



# THEATRE ORGAN

June/July 1978



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# THEATRE ORGAN

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## Cover Photo

The ornate console of the Mightiest Wurlitzer features gold leafing throughout, including the pedal clavier. The initial "W" crest was recently designed as the last of Wurlitzer's theatre organ signatures. And the unique bench, built for Helen Crawford's use in the Brooklyn Fox, is authenticated by the distinctive Wurlitzer configuration of the feet.

ATOS

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## 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

## HONORARY MEMBERS

1959 — Jesse Crawford

1960 — Fanny 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

The Atlanta and Birmingham chapters are making final preparations to roll out the red carpet for the ATOS members who will be attending another great convention. A fine program has been prepared, great organs all tuned up and theatres made ready. With all of the other attractions, our stay in the "deep south" should be most enjoyable. Another record attendance is anticipated.



During the convention, the meeting of the National Board of Directors with the chapter representatives will be held. Each chapter should have their designated representative at this meeting. The suggestions and recommendations made to the officers and the Board of Directors will be their guide for action during the coming year. The annual membership meeting will also be held during the convention.

Your ballots should have been returned by the time you receive this issue. It was good to see a greater number of nominees for this election. I hope that you exercised your right to vote.

See you in Atlanta!

Sincerely,

*Ray F. Snitil*  
RAY F. SNITIL



# THE MIGHTIEST CONTINUES A WURLITZER TRADITION

by Jerry Kenney of the Wurlitzer Company

The Mightiest Wurlitzer is more than just a museum piece. It is a living example of the best of the organ-builder's art. And its installation follows the Wurlitzer/Hope-Jones tradition of unique instruments designed to enhance the lo-

cations that house them. This quality of uniqueness may seem ironic in that Wurlitzer's standard specifications and mass-production techniques made many of Hope-Jones' innovations technically and economically feasible. But irony is one of

the qualities that distinguishes true art.

Purists may argue that the Mightiest Wurlitzer should be built to a strict set of specifications. And it is, inasmuch as all of the instrument's components meet original

Stop tablets for the Mightiest Wurlitzer were all etched with the original plates from the old Rudolph Wurlitzer factory in North Tonawanda.







Wurlitzer specifications. And when completed, the organ will be capable of reproducing a complete range of Wurlitzer pipe organ sounds. But to say that the Mightiest should reflect a specific style of instrument or unification formula would be to ignore a basic point of authenticity. Because few, if any, of the more than 2,200 Wurlitzer pipe organs exactly match the specifications drawn up for the 100 or so different styles developed over the decades.

“ **More than  
five dozen ranks  
of pipes** ”

Evolution occurred because the instrument designers and installers were continually innovating according to the state of the art at the time of installation and to the requirements of each location. For example, rather than there being 200 or so simon-pure Style D's, most of these instruments were modified with the addition of optional features, and specifications were revised to fit the installation. The evolution of the Mighty Wurlitzer, then, followed two courses. The first was on the engineering drawing boards and in the sound laboratories at North Tonawanda. But the second course was in the theatres, halls, residences and houses of worship in which these instruments were installed.

The Mightiest Wurlitzer, then, follows this evolutionary tradition. True, the instrument will include a fantastic array of typical Wurlitzer theatre and liturgical organ features selected from four decades of experience. But because of its size and scope, it may also show pipe organ enthusiasts a few innovations made possible by its ideal location. Although more than five dozen ranks of pipes may encompass more possibilities than even the most eager enthusiast can dream of, the Mightiest will also feature some innovations, especially in the area of unification. These innovations are being

Top — An inspiration to today's craftsman in the Wurlitzer model shop is this photograph from the North Tonawanda pipe organ factory. Of this equipment, only the pantograph and plates used to etch stop tablets remain.

Bottom — The etching machine is a pantograph that transfers the form of the lettering from the plates to the molded tablet.



developed right now as the installation is completed. The exact scope of these innovations won't be realized until they are actually combined. But we can assure theatre organ enthusiasts several delightful surprises — surprises that are authentically within the Wurlitzer tradition.

Meanwhile, here are some indications of the size and scope of this instrument. For example, in the 100 or so specification lists of original Wurlitzer/Hope-Jones Unit Orchestras, ranks at the 32' level were somewhat rare, and at best, there was only one in those instruments that had them. The Mightiest will have three 32' ranks.

There are over five dozen capture pistons on the Mightiest including single and double touch combinations. The pistons will include a *Sforzando*, something few theatre organs boasted of, most of which were Mighty Wurlitzers. Of course, the pistons will include a General Cancel for all stops.

The more than 340 stop tablets that curve around the newly refinished console have all been etched individually, using the original plates and equipment from the North Tonawanda workshops. Over 30 couplers



... the organ's  
completion is clearly  
in sight ...



will provide exciting inter- and intramanual combinations. The organ features over two dozen Tremulants. And the six expressions pedals, plus an Additive Crescendo pedal, will enhance the full organ sound.

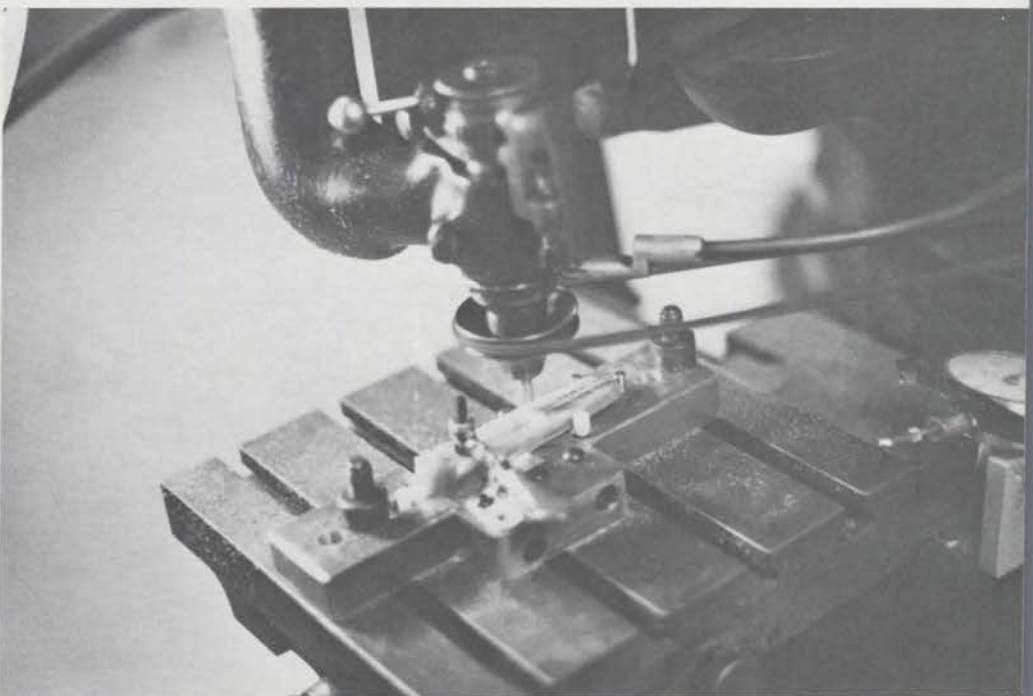
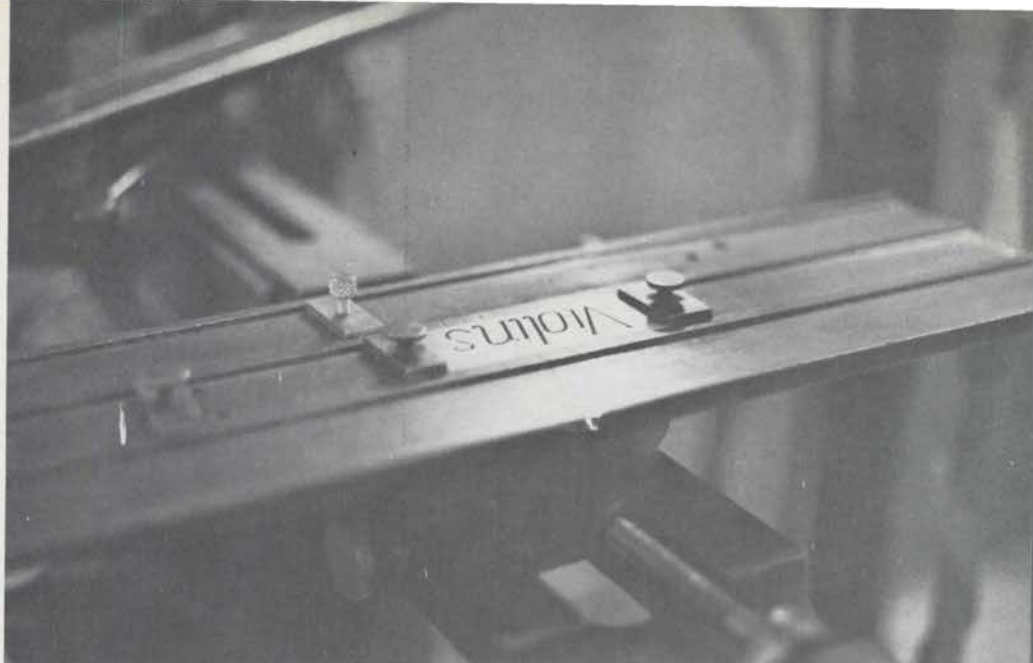
In addition to the five Tibia and five Vox ranks previously mentioned, the Mightiest will have a Floating Orchestral division of 19 ranks.

But this is merely a hint of the full scope of the instrument. The tradition of innovation is not opened by any means. In fact, the organ's completion is clearly in sight. Much of what has been done is based

Top — The etching plate is jugged in position to cut a new stop tablet designation.

Center — The stylus that etches the lettering into the tablet is guided by the arms of a pantograph.

Bottom — When the etching is completed, the operator clears away any burrs that remain.





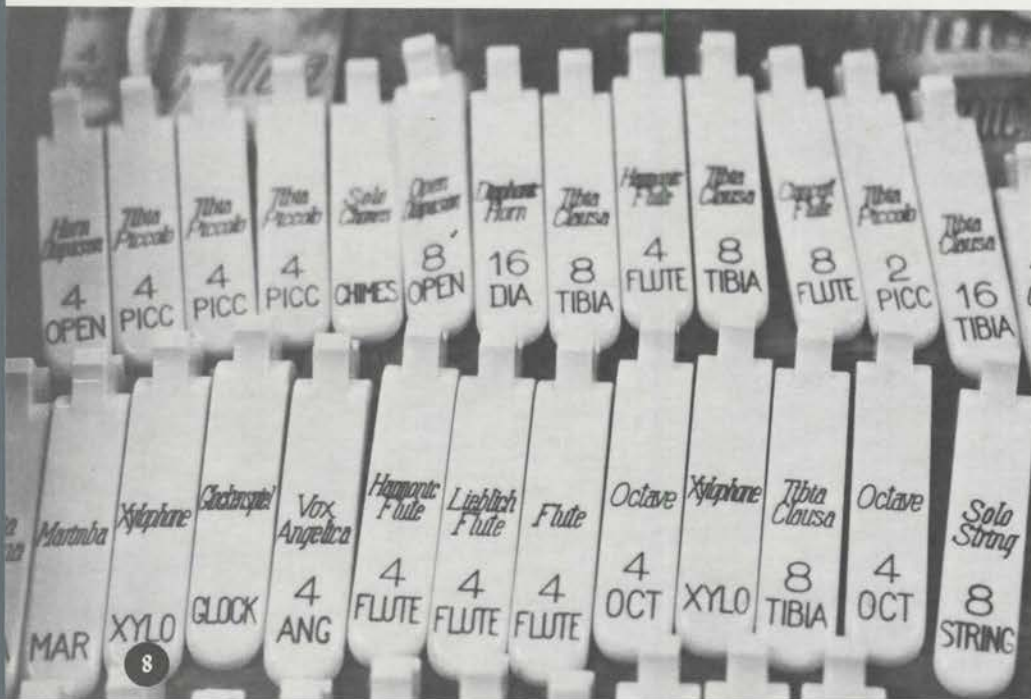


Top — Paint is applied to the surface of the newly etched tablet and then wiped off, leaving a residue in the grooves of the lettering.

Center — After the paint dries, the surface of the tablet is polished clean of any extraneous paint using a smooth cloth and a paint solvent.

Bottom — The completed stop tablets are then left to dry, soon to be installed in the rails on the console of the Mightiest Wurlitzer.

on consultation with the recognized authorities — the giants among American Theatre Organ Society membership. After a final check out of the installation with these authorities, more details will become known. □



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# THEATRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY GOES TO TEXAS

Austin's Paramount Theatre (nee Majestic) opened in 1915 — a John Eberson design like its San Antonio counterpart. It was built in the era of the pre-organ pit symphony orchestra, so began its theatrical life — as it ended it — organless. Now a \$600,000 grant has been given the theatre by the Economic Development Administration for its refurbishment as a performing arts center. Hopefully, there is an organ somewhere in need of a home that will find one here.

by Clifford Edge

Picture palaces, pizza parlors, millionaire's mansions . . . they all add up to eight different playable organs which will be available in concert, and for open console, in a four-and-a-half day whirl of activities across Texas in July. It begins as an afterglow to the Atlanta ATOS Convention and ends with the Theatre Historical Society conclave in San Antonio and Austin. Along the way are included over twenty theatres of every description, several museums and theatrical displays and some real challenges to organ diagnosticians and doctors!

ATOS members should reserve



Delta Flight #209 on July 13, known to Texan organ affectionados as the Robert Morton Flight, in identification of most of the region's instruments, which will take you from Atlanta to Beaumont, Texas. There you will be met by Al Sacker and the newly organized Southeast Texas Chapter of ATOS for a day-and-a-half of tours and organ happenings around that coastal city. The Houston Chapter of ATOS will be co-hosts of activities which will be climaxed by a 1927-style bash in the Jefferson

Theatre with a silent movie, organ concert, sing-along, simulated vaudeville and the works! Beaumont is now providing big vibes in its organ accomplishments, with plans on its drawing board to make a major city green with envy. (This town has only a little over a hundred-thousand population and is now developing projects which will give it six outstanding pipe organs.) Its ATOS people hope to spin off their enthusiasm into even greener pastures elsewhere in the state.

On July 15, a cross-Texas bus tour will be hosted by the League of Historic Theatres, and will include stops in Houston, Galveston and Columbus en route from Beaumont to San Antonio.

In San Antonio, the focus will be upon a study to be presented by leading architects and urban planners for the adaptive re-use of seven downtown theatres as a performing arts district. These, along with several additional theatres and points of historic interest, will be included in walking tours. The final day, July 18, will be spent in Austin, where a highlight will be a visit to the Hoblitzelle Theatre Arts Library, which contains much theatrical memorabilia. One of the last activities — to cap off many miles of travel — might well be a visit to Loew's Theatre in Canton, Ohio. Well, not quite. Its 3/11 Robert Morton will be in concert at an Austin restaurant to be visited by the group.

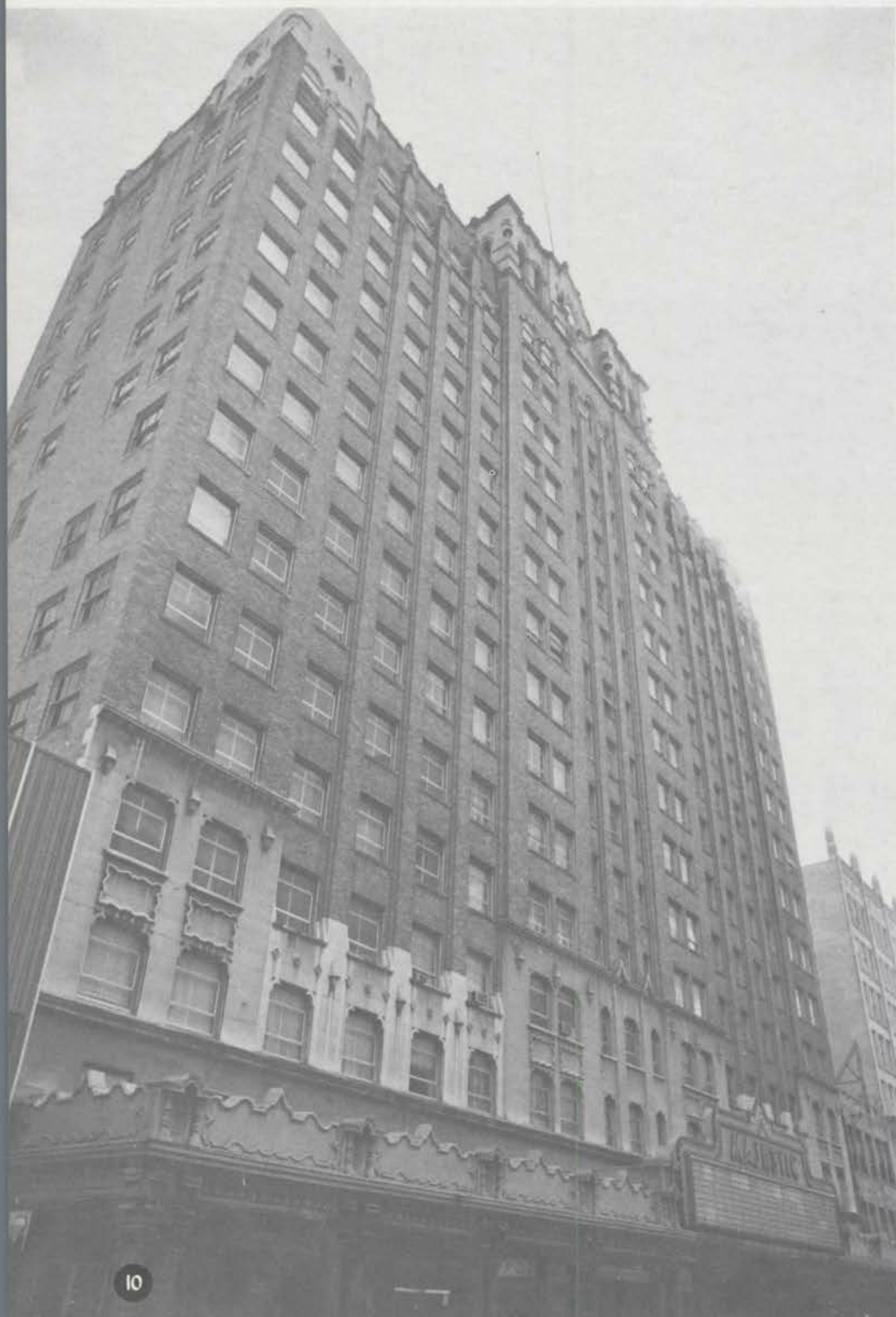


Registration information about the Texas activities can be secured from Al Sacker, Southeast Texas ATOS, Jefferson Theatre, P.O. Box 3925, Beaumont, Texas 77704; Clifford Edge, theatre Historical Society Headquarters, Gunter Hotel, P.O. Box 360, San Antonio, Texas 78292; or Robert Stoddard, League of Historic Theatres, 3208 North Monroe, Wilmington, Delaware 19802.

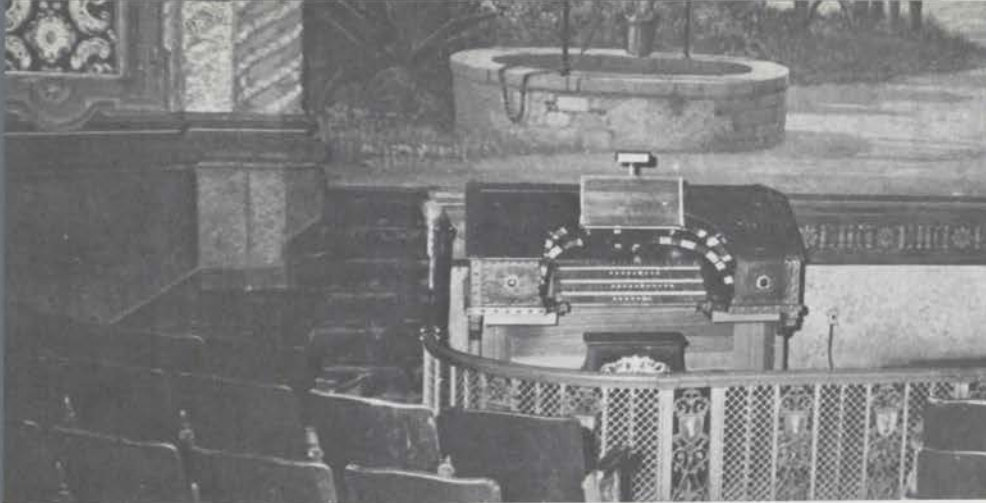


A major goal of the Texas activities will be the formation of an active ATOS group in the San Antonio area. Three of the downtown theatres have organ installations and two of these are literally awaiting ATOS people to bring them to life. Other state chapters are cooperating in ATOS promotional efforts, and there will be, during the San Antonio meeting, an affinity group of prospective ATOS members brought to-

◀ San Antonio's huge (3,700-seat) Moorish atmospheric Majestic Theatre will soon reopen as a performing arts center. Long asleep and silent within is its 3/11 Robert Morton organ, which has been waiting, like Sleeping Beauty, for its re-awakening. When its voice is again heard, it will be in an auditorium said to be acoustically perfect. Another Morton and a Moller are in nearby theatres.







The long-silent 3/11 Robert Morton organ may be refurbished when San Antonio's Majestic Theatre becomes a performing arts center.

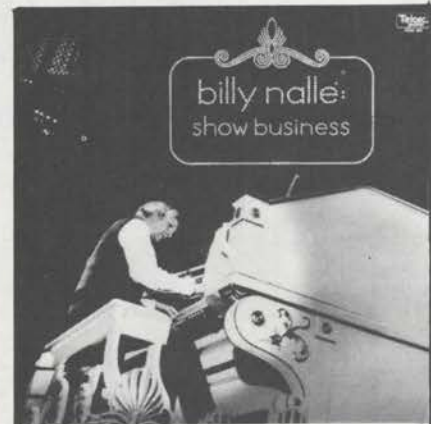


The Majestic Theatre, San Antonio, Texas, is an early Ebersson atmospheric.

ATOS members who have been keeping up with the 3/11 Robert Morton from the 1927 Loew's Canton, Ohio, Theatre will be happy to know that it is alive and well down in Texas where Dayle Harris, owner of Austin's Scampi's Organ Palace, installed it in his popular restaurant. Those who take part in the after-Atlanta-Texas trek will hear the instrument in the capable hands of head organist Leonard Woosley, shown here at the console. Through the summer he will be scoring the silent cliff-hanger serial *Lady in Gray* with the twice-nightly episodes changed each week.



gether for organizational purposes. To a person, those in the theatrical and conservation organizations which have brought about the theatre restoration projects are saying, "We can preserve theatre buildings but it takes the organs to bring life into them." It is an irony that while in many parts of the country ATOS members find themselves without theatres, in the Southwest it is just the opposite. And hopefully, ATOS will meet the challenge — which is decidedly the kind of opportunity it likes! □



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# LORIN WHITNEY STUDIO

by Stu Green

If the expression hadn't been over-used, we'd herald "the end of an era." Actually it's been over two decades since Lorin Whitney built a studio building in Glendale, Calif. to house the 3/14 Robert Morton he had removed from the Redwood City (Calif.) Fox Theatre. Now he has sold it.

At the time, Whitney couldn't foresee the fabulous success he would have as a recording processor or as a studio facilities provider. Almost as soon as the then one-studio building had been completed and the organ installed in the mid '50s, Walt Disney came knocking at the door, needing studio facilities for his then

new Disneyland series of kiddie records. The organ studio was rented to Disney for several years, during which hundreds of organ-backed orchestral and vocal records were produced. The organist was usually Buddy Cole. This brought an initial prosperity to the enterprise which was invested in ever better studio and record mastering equipment.

Up to the time he opened his Glendale Studio, Lorin Whitney was known as the organist for several well known evangelists, the most familiar being Billy Graham. Lorin soon learned the value of these associations. Over the years he has made a series of taped programs of hymn tunes on the Morton which have made his name known among those who tune in evangelical radio stations across the land, and they are legion. So Lorin the organist became Lorin the successful businessman, because of his devotion to the theatre organ.

From the beginning, the Morton grew. When it was installed it had sprouted a fourth manual and more ranks, circa 24. In the years since, it has gradually grown until chamber space ran out at 34 ranks. Meanwhile, it became a Mecca for organ-

Lorin Whitney at the console of his 4/34 pride and joy.





ists and for the Los Angeles Theatre Organ Club, for which Lorin was the program director for a time.

We have mentioned Buddy Cole. Unfortunately he never recorded solos on the Whitney organ. His efforts were applied to making small orchestras sound larger, and that meant keeping the organ behind the orchestra. However, many of Buddy's famous contemporaries did record it in solo for various labels, among them Jesse Crawford, Eddie Dunstedter, Ann Leaf, Leonard McClain, Gordon Kibbee, and Don Baker, to name a few. Most left us a string of records played on the judicious mix of Morton and Wurlitzer pipework. The Wurlitzer ranks numbered seven and were selected to blend with the dominant Morton ranks.

Orchestra leader Freddie Martin's pianist, Bob Hunter, recorded the Wurlitzer twice as the fictitious "Georges Montalba," locating the organ in Nice, France, a town which never had a real theatre organ except in the records' jacket notes.

The Theatre Organ Club sponsored many concerts in the studio, during the '60s, some of the artists being Rex Koury, Bob Mitchell, Del Castillo, Chauncey Haines, Jim Melander, John Ledwon (then a teenager), Leonard McClain, Johnny Seng, Col. Harry Jenkins, Bob Gerretson and Ramona Gerhart Sutton, whose audience included Eddie Dunstedter. And Lorin Whitney honored the TOC with a memorable concert, soft pedalling the hymns in favor of pops. To improve the acoustical environment, Lorin had a room dug from the solid earth beneath the building to serve as one of the most effective echo chambers available in the west.

By the '70s the studio had become a recording center for producers of religious music, and it wasn't overlooked by rock musicians who required the support of multi-channel facilities, overdubbing and "isolation booths." The listening area in the organ studio shrunk steadily as glass partitions and permanent baffles were installed to accommodate the special needs of new generations of customers. It could no longer accommodate audiences. And additional small studios, geared to the needs of vocal groups, were added to the original building.

One record company which found the organ and studio useful in recent years was the Electric Lemon label, whose sponsors, showman Milt Larsen and El president Verne Langdon, specialize in occult and generally weirdo music and material. One result was a release starring "Erik, the Phantom of the Organ," with sepulchral music purportedly issuing from the sewers of Paris but actually featuring the minor key improvisations of Verne Langdon on the Wurlitzer-Morton. In another release, Langdon backgrounded actor John Carradine reciting the macabre poetry of Edgar Allan Poe in that expressive, stage-trained voice which has become familiar to four decades of moviegoers.

In the mid-'70s, Lorin Whitney began to think about retirement — but hated the thought of giving up the organ and the studio facility which had been instrumental in bringing him financial security. In March 1978 he found a buyer who would do it his way, the giant Music Corporation of America, that conglomerate whose range of activities includes managing film stars and owning movie studios such as Universal Pictures.

Under the conditions of the sale, which brought Lorin well over one million "greenies," he will remain as advisor for a renewable period of

four years. The Studio will continue to process tapes for record releases and studio rental will be available to all who need recording facilities. MCA wanted the studio complex especially because of the organ.

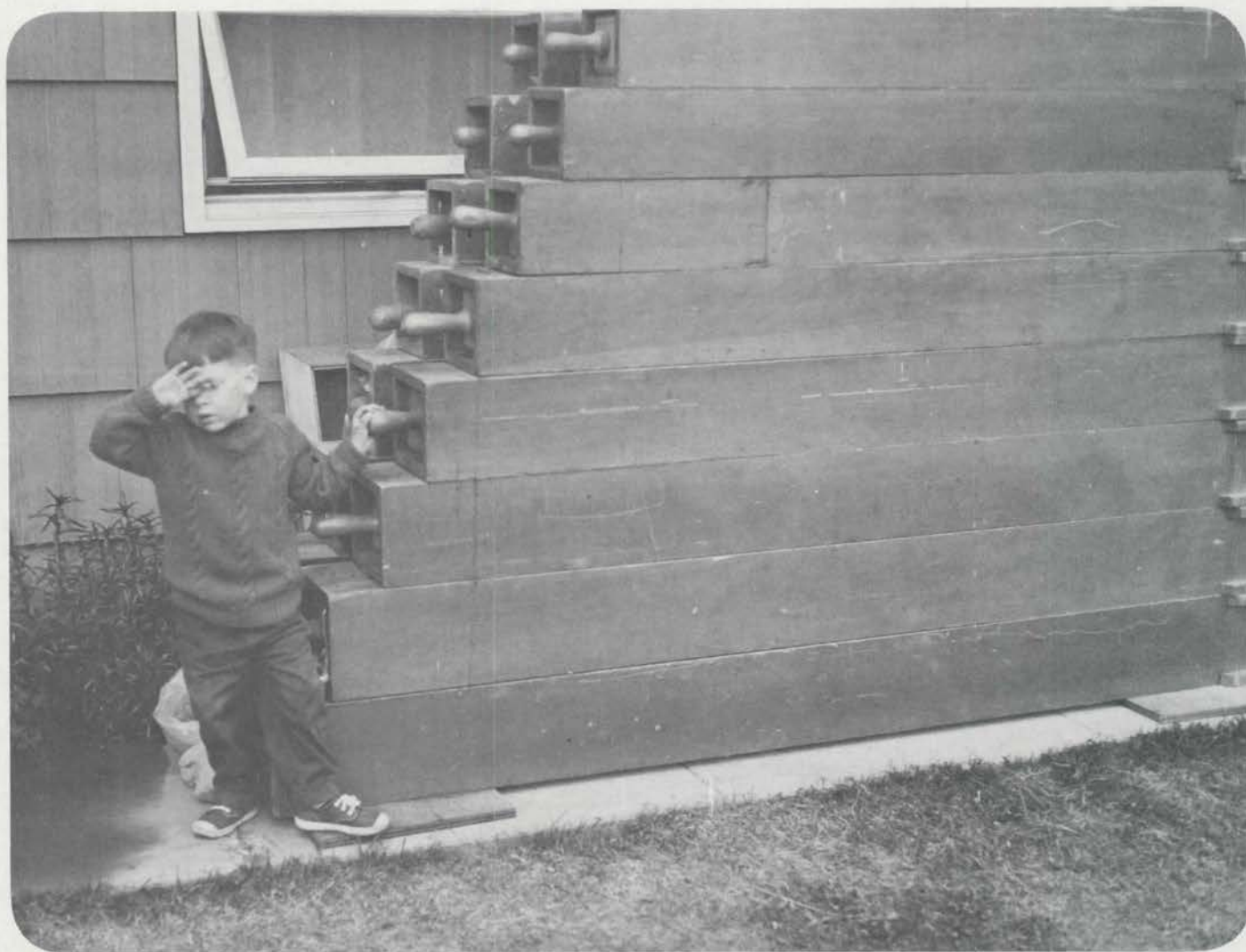
The agreement went into effect in April 1978 and Lorin and his wife will continue to live in Newport Beach, but he won't neglect to be on hand in his Glendale studio office where so many record producers depend on his many years of accumulated experience to help them turn out listenable and saleable records and tapes.

Meanwhile, in Redwood City the old Fox Theatre has gone the municipal auditorium route. Years too late, the city fathers realized the organ in their newly-hatched cultural center was gone, and they wanted it back. Someone recalled that it had been sold to a guy named Lorin Whitney back in the 50's. They traced down Whitney and wanted to buy the organ back. Of course it was out of the question. Even if MCA wasn't in the picture, the 3/14 grown to a 4/34 would not fit into the original chambers. But Lorin agreed to keep his eye open for an organ which would meet the cultural center's need.

"If this is retirement, I like it," said Lorin Whitney. □







# Dear Old Opus 569 Et AL

as told by Franklin Butte

In trying to review the whereabouts and happenings of Opus 569 (et al) for the past 21 years (I bought it from Roman Guenther in January, 1956) one philosophical thought crosses my mind: One man's trash, another man's treasure.

What a pile of junk it was, stashed in a heap at the Guenther Organ Co. on S.E. Holgate in Portland, Oregon. A military surplus ad might have read: "Residue of theatre organ, used, as-is, no guarantees apply." I had just been discharged from the U.S. Army and had a bit of my severance pay augmented with a \$400 loan from Merit Earsley and the

First National Bank of Portland for a grand total of \$1200, the price Roman was asking. He had just recently taken it out of the Apostolic Faith Tabernacle at Third and Burnside where some electronics slicker had gotten to them and advised them the organ was on its last legs. He said the electrical system had gone kaput, and they had better hasten to buy a new electronic from him, which, to my delight, they did. I never have

---

ABOVE PHOTO — Out of the mouth of babes — in a classic silent film pose, this youngster tells the story as pipes are unloaded at the author's Baxter Road residence.

confirmed it with Roman, but I have a gut feeling that he got it just for taking it out of the place. I still feel \$1200 was pretty cheap for eight ranks.

Nevertheless, three truckloads later, with the help of many friends, we collected the junk and deposited it at my Dad's home in N.E. Portland, where about six months later it was sort-of playing. It came with a homemade three manual console, no combination action, and was built of oak with a straight-church design, probably made by Sandy Balcom of Balcom and Vaughan of Seattle, the firm that moved it to the Apostolic



Faith Tabernacle in 1934. Any and all who have moved and installed similar-sized instruments to their residences will know of the ordinary hassles: laying the 16' Bourdons on their sides, exchanging the three-horse, three-phase blower motor for a single-phase (or some such trick to get wind) — and putting the main chest virtually on the floor where it is absolutely impossible to service. I'll not bore you with the details; they are typical. Suffice it to say, it didn't sound too awfully bad in that environment, squashed in the basement, and speaking through a grill into my Dad's dining room. A slightly less-than-desirable location for a console. This was in June, of 1956.

By the spring of 1957 I was thoroughly disgusted with college. Having held my first class FCC license since age 17, I returned to Juneau, where I had been stationed in the Army (1953-1956), and assumed my first radio station chief engineering position at KJNO, a mighty 1000 watt station. I was scared to death.

The Wurlitzer sat silent until I returned in the fall of 1959 to work for Rodgers Jenkins at Rodgers Organ Company. I was employee number nine. I didn't like it. Stuffing resistors in PC boards was not my idea of organ building, so back to Juneau I went, this time taking the Wurlitzer with me and selling it to the Northern Lights Presbyterian Church. We flew up in the belly of a Super Constellation (speed-pak). Everything but the bells, drums and the homemade console went. (I had picked up a beautiful set of Morton traps for \$25 from Sandy Balcom about 1956.)

Northern Lights had a Reisner console which had been added to their old electrified Kimball "box-car" tubular pneumatic. The electrification was less than satisfactory to put it mildly, so my pipes, blower and relay arrived and Allan Harrah and I worked for several months making a church organ out of 569 again. We lowered the wind pressure, and closed up the Tibias and called them "Gross Flute." It sounded pretty fat in the church.

In July, 1963, I got the call to move to Anchorage, a mere 800 miles northwest of Juneau, to become technical director of a chain of radio and television stations (Northern T.V., Inc.). So 569 and I parted com-



This Reisner console was added to the original tubular pneumatic Kimball at Northern Lights Presbyterian Church in Juneau in 1952.

The Reisner console from the church in the authors Baxter Road residence in 1966.







Young John Guess, son of Gene Guess, speaker of the Alaska State House of Representatives, sits amidst the pipes in Butte's organ, in 1966.

pany again. Meanwhile the church sold out and built a new place of worship and installed a three manual Rodgers. The old church building was to be torn down. I knew very little, if anything, of all this. My verbal agreement with the church was that if they decided to sell the organ at any time, I was to have first refusal. My dear friend, J. Allan McKinnon, was fortunately on-the-spot and employed by the 20th Century Theatre. (See story in THEATRE ORGAN February, 1978). Allan removed 569 to the theatre for storage and subsequent assembly on a portable platform soundbox. But Allan had to trot off to school, or the Air Force, or whatever, leaving 569 stranded and the theatre said to R.E. Garrison, who had taken it in trade for a portion of the Rodgers, "Get it out!"

When Garrison called me, it was the first I had known of its removal from the church. He asked if I wanted to buy it back. I was furious at not having been informed of its being surplused. I packed my bags and spent two weeks flying to and from Juneau, on company travel, to dismantle and pack the instrument, picking up the console and electric chimes that had been added when it went to the N.L. Church. This was in the Spring of 1965, and we again flew the organ et al in the belly of a Super-Conny. Now, if you ever decide to do this, you simply pack all the little pipes inside the big ones, ad infinitum, and on a nine-rank (one rank was added at the church) you'll wind up with about 175 pieces. This upsets the airline a little bit, but if you are pushy, they

will take it as is at "owner's risk," which is a preferred way, as they are super conscientious about all 175 parts, and you may wind up with a few spare airplane parts to boot.

The garage at my Baxter Road residence was converted into an organ chamber, and in about six months, or less, it was playing fairly well. This was a modest residence, and just guessing, I would say about 2000 kids a year came through to see old 569, along with other antique musical devices. About 1971 I started hunting for a bigger place and found one a mere eight miles from the Baxter place. It might as well have been 8000 miles. What a hassle! The 1941 Cadillac limousine hauled about 150 loads of wee pipes and miscellaneous organ plunder, and the piano movers got the rest . . . windchests, blower and console.

About that time Joe Spurr surplused the old Riviera (Chicago) Style 210 console (Opus 279). It was exactly right for li'l ol' 569, and Dave Junchen and his Dad crated it, put it on a Northwest Orient Airlines DC-10 and it was here in five hours from Chicago. It now graces my living room, and controls 569, coupled with a relay from the Omaha Theatre (via Seattle).

Copious experimentation has happened to poor old 569. The original Tibias were evidently replaced by Mortons in the 1934 move. I have tried balancing and balancing for lo, these 21 years, and never could get the tonal balance on the old studio recordings. After all, the front room



Carol Beery Davis listens to J. Allan McKinnon play Opus 569 in 1959 in Juneau.

of a home is a lousy reverberation chamber, quite unlike an original theatre installation. My goal was to make it sound like a well-regulated studio installation. Learning is slow, when you have no one to bounce ideas off, especially when you live 2000 miles from the nearest organ buffs (Seattle).

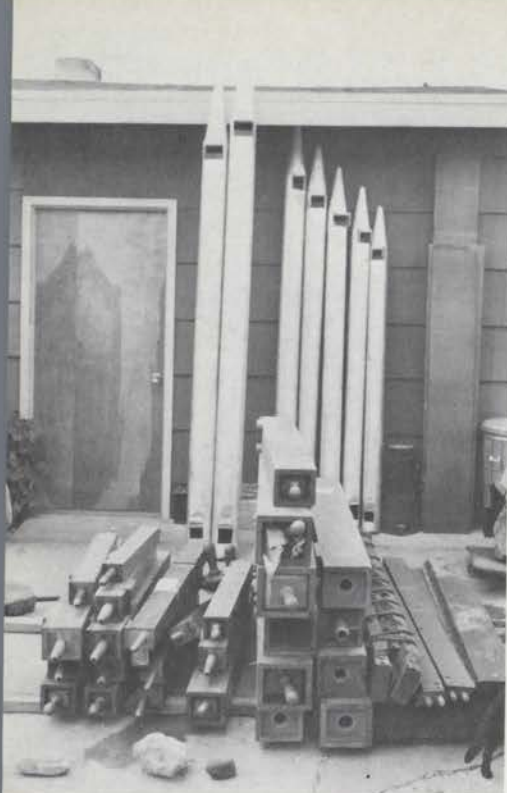
The Tibias have been opened-up and closed-down a dozen times; the strings replaced again and again (I have six ranks of strings, but only two ranks of wind chests). The Diapason was exchanged, with some from CBC (Toronto), Oboe Horns substituted for Style D's, an English Horn added and the Vox's up-and-down and down-and-up.

Returning from a trip to Los Angeles I chanced to find a genuine registered card-carrying Wurlitzer Tibia Clausa pipe in, of all places,

The Style 210 console from the Riviera in Chicago controls Opus 569 in the author's present home in Anchorage.







Opus 569 was moved to Franklin Butte's Baxter Road residence in Anchorage in 1965.

an antique store in Portland. It was \$4, certainly a worthwhile investment for an ornament. I returned to Anchorage, and plugged it into its place (an A, 880 cps), and it went wheew-a-wheew-a-wheew, and I can just see Roger Jenkins going Blaaa and shaking his head as he did when we had stumbled on a new deep vibrato on the prototype Rodgers. What a vast difference to my Mortons (muted horns), even though they were of a larger scale! So, upon close scrutiny, it appeared the mouths were different to the extent that the upper lip was straight on the Wurlitzer and arched on the Mortons, that the inside lip only was knicked on Wurlitzer whereas both were knicked on the Morton, and the air stream was wafer-thin on the Wurlit-

zer and fat on the Morton. After removing caps, and applying about a roll of black electrical tape in layers to seal off the Morton nicks, to make the wind stream wafer thin, the sound is very, very near the Wurlitzer Tibia! Perhaps even louder as they are a larger scale. This also meant the wind hole could be enlarged on the Mortons, and I would hazard a guess the total increase in volume is equal to about 10. This trick also cut down the breathiness of the Mortons, and increased the 2-2/3' component of the tone immensely.

But, back to the 569 Diapasons, and opening up the Oboe horn (Barton's) by cracking their lids open a bit. An overall balance very pleasing to a residence or studio, and the Vox's had to be beefed up a bit to balance, but they are mysteriously at the original factory settings (scratch-mark).

The next step is to put the Tibias and Oboe Horns on separate reservoirs and tremulants. That will be done when the whole thing is raised about three feet so the wind chest is level with the shutters. Don't ever put the organ below the shutters! The flues speak into the wall and all you get is the left-overs, and the reeds blast out of their tops and clobber the ensemble. Live and learn. Oh. The electrical tape. When I'm certain that is exactly right, the caps of the Tibias will get ground down to match the Wurlitzer Tibia.

Only on extremely rare occasions do ATOSer's ever get to Anchorage. But, if you are heading this way, drop me a line. I'll be glad to show you the beast, and the Juneau 20th Century Theatre organ in the State Office Building. □

## DINNY'S COLYUM

as  
transcribed  
by  
Del Castillo



A feller tries to get better and then some guy comes along and kicks him down again. You would think us ritters would try to stick together, but Mr. Stew Green who is a fellow riter with me in this magazine he says to me that he dont like my ritin any more on acct my spellin is gettin too good. Now that seems to me a pretty stoopid kind of a criticism to make. I know I aint perfect but when a guy has to take a brikkat on acct he is gettin better why they is sumthin rong somewheres. I would hate to think that Mr. Green is jellus on acct I am gettin too good. I never sed nuthin bad about him when he was gettin too good.

I got to thinkin about peepul tryin to improve theirselves because I just got to go to a concert with four organ players called Just A Earful Of Music at the Wiltern Theayter in Los Anjelees. I didnt get to hear it too good on acct. it was at 9:30 on a Sunday morning on the day the time changed so that it was really only 8:30 A.M. so I was pretty groggy. But I kicked myself out of bed on acct it was for a good cause for a

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Memorial Skolarship Fund for Mr. Joe Koons who had the pipe organ in his Motorsickle Shop where he giv concerts every Sattidy nite. The four organ players who giv there services was all the top officers of the bored of the ATOS in LA. They was Mr. Bob Power who is the top man, then they was Mr. Mike Ohman who is next to the top, and Mr. John Ledwon who was last years top and findly they was Mr. Rod Skelding who come over here from England to be the Program Chairman.

So it was a pretty good concert except that as a old elyvater man myself I have to say that they couldnt make up there mines as to which way to make the elyvater go. Mr. Skelding who started off left the elyvater down in the seller until he got to the chorus of Just A Earful Of Musik, so I guess maybe he done it like that on purpose but it sure made me nervous. Anyways he just played it for openers as you mite say and by that time the organ was up to the top and he had to bring it down to where he could get off of it and walk over to the mikryfone on the stage while they took the organ down to the bottom so as Mr. Power could get on. I guess Mr. Power he was havin a little trouble because when Mr. Skelding was talkin they was a couple grunts come from the organ like it was trying to tell Mr. Skelding somethin. But anyways Mr. Power he got the elyvater up while he was playin Keep Your Sunnyside Up which I spose was sposed to be simbolick like. He made a little speech when he said This organ isn't used to me, and then he proved it by playin the first pease without any Vybratos, and when he stopped Mr. Skelding shouted Trems, Bob, Trems, which is what organ players call the Vybratos, so then Mr. Power he played That's The Kind Of Guy I Am. That was how the hole concert went with everybody pickin out Apropiate peaces, because after that he made a little speech about Candi Carley who has a rekord out and is goin to play a concert pretty soon and then he played Candy and Aint She Sweet. After he got thru he had a little trouble gettin off the organ onto the stage, and then of course they had to get the organ way down for Mr. Mike Ohman who was next. So you can see that I was all pens and needles on acct I was nervous about the

## Baby, Where Will You Be?

A Commentary by John Mecklenburg, Central Indiana Chapter

Saving old theatres is getting to be a larger task every day — what with a recent release in the *New Yorker* magazine in which Jack Kroll — (*Newsweek's* movie and drama critic) explains why it appears the Radio City Music Hall has had it's day, something like tail fins on autos, outdated uniforms and old movies. When the corporation decided to close this theatre, a group of activist citizens sprang into action and are appealing to various levels of the government for funds to keep the place going. Kroll wrote: "Even though the Music Hall played a crucial role in the culture, indeed the consciousness of the nation, — to subsidize the Music Hall is to subsidize part of that consciousness. The idea that the nation should underwrite its consciousness with federal dollars is a new one." That's true in the case of New York which always did and still has many other beautiful places for public gatherings, and several of these are newer and more grand than the Music Hall. But, that's not true of Wichita, Indianapolis, Columbus, Ohio or Bangor, Maine. This season there are more shows than ever before opening on Broadway — which proves again, no other city has, or may ever, have, the theatre like New York — and we in the hustings must save our halls in which to cultivate the theatre, like New York.

Moreover, most of the few remaining theatres contain great theatre pipe organs. After a recent concert on the Music Hall Wurlitzer (one of the largest) the writer questioned the performing artist as to — where in the future are we going to find these magnificent theatre pipe organs — in the movie palaces, in the restaurants, in the pizza palaces, in the clubs or in the civic centers? To this question — this famous theatre organist gave one of his usual noncommittal answers, "we won't find them in the movie palaces — because we can't find them (the movie palaces) anymore." □

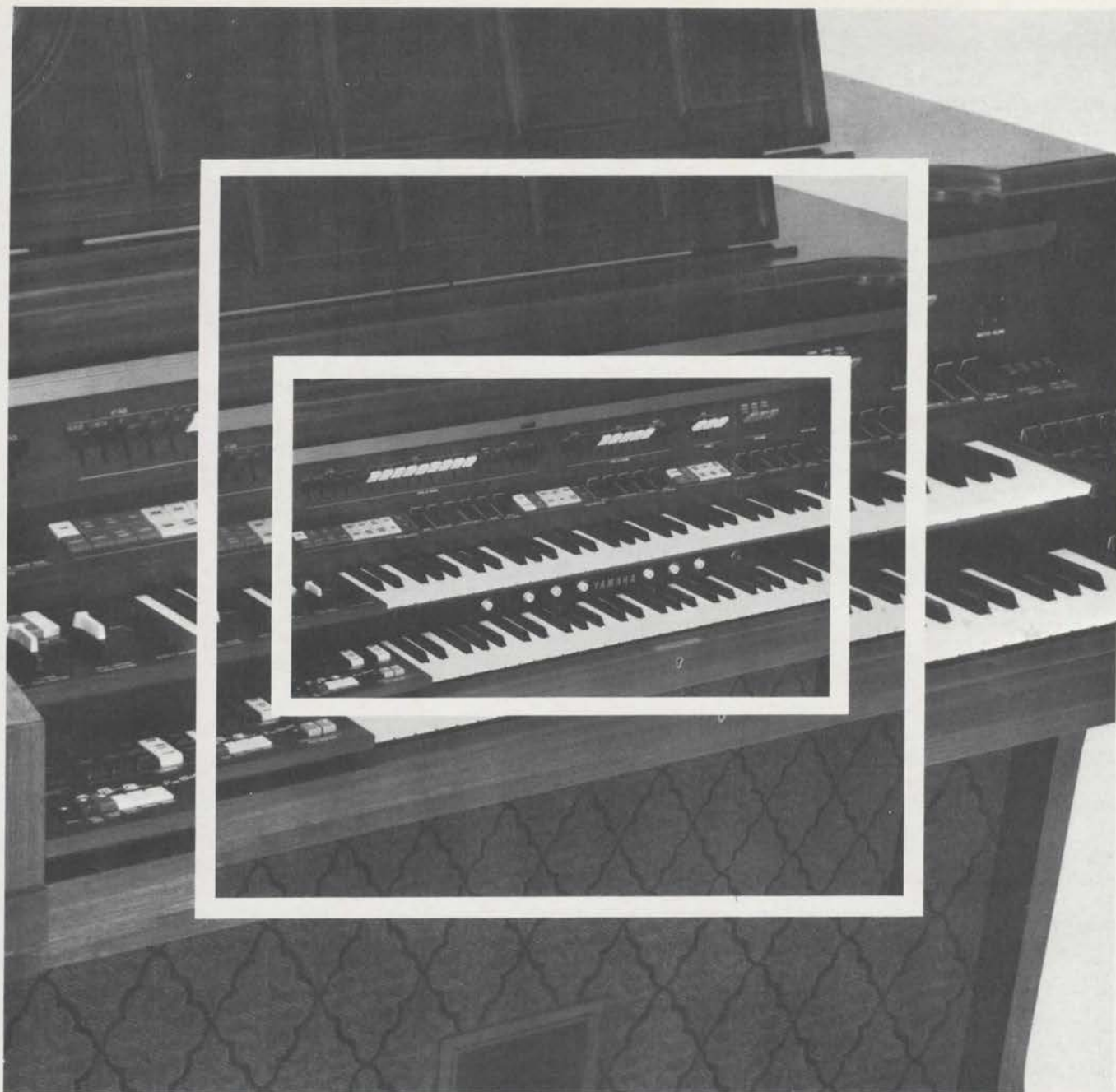
elyvater.

Mr. Ohman he started out all full of beens with a Mamba and he had his feet goin like he was goin to dance it insted of play it, and so then when he turns around to make an announcement they is a lot of shoutin and down the ile comes two Peenut Venders throwin out free bags of peenuts. So that gets everybody laffin and Mr. Ohman who is a crackajak player played some more peaces and ended up with a march which he said the title is Under The Double Eagle And Dont Stand There Very Long.

Then they is what Mr. Skelding called a One Cigaret Intermission, and then he announces Mr. Ledwon who comes up playing 2001 dressed up like the Fantom Of The Opera with a long red cape and a green soot with big brown clothopper boots. Him and Mr. Skelding who was last was more conserfative in dark soots

than Mr. Power and Mr. Ohman in the first half who wore white soots, but they turned out some pretty loud musik that kept the peepul on there toes, and Mr. Skelding when he come on finished up with I'll See You In My Dreams and then for a clincher What Goes Up Must Come Down, and when he come down to where he could get off he hid behind the organ and all his close come flyin out over the organ, and Mr. Stew Green, who said he was Mr. Elmer Fubb, Pres. of the Midnite Organ Society he introduced the four organ players and they lined up all dressed up in yellow shirts sayin Wind Machine Restaurant which is the Pizza joint hwere him and Candi play the Wurlitzer. And then they turn around and on the back it says That's All Folks, and Pres. Fubb he gives each a one of them a present. So that's All Folks. □





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After her theatre days, Edna played lounges and restaurants. Here she appears at a Hammond in Milwaukee's Clock Bar about 1947. (Sellers Coll.)

# An Evening With Edna Sellers

## PART III

Transcribed and Edited by Lloyd E. Klos

During the 1969 ATOS Convention in Chicago, a surprise guest was presented to the audience at Mundelein Seminary, former theatre organist, Edna Sellers. This gracious lady was married to another theatre organist, Preston Sellers, and when the latter was installed in the Theatre Organists Hall of Fame in 1976, the writer felt that the Sellers family was an excellent subject for a feature story in THEATRE ORGAN.

Thanks to CATOE executive Russell B. Joseph and his wife, Florence, Mrs. Sellers spent several hours during a visit to their home in late 1976, talking over the great days of the theatre organ as they affected her family. Through electronic gadgetry, this conversation was recorded, and following is the edited transcript of the highly interesting session.

### PART III

**RJ.** — What did you do in the sixties?

**ES.** — In April 1962, I went to work at Math Iglar's Casino in Chicago. I was organist there and was assisted by Basel Cristol with a piano-organ duo whose mainstay was accompanying seven or eight singing waiters. The bulk of the music was accompaniments which necessitated score-reading. When I developed cataracts

in both eyes, and subsequently had surgery on both, my music-reading capabilities were very difficult. I eventually retired from active musical life, but still enjoy going to concerts, recitals, operas etc.

**FJ.** — You've had a very colorful career.

**ES.** — I've been busy all my life.

**FJ.** — It's a pity you didn't make records.

**ES.** — I did, but they've been lost. One of them was made on the WGN organ, through the control room. Somewhere, I have two 10-inch records made in Oklahoma on the WKY organ which turned out very well. I never wanted to make a commercial thing out of them, but wanted them solely for myself.

**RJ.** — Edna, we have some remarkable young talent today who never had the privilege of sitting in a theatre during the silent movie days. Yet, they do a fine job in bringing back memories of those days. If you had this room full of these youngsters for a seminar, what would your advice be to them?

**ES.** — I'm strong for learning the basics. Some of these people won't reach a goal at all until they get more basics into their knowledge.

**RJ.** — A lot of your contemporaries were self-taught; they learned by experience, from "the seat of their pants," as it were.

**ES.** — That's right. If you sat in with an orchestra, led by a good conductor, you could learn a great deal. Where are today's kids going to get that? They're getting it in a way in the rock style with combos. There are a number of young musicians who have been trained by excellent teachers; my grandson is getting it right now. But, I believe there should be more serious study.

**RJ.** — I don't believe any performer should mimic another. I'm thinking that the theatre organ should be exploited to its full potential of being adapted to greater varieties of music than it has been by many organists.

**ES.** — I feel the same way.

**RJ.** — I just wonder what the future of the theatre organ is as more are removed from theatres. What will we do when they tear down the last theatre? You can install them in pizza parlors, roller rinks and other places, but they are not the same.

**ES.** — No, they're not.

**FJ.** — The pizza parlor is a sort of fad right now, but families go in and children get to hear a theatre organ.





**ES.** — I hope this phase won't pass into history. The artists can further themselves if they have any potential at all.

**RJ.** — The theatre organ is probably the most unique musical instrument in history, when you consider its complexities, the special way it was tonally designed, its mechanical aspects. And yet, it had such a short life; about 10 peak years. It had been

in theatres in the teens, but it really developed in the twenties when the big movie palaces were built. An instrument of this type to have only a 10-year life is unbelievable.

**ES.** — I'm glad they're being preserved as much as they are.

**RJ.** — Did your parents ever hear you play the theatre organ?

**ES.** — My father didn't; my mother,

yes. They had moved to California and I brought her here once when I was at either the Chateau or the Covent.

**RJ.** — Your parents certainly would have been proud of you and Pres.

**ES.** — We had a wonderful life together. Pres was such a prince of a fellow. Musicians are supposed to be temperamental and fly off the handle, but not in our case.

**RJ.** — Did you have a competitive feeling about your musical attainments?

**ES.** — Oh, no. I always looked up to Pres, and he looked up to me the same way. He used to tell me at times when I'd get down-in-the-mouth: "Why you play better than I! I could never play the way you do." It was a shot in the arm, and I'd feel better right away.

**RJ.** — That's interesting because of what one hears about the Crawfords. Jesse seemed to be quite sensitive about his artistry and wasn't about to let Helen surpass him in any way at all.

Preston acknowledges applause at the Oriental.

(Sellers Coll.)





**ES.** — That's right. Jesse was a little difficult to get along with, and there were times he couldn't relate to anyone except Helen. He was an individualist, but I never heard his making remarks about Helen. He could about others.

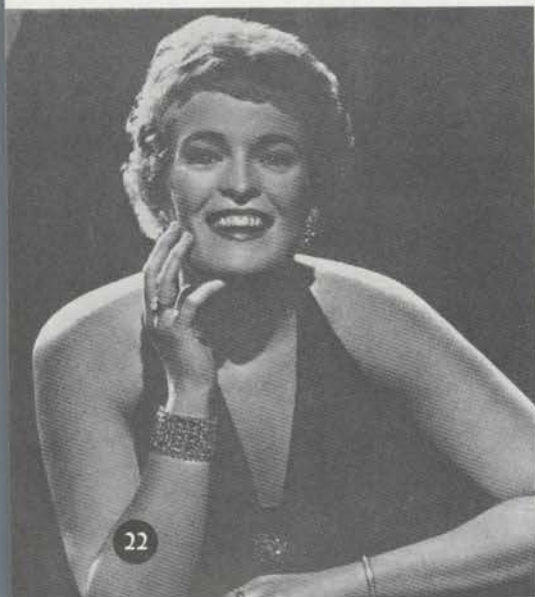
When Jesse first came to Chicago, he opened the Tivoli. When he opened the Chicago, Milton Charles took over the Tivoli. Jesse put out "his way" of accompanying a picture and thereby took away all the individuality of the person who was trying to do the job as he understood it. He did it with Pres at the Tivoli and it got pretty bad. He told me, "Edna, I can't take it." I believe he asked for a transfer. If he had stayed there, it would have sapped his individuality.

**RJ.** — We went to the Tivoli, but I can't remember the organ.

**ES.** — A 3-manual job, it was very beautiful and had lovely, lovely tibias. Preston said after his experience there, "I can't take anything from Jesse Crawford. He's wonderful and plays a ballad with those gorgeous rolls. However, I have a personality of my own; I can't copy his." He was right. No one should copy anybody.

**RJ.** — Maybe too many of the young organists are trying to copy other performers and are thereby losing their individuality. One of the greatest talents of any organist is a good sense of registration; many fail to exploit it. I look at registration the same way as, an artist painting a picture utilizes colors. You have to develop that same, spontaneous reaction to registration.

A glamour pose of Barbara Sellers. Note the remarkable resemblance to singer Jaye P. Morgan.



**ES.** — A great many organists don't have the ear which they should. They have technique, but not the artistry. I heard some work not long ago when everything came off very heavy. It didn't have the lightness of combination. Arthur Dunham hated heaviness and though he had power, his small feet used to dance over the pedals. He was a great technician and a fine, fine musician. He had what Ernest Lubisch had as a movie director — a light touch, when he required it. My husband had it, too. Believe me, I tried to absorb it because I know that's good playing.

**RJ.** — I sometimes feel shortchanged when you have a fine instrument and the artist never brings out the solo stops, but combines them instead. You have to exploit both ends of the spectrum. You can't play slam-bang music all the time and neglect solo voices. They simply are not compatible.

**ES.** — You can say that again! This is not boasting, but Barbara has that. She has that fine quality in her ear, and in her hands, and the style is all there. You don't get tired of her playing.

**RJ.** — She has made a name for herself thru her own efforts and talent. Tell us how she achieved success.

**ES.** — I knew she was ready for lessons when she was five. The public school music teacher, Miss McGreevy, came to the school to run a music class. After a couple sessions, she came to me and said, "Mrs. Sellers, I *have* to take your child for private lessons now, because she is so far ahead of the others. I answered, "Well, you can come to the house and give her lessons." She did for a long time until the next teacher, Helene Brahm, who was a pupil of Alexander Rabb. When she outgrew that teacher, I took her to Mr. Wells when she was about 14 and she got into serious piano study then.

Wanting to get into organ study, I sent her to Lou Webb, an NBC organist with theatre experience, who was a good classical and popular teacher. After a stint with him, she was out earning money. She has developed a beautiful style with very good taste and a personality to match. She is one who doesn't have a heavy touch, and has a nice following with a lot of people. Many con-



The second generation of the Sellers family of fine organists, daughter Barbara at the console in Chicago's Bismarck Hotel. (Russ Joseph Photo)

ventioners who've heard her at the Bismarck Hotel, return to hear her.

**RJ.** — Her appearances have been in hotels and restaurants?

**ES.** — Yes. There are not theatres to play, so where else can you go? She does pop music so wonderfully, she has to have a place to sell that.

**FJ.** — Would you say her style is more like yours or Preston's?

**ES.** — It has some of us, but it is mostly herself. Barbara had some coaching from us, but she went on to develop her own way. She is to make an album on the instrument she plays at the Bismarck, because she can't get another to put into the recording studio.

I am 77 years young and look back on my beautiful memories. I have two children, one very active in the musical life of Chicago; five grandchildren, two of whom will have received their Bachelors of Music in May 1977; and one beautiful great granddaughter.

I would love to hear from any friends or fans from the "Good Old Days." My address is 5240 N. Sheridan Rd., Chicago, Ill. 60640.

And so we come to the end of this extremely informative and entertaining visit with Edna Sellers. ATOS sincerely thanks Mrs. Sellers for the opportunity to share her interesting career with us. And to Florence and Russell Joseph for proposing the questions and manning the cassette equipment, our grateful thanks also. □



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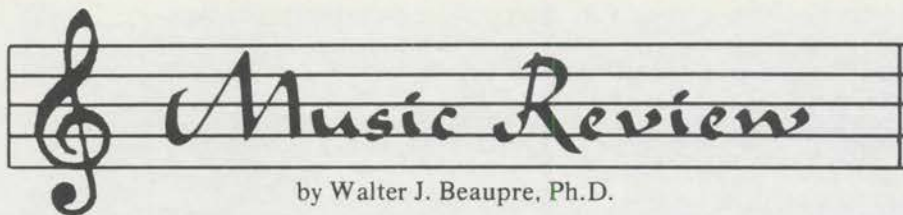
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# Music Review

by Walter J. Beaupre, Ph.D.

Al Hermanns, **ORGAN SERIES, BOOK 4**, Big 3 Music Corporation, New York, N.Y., \$3.95 (or available by mail from Hermann's Organ Studio, 1120 Union St., Reading, PA 19604).

Al Hermanns solid integrity as the creator of many excellent "How to . . ." books for organists with a theatre-sound bias has been established in prior reviews. Obviously those advanced degrees in harmony, counterpoint, arranging and composition at Temple University have not been wasted. Hermanns has also capitalized on his many years experience as a teacher. But, as the saying goes, "you're only as good as your latest show." So let's take a look.

*Book 4* is a collection of eight organ transcriptions of pop tunes plus commentary and registration suggestions for draw bar or stop tab instruments. In a personal note

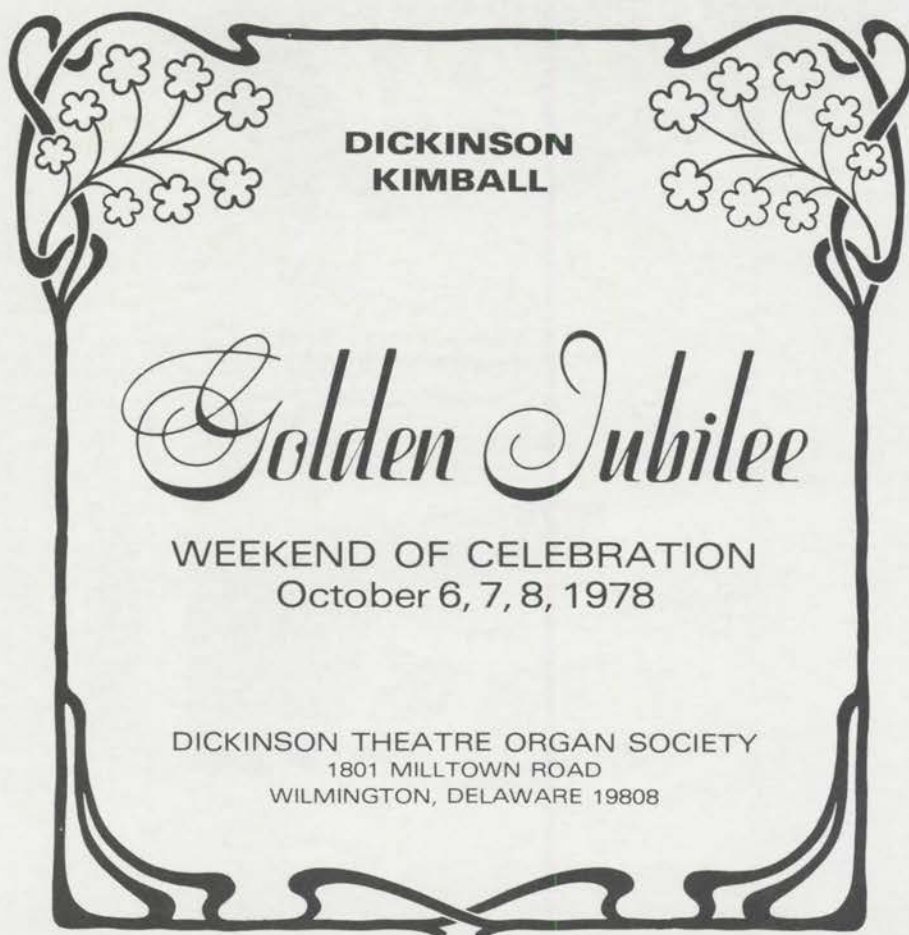
which arrived in the mail with this collection Al Hermanns reasoned, "The theatre organists of the '20's and '30's were always up to date with the latest songs, so there is no reason why today's organists should limit their repertoire to music of that period." I wondered, frankly, why he bothered to make such an obvious point. Many fine collections of arrangements for organ include both golden oldies and recent hits. It is also my observation that many not-so-fine collections feature a few good tunes (both old and new) plus plenty of junk music (also of varying vintage). The value of such collections is limited by the musical taste of the collector.

I must confess the first selection title "Weekend in New England" didn't fill me with wild anticipation. Never heard of it! Nor did scanning the lyrics printed between the bass clef and the pedal line ring any "top forty" bells. Oh well, it's in waltz

time and looks easy to play. Why not give it the once over? "Weekend in New England" turned out to be a lovely surprise: a haunting melody, tricky rhythmic variations in the song line (I'd been warned in Al's commentary) and harmonic patterns that were stunningly supportive even though they *looked* simple. Hermanns was right in his commentary about the importance of a sustained legato pedal passage at the end of the bridge. Then there was a simple and very right transposition from C to D flat for a final statement of the melody. I immediately flipped back to the beginning and played through "Weekend" a few more times just for the fun of hearing it. Granted, the suggested Tibia registration was too heavy for the accompaniment Diapason and string ensemble on my Marquee, so I made some modifications to bring out the counter melodies.

There were to be other delightful surprises in Al Hermanns' latest. At long last, someone has written a gorgeously simple and thoroughly satisfying arrangement of "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes." Nobody needs to be reminded that the killer in Jerome Kern's classic is usually the modulation from three flats to five sharps in the bridge. Hermanns takes the sting out of this modulation by keeping the left hand chords sustained and simple while the pedal takes on a beat to keep things moving. The right hand throughout the entire arrangement has the freedom of a single note melody line; the left hand counter melodies and arpeggio chords add just enough color and contrast to make things interesting without swamping the player in complexities. If there is a better organ transcription of "Smoke Get In Your Eyes" on the market for the home organist, I have yet to find it.

Three more standards are featured in *Book 4*: "Deep Purple," "Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White" and "Somewhere My Love." For those organists who cut their teeth on the lush Dave Coleman arrangement of "Deep Purple" (Robbins Music, 1952), this one is less Crawford and much easier to play. Hermanns keeps the transcription in the key of F and introduces variety with changes in rhythm. A lively waltz chorus with slight changes in



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the melody line works wonderfully well; the quarter chorus in beguine tempo serves as a nice transition to the finale which is an orgy of 9th chords in the left hand plus pedal. Again, Al's hints in the commentary prove helpful: the progression of 9th chords is written to be played easily, and the resulting sound is well worth the practice time involved.

"Cherry Pink" gets the tango treatment by Hermanns. It plays reasonably well, but suffers by comparison with the Ashley Miller rumba version in *Continental Favorites* (Chappell, 1962). Both arrangements are of equal difficulty. If Ashley gets the slight edge for sheer style and a snappy intro, Al Hermanns' "Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White" has that very important virtue of being readily available in music stores *now*. Either way, you can't lose.

It takes either courage or a superb arrangement to publish "Somewhere My Love" in a collection of organ solos at this late date. It's a pleasure to report that Hermanns wins on both counts. Without resorting to the verse of Lara's theme for variety, Al supplies a dramatic but simple intro and then lets the chorus sing away in G, B flat and C. Perhaps the greatest virtue of this arrangement is the Coda — and no irony is intended! Personally, I've never found the right way to end my own playing of this tune; it always seems to die without a final resolution. Al Hermanns knowhow has solved this problem with ease, charm, and class. Lara dies beautifully!

There are three additional new tunes in *Book 4*: "Tomorrow," "Gonna Fly Now" and "My Heart Belongs to Me." My current favorite is the hit song from the Broadway musical *Annie*, and Al Hermanns' "Tomorrow" is a joy to play. He wisely keeps the left hand spare and simple, letting changing registrations and repetition of the theme an octave higher add the necessary interest. Although I've heard the show version of the song many times, I never realized what a pretty tune "Tomorrow" is until I played this arrangement.

The theme from the movie *Rocky*, "Gonna Fly Now," is probably the most difficult selection in the collection to play well. The changing rhythmic patterns are a chore to

master, but if you like the tune it's worth the effort.

"My Heart Belongs to Me" is a recent low-down-blues-funk-rock tune that, for all I know, may have done well on the charts. The arrangement lends further variety to the collection. Steady beat guitar-type chords and the jazz horn solo line will require considerable skill and feeling. For my taste, it was the least effective tune in the book.

*Book 4* is quality printing throughout, but resign yourself to page turning at awkward moments. Regis-

tration suggestions, especially for the lower manual, varied little from Diapason 8' String 8'; you may want to modify the tab settings to suit your own ear and instrument.

The better pop organ teachers around the country should welcome this collection with open arms. Even those venturesome souls who create their own arrangements of pop tunes will find what Al Hermanns does mighty hard to beat. And for the home organist with modest playing skills, *Organ Series; Book 4* is just about the best buy on the market. □

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# What Will Happen?

As questioned by Ben Levy

As all of us know, recent dramatic advances in electronics have put pocket calculators, video games, sophisticated wristwatches, and many other hitherto impossible or extremely expensive devices within the reach of everyone. These developments have also made it possible to do virtually all the switching in the pipe organ electronically rather than electro-pneumatically as in the past. In a tiny fraction of the space formerly required, stop selection, combination setting, keying and signaling to the pipe chambers can be performed by a few magic silicon chips. Multi-conductor cables can be replaced by single wires. A touch of a button records stop combinations; a twist of a dial adjusts tremulants; and all with silent efficiency at the speed of light. Many theatre organ owners are converting their instruments to electronic control, to save space, to provide flexibility of operation not possible before, and (it seems to be widely believed) to increase reliability as well.

Is there a price to be paid for these miracles? Very few blessings in life are unmixed. Is this an exception? What problems, if any, are organ lovers likely to encounter by trading their instruments' brains for electronic ones?

Most theatre organs are fifty years or more old; yet, barring severe physical damage, they can be restored to full operation by the application of leather, glue, wire and labor (lots of the latter). There is nothing mysterious or technically difficult in their principles of operation. Fifty years from now, they can be playing as they were today, and as they were fifty years ago, without benefit of their long-gone builders. What about the electronic additions?

They can be relatively simple or extremely sophisticated. In either case, they are less obviously comprehensible than the original design. It is also possible for them to develop obscure and puzzling maladies not easy for a non-specialist to diagnose and cure. With the most complex, such as those employing strobing or sampling techniques, it is likely that, except for major component replacement, home servicing is out of the picture. In the event, however remote, of your pride and joy developing electronic indigestion, therefore, availability of replacement parts becomes an important consideration.

This branch of electronics is the most rapidly changing field in the history of technology. It is almost impossible for anyone but a specialist to be even aware of the rush of developments. In the January, 1978, issue of *Spectrum*, the professional engineering society, IEEE, (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) sums it up thus: "Every 18-24 months brings a new generation of equipment technology..." How about maintenance of existing electronic systems? The IEEE states, "It is difficult or impossible to maintain these systems. Parts become obsolete, and manufacturers no longer

produce them. Second and third sources are of no use when the entire industry has turned to entirely new parts."

The IEEE was discussing large complex systems such as military computers; however, the problem is not limited to them. Integrated circuits cannot be manufactured except by extremely sophisticated and expensive techniques not available to the small manufacturer, and once made, they cannot be repaired. There are only a few corporations in this business, and costs are so great that sales volume must be large to make the venture profitable. It seems unlikely that the demands for circuits used in theatre organs would keep them in production after they become obsolete. Thus, the particular system used in your organ could become unrepairable in the event of damage, or impossible to add to or modify, at some not too distant time.

No doubt the picture I have painted will seem excessively gloomy, especially to the electronic enthusiast, or to those in the business of making and selling these devices. I hope they will rush to the defense of these marvels, and prove to everyone's satisfaction that, first, nothing will ever happen to cause one of them to fail; and second, that even should that impossible event occur, repairing or replacing them will be no problem. I hope so, for the sake of the future of the theatre organ. Would it be possible for the ATOS, or some committee, to come up with a standardized design to increase the likelihood of parts remaining available?

In the meantime, perhaps, throwing out all those beautiful, quaint old relays, switches and setter boards might at least be worth a second thought.

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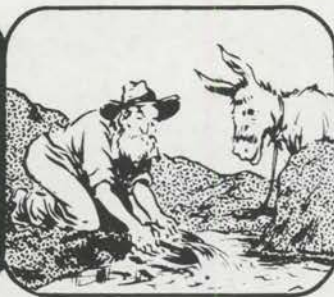
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**NUGGETS**  
from the  
**GOLDEN DAYS**

Prospected  
by Lloyd E. Klos



With the 1978 ATOS Convention's being held in the deep South, we salute Dixie with nuggets gleaned from that area. References were the Motion Picture Herald (MPH) and local press.

*Dec. 25, 1927 Birmingham (Ala.) News.* "When Miss Birmingham awoke this Christmas morn and gazed into her silk stocking, hung gracefully by the municipal fire-side, her eyes opened wide in amazement, her heart expanded largely and her joy knew no bounds, for ensconced in that delectable hiding place, was a gift of which few cities can boast and of which this city is eminently proud: namely, a magnificent \$1.5 million theatre, the gift of that splendid organization known as the Publix Theatres Corp., which realizing Birmingham's colorful past, her magnificent present and her roseate future ever progressing, ever growing, has put "the big pot in the little one" and spread itself all over the face of the earth in giving the Magic City the newest, the most modern, the most artistic and the most comfortable theatre which money and talent could devise — the Alabama.

"Sidney Dannenberg is to be the new manager . . . House manager will be Stephen Barutio under whom will be a brigade of ushers, page boys, doormen and others . . . Director of publicity will be Larry Cowen . . . Ralph Pollock has been named master of ceremonies . . . The Alabama seats 3,000 and the seats are so arranged that every one is a good one . . . The double box office is in the front lobby, and there will be no waiting in line, as the automatic ticket seller machines and double box office service will take care of any amount . . . The magnificent organ is a wonder of its kind, according to reports. It is the perfect interpretation of the human voice and of all musical instruments. Thousands of miles of wire and cable have been used in connecting this giant instrument. The console is placed on an elevator and ascends and descends at the will of the organist. This eliminates any interference as the console is electrically sent below the sight lines while the performance is on. At the gala grand opening will be organist JOE ALEXANDER, featuring the presentation "Organs I Have Played." . . . The vertical signs outside the theatre are 11 feet wide, 60 feet high, with letters 4½ feet high, each sign containing 2500 lights. The marquee is 12 feet high with 3,000 lights . . . The theatre required 500 tons of plaster, 15 carloads of sand, 10,000 square yards of lath, 200,000 feet of channel iron and 3,000 pounds of fine ire."

*Sept. 26, 1931 (MPH) EARL ABEL*, at the Texas Theatre in San Antonio, offered an organ solo of his own arrangement, and he called it "Looking Backwards." Opening the musical presentation with "Daisy, Daisy," he followed with a group of comical song slides, depicting the style and ways of yesterday. Next, he rendered "In the Good Old Summertime" with several advertising slides

used in the days of the magic lantern, and these got many a hearty laugh. This was followed by "In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree" and "Let Me Call You Sweetheart." The organist received a great big hand.

*Sept. 26, 1931 (MPH) ART HAYES*, who has been away from Memphis for the past year, received a welcome on his return to the RKO Orpheum there of which few organists can boast. Art, even after a year's absence, is still the fair-haired boy of Memphis. The town's leading citizens, with five or six of the leading societies and clubs, welcomed him back with a two-block parade, a police escort and music from bands and a radio truck.

*Nov. 7, 1931 (MPH) MAC BRIDWELL* at San Antonio's Majestic Theatre, recently offered an organ solo which he named "Everything's RKO." His first selection was "Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams and Dream Your Troubles Away," followed by "The Waltz I Saved For You," an excellent parody to the tune of "Two Heart Beats," then came "Sweet and Lovely" and "I Want a Girl."

*Nov. 7, 1931 (MPH) JOHNNY WINTERS*, who held the organist job at the Warner Strand in Brooklyn, is now at home in Pennsylvania, recuperating after a minor operation. He starts at the Nashville Paramount on November 14.

*Nov. 7, 1931 (MPH) EARL ABEL*, solo organist at the Texas Theatre in San Antonio, is on his fourth return engagement at this house.

*Feb. 13, 1932 (MPH) F. DON MILLER* is at the Olympia Theatre in Miami. Now that the winter season is on, this house has brought Mr. Miller, who was quite popular here a season or so ago, back to the console of this city's leading theatre. Mr. Miller is offering two solos a week; the first half, "community singing" solos, and for the last, "straight concert" solos, in which either popular or classical numbers are featured. He has, in the short time he has been here, succeeded in building up a large following and naturally, making himself a real box-office attraction.

The solo this week is a straight spotlight "concert" solo in which special lighting effects added to the attractiveness of the solo. The numbers featured are, "The Miserere" and "Anvil Chorus," both from the opera "Il Trovatore." Mr. Miller is a capable musician and the audience shows its appreciation of his efforts in a fine manner.

*Oct. 22, 1932 (MPH) DURAND "RANDY" SAULS* is at Miami's Capitol Theatre. This 22-year-old chap has gained a lot of popularity since he started here, both for his theatre work and his "Slumber Hour" programs, every night at 11:30. One of his recent and typical programs opened with two favorite song hits from Broadway shows: "Of Thee I Sing" and "Let's Have Another Cup of Coffee." Next came song slides of "Somebody Loves You" for community singing, and the theme song, "The Old Refrain," used on "The Slumber Hour." This number won applause in the middle of the program. More audience songs were "Good Night, Sweetheart," a picture puzzle group of slides of "Down by the Old Mill Stream" and "The Night Love Was Born" which completed the community singing section. The surprise feature was Randy's arrangement of "Chloe," played in concert style and built to a big finale. As a rule, his "hand" runs into the feature picture which follows.

See you in the deep South, shortly.

Jason & the Old Prospector





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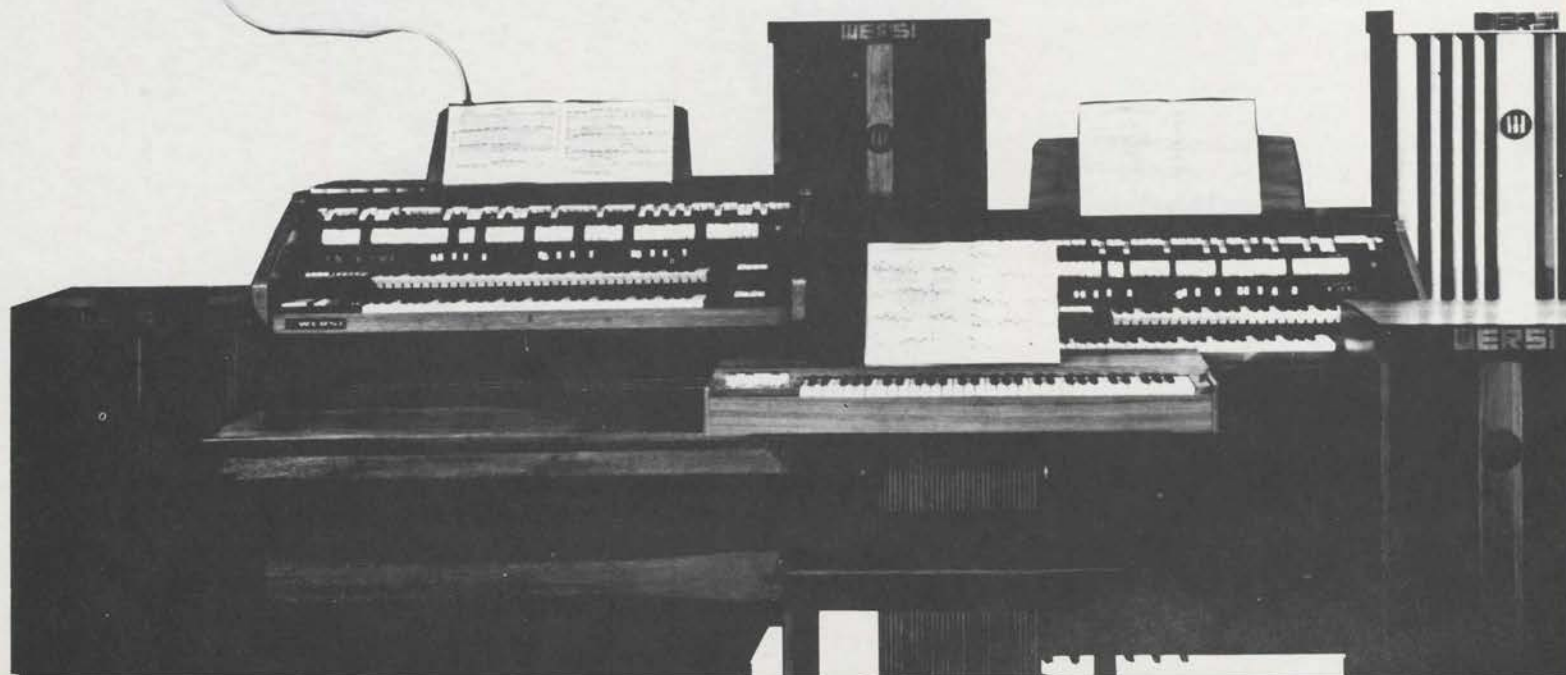
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# VOX POPS



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 10c postcard to get it to VOX POPS Editor, Box 3564, Granada Hills, California 91344. If the contributor can afford a 15c stamp, why not include a black and white photo which need not be returned.*

A clipping from the Fort Lauderdale News submitted by Helen Kiley indicates that Karl Cole is hitting the spot at Mavandola's restaurant. Cole's instruments are electronic; a Wurlitzer organ, a Hammond organ, a piano and a synthesizer, six manuals in all, and on top of playing he does vocals in a pleasing baritone. The self-taught musician, who favors the key of B (yes, B), is on the stage Tuesday through Sunday evenings for four hour segments. Asked to account for his exceptional crowd-drawing ability, Cole explains:

"For some reason I always end up doing songs other musicians have forgotten — and they turn out to be songs people want to hear."

News reporter Bob Keaton sums up: "Seldom have I seen any solo act draw such a response."



Aloha Chapter hospitality was the order of the day when Chicago area ATOSers Harry and Cathy Koenig visited Hawaii in February "to escape the severe Illinois winter,"

writes Cathy. In Honolulu they contacted former Chapter Chairman Al Watson who took them to a Sunday morning chapter session at the Hawaii Theatre where members played the 4/16 Robert Morton. Then Harry was invited to play a few numbers, mostly light classics and operatic. It was with considerable regret that the Koenigs said "Aloha" to their kindly hosts and left the Islands. They had even more regrets when they got back to Niles, Illinois, and found it still frozen solid.



When the Ohio Theatre's resident organist, Dennis James, had an engagement in Davenport, Iowa, a show on the same date at his Columbus base of operations loomed, the Miss Ohio Beauty contest preliminaries on March 31. Dennis needed a substitute and he figured that a gal organist would be best able to resist the obvious onstage distractions. "Now where can I get a gal organist for a one-night stand?" he asked himself, leering darkly. Then a light-bulb illuminated above his tousled head; why not an organist who is also a beauty contest participant? That

narrowed the field to one candidate Miss Amy Reimer. Amy, who has been charming Detroiters with her music since she was a little girl, was First Place winner in the "Beautiful Ohio" organ competition in 1975. And she was a runner-up in the Miss Michigan contest last year.

So Amy was flown in for the one night stand from her home in Muskegon, and supplied the incidental music while the fledgling beauties paraded for the judges. It was perhaps the first time during a beauty contest that as much male attention was focussed on the occupant of the Morton console as on the lovelies on the stage. One loser was heard mumbling something about "unfair competition."



Good news reaches us that New Orleans' 3400-seat Saenger Theatre, though closed on March 12 as a moving picture house, has been purchased from ABC Interstate Theatres by E.B. Breazeale for slightly more than one million. The historic 51-year old structure will be completely refurbished and used as a performing arts center for concerts, organ



Amy Reimer. Unfair competition from the console.



programs, silent films, plays, operas and possibly conventions and trade shows.

The partition, enclosing the balcony for a second theatre, is being removed. The 4/26 Robert Morton, though playable, is being restored to mint condition by workers headed by Dr. Barry Henry and Richard McCormick. This organ was considered one of the best by its builders, and prospective purchasers were brought to the Saenger to hear it. Those who played it years ago included John Hammond (who opened it), Rosa Rio and Ray McNamara.



C.E. Dailey sent us a clipping from the *Wilmington Evening Journal* which pointedly illustrates the value of a pipe organ in a school as a means of spreading the word. Youthful Sean Mchugh was a member of the Dickinson High School organ maintenance crew and worked on the big Kimball. His parents weren't surprised when he asked permission to build a pipe organ in their 2-car garage; for years he had been addicted to the electronic they had bought for his older brother. In a short time Sean had collected several ranks of pipes, some chests and regulators. He bought an old straight console from a Pittsburgh church. The 17-year-old soon had 1,000 pipes perking and plans to add another thousand, and a Xylophone. With the garage doors open, Sean's organ can be heard to the end of the block, as neighbors learned when Hector Olivera gave the instrument a shakedown last year. Mchugh is modest about his accomplishment, which to date has cost him \$450 plus another \$200 for leather, not to mention a year's work during which he was helped by schoolmates.

"It's a good hobby. You know, you can buy an electronic organ, put it right in your house and be done with it . . . This weighs a ton, but I like the sound of a pipe organ."



The vagaries of the music publishing business are well illustrated by the history of a recent set of organ arrangements put together in a hurry to cash in on the hysteria surrounding the death of rock singer Elvis Presley. The music Elvis produced had little in common with organ styl-

ings, but with the inclusion of a few of the less rocky songs he sang and his photo on the cover, the retail price could be jacked up considerably. Because every publisher was coming out with Presley memorabilia in a hurry, our man had second thoughts; perhaps the demand would be gone before his book of organ arrangements hit the stands. So he switched from the gone Elvis Presley to the living Liberace, a musician who earns his AFM dues playing the piano. Without changing a note, he put the pianist's photo on the cover and relabelled it "Liberace Organ Book" and in smaller



Millie Alexander. 'First I'm Elvis — then I'm Liberace. I just want to be me — not a trinity!' (Stufoto)

print, "Arranged by Mildred Alexander." The organ stylings are fine but the buyer pays 75% extra for the photo of Liberace, who had nothing to do with it.



New ATOSer Harold Shaw reports from Bluff Point, N.Y. on a 50th anniversary celebration that did come off as scheduled. This one was staged by the Penn Yan Organ Club for central New York organist Dean Robinson in February. The theme commemorating 50 years in music was patterned after *This Is Your Life*, with 80 friends and relatives, some having come great distances, pointing up highlights in the Robinson playing and teaching career. Dean has played pipe concerts in Syracuse and for awhile owned a Wurlitzer. Letters were read from those who couldn't make it, some from out-of-state students, some from as far as Australia.



Dean Robinson, 50 years in the music biz.

Dean enjoyed all the fuss once he recovered from the shock. One friend summed up, "Harmony is the key to Dean's success and 'Mrs. Robinson' (Merle) is the name of his song."



Some years ago we published a story about the 3/10 Robert Morton installed in the Christian Crusade Cathedral in Tulsa, Oklahoma. It was played by Jim Orcutt for services and also for two record releases by Concert Recording. The Cathedral was the brainchild of Billy James Hargis, an evangelistic preacher with a great talent for mesmerizing his flock as well as for raising the kind of finances via TV which built the Cathedral. Time passed and great changes transpired. Organist Jim Orcutt died from a drug overdose (after he left the Hargis ménage) and much later Hargis was forced to leave for transgressions he was alleged to have committed. Without his electrifying leadership the Cathedral soon lost the support needed to sustain it. Last we heard the property was for sale, including the organ. Tulsa TO enthusiasts have an inside track on the organ, according to Lorin Whitney who put the organ in the Cathedral.



With organ-equipped restaurants springing up everywhere, organ-minded travelers are having a field day seeking them out and enjoying them. ATOSer Jim Phillips, traveling in Utah, found a pleasant surprise at the Pipes and Pizza in Provo — the 3/15 Wurlitzer which sounded forth





Seth Anderson at the Provo pizzery console.  
(Jim Phillips Photo)

originally in the Piccadilly Theatre, way back east in Rochester, N.Y. The featured organist looked familiar and sure enough it was Seth Anderson, a lad Phillips had seen participating in the L.A. Chapter's *Stars of Tomorrow* program, an annual event designed to encourage young talent. When Jim Phillips got back home (Phoenix) he wrote us a few lines about his Provo adventure, and said Seth Anderson has been holding down the pizzery organ bench for the past two years. Time does fly. It seems only yesterday that we saw him do his stuff for the *Stars* program.

Dick Sklenar writes that "Genesee Theatre Day" in Waukegan, Illinois, came off well. Chicago Area TO Enthusiasts and the town celebrated the theatre's 50th anniversary with a concert on the 3/10 Barton, refurbished by CATOE members, played by Rex Koury, who came back after intermission for a sing-along. Dick says it was a well-attended gala occasion. Waukegan's mayor read his proclamation designating April 23 as "Genesee Theatre Day." Waukegan was the birthplace of Jack Benny. This was commemorated by radio program playbacks and film clips of the late comedian. Former Genesee organists Millard Heyman and Carmel Francke were introduced, as was CATOE's organ crew. Dick adds, "Rex did a fine job and was well received."

While we are in the Chicago area we have a story about a suicide-bent mouse, whose exotic method of self destruction ran up quite a funeral

bill, for a rodent. When organist David Hamilton turned on the blower to play the 8:00 p.m. intermission at the Oriental theatre on April 20, he noticed something very wrong with the wind supply. He had played two previous intermissions between showings of *The Great Caruso* without a hitch, but after one fanfare for the evening show, he knew the organ was in trouble and shut off the power. Greg Simanski and his crew traced the trouble to the blower. On disassembling it they found two damaged and blood-stained impellers. An invading rodent had been reduced to mouseburger. The repair bill totalled \$294.00. An expensive mousetrap if not a better one.

A few years ago, Dolton McAlpin was a budding organist with a penchant for pipes. He played Louisiana theatre Mortons, made a couple of very good records, then dropped from sight. Well, not entirely. He decided law was a more fruitful calling than music, and he is now practicing law in Starkville, Mississippi. He writes that the only organs he gets to play these days is when he drives to Meridian to put some time on the Temple theatre's Morton, or when he visits Jeff Seale in Laurel, Jeff has a fine home installation.

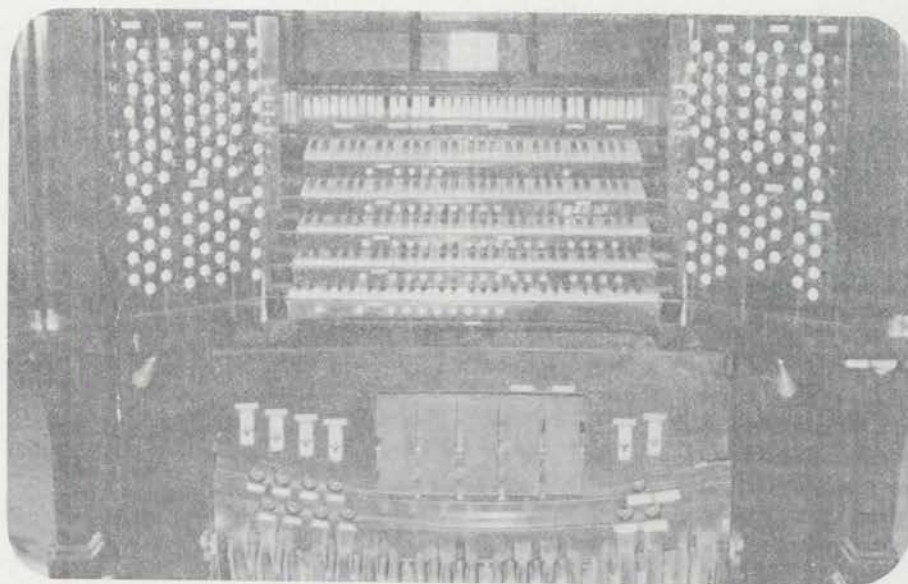
Dolton also had some news about the 110 rank Kimball in the Memphis Civic Auditorium; it has been completely restored by Bill Oberg "and is possibly the best concert

organ I have ever played." Dolton reports that Bill is dickering with Virgil Fox for a concert there.

From Beaumont, Texas, Al Sacker writes that the new Southeast Texas Chapter's regional convention, planned for 1978, has been postponed to November 1979, so the Chapter can give full attention to hosting the national Theatre Historical Society conclave in July 1978.

It has been revealed that another jazz great of the swing era was once a silent film accompanist back in the early '20s. This came to light during the Oscar Micheaux Awards ceremony held at the Oakland Paramount on Feb. 19 (seen on PBS TV on April 23). The awards are for Black Music in American Films, and orchestra leader Bill "Count" Basie was one of the recipients. During the intros it was mentioned that the Count had played piano for silent films in Kansas City but "only from hunger" when he couldn't get work playing jazz.

Marion Martin's trip to New York (from his Whiteville, N.C. home) was mainly to hear Don Baker's concert at the threatened Radio City Music Hall. He says that the lineup of people snaked through the sunken garden at Rockefeller Center and down 5th Avenue to 49th Street —



Console of the 5-manual Kimball in the North Hall of the Memphis Municipal Auditorium. Bill Oberg has all 110 ranks perking, and in tune.





Marion Martin. He made the rounds in Gotham town.

about 5000 total. Marion reports that Don was really at his best, and the tapes made on the Martin lap recorder indicate Don played the 4/58 Wurli to the hilt. Martin also with on Mel Robinson's "fantastic organ crawl," visited Rev. Ike's 175th Street Palace for a whack at the ex-Loew's theatre Robert Morton, visited a Scarsdale mansion equipped with a 2/9 Wurlitzer, and spent a day with Lee Erwin, braving 14 inches of snow for some time on "Little Mother" (2/9 Wurli) in the Carnegie Cinema.

Marion says his biggest thrill was playing the 179-rank Kimball in St. Patrick's cathedral: "It has a 9-second reverb, and you hear what you have played several measures back... This organ has five 32' pedal stops and a 64' Gravissimo which will rattle your teeth."



We get a boot from newspaper accounts of theatre organ concerts written by reporters who are probably more at home analyzing the police blotter or covering a dog obedience session. Their unfamiliarity with the subject often adds up to smiles. John Nelson, who books concerts for George Wright, submits a clipping reporting on a recent concert. The reporter for the *Waterbury Times* was somewhat "gee whizz" about George's technique during his April ConnValChap concert at the Thomaston Opera House. He observed George playing on three manuals.

"His left foot plays the base (sic) notes and keeps the rhythm. His right foot controls the shutters for

volume. His right fingers play keys on the top manual while his right thumb plays the middle keyboard. His left fingers are on the bottom keyboard and his left thumb pushes (combination) piston stops. Then he checks his wristwatch and never misses a beat."

Old stuff to buffs perhaps but the innocent wonder of a first timer just might arouse the interest of other prospective first timers. Incidentally, Chapter Chairman Norman Ray revealed at intermission that Wright had donated \$100 to the fund for the maintenance and improvement of the Chapter's Marr and Colton, reported the paper.



A few nights later, organbuilder Edwin Link and wife Marion were in the audience for George's concert on the Link organ the noted inventor donated to Roberson Center in Binghamton, N.Y. The *press* reported:

"As his final encore, he dedicated "Goodnight Sweetheart" to Marion Link, adding 'if the chimes don't work you can go home and give him h - - -.' But the chimes were perfect. In fact, the whole program was just Wright."



Speaking of Binghamton, the James family was set for the concert rededicating the restored Robert Morton in the Forum theatre there on May 27. We recently reported that Heidi James was up to here in music staff paper, composing a silent movie score for a presentation celebrating the Columbus Ohio theatre's 50th anniversary this Spring. Heidi tells us she finished the scoring for full orchestra in plenty of time, but the 50th Anniversary Jubilee has been postponed until September 24.



Like a rare vintage wine, Lyn Larsen improves with age. This was amply demonstrated on April 8 when he regaled 1095 enthusiastic concertgoers at Rochester's Auditorium Theatre. Making his fourth RTOS appearance, Lyn was in rare form, playing selections a typical theatre organ audience enjoys. The artist gave a fine tribute to organist Ashley Miller, by playing some numbers Ashley had arranged. His "Pic-



Lyn Larsen. He's like vintage wine.

(Dick Harald Photo)

colino" was a Xerox copy of the rendition Ashley recorded on the Radio City Music Hall organ some years back. Other highlights of Lyn's program included a trip around the 4/22 Wurlitzer, renditions of "Blue Danube Waltz," "Waltz of the Flowers" and a rousing closer, "Dance of the Hours." The audience showed its overwhelming approval by buying all the records which Lyn had brought to Kodakville.



Congratulations are in order to the British Theatre Organ Club on reaching its 40th anniversary. It was started in 1938, with Ralph Bartlett as secretary (he still is) and Robinson Cleaver its patron (so is he). With the closure of organ-equipped theatres in Britain, the TOC undertook a project to place organs in public halls by means of Preservation Societies operating within the club. So far three organs have found new homes through TOC efforts. For many years the TOC published an excellent quarterly magazine, *The Theatre Organ Review* which was discontinued in 1974, ostensibly for lack of contributed articles. It is former editor Frank Hare's fond hope to get the "Review" going again. Good fortune to you, TOC!



Those who attended the ATOS Convention in the Washington area in 1972 will recall the Tivoli Theatre in Frederick, Md. and its bright red Wurlitzer console. On February 9, the refurbished theatre re-opened as the Weinberg Center for the Arts. As one journalist observed, "The





Ray Brubacher. He was true to the Tivoli Wurli.  
(Tyner/Cann Photo)

Tivoli is like an aging vaudevillian, anticipating a return to the stage after years of retirement. Her make-up now needs fixing and her costume is dated, but come opening night, she was done up and ready to go."

Restoration began more than a year ago. The garish brocade is gone, the interior being restored to original gold, terra cotta and black color scheme. The damaged 2/8 Wurlitzer has been restored by Ray Brubacher, ATOS member and on the staff of the American Film Institute at Washington's Kennedy Center. Ray will play the instrument when silent films are featured.



They like John Landon's talents as an organist in Anderson, Indiana. For several years John has been providing weekend musical intervals on the 1657-seat Paramount Theatre's 3/7 Page. And an extreme oddity these days is that the theatre advertises the fact in its display advertising: "Hear the Beautiful Page Pipe Organ Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 6:30 and 8:45 p.m." According to John, "Our young manager is enthusiastic about it."



Ever since he performed at the 1966 ATOS Convention in Portland the star of Jonas Nordwall has steadily risen in the theatre organ firmament. That he has achieved the maturity so necessary in the business, was adequately proven on March 17 when he entertained 994 at Rochester's Auditorium Theatre. A few classics, more oldies, and a

sprinkling of numbers from the present era, culminating in a somewhat strident "Orpheus Overture" made up the varied program done in artistic but true theatre organ style. Jonas is one of those organists who feature solo stops, thereby demonstrating the voices of the "unit orchestra." However, he also plays a full ensemble. A nice easygoing console presence with his audience, coupled with a no-nonsense approach while playing, mark this artist.



The Connecticut Valley Chapter has long been known as the pioneer of ATOS chapters in awarding scholarships to deserving organ students, and a sizeable fund is an-



Rosa Rio. She produces winners.  
(Dick Harold Photo)

nually earmarked for this competition. In March, Susan De Angelo of Waterbury, Conn., won the first award of \$150 in the Roberg Scholarships of Theatre Organ Arrangement for her score of "Til Tomorrow" from *Fiorello*. Her teacher and sponsor: Rosa Rio. Second award went to Ronnie Fabry of Huntington, Conn. another Rio student. Duane Boise of Waterbury, took third while Jim Arsenault of Stratford received honorable mention. Judges were Don Baker, Lowell Ayars and John Muri. The Roberg awards are open to students of organ living in Connecticut or western Massachusetts.



Billy Nalle has realized a 20-year hope — to record the 4/37 "Queen Mother" Wurlitzer once more. Old timers will recall that Billy recorded it in 1958 in its New York Para-

mount location when it was only a 4/36. RCA's "Swingin' Pipe Organ" release opened a whole slew of doors for Billy. He has made several records in the interim on other organs but always hoped one day to once more groove the Mother Wurlitzer. And with Wichita Theatre Organ Inc.'s approval and cooperation he has done it, recording enough tunes for two releases. The first should be available now. The title selected by WTO is "There is Only One Billy Nalle." Amen.



The success of two generations of Chicago's Sellers family in the field of music is well known. Preston and Edna Sellers were leading lights in theatre organ spectrum in the Windy City during the big era. For a number of years, their daughter, Barbara, has entertained thousands in the Bismarck Hotel's lounge, playing an electronic. Now word has reached us from Russ Joseph that Edna's grandson, Jack Matranga (Barbara's son) has been awarded a scholarship for advanced study on the trumpet in Graz, Austria, this summer. He is a graduate of the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago.



Ashley Miller informs us his concert schedule next year will have him playing in Canada, Great Britain and Wichita's Century II Exhibition Hall playing the ex-N.Y. Paramount 4/37 Wurl. Ashley was very much flattered to have been chosen to play a private midnight concert on the RCMH 4/58 Wurlitzer for members of the Los Angeles Chapter of ATOS (who flew to New York for the event), following it up next morning with a half hour concert organ program which included the Bach "Passacaglia and Fugue." He'll be coming west for several concerts in June.



The *Oakland (Calif.) Tribune* reports that an auction of organ parts netted about \$40,000 toward installing a composite theatre organ in the Paramount Theatre. It will be recalled that the theatre's original Publix No. 1 Wurlitzer was sold years ago and has been playing in a fast food restaurant. When the Paramount became a cultural center, efforts were made toward getting an-



other pipe organ for the beautifully refurbished house. J.B. Nethercutt, of San Sylmar "Tower of Beauty" fame, donated an almost complete organ, but installation funds were lacking. Then came a windfall. In San Diego, Sandy Fleet stopped expansion of his organ-plus-pizza-and-spaghetti operation. He closed down two pizzerias and disposed of the organs. That left him with one 4/28 assembled Wurlitzer he had bought from George Allen. Fleet donated the console and 20 ranks of pipework and associated parts to the Paramount project. That left the Paramount group with lots of organ but still no money, so they decided to auction off parts above what is needed for the theatre. The auction, held late in February, drew bidders from afar. The most expensive item was the beautifully finished console (see the cover photo of the May-June 1975 issue of THEATRE ORGAN). It brought \$20,000. Bids for other items ran to approximately another 20 grand.

However, the assembly and installation cost is estimated at \$58,000, according to the *Tribune*, so donations are still being sought.



Driving by the San Gabriel Civic Auditorium, we saw three men carrying a long, tapered wooden box toward a waiting truck. Sensing a "snatch" of organ parts by "Midnight Organ Supply" operating in broad daylight, we hid behind a metal fence post and snooped.

In less than a minute a voice said,



Long tapered boxes were being moved. It couldn't be "Midnight Organ Supply" because it happened at noon, but the stage door of the San Gabriel Civic Auditorium was the scene of considerable activity. (Pegpic)



George Wright (front, center) poses with the loading crew for a group photo. (Left to right) Dennis Hedberg, Chris Hill, Bob Ziller, Ken Kukuk, John Hoffman, Ed Burnside, Bob Labbe and George Ashley. Two of the big Diaphones are shown. (Pegpic)

"Come on out from behind that pole, Stu. You're too wide to hide there." The voice was Dennis Hedberg's and the operation proved to be quite in order. Dennis, in his never-ceasing search for organ parts, had bought the 32' wooden Diaphone from the city of San Gabriel, a leftover from the 3/16 ATOS Wurlitzer installation, a set too large for the stage. It was a full octave, not the seven pipes plus top flaps often encountered. While we were shooting photos, George Wright drove up.

"Want to see a beautiful octave of 32' Skinner Bourdons?" George led us to the back of the truck, and already packed in was the forest of monstrous wooden Flute pipes. Dennis, who had arrived the day before with the truck and Chris Hill, said he didn't have any immediate plans



The big resonators are loaded into a waiting truck for the journey to Portland, Oregon, Dennis Hedberg's base of operations. (Stufoto)

for the 32' octaves, but had heard the parts were available and besides he enjoyed driving a rent-a-truck. He had assembled a crew of volunteers to jostle the big pipes from storage to the truck and was about ready to hit the road for Portland. We asked how he had learned about the available pipes. He pointed to George.

"He arranged the sale. In fact, the 32' Bourdon belonged to George." George grinned.

Before taking off, the crew lined up for a group mug shot.



We heard that Vancouver newspaper critics are not especially partial to theatre organ concerts. Perhaps, but three reporters for Vancouver papers went somewhat overboard on hearing Ann Leaf's Febru-





Ann Leaf. Vancouver likes her.

(Pegpic)

ary concerts on the style 240 Wurlitzer (3/13) in the Orpheum theatre. In the *Sun*, Lloyd Dykk's review was headlined "Little Organ Annie Charms 'em at the Orpheum." The *Province's* Ted Wing headlined his review "Ann Leaf an Entertaining Lady." In another issue of the same paper, Helen Bateson headed her article, "She's a Little Lady Who Makes Mighty Music." And radio station CHOM got into line with a very favorable verbal account of the two concerts. It was superlatives all the way. Like we said, those Canadian critics sure have good taste.



The grand guy of Chicago skating rinks, Leon Berry, now 63, is still going strong. We haven't heard too much about him of late, but in spite of a stroke awhile back, he still fingers the keys and taps the pedals of the Orbit Roller Rink's electronic in Palatine, Ill. Berry performs there twice a week, and is considered the best in the business by his employers. Well remembered are his "Beast in the Basement" series of recordings which were made at the time he played a pipe organ in the Hub Rink from 1950 to 1967. Now known as "The Dean of Roller Rink Rock," Berry has two loves in his life: his wife, Mildred, whom he married about seven years ago, and music played on a theatre pipe organ. Russ Joseph says, "It is heartwarming to see how ardently his loyal older, as well as younger, fans come out to listen to and skate to his lilting melodies, played with all the vitality and feeling which have marked his musical career." □



## 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 George:

You can be very proud of a beautiful magazine — it will stand up to anything published as far as I am concerned. I look forward to it every month.

Four years ago I was able to purchase, and install in my home, a 2/7 Wurlitzer Opus 1080 Model 105 which had been repossessed by the factory and re-installed in a church in Coldwater, Michigan, from where I obtained it. It had only chimes, in addition to the ranks, and I have managed to pick up a combination harp and orchestral bells and am trying hard to find a Toy Counter. The only way I was able to install it, having had little previous experience, was to copy exactly the way it was originally installed. Incidentally the organ was originally in the Elm Theatre in Philadelphia, Pa., and I would greatly be interested in any information about the theatre and/or the organ from any readers.

I have also gotten a small group of people interested in restoring the original installation organ in our theatre in town, a 3/8 Barton. The chests have all incurred severe water damage and will require a great deal of work. If this group does not do the work on the organ, the organ will be

left to rot. I would like to suggest that people in areas such as ours, which happens to be 90 miles away from the nearest ATOS active chapter, in Detroit, and without the knowledge and guidance of people such as that, need all the help we can get in a restoration such as this. A series of articles on restoration would, I believe, be of great interest to many of us "untrained" ATOSers. Thank you for any consideration you can give us.

Sincerely,

R.C. Rowan, M.D.  
Albion, Mich.

Dear Mr. Thompson:

Ben Levy's letter in the April/May, 1978, issue of THEATRE ORGAN will probably, as Mr Levy suggests, incur the ire of some ATOS members; yet, I hope those who disagree with him are few. The fact is that many, perhaps most, of the few remaining theatre organs are indeed being desecrated. In item after item one reads of a 2/7 that is now a 3/49; owners pose proudly beside their Wurlli-Marr-Mort-Bart-Moll-Wick-Austins. At this very moment a highly-touted project of a local chapter of ATOS is the removal of an original Wurlitzer installation from a theatre and the installation of a mammoth Wurlitzer from another theatre in its place — a violation of both national and local by-laws, which suggest as a prime objective, the retention and restoration of theatre organs in their original locations.

True, an owner is entitled to do what he pleases with an organ he owns, but the ATOS rank and file ought not to applaud these selfish alterations — especially when the organ is still in a theatre or other public place. As a restoration crew member currently working on a 2/8 Wurlitzer in a local theatre, I have observed a procession of visiting experts who have suggested such improvements as adding strings, Tibias, and reeds; re-winding this chest; dividing that chest; adding tremulants; synchronizing tremulants; adding couplers; increasing wind pressures; and so on ad nauseam. Though I have steadfastly refused to consider such aberrations, the day may come when I am outvoted. Assuming that this theatre and its organ are around fifty years from now, I feel that the atreagoers in 2028 would prefer hearing the Wurlitzer as it sounded in the



year of its installation, 1928, not as someone in 1978 thinks it should sound. Do not we crew members have an obligation to preserve for posterity the sound of the theatre organ as originally conceived by Wur-litzer, Morton, Barton, et al.?

Authorities in the classical organ field have come to realize that it is the eleventh hour in saving the few remaining romantic, orchestral organs, such as those built by E.M. Skinner. The few remaining are being preserved. Where a more classic sound is required, a small tracker-action organ can be built in the same room (would that the Hope-Jones in the Ocean Grove Auditorium had been left intact and a second organ installed!). Theatre organ enthusiasts need to realize that theatre organs are no longer being built. Those remaining must stay as they are.

Another matter, related to the preservation of organs, should be mentioned for consideration. I have consistently heard theatre organ aficionados criticize the "classical" organ, degrade some of the greatest organists, ridicule the A.G.O., and condemn classical (usually called "heavy") organ music. A reviewer in the August/September, 1975, THEATRE ORGAN (p. 35), referring to the late E. Power Biggs, mentioned "those dullsville organs he so loves." Why cannot theatre organ and classical organ people alike realize that there are different organs for different kinds of music? Mr. Biggs had perhaps recorded music that the reviewer did not care for on an organ that the reviewer did not find appeal-

ing, but that is purely opinion. Many, myself included, number the organs on which Mr. Biggs recorded among the world's finest.

Let's live and let live and distinguish fact from opinion. Not bickering and sniping, but cooperation between popular and classical and amateur and professional branches of the organ world alone can save from oblivion the organs of America's past — tracker, romantic, and theatre.

Sincerely,  
Roy E. Frenzke

Dear Mr. Thompson:

After reading Mr. Ben Levy's letter concerning the restoration by alteration of the once mighty theatre organ, I strongly suggest that in keeping with our present objectives, we change our name from ATOS to APOS (American Pizza Organ Society). Then we would no longer have to worry about what happens to the great organs after they are taken from the movie palaces.

Sincerely,  
Miles J. Rudisill, Jr.

Dear Mr. Thompson:

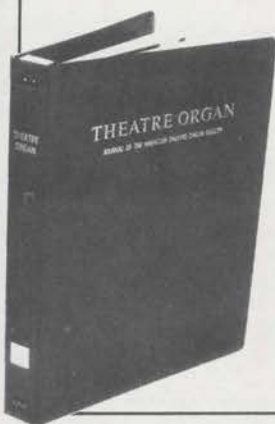
I was interested to read some remarks on Page 28 of THEATRE ORGAN February/March which were made in connection with a record review of Don Knight's *All Through The Knights Deroys* LPs. The reviewer states — "From all we have gathered over the years, this instrument (the Odeon Leicester Square London Compton 5/17 and Mel-tone) is mechanically and tonally

more straight than theatrical, and entertainment specialists must work hard to obtain a theatrical sound etc., etc." I would like to point out to your readers that this supposition is entirely wrong. The Odeon Leicester Square organ is a fully fledged theatre organ, a unit organ, and highly typical in character of hundreds of organs built at this period (1937) of the largest theatre organ builder in Europe. It is not and has never been straight or even partially unified. It has been my privilege to have as friends three organists of great repute in Europe who have been and are often called upon to play the organ the most famous "in theatre" instrument in the United Kingdom. Many years ago I had the advantage of discussing the organ with the great organ builder genius himself and his partner, the late Jimmy Taylor, who was principally responsible for the design which was based somewhat on the famous BBC theatre organ. The original instrument which was destroyed in the early part of the war. A friend of mine, Mr. James Pollard, who is probably the last surviving key member of John Compton's associates, supervised the meticulous installation of this organ which functions as well as it always has and is tuned and maintained professionally as ever. It is used for film premiers, organ concerts and hired by the BBC for frequent broadcasts. It has also been the venue for your ATOS 'Safari.'

Yours sincerely,

Ian G. Dalglish  
Kent, England □

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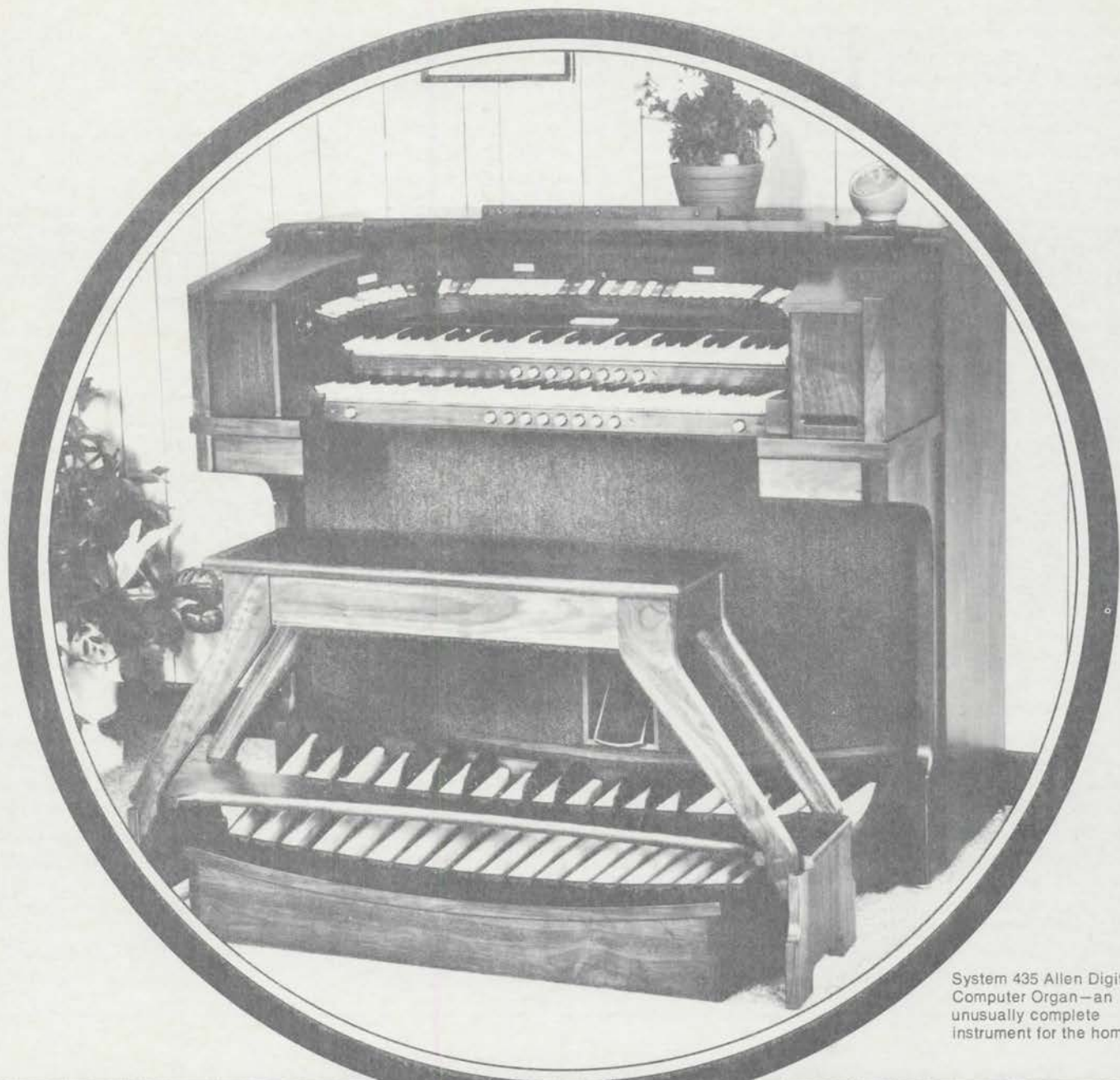
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Candi Carley — (Max Herr Photo)

## How Does She Do It?

by Stu Green

Those of us who have heard blind organists closely duplicate the skills of sighted colleagues often wonder how they manage to master the intricacies of playing such a complex instrument. So we decided to find out, by asking a young lady who has no recollection of sight — although she was not born blind.

After numerous interviews and observations we came to the conclusion that an organist such as Candi Carley, who is sightless, must be strong in several areas: (1) she must have a very receptive ear for music (so-called "relative pitch" may help), (2) a retentive memory for music,

and (3) a generous degree of will power and discipline. Her musical ear helps the brain absorb music, where the retentive memory stores it, and the will to succeed keeps her at the tedious task of cramming endless pages of music into her head — always ready for instantaneous "playback." This is quite in contrast with the sighted organist who is also a good music reader. Even though he memorizes his music, he has had the advantage of reading it initially from the printed page, as the composer wrote it, even though he may eventually re-arrange it to suit his needs and abilities.

Conversely, the blind organist has only the musical sensitivity of the ear and memory to depend on — so they had better be accurate.

Candi Carley was born prematurely. She weighed in at 2½ pounds, and her chance of survival wasn't too good. She was placed in an incubator. Back in the '50s, medical technology hadn't yet determined how much oxygen to administer to a "preemy" in an incubator. An overdose blinded her. But Candi was equipped with a strong will to live even as a baby. She would survive, and that was that.

By the time she was two, it was





Gordon Kibbee

(Stufoto)

noticed that she was attracted to the radio when it was playing music. Then came a 78 rpm record player. That was even better because tunes which caught her fancy could be repeated. She was only a little past her third birthday when she learned how to operate the record player. Then it was music for most of her waking hours. She discovered something new at the age of six — a piano. Here was an instrument which would play the tunes she knew. All she had to do was touch the right keys. Music she had stored in her head thus found an outlet through her fingers, first just melody lines. Within a year she had added harmony, rhythm — and embellishments.

Candi had several piano teachers, then she discovered the electronic organ. Her emphasis changed immediately. Here was a whole orchestra to play with. It was a short step to pipes, and that was even better. In her southern California home she still has her old Hammond, although she does most of her practicing on a

Richard Purvis

(Stufoto)



more orchestral Rodgers. Candi lives with her mother and an older brother.

There have been those who encouraged her, friends and teachers. The earliest and probably most fondly remembered is the late Paul Beaver. Paul noted Candi's extraordinary musicality when she was only seven, and he never seemed to tire of watching the kid with the pixie haircut plink out tunes. It was Paul who insisted she supplement her natural abilities with some formal training. Her early training was on piano, partly financed by a scholarship she was awarded. Her current teachers are classical organist Richard Purvis and theatre organist Gordon Kibbee, who specializes in arranging.

Candi has been active in the concert field for several years. She first came to the writer's attention when she played cameos during Los Angeles area organ crawls, jam sessions and informal gatherings. Our curiosity resulted in questions. How did she manage to play such a complex instrument? How could she even manage registration? Slowly the story began to unfold.

When Candi is confronted with an instrument new to her, she goes around the stoprail, listening to each voice in its various octaves, noting pitch and making a mental note as to its tonal characteristics and its location on the stoprail so she can find it quickly. If a sighted person is there to read the names and pitch indications, so much the better. But knowing the actual name of the voice is of secondary importance at this point. Next she tries mixing voices to learn what's good for ensembles. And she also notes solo possibilities. So, by the time she is ready to play she has a reasonably complete picture of the instrument's facilities fixed in her mind. Toe studs and combination pistons are explored in the same manner. Of course, the organ with a convenient number of settable pistons is a big help. Even on a non-capture piston system, Candi doesn't forget what voices have been set. Tape overlays in Braille on stopkeys help, too. Candi is a skilled Braille reader.

Learning music is no chore. For pop tunes, Candi usually has them firmly set in her mind after hearing them once or twice. Then it's only a



Candi "white canes" it. She is remarkably adept at getting around on her own.

matter of trying what she has learned on the keyboards. Her fingers seek the right keys automatically. More complex music requires more application but the procedure is the same. Incidentally, she can play readily in any key; transposition was always easy for her.

As for repertoire, she collects tapes and records as well as sheet music. A friend, Deke Warner, provided over 50 reel-to-reel tapes containing a vast collection of pop tunes. These added immensely to an already large collection. Tune titles are catalogued so the tape or sheet music may be located easily. A couple of playbacks and the tune is hers. She

Paul Beaver.

(Stufoto)





usually prepares her own arrangements, and they are constantly changing. If the music is in printed form, a family member, usually her mother, Virginia, reads the melody line to Candi. She commits it to memory. Often, while being driven to work, she hears something she likes on the car radio. She usually has it "stored" by the end of the drive. Her abilities are not limited to music. She graduated from high school as an honor student, and later completed two years of college.

Learning classical music takes a little more time and concentration. This is done during her lessons with Richard Purvis. He plays the selection then Candi, applying that remarkable ear, takes it as far as she can. Then the teacher makes any necessary corrections and plays a couple of more pages for Candi to absorb. Of course, progress is in pro-



Mike Ohman.

portion to the difficulty of the music. Some she picks up quickly, just like her pops. And some requires a great deal of concentration and repetition. Between listening to passages and having her teacher read consecutive notes aloud, she manages to master intricate organ classics. All lessons are recorded on cassettes for later study.

The lady indulges in no self-pity because of her blindness. Hers is a strictly upbeat outlook. But she does have compassion for people less fortunate than she. For example, for four years she went to the Metropolitan State Hospital monthly to play for the patients. More recently she has been making monthly trips to

the Long Beach Veterans' Hospital to play for patients in the spinal injury ward. On one occasion an almost helpless patient, noting her blindness, said, "Candi — hang in there." Candi was touched. Later she remarked, "Can you believe it! He can't move anything but his head — and he told *me* to hang in!"


Candi was first exposed to the public on a continuing basis when organist/organ technician Mike Ohman bought the Pipe 'n Pizza in Reseda, Calif. Mike wanted to upgrade the music so he rented an electronic organ while he tore out the somewhat hastily installed 2/10 Wurlitzer which had been the main attraction since the pizzeria opened in 1969. The organ, which once sounded forth in a Beverly Hills cinema, needed a lot of work. While he was at it, Mike rebuilt the chambers farther apart to get better separation. He revoiced the many notes which neglect had soured, and he added a newly fabricated Posthorn. He also put the shutters up high, — near the 16-foot ceiling. Then he renamed the establishment "The Great American Wind Machine" and dubbed the



Candi during a jam session at the Los Angeles Elks Bldg. 4/61 Robert Morton organ.

(Bob Hill Photo)

# GEORGE WRIGHT



## In Concert

### WHAT THE CRITICS SAY. . . . .

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*The New York Times*

"On stage to play a Bach chorale or a Gershwin song, he seems to be re-creating the music. He apparently does nothing that no other organist does, yet he accomplishes results that none of them seem to come near accomplishing."

*Hollywood Citizen-News*

"His program had humor and was always musical. He has brought theatre 'pops' organ back to a nation which had forgotten it."

*Theatre Organ*

"Sponsored by the San Jose Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, he gave a display of musicianship that must be heard, live, to fully appreciate. He had them in the palm of his hand."

*Tabs and Drawbars*

For concert information and availability contact:  
J. NELSON MANAGEMENT  
900 Andersen Drive, San Rafael, California 94901  
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organ "Windy."

Long before this work was underway, Mike was determined to provide an improvement in the quality of playing. When Candi Carley auditioned, Mike knew he had found an artist who could meet his exacting requirements. He also hired Tony Wilson, a young man of great musical talent. Candi and Tony divide the evenings between them. It's a nearly 90 mile round-trip to her home in Norwalk, Calif., but Candi loves the work.

With so much public exposure, Candi has been enlarging her repertoire in order to meet the many requests of the pizza chompers. She adds several new tunes each week and her memory shows no signs of saturation. She is popular with the patrons, thanks to an outgoing personality. Many who observe her handling the console for the first time are surprised when told she is blind. "How does she do it all?" they ask. We hope these notes will supply some of the answers.

*Footnote: Candi Carley's first recording, played on "Windy," was being processed for release as we went to press.* □



Candi caresses "Windy."

(Max Herr Photo)

'The Great American Wind Machine' has changed radically through the efforts of owner Mike Ohman. There's more visibility and the swell shutters were shortened and installed near the room's ceiling. In this Chuck Zimmerman photo, the pizza eaters are ATOSers, there for a business meeting.



## BOOK REVIEW

by Francis Hibbard

**JEWEL OF JOLIET** — An 80-page, largely pictorial, history of the Rialto Theatre, Joliet, Illinois. Produced by the Will County Cultural Arts Association, 1300 West Acres Road, Joliet, Illinois 60435.

This handsome document was produced by the Will County Cultural Arts Association for the purpose of acquainting the public with the historical importance of the Rialto facility available to them and to raise funds for saving the complex. Considerable research has gone into the production of this book. It features several photos of earlier Joliet theatre enterprises. It also contains a number of pictures depicting the construction phases of the Rialto Theatre.

The Rialto Theatre was a product of the famous theatre architects, Rapp & Rapp. Many of the pictures in the book taken at the completion of the Rialto clearly shows the lavish setting Rapp & Rapp felt necessary for the presentation of motion pictures and stage productions.

A 4/21 Grande Barton organ figured prominently in the opening. The organ is still in the theatre and is currently used in many of the money raising programs being conducted. The Joliet Chapter of ATOS is charged with the refurbishing of the instrument.

The book being reviewed here is an excellent history of a deluxe theatre and presents a good statement of how it was in the golden days of the late 1920's. It can be especially recommended for theatre buffs and would be an addition to any theatre organ enthusiast's library.

The book is available from the address given at the beginning of the review. The price is \$8.50 plus \$1.00 for postage and handling.

A \$10.00 donation to the association will bring the book to you plus a nicely-rendered pencil sketch reproduction depicting in montage the



faces of famous personalities who have appeared on the Rialto stage or screen. The sketch was done by Douglas McCallum, a Will County artist, and would lend itself nicely to framing for a place on your music room wall.

The above mentioned donation would also help greatly in saving the theatre and reworking of the Grande Barton. □



**YOU'RE GONNA HEAR FROM ME.** David Reese playing the 3/19 Wurlitzer in the Pipe Organ Pizza, Santa Ana, Calif. No. CR-0149 (stereo) \$7.95 postpaid from Concert Recording, 3318 Platt Ave., Lynwood, Calif. 90262.

David Reese first came to the attention of ATOSers in a big way during the 1975 San Francisco ATOS convention. He gave a good account of his abilities at the Bella Roma pizzeria in Martinez, Calif., playing a Wurlitzer (a style 260 if we remember correctly). Before that he invested four years playing for dancing at Larry Bray's Organ Loft in Salt Lake City on Larry's 5-decker. He moved on to southern California and the pizzeria created by Russ Nelson and Harvey Heck in Santa Ana, Calif. (near L.A.), where he played the now 3/19 Wurlitzer, part of which was for so many years in the Paul Pease residence. Pease obtained it from the L.A. Million Dollar Theatre where it had been one of the first reasonably large theatre organs in the city (a 3/17) circa 1920. David's stay at the Santa Ana Pipe Organ Pizza was brief, but long enough

to record this collection of what must be his own favorites. All have been recorded before but David's arrangements, playing style and all-around musicality provide the interest value.

Side 1 invests 7:57 minutes in a "Salute to America," parading the usual line-up of patriotic tunes in well-conceived array. For some reason David nearly inundated "Stormy Weather" in thunder effects and wind sounds produced by hand-wiping a manual of Tibias, much as the bar organist wowed the guzzlers with such "wizardry" when Hammonds in lounges were new years ago. What was audible of the tune was attractively played. Dave took a strictly classical approach to "Trumpet Voluntare" (sic), and it's a little short of amazing how orthodox this Wurlitzer can sound on well chosen, trems-off registration. But it isn't until the final tune on Side 1 that the real pop artistry of David Reese comes alive, and it is an expertly phrased, well registered "You're Gonna Hear From Me," as fine a performance as the theatre organ fan could hope for. It has the rolls, stings, harp punctuation and the richness of concept dear to the hearts of aficionados; a gem.

Side 2 opens with 6:10 minutes of "It's a Small World" in a number of variations. First the Disneyland pot-boiler goes oriental-minor, then it's Spanish (ah, those castanets!), next an oompah merry-go-round organ, then chop-chop oriental. For the finale, Dave marches his brass band down the aisles of the pizzeria. This one is for the lovers of special effects. "Feelings" gets the expected sentimental treatment wrapped in lush combinations and colored with counter melodies. Dave continues in the same mood with "Send in the Clowns" (mis-labeled on the jacket) which features some absorbing sounds from the high-pitched mutations against Harp arpeggios, among other intriguing combinations. The closer is a well-performed group of selections from *Sound of Music* — the title tune, "Do-Re-Mi," and "Climb Every Mountain." While the selections may be in the too familiar class, the Dave Reese approach gives them a freshness worth the listening.

Ken Simmons' recording is good, with just enough reverb to insure "the big sound," and big it is.



David Reese.

(Stufoto)

The jacket notes place much emphasis on part of the instrument's initial installation in Grauman's Los Angeles Million Dollar theatre. The writer would have done better to have concentrated on the nearly three years spent by Harvey Heck rebuilding, repairing, adding ranks, replacing chests, adding 75 switches, 3400 diodes and readying the organ for its present pizzery setup. In the Pease residence the organ had about 15 ranks; it now has 19, the extras added by Harvey. Ron Mitchell did the exceptional pipe regulation. So, the jacket notes about the Million Dollar theatre Wurlitzer are quite misleading; it is just not the same instrument. It's what one hears now that counts, and the sounds on this album are ear-catching.

**MANY MELODIES FROM THE MAJESTIC MORTON.** Four organists play the 4/20 Robert Morton in the Plantation restaurant, Solana Beach, Calif. DO 1412 (stereo), \$5.95 postpaid from Doric Records, Box 282 Monterey, Calif. 93940.

In our not always objective opinion, this is the finest recording to issue from the ill-fated Pipe Organ Restaurants project in San Diego, Calif. (two of their pizzerias have closed permanently, one remains). The reason for our preference; the music is played on a genuine theatre organ. The other San Diego records released by Doric were all played on the 5/27 Moller which was designed for the special talents of Reginald Foort. Reggie's repertoire requires much orthodox pipework, and the rub is that even the voices supposed



to be theatrical often don't quite make it. Owner Sandy Fleet did much juggling and replacement of ranks, but nothing much changed. In contrast, the 4/20 Robert Morton has instant ear-appeal to the theatre organ minded.

The organ spent its first lifetime in the Kansas City Midland Theatre, its second in a Kansas home and a brief third in the Solana Theatre, Solana Beach, Calif. which was transformed to a restaurant-with-organ. It was beautifully installed on the stage, to please the eye as well as the ear (it's pictured on the album cover). When it became apparent that such a restaurant (located far from population and fan concentrations) couldn't make it, Doric's prexy, Frank Killinger decided to do for the Solana installation what he had done for the San Francisco Fox; to immortalize it in grooves while everything was intact. This time the taping was entrusted to Ralph Sargent, who had assisted in the previous Moller tapings. The pickup is close to the shutters but good. Ralph brings out everything the organists play and manages to stifle the louder percussions.

The choice of talent is a stroke of genius; all four of the Plantation's staffers are represented. Their styles offer both contrast and an over-all blend. The Morton has a way of mixing individual styles to a homogenous whole without destroying individuality. For an example of this homogenizing effect, compare the content of this disc with a previous Doric release (DO Q 1502), "The Many Moods of the Mighty Moller."



Irene and Bill Wright are celebrating 50 years together. Bill was playing organ in Kansas City in the '20s and Irene was the ticket seller — at a rival theatre! (Stufoto)

The difference is quite apparent.

The organists represent an interesting age range: the youngest is Ty Woodward (18) the oldest, Bill Wright (70+). In between are Chris Gorsuch (only a little older than Ty) and Earl McCandless, a retired army colonel who saw Pacific service in World War II. Their styles and tune-lists are as varied as their generations. Chris plays "There's a Trick to Pickin' a Chick Chick Chicken" in 1927 style, an upbeat "Cheek to Cheek" an intense "Weekend in New England" and an emotional "Can't Help Lovin' That Man." Ty Woodward exhibits a flair for humor with his Xylophone-pocked "Type-writer Song," and an inspired "Brian's Song." Earl offers an original polka, "Katy Jo," with plenty of "oompah," a soft rock "Wave," an engaging "Summertime" (*Porgy & Bess*) and a swingband rendition of the late Ray Noble's "Cherokee."

*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.*

Bill Wright is right at home playing this particular Morton because he also played it back in the '20s at the Midland Theatre in Kansas City. Bill's tunes are "Diane," "Charmaine," "Wedding of the Painted Doll" and "Serenade" and "Deep in my Heart" from *Student Prince* by Romberg, all tunes connected with films which played the Kansas City theatres while Bill was working there. We never heard Bill then but he handles the Morton like the veteran he is, getting wonderful sobs from the Tibias, especially.

The organ sounds great, especially the big flutes which are trem'd just right. An occasional slightly flat brass solo reed does no damage except to super ears. The balance is well maintained throughout.

Detailed jacket notes bear sketches on the artists and comments on the selections. Listeners will quickly perceive that the selections on the label and on the jacket for side 1 are not listed in the order played, but



Ty Woodward

(Tom Pittman Photo)

there is no problem in sorting them — "Weekend" and "Cheek to Cheek" are reversed in the grooves, then comes "Brian's Song."

Shortly after these tunes were taped the organists were dismissed and the Plantation closed. The organ has been removed and has been donated to an unnamed organization. Doric's recording is, therefore, a one shot, and a very desirable one.

**INTERMISSION AT THE MICHIGAN THEATRE (Ann Arbor). Henry Aldridge playing the 3/13 Barton organ. Musica Liberata label No. STD 1007 (stereo). \$7.65 post-paid from Liberty Music Shop, 417 East Liberty Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48108.**

As our feature writer John Muri has pointed out, current day organists apparently can't be checking on one another's tunelists to determine what's appropriate for a program, and what has become an overplayed chestnut, else there wouldn't be so much duplication of selections.

Mr. Aldridge's tunes are: "That's Entertainment," "Laura," "A Man and a Woman," "In the Still of the Night," "Serenade in Blue," "Begin the Beguine," "Hail to the Victors," "I Love You" (Porter), "Misty," "Summer of '42," "Carioca," "My Funny Valentine," "A Lovely Night to Go Dancing," and "Radio City March" (Leibert). That adds up to a generous tunelist, although twelve of the selections have been recorded several times previously, some by giants of the console. If the prospec-



tive buyer can overlook that hurdle, there are some absorbing treatments waiting for him. Because there are 14 titles, the renditions are necessarily brief, although there is no feeling of truncation at the close of a tune: the organist has said what he had to say. The full resources of the instrument are brought out, and there is a wide dynamic range with the upbeat tunes (e.g. "Carioca," "Radio City March") getting the full organ treatment while the ballads, which dominate, are played on the more subtle resources. For example, the fine Vox chorus during "Misty," the solo reed and String/Vox/Mutations which carry "Summer." On the critical side, the pedal bass often "sticks out," failing to blend into the ensemble, which is expected for such console risers as "That's Entertainment" and the marches. However, that same heavy "bloom" punctuating a ballad can be distracting.

Henry Aldridge, a professor at Eastern Michigan University, has been playing the Michigan Theatre Barton in Ann Arbor since 1971. He knows his instrument thoroughly and he's sure of himself in performance. He gets a lot of variety from the 13 ranks, including a lovely baritone reed combination during "In the Still of the Night," a mellow Tuba sound in several registers for "Serenade" (although the stoplist includes no Tuba) and full combinations that tickle the tympani. There is much variety in his arrangements, each tune getting an individual treatment.

It's a very refined sound one hears from this recording, a good recorded sample of the medium-size Barton. Recording is good. So is the pressing. Jacket notes are aimed more toward the casual listener than the organ enthusiast. Despite the repetitious tunelist, it's a worthwhile package.

**FRED BOCK PLAYS 50 COUNTRY-GOSPEL FAVORITES** on the 4/34 Lorin Whitney Studio Organ. Two record set No. ZLP-30295 (stereo), available from Singcord Records, 1415 Lake Drive S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. Two record set \$7.98 postpaid.

At one time the Lorin Whitney Wurlimorton in Glendale, Calif.,



Fred Bock at the Whitney Morton console.

(Stuforo)

was the instrument recorded by Jesse Crawford, Don Baker, Eddie Dunstetter and a host of other greats and near greats. In recent years it has been heard only playing fresh Parisian "sewer music" by "Erik" on the Electric Lemon label, or on Fred Bock's continuing collections of sacred or semi-sacred music. His music has a dual appeal. To the hymn-oriented listener it comes out as very special arrangements of old religious favorites as well as newer material. To the theatre organ fan who hasn't been in a church since his baptism or marriage, it comes out as a collection of interesting if unfamiliar tunes, perhaps soap opera or movie cues. And the Whitney Wurlimorton is the perfect facility.

Fred plays his tunes, always in groups of 50, with theatre organ registration and styling. He employs broad, sweeping rhythms and modern harmony. Some tunes sound like current pops, and Fred does well with rolling open harmony. Only about 10 percent of the tunes are old standards; most are modern hymns by such composers as Ralph Carmichael, Ira Stanphill, Stuart Hamblen, the Gaithers, Elmo Mercer and Redd Harper. The duration of the tunes, necessarily brief to get all 50 on four sides, ranges from 1:16 to 3:05 minutes. Sorry, but 50 titles are just too many to list.

Fred isn't above latching onto a good idea; for example he infuses a melodic line from George Wright's intro to "Jalousie" in "Just a Closer Walk With Thee" more than once — apparently just for the h - - - of it.

Recording is good, with some bass rolloff to accommodate the 50 tunes on four sides. This may be compensated for during playback by increasing the bass at the record player. The review set of pressings had been slightly warped in transit, a fault some heat treatment and pressure can correct. However, there is no practical way to compensate for an off-center disc; sides 1, 2 and 4 were so off center the resulting "wow" would be apparent to the most unmusical ear. Always return faulty records for replacement or refund. Let us know of any difficulties encountered. If good pressings can be obtained, this set is a worthwhile one.

**DOREEN CHADWICK, WURLITZER ORGAN, GAUMONT THEATRE, MANCHESTER. DeRoy 1056 (processed stereo) \$5.50 postpaid from Stanley C. Garniss, 35 Union Street, North Easton, Massachusetts 02356.**

Again we must express appreciation to Derrick Marsh for his efforts to preserve the sounds of the organs in British theatres. He was



there with his recorder in the '50s and '60s while the instruments were still in their original theatres, and thus captured on tape much priceless material. This is one good example. The 4/14 Wurlitzer, sometimes described as one of the most expressive in Britain, has since been removed from the theatre, happily by members of the Manchester Theatre Organ Trust. But on this platter it is heard in its original state, played by a gal who has got to be one of Britain's finest.

Doreen Chadwick has been musical since she was 7 in her native Wales, and played her first organ broadcast when she was 17.

The Marsh *modus operandi* was to do his recordings at concert rehearsals and sometimes during concerts. His goal was to obtain examples of playing styles and the sound of the organs. At the time record releases weren't the objective. The technical quality sometimes isn't up to snuff; there's some distortion in these grooves but it's minimal and doesn't harm the music greatly. And because the organists weren't necessarily playing for the microphone, Marsh occasionally picked up some clinkers. This recording is remarkably free of player errors. We caught only a couple. For the most part Doreen's playing is clean and crisp.

The selections are: "Latin Lady," "Singin' in the Rain," "You Are My Lucky Star," "Should I?," Waltzes from *Gypsy Love*, "Joy Samba," "Summer Evening in Santa Cruz," "Lazy Piano," "Spring Green Lady," "Military Shuffle" (march), "Dance of the Three Old Maids," "Put On a Happy Face," "Make Someone Happy," "Just in Time," "The Party's Over" and her signature tune, "Doreen."

We sometimes harp about British organists who we feel overdo tunes from the USA. Doreen doesn't. Nearly all of the American pops are contained in two medleys and get delightfully short shrift. The first group is given the British "quick-step" treatment. The rest of the grooves are devoted to a delightful array of English and European music, except for two South American sambas, "Latin Lady" and "Joy Samba" with their shades of Ethel. "Santa Cruz" is Spanish dance music. The *Gypsy Love* selections are



Doreen Chadwick.

(J.D. Sharpe Photo)

tuneful in three-four time. Doreen had no piano stop for "Lazy Piano" so she used other percussors to carry parts of the minor tune. "Military Shuffle" is a bright march, and the "Three Old Maids" is a comedy waltz with just a hint of Spike Jones. "Green Lady" is what silent movie

organists called an "intermezzo," music for neutral scenes. It's a very satisfying tunelist for jaded appetites.

Doreen is a "trem's on — trem's off" practitioner, and her precision tunes display a sense of humor, especially in "Lucky Star" which has whimsical moments. Her registration changes continually and she uses the big, slow-trem'd Tibia sparingly, reserving it for sentimental phrases. She gets a solid, hard ensemble sound we haven't previously heard from that organ, which makes passages on thinner combinations and Tibia the more effective.

Jacket notes provide some Chadwick biography. Recording is okay for the time, considering the non-professional equipment used, and the monaural tracks have been split into "studio stereo" tracks. Besides being of historical interest, the disc is a showcase for Doreen Chadwick. □

## PIZZA, PIPES and . . . PUPPETS?

The young, and young at heart, are fascinated by none other than puppets, dancing nightly at Seattle's Pizza and Pipes, and at their second location in Bellevue.

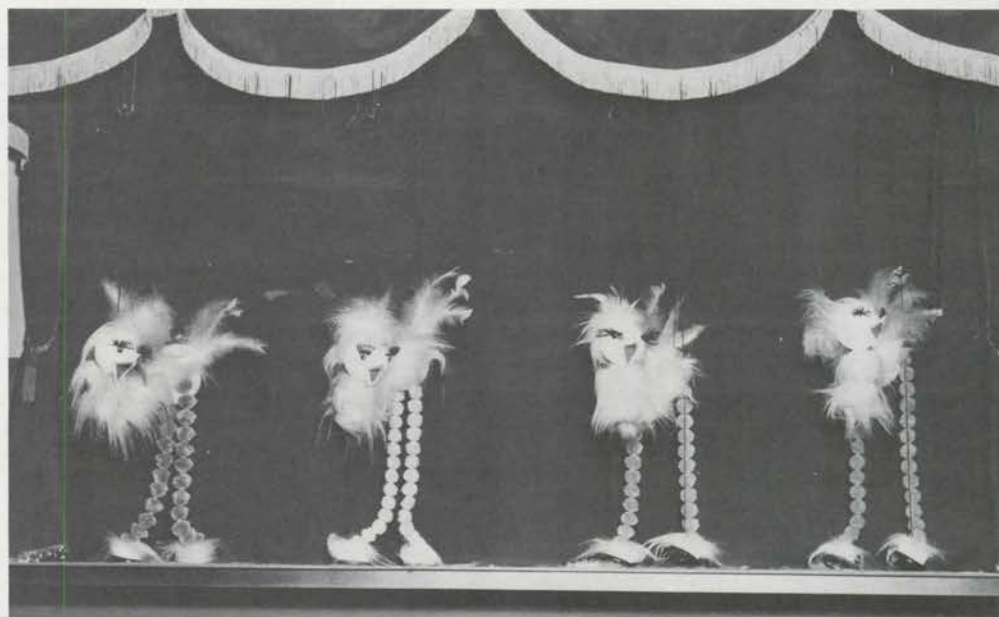
Created by Genny Whitting, of the Seattle Chapter, the idea of the little birds was hatched in Genny's living room and became a reality in December when they first danced in a chorus line at the restaurant.

The puppets are set into motion by the organist at the console of the mighty Wurlitzer, and keep time with the music. Don Myers built the actuators and installed them on the wall-stage in the dining room.

The enthusiasm of the audiences has brought such comments as: "I love the puppets, please don't turn them off or take them out;" "Please make the puppets move;" and "Can those four gooney birds only stamp one foot?"

In addition to the chorus of birds, Genny has created puppets to accent different seasons. Last Easter, two hopping rabbits, a nest and eggs highlighted the scene at the Bellevue restaurant.

Spring brought yet another set of animals, a frog and a bear, to delight the children at Bellevue Pizza and Pipes. □





# OUR NATIONAL MUSIC

by John Muri

Regularly, for twenty-four years I played "The Star Spangled Banner" in a five-thousand-seat sports arena before basketball games and other more or less human events. The crowds of young people were usually decently respectful during the playing, but the middle-aged and older people, particularly those attending wrestling matches, were noisy and talkative. There is nothing new or startling in the thought that there has long been apathy about — and vague dissatisfaction with — our national song and anthem. The music is not particularly inspiring, and it is difficult to sing. Even lowering its key from B flat to A flat has not helped.

The piece suffers particularly from its lyrics. I used to ask high school and university students to tell me in their own words what the first stanza says. Rarely did they succeed, because they didn't visualize the pictures that the words create. The trouble with the first stanza is its indecisiveness and insecurity. The speaker asks, "Does the flag still wave?" He isn't sure, and he's worried because he can't see through the morning mists. The third stanza gloats in hateful triumph ("their blood has wiped out their foul footsteps' pollution.") Neither one deals with matters of present concern. Neither expresses a national philosophy or policy, and their subject-matter, other than the prayer of the fourth stanza, is outdated.

"America," a fine tune, suffers by being a borrowing and a re-setting of "God Save the King." The British connotation is too strong for the music to be adopted as our national anthem. That is unfortunate, for the song is dignified and easy to sing.

What seems to have been an act of desperation, the nation pounced upon a 1918 song by Irving Berlin, rewritten in the thirties after he had

allegedly rejected it, titled it "God Bless America" and elevated it to high acceptance as national music. The words are cliché-ridden: "light that shines down from above," "oceans white with foam," and "my home sweet home" ring no bells as poetry.

"America the Beautiful" is the best of the well-known songs. Its images are clear and impressive. Its prayers for God's blessing and for brotherhood "from sea to shining sea" are moving and sincere. The poem is fervent and devotional, but it falters, like "The Star Spangled Banner," in the obsolescence of its images. It is no longer true that "alabaster cities gleam undimmed by human tears." The cities are too dirty and polluted to be called "alabaster," and the urban bee-hives are full of the tears of poverty, violence, and corruption.

There is little that one can say in praise of modern patriotic music. Musical settings of quotations from Abraham Lincoln have usually been expressed in such dissonances that listeners find them uninspiring. Aaron Copland's "American Portrait" (of Lincoln) has always left me cold; parts of it are downright ugly. Whatever basic simplicity and dignity there is to be found in the human condition (or in great men, for that matter) can be properly expressed in simple, dignified musical terms, not in elaborate polyphony or dissonance. Phony emotions stand out prominently in much current patriotic music, as in "This Is My Country," a banal choral piece with whole octave jumps, trite figures, and awkward accents. In all my experience, I have never seen an audience moved by it. Part of its trouble

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

lies in the words, which lack fervency and conviction. Another weak one is Sigmund Romberg's "Your Land and My Land," which is now mercifully almost forgotten.

Since we now have "The Star Spangled Banner" and will probably be playing it for a considerable time to come, we should do the best job on it of which we are capable. The piece should be played briskly as a token of our national vigor. Careful attention to the dotted-eighth and the sixteenth notes will help in creating the effect. The words of the first stanza give clues to interpretation. "Whose broad stripes" should be played broadly, almost rubato. "The rockets' red glare" may be followed by a cymbal crash on the following beat, as should "the bombs' bursting in air." The last sentence should be played *maestoso*, with a moment of silence after the words "land of the free." In this piece, as in all others, we do well to follow the principle of "the sound must be an echo of the sense."

We need a national anthem that will humbly represent decent aspirations, worthy faiths and commitments. To create this in words that are not clichés or that are not too high-flown for credibility require more skillful hands than those of amateurs. We need a prayer for deliverance from two kinds of evil: those our enemies create, and those which we create ourselves. It ought to pray for moderation, honor, and justice. A composition calling for dignity and integrity will not be written in strains of cacophony.

Detractors of nationalistic patriotic expression have pointed out a couple of its dangers: (1) the possibility of carrying chauvinism too far with resultant arrogance, foolishness, or tyranny, and (2) the exploitation of patriotism for commercial interest. Vaudevillians and some organists have been known to wrap themselves in the flag (one way or another) to get applause. But there is another danger: the danger of becoming so sceptical of our national and social heritage that we throw away our good feelings with the bad. For the organist, the middle ground between the two extremes is a narrow one, but it is one he will do well to keep. One of these days — not too far off, I hope — some new composer will, in a moment of inspiration,



produce a work that will provide a rallying-call for national feeling and an inspirational philosophy for a great nation. I dare hope that it will be moving, both when sung or played as an instrumental solo, particularly on the organ. □

## 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 four-rank unit Kimball organ. In order to get a greater variety of stops, I disconnected the string stop wires from the unit chest and wired them to a four-rank vent straight chest. I would now like to add still another set of pipes. Can I just add the disconnected unit chest to the vent chest and somehow energize the new stop by using the ground wire as the vehicle? Will the use of two magnets simultaneously per note cause any problems?

**A.** I assume you mean to divide your chest wires from the console so one runs to the vent chest and the other to the unit chest. I don't see that this would overload your contacts. In order to shut off the unit chest, you will either have to break the cable with a gang switch, or run your cable right into the unit chest

and install diodes between the chest magnets and negative common. You will then need a relay for the stop action which would have the primary holding coil wired to the stop key and the secondary wired to the negative common. I would suggest a 12 v. DC Potter-Brumfield relay which would be available at most wholesale electronic outlets.

**Q.** Since my organ is in a basement, I have a height problem. If I were to cut an 8-foot pipe in half and put a cap on it, would I get an 8-foot sound? I tried putting a cap on a 4-foot pipe and it refused to speak.

**A.** I do not recommend cutting any pipes in half. Halving the length of an open pipe by the use of a cap will drastically alter the tonal character of that pipe. The pipe will become a quintedena in that it will have a very pronounced twelfth tone speaking with the fundamental tone. My recommendation would be to remount the longer pipes and tube them off their respective chests. Use Orgafelx which is available at a modest cost from Durst Organ Supply, Erie, PA.

**Q.** At present we are rebuilding a 3/10 Wurlitzer in the south of England. On this organ we are putting the bass off-note chests on separate untremmed regulators. I should be most grateful if you could advise me of the correct procedure for setting the regulator valves. I understand this involves adjusting the length of the two flap-valve stickers with felt spacers after initially adjusting the cone valve. We wish to set the Tibia tremulas for maximum "throb" as per your lovely American Wurlitzers. Is it possible to achieve this condition and also stop the regulator being unsteady with the tremos off? I have noticed that on many Wurlitzers that the basses cause wind unsteadiness in the treble ranks taken from the same regulator, particularly on the main chest which has five ranks on one regulator.

**A.** Since you are wisely putting your basses on separate regulators, I can not see why there should be any

unsteady wind in the trebles with tremulants off. There are examples of theatre organs with bass notes winded off manual chest regulators and these regulators then become overloaded.

To achieve your Tibia "throb" I am assuming that your Tibia is being winded from its own regulator. This regulator then, should not be larger than 20" by 30" and should be tremmed with the largest size tremulant. All Tibia notes from 8-foot B on down should be on a separate regulator.

Do not make any further adjustments with the flapper valves or cone valve. Regulator pressure must be established by spring tension only.

**Q.** I am helping install a 2/7 Kimball theatre organ in my friend's basement. The ceiling height is 7' 6". The only way the pipes will fit on the manual chests is if we mount the manual chests 8" off the floor. In order to avoid mitering pipes, I plan to jack the chests off the floor after removing the longer pipes when removing chest bottom boards for service. What do you think of this idea?

**A.** Manual chests that are this difficult to service generally get less servicing. You will find that in order to avoid having to jack up your chests, every time you get a dead note or cipher, you will allow maintenance problems to accumulate which lead to a poorly maintained organ.

Better to raise your chests off the floor at least 14" for easy service access and remount your longer pipes horizontally winding them to their respective chest holes.

**Q.** How much ceiling clearance is necessary over the lowest C of an 8-foot Diapason pipe that is scroll tuned?

**A.** 3 inches.

**Q.** How much ceiling clearance is necessary for an 8-foot Tuba pipe?

**A.** 4 inches. □



## Closing Chord

**Frank Reddie**, originally from Brazil, Indiana, an ATOS member, and long-time organist, died in March in Dayton, Ohio.

He worked in theatres and on radio in the Indiana area until 1946, when he toured with a Hammond and piano. For many years featured in hotels, he toured for the Pick, Schroeder and Hilton chains. Another spot was Martinetti's Restaurant in Crystal Lake, Ill., where he played the 2/8 Wicks. Recently, he was teaching for the Allen dealer in Dayton, and playing at Wright Air Force Base nearby.

He is survived by a wife and daughter.

**John A. Phillips**, Long Beach, California, passed away suddenly at home in February of a heart attack. He had been a member of ATOS for many years.

Mr. Phillips was the second president of the Los Angeles Professional Organists Breakfast Club organization, he served for two years. He played mostly electronic instruments as an entertainer in hotels and restaurants in this city.

In his past years, he played for three churches in Long Beach: Holy Innocents Catholic Church, St. Matthews Catholic Church and Moore Memorial Methodist Church, on pipe organs. This in addition to being partner in the Gregory Organ Service, actively engaged in the maintenance, repair, tuning and restoration of pipe organs throughout southern California.

**Pearl White**, noted Chicago theatre organist, died in Chicago on May 11, 1978. Born Pearl Eleanor Weiss on October 26, 1910, she took her early piano training from Florence LeClaire and Dr. Rudolph Ganz. Instruction in organ came from Edward Benedict and Dean Fossler. Pearl's first theatre job was at age 13. She worked as a substitute during her teen years at the Uptown, Tivoli, Granada, Belmont and Embassy theatres. She was featured at

the North Center Theatre from 1928 to 1932, during which time she also did six weeks at the Chicago Theatre.

Al Carney, another Chicago organist, recommended Pearl for a job cutting piano rolls. From 1925 until 1932 she cut over one thousand rolls which appeared on the Capitol, Imperial, Supertone, Columbia and American labels.

During the 1930's and 40's Pearl White played over radio stations WCFL, WIND and WBBM.



Pearl White.

In recent years Pearl was discovered by ATOS and played numerous programs for CATOE, of which she was an Honorary Life Member. Playing for ATOS national conventions in 1964, 1965 and 1969, she is remembered for her show stopping performance at Shea's Buffalo during the 1964 convention. It was here that she demonstrated her "double stuff" for a national audience. This technique of her jazz style featured interlocking chords alternating between right and left hands. This device, applied to a twenties medley including "I Want To Be Happy," brought the audience to its feet and resulted in a twenty-minute ovation. Pearl cut one album featuring the Patio Theatre 3/17 Barton about 1968. In recent years she had played

at the Prime House Restaurant in Chicago.

Pearl White was the widow of the late Howard Erickson and is survived by a daughter, four grandchildren, a brother and a sister. She was buried at Rosehill Cemetery, Chicago on May 15.

Richard J. Sklenar

**Jeff B. Seale**, owner of the Seale Studio Morton, died in Laurel, Mississippi, on April 20, 1978. He was sixty-three.

Jeff's interest in pipe organs flowered at an early age, and when he was sixteen years old, his picture appeared in the local press with an accompanying article describing how he had built a large two-manual reed organ by combining parts from two old family melodeons. By 1940, Seale had installed a three-manual, six-rank Wurlitzer in his home in Laurel, Mississippi.

In the early 1950's, Jeff acquired a two-manual, seven-rank Robert Morton which had originally been installed in a theatre in West Virginia. Over the last twenty years he enlarged the organ into a three-manual thirteen-rank instrument (including Posthorn) and had recently built a large studio addition to his home so that both recording and concert performances could be accommodated.

The Seale studio has been the site of many exciting performances, including an impromptu performance



Jeff B. Seale.



by Dennis and Heidi James. Jeff always welcomed any organ enthusiast to his studio and has done more to promote the theatre organ hobby than many organ clubs.

The organ has been left by his will to C.G. Soley, Seale's assistant, both in business and in the organ hobby.

**Ken Wright**, an organist who entertained in the theatre, on radio and television, and in person for over 50 years, died March 13, 1978, in Oklahoma City at age 70 after an extended illness.

Ken was born in Hutchinson, Kansas. His early musical training and skill development followed a legendary pattern. It is told that his mother began giving him piano lessons when he showed his readiness by scratching his initials on the bench. As a young boy he often spent afternoons at Hutchinson's Midland Theatre leaning over the pit railing watching the organist play the Austin organ. Ken many times related how he almost tore the railing down getting over it when he was first invited to sit on the organ bench. He later traded organ playing at the Midland for lessons. There developed a demand for his musical talents at many local events in a wide area surrounding Hutchinson.

After answering an advertisement in *Billboard* and communicating by telegram Ken was hired in 1927 to play the Barton organ at the new Lloyd's Theatre in Menominee, Michigan. Talking pictures arrived there the following year but Ken stayed on until 1931. There were brief stints in the meantime at theatres in Rhinelander and Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Ken then moved to KMOX radio in St. Louis, Missouri, where he played the studio Kilgen organ. While still in Michigan and Wisconsin he had often listened to the radio broadcasts of organist Eddie Dunstedter from Minneapolis. Dunstedter had moved on to St. Louis also and it was there that the two organists established a life-long friendship.

After three years at KMOX Ken joined WLS radio in Chicago where he played the accordion and wrote combo arrangements for NBC's coast-to-coast broadcasts of *The National Barn Dance*.

**WE HAVE JUST LEARNED  
OF THE DEATH OF  
FRED FEIBEL  
THE CLOSING CHORD  
WILL APPEAR IN THE  
NEXT ISSUE**

In the early '30s Oklahoma City oil man and hotel owner W.B. Skirvin was planning a new hotel in the city. Simultaneously, E.K. Gaylord, president of the Oklahoma Publishing Company, was planning modern studios for the company's then-newly-acquired subsidiary, WKY radio. An entire floor of the new hotel was specially designed and built to house the studios. One of the most outstanding features of this layout was the 4/14 Kilgen pipe organ in Studio A. The opening of the studios was accompanied by a week-long celebration to which the public was invited. Skirvin's daughter, Perle Mesta, who was later to gain fame as a Washington party giver and minister to Luxembourg, entertained local and visiting dignitaries. Playing the organ for studio visitors during the week was none other than Jesse Crawford. The following week, on April 20, 1936, Ken Wright went "on the air" as staff organist. This was the beginning of a 36-year association with the broadcasting company. Almost instantly an admiring public was created throughout the broadcast area which covered most of Oklahoma and parts of several surrounding states. More than 40 years later there remain many Ken Wright devotees in the area.

It is an interesting irony that Ken happened to visit the Kilgen factory in St. Louis the same day the first boards were cut for the console of the WKY organ, although he did not know at the time that he would preside over it for 15 years (except for 27 months when he served as a military flight instructor during World War II).

During the heyday of WKY radio Ken was busy there at least six days a week. Each day started with finger

exercises at the piano. Throughout the day and night Ken was heard not only in frequent solo performances at the organ but he also provided a variety of theme and background music for many shows.

WKY-TV made its debut in 1949. Right there among the first local performers was Ken Wright at the Hammond organ. Again there were solo performances and the accompaniment of musical groups and vocalists. In this way Ken helped to launch the careers of a number of performers. One of the better known of these is Anita Bryant.

At one time or another Ken has made a personal appearance with his traveling organ in virtually every town in Oklahoma. His first traveling companion was a Hammond and then later a Conn because the latter sounded, as he said, "more pipe organish." Although Ken preferred the pipe organ he was never apologetic about performing at a "plug in" for it didn't seem to matter to his admirers.

In 1951 WKY-TV moved to newly constructed studios. There began a new phase in Ken's career. Added to playing the organ on a daily local mid-day show were the behind-the-scenes jobs of writing, producing and directing. It was not infrequent that Ken was called upon at the last minute to host the daily show and to do live commercials. In the early '50s he was even a radio disc jockey on an early morning radio show. And somehow personal appearances could still be worked in!

Company policy dictated that Ken retire in 1972 from WKY-TV (now KTVY due to change of ownership). This, however, provided the opportunity and stimulus to embark on new ventures, selling Conn organs and doing creative writing. Ken had never thought of himself as cut out for selling but he was a success right away, even to the extent that he soon earned a sales prize of a trip to Paris for he and his wife. (This provided an opportunity for him to apply first hand his ability to speak French.) In his final illness Ken was even closing organ sales deals from his hospital bed.

The WKY Kilgen was sold for \$1,000 in 1951 and moved to Oklahoma City's Civic Center Music Hall where it languished until 1977 when it was superbly restored by Paul



Haggard, the same man responsible for its original 1936 installation and subsequent maintenance. The organ is the centerpiece for the newly-established OK City Chapter of ATOS (See TO, Dec. '77/Jan. '78). One of the chapter's first acts was to designate Ken Wright as an Honorary Member. Ken was among the enthusiastic crowd of almost 3,000 who attended Hector Olivera's rededication concert for the organ on September 11, 1977. It was a busy day for Ken because that morning he had taken his Conn to entertain at a convention breakfast.

During the KMOX days Ken devised his own theme tune because he "wanted something different." It was dedicated to his mother. This piece was heard often over the years by his Oklahoma listeners and it would surely evoke a "Why, that's Ken Wright!" response from many today. This musical trademark was never formally put on paper and so it remained Ken's very own property.

If one were to briefly try to characterize Ken Wright it might be to say that he was a man of diversity and detail. In addition to the talents already mentioned Ken has been known to give his special attention to cooking certain dishes, model railroading, flying, teaching flying and meticulous automobile maintenance. Curiously enough Ken never believed he had the knack for teaching music. Perhaps this speaks to a deep intuitive notion of what music and organ playing should be and his desire to approach perfection in playing. His father once affectionately remarked, "What Ken needs is to miss a note once in a while."

On the day following his death the mid-day TV show on which he played an important part for so long paid a special visual and aural tribute to Ken.

Ken Wright is survived by his wife, Mauna, and his daughter, Margo.

Gary Tuck

**Henry Grady Pope** came to California by motorcycle in the '20s to escape the harsh winters of Michigan, where he had worked in the auto factories. The son (one of nine children) of a Georgia sharecropper, the death of his father when Henry



Henry Pope circa 1957, servicing a Hammond at NBC Hollywood.

was 17 left him and his brother, Dan, the sole support of the family. The auto factories held promise — but the winter was too much for a southern lad. Henry had shown a disposition toward music when he played country fiddle as a youth for square dances near his Georgia home.

Henry arrived in California with the idea of becoming a seaman, but he met organbuilder Joe Klein and agreed to help Joe with an installation for a couple of weeks. Henry was fascinated by the pipe organ. Largely uneducated, Henry filled the voids by studying in night school while working for the Robert Morton Organ Co. in Van Nuys, Calif. Then he went with the Maas Organ Co., which later specialized in organ percussions. Henry envisioned being his own boss and in the '30s set up his own organ installation and maintenance service.

He serviced organs in clubs, churches, residences, mortuaries, civic auditoriums, rinks and theatres from San Diego to Santa Barbara, Calif. One special installation he worked on was the 3/15 Welte in Scotty's Castle, Death Valley. One of his specialties was radio studio organs. He installed the organ (Welte & Wurlitzer) in the old NBC Hollywood studios, the one used for *One Man's Family* and *I Love a Mystery*. He serviced the organs in Hollywood studios through the '30s and '40s. He

was so devoted to work that he would sometimes drop from exhaustion. After a few of these experiences Henry accepted an offer from NBC Hollywood to keep their studio instruments in top shape, including the many Hammonds and pianos which dotted the studios. He was with NBC for 18 years, and it was at NBC that he met and married a girl named Rae.

During his active years Henry Pope serviced organs in southern California radio stations KGER, KFOX, KFI, the Lorin Whitney Studio Wurlitzer in Glendale, the 20th Century Fox Studio Wurlitzer, the Kimball in Angelus Temple, and the L.A. Shrine Auditorium Moller. He did much of the tonal work on Buddy Cole's Wurlitzer in North Hollywood and also made special tonal adjustments on the Simonton Wurlitzer requested by Jesse Crawford for the two recordings he made on it. Henry was well acquainted with the Warner Bros studio Wurlitzer. He removed it to storage when CBS purchased it and was there several years later to activate it in the house actor Joe Kearns built for it.

In 1967 Henry was called to New York as consultant for the renovation of the Radio City Music Hall Wurlitzer. The following year he spent a month working on the RCMH organ. The exertion landed him in the hospital and he resolved to retire. Henry and his wife Rae moved to Hemet, California. Even in retirement, he kept a hand in the organ hobby. He had elaborate plans to make the Wurlitzer in Dr. Orrin Hostetter's Pasadena home a showpiece, but declining health didn't permit it. He was hospitalized six-teen times since 1966.

After their marriage, Rae helped Henry on his service route. She learned how to replace worn leather and held keys while he tuned.

She recalls, "He could hear things I certainly couldn't. He preferred to do most work himself, rather than delegate tasks. For this, he was known in the service business as a 'loner'."

Henry pope died on March 19, 1978, after a lifetime of service to the King of Instruments. He served with distinction. Burial was in Forest Lawn cemetery, Glendale.

Stu Green





## CHAPTER NOTES

**Let us know what's happening in YOUR Chapter!**

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May 1st. for June/July  
July 1st. for Aug./Sept.  
Sept. 1st. for Oct./Nov.  
Nov. 1st. for Dec./Jan.

### ALABAMA

Alabama is most fortunate to be in an area that has many accomplished theatre organists who will share their talents with us. Our neighboring states of Mississippi and Georgia also have some great talent and for our March and April meetings we had a sample of some of the best.

In March, the Alabama Wurlitzer met the talent of Walter Winn from

the Music Grinder Pizza of Marietta, Georgia, and we heard some new type of sounds from this theatre Wurlitzer — like "Pizza Wurlitzer." Walter is associate organist at the Music Grinder and a talent that you need to keep your eye on. He not only can knock out some of the new "modern" sounds known to the pizza emporium, but he has his own special way with the great older numbers as well. He is a master of registration at the Wurlitzer, and we heard some well-known songs in an entirely different way that were really beautiful and in keeping with the traditional theatre organ styling.

If you are going to the Atlanta Convention in July be sure to take in some of the jam sessions scheduled for late evenings at the Music Grinder and listen to Walter — he is really a talent on the way up.

At our April meeting our guest artist from the Mississippi Gulf Coast was Jack Moelmann. Jack is a major in the United States Air Force and has managed to combine an

electrical engineering Air Force career with the magic of theatre organ music. Jack really knows how to put on a great show and his personality is that of a true showman. We were treated to some of every style and age of song. His call for requests from the audience was answered expertly and we had an opportunity to hear the classical side of Jack's training. Jack even brought along a short silent comedy for our entertainment, and proved that he knew how to use the organ for silent movie accompaniment.

We are sad to say that Jack is leaving our area, having been transferred from Kessler Air Force Base. But, all of you in the Washington, D.C. area be on the lookout — he's headed your way and you are in for some treats in the future.

RIEDEL WEST

### CEDAR RAPIDS

Once again CRATOS reports the sound of the Closing Chord; this time for Carolyn (Mrs. Robert R.) Beck of Davenport, Iowa. Both she and her husband were charter members and were tireless workers in the establishment of the CRATOS Chapter, despite living some 70 miles from Cedar Rapids. And, as if this weren't enough, they still had time and energy left for helping in the restoration of the organ in the Capitol Theatre in Davenport. She personally handled disposition of tickets in Cedar Rapids for the silent movie spectacles in Davenport.

I shall miss the twinkle in her eyes each time we met, after which she invariably would turn to whomever was nearby and explain how hard she did *not* have to work to make me a member; seems that it was she I first encountered in the theatre lobby with the question of how I could join the society so that I wouldn't miss any silent movie nights!

By the time this report reaches you, CRATOS will have had another of a long string of "Sold Out" theatre organ spectacles. May 20 was the date for Ron Rhode to be the featured performer; a triumphant return for the young man who is well-known to us for having performed at monthly chapter meetings.

The spring show of the Davenport branch presented Dennis and Heidi



Jack Moelmann at the console of the Alabama Theatre Wurlitzer.



James at the Capitol. The 3/10 Wicks restoration has been the result of years of work by the group ramrodded by the Adams family, Jim, Paul and father Howard, with much cooperation by then-manager Dan Lindner.

Plans already are being formulated for the September 1 celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the opening of the Paramount (nee Capitol) Theatre in Cedar Rapids.

LOREN H. FRINK

## CENTRAL INDIANA

The March meeting was held at Foster Hall in Park Tudor School. There was not an abundance of new or old business, so we segued to the entertainment of the day. Kurt Von Schakle was the guest artist who was to play the Aeolian 2/27 player organ with built-in Duo Art registration and expression. However, due to much cold weather, it was not doing much "registrating" or "expressing." There seemed, instead, to be a great deal of "malfunctioning," and no matter the amount of coddling by Kurt, would it respond satisfactorily. Members had to be content with viewing its chambers.

However, after refreshments were served, Kurt graciously compensated by inviting everyone to hear him play the pipe organ at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church. At least the members were able to hear this very talented young man play, so all was not in vain. So much for our wintry March.

The April meeting was held at the Hedback Theatre. Member Don Craig reported there will be a trip to Chicago, in late September or October, to hear the New World Wurlitzer.

Our entertainment for the day was Rob Calcaterra. Rob is another very talented young man and played original arrangements of "Jealousy," "Dainty Miss" and many others. His wide variety of registration and technique was super. The "piece de resistance" was a humorously illustrated group of sing-alongs. Rob's meringue topping on this musical dessert was his rendition of "Poet and Peasant" Overture.

Our artist began his teaching career in the second grade when he gave organ lessons in exchange for pop bottles. Soon after this he was



Ron Calcaterra at the Hedback Theatre 2/10 Page.

in the "chips" receiving hard cash! He studied three years privately with Dr. Oswald Ragatz at Indiana University. He is a student teacher at Manual High School, where he directs and accompanies three choirs and teaches piano theory.

Many members attended the Lee Erwin concert at Manual High School the Friday before Easter and enjoyed the appropriate *King of Kings* silent movie accompanied by Lee. The audience also got in the act with a sing-along.

April 21 and 22 our chapter had in concert Lowell Ayars at the Hedback Theatre at the 2/10 Page. He is known as the "singing organist" and has recently completed a tour of England playing to packed houses in London and other British cities. His program was varied and featured nostalgic composers of the pipe organ era. A sing-along followed. After intermission Lowell accompanied the Laurel and Hardy silent movie *The Second Hundred Years*. All in all the evening's performance was well received. This concert was another of a series jointly sponsored by our chapter and Footlite Musicals.

BEE BUTLER

## CHICAGO AREA

CATOE has been busy since our last appearance in these pages. Tom Cotner, back in Chicago after the Old St. Louis Noodle and Pizza Co. folded despite the vitamin of his fine music, played an excellent concert for us at the 3/11 Pickwick Theatre Wurlitzer in December. It featured a vocalist plus the other things which

made Tom's "Chicago '77" show so good. (You'll be able to hear him at the Atlanta convention.)

Jack Olander presented the December social at Maine North High School, complete with two of the school's vocal students. Olander has just completed teaching a second theatre organ class at the school. Fred Kruse was presented with a framed resolution of thanks for his donation of a 16' Tuba to that organ, which is owned by CATOE.

In January we were at Medinah Temple, Chicago, a 5000-seat hall with a 75-rank Austin, circa 1914. It has two consoles, a five-manual and a four-manual. That same month members were invited to hear a 50-rank Austin, circa 1978. This new "American classic organ," designed by Dr. William Barnes and John Peters, was dedicated by member Devon Hollingsworth at Christ Church, Oakbrook. It's nice to know someone can still build a robust organ.



Lee Erwin enjoying himself at the Chicago Civic Opera House. (C. Albin Anderson Photo)

Lee Erwin returned to Chicago, in February this time to play the 3/50 Skinner at the Civic Opera House accompanying *The General*. Members were the guests of landlord L.N. "Chris" Christensen afterwards in the Kib Room, Samuel Insull's private apartment backstage. That same weekend, Lee joined many CATOers at Mario and Jimmy DeLuca's Pipe Organ Pizza, Milwaukee, for the final appearance of Walter Strony. Walter has moved on to Phoenix. Clark Wilson is his replacement in Milwaukee.

The March social was at WGN, where Mark Noller played and Rich-





Milwaukee's Perry Petta following his April social program for CATOE. (Bill Lamb Photo)

ard Sklenar, Ione Tedei and Virginia Ferroli entertained with a musical newscast over "KATO-TV." The station's news set is now in Studio 3, with the organ, and was used to good advantage, especially during the mock editorial reply by Zelda Mae Fern, a spoof of the editorials read by station vice-president and CATOE member Alexander Field.

In April, Milwaukee's 16-year-old Perry Petta played a social program at the Downers Grove 3/10 Wurlitzer. Perry is the young man who won the youth playing competition at the Cleveland Regional ATOS bash last November. It's no wonder; his playing is clean, sensitive and very musical. You will probably be hearing his name and music in the future.

April 23 was "Genesee Theatre Day" in Waukegan, Ill. The mayor and city council had so proclaimed it in honor of the 50th Anniversary show presented by CATOE. It was a re-premiere of another saved organ, a 3/10 Barton, which Rex Koury played for an appreciative 1500 people. This is another opportunity to keep theatre organ alive and well in the Chicago area. John Koch is crew leader.

On April 23, David Hamilton was to play three intermissions during showings of *The Great Caruso*, presented by the Oriental Theatre. During the last show the blower gave

out. Spencer is now fabricating two new impellers, paid for by the new owners of the building. Thus they have proven their interest in keeping this musical treasure secure in Chicago.

As is customary for our chapter, during May new chapter officers will be elected to take office July 1. The retiring board of directors consists of Richard Sklenar, chairman; Alden Stockbrand, vice-chairman; Bill Rieger, secretary; Ione Tedei, treasurer; Virginia Ferroli, membership chairman; Marie Pond, VOX CATOE editor; and Bill Benedict, Jim Taggart, and John Peters, directors. New faces will grace the next board as three long-time members are not running. Sklenar is retiring after nearly six years, Stockbrand after four years and Rieger, who has been on our board continuously since 1967.

TOM TIBIA

## CONN VALLEY

Our spring season began in style with concerts at Thomaston Opera House by George Wright on March 31 and April 1 and April 2. Patronage was excellent and so was the music. Previous appearances in Connecticut by George did bode well for these dates and our fondest expectations were realized.

During the first half of the concert George gave us a fine musical sample of musical comedy, the Beatles, and popular tunes from years ago to the present. Highlights were the "Cuban Love Song" and "Hora Staccato" done in the Wright style.

This artist makes full use of combination pistons. This writer has not attended a concert during which the artist took less time for setting stops. All the pistons available were used.

Following intermission, during which the George Wright records were sold out, we were treated to a series of compositions somewhat more elaborate than those heard in the first half. These allowed our organist greater opportunity for arrangement and we heard some very skillful ones, including "Petite Waltz," and Mozart's "Ave Vera."

It was a very fine concert, indeed, and we have already engaged this artist for another return engagement next year! Not only was the

music great, the artist was generous as well, a combination always appreciated at Thomaston.

Our April meeting this year was held at the home of Irving and Anita Twomey in Manchester, CT. We have been there before and it is always an unusual pleasure to see and hear all the beautifully restored music machines, cash registers, player piano, 2-manual Wurlitzer pipe organ, etc., etc., etc. These various items are all over the house and make every room a treasure hunt area.

The Wurlitzer is located in the basement where many appropriate items such as a rotating mirrored ball and spotlights contribute to a very theatrical atmosphere.

After a brief business session following dinner, Program Chairman Paul Taylor greeted us with the most welcome news — that we would be entertained by none other than our own Ev Bassett at the console. Immediately Ev came on with the "Radio City Music Hall March" as his console riser. He then proceeded with a nicely planned program of "popular music chronologically selected" which began with the year 1919 and went on through 1938, a generous and thoroughly enjoyed program of some 19 selections, all in the popular vein.

As he always does, Ev had found the time to research and put together a very interesting program for us which he played in the comfortable Bassett style.

Some more open console followed Ev's program and finished this most pleasant evening, for which we are very grateful indeed to Irv and Anita Twomey.

W.F. POWERS

## DAIRYLAND

At our board meeting, it was decided that we should advertise the theatre organ as an item in short supply. President Greg Filardo pointed out that people ran to the grocery store when there was an onion shortage, and waited in lines for hours when there was a gasoline shortage. So we came up with the idea of billing the next concert as being held because there is a shortage of theatre organs.

Other items discussed for our next concert were displaying Model A



Fords in front of the theatre before the concert and having members dress in period clothes and generally creating a 1920's atmosphere that that would attract attention from far and near.

Our concert was a success. Our guest artist for the evening was John Muri, who played a delightful concert along with a silent film, *Charlie Behind the Scenes*. Our club also presented scholarships to students at Carroll, Alverno and Concordia colleges as well as the University of Wisconsin.

On Sunday, March 12, our social was held at Organ Pipe Pizza in Milwaukee. The entertainment for the afternoon was provided by Gary Sette, former organist at the Schnitzelhaus Restaurant (that organ has since been sold to a Dallas firm).

Gary played a lot of songs in the vein of *Star Wars*, "Chattanooga Choo-Choo," and "Stormy Weather," with thunder and lightning effects.

Recently some progress has been made with United Artists Theatres toward removing the temporary stage that has been placed over the organ at the Riverside Theatre, according to Mr. Walters, organ curator. Although the instrument is in playing condition, a concert could not be held without considerable work from our club.

The installations of our 2/6 Wurlitzer in the Racine Theatre Guild is coming along fine. Some Saturday mornings there is actually too much help. With a little more work, the organ will be ready in time for a 50th Anniversary concert.

There is a concert planned at the Sheyboygan Theatre for members and friends of D.T.O.S. before the Wurlitzer, which is owned by Jim De Luca of Pipe Organ Pizza, is removed. It is sad to see one of the last remaining Wurlitzer organs in a Wisconsin Theatre being removed to be used as a part of a pizza organ.

We would like to thank Jim Bringe, Jim DeLuca, the Pabst Theatre and Fred Hermes, who had socials for us this year.

WILLIAM CAMPBELL

## **EASTERN MASS.**

Pleasure before business was our reversed procedure for our March 25 Babson meeting. What pleasure

it was with our special guest organist, Master Sergeant Lou Hurvitz, from the U.S. Military Academy Band, West Point, N.Y., swinging onto the bench after introduction by Chairman Royal Schweiger. Lou's rapidly growing console reputation preceded his first appearance with us resulting in about 150 members and guests attending. It would be safe to say that his following has been increased by as many, for this gentleman displayed a crisp, imaginative, authoritative style of playing coupled with a calm, engaging personality. He was master of the console at all times showing a thorough familiarity with the mechanics plus tonal blending of the "unit orchestra" enhanced by his knowledge of band instruments. Lou's warm, friendly manner quickly establishes a rapport with his audience and his obvious love of theatre organ pipes shines through in his music. These are the ingredients for success and this young man is going places in the concert field after active service.

Over an hour of really good theatre organ was greatly enjoyed from his opener, "Say it with Music," to his long-standing ovation second encore "The Stars and Stripes Forever." The latter was his second march of the evening and both displayed the Wurlitzer's "one man band" capabilities. An excellent concert doesn't just happen and Lou's native ability, "basic training," constant practice and genuine enthusiasm put it all together.

Business was opened by Chairman Schweiger who announced several personnel changes approved by the board of directors. Craig Johnson's resignation as vice chairman, owing to an impending move, has Bob Bramhall succeeding him. Tim Holloran is our new program chairman. John Ross is the membership chairman.

Bob Legon reminded the membership that we have now owned our Wurlitzer for 10 years. He also invited the club to an unofficial theatre organ seminar of four evening sessions in May at the 3/9 Kilgen in Lakeview Congregational Church, Waltham.

Customary open console was unusually active with many members and guests taking their turns, including new member, Phil Bordeleau

and his busy professional organist sister, Jan. Spring concert flyers and tickets were distributed by Roasalie and Patsy Fucci.

Our April meeting at Babson was short on business and long on good listening. Royal presented a beautiful plaque, with club console engraved, to our first member extraordinaire, Clayton Stone. Applause followed appropriate words by each, as all present stood in approbation.

Program Chairman Tim Holloran spoke briefly and introduced our two mini-concert artists of the evening, Bob Legon and Phil Bordeleau. Each played the Wurlitzer in carefully worked out arrangements creating some nice sounds. One of Bob's was a classic "The Whistler and His Dog" which brought back memories of Lew White's long-ago 78 recording. Phil's theme was "Tribute to Spring" with song titles reflecting the vagaries of that season. Each artist received a deserved good round of applause as they concluded.

Tim then announced that a taped portion of Eddie Weaver's Stoneham concert of May 14, 1968 would be played over the new P.A. system. It was a nice reminder of a fine concert for the older members and a revelation to the newer — an additional incentive for all to sell tickets to his May 13 program.

A succession of members and friends at the popular Wurlitzer concluded the evening's entertainment. Each brought interesting and varied styles, selections, interpretations and abilities. All had fun and gave pleasure to others in so doing. That's what it's all about!

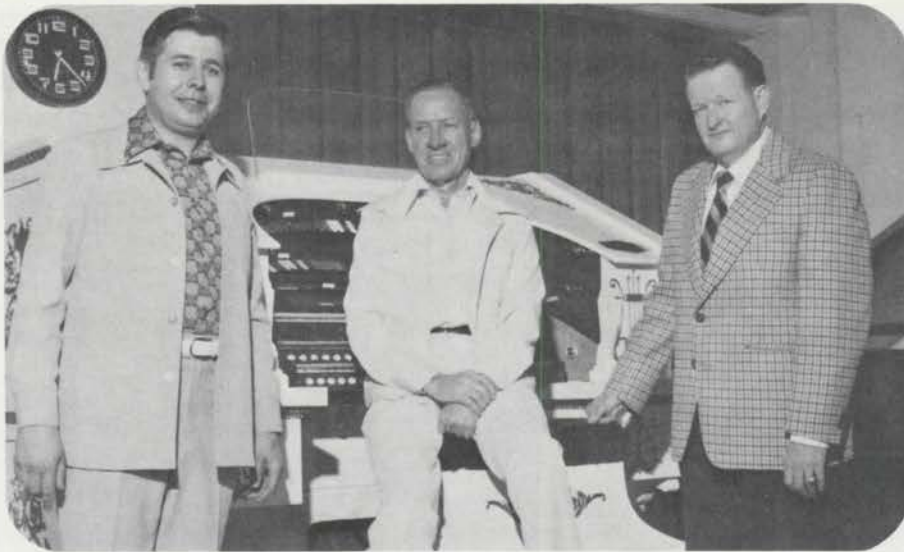
STANLEY C. GARNISS

## **GULF COAST**

Our newly-elected chairman, Walter Smith, has had a change in plans and has resigned the chairmanship. Our chief mentor, Barclay D. Rhea, M.D., fortunately has accepted the chairmanship for the rest of the year.

Representatives from the chapter have met with the cultural affairs board and city council as to the status of our chapter and the Robert Morton organ at the being-restored Saenger Theatre here in Pensacola. We have presented to these groups our rough estimate of the cost of





Jack Moelmann, Jeff Seale\* and Senton Granberry at the March program in Laurel, Miss.

restoration to date. This we hope will be in lieu of charges so that we may hold our meetings at the Saenger without cost to us as we have in the past. Naturally, we will pay all fees when our concerts are open to the public for professional charge. We have asked those governing the Saenger that our chapter be allowed to maintain the organ. Also that we be allowed to have the final say-so as to who may play it and when.

Tom Helms, our Peripatetic premier organist, was guest soloist for a concert in Laurel, Miss., on March 11. This was at the invitation of Jeff Seale\* at the magnificent, beautifully-restored 3/13 Robert Morton and concert Steinway in his home. Jeff sponsors these Sunday afternoon concerts and invites many friends to enjoy them with him. Several were there from Pensacola, Memphis, Jackson and Meridian as well as guests from Laurel. Tuddy Soley, who did the lion's share in the restoration of this instrument, and Senton Granberry, also very active in the Magnolia Chapter, have co-hosted these delightful afternoon organ musicals. After Tom's splendid performance, several organists

*\*We have since learned of the untimely death of Jeff Seale in Laurel, Miss. His concerts and hospitality were legend. We hope somehow, someday, his Robert Morton will continue to give the pleasure it did during his lifetime to so many listeners. We feel sure he would want it this way. See Closing Chord on page 49.*

participated in open console. A most enjoyable afternoon; thanks to the Magnolia Chapter. Senton tapes these events and shares copies with others who wish them.

In April we sponsored a meeting with the American Guild of Organists at the Saenger Theatre. Marcia Cohen, cultural affairs chairman for the City of Pensacola, was our guest of honor. Ken Karadin, president of AGO, and Tom Helms played an entertaining duet of *P.D.Q. Bach*. Tom then explained the workings of the theatre organ to the group from AGO and others who were present. After his very comprehensive explanations he played some requests from the audience. Besides Mrs. Cohen, the members of the cultural affairs committee were included in the guest list as well as other civic officials interested in the Saenger restoration. Dr. and Mrs. Rhea hosted a reception at their home immediately following the program. Naturally, all conversation centered around our organ and its future in the theatre here. Everyone was pleased to see and hear the Brambach pit piano that Dr. Rhea and his crew had restored so beautifully. This will be wired into the console at the Saenger.

On April 13 our chapter was indeed honored when Tom Helms was asked to play background music for the mayor's reception at the Saenger. Here the city officials, cultural affairs board and other civic minded citizens, including industrial rep-



Tom Helms at the 3/13 Robert Morton in the home of Jeff Seale,\* Laurel, Miss.

resentatives, were awarded recognition for their contributions to the Saenger. Over \$100,000 was pledged as of this date toward restoration. This amount will be added to other funds already pledged. This totals approximately \$1.5 million for the restoration fund to Save the Saenger!

DOROTHY STANDLEY

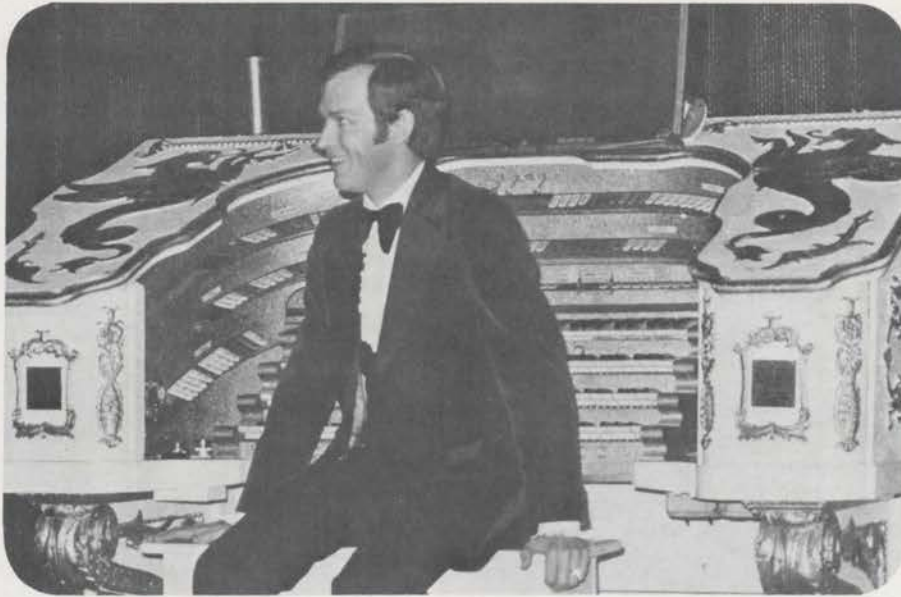
## LAND OF LINCOLN

The Coronado Theatre in Rockford is being "rediscovered" by the people of this northern Illinois community. Since LOLTOS staged a big 50th Anniversary show last October the Coronado has become the place for groups to tour. LOLTOS has assumed a lot of the responsibility for these groups and about 150 students have visited the theatre during the last few months.

During February, LOLTOS member-organist Bob Coe took an extended tour to the West Coast and back. Enroute, he stopped with friends in Tuscon and played for SATOS members at an informal gathering. Following visits with relatives and friends in California, his faithful Oldsmobile took him to Salt Lake City and the Mormon Tabernacle where he played a few numbers at the tabernacle organ at the invitation of Dr. Alexander Schreiner.

April 20 brought Lyn Larsen to the Coronado Barton for his first concert here. Lyn did an outstanding job, even though his rugged schedule





Lyn Larsen at the Coronado Barton for Land of Lincoln.

and lack of sleep didn't allow for extended rehearsal time. The Barton never sounded better and concertgoers were lavish in their praise of his artistry. Everyone is looking forward to visiting Lyn's new eatery in Sun City, Tivoli Gardens.

On May 4 LOLTOS hosted a large group of Senior Citizens at a free concert with Bob Coe at the organ. This show was made possible with the generous support of the Coronado and Local #217 of the Stage Employees Association.

Upcoming shows at the Coronado are Rosa Rio on June 15, a 51st Anniversary show with Myron Floren and Chad Weirick on October 22, Bob Ralston on March 15, 1979 and to round out the season, Hector Olivera returns in May 1979.

BOB SCHMOOCK

## LOS ANGELES

The 4/36 Marr and Colton theatre organ, which was to be installed in Pasadena's Civic Auditorium, has been temporarily dethroned, since J.B. Nethercut very graciously donated his Reginald Foort 5/27 Moller organ to Pasadena. The Moller Organ Co. will install the instrument after some extensive rebuilding by Gordon Belt and his crew from San Sylmar (Mr. Nethercut's "Tower of Beauty," where his impressive collection of antique musical instruments and cars is housed). Chapter members are now searching for a new location for their Marr and Colton organ.

The owners of the Elks Lodge and 4/58 Robert Morton organ have leased both for 20 years to a recording company. They have begun rebuilding several of the regulators and chests and have had the manuals rebushed. The console now shines in a new antique white finish with gold trim soon to come. The huge instrument will be used for the recording of some 125 LP albums. The organ is still available for chapter jam sessions, concerts and the "Pay and Play Plan."

On March 17, an excellent turnout witnessed an interesting and varied program by topflight organist Lyn Larsen. He presented a midnight concert at the "newly-rebuilt" console of the 4/37 Kimball in the Los Angeles Wiltern Theatre. Temperature problems caused some stoppers to drop and tuning problems, but the master organist played "around" the problems nicely and all enjoyed a "Wearin'-o'-the-Green" program.

Canadian organist Frank Olsen was busy setting combination pistons for his April 16 program, and delighted his audience with a sparkling and novel approach to the huge Kimball at the Wiltern. His uptempo jazzy style was evident throughout his two-hour program. It was fun to watch him hold the last chord of each tune, turn around on the console bench and smile to his appreciative audience before releasing the chord.

MIKE OHMAN

## MAGNOLIA

This chapter is not dead, just quiet and working hard, and no attempt will be made to catch up on all of the happenings of the past year, just the most important ones.

Preparations were started last year for the celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Temple Theatre on May 22, 1978. A series of three concerts were planned in order to raise our funds to place the Temple Theatre's Robert Morton on a lift. Cylinders had been secured, and money was needed to have some sprinkler lines prepared as well as for the excavation. Two of the concerts went just fine. Jack Moelmann played for us in May, and Dalton McAlpin played in July, with the third concert scheduled for November with Clyde Lummus to play. The organ was in the best shape it had ever been in. Don May had come over prior to Dalton's concert, tuned the instrument and rewinded the violin.

Everything was close to perfection for the November concert, when misfortune happened. The theatre had been leased for a weekend of Elvis movies in September, and the air conditioning equipment developed evaporator problems. The pan overflowed and water leaked into the left chamber. The Tibia, Oboe, Orchestra Bells, and the Chimes were ruined.

The funds set aside for the lift had to be used to repair the damage in the left chamber. All of the leather is being replaced, along with new valves and springs. The work crew, consisting of Frank Evans, Pop Evans, Marl Cobler, Sam Feltenstein, Tommy Darsey and sometimes the three Darsey boys, have removed the damaged parts for reworking. Jeff Seale\* and Tuddy Sollie of Laurel, Mississippi, are recovering the pouches for the Orchestra Bells and Chimes. With all the work being done, the Robert Morton should be back in playing condition in time for the planned Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration of the Temple Theatre in May.

The same group of people, in their spare time, have been helping Frank Evans complete the wiring of the

*\*Editor's Note: After this was typeset we received word of Jeff Seale's death. See Closing Chord on page 49.*





Maj. Jack Moelmann at Jeff Seale's 3/13 Robert Morton.

Robert Morton that is being installed in his home. The organ was playing at one time but because of other problems and down time, Frank decided to go ahead with plans to computerize the instrument. This was two years ago, and Frank is now saying that in another four or five months, the Robert Morton will be playing.

Our monthly meetings have been held regularly, either in the form of work sessions or business meetings. The March meeting proved to be an exception, as the membership was invited to the home of Jeff Seale in Laurel, Mississippi, for a concert by Tom Helms from Pensacola, Florida. Tom is an exceptional young man at the theatre organ, and gave us a wide and varied program for the afternoon. After Tom's concert, the console was open to those that wished to play. It did not take long for Frank Evans and Jack Moelmann to take to the bench.

Jeff's 3/13 Robert Morton is undoubtedly the finest home installation of a theatre pipe organ in the South. It is always in tune, and undergoing additions of one sort or another. It even has a Moelmann stop (duck call especially for "Rubber Ducky") and a monkey that plays cymbals and is controlled from the console.

There has been some discussion concerning the Jeff Seale installation and that of the Temple The-



Tom Helms at Jeff Seale's 3/13 Robert Morton.

atre Robert Morton. The Temple installation is the last in-theatre pipe organ in the State of Mississippi. Jeff's instrument is the only theatre pipe organ home installation that is playing at this time, that this reporter knows of.

Major Jack Moelmann will be leaving the State of Mississippi in July for a new post with the U.S. Air Force. Jack has been a leading force in the restoration of the Saenger Theatre in Biloxi, Mississippi, as well as promoting and playing a number of concerts for the chapter. Jack and his talents will be missed, and we hope that we will be seeing and hearing Jack in the future.

#### MID-AMERICA

The chapter met on March 10. After a social hour and a brief business meeting members enjoyed theatre organ music played on the 4/24 Wurlitzer installed in the home of Bob Foley and David Dillon in Wichita. Members playing this marvelous instrument included Victor Rork, David Dillon, Tom Cusick, Kathryn Moore and Bob Foley. A particular treat for the members were two duets, "Ave Maria" and "Climb Every Mountain," played on David Dillon's new harp, accompanied by Bob Foley at the Wurlitzer.

KATHYRN MOORE

#### MOTOR CITY

Ron Rhode appeared for a one-night program at the 3/16 Barton at the Royal Oak Music Theatre on March 8. In addition to his fine concert and sing-along, he accompanied the silent comedy *The Cure* with Charlie Chaplin.

As a fund raising activity we launched a bi-weekly weekend series of eight Hollywood musicals in March. Taking advantage of our newly-acquired 70mm 6-channel stereo projection equipment, we began the series in early March with *The Sound of Music*. We were overwhelmed with SRO performances. Over 1500 people attended each showing. A 30-minute organ overture, featuring a chapter organist at the 3/10 Barton, begins each show. The organ is also used during intermission. Audiences have averaged well over 1000 since then.

At his Old West program at the Redford Theatre on April 1, Gaylord Carter really fooled us by making his entrance not on an organ bench, but on a horse! In keeping with the Western theme of the evening, Gaylord, in cowboy attire, rode to the center of the stage, where he dismounted and welcomed the audience, glad (probably) that his short ride was over.

In addition to a Western sing-along and the William S. Hart silent feature *Tumbleweeds*, the evening's



One of the good guys (they always wear white hats). The spurs jangled because his legs were shaking. (Dan Lockwood Photo)



entertainment included 24 square dancers on stage, all accompanied by none other than the lone arranger himself, Gaylord Carter.

The horse, owned by Betty Gail Beers of Royal Oak, was held up in heavy traffic on the way in from Rochester, but arrived at the theatre in time for Gaylord's now-famous ride. Unfortunately the photographs of Gaylord on horseback didn't turn out, so reprints are not available, much to the chagrin of the writer.

Billed as a budget-priced alternative for those, who, for one reason or another couldn't attend Don Baker's Radio City Music Hall program in March, member Fred Page arranged a bus trip to the Roaring 20's Pizza in Grand Rapids on April 8. Reservations were cut off when the response grew to three busloads.

The day featured the distaff side of our hobby, a delightful change, and began with a concert featuring Amy Reimer at the 3/11 Barton at the Michigan Theatre in Lansing, sponsored by the Wolverine Chapter. After lunch it was on to Grand Rapids for a program featuring Donna Parker at the 3/33 Wurlitzer at Roaring 20's Pizza. Open console allowed Larry Gleason, Amy Reimer and Sigmund Ross to try the Wurlitzer. Donna returned to the console for another set, and as we left (to give those waiting a chance to sit down) Dave Russell was just beginning his evening's program. The enthusiastic response could well make this an annual event.

The Detroit area premiere of the new Columbia Picture's film *Silver Bears* was presented as a joint fundraiser in conjunction with the Great-



Donna Parker and Amy Reimer — a double feature for Motor City.

(Marjorie Allen Photo)

er Detroit Motion Picture and Television Council, at the Redford Theatre on April 15. While not competing with commercially-operated theatres in running current filmfare, premieres of this type, as well as Hollywood favorites of the past, provide an interesting film alternative that attracts sizeable audiences to the Redford. You, too, can help us pay off our land contract by sending your tax-deductible contribution to MCTOS, P.O. Box 40716, Redford, Michigan 48240.

Our Second Sunday presentation at the Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor in March featured Bud Bates at the 3/13 Barton. In April, Dave and Jo Lau presented their slide show, "A Tribute to Radio City," with Henry Aldridge at the Barton. Some 66 chapter members took advantage of a special package-rate to attend the RCMH program.

Steve Stephani was the artist at our Fourth Sunday program at the Royal Oak Music Theatre 3/16 Barton in April.

DON LOCKWOOD

## NOR-CAL

More activities are being planned for this season with emphasis on hearing some professionals that have not performed for us previously. The San Francisco Bay Area has a wealth of theatre organists and it is difficult to schedule all the able musicians. We are also in a healthy position with many pipes playing in pizza palaces, but losing fast on the in theatre/auditorium installations. There is a rising sun with the installation of the Sandy Fleet/George Allen 4/28 Wurlitzer in the Oakland Paramount plus the former San Francisco Orpheum Robert Morton going into Piedmont High School in Oakland. One of our goals this year is to have a chapter organ in a location allowing more access to the instrument. Both amateurs and professionals have difficulty in arranging time on local commercially used instruments. Perhaps an angel will smile upon our chapter.

Sunday, February 19 was a special treat with a concert by John Muri,



John Muri at Bill Breuer's Cap'n's Galley in Redwood City.



Bob Vaughn (left) visits with John Muri (right) following John's concert for Nor-Cal at Cap'n's Galley, Redwood City, in February.

(Virginia Cheshire Photo)





Dick Bailey announces his next selection at the April Nor-Cal meeting at Ye Olde Pizza Joynt in San Lorenzo. (Jim Dunbar Photo)



Bob Vaughn in concert for Nor-Cal in March at Pizza & Pipes, Serramonte Shopping Center, Daly City. (Jim Dunbar Photo)

1977 Theatre Organist of the Year, at Bill Breuer's Capn's Galley in Redwood City. His California tour closed with us and we were enriched by his techniques and artistry. He certainly practiced what he preaches in his THEATRE ORGAN columns. The hour-and-a-half continuous performance seemed only half that time. Members and guests were enchanted by his warmth, stylings and registrations. His program was well-balanced with fresh rarely-heard selections. There was music for every taste. It was a tribute to John that many local professional organists were present. The brisk record sales of his Detroit Fox album proved our members desired memories of this fine musician.

On March 19, our members were entertained by Bob Vaughn, the featured silent film organist at the San Francisco Avenue Theatre since 1968. The location was Bill Breuer's Pizza and Pipes at the Serramonte Shopping Center in Daly City. Mr. Vaughn is well-known in the West for his silent movie scoring. He deviated from this format and displayed the other side of his talents: pure listening enjoyment of concert theatre music. His program consisted of a great variety of tunes, and melodies from Victor Herbert's *Babes in Toyland* to *Star Wars*. Mixed in-between were Sousa marches, themes from several silent movies, Spanish, Irish and Gershwin melodies. Bob Vaughn's performance was at the 1924 vintage 3/19 Wurlitzer, formerly from the Diversey Theatre in Chicago. Following our two hour concert, Bob continued on the bench to entertain the pizza patrons during the normal

matinee performance. It was a grand afternoon of old-time theatre stylings.

The next meeting was held in Ye Olde Pizza Joynt in San Lorenzo in April with Dick Bailey at the console. Dick is a well-known Bay Area professional organist and organ teacher, and performed to a full house at the 3/13 Wurlitzer. There were Latin numbers, old standards and a smattering of light classics. The registration of each number was well-planned and executed. The volume was extremely well-regulated to fit the small room size. It was a pleasure to listen to an artist who can entertain without damaging the ear drums. Dick's program explored all forms of music and utilized most of the organ voices.

An engraved award was presented to our host, Carsten Henningsen, owner of Ye Olde Pizza Joynt, to signify his contribution of featuring theatre pipe organs. He was the first person to place pipes in a pizza restaurant and started the nationwide practice which has resulted in saving so many fine instruments and keeping them in a public place for us all to enjoy and appreciate. Open console followed Dick Bailey's performance and featured David Peckham, visiting from Rochester. David is a young man with a nice flair for the pipes. Our members who performed included Warren White, Jerry Miller, Don Creswell, Bill Taylor and Al Templett.

Touring professionals, desiring to play chapter concerts in the San Francisco area, are asked to contact Program Chairman Jim Dunbar, 13686 Old Tree Way, Saratoga, CA. 95070, (408) 867-1095.

JIM DUNBAR

## NORTH TEXAS

Our Wonder Morton has arrived and on April 16 a meeting was held to show it off. As described in previous chapter notes, an emergency contingent of chapter members had to meet the vans at the warehouse where it is stored to unload it about two weeks before we expected it. Had the organ arrived on schedule, a few weeks later, it would have been stored in a building that was hit by a small tornado, the roof torn off, and the contents of the building considerably damaged. We're certainly glad the organ arrived early and had to be stored elsewhere. Thank the Good Lord, it's still neatly stored in the alternate building, some 15 miles from where the tornado hit.

The April 16 meeting started out with a few minutes of just wandering around amongst the goodies. Recently elected Chairman Charles Evans then called the meeting to order in the midst of all the Robert Morton organ hardware, and announced that the first item on the agenda would be group tours, led by chapter members with detailed knowledge of all the many pieces stacked in the warehouse. There are enough pieces there to require group tours over a large area to see them all. The magnificent four-manual console, of course, attracted a lot of attention, as did the many ranks of pipes, with much discussion as to which pipes were which voices.

Eric Parker, Lorena McKee and other knowledgeable members of the chapter continued the theatre organ education of members through these tours, explaining what each component was, and giving everyone



a good idea of the size of the task we have set out for ourselves in the refurbishing, and installation of this magnificent example of the theatre organ builder's art. Jim Peterson and Gordon Wright being the most knowledgeable concerning pipe organs (Jim is a professional organ builder), will head the reconstruction committee. These two, as approved by the membership some time ago, along with the very knowledgeable Rodney Yarbrough, are the "brains" of the whole operation, called the Restoration and Installation Committee in our new roster. These members, along with a few others, are the ones who can teach us some skills and "tricks of the trade" of the organ builder's craft.

Also present was David McNally, chairman of a new ATOS Chapter in the Providence, Rhode Island, area. Dave is very knowledgeable in organ rebuilding techniques and gave us some good comments on just what lies ahead.

After the tours of the Wonder Morton, Chairman Charles Evans called the business session to order and while everyone's eyes kept drifting over to the four-manual console, items of chapter business were transacted. He read the committee appointments for the new year and emphasized the need for a lot of real teamwork in the rebuilding of the new acquisition, its' funding and the choice of a suitable location.

We are all getting better and better ideas of what other chapters were up against in handling similar projects. We hope to gain from their experience, and make our installation an outstanding one. We've got plenty of talent to play it.

Speaking of the playing talent, we are proud and happy to see that chapter member Lew Williams (cur-

rently working on his Master's Degree in Organ at Southern Methodist University) is scheduled to appear at the ATOS National Convention in Atlanta. Lew is a real talent. Keep him in mind. This young man is going places in the field of organ music.

Charles Evans and his Chapter Officers and Committee members have gotten things off to a good start for the chapter 78-79 year. Stan Guy is editor of the revitalized chapter newsletter, *Keraulophone*. Jan Nichols has been appointed chapter historian. Meanwhile, plans are going ahead for our number one project, the reconstruction of the Wonder Morton and the selection of the most advantageous location for its installation.

JOE KOSKI

### OHIO VALLEY

Last year it was the natural gas shortage, this year the coal strike — we're not looking forward to next winter's surprises! The coal strike and resulting electrical cutbacks put a crimp in the activities of our chapter for several months during the winter. The University of Cincinnati, owner of Emery Theatre in which our organ is installed, was put on a sharp electrical curtailment and so asked us to not even go into Emery and turn on lights, much less run the organ.

The chapter was saddened at the sudden deaths of two of our members, Stan Todd, and his wife Ginny, owners of the Shady Nook Theatre Restaurant, Stan on January 8. His wife Ginny continued to operate the restaurant, with as little change as possible until her sudden demise on April 9th. The restaurant is still open but is now for sale. Members Herb Wottle and Marilyn Libbin, along with Bob Read, are playing the big

4-manual Wurlitzer on weekends in Stan's place. Ironically Ginny hosted the chapter in a meeting at Shady Nook on March 12. The program for the afternoon was a surprise showing of a feature film, *Angel in My Pocket*, starring Andy Griffith. In the film, a theatre organ is moved from an old theatre and rebuilt and installed in a church in record time. Herb Wottle played the organ to entertain those who were able to stay for dinner following the movie. At the meeting it was announced that Herb will teach a course in theatre organ to be offered by UC on our Wurlitzer in Emery Theatre. Also announced at the meeting was a firm new date for our next public concert — a re-creation of the famed WLW late night radio program, *Moon River*, to be held April 30. The program was originally scheduled for March 5, but the coal strike took care of that. The show will star Lee Erwin, organist on *Moon River* for eleven years as well as chief organist at the RKO Albee Theatre, where our organ was originally installed. Lee will be assisted by other performers from the old radio show. All involved are donating their talents for the show, which will be a benefit for the restoration of Emery Theatre. The concert will kick off a fund drive by the chapter to raise money for the restoration and renovation of Emery.

Our first meeting at Emery in several months was held on April 14. The main purpose of the meeting was to make final concert work assignments and check on ticket sales. Henry Garcia, one of our newest members, was featured organist. Henry gave us a hint of his talents when he played one number at an open console session last year as a new member. He has played the organ professionally for a number of years and provided an excellent pro-

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Six days before our April 30 show, we were happily sold out, having run only one newspaper ad in addition to a small amount of other publicity. Most ticket sales were made by members based on word of mouth advertising. We're hoping that this is indicative of Cincinnati's response to future theatre organ shows as well.

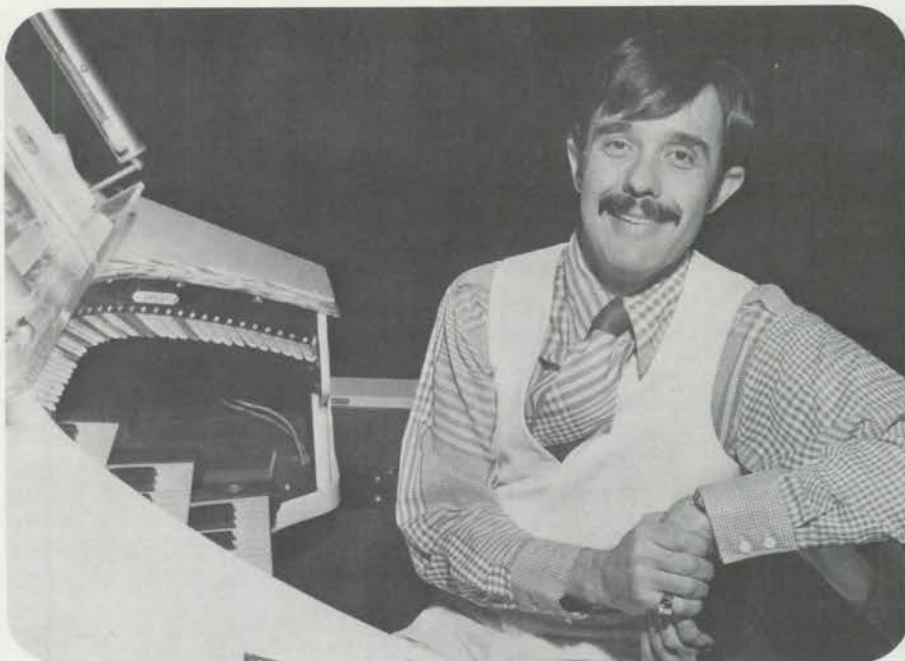
We have leased space in Emery Theatre from UC to provide us with a permanent office for the chapter. Our new chapter headquarters address is 1112 Walnut St., Cincinnati, OH 45210. Our phone number is (513) 721-2741. We have the "Call Forwarding" feature on our line which allows calls to be transferred to members' homes when no one is in the office, so the phone can always be answered. Ticket mail orders for future concerts may be sent to the above address.

MIKE DETROY

## OK CITY

A considerable amount of planning, preparation and anticipation culminated in the April 25 concert of Hector Olivera at the 4/14 Kilgen organ in Oklahoma City's Civic Center Music Hall. This was Hector's second appearance here in less than a year. This most recent event was co-sponsored by the local arts council as the kick-off event of the 12th Annual Arts Festival which features many kinds of visual and performing arts.

On the day of the concert Hector and the organ were featured live on the popular local midday TV program *Dannysday*. The camera provided some extraordinary close up views of the organist's hands and feet. Hector then went outside into the Oklahoma wind for an interview with the show's co-hosts Danny



Warren Lubitch at the Scottish Rite Temple Wurlitzer at the March meeting.

(Claude V. Neuffer Photo)

Williams and Mary Hart.

Enthusiastic concertgoers were treated well, thanks to the fine manual and pedal dexterity that is a part of Hector's organ playing. The program consisted of a number of tunes in the popular vein from both past and present. There was also a liberal sprinkling of the artist's witty comments as well as presentation of compositions by Bach and Widor. Hector had much praise for the quality of the sound produced by the organ.

During the concert Hector paid a verbal and musical tribute to the late Ken Wright who played the organ during the entire 15 years it was located in the studio of WKY radio. A 1947 recording made by Ken on the Kilgen has been reissued through the support and efforts of several of Ken's friends. The proceeds of record sales will go into a trust fund for the education of Ken's daughter.

## OREGON

In March, we had the privilege of hearing the popular California Bay Area organist, Warren Lubich, at the Scottish Rite Temple Wurlitzer. Warren is a staff organist at the Avenue Theatre in San Francisco and is also heard regularly at several of the Pizza organs in the south Bay Area.

This organ was installed as a Style F 2/8 in Portland's Egyptian Theatre in 1924. In 1936 it was moved to the present location where a third manual and five ranks were added. Because there are no fiery reeds, the tone is rich and mellow, best suited to ballads and certain classical music.

By skillfully tailoring his selections to this organ, Warren played an excellent program which included tunes such as "Indian Love Call," "Light of My Life," "Sugar Blues"

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and the seasonal "Easter Parade."

An exquisite "When You Wish Upon a Star," which featured a most beautiful Tibia solo with string and Vox accompaniment was a special treat.

Thanks to Warren Lubich and the Scottish Rite management for a most enjoyable afternoon.

BUD ABEL

### PIKES PEAK

The PPATOS has had a most prosperous spring. Due to forecasted heavy scheduling of the City Auditorium this summer the installation crew for the Chief Theatre organ put in much overtime to complete the installation. In late April the crew scheduled the auditorium for an entire week — 24 hours a day. Some very long days were put in and a major amount of the organ was completed. With some final touches we hope to have the organ completed by late June, much earlier than anticipated. Finally, Colorado Springs will be able to hear the Chief organ after many years of silence.

With the passing of spring we look forward to the coming of summer and the recital series at the Air Force Academy. The Cadet Chapel at the AFA is an imposing structure of steel, aluminum and stained glass. The apex of the seventeen spires are 99 feet above the floor. At the rear of the chapel is the organ. The 3/79 Moller is the largest freestanding organ in the Western United States. The organ was installed in 1963 and designed by Walter Holtkamp. Crowned by the horizontal trompettas and flanked by the full length 32" reeds, the organ makes a most impressive visual impact. The recital series begins on Sunday, July 9 at 8 p.m. and continues through August. The recitals are performed by

internationally famous artists. Even though somewhat out of our realm of theatre organ, Sunday nights invariably find many ATOS'ers from Colorado Springs and Denver present.

Best wishes for a good summer and the upcoming convention. We welcome all vacationers to Colorado this summer to stop and inspect our projects.

SCOTT CHRISTIANSEN

### POTOMAC VALLEY

The March meeting was held at the George Washington Memorial Masonic Temple auditorium in Alexandria, Virginia. Over 150 members and guests were there, with a scattering of the general public. The March 16 edition of the Alexandria (VA) *Gazette* had included a full page picture story of the pipe organ installations of Jimmy Boyce and Bob Stratton. Included was an announcement describing the scheduled organ concert at the Masonic Temple.

One word describes the 3/35 Moller, draw knob console installation, and the acoustics in the auditorium — fantastic. No need for a sound system here. A stage whisper from any part of the stage or floor carries adequately to any point in the elevated seating area. The Moller adapts to generate a wide variety of tonal effects. For example, a 32-note Deagan carillon is attached to the Moller. Sound is generated by special rods made and tuned during manufacture. These are struck by an armature which is activated by a solenoid. The sound is picked up electro-magnetically and amplified by a four unit, 2000-watt audio system which feeds 16 speakers at the top of the tower of the temple. Another speaker is located in the organ

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chamber, allowing the carillon to be heard in the auditorium. A second set of solenoids controls dampers, one for each note. The dampers may be held away from the vibrating rods by depressing a second F sharp of the Moller pedal keyboard. However, the organ's player roll has additional punchings for registration.

The carillon is playable manually from the organ console, or through a



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George Johnson (left) presents Al Baldino with a plaque in appreciation of his services as chairman.  
(Harold R. Richman Photo)



The 3/35 Moller console at the George Washington Memorial Masonic Temple in Alexandria.  
(Harold R. Richman Photo)

paper roll type player. The player can be programmed to play hymns at preset times and strike the hours and Westminster Chimes on quarter hours. Numerous music rolls are available for operating the carillon automatically.

Also of interest is another paper roll player, made by the Moller Company. It sets in a small ante-room near the stage, and is part of the organ, for automatic play. The mechanics of these player attachments are similar to the finer old-time automatic player pianos, such as the Duo Art and Ampico, with the addition of special effects and controls. Hundreds of classical and other perforated paper music rolls are available. These are patterned after the conventional music roll but carry much more information.

*(We thank Leonard J. Thomas, Sr. for making the technical information on the Deagan carillon available to us.)*

The business portion of the meeting was devoted to brief reports by Chairman Bob Stratton and others. These included an updated review of our Kimball restoration, well on

the way toward the installation phase at the University of Maryland.

George Johnson presented Al Baldino with an impressive plaque as a token of our appreciation for exceptional services rendered during Al's term as chairman of the chapter which ended December 31, 1977.

Our scheduled concert artist for the afternoon was Richard "Rick" Maryman, one of a large group of talented members who can always be counted on to entertain us. Rick did a very creditable job. In tune with the conditions imposed by a classical concert organ, he concentrated on the better-known classics, replete with interesting program comments. Rick did include, however, several classical organ arrangements in theatre organ style. We appreciate the opportunity to have been offered the facilities of the temple and its fine instrument in concert.

On March 4, 1978, 186 members of our chapter went to Radio City Music Hall, in New York City, to see and hear a special program sponsored by the New York Chapter, prior to the closing of the theatre.

Neither the world-famous Music Hall, Don Baker nor the Wurlitzer need further introduction!

Don Baker received a warm welcome. At midpoint in his program he gave a demonstration of the various voices of the Wurlitzer. As an additional surprise, Lee Erwin showed up and played several selections at the second console of the organ. The Music Hall Easter show, with a cast of 60 people, plus 30 Rockettes was accompanied by an orchestra of about 65, and the organ.

The stage show closed with the Rockettes doing their well-known and revered precision dance routine. The entire program of entertainment and technical demonstration left an indelible impression on the audience.

HAROLD R. RICHMAN

## PUGET SOUND

Puget Sound commenced the year on January 29 by borrowing talent from Portland once again, this time in the person of Paul Quarino, staff organist of the Organ Grinder. A full house at Greenwood Pizza and Pipes enjoyed his performance at



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March 12 found us all at the Tacoma Pizza and Pipes to hear Bob Salisbury, who is more frequently heard at the piano accompanying the British music hall team of Maisie and Arden. He's not lost on pipes, though, and even added an extra set: bagpipes played by friend Jim McLean for a few numbers. Both performers appeared in kilts, which enhanced the whole effect.

By April 9, we were ready for our first annual get-it-all-together meeting at Haller Lake Clubhouse. Featured were a Show and Tell, Swap and Sell (many record classics went to happy new owners) snack potluck, open console at the chapter organ and a business meeting with more membership input than is usually possible at a concert meeting. This was followed by open house at Genny Whitting's to try out the 2/10 Hybrid with the Morton console upstairs, and Don Myers' custom five-manual console temporarily connected downstairs. The latter has been in the building process for almost 10 years, and just got eager to play.

Other programs of interest in our neighborhood: the Vancouver Orpheum has presented Ann Leaf and Rex Koury in concert, and has other fine artists lined up for future programs.

Big Bob's Pipe Dream is now under new ownership and has a new name: the Pizza Works. Pipe organ has not been a familiar feature to the new owners, but they have quickly learned to appreciate it, even to the extent of presenting Jonas Nordwall in a special concert on May 7.

Donn Clayton and Greg Smith presented a weekend seminar at Rosario, the charming resort in the San Juan Islands, and Jack and Betty Laffaw of Bellevue Pizza and



(L to R) Jim McLean and Bob Salisbury at Tacoma Pizza and Pipes. (Dick Daubert Photo)

Pipes played host at breakfast to the costumed members of Queen Victoria's court from Victoria B.C., together with members of the East-side Convention Bureau. Dick Schrum entertained at the Wurlitzer.

Mother's weekend May 6 at Washington State University featured the 2/7 Robert Morton in the Physics department open house, with a day-long program of silent movies accompanied by Jim Park, interspersed with intermission music by daughters Treta (age 11) and Heather (age 9).

GENNY WHITTING

### RED RIVER

We completed our seventh show at the Fargo Theatre, in April, which starred two of our members, Pat Kelly and Lance Johnson. Pat han-

dled the first half with concert selections, a sing-along, and the scoring for a special silent animated film as well as a Chaplin film, *The Immigrant*. Following intermission, Lance played the feature film *Peck's Bad Boy* with the irresistible child actor, Jackie Coogan. As a special touch of class, our own "Incomparable Hildegard" entertained our patrons preceding the show with music at a Steinway grand in the lobby. We continue to attract people from distant points to our shows and this time from as far away as Chicago.

The first Sunday in April, Tony Tahlman, of Minneapolis, stopped in to visit with Lance Johnson. After a few minutes at the theatre, where Lance played a movie intermission, they took a short drive to Bud's Roller Rink in Moorhead. There, Tony was the last person to play the 3/7 Barton-Moller for skating public. Then it was to Lance's home, where Tony tried out the 2/6 Robert Morton hybrid and heard the newest stop — a specially-voiced reed, after the "Serpent" sound. It'll pin your ears back — not that it's terribly loud, but it is very crisp!

The next day was a time for hard work and pangs of sadness. Steve Stevenson of Wichita Falls, Tex., arrived to begin removing the roller rink organ which he had bought a few weeks earlier. So, Steve, along with Lance, three of his sons, and the writer managed to get it all stuffed carefully into an 18 foot rental truck in a day-and-a-half. Steve is planning a new home around this organ, where it will get much TLC we're sure, but it's painful to see it leave our area. Our family's association with this organ started in 1958, when Lance bought it and installed it in our parent's home. It has had several homes, the first being the WDAY radio studios in Fargo, for which it

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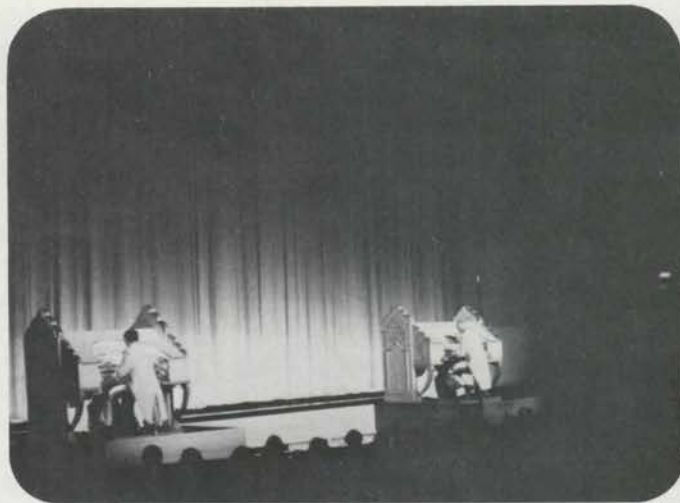
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Chapter information table in lobby of Paramount. Note working model of pipe organ. It plays.



Left to right: Bob Castle and Rick Dalrymple at the Paramount's twin consoles.

was built in 1925 and played by our own Hildegard. Steve did leave behind the lift, a gift to our chapter, which we would like to use at the Fargo Theatre someday.

A local Wurlitzer dealer, Music Inc., has given our chapter a set of Wurlitzer posters which we plan to frame properly and display at the Fargo. A number of us have been attending monthly concerts at their showroom, which featured Ron Atkinson, Paul Street and Roy Hanson this spring. We invited Mr. Hanson to join us at the theatre after hours and play the mighty Wurlitzer for as long as he liked. There's nothing like a private concert in an empty theatre after midnight, a pipe organ in top shape, and a personable, talented organist to really make it sing. A great way to end any day!

We've recently had a professional picture taken of our chapter Wurlitzer console by Tom Tollefson and the 8 x 10's of this three-manual ebony beauty on our walls will remind us of what our main goal is here in Fargo.

SONIA CARLSON

## ROCKY MOUNTAIN

Thursday, February 23 was a gala night for just about everyone in Denver. The Intermountain Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society booked the 1925 silent movie, *The White Desert*, that played to a capacity house at Denver's beautiful and historic Paramount Theatre. The plot concerned the problems and dangers of constructing a railway tunnel thru the Rockies. The filming was done high up in Rollins Pass on the line of the Denver & Salt Lake RR Co. Our man, Bob Castle, cued the film at the 4/20 Wurlitzer organ, much to the delight of the packed house.

Our work crew, headed by Bob Castle, worked many hours on the Mighty Wurlitzer to bring it into excellent shape for the show. The lights dimmed after a gay 20's dance review, and a mighty sound filled the theatre as the gold and white twin consoles rose from the pit. The reception was deafening.

Our March program was held at the new Wells Music Co. store in

Lakewood, Colorado, where we were entertained by De Loy Goegelein. We saw and heard the new Rodgers electronic/pipe organ made for church and concert work. Also on the bill was Russ Jones who played music on the lighter side.

Our program committee, headed by Bill Arthur and publicity committee, headed by Ron Graham, are really working this year to keep us all busy, going and coming. The new board of directors is working to put this chapter on the map. We have already signed up four or five new members since the beginning of the year and they are very enthusiastic about theatre pipe organs and helping us maintain them.

The wiring on Fred Riser's Wurlitzer is about completed. The giant trunk to connect the two chambers will soon be hung, and with a few minor jobs upstairs, we should have it winded this summer.

The Aladdin Theatre crew are scratching their heads about how to move a seven-foot square, 14-inch deep, several-hundred-pound combination action from the boiler room

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Denver's Paramount Theatre. A capacity house for a silent movie.

to the upstairs to be connected to the console of the 3/17 Wicks. With the 70mm screen and horns built out over the old pit we can't get it up through the house. The old service stairs in the rear of the theatre now has a two-inch gas line running right through the center of the trap door leading to the parking lot. Any ideas??? 'Nuff said. More later when we get the problem solved.

FRANK R. GANDY

## ST. LOUIS

In the last issue of THEATRE ORGAN there was an error in our chapter notes on page 67. "Later in the year Marc Eyestone substituted at the Fox until the sad day in Feb-

ruary 1978 when the organ was removed." Corrected, the sentence should have read, "Later in the year Marc Eyestone substituted at the Old St. Louis Noodle and Pizza Company until the sad day in February 1978 when the organ was removed." The organ has been placed in storage.

Jim Labit arranged the February meeting at the Ludwig Aeolian Music Store in the new Chesterfield Mall. Tom Thomassen, store manager, played the musical part of the meeting on a "top of the line" model 950 Wurlitzer. He explained the unlimited capabilities of this fine theatre organ and demonstrated with many novelty numbers and unique registrations. Open console followed and was especially good due to the store's inventory of 25 organs (most with headphones), 43 pianos and a variety of other instruments.

Organ music, bicycles and doughnuts were all around us when Bill and Delores Boals hosted the March meeting at their Schwinn West Bicycle Shop in Baldwin, MO. Ken Iborg, chapter chairman, announced that there would be some theatre organ instruction at each meeting. He initiated the practice by explaining glissando and trill notes, and demonstrated both during the musical portion of the meeting. His first two selections, "Get Happy," and "Bicycle Built for Two" put everyone in the proper mood for a fast-moving program of delightful music. Bill Boals gave the specs of his two-manual Conn theatre organ, then played his own arrangement of "Mexicali Rose."

Television played a significant roll in the April meeting hosted by Rich and Melba Oberle at their home. When members filled the music room, others were seated in the living room and also the breakfast

area where they could observe everything taking place in the music room on closed circuit television monitors. This setup was especially helpful since Bob Ellison was guest organist for the evening, and he packed them in just as he packs them in at the Kirkwood Holiday Inn. Bob started his part of the program with a discussion of rhythms in a novel hand-clapping manner. He then masterfully played a variety of old and new themes in the superb style that has enhanced his vast popularity and made him one of the busiest organists in this area.

Rich Oberle had assembled his organ at home. It has a three-manual console built to AGO standards, 32 pedals, two toe studs and two clusters of electronic pipes over fifteen inch speakers. In addition, it has an RMI electronic piano, tuned orchestra bells, chimes from a church pipe organ and a Thomas Band Box.

During open console at the April meeting Fred Pillsbury and Bernard Nordmann teamed up at the organ and piano and were so sensational that they were forced by applause to encore at least a dozen times. Their impromptu program of old show hits was enormously enjoyed by everyone.

## SIERRA

Sunday afternoon, March 19, found approximately 120 members and guests at the Big Top Pizza to enjoy Van Welch at the "Moon River" Wurlitzer.

It is easy to understand why this Bay Area artist is much appreciated by those who remember the good old days, and music. He plays it like it was! I don't believe a single number on his program would have a copyright date more recent than twenty-five years old. His presentation in-

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cluded a Hawaiian medley, Rudolph Friml selections, and a selection of the best-liked Gershwin tunes. Two good old-timers, "You're Getting To Be A Habit With Me" and "Never-the-less I'm In Love With You," just about sums up our feeling for Van. We'll be looking forward to his next visit.

Memories of the fabulous San Francisco Fox were brought to our April meeting by Everett Nourse, seated at the Arden Pipes and Pizza 4/22 Wurlitzer. Everett needs no introduction to theatre organ fans. He has been heard in concert at ATOS conventions, and (with Tiny James) made the famous *Farewell to the Fox* recordings. These records, originally released in 1965, were so popular that they are being reissued on the Doric label. Everett's concert consisted of selections from these records, plus a few more recent numbers, and a seldom heard Rimsky-Korsakow, "Caprice Espanol" with some very exciting piano fireworks.

I'm sure we have two more theatre organ enthusiasts. The concert had just started when a young couple wandered in. It was immediately obvious that they had never seen a theatre organ, for they stopped dead in their tracks to watch Everett play for a couple of minutes and then slid onto an empty bench just beside the console. With the naivety of two children, they become more and more excited as they discovered that he was using one foot for the pedal notes, and the other foot was controlling the shutters, and the various stop tabs changed the sound and brought in the wall-mounted percussions. Whispering very quietly, and with much demonstrative finger movement on the table top, they were like Alice in Wonderland.

During the intermission, our chairman announced that Everett's

records were for sale. This immediately brought up a discussion between them and after much urging by his wife the young man came to the record table to inquire the price. When told the records were five dollars, he returned to his table and again there was a discussion with much nodding of heads. Finally she opened a battered bag and took from it a small coin purse from which she removed and straightened, one by one, three one-dollar bills and some small change. In the meantime he had found a dollar and some change in his pocket. Carefully they added it up and were obviously overjoyed to find they had enough for a record, which he purchased.

When told Everett would sign it for them, they shyly approached his table, received the autograph and carried the record back to their table as though it were solid gold. During the second half of the program they carefully read the record jacket notes, again with much nodding of heads and finger references to the organ console.

After the program was over, the young couple approached me at the door and asked how much it cost to join the chapter. They admitted they would like to join, but just couldn't afford it — they had been married a short time, he was going to college and holding a part time job, and a baby was expected in the not-too-distant future. But they thought the theatre organ was real "cool" and someday they would become members. I told them that in the meantime they were welcome to attend our monthly meetings. The last I saw of them, was as they left, holding hands and clutching a theatre organ record that obviously had meant great sacrifice to them.

Welcome to the club, youngsters!

KEYZANPEDALS

## SOONER STATE

March and April were quiet months for the chapter — "quiet" meaning that our meetings had no featured artists in performance. Both sessions were held around the 3/10 Robert Morton at Tulsa's American Christian College, with open console following short business meetings.

Several members attended Hector Olivera's concert in Oklahoma City on April 25. Unfortunately, the two-and-a-half-hour drive to our state's capital on a Tuesday night (with another two-and-a-half hours for the return) is difficult for many of our workin' folks to manage — especially when the alarm clock goes off early in the morning. Reports from those who did attend, indicated that Hector gave another fantastic, fabulous performance.

DOROTHY SMITH

## SOUTH FLORIDA

Every so often, in the wide search for varied entertainment, we look inward to our own chapter and discover a new talent. The March meeting of SOFTOS was such an occasion. Don Ursem, a transplant from California, made the mistake of taking the console at the end of one of our many late-night work parties. He displayed a style much like the late Buddy Cole. Within weeks, we had Don cutting his teeth on this first formal club concert at the Allen 435 in the Overbrook Organ Studio, Ft. Lauderdale.

Don's program was well rounded, touching all bases — fast/slow; new/old; show/pop. Patterned from many hours of listening to records, he says. However attained, Don does superbly and can count on many return engagements.



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In April, Gaylord Carter, with his program of movies, sing-along slides and just good music at the Mighty Wurlitzer, opened to a sell-out crowd at Gusman Hall. Our first formal evening concert, sponsored in conjunction with the *Miami Herald*, was enthusiastically received by the Miami audience. Many folks from Palm Beach drove down to catch the show, having been exposed to Gaylord in his recent *King of Kings* program in the First Baptist Church of West Palm Beach. It was a grand way to kick off the 1978 concert season and inaugurate the recently restored instrument. Thanks Gaylord, for a great performance. You shall return!

Thanks, also, to the unsung SOFTOS heros and heroines who worked so hard to make it happen.

STEVE FITZGERALD

### SOUTHERN ARIZONA

Our April meeting gave us the opportunity of hearing one of our newer members, Bill Carr, also of the Valley Of The Sun Chapter, in a spot as a guest artist. We were also playing host to a few others who are members of both chapters. These get-togethers are a great way to become better acquainted and to form new friendships.

The weather turned out beautifully after part of a week of "slop-over" rain from the extreme southern California area. Lois and Larry Seamands' patio was well-used by most of the 50 members in attendance for our usual after-concert luncheon.

Along with Bill Carr's performance we were entertained by Bea Kotasek, Lynn Staininger and Helen Bowers, after which we had open console.

Several of our local members,

Rudy Kotasek, Al Begany, Ray Chase, Ray Staininger and the writer, have been journeying to Phoenix each Saturday to attend Bill Carr's workshop on the care and feeding of pipe organs, in anticipation of Southern Arizona's installation in the hopefully near future. So far we have worked chamber modification, installation of chests and winding of same, connections of spreader bars and tuning. It has been very interesting and very educational and time very well spent. We are very fortunate, as is Valley Of The Sun Chapter, in having the talent and availability of a member such as Bill Carr to train us in this endeavor.

BOB HIGH



Brent Carr pushes stops for dad Bill on Phoenix College Wurlitzer.

### VALLEY OF THE SUN

Our area was anything *but* the Valley of the Sun on March 5 when chapter members arrived at Organ Stop Pizza in Mesa for Ron Rhode's third annual spring concert! After receiving most of our annual rainfall during the first three months of the year, the valley was pretty soaked — but the weather didn't dampen



Ron Rhode at the Organ Stop Wurlitzer, following his spring concert.

the spirits of the ATOSers attending the concert. Ron presented an excellent program of organ music, with an added bonus — Ron Rhode *sang!* With Phoenix Organ Stop organist Walt Strony accompanying him on the 3/25 Wurlitzer, Ron began the second portion of his program by singing "Someday." Many listeners were pleasantly surprised. During the intermission, Organ Stop owner Bill Brown recognized our chapter, and told the audience about our restoration projects.

Our program chairman, Reynolds Galbraith, passed away on March 8. He died of a heart attack in his home in Mesa. At our next board meeting, Don Reasor was appointed to fill Galbraith's post.

Our March social meeting was held at Phoenix College where our chapter is currently in the process of restoring the school's 2/9 Wurlitzer. With a little "help" from small sons Ricky and Brent, chairman Bill Carr explained the pipework in the organ. At present, the Wurlitzer's nine ranks include a Harmonic Tuba, Tibia Clausa, Vox Humana, Open Diapason, Orchestral Oboe, Clarinet, Concert Flute, Violin, and Vio-

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Fr. Jim Miller at the 3/11 Barton in the Michigan Theatre, Lansing, Mich.



John Lauter, guest artist at the March meeting in the Jenk's home.

(Marjorie Allen Photo)

lin Celeste. Not everything plays, however. There's still a lot of work to be done, but we're hoping to finish it and have a dedication concert before the end of the year. Following Bill's talk, members participated in open console.

Saturday, March 25, was the first meeting of our pipe organ school, usually held at the First Christian Church Fellowship Hall. We are planning on three sessions of six class meetings each where members can learn some of the technical aspects of the pipe organ. Participants include some of our fellow ATOS members from the Southern Arizona Chapter in Tucson.

On April 2, some of our members traveled to Tucson for the Southern Arizona meeting. Bill Carr was one of four organists to play at their social.

It was back to Phoenix College for our April social meeting. Our guest artist for the evening was Dave Brokowski, who presented a mini-concert at the college Wurlitzer. His program for the evening consisted mainly of songs that might have been popular when the organ was new.

Later we held a special business meeting concerning another of our restoration projects, the pipe organ from the old Phoenix Paramount Theatre. The organ now belongs to the chapter.

MADELINE LIVOLSI

### WOLVERINE

Our January meeting was held at the Royal Oak Music Theatre starring John Fischer at the 3/16 Barton. John's program was basically old favorites with some show medleys thrown in. Our thanks to John, crew chief Mert Harris and the MCTOS.

February found us at the Temple Theatre in Saginaw with Fr. Jim Miller at the 3/11 Barton. One of the highlights of Jim's program was an Ellington medley including "Solitude" and "Sophisticated Lady."

Our First Saturday programs in Lansing, at the Michigan Theatre, are gaining more regular attendees with each passing month. In January, Scott Smith was at the console of the 3/11 Barton. Greg Yassick was the artist in February with a widely varied program beginning with the

theme from *Silent Movie*. His contemporary harmonies proved that one need not play every musical note exactly as written.

Our March First Saturday was co-sponsored by an independant group known as "Da Capo, Inc.," who are dedicated to purchasing the fifty-seven-year-old Michigan Theatre, with the organ intact, and restoring it to its former elegance, as a performing arts center. Fr. Jim Miller started at the Barton for a short (but super) program, and concluded with an accompaniment to Harold Lloyd's *Never Weaken*. Among the speakers in attendance were Tom O. Thompson, president of "Da Capo, Inc.," and Drew Ebersson, son of the architect, of the Strand-Michigan Theatre, John Ebersson.

DAVID L. JONES

The Brighton home of Don and Shirley Jenks was the scene for our March meeting. Guest artist John Lauter presented a fine program at the residence Rodgers 33E. Visitors were impressed by John's dexterity as well as the pipe-like sounds that emerged from the electronic instru-

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Host Don Jenks at his Rodgers 33E.

(Marjorie Allen Photo)



Fr. Jim Miller and his 2/7 Barton, now ensconced in his home in Fenton, Mich.

(Ed Corey Photo)

ment, which has been painstakingly adjusted for this effect. Several of our members took advantage of a lengthy open console session.

Our April First Saturday at the Michigan Theatre in Lansing starred Amy Reimer at the 3/11 Barton. Over 200 persons were in attendance — the majority of which arrived only minutes before showtime via bus from Detroit. Those arriving in this manner were taking part in the Motor City "Poor Man's Organ Trip Show." The beautiful young lady from Muskegon entertained us with a very well-rounded program, capped off with one of the cleanest versions

of "Dizzy Fingers" we've heard yet.

The long-awaited premiere of Fr. Jim Miller's recently installed 2/7 Barton became a reality on April 16. Approval of the instrument was very high — and rightfully so. Since being removed from the Ready Theatre in Niles, Michigan, in late 1976, the organ has undergone rebuilding to the minutest detail in its new home in Fenton, Michigan. To put the icing on the cake, Fr. Jim acquired the tonal talents of professional voicer Rick Swanson, and it shows. Rick evened out all of the ranks, and filled in the missing holes with the proper scale replacements.

The instrument speaks down an open staircase with lightning speed and great authority. This is not to say that it parts one's hair, as some home installations have a tendency to do, nor has it been muffled in any way. It is a near perfect blend of instrument and installation — not to mention the brilliant artistry of its "keeper" — Fr. Jim. We look forward to many return trips to view and play this magnificent little beast.

Our thanks to the Jenks, Amy Reimer, Fr. Jim Miller, Da Capo, Inc. and the Michigan Theatre staff.

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