we who made it to Organ Power in Kearney Mesa to hear Ramona were just "Easy Winners." What a way to start the New Year!

The chapter is indeed fortunate in being able to use the Mighty Wurlitzer for concerts, open console, and for personal or group practice between business hours. The 3/12 organ originally was installed in the Wilson Theatre in Fresno, California, which opened February 3, 1926. It was used to accompany silent movies and some stage shows until purchased by Organ Power Productions in 1973.

Ramona Gerhard Sutton, a delightfully charming person and tremendous organist, had a great time playing this organ and playing in a pizza parlor for the first time. All those who came from all over San Diego County as the rain poured down were captivated by Ramona. Her little personal comments of

other times and places interspersing her medleys added much to the evening's enjoyment. Ramona's blending of all types of music into a concert of pure listening pleasure was truly emotionally rewarding.

On February 13 we had another special treat. John Muri (voted organist of the Year in 1977 at the convention) entertained at the Wurlitzer at Organ Power. We heard beautiful medleys, spiked with laugh-provoking remarks, as John took us on a musical trip via the music of Westerns, *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Orient Express*, and into space with *Star Wars*, followed by a Duke Ellington medley and a couple of Jesse Crawford favorites.

After a break John indulged in some fun numbers portraying the hungry organist of early silent movie days, who kept food tucked in the console to munch as he played; the alcoholic organist, who tipped the bottle at random while playing "Dizzy Fingers" with bilous digits!; and the acrobatic organist, doing his antics with "12th Street Rag."

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February was indeed a busy month with a board meeting, concert, and a fun and food time at Organ Power where Chris Gorsuch, talented young staff organist and ATOS member, kept the Wurlitzer busy sending out its musical answers to the many requests.

We finished the month with our bi-monthly membership meeting at the beautiful not-yet-finished home of Mr. and Mrs. Coulter Cunningham. They have bulldozed out a spot high on a canyon wall in El Cajon, just room enough to get around the house at the upper edge of the canyon which overlooks the valley below and the hills beyond. It was worth finding this home, designed and built by the hard work of Coulter and Mildred, both artists and talented in many ways. The living room with cathedral ceiling was built for the Rodgers 330 organ and the Yamaha baby grand piano. There was also a balcony for those who wished to view the whole scene as they enjoyed the music.

After the business meeting we enjoyed lots of music with a capital M. We had organ alone, organ and piano and when Coulter added his hot trumpet to the two, the day was made complete.

Work continues on our Wurlitzer Style "D" being installed in the California Theatre in downtown San Diego. Our crew of dedicated volunteers are working Wednesday nights as well as weekends to get this little beauty going as soon as possible.

The board of directors has authorized setting aside 10% of the gross proceeds of our March 20 benefit concert for a scholarship fund, which is being established to further the study of theatre pipe organ music by deserving students with an accredited teacher.

GWEN O'CONNOR



John Muri addresses the San Diego Chapter during his February concert. (Ed Minder Photo)

SIERRA

Sunday, January 22, was chapter day as we presented three of our own members at our Seaver Memorial organ. Approximately seventy members were present when Chairman Art Phelan introduced Jim Brown, associate organist at the Big Top Pizza. Jim is one of our younger members and we've watched his playing get better and better in the past three years. He opened with three listenable modern numbers, and then played a very good arrangement of "Battle Hymn of the Republic," with some fine pedal work. Those of us who hadn't heard Jim for a long time were greatly sur-

prised at what a fine organist he has become.

Joe Gustin, our English teacher from Paradise, was joined by Louise Daggett for a sing-along. Joe is both a good organist and a real enthusiast. He not only makes the two-hundred mile trip to attend meetings, but usually brings along some of his students. What do you tell them, Joe? "Either you get an "A" in the theatre organ, or you'll get an "F" in English."

Herb Dunkley has been a member since our first chapter meeting. At that time he had one of the best Artisan installations in his home that we'd ever heard and he knew how to get the most from it, just as he does when playing pipes for us today. As everyone knows, we had a drought for two years and now have gone to the other extreme with rain and more rain. Herb acknowledged the situation with a medley of all the "Rain" and "Sunshine" songs imaginable.

Concert organist Bill Thomson took over the gleaming console of the Grant Union High School Wurlitzer in February. Weatherwise, this was one of the few beautiful days we've had in many rainy weeks, and Californians love the out-of-doors, so unfortunately attendance was disappointing with only two-hundred-forty persons present. We can feel sympathy for those who missed Bill's program. Though we've heard the Grant organ for many years, Bill brought forth many new sounds we didn't even know were there. His registration was brilliant, and his playing flawless. Bill's warm personality is evident during his "chats" between numbers, as is his sense of show business. We now know why Bill is so busy playing concerts all over the world.

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SOONER STATE

Although winter in Oklahoma is nowhere near what it is in the Northeast, we, too, have had more than our share of snow and cold weather! However, most chapter members — typically undaunted — wouldn't dream of letting Tulsa's slippery streets or blowing snow keep them from attending the two excellent programs presented at our January and February meetings, both performed on the 3/10 Robert Morton in the American Christian College.

David Osborne, our January artist, didn't let the fact that he was more used to plug-ins stop him from doing a commendable job on the big Robert Morton. We enjoyed a number of medleys, a Latin American collection, selections by Scott Joplin, a medley of love songs — and "Twelfth Street Rag" performed upside down and backwards! For an encore he played Bob Ralston's arrangement of "Bubbles in the Wine." David is a music student at Oral Roberts University and had been featured recently at the Tulsa (electronic) Organ Club.

During open console we heard several piano-organ duets, with Joe Crutchfield at the console and Chad Weirick at the piano. Then Chad took a turn at the console, followed by Phil Judkins.

February featured another performance by talented Chad Weirick, again at American Christian College. Chad opened with "How the West Was Won," then presented a tribute to the day's blowing snow storm with a medley of "weather" songs, following with novelty tunes and marches. After a short intermission, he treated us to "Tu Es Petra Et Portae" ("Thou Art The Rock") by Henry Mulet, proving once again that classical organ music should

not be excluded from theatre organ concerts. For the balance of the program it was back to popular standards. A silent movie accompaniment was cancelled. The movie projector was another victim of the cold weather and burned out its light bulb! We'll have to try again when winter (will it ever??) is gone!

DOROTHY G. SMITH

SOUTHEAST TEXAS

Activity is beginning to pick up around here, somewhat. The chapter was notified this week that office space was available on the former executive floor of the Jefferson theatre. The writer called a friend to inform him of the good news, but we needed furniture for the office. On February 20, 1978 we moved into our office with a desk, typewriter and all of this at no cost... that cannot be beat!

While the Jefferson Theatre is being booked solid during February and March, our organ work crew started the first session of the complete refurbishing and restoration of the 27-rank Moller in the former Phelan mansion, which is now a convent. After we work the Phelan Moller, we will undertake overhauling the Rogers mansion 12-rank Aeolian Duo-Art Player with separate console. This will give our chapter three pipe organs to oversee.

The Jefferson has been declared a Historical Landmark.

AL SACKER

SOUTHERN ARIZONA

We have been busy as beavers working on our new by-laws and on February 2, 1978 we filed Articles of Incorporation with the Arizona Corporation Commission. Our past chairman, Helen Staininger, and

current chairman, Rudy Kotasek, with a lot of helpful advice from our friends of the Valley of the Sun chapter, succeeded in this mighty step forward so we are that much closer to our dream of helping to teach and educate the youth (as well as the older generation, who still care) of the merits and joy of a theatre pipe organ in proper surroundings; someplace where all can enjoy that beautiful sound once again. Soon our papers with the IRS will be filed and along with our nonprofit corporation, will put us in the educational organ business.

On the first Sunday in October we met in the Parish House of Grace Episcopal Church for our third meeting of the year through the courtesy of our new members Fr. and Mrs. Richard M. Babcock. Mr. Allen Guirl, owner of our new dealership Broadway Keyboard, furnished us with his own Conn 651 model and pipe speakers. We take this time to mention how very cooperative Mr. Olson has been in the past in not only furnishing organs for our club use but in backing the productions of such well-known and established artists as Don Baker, Don Kingston and others as well as our own Arthur Crowell, and one who in the past played on the East Coast and is now playing Hammond around Tucson, George French. Thank you, Roy Olson, for a lot of good things. Fr. Babcock played the Grace Church pipe organ, which is one of the largest in any Tucson Church. We got to see the other instruments of the church and then started our business meeting followed by the program. We finally got to hear Mildred Ives and a new member, Louise Townsend.

Following our December meeting and election of officers came the program which, through the courtesy

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of Richard Brennan of Schroeder's Pianos-Organs, we were furnished the new Hammond, a console model of two manuals with 25 pedals and a very lovely piano section. In the past Mr. Brennan has loaned us a three-manual Rodgers trio and a Hammond Concord so we have been very well-treated by this dealership. Thank you very much, Schroeders of Tucson.

Tucson's Southern Arizona Chapter has been helped a great deal in our pipe organ "drought" many times in the past by several dealers not to forget Muller's, the Wurlitzer electronic dealer and Mr. Roles of the Baldwin store of Tucson.

Our program chairman, Mrs. Katherine Gard, did a bang up job while suffering from an "uncast" fractured ankle. Her performers were Bob Tozier, Evelyn Framke and our youngest playing member, Miss Lynne Staininger.

Our February meeting was held at the El Dorado Townhouses club-room using a Baldwin Theatre Two furnished by Roles Piano and Organ Co. Louise Townsend, Flo Erickson of Green Valley, Arizona, and Ralph Cloos were the entertainers.

BOB HIGH

SOUTH FLORIDA

1978! No, 1928 would better describe the atmosphere during the now traditional New Year's meeting at Andre Hall. Bob is moving ahead with construction of a model Eberson atmospheric theatre, inspired by the Olympia Theatre, Miami. The stars were brightly shining, with fleecy white clouds and a full moon in the Spanish courtyard when Betty Lee Taylor slipped quietly to the Wurlitzer console and introduced *The Rink* with Charlie Chaplin. This was followed with a Laurel and



Marti Lynch at the Gusman Hall Wurlitzer in Miami, Florida.

Hardy comedy, *Their Purple Moment*, and wrap up cameo, before Betty Lee relinquished the console to the inspired members and guests who were anxious to try the big instrument.

We are fortunate to have the talent of Betty Lee in our group and are grateful for her willingness to share her superb abilities on a regular basis.

I am always amazed when a performer of Betty Lee's caliber, a trooper who was a part of the silent film era, demonstrates the abilities acquired many years ago.

Past an age when failing sight, hearing or arthritis have stopped most people, the theatre organist can sit at the console and be transported fifty years back in time to display a talent and ability envied by those half as young, to cue an unpreviewed film with an inconspicuous caress, capturing every mood, anticipating every action, as though performer, organ and film are of one being. But most of all, to transport the audience on that same magic carpet of youth and, to the casual observer who can tear away from the

screen long enough, to catch the obvious pleasure the artist experiences in so doing, it is a precious gift. Yes, we are indeed fortunate.

Never inhibited by tradition, we scheduled the preview of the Gusman Hall Wurlitzer for club members two months after it's debut to the Miami public. First heard during free noon concerts the week preceding Christmas, we postponed the club concert until surely all would be in order before exposing our baby to the "critics." It took two months to correct what those five concerts uncovered.

Marti Lynch was our featured artist, her first concert following major surgery. Marti took us on a tour of the Wurlitzer, exploiting its capabilities for the new (*Star Wars*), old ("Old Cape Cod"), fast ("March of the Toy Soldiers") and slow ("I Left My Heart in San Francisco"). Truly an artist who has the gift of theatre organ style, with rich harmonies and full chords, Marti provided a very enjoyable Sunday afternoon for those members fortunate enough to attend.

STEVE FITZGERALD

VALLEY OF THE SUN

The chapter was so busy during November and December that some of us thought that 1978 couldn't possibly be any more hectic. 'T ain't so! At our first board meeting of the new year, we worked out a schedule of meetings, concerts and organ treks that are bound to keep the entire membership hopping for the remainder of the year.

Our first big group activity was our January social meeting at Organ Stop Pizza in Phoenix. It was Lyn Larsen's last night there, and many of our ATOS members, their fami-



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Walt Strony starts at Organ Stop.

lies and friends were there to wish Lyn good luck in his new venture. Mr. Larsen is now part owner of a restaurant in Sun City in which he is going to install a theatre pipe organ while having the place remodeled.

The February meeting was held at the First Christian Church Fellowship Hall. New board members were introduced, and a change was made in our by-laws to allow for the election of additional board members. Since our general membership is growing, it had been decided that we needed more representation on the board. Later, Chairman Bill Carr explained plans for the 2/12 Wurlitzer he is installing in the church hall,

and showed members what had already been done.

February 18 and 19 had to be the two busiest days of the month for members! Saturday, a group of us were at Phoenix College getting things ready for our Sunday afternoon concert. This included setting up the grand piano and a Rodgers Trio for our artist, and tuning the college's 2/9 Wurlitzer that we are in the process of restoring. Some people were there until 4 a.m. Sunday morning! It was back to the college again at 2 p.m. Sunday afternoon for our first concert of the year. Rob Richards, associate organist at Organ Stop, presented a program of organ and piano music with enough variety to suit everyone's taste. From his toe-tapping opening of "Broadway Rhythm" to a tender closing with Schubert's "Ave Maria," it was a most enjoyable concert. Rob gave us a chance to hear what progress had been made on the pipe organ and the Tibias are beautiful!

The busy weekend wasn't over after Rob's concert, however. Local ATOS'ers had not one, but two organists to listen to that evening. Some of our members gathered again at Organ Stop Pizza to welcome Walter Strony to Phoenix. Walt is the new featured organist at the restaurant. Others joined the



Rob Richards relaxes at the Rodgers.

crowd at Phoenix Symphony Hall to hear our own chapter Vice Chairman Steve Schlesing, perform during a Liberace concert. Steve recently entered a keyboard contest sponsored by the Liberace Foundation For The Performing and Creative Arts and the Baldwin Piano and Organ Company, and came in first in the organ division out of 130 original entrants. That evening, the 20-year-old Schlesing played "MacArthur Park" and the theme from *Star Wars*. As he presented Steve with his trophy, Liberace said that our young man sounded like an entire orchestra. Congratulations, Steve!

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Letter of November 22, 1977
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