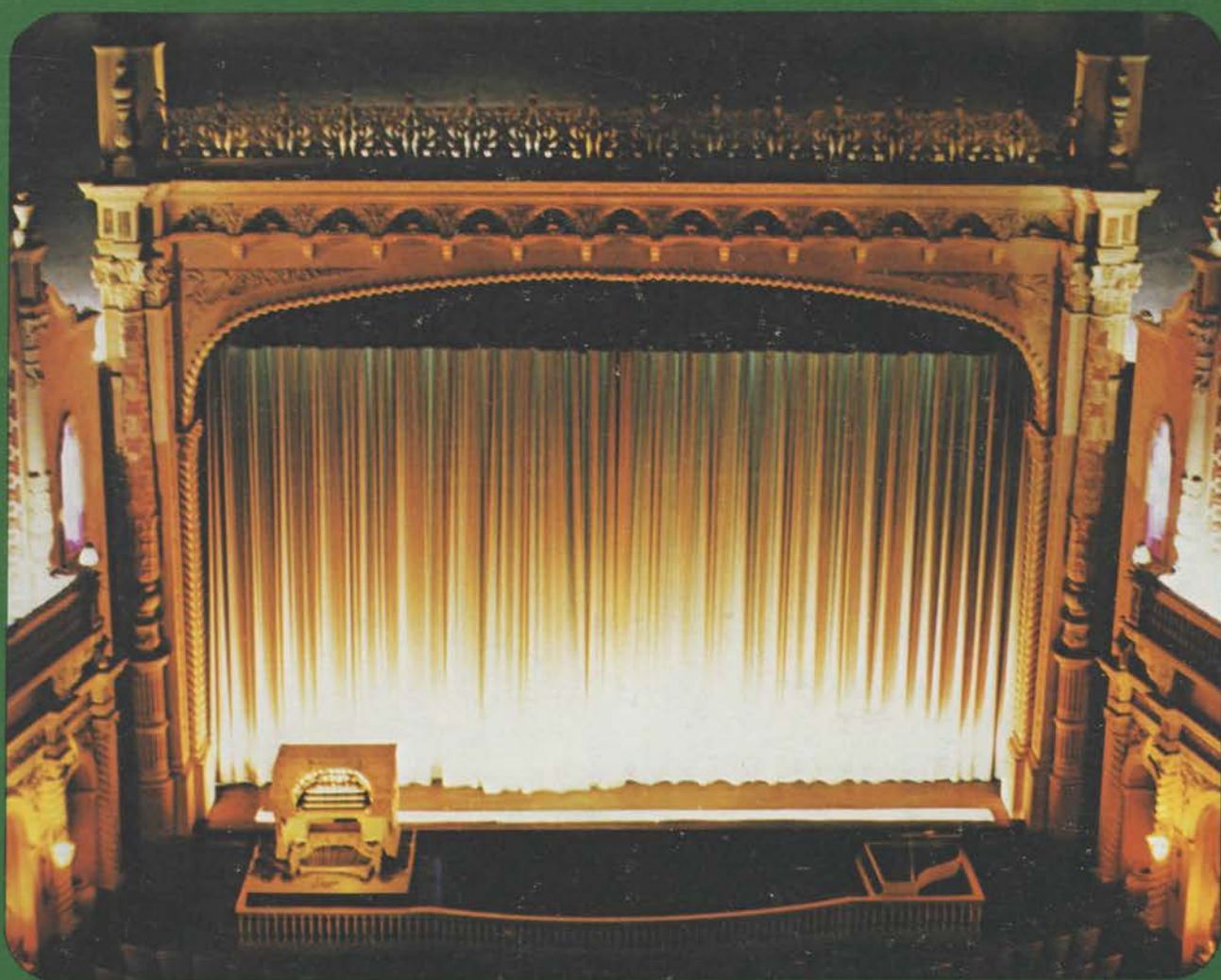


THEATRE ORGAN

August/September 1978



Journal of the American Theatre Organ Society

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VOLUME 20, NUMBER 4

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER, 1978

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The Anderson (Indiana) Paramount is a John Ebersson atmospherichouse. It boasts a 4/15 Page theatre pipe organ. See story on page 23.

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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

1978 — Len Clarke

President's Message

For the past two years I have had the honor and privilege of being the president of the greatest organization in the world, the American Theatre Organ Society.

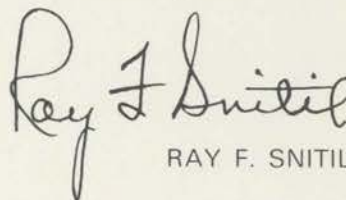
The rewards and benefits of this office are: being the recipient of friendliness and warmth during my visits to the various chapters, and acquiring lasting acquaintances at the conventions and through letters I have received. There was, also, an enthusiasm noted through these contacts that indicated our society would have continuing growth. New members are constantly being attracted to our interesting and exciting hobby society and our numbers are increasing steadily!

ATOS is also blessed with having dedicated members and I want to thank each one that helped me during my term of office. Without their assistance and understanding my job would have been very difficult. My office was also made much lighter by the support of the officers, board of directors and the THEATRE ORGAN staff — and in particular that of Erwin Young, who was invaluable to me with his expertise, knowledge and background of theatre organ. To all of them, a big thank you.

And finally, but not in the least, a big thank you to my wife, Dorothy. She now knows what it is to be the wife of an ATOS president.

It has been a wonderful two years, regardless of its "ups and downs," and I will cherish them for the rest of my life. Theatre organ has been and will forever be a part of me. I will never stop working for ATOS and I ask each and every one of you to support your new president, officers and board of directors, so that ATOS can continue to grow and prosper in the years to come.

Sincerely,



RAY F. SNITIL





The 23rd ATOS National Convention ATLANTA '78

Photos by Bill Lamb unless otherwise noted.

Y' All Come, Atlanta 1978

That was the invitation extended to ATOS by the Atlanta Chapter. Over 750 members responded and another ATOS meeting began on July 9th.

The headquarters hotel was the older Sheraton-Biltmore which has been refurbished and provided adequate facilities for the convention needs.

The entrance of the hotel is styled in the gracious manner of the Old South. One of the restaurants even featured waiters, obviously trained by Step 'n' Fetchit, who became famous for their slow shuffle response to all situations.

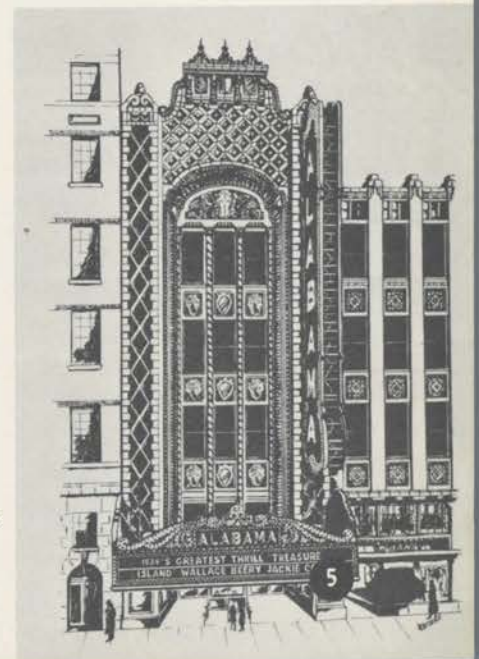
The 23rd ATOS Convention got off to a leisurely start on the humid afternoon of July 9th at the huge Atlanta Fox Theatre. The organist was Lee Erwin. He had arrived



◀ The main entrance to the Sheraton Biltmore, our convention headquarters in Atlanta. (Don Lockwood Photo)

A drawing of the Alabama Theatre by Linda Whitmire. ▶

THEATRE ORGAN





Lee Erwin opened the convention at the Fox. With him are his sister, Sara Hix from Huntsville, Alabama, and his brother, Joe Erwin from Tryon, North Carolina.



Don Schwing, custodian of the ATOS Wurlitzer in Carnegie Hall Cinema, was a great help in tuning the Fox Moller before the first concert.



Convention Chairman Jim Thrower emceed the programs at the Fox, in addition to his other duties.



The buffet dinner in the Egyptian Ballroom was a serious affair from the look on the faces of these members.

In the Egyptian Ballroom.



several days early and when he checked out the 4/42 Moller, he found it badly out of tune, due to the heat and on-and-off air conditioning. Lee found volunteers in Lance Luce, Robert Foreman, Robbie Irwin, Don Schwing, and visitor-brother Joe Erwin, who, with Joe Patten, tuned for the next three days in chambers where the heat reached 90 degrees.

The resulting fatigue might have floored a less dedicated artist, but there was nothing in Lee's performance which revealed the strain he had been under. In fact, he was in top form.

A brief greeting was made on behalf of the Atlanta and Alabama chapters by convention chairman, James Thrower.

Then, at 2:45 p.m., the huge console rose slowly in the glare of a white spot as Lee played a fanfare, his introduction to "But Not For Me." Among Lee's selections was a medley of tunes associated with the South, a bow to the host chapter, including "Carolina Moon" and "When It's Sleepy Time Down South." He then demonstrated the organ's voices, avoiding several ranks which were not useable. During his display of the Moller's battery of sound effects, Lee encountered a cipher in the sleighbells which was heard faintly through the next several selections until silenced.

Perhaps Lee's claim to early fame was his midnight organ performances on Cincinnati's WLW during the '30s. These programs conjure many sentimental memories for aging lovers, and Lee's brief but beautiful re-creation of a portion of one of the programs hit the spot. He included the left-hand counter melodies which made the program's signature, "Caprice Viennois," distinctly his. It was a highlight. Leading up to intermission was a varied medley of favorites, closing with a powerful reading of Leonard Bernstein's "Tonight."

After intermission, it was silent movie time, and Lee applied his theories on movie accompaniment (which excludes recognizable selections) to Buster Keaton's detective work in *Sherlock Jr.*, Lee dropped his rule for a moment with a musical allusion to "Sailing, Sailing" as Buster's flivver floated down a river, but quickly recovered his pose and got out of it. Horrors! Buster and Lee rated an enthusiastic round of applause after Buster won the girl and was contemplating the results of matrimony at the fadeout. Lee gave a spiel on the ATOS "Little Mother" organ, now on lease to the New York Carnegie Hall Cinema, and invited audience members to drop in when they are visiting the Big Apple.

The audience was then directed to a stairway which led to a huge closed door above the theatre's lobby, at mezzanine level. After about 10 minutes' wait on the steps, the door was opened and the conventioners were admitted to a huge, but empty ballroom. More waiting. Then more doors opened and in another ballroom were bars where lines quickly formed ("Coke" is the local drink in Atlanta), and two tables were loaded with buffet food around which hungry ATOSers soon assembled, three and four deep. It was catch-as-catch-can with those equipped with long reaches and more adventuresome natures got their plates loaded first while the meek could only wait for the traffic to subside. A little guidance on the part of hosts in forming lines would have forestalled much unpleasantness generated around the buffet tables. Once a plate was filled, the diner learned that the tables provided

were far too few to accommodate attendees. So, he ate standing up or sitting on stairway steps. And most remained standing from circa 4:30 p.m. to the next event at 8:30 p.m.

If the attendee survived the badly planned cocktail hour and buffet, he could look forward to hearing Ron Rhode's concert at the Fox. Ron, a young man who has made great strides as an organist, had very little practice time, due to last-minute work on the Moller, but being a pro, he never let the deficiencies show.

He brought the console up with a sprightly "A Sunny Disposish." He welcomed his audience and went into a ballad arrangement of "More Than You Know." His tune list included one classical toccata in the baroque pattern with mainly untrem'd brass/reed registration, Henry Busse's "Hot Lips," a non-Chevalier "You Brought a New Kind of Love to Me," "March of the Steelmen," Victor Herbert's "Rose of the World," and an impressive "Deep Purple." He proved to be an adept musician and a pleasant MC. Thus ended the first day of convention concerts, and the audience braved the heat to walk back to the Sheraton-Biltmore, headquarters hotel, to visit electronic showrooms and the record shop.

Events started early on the second day -- buffet breakfast starting at 6:30 a.m., so conventioners could board buses around 8 a.m. for the three-hour journey to Birmingham where the Alabama Theatre and its 4/20 Wur-litzer were waiting. It was a pleasant ride through forest and grassland. Many continued their night's sleep.

Birmingham proved to be just as warm and humid as Atlanta, but the hospitality of the Birmingham chapter members minimized the discomfort outside; they had the theatre in a cool, air conditioned state.

Cecil Whitmore proved to be a personable MC. His humor-spiked announcement first introduced Chapter Chairwoman Alleen Cole, then Eddie Weaver, veteran of previous conventions whose music and wit are quite unlike anything else served at the annual bashes. Eddie brought the red and gold console skyward with a medley of south-oriented songs, starting with "Sleepy Time Down South" and closing with a rousing "Alabama Bound." Then came a quickly fabricated set, describing what had happened to him the previous evening. The tunes were "Tea For Two," "Climb Every Mountain," "Flight of the Bumblebee," and "The Sting" which indicated that during the evening meal, a bee had crawled inside Eddie's pant leg, ascended, and had stung him just above the knee. The audience emphathized. Eddie offered a medley of mod tunes which he felt were quality, to combat the oft-heard saying that "they don't write good ones anymore," then married off "Georgia" and "Big, Bad Leroy Brown."

Most listeners were unaware that Eddie was fighting two flaws in the pedals. One was a recurring cipher (A natural) which he countered by playing in keys which included A. There was only abstinence in the case of a couple of pedals which had "runs," that is, they sounded the note desired, plus one or two other notes. Eddie just didn't hit those pedals more than once. During intermission, the Alabama Chapter's technical crew up-ended the pedal-board and untangled the offending contacts. No further trouble.

After the repair job, Eddie Weaver really opened up with his bag of entertainment tricks. He likes to find tunes



The Fox Theatre piano, complete with candelabra, is on its own lift. Here, Ron Rhode chats with the audience during his program.



About 18 buses were required to transport conventioners for the day in Birmingham. As usual, one of the buses got lost.



Cecil Whitmore emcees the Eddie Weaver and Don Baker concerts in Birmingham.



Eddie Weaver chats with the audience at the Alabama Theatre.

"Fantasy Impromptu" for one piano, three hands. The newly-discovered dynamic duo of Helen Dell and Judd Walton "perform" during the buffet dinner in the Egyptian Ballroom at the Fox.

Anna Olive and John Muri, two convention regulars, exchange ideas in the lobby of the Sheraton-Biltmore.





Lobby of the Alabama Theatre in Birmingham following the Eddie Weaver concert. Lunches in boxes and pop in ice — all ready to be consumed in the 'picture palace.'



Don Baker between numbers at the Alabama Theatre in Birmingham.



Edward Tibbs at the Birmingham Civic Center Schlicker console.



The box lunch was expertly handled at the Alabama Theatre on Monday. It was sandwiched between Eddie Weaver and Don Baker.

At the end of a long, but enthusiastic day in Birmingham, the three-hour bus trip back into the Eastern Daylight Time Zone seemed like the perfect way to relax.



which can be played simultaneously so that they harmonize one another. He played "Secret Love" and used "Dancing Tambourine" as ornamentation. They match all the way through. He later did it with "There's a Long, Long Trail A-winding," "Keep the Home Fires Burning" and "Love's Old Sweet Song." He presented an operatic duo, a nautical set which included "Sailors' Hornpipe" and "Asleep in the Deep." He mentioned that he is a Glenn Miller fan and proved it with a "walking bass" during "Tuxedo Junction" which employed Eddie's two feet, rather than automatic electronic crutches. Eddie Weaver left 'em wanting more.

Then it was box lunch time. Each was served his lunch and a soft drink with little fuss, long lines or delays. People were invited to sit in the auditorium. To many old timers it was quite a novelty to sit in a plush picture palace balancing a lunch on the knee.

After lunch, it was time for Don Baker. Considering the ordeal he went through at the Rialto Theatre in Joliet, Ill., in the last convention, his audience was glad to see him assigned to an instrument which could reflect the Baker magic. Don relied on a number of his trademark arrangements such as "Ghost Riders In the Sky" and "Willow, Weep For Me" but added newer titles such as "Brian's Song" which really soared. Baker stylings are something to behold. His rhythmic work is often embellished with downward chromatics, applied at places in the music where they give the listener spine-tingling sensations. And his famous "chop-chop" treatment was heard briefly during "Coquette." There are no dull moments while Don is at the console, and he was in fine form on this day.

The audience fared less well when members of the audience tried to write a new "Poor Butterfly" by calling out unrelated notes at Don's request. The notes added up to a hideous melange, but the way Don supplied the harmony, the result wasn't bad, but no replacement for the original.

Don left his audience with an unresolved riddle, then chatted with old friends, signed record jackets and endured the lightning-like flashes of uncounted shutterbugs.

When ATOSers emerged from the Alabama Theatre, they were greeted by a very expressive thunderstorm. As they boarded the buses, Thor's kettledrums assailed their ears and bright streaks of zig-zag lightning cavorted overhead. By the time the buses unloaded at the Birmingham-Jefferson Civic Center a few minutes later, the storm had largely subsided. The conventioners filed past the impressive buildings and gardens of the center to the Concert Hall, the interior of which is a pistache of uneven surfaces (for acoustical reasons), and painted black and white. The hall is part of a larger stage which the movement of a wall of linked panels can make one. At the back of the stage, was a large castered box which contained the pipework of an 1135-pipe Schlicker organ, some of it under expression. A look at the organ specs on the program reveals that it is highly unified and has no more than 15 ranks of pipes, played from an austere two-manual console. The artist introduced was Edward Tibbs, a classical organist with many credentials, the most valid to conventioners probably being the help he has afforded Birmingham Chapter ATOSers.

Mr. Tibbs brought on his page turner, a tall beautiful woman, attired in a flowing black gown, and went into his

first selection, during which his hands never touched the manuals. It was "Pedal Solo on a Theme by Frescobaldi," adapted by Jean Langlais. It put Mr. Tibbs into the running with some of the other convention organists who have developed an eye-catching pedal technique.

The pedal display continued into two chorales by Bach (also with hands) and a well-played "Prelude and Fugue in C Major" by Bach.

Following two very dissonant pieces by Leo Sowerby, Mr. Tibbs unleashed the untrem'd and often harsh ranks of the Schlicker on Marcel Dupre's eleven "Variations on a Noel." Each was quite different from the preceding one and Mr. Tibbs tackled them all with verve and a technique which listeners could only admire. Yet, when the frenetic variations of the finale "Fugato" died away, one couldn't help but wonder, thinking as a theatre organ enthusiast with a reasonable affinity for the classics, had it all added up to music? There's no denying that theatre organ enthusiasts might not fully understand nor appreciate the current vogue in classical organ recital material, yet the organist had made no attempt in his choice of material to include at least one or two titles known to appeal to the type of audience present. Perhaps the start, chiff-riddled tonalities of the Schlicker would not make an effective vehicle for anything less than the type of material presented.

Following the Tibbs concert, there was a social hour in a large salon of the civic center, followed by a sit-down dinner in an adjacent dining room. The well-served food was delicious. The Birmingham Chapter had their portion of the convention well planned, and it came off without a visible hitch.

The Atlanta-bound buses took on passengers shortly after the meal was over and the trip back provided a chance to catch a little shuteye. The passengers had been up since 6 a.m. and the little hand on timepieces was nearing midnight. Once in their rooms at the hotel, going to sleep was no problem.

On Tuesday morning a less rigorous schedule was presented.

The national board met with chapter representatives at 8:30 a.m. concurrently with the cameos.

The cameo segment was originally scheduled to be played at the East Point Theatre but was transferred to the Music Grinder 3/24 Wurlitzer. Because of the unavailability of the theatre each artist played 15 or 20 minutes and considerable quality musicianship was revealed.

The cameo performers were: Bill Taber, Ohio; Chris Phillips, Ohio; Dennis Norden, age 11, Georgia; Jimmy Boyce, Virginia; John Sander, Pennsylvania; and Walter Winn, Georgia.

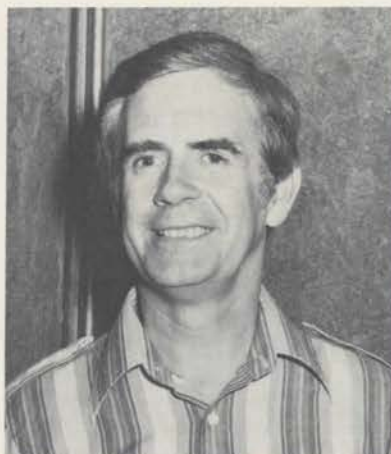
The East Point Theatre could not be used because the organ installation was not completed. The crew had worked hard to get the organ playable but time ran out.

The Colson/Goddard program at Peachtree Christian Church featured two organs, one a 3/35 Pilcher, the other at the rear of the church, is a 3/37 Ruffatti. At the opening, Sue Goddard was playing the Pilcher while Gregory Colson was at the Ruffatti. This was a duet featuring two organs and having two organs available for such programming is unusual. Using the two instruments, widely separated, required closed-circuit TV between organists to enable the performers to keep together.

In this motif, several numbers were played. Then the



The sit-down dinner at the Birmingham Civic Center was worthy of being called a "banquet." The service was good and the food delicious.



Jimmy Boyce, Potomac Valley.



Dennis Naughton, Atlanta.



Chris Phillips, Miami Valley.



Bill Taber, Western Reserve.

Our English friends at the banquet. England now seems to be represented at every convention.





Sue Goddard and Gregory Colson played a 3/37 Ruffatti and a 3/35 Pilcher for their duets at Peachtree Christian Church.



Helen Dell after her concert at the Fox Theatre.



Ray Snitil, out-going president, conducted the annual membership meeting at the Fox Theatre.

With the discovery of demolition plans for the Chicago Theatre, a corporation was formed to try to save the theatre. Ione Tedei (R) collected signatures and money in the lobby of the Fox and Richard Sklenar (L), CATOE, made an impromptu plea for member support.



artists both played the Ruffatti in duet.

After intermission, the two artists moved to the Pilcher and played in the same manner. In closing, they returned to the original format.

The entire program was classic in nature and featured an outstanding variety of classic literature. As an encore, the duo played, of all things, "Tico Tico." Probably the first time either organ was ever called upon to imitate Ethel Smith. The results of this depended on the ear of the listener and his imagination.

The program was well-received. Each artist exhibited a thorough knowledge of music and both were well-grounded in technique.

Music played included compositions by Wagner, Bach, Schubert and an outstanding performance of "Grand Choeur Dialogue" by Eugene Gigout.

Then it was back to the buses for Helen Dell's Tuesday afternoon program at the Fox. Helen is a popular West Coast organist who is especially beloved of baseball fans because she plays a Conn theatre model for the Los Angeles Dodgers' home games. This subject came up when she announced the current pop, "Rainy Days and Mondays." It's not what they look forward to at ball parks.

Helen opened with a rousing French march, "Aux Flambeau," then demonstrated her characteristic "Chiffon-bounce" style with Johnny Mercer's "My Sugar is So Refined." Her program had much variety, with titles ranging from a mod "I Write the Songs" to selections from *The King and I*.

It was a lovely setting. The orchestra and grand piano elevators had been raised from the start. The piano even had a candelabra (equipped with light bulbs). The house curtain displayed a stylized Oriental scene with perhaps Moorish architecture. When the organ console rose, it completed the picture. This was the setting for the remaining concerts.

Helen Dell presented one classical piece, Bolleman's "Toccata," but remained mostly with standards, "If I Love Again"; current, "Send a Little Love My Way"; showtunes, "If This Isn't Love" and one piece by the master of British marches, Eric Coates' "Oxford Street."

Her encore was an original, "Here Goes." The lady displayed scads of charm as she MC'd her show and her audience approved. At the conclusion of Helen Dell's program everyone adjourned to have dinner.

The beginning of the evening's scheduled program was started with the annual ATOS membership meeting, in keeping with requirements of the corporation laws.

After the membership meeting, it was spiel time. A slide presentation heralded the wonders in store for those who attended the 1979 ATOS Convention in Los Angeles and San Diego. The Jefferson Theatre boosters (actually the Southeast Texas Chapter) managed to mount a plug for Beaumont and their Robert Morton organ. A slide, showing the slick building proposed to replace the Chicago Theatre, spread alarm among the "Flagship" preservers and galvanized the CATOE contingent to organized resistance against theatre demolishers in their bailiwick. The non-ATOS Dickinson Theatre Organ Society was permitted to present a brief film about their fall regional. There was an original pep song, voiced by Lowell Ayars and narrated by the club's sparkplugs, Bob Dilworth. In all, it was a varied and informative half hour, well-produced.

Before the evening concert started, Convention Chairman, Jim Thrower made the announcement that the 3/11 Moller organ, partly installed in the East Point Theatre, could not be made ready for the next day's concerts, although chapter members had been working day and night to get it in shape. They had about five ranks playing, but even these couldn't be relied on, so Mr. Thrower regretfully scratched the East Point. Instead, the East Point concerts would be held at the Fox. This meant another juggling of rehearsal times, but it had to be done.

Then it was time for the Walt Strony concert. Walt selected a mix of "Yankee Doodle Dandy" and "Dixie" as a console riser. He chatted easily with his audience, during which he revealed that 14 of the Moller's 42 ranks were not operative during convention concerts. But even as a 28-rank organ, the Moller filled the bill.

Walt's offerings included a *West Side Story* group, a very well performed excerpt from "Rhapsody In Blue," "My Romance" with an interpolation of the main theme from Tchaikowsky's *Romeo and Juliet Overture*, "There's No Business Like Show Business" with a touch of "Hur-ray for Hollywood," a group of five of Gershwin's most popular standards and a maestoso "Battle Hymn of the Republic" with a sly reference to "American Patrol" and a verse played on slurping tibias.

On Wednesday morning the conventioners were divided into two groups because the Grinder Pizzeria could accommodate only half of them at a time. First on our list was Trevor Bolshaw whose concert was moved to the Fox Theatre when the East Point organ couldn't be finished in time.

At the appointed hour (9 a.m.) Jim Thrower appeared on stage to introduce the first concert artist, a youthful Briton who is rich in English music hall, cabaret, concert and broadcast experience. Trevor brought the console up to a spirited English march, "Through Night to Light," then greeted his audience in a soft spoken accent which only occasionally marked his British beginnings.

One of the strong points of Trevor's concert was the predominance of English and continental tunes and stylings, affording conventioners an opportunity to experience what is being heard on the other side of the pond. The dearth of practice time caused him to describe his predicament as "organistic Russian Roulette." His tune list was intriguing: a jazzy coach ride for a pseudo-western called "Stagecoach;" a pastiche of '20s style music from the long running London stage production, *Salad Days*; an intermezzo named "Moonbeams Dance;" a Scotch novelty called "Tartan Dance" to the skirl of pipes; a Sydney Torch remembrance entitled "On a Spring Note;" three British TV program themes strange to U.S. ears, an old early boogie woogie "Dardenella" and the "Lustspiel Overture." Trevor's encore was a salute to one of Atlanta's claims to fame, "Tara's Theme" from *Gone With the Wind*. It was written by Max Steiner, a Viennese whose composing career came to fruition in the USA.

On the personal side, Trevor Bolshaw was a solid hit with his listeners. His introductions fixed his selections in time and place in as few words as possible. With Trevor the music bore the message and his clean execution of his selections made his audience want more.

After a brief intermission, it was time for Tom Helms at the Fox Moller. This time the console pilot was a native of Florida, who is known for some very original silent movie



The Fox console looked impressive indeed against the jeweled grand drape during the Walt Strony concert.



A toast to Conn Valley from Past President Stillman Rice, his wife Claire and Allen Miller at the cocktail party in the Egyptian Ballroom.



Trevor Bolshaw at the Fox concert. Originally scheduled for East Point Theatre, the program had to be moved to the Fox.



Walt Strony after his program at the Fox.

The record room did a brisk business in Atlanta. Nelson Harris was in charge of the record room, assisted here by Paul Beaver (R).





Lew Williams at the Music Grinder.



Tom Helms, scheduled for the East Point Theatre, played the Fox Moller.



Many hours are spent in the electronic rooms when not at a concert. The Conn room this year was no exception.



Lunch at the Music Grinder in nearby Marietta on Wednesday was accomplished by dividing the conventioners into two groups. The food and the music was hot, good and plentiful.

The Music Grinder.



scores. Tom was at ease once the console reached stage level as he played "It's a Good Day." He placed a tack on Rachmaninoff's chair with "Russian Rag," a burlesque of the Russian composer's "Prelude in C-sharp Minor."

Using Leroy Anderson's "Sleighride" as a vehicle, Tom took us to Vienna for a Strauss waltz treatment, a "Cathedral Engloutie" version in French accents, a Spanish minor mode representation in the "El Relicario" style, bagpipes and drums for a few measures in Scotland and then a Texas-style cowboy version. His stylings were self explanatory. There was also a Bach "Jig Fugue," an organ boogie, George Wright arrangements of "When You Wish Upon a Star" and "South," then came the pomp of William Walton's 1937 coronation march, "Crown Imperial," which was not a leftover from Trevor Bolshaw's concert an hour earlier.

Clean execution and many registration changes marked Tom Helm's concert.

The buses were waiting outside the Fox to take conventioners to the Music Grinder, Atlanta's first and only pizzeria with pipes. It was a warm but somewhat overcast noontime and the air conditioned buses were a blessing. There was a brief wait aboard the buses in the Grinder parking lot while the first shift finished their pizzas and boarded buses for the Fox. Then, the multitudes debarked and formed a long line which didn't seem to move for a half hour, during which a number of the more hungry customers quit the line for a sandwich shop across the street. When they returned, after enjoying a ham-on-rye and a beer, the line had started to move — but ever so slowly. It snaked into the pizzeria and around rows of tables. The attendants were doing their best; there were just too many hungry customers.

At one end of the balconied room was an attractive Wurlitzer console — "Winifred," a lady of many moves (Buffalo, Schenectady, Plattsburg in New York and now, Atlanta) perched on a Barton four-post lift, fully raised. Behind Winifred (so named by owners Dick and Audrey Weber) were the lighted chambers, some unenclosed percussions and a couple of "portativs."

The first organist announced was Lew Williams, who has shown an interest in theatre organ since he was 10. Lew has enough diplomas in classical organ studies to paper a fair-sized chamber, but his first love is the theatre organ. Lew's program reflected both his interest in the Age of the Theatre Organ and his recent studies in Europe where he picked up some interesting European music such as a wild "Orient Express" and a song, sung by the late French chanteuse, Edith Piaf, "My Lost Melody."

Lew started his show with a tune from the 1933 movie, *Footlight Parade*, "Sittin' on a Backyard Fence," and included "Canadian Sunset" with Buddy Cole-style untrem'd Diapason passages, "Temptation Rag" in the Sidney Torch manner, and more from old musicals such as "I Only Have Eyes For You" and "Forty-Second Street." At one point, he performed a nearly perfect re-creation of Jesse Crawford's 1927 hit record, "At Sundown" for a friend in the audience. Lest we get the impression that Lew Williams' forte is in imitation, let us state that his treatments of "Mr. Lucky," "By the Fireside" and "Whistling Teeth" (a German tune) were strictly his own. His classical selection was Marcel Dupre's "The Spinner" and his encore was a rousing version of Robert Elmore's "Rhumba." For good measure, he threw in John Seng's

rarely-heard, recorded arrangement of "Beyond the Blue Horizon."

A young man of very serious demeanor, the ATOS photog, Bill Lamb, finally got him to smile for a photo.

His audience let him know their approval in the usual way, added to the favorable comments of Eddie Weaver and Lee Erwin, who were in Lew's audience. Rarely had pizza been so palatable.

Next at Winifred was house organist, Jay Mitchell, who hails from Birmingham where he served as house organist at the Alabama Theatre. Jay is credited with much of the success Atlanta's first pizzery has enjoyed during its initial year of operation. His audience soon fathomed the reason; he's a showman. He came to the console in a light blue suit, and the jacket was festooned with rhinestones which provided much sparkle, even when Jay wasn't playing. His ballooning sleeves would seem to interfere with playing, but he managed an almost Wagnerian "How High the Moon," then unleashed a friendly greeting: "How yewall? Consider yourselves at home."

Jay's numbers included "Atlanta G.A.," "Nobody Does It Better," "Nadia's Theme," "Rhinestone Cowboy" (a natural, considering the sequins), Max Steiner's "Taran-telle" from *Rome Adventure*, "You Light Up My Life" and the very popular pizzery request, *Star Wars* excerpts. His serious offering was a prelude in the classic style which had Winifred going baroque briefly. His closer was a "Chattanooga Choo-Choo" with train sounds which were a bit much. Jay's selections were interestingly registered and his warm personality got through to his enchanted listeners.

Back to the buses for the trip to the Biltmore where preparations were well along for the banquet.

Wednesday evening began with a no-host cocktail party followed by the annual banquet.

The banquet was, as usual, a high point of the annual ATOS get-together. It was well served and very tasty.

Erwin "Cap" Young served as emcee and did an excellent job of conducting the proceedings smoothly.

A roll call revealed 46 chapters were represented. Members from Australia, England, Canada, Holland, and Germany were also in attendance. Five ATOS past presidents were acknowledged as were several charter members present.

Preston "Sandy" Fleet, the new ATOS President, was introduced and the badge of office (a Tibia pipe) was transferred from Ray Snitil to Sandy.

Then it was off the the Fox for more music.

After the banquet the conventioners covered the six blocks between the hotel and the Fox Theatre mostly by shanks mare, a veritable parade of ATOSers. It would be Tom Cotner's second appearance at an ATOS convention; he played at Chicago last year and his audience liked what they heard.

Tom has a style of playing that is dramatic both to the eye and the ear. He doesn't resort to the slithery type of "body English" which often turns off audiences, but the way he reaches for stopkeys, a hand lingering over a manual or poised for the attack, the way he throws his head to coincide with musical emphasis — these sights punctuate the music of Tom Cotner.

His console bringer-upper was the familiar 20th Century-Fox movie fanfare, followed by Alfred Newman's "Conquest" from *The Captain From Castile*, a dramatic



If convention attendance records were kept, Leonard and Theresa Winter, from Salem, Mass., might well get a "gold star."



Jay Mitchell at the Music Grinder.



Cap Young, emceeing the banquet festivities in the Sheraton-Biltmore.



The "Old Prospector," Lloyd E. Klos, announces the 1978 entrants into the Theatre Organists Hall of Fame.



Newly-elected ATOS President "Sandy" Fleet accepts the wand of office, a Tibia pipe, from outgoing prexy Ray Snitil at the banquet.

In the Atlanta Fox lobby.





The registration room, just off the hotel lobby, was a busy place.



Tom Cotner at the Fox Moller.



One of the many organs available in the Conn room, and ably demonstrated by this Conn representative.



George Buck of the Wurlitzer Company with two ATOS ex-presidents, "Doc" Abernethy and Judd Walton, in the Wurlitzer room.

Bus captains complete with hats: John Tanner, Larry Hope, Gail Hope, Jane Torell, Wanda Corey, Jack Goodwin, Monte Smith, Richard McGee, Steve Baughman, John Torell, Carole Hubert, Bob McKee, Jim Gleeson, Ed Rainey, Al Newell.



swashbuckler depicting the Spanish conquest of Mexico. Tom played it with all the intensity of a Hollywood studio orchestra. Variety was the keynote in both titles and instrumentation. Tom's program ranged from Stephen Foster to Litoff's "Classical Concerto." He played Harry von Tilzer's "Cubanola Rag" (1909) with help from the grand piano (played from the console), Drigo's "Valse Bluette." "Bohemia Rag" (composed by the grandfather of ATOS official fotog, Bill Lamb), "Ten Cents a Dance," "With a Song in My Heart," and a "St. Louis Blues" with many variations and added frippery. Tom also accompanied a short film, a compilation of brief scenes from silent dramas and comedies showing "Perilous Escapes." All those trains barely missing autos at crossing, chases at breakneck speeds, the hero standing on a locomotive's "cow catcher," picking up the baby on the tracks ahead, forgotten comedian Monty Banks walking a plank stretched between two parallel trains — all these scenes Tom accompanied without once slapping the manuals or using hand wipe "schmears" across the octaves. His chase music was well-tailored to the thrills depicted.

Tom Cotner's big, bravado playing style was a revelation to those who had not heard him previously, one more example of the contrasts possible from the rich tonal facilities of the Fox Moller.

Afterglow...

Several events were scheduled for this affair. This is actually not officially a part of the National Annual Meeting, but has become a tradition, whether it involves a boat trip, salmon bake or winery tour.

In this case, those who signed up had a choice of visiting three home installations or the Stone Mountain Park and Callanwolde Mansion.

The Stone Mountain trip offered a view of the largest solid mass of exposed granite known. A sculpture, commemorating the Civil War has been carved on one face.

At Stone Mountain, a 732-bell carillon (electronic) is featured. The carillonneur, Mabel Sansing Sharp, played this beautiful instrument, donated by the Coca-Cola Company, for the afterglow audience. The sound was impressive.

Next on the tour was the Callanwolde Mansion which contains a 3/51 Aeolian organ. The program was unique in that all selections offered were by player rolls. This was a most interesting organ. Although labeled "classic", it sounded more orchestral, a very pleasant sound.

From Callanwolde, the trip back to the hotel was about a half hour.

At the same time that some members were visiting Stone Mountain and the Callanwolde Mansion, others were on Home Tours. There were two different tours on Thursday morning. Two groups saw the Holbrook organ with Bobby Clark at the console and the Simmons organ played by Gordon Johnson. Another group went to the Ford home and heard Tommy Ford.

The Holbrook Residence organ is controlled by the console formerly in the Piccadilly Theatre, Chicago. This organ was the largest theatre installation built by the Kilgen Company. It is the only horseshoe console with 4 manuals built by Kilgen. (They did make many 4-manual "wing-type" consoles).

The organ originally had 19 ranks. The genius of Mildred Fitzpatrick is evidenced here inasmuch as she designed the organ. Ms. Fitzpatrick was one of Chicago's most popular organists for many years. The Kilgen was installed in 1926 and removed in 1963.

In its present state there are only 4 original Kilgen ranks and two percussions. The complementary ranks are mostly Robert Morton from the 3/15 installed in the Capitol Theatre, Atlanta.

Fourteen ranks are presently playing. There are an additional eleven ranks to be playable as the string organ.

The 2/8 Simmons Kimball organ in the home of Dr. and Mrs. Edd Simmons was installed in the Plaza Theatre on Biscayne Bay, Miami Beach, Florida, in 1927. Little is known about the instrument until 1945, when it was removed from the theatre, with the traps and toys discarded, and installed in the First Methodist Church of East Point, Georgia. There it was used regularly, and in 1954 was "modernized" with a new console. In the process of doing this the xylophone, all second touch and much of the unification of the old horseshoe console were eliminated. Nevertheless, the organ served the church well until the mid-1960s, when the church made plans for a new sanctuary and a new organ.

While looking forward to the new, the old was neglected, and the roofs above the chambers began to leak. Gradually more and more damage became noticeable. In 1967 the organ was put up for sale. The local ATOS chapter had a meeting at the church and played the Kimball with its church console and pronounced it hopeless. Serious water damage had resulted from neglect. Many of the pipes had been removed and holes plugged with cotton.

The organ was cleaned, releathered, and chambers were constructed. Gradually it is again becoming what it was built to be. Though it has only 6 of the original 8 ranks (Kinura replaced by Dulciana and Violin II by Quintadena), and only three percussions, it still has the theatre sound. Future plans are to restore the original console (its pieces have been found) and mate this organ with a Style 235, 3/11 Wurlitzer which is now being restored.

The Ford Residence Organ is a Robert Morton with Wurlitzer manuals and pedals. The pedalboard is from the slave console of the St. Louis Fox 4/36 Wurlitzer Crawford Special. Second touch is available on the accompaniment, great and pedal manuals.

A new method of stop control was devised to have more stops available with less space in the console. DialightR illuminated pushbutton switches are mounted in left and right horseshoe support panels. When activated, they light with the appropriate stop illuminated on their face. An adjacent button cancels the stop and the light. These are compatible with the electric combination action. When combination pistons are depressed, they will also light, indicating which stops are in operation.

Hector Olivera! What can we say? In the few years since he thundered in from South America, he has become an institution. Few pedalboards on the concert circuit have escaped the incessant patter of Hector's soles as he pursues the elusive bumblebee. And his Desi Arnaz brogue is as rich as ever. He opened with a loud and furious "On Broadway" (written by organist Jimmy Boyce). In complete contrast was his "Ave Maria" approach to Barbra Streisand's "Evergreen." His "Close Encounters of the Polish Kind" included such surprises as "Beer Barrel



Jerry Kenney, from the Wurlitzer home office; Linda Fidler, in charge of the slide presentation; and John Muri, consultant for the DeKalb installation, manned the Wurlitzer room.



This is what you call a 'whole bunch of talent.' (L to R) Tom Cotner, Karl Cole, Lew Williams, Tom Gnaster, David Hamilton, Lowell Ayars, Ashley Miller and Lyn Larsen. Where else but a national convention would you find this many talented men in one room?



Dick and Marilyn Schrum, past president and former national secretary, seem to be enjoying the cocktail party at the Fox.



Chuck and Mary Schrader dine on the steps in the Fox, having just recovered from the '76 Convention.

Ashley Miller makes his point to Ron Rhode as Judd Walton listens in.

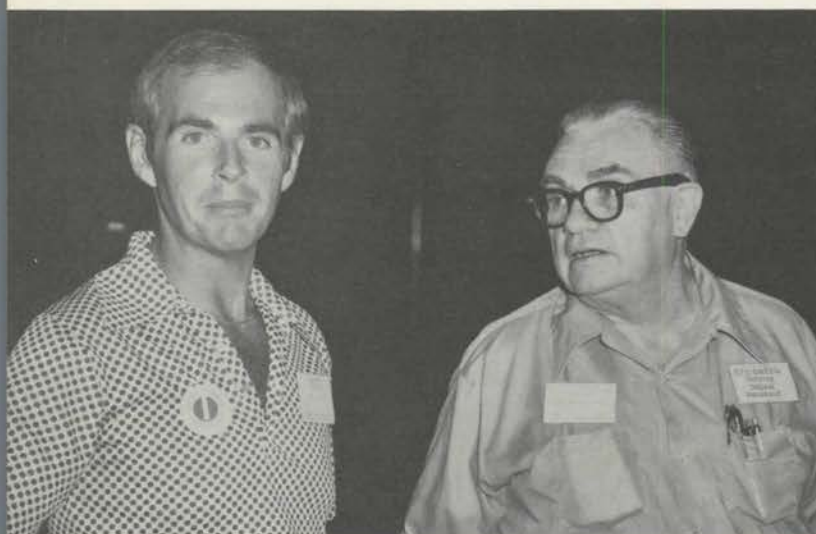




At the afterglow, Hector Olivera is about to improvise on a theme submitted by Lee Erwin.



Lew Williams, Walt Strony and Lance Luce are representative of the "younger generation" at this year's convention.



Karl Cole can hardly contain himself as the 'wisdom' of Stu Green flows freely.

Peachtree Christian Church.



Polka," and his "I'll Follow My Secret Heart" was often loaded with Cole. Buddy, that is.

The Olivera vocabulary is becoming very Americanized and he has fun projecting his very pronounced accent, but when he announces such a title as "Ad Nos, Ad Salutatum Undam" there may be a communication problem. There was. So far as we dare attempt a translation, the Franz Liszt piano piece is "To Us By The Saving Waters." Hector played it as he might cue a disaster scene in a movie. His slambang attack was appropriate for *Earthquake*; the volume, too. There are no dull moments in such an Olivera rendition and Liszt must have been spinning in his sarcophagus just from the sympathetic vibrations. If ever the word "colossal" applied, it fit here. How such a small guy can make so much noise adds to the wonderment. Whatever the musical value, the spirited playing and sheer volume galvanized the audience into furious approval.

At another point in the program Hector played on the portion of the stop complement there hadn't been time to tune, the Ethereal organ. True, the dozen or more voices were slightly out of tune with the rest of the organ, but not badly. They celested the tuned stops.

Perhaps the most effective test of Hector's musicianship was his improvisation. Betty Mason handed Hector a sealed envelope. Inside was a theme sketched by Lee Erwin before he returned to New York to recover from his three days and 3 nights of organ tuning. Hector looked at the hastily scribbled notation and shook his head, "Lee threw me a curve." Then Hector went to work on the improvisation. First he played what Lee had written, something that sounded a little like "Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater." Then he went to work on it — forward, backward, upside down, and as a pedal solo with manual ornamentation. His registration changed constantly with lightning flips of stopkeys and liberal use of the Crescendo Pedal. What Hector didn't do by way of developing that innocuous little theme isn't worth mentioning. He literally wore it out, leaving some auditioneer as limp from exhaustion as he should have been, but wasn't.

For an encore, he started what could have been a fine calliope solo of "Over the Waves" but habit was too strong; he was soon skittering over the pedals in lightning pursuit of his favorite bumblebee. Hector has changed the character of this particular bee. Instead of the friendly little buzzer pictured by composer Rimsky-Korsakoff, Hector has built him up to the stature of a roaring monster, perhaps looking more like a tyrannosaurus. Had Eddie Weaver had the misfortune to encounter this brute, instead of the normal size bee which stung him, he would have been swallowed whole.

But that's the type of show Hector's fans expect from the diminutive South American and they let him know of their appreciation in no uncertain terms, including hyped record sales.

The final event was in the capable hands of Lyn Larsen, a young man who has built up an enviable musical reputation in the circa 10 years he has been recording and playing concerts.

Lyn opened his show with a happy "When I Take My Sugar to Tea" then went into an unannounced "La Rosita," played with a tango beat. Next a fine ballad presentation of Irving Berlin's "What'll I Do?" followed by a fast hula, "Ukelele Lady" which displayed the Moller's

color reeds effectively. He then re-created one of the memorable titles from one of his earliest records, "How Long Has This Been Going On" with that unforgettable upward, surging modulation for the final bravura chorus. The Moller provided all the power and color that Lyn's record played on a 3/26 Wurlitzer had displayed. Lyn offered medleys from two shows, *Desert Song* and *Girl Crazy*, and a big, fast and loud presentation of Vincent Youmans' "Great Day," which is exactly how it was heard during the stage presentation. Lyn played two novelty selections, an organ transcription of Strauss' "On the Beautiful Blue Danube" and "Silver Heels," which turned out to be Hollywood style Indian music. It was written by Neil Moret (remembered for "Chloe") and was brought to Lyn's attention by his friend, the Fr. Bill Beibel. The closer was Ponchiellis "Dance of the Hours" which Lyn has admired ever since he saw Walt Disney's *Fantasia* (Lyn copped the name for his current record). Sure enough, mention of the film was enough to conjure memories of the ballet dancers played by a lady hippo and a macho crocodile, especially the place in the music where the hippo takes a running leap into the arms of her partner and nearly squashes the poor croc flat. This reviewer actually dodged when that sequence surfaced.

Lyn's winning personality made his brief announcements palatable, and his playing is as clean and engrossing as it has been throughout his career. He is another who leaves audiences wanting more.



Lyn Larsen, following his afterglow concert, with Jack Goodwin, vice chairman of Atlanta Chapter.

After his concert, the Fox had to be cleared for a symphony concert starring Benny Goodman and his clarinet, so Lyn directed his well-wishers and autograph seekers to the record shop on the 10th floor of the hotel. He was still there an hour and a half later, holding court. Lyn just likes people.

In closing, we again express our appreciation to organist Lee Erwin. He came on the scene early, saw the problem and took the bull by the horns. Without Lee's leadership in organizing a volunteer group to assist Joe Patten in getting the Fox organ tuned, there could not have been a successful convention.



Group B waits patiently for lunch at the Music Grinder Restaurant.

The Atlanta Fox balcony during the Helen Dell show.





At the Banquet.



▲ The line for lunch at the Music Grinder extended out into the parking lot.

▼ The Birmingham Civic Center Concert Hall.





1978 ATOS President, Preston "Sandy" Fleet.

New President...

Preston "Sandy" Fleet has been active in promoting interest in theatre organ in the Southwest. He is a charter member of the San Diego Chapter which he helped to organize. He has been influential in obtaining pipe organs for civic auditoriums. He has also donated a pipe organ to the San Diego Chapter.

Jam Sessions...

There were jam sessions held during most nights of the convention at the Music Grinder Pizzeria which is equipped with Dick and Audrey Weber's immaculate 3/22 Wurlitzer, described elsewhere in these pages. The jam sessions started after the days' concerts were finished, perhaps around 11:00 p.m. and attracted near-capacity crowds to the Grinder (which can accommodate 300 pizza munchers). It must be pointed out that these late night sessions were not on the convention schedule, they just materialized from the enthusiasm generated by a large gathering of theatre organ aficionados who couldn't get enough. Bob Oberlander attended several of the Grinder sessions and he reports that the most inspiring one was on Tuesday night, an evening during which everything fell into place and the fervor grew with the introduction of each succeeding participant.

Age doesn't seem to be a factor in the construction of a successful jam session. Singing organist Lowell Ayars was on hand; he admits to 60 — plus a few. But Harry Koenig was there on Tuesday, too, and he boasts about 80 — plus (we assume he's kidding).

One of the youngest to play was Jerry Nagano (21) of Southern California. Jerry's first record has just been released and he offered some of the tunes he recorded. Tom Cotner was on hand with his dramatic stylings, so was a promising young man named Lance Luce who gets better with each passing year.

Of course, the piece-de-resistance was the inimitable Bull of the Pampas, Hector Olivera, who has a natural talent for entertaining. His wild and devastating approach to the console has frazzled many a concept of organ entertainment. Hector is unique — and his music is pretty good, too.

One novelty bit was a duet by "Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Crawford," impersonated by Texans Lew Williams and Danny Ray. They had a small problem deciding who was who but their re-creation of the Crawford's recorded duets, although performed on a single console, were not bad. At one point usually deadpan Lew Williams actually smiled, something Crawford did but rarely when acknowledging applause.

One must be at a jam session to realize the mounting fervor when all the governing factors are just right. Such magic was manifested during the wee hours of July 11-12 according to many witnesses. We wish we could fathom the secret so future events could be staged with assured enthusiasm, meanwhile we'll settle for the rare "happening" during which everything is just right to assure a very memorable experience.

Electronics...

The electronic displays consisted of Conn and Wurlitzer. Other companies had indicated a desire to display but did not do so.

Conn had three organs available and were heard regularly during the leisure hours.

The Wurlitzer display was audio-visual and there were also two organs on display. As noted elsewhere, misfortune struck so this exhibition was only available Sunday and Monday.

The chapter operated Record Shop did a brisk business with a large display of theatre organ recordings and other organ oriented items.

MYSTERIOUS DISASTER!

Sometime between Sunday night and Tuesday morning, disaster struck the Wurlitzer Display on the 10th floor of the Sheraton-Biltmore.

The display featured an audio-visual display of Wurlitzer's project, the Mightiest Wurlitzer and included a history of the Wurlitzer Company with emphasis on the pipe organ.

This comprehensive audio-visual presentation was shown to attending ATOS members on Sunday July 9th. Since everyone was in Birmingham on Monday there was very little activity at the display.

Realising the ATOSers would return quite late Wurlitzer representatives Russ Gazda and Linda Fidler shut down the exhibit, locked the doors and left the display.

Tuesday morning, John Muri came to the room, found the doors unlocked, went in and started preparing for the expected crowd. Soon after, audio-visual expert Linda Fidler arrived and began to prepare the equipment for the day's work. At this point she detected something amiss with one of the slide projectors. Upon checking it was found that extreme heat had melted all the plastic parts and ruined an entire set of slides. Examination showed the projector, a rental machine, to be completely ruined. Although all switches were in the off position some sort of heat or malfunction had consumed the projector, and associated equipment.

Because the entire display depended on this projection equipment and slides, the loss forced Wurlitzer representatives to close the exhibit.

This was a most unfortunate event as the few who saw the display on Sunday were extremely enthusiastic in their praise of the pictorial history of the Wurlitzer pipe organ.

As we go to press, no explanation or reason for the disaster has been forthcoming from the hotel security staff and it is totally unexplainable to the Wurlitzer Company.

Since the loss of the slides, the center of the display, was complete, there was no reason to keep the exhibit room open. Therefore it was closed and the Wurlitzer representatives returned to De Kalb, Illinois.



The National Board of Directors (L to R): Tommy Landrum, Judd Walton, Erwin Young (vice president and treasurer), Riedel West (secretary), Ray Snitil (president), Betty Mason, George Thompson, Bill Rieger and Dick Simonton.

The National Board Meeting

JULY 11, 1978 — ATLANTA GEORGIA

1. Reviewed and approved treasurers report for year 1977 and also interim report to July 1, 1978.
2. Accepted membership department report. Reviewed agreement with Anagram Corporation and made adjustments to expedite input.
3. Received and approved Hall of Fame Committee report naming Eddie Hanson, Bill Dalton with Milton Charles as Theatre Organist of the Year.
4. Approved future conventions as follows:
 1979 — Los Angeles/San Diego
 1980 — Beaumont, Texas — Southeast Texas
 1981 — Seattle — Puget Sound
 1982 — Detroit — Motor City
 1983 — Phoenix/Tucson — Valley of Sun and Southern Arizona
 Discussed methods of assisting in the control and direction of future conventions.
5. Board of directors election report. Newly elected directors Judd Walton (new) Riedel West, Tom Landrum, William Rieger.
6. Received report from THEATRE ORGAN staff.
7. Discussed the future growth of ATOS. Appointed a committee to study areas in which executive branch could be made more efficient.
8. Received reports from chapter representatives.
9. Discussed the feasibility of having election of chapter officers to coincide with national. Headquarters office to poll the chapters for information.
10. Established a \$500 scholarship at Elon College to provide a librarian for the ATOS library.
11. Increased the Hall of Fame Committee by one making a total of nine members. Lowell Ayars was appointed.
12. Approved a new roster design that will be made free to individuals who would request it.
13. Honorary member — Len Clarke, advertising manager for THEATRE ORGAN Magazine.
14. Election of Officers:
 Sandy Fleet — President
 Erwin Young — Vice President/Treasurer
 Riedel West — Secretary

Most of the chapter representatives that met with the board of directors in the hotel.



New Hall of Famers

Three inductees were enshrined in the Theatre Organists Hall of Fame during the ATOS Convention in Atlanta. They are:

EDDIE HANSON

Performing mainly in the Chicago area, he was on both the Ascher Bros. and Balaban & Katz theatre circuits and became a radio organist afterward.

WILLIAM R. DALTON

He played the large theatres in Columbus, Ohio, several theatres in Richmond, Va., became a touring organist on the Sheraton Hotel circuit, and broadcast extensively.

Organist of the Year

MILTON CHARLES

Named Theatre Organist of the Year, he played theatres on the West Coast, the Balaban & Katz circuit in Chicago, and the Mastbaum in Philadelphia. He was a radio organist for 20 years, followed by a long tenure in a Los Angeles supper club.



1977

Honorary Member

LEN CLARKE

In 1977 Len Clarke sold an incredible amount of advertising space in THEATRE ORGAN.

Len's commitment to his job, as advertising manager, became apparent in his acceptance speech following his award at the banquet. After a few words of thanks, his speech turned into a "hard sell" for THEATRE ORGAN advertising. Len let the audience know what a good deal he had for them in the classifieds, "pro-cards" and Christmas Ads.

His devotion to ATOS, plus his steady successful selling efforts over the past six years made him the obvious choice for Honorary Member.

Len, a native of the Chicago area, is a purchasing agent for the Schwinn Bicycle Co. His other interests include model cars, model railroading, and he plays a Conn 650 at home.

Congratulations to Len for this well-deserved honor. □



HALL OF FAME

Donald H. Baker
 Stuart Barie
 Dessa Byrd
 Gaylord B. Carter
 Edwin L. "Buddy" Cole
 Bernie Cowham
 Helen A. Crawford
 Jesse J. Crawford
 William R. Dalton
 Lloyd G. Del Castillo
 Reginald Dixon
 Edward J. Dunstedter
 Lee O. Erwin, Jr.
 Francis "Gus" Famey
 Frederick Feibel
 Mildred M. Fitzpatrick
 Reginald Foort
 Paul H. Forster
 John Gart
 Betty Gould
 Arthur Gutow
 John F. Hammond
 Eddie Hanson
 Henri A. Keates
 Frederick Kinsley
 Sigmund Krumgold
 Edith Lang
 Ambrose Larsen
 Richard Leibert
 Leonard MacClain
 Quentin M. Maclean
 Rodwell "Sandy" Mepherston
 Albert Hay Malotte
 Dr. Melchiorre Mauro-Cottone
 Al Melgard
 F. Donald Miller
 Charles Sharpe Minor
 John T. Muri
 Henry B. Murtagh
 Dr. Milton Page
 Dr. C.A.J. Parmentier
 Edna S. Sellers
 Preston Sellers
 Gerald Shaw
 Raymond Shelley
 Arsene Siegel
 Milton Slosser
 Kathleen O. Stokes
 Firmin Swinnen
 Sidney Torch
 Emil Velazco
 Deszo Von d'Antalffy
 Oliver Wallace
 Jack Ward
 Edward J. Weaver
 Lew White

1978

Theatre Organist of the Year
MILTON CHARLES

MODERN Folk Music

by John Muri

Folk music is a term rarely used in connection with modern popular music, although pop tunes make up about all we have of what may now be called "music of the people." The disappearance of people singing at their work (the piped music systems won't let them) and of latter-day troubadours (we'd call them strolling musicians or vaudevillians) makes modern pop music the property of relatively few singers, whose professional careers in saloons are bewilderingly short. Their material is often weak, but it is widely disseminated on records, radio, movies, television, and Muzak-style speaker systems. It deserves preservation. Since the fourteenth century, scholars have endeavored to collect and preserve popular tunes. They are still doing it. Numerous good books about modern popular music keep appearing, and libraries are saving copies of faded and recent tunes.

In the days of practicing full-time theatre organists, the course of American folk music was determined by movie theatres, provincial dance orchestras, and phonograph records. The theatre organist was a very important person in the eyes of music publishers. His choices of new tunes to feature every week and his happy situation of being able to pick from the cornucopia of popular music that flooded a profitable market made him king for about ten years. This is not to suggest that the music of the twenties was unremittingly excellent; junk tunes abounded. After 1923, radio became the major disseminating power. In 1927, sound movies joined radio in the competition for listeners. During the early movie years (1908 through 1916) a morality code that forbade the showing of live

snakes, women smoking or drinking, fervid love-making, or violence was strictly in effect. By the late twenties, many of the restrictions were relaxed, and the trend was observable in even the song-lyrics. Television took over in 1948, almost destroying its predecessors as it tried to get away with everything it could morally and commercially. It carried violence in entertainment to new limits while giving scant attention to music of all types because of the cost. Its nearest approaches to folk-musical influence have been *Hee Haw* and the *Lawrence Welk Show*.

Critics with no catholicity of taste have labeled popular music inferior and not worth scholarly attention. People differ so materially and emotionally on matters of art and taste that it is not worth the effort to argue, particularly with someone who swears that he doesn't know music but knows what he likes. It may be fighting windmills like Don Quixote, but certain things need to be said about current music.

The most serious defects in modern pop-rock (in common with much old folk material) are casualness of emotion and shallowness of musical form. Trivial sequences of sound (scarcely to be called tunes) made up of a single repeated four-bar figure that fails to develop and trails off into silence after three or four minutes are stupefying. When the lyrics make sense, they portray a few stock emotional situations, namely (1) reactions to a faithless lover or mate,

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

usually done with sneers or self-pity, (2) uncontrollable sexual drive, expressed with beggings and assorted grunts, indicative of a Passion that is supposed to be love, and (3) commentary on social or political thought that is occasionally soundly based but too often expressed with sentiment that makes one rush to the intellectual vomitorium. The amateur lyric-writers have little regard for rhyme; they join *mind* with *wine*, *pain* with *gained*, and *speak* with *feet*, to quote examples from three touted "great songs of the seventies." Take the words away and the musician finds little or no melody, only two or maybe three chords. All that's left is a beat. A beat makes noises for dancing, but it does not represent "man thinking"; it represents "man feeling," which, for a human being, puts him on a low animal level. Much radio and television music (even background material) is now expressed in simplistic terms, intended to excite or to pacify.

If music can "soothe the savage breast," it can also excite. Assuming (1) that music can stimulate us to action, and (2) that music can be evil as well as good on its influence, we may try jumping to the conclusion that the message of an awful lot of modern pop music is dangerous, if not harmful. If childishness in adults is unbecoming, if imbecile mumbling or screaming is abhorrent, if vacuity of the soul is shocking, if sexual excitation for profit is evil, then the great body of pop rock (rock-a-billy, acid rock, punk rock, etc.) is sending a bad message. I have been informed that much of this music is intended for listening in a hypnotic or drug-saturated environment. If that is what it really is, at best we hope it will have limited influence; at worst we may be justified in being pessimistic. If Gresham's Law (that bad quality will drive away good) is operative, then modern commercial music is sending out more than warning signals.

Folk music has always been pretty rough stuff. After 1720 the bawdy popular music of the English music halls and drinking clubs was almost without exception suppressed, censored, and expurgated by collectors who set out "to purify the English language." They concentrated upon style as the important medium to carry subject-matter. Musicians

came to the same view in the nineteenth century. By 1920, theatre organists tried to become stylists, emulating the flashier pianists and violinists of the previous half-century. Flourishes and poses at the console with distorted dynamics and liberties with melodies became common.

Popular folk music of our time emphasizes style at least as much as it does in content. Witness the work of Kate Smith, Peggy Lee, Bing Crosby (whose stock in trade was delaying entrances into phrases and clipping subsequent notes to catch up), and Elvis Presley, who made his style physical. Early stylistic organists were C. Sharpe Minor, Milt Herth, and Crawford. Later moderns are using personal charm and exotic clothing, but few of them are pure stylists; too many are copying other organists' devices.

Perhaps the day of style is over. Blame television for it. A funny event occurred at the end of the Bolshoi Ballet's *Nutcracker* on NBC last December 18. As the dancers, with Mrs. Gerald Ford as narrator, were taking their bows, NBC broke in with a commercial for peanut butter. I don't know whether there was any political significance or not, but I howled. A few days earlier, CBS had presented a much finer *Nutcracker*, done by the American Ballet Company. The ballet came to a beautiful close, but then what did CBS do? They threw on the crawl (the list of credits) at a speed that tore through the list of performers, slowing down for the names of the faceless producers, assistants, cameramen, scene-shifters, hairdressers and ratcatchers. This sort of hamminess can be passed without comment when it is exhibited at the close of the usual run of TV time-killers, but it calls for scorn when thrust upon what is supposed to be an offering for mature audiences. A recent episode of *Kojak* gave no credits whatever to actors. A new trick is to insert credits after the story gets going, forcing you to read the stuff if you don't tune out the station. What's all this got to do with theatre organs? Well, those TV people, excepting Lawrence Welk, don't use organs on their shows. And so far as the days when organists were powerful in directing public taste is concerned — well, they were great while they lasted. □

Cover Photo . . .

THE ANDERSON PARAMOUNT

by John W. Landon

Originally planned as the Palace Theatre, Anderson, Indiana, the 1700-seat John Ebersson atmospheric house was leased before construction was finished and opened as the "Paramount — A Publix Theatre." Built at a cost of \$800,000 in 1929, it was the grandest thing most of the citizens of this modest-sized Indiana community had ever seen. The auditorium was done in a Spanish decor with copies of famous statuary in the various coves and niches including Venus de Milo. It also boasted the usual twinkling stars and drifting clouds, stuffed parrots and artificial hanging vines. The ceiling of the main lobby was hand-painted in five colors and thousands of tiles in the original design of the lobby floor were set by hand. The terra-cotta facade on the building facing was so detailed that it merited its own blueprints.

John Ebersson had designed a number of theatres in the midwest, particularly in Ohio and Indiana equipped with Page pipe organs which were built in Lima, Ohio. Perhaps the best known of these today is the 4/15 Page in the Embassy Theatre, Fort Wayne, Indiana, beautifully recorded by organist Buddy Nolan. Radio Station WHT in the Wrigley Building, Chicago, installed a 4/15 Page in their studios, broadcast over NBC in the late 1920's by Al Carney. The Casino on Catalina Island, off the California coast, also featured a Page organ. A Page pipe organ was also chosen for the Anderson Paramount. It consisted of three manuals and seven ranks, but in typical Page fashion it was highly unified. Almost no builder of theatre organs unified its instruments as heavily as did Page. There were 148 stop tablets allowing almost unlimited flexibility. Located in two chambers at either side of the proscenium are Flute, String, Vox Humana and Sousaphone in the main, and Kinura (actually Krumet), Tuba

and Tibia in the solo. The console was loaded with bric-a-brac and finished originally in green and gold.

The Anderson Paramount opened August 14, 1929 with a sound film. It never showed silents. The opening program included an address by Sam Katz, president of Paramount-Publix, a newsreel, a novelty song cartoon and the feature picture, *Coconuts* with the four Marx Brothers. For many years the organist was Hilda Lindstrom who came from Elwood, Indiana, every day by interurban to do the honors at the console. She also broadcast the Paramount organ over a local radio station.

The organ was idle for several years in the 1940's and 1950's except for accompanying an occasional stage show. The writer discovered it in 1955 while a college freshman at nearby Taylor University and has been playing it ever since. In 1964-65 the instrument was completely restored by Lewis Hodson and Rex Hoppes of Anderson. For several years thereafter, the writer played organ intermissions before the feature picture on Friday and Saturday evenings. After another brief period of disuse, organ intermissions resumed in 1974 and they continue weekly at present. The writer plays Saturday evenings, with Carlton Smith playing Fridays and Sundays. Lewis Hodson, Carlton Smith and Bob Dunn keep the instrument in first class condition. The writer recorded the organ in 1965 — the first time a Page organ had been heard on a long-playing disc. A new album by the writer at this organ is soon to be released. Although there is dust on the pre-plastic ivy and vandalism has decreed a perpetually cloudless sky, the stars still shine and twinkle on the vibration of the sixteen foot Sousaphones, as the console rises slowly to bring to a new generation a glimpse of the not too distant past. □

"Old Rahway" Celebrates Its 50th



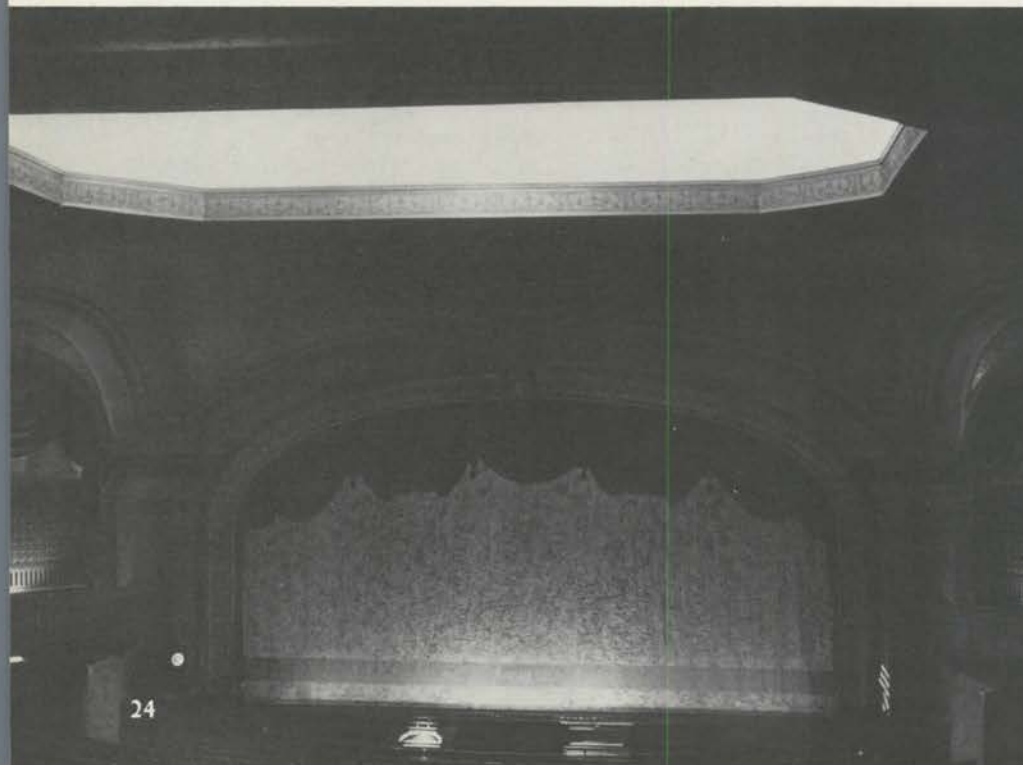
by Bill Stanmyre

Fifty years is a milestone in any endeavor, but among the grand movie palaces of the 1920's, New Jersey's Rahway Theatre's celebration of its 50th Anniversary was truly a miracle. Many grander and more palatial theatres are now just faded memories of a bygone era across our land. In the New York Metropolitan Area such historic show palaces as the Roxy, Paramount and Capital, just 20 miles away, are now gone and the last vestige of this grand era, Radio City Music Hall, hangs on the edge of extinction. So, the Garden State

Chapter decided to throw a fitting party for the theatre and its unique 50-year-old "biggest little Wurlitzer." We had some new stage curtains to show off for the occasion, the first in 30 years.

Wednesday, April 19, turned out to be a foul day, weatherwise. A real northeaster raged day and night but did not discourage some 800 from attending the gala show. Several local radio stations had run ticket contests and interviews for a week prior to the event and the area daily and weekly newspapers ran several feature

Interior of the 1600-seat house before the audience arrived. It is one of few intact theatres in the area, others having gone either the steelball or twinning route. It is hoped it will eventually become a performing arts center.



stories and ads. We even obtained a copy of the original program, had it reproduced and included as part of our program.

Curator of the Wurlitzer (Opus 1923, divided 2/7) and producer of the show, Bob Balfour, did the MC chores. He announced the overture, played by one of the theatre's original organists, Rex Koury, now of Reno, Nevada. Rex grew up in Cranford, N.J., a town adjacent to Rahway, and at age 14, served as relief organist at the Rahway when it first opened. Now Rex is traveling the country with silent films and organ shows, much like in the '30s when he toured the RKO theatre chain billed as "The World's Youngest Professional Theatre Organist." Since then Rex has distinguished himself as a composer, conductor and musical director for all three networks on the Coast and has scored and composed music for many films and TV shows, most notably, *Gunsmoke*. When we told him how extremely pleased we were to have him back with us, he said, "I wouldn't have missed it for the world," and "Gad, is it 50 years already?"

We tried to follow 1928 tradition as closely as possible. We were even going to try to re-create the original show, but when we found out that the film *The Grain of Dust* was no longer in existence and the stage presentation was four vocal soloists with operatic arias, we decided that today's tastes dictated presenting a typical weekend bill from 1928. So after the overture, we returned something that has been missing from theatres across our land for the last 25 years: our National Anthem. It was also heard on opening night in 1928.

The manager of the 1600-seat Rahway Theatre for the past 15 years, Mrs. Emile Lockner, was introduced, and Mayor Daniel Martin then presented the theatre and the Garden State Theatre Organ Society with a proclamation declaring Wednesday, April 19, as Rahway Theatre and GSTOS day in Rahway.

Nine people who were at the opening show 50 years ago were introduced in the audience, and several original staff members were also introduced as well as the members of the Rahway organ crew.

Next came five acts of vaudeville.

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER, 1978



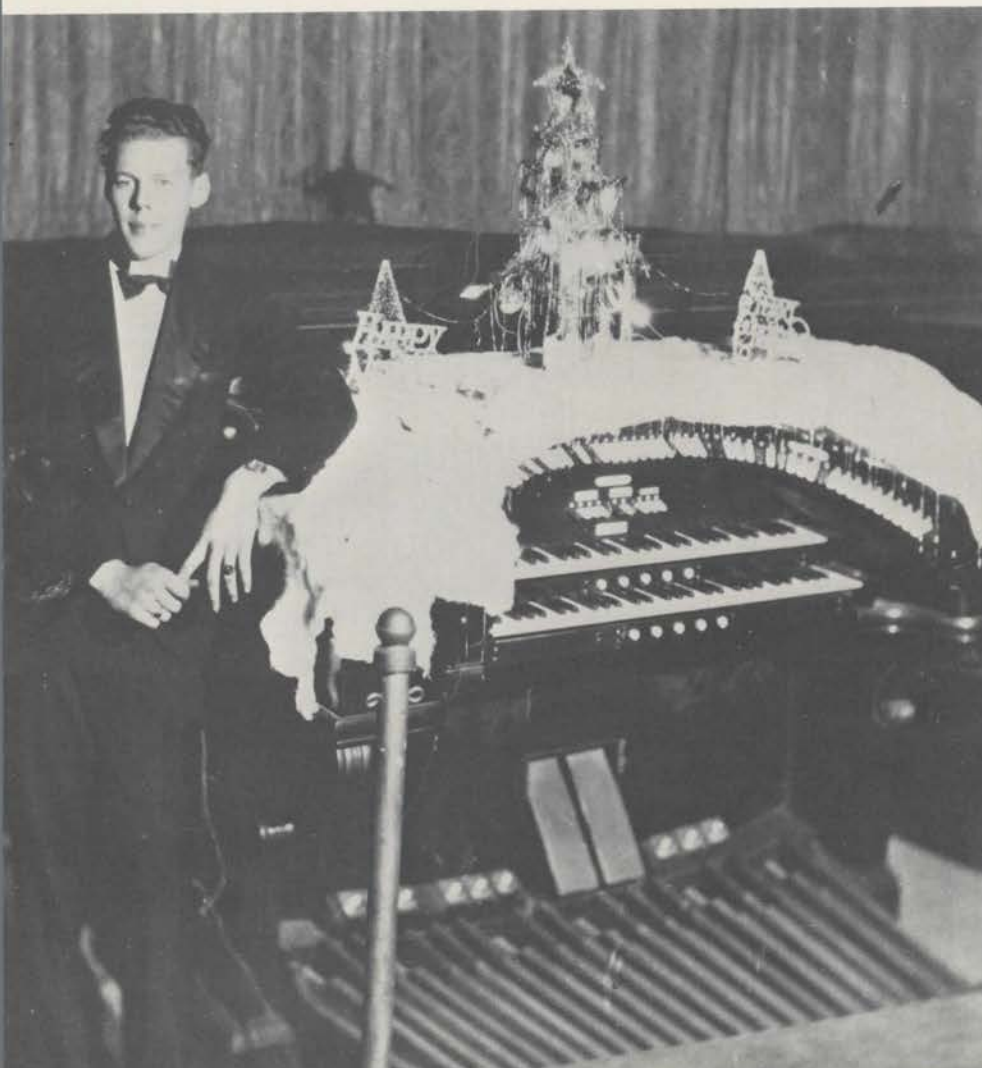
Teresa Vandre was the between-the-acts attraction as she changed the annunciator cards which introduced the vaudeville acts.

MC Bob Balfour brought out a huge 25-foot stage hook to set the mood. We had two magic acts, a barber-shop quartet, an improvisational comedy team, and as our finale, the New Jersey State Twirling Champs from Rahway, who ended with a good old Rockette high-kick-line. Accompanying all this was a small pit band from the local senior citizens center. It was all quite representative of vaudeville on the local circuit in the '20s and the audience loved it.

A slide and film pictorial history of the theatre followed, after which the proceedings were turned over to Rex Koury at the Mighty Wurlitzer to take us to intermission with a 1928 silent newsreel and sing-along. Did they ever sing!! Fred Waring would have been proud.

Following intermission, we held a record drawing for some of Rex's latest discs on the Wichita Century II ex-N.Y. Paramount "Dowager Empress," which Rex had the honor of premiering in it's new Wichita home several years ago.

A bit of history. This 1928 photo shows the original house organist, Chester Kingsbury, at the Rahway console decorated for the Christmas show. He was 19. His assistant was a 14-year-old named Rex Koury.



The Man of the Hour. It was old home night for Rex Koury. He first played the Rahway's 2/7 divided Wurlitzer when he was growing up in the area 50 years ago. The instrument is equipped with double sets of swell shutters in front of each chamber, providing exceptional volume control.

Finally, to cap the evening, Rex superbly scored a 1928 Buster Keaton Comedy, *Seven Chances*, which had the audience nearly rolling in the aisles with laughter. The show started promptly at 8 p.m., the movie ended at 11:45 p.m. and the audience didn't want to go home, so Rex played several encores including his famous *Gunsmoke* theme until just before midnight. Afterwards, Rex and the organ were mobbed by a grateful crowd who kept asking, "Why don't you do this every week?" Well, it would be nice, but . . . (sob). Maybe, if the Old Rahway ever becomes a performing arts center — someday, hopefully.

On the following day Rex Koury returned to the pit of the Old Rahway, and recorded one of the most listenable records you may ever hope to hear, to be released in the fall of 1978 to commemorate the theatre's 50th Anniversary.

As MC Bob Balfour said in closing the show, "You know, when all is said and done, in spite of the need for a good paint job, this theatre and organ may well be the most precious thing this city has. It is uniquely designed, well built and should be cherished and preserved as part of this city's cultural and architectural heritage. If we all make an effort to support it and play our cards right, we'll all be back here in 50 years to do it again. See you all in 2028." □

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE TECHNICAL SIDE

by Lance Johnson

Do you have any questions?

Send them direct to:

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Q. I have decided to go the whole route and refinish all my theatre organ wood parts to the bare wood. I started by belt sanding the orange shellac but found it gummed up the paper with little or no shellac being removed. Is there any faster way to remove shellac?

A. You cannot sand off orange shellac because the heat from the friction dissolves the shellac into gum. You will have to use liberal paint remover first and scrape off with broad knife. After you have gotten as much as possible removed, wash the surface with synosol. Then you can use your belt sander to your heart's desire.

Q. I have seen some organ installation done with PVC sewer pipe for conductors. Do you recommend this?

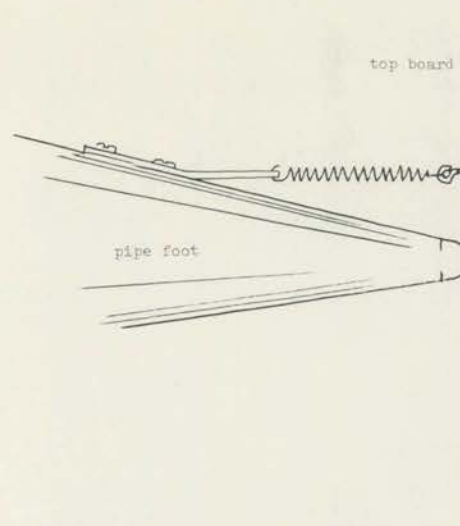
A. Most certainly. It will stand up longer than zinc or iron pipe and is very easy to fit and install. If the size gets up into the 8 to 12 inch size, it gets quite expensive. For winding offsets, shades, etc., it is ideal.

Q. Recently our organ service man recovered several pouches in our church organ with PVC leather substitute. Do you recommend this?

A. Several major builders of organ have tried this product with disastrous results. One builder is now recovering pouches in several of their organs built only ten years ago and doing it at the builder's expense. It is quite possible that some builders have used it successfully but many have not. Better to stick with your old-fashioned leather.

Q. I have an 8' Diapason off-set bass chest that I cannot stand up in my 8' ceiling chamber unless I miter several pipes. Can they be mounted horizontally?

A. I would mount this chest on its side and install screen door springs on the feet and tie them into an eye screw on the top board. This will pull the pipe into the hole and keep it air-tight. To attach the spring,



take a piece of flat steel, 1/8" x 1/2" x 5" and drill three holes, 3/16" in diameter. Screw the strap to the pipe using two of those holes and two #10 by 1/2" pan head (sheet metal) screws. The third hole is for the spring. (See drawing) String bass notes can also be installed in this manner. Do not attempt to do this with spotted metal or hoyt metal pipes. □

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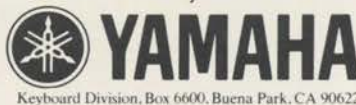
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ARNOLD LEVERENZ

Organist at the Tacoma Pantages Theatre

by Lloyd E. Klos

During the 1976 ATOS Convention, the writer renewed acquaintances with Mr. and Mrs. Homer R. Johnson of Tacoma, Wash. Mrs. (Jane McKee) Johnson was a theatre organist in that area, still is a teacher, periodically plays at the Pizza & Pipes Restaurant in Tacoma, and has a top-grade recording to her credit.

The Johnsons interested the writer in doing a story on Arnold Leverenz who served as house organist in Tacoma's Pantages Theatre for over 10 years. They agreed to collect material from him and his wife, Marie. Interviewing Mr. Leverenz was a difficult task due to a stroke he suffered about 15 years ago, and communication with him is limited. Mrs.

Leverenz assisted as much as possible in providing information and pictures.

When the material arrived there seemed to be almost as much data on the Pantages Theatre as on the house organist. Therefore, this narrative has been divided and the story of Tacoma's Pantages Theatre will appear in the next issue.

Arnold did a lot of broadcasting. Here he plays and MC's his own program in Tacoma.

(Leverenz Coll.)



Arnold Leverenz, whose theatre career was centered in Tacoma's Pantages Theatre, was born in Manitowac, Wisconsin, in 1894. His mother was musical and played a parlor pump organ, which may attest to Arnold's latent musical talent. He had a year's piano instruction, starting at the age of eight, but the organ became his forte. He'd lock himself in his grandmother's room and play the pump organ.

As an organist, he was largely self-taught, developing his own style, and had a great talent for improvising intricate scores for motion pictures. Particularly adept at changing tempos, he seemed to thrive on fast playing. Often, the theatre manager wanted an extra vaudeville show on weekends. This meant that the feature and newsreel had to be run in an hour! A pretty fast pace resulted, but Arnold always did it with a flair which never sounded ridiculous.

Before he moved west, he played piano on the road for the Ziegfeld Follies, a job which provided him some excellent training for the period when he accompanied vaudeville acts.

His brother had been living in Tacoma prior to Arnold's arriving there about 1915. His first theatre job was at the Colonial in 1916. The house originally had a two-manual Estey church organ which subsequently was moved to Stadium High

School, and was succeeded in the theatre in 1920 by a 2/9 Wurlitzer special.

Arnold also played the 3/15 Wurlitzer in the Rialto Theatre in Tacoma. The sound of the organ was exceptional. It has since been installed in Big Bob's Pizza in Burien, Wash., augmented by the organ from the Seattle Coliseum, to make a 42-rank instrument.

The Colonial and Rialto were around the block from each other, were operated by the same owner, and Arnold played relief in both houses.

He also had a stint in the Liberty Theatre in Seattle, between 1918 and 1921, at the same organ on which the great Oliver Wallace achieved his fame. The organ is still in use. It was reinstalled in the PLU gym for awhile, and then sold to the Church of the Nazarene in Spokane which put \$50,000 worth of repairs into it. Electronic relays, new ivories and stop tabs, and a refinished console were included. The traps are still with it, and the organ sounds very well, according to Homer Johnson who has played it.

As we mentioned before, as an organist, Arnold was self taught. Some of his illustrious contemporaries were: Jesse Crawford, Oliver Wallace, Henry B. Murtagh and Albert Hay Malotte, all of whom are Hall of Famers and all of whom Arnold knew.

Arnold Leverenz at the Pantages 3/10 Robert Morton console. At the end of silent pictures, the keydesk was moved to the left side of the orchestra pit, but without an elevator. (Leverenz Coll.)



At an Elks party, he entertains members and their wives a few years ago.

(Leverenz Coll.)

The Liberty Theatre in Seattle, which was opened in 1914, featured Murtagh at the Wurlitzer, succeeded by Wallace, and then Arnold Leverenz for a brief period. Albert Hay Malotte was a great picture accompanist, all-round organist and composer (Malotte set "The Lord's Prayer" to music). Jesse Crawford was the King of the Theatre Organists.

The Liberty was owned and operated by Jensen & Von Herberg, the same organization which operated

the Liberty Theatre in Great Falls, Montana. Our subject also had a six-month stint in the latter house. Then came his 10-year period at Tacoma's Pantages.

The organ in the Pantages was a 3/10 Robert Morton and boasted the first console elevator in the Northwest. It was water-operated, absolutely silent, and was located front and center behind the orchestra pit, three rows of seats being removed for it.

The chambers were under the stage and designated "woodwind" and "brasswind." The console had double bolsters and was highly unified. The manuals were accompaniment, solo and orchestral. The top two were identically unified with all pitches, plus octave couplers. This allowed the organ to be built up into a big, almost dazzling ensemble which completely filled the house in spite of its being an under-the-stage installation. The Pantages circuit had several organs installed this way.

Arnold played the Pantages from the opening of the organ in 1923 until talkies became a regular feature of the bill, albeit the only organist who regularly played it. On his days off, or during rare appearances elsewhere, it was played mostly by the late Donad V. Ball.

Pantages, who used to say that he spoke seven languages, "English as bad as any," was a gifted show-

man. In his chain of theatres, the Tacoma Pantages was always regarded as one of his best, due no doubt to Arnold Leverenz' popularity as house organist. He used to MC his broadcasts from the theatre, which didn't hurt, either.

In early 1926, a reviewer in one newspaper had this to say about a portion of the Pantages bill:

"Max Frolic with his augmented orchestra, playing late hits, gives Tacomans pit music extraordinary. Then follows Arnold Leverenz with as fine a songalogue as he has yet staged. While Frolic and Leverenz are steady diet as house acts, they are showing this week what can be done in the way of really high-class entertainment."

In 1927, Arnold played two big memorable pictures in one week, and vaudeville was suspended. They were *What Price Glory* and *King of Kings*. During the former, the unoccupied stage hands shot blanks into garbage cans behind the screen during battle scenes, while the organ thundered by use of handfulls of keys on the bottom octave of the 16' Diaphone and Ophicleide. His accompaniment of the latter film was such a memorable experience, according to Homer Johnson, that the public returned several times just to hear the organist play the pictures. The earthquake, storm and crucifixion scenes were the most noteworthy.

During his vaudeville days, Arnold had the opportunity to meet some of the great performers and work with them: Bob Hope (with whom he played golf), Jack Benny, Burns & Allen and Singer's Midgets. At one engagement of the midgets, Arnold did a walk-on with them. Rather short in stature himself, the midgets could still look up to him, and it got a laugh.

Occasionally, Arnold took time off from his Pantages duties to open an organ elsewhere. His friend, organ builder Sandy Balcom, remembers his opening a three-manual Kimball in a Longview, Wash., theatre.

Arnold entered radio in the twenties with many broadcasts from the theatre. The first were from the Pantages on Tuesday evenings during vaudeville presentations. They actually put vaudeville on the air in those infant days of radio!

Homer Johnson recalls that often

after the last show, the theatre's outer doors would still be open, and people would wander in to witness a broadcast. "I used to sit down front to listen. One time, Arnold told me he got a letter from people east of the mountains who said he played better than Jesse Crawford. This amused him and he intended to send the letter to Jesse whom he had met in Chicago. I didn't miss many broadcasts. Those were the days when one heard the kind of music everyone liked."



Mr. Leverenz, 83, looks much like this today. Until 1974 he served the Tacoma Elks Lodge as organist. (Leverenz Coll.)

In the late twenties came the alliance of theatre chains through transactions, name changes, etc. The Pantages became the RKO Orpheum about 1929, and became the Roxy in 1934 under the John Hamrick organization. Things were never the same afterward.

During the depression, admissions which had been 50 and 60 cents before, were reduced to 15 and 35 cents, but still not enough attendance to sustain pit orchestras, vaudeville and organists.

By 1933, he broadcast directly from the studio of KMO, using its Robert Morton (now in Tacoma's

CONCERT CANCELLED

It has been announced that the concert, scheduled for September 30th, featuring Ron Poll at the Vancouver, B.C., Orpheum, has been cancelled.

There will be a concert at the Orpheum in December with George Blackmore as the artist.

Sacred Heart Church). He also broadcast for Tacoma Savings & Loan Association on an electronic in his home. His radio period ran until 1945.

One of his radio announcers was John Porter who introduced him with the phrase: "The finest pipe organ music on anybody's air."

During the depression years, after vaudeville was dropped, it was up to the organist to attract patrons to the theatre, which Arnold did. It became the period when the theatregoer's attitude had changed from the "Ain't we got fun" attitude to that of "Now, entertain me." A half-hour before the start of the movie, he performed a daily concert which resulted in almost full houses. He played "songologues" with two girls sometimes sitting atop the console. One spotlight presentation used two school desks as props for a "School Days" routine.

Following the days of radio, Arnold Leverenz was musical director of Tacoma's Afifi Temple Shrine for many years, was organist for the band which accompanied the grandstand show at the Western Washington Fair. In 1949, he played at The Top of the Ocean, a restaurant which featured seven-course dinners, starting at \$1.50! He played a solovox during the dinner hour. In later years, he was organist at the Piper Funeral Home in South Tacoma.

More recently, he played an electronic at the late-lamented Steve's Gay 90's in South Tacoma. Though he was never a teacher, he did coach several students.

After his stroke in 1962, he remained active as organist for six years for the Tacoma Elks Lodge which enjoys the largest membership in the United States.

Several times in recent years, Arnold Leverenz has played at events when he wasn't seen by the audience, such as the church service when Mrs. Leverenz' sister passed away. People, upon hearing the music, said that they were sure it was he that was playing.

Homer Johnson says that people often inquire about Arnold Leverenz, because "they have enjoyable memories of his talent and unique style."

The story of Tacoma's Pantages Theatre will appear in the next issue. □



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NUGGETS from the GOLDEN DAYS

Prospected
by Lloyd E. Klos



Not long ago, we received some undated nuggets, culled from *Variety*. However, these items, probably from the 1927-1931 period, are still interesting enough to see how theatre organists and their presentations were received then.

ALBERT F. BROWN'S organ bit was again original and novel. Had two characters working behind the scrim, one at either end of the stage: a man sitting, listening to the radio, with a woman on the other side, singing thru a mike. Both joined in for a chorus, with woman's voice still coming thru the mike, giving a pleasant and realistic effect. And to hold up the production end of this new style organ work, Brown knows his stops.

CARL COLEMAN, Buffalo organist, failed to enthrall his audience to the point of congregational work. Four numbers played to the accompaniment of publishers' slides were not arranged in a way novel enough to cause singing. But one slide gathered a laugh.

Mr. & Mrs. JESSE CRAWFORD's presentations (at the N.Y. Paramount) took their usual turn, and romped home with the novelty of masking masculine and feminine voices among the organ pipes.

DEL CASTILLO (in Boston) used *Organists Prefer Blondes*, and the film bits included the exploited prize baby contest, a newsreel, and a theatre film showing the stage crews and glimpses of house operation.

A novel stunt to the program called *The Phantom Organ* was played by CYRIL I. GUTHOERL, Pittsburgh organist. The curtain went up on an attractive set with a spotlight on the organ console. The organist was seen behind a scrim on the stage, and with the light playing on the manuals, an air of mystery was created. Over the playerless console appeared a huge question mark. The stunt scored heavily.

DORIS GUTOW's organ and slide stunt made a pleasing bit. A plugger, undercover, joined in for a chorus, and the number fared well with the customers.

Organist JOHN HAMMOND, who has a habit of bowing ahead of his applause, did not get heavy hands at the end of his *How Do You Like Your Opera?* The idea was corking, but Hammond failed to make the most of his opportunities. The excerpts employed were not of the sort which appeal universally. He has been doing much better, and is a master of the instrument.

SYMPHONIC HAWLEY, formerly of the Covent Garden Theatre in Chicago, almost threw away the novelty of a good and originally composed welcome verse by following with song plugging, but helped the latter with a vocal selection by himself. Hawley can write, and play the organ with the best around this burg, and with the added attraction of a nice singing voice, may create a steady patronage out here as others of no more ability are doing elsewhere.

ART HAYES at the organ made 'em sit up and take notice with a novelty, telling of the picture house he would like to build and the artists he would show. It was good.

EDWARD K. HOUSE's organ solo (in Chicago) is dedicated to the late Ernest R. Ball, and is a medley of the composer's melodies. It lacks the usual congregational appeal, but is well conceived and played.

HENRI A. KEATES, solo organist (in Chicago), billed his offering as *Static*. The idea as presented on slides was to convert the theatre into a broadcasting station and have the audience present a program. The erstwhile broadcasters got the drift and went at it loudly. They liked it so well they made him play an encore which is no novelty here.

ALBERT HAY MALOTTE offered a repertory of songs of the sea, wearing a slicker and rain hat to lend color. His organ selections always register with the customers, with his current program scoring well.

The Poet and Peasant Overture was the number assigned to Boston's ARTHUR MARTEL at the organ, but *The Glow Worm* was the number he played. Soft lights and blending color combinations were played over the curtain during his number, a welcome relief from the song slides of the past few weeks. Through the final chorus, little electric lights blinked in all sections of the stage area in an excellent simulation of the glow worms. The old favorite clicked.

ED MEIKEL, Chicago solo organist, had a relapse this week. Usually, his original Organ Club program rates as a feature portion of the bill, but Meikel tried to interest the gang in old American folk numbers, and the way they shied from it is a lesson for any solo organist.

HENRY B. MURTAGH at the organ slipped over an especially effective comedy songfest with slides. The idea is to encourage rivalry between the two halves of the audience. "Last week", says a title, "we had a song contest between the blondes and the brunettes. This week, let's see if the slim girls are better than the plump ones." On that basis, he worked up a barrel of laughs and had them all singing *Baby Face* at the finish.

MILTON SLOSSER had the house with him in his organ solo, *Where'd You Get Those Eyes?*, a singing school number.

Hope you have an idea how the organists presented their specialty numbers. Most were successful, some were not. See you in October, so long, sourdoughs!

Jason & The Old Prospector □

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ORGAN-IZING A MAGIC SHOW

by Harold R. Richman

The organ as an instrument of music is not only renowned for its forcefulness in setting the mood for worship, but as we know it, also a capricious side in setting the mood of an audience. In addition to its invaluable contribution in orchestrating the silent film, the classical organ, reconstructed as an orchestral instrument for the theatre, radio and television, remains to this day a major component in supporting a live performance. In some forms of entertainment the organ is instrumental not only in lending life and structure to the performance but, as in a religious setting, establishes or guides the emotions and mood of the audience. In this connection is the unique ability and role of the theatre organ to enhance as it controls or shapes moods, adding spice to live entertainment. Its quality depends not only on the scope and credentials of the instrument, but also on the versatility of the organist who must constantly adapt and keep with the performance. Nowhere is this audio-visual partnership better illustrated than in the necessity for the close and exacting teamwork required between the organist and the magician.

Watching a good magic show is

like reading an intriguing mystery story. In a magic show there is an additional fascination. You know from the beginning "who done it," but the magician never reveals how an effect was achieved, for once the answer occurs, the effect loses its appeal. The magician must constantly vary the way in which an act is performed. This complicates the work of the organist and forms the basis for our story.

On two occasions recently, Potomac Valley Chapter member, the genial Todd Strickland, veteran professional organist/magician, performed for our chapter meetings a magical blend of theatre organ and conjuring, renewing in me a dormant interest in magic, (one of the hobbies of my youth.) Since Todd's talents and expertise included working both sides of the footlights, I talked to him to find out more about this absorbing avocation and share with you what it takes to produce and musically accompany a magic stage show. As a guest of the Stricklands, I later attended the 33rd Annual Christmas Show of the Yogi Magic Club in Baltimore, Maryland. Todd, a member of the Yogi club, served as general chairman for the extravaganza. He also played a half



Todd Strickland, veteran professional organist and magician.

hour pre-curtain concert of show tunes and a complete organ score throughout the three-hour variety production.

Accompanying the Yogi magic show was not a first for Todd. Years ago he played organ or piano music for his four and five-year-old daughters who had their own magic show in western New York at the Palace Theatre, Olean, N.Y. — "an amateur effort in a professional setting on the stage." Todd and his daughters also played for the Knights of Columbus, Elks and other charitable organizations. "The girls did some outstanding magic," he recalls. He also played pipe organ for Harry Blackstone, Sr.'s magic extravaganza in western New York back in the 30's and, additionally, rink organ, night club stints and solo piano and organ theatrically. Todd also played for dance routines at Army air bases during World War II. His introduction to piano came at the age of four, organ at eight and theatre organ at 14, playing for silent movies and intermissions. He started in magic with his father at age 12 and has since produced, directed and been a part of many magic and variety shows and minstrel shows across the country.

Where there is Todd Strickland you will always find his equally talented wife, Marie, who has worked as his able helper in all magic shows for about four years. This engaging couple does several bewitching tricks, which include Marie materializing from an empty cardboard carton or Easter basket, and a unique, one of its kind, suspension act in which Marie "rotates" horizontally in midair. There have been several husband/wife and larger family teams recorded in the history of the magicians' craft. For example, Harry and Bessie Houdini and Dash, in the 1890's, and the Amazing Marvels of the *Black Art* shows of Billy and Dot Robinson. Madame Adelaide Hermann, the Queen of Magic, was the first woman magician in the history of the art. Madame Hermann followed in the footsteps of her husband, Hermann the Great, after his death in 1896, successfully continuing her headline show for 25 years.

While researching for my story I was impressed with the similarity between the theatre organ and magic. Music and magic, like literature, are universal and make excellent missionaries. Each is capable of communicating in a language understood and enjoyed by all nationalities. Adherents are fervently trying

to keep traditions alive for those who follow. The attributes of the organ and magic craft when combined equate to something special. Both had their beginnings in antiquity.

Magic (conjuring, legerdemain, or by whatever name), is very aptly described in *The Encyclopedia Britannica* as, "The Art of Entertainment by Pretended Performance of Those Things Which Cannot be Done." Its beginning also dates back to Biblical times. Earliest meaning related to tribunal culture — spirits, the devil, unholy powers; used by pagan priests, with illusions and images, to enhance their power over others. In addition to priestly magic, on the other side of the coin, were the highly respected and popular conjurers who performed "theatrically" in the courts of kings, for royalty, and in the streets for other classes. The famous Cups and Balls (shell game) manipulation was their basic feat. About 5,000 years ago the Pharaoh of Egypt called upon a legendary wizard for advice. The story is told that the illusionist demonstrated his prowess for the monarch by restoring the "severed" heads of animals. Although Egypt is considered the cradle of magic, it was performed in the same era, by the Grecians, Romans, Indians, Chinese and others.

These and other original mind-skills and hand-skills cultivated by the ancients have been guarded and zealously handed down, through families of magicians, generation after generation. Various versions of the same illusions are still being done to his day, with modern dress, mechanical apparatus and methodology, now purely for entertainment. In the middle ages the practice of some forms of magic (such as black magic and voodoo) was feared, often considered supernatural and treated as sorcery or "witchcraft." Natural magic, in our enlightened times is based on scientific, not supernatural claim. Its fundamentals remain the same, with variations, from country to country, a most universal form of entertainment. The histories of organ and magic make absorbing stories in themselves.

The Yogi Magic Club of Baltimore is to the magician and magic buff, what the ATOS is to the theatre organist and followers. Historically, the club goes back to 1939, carrying on the traditions of the greatest showmen. It has over 300 members from every state in the union, representing one of the oldest and largest independent magic clubs in the world. One of its founders is the "Great Yogi," Phil Thomas, proprietor of the Yogi Magic Mart, 310 North Charles Street, Baltimore, Maryland. Phil Thomas started in magic at the age of six, performs professional internationally and says, as do all magicians, that he is *still* practicing. Honorary members include personalities such as Harry Blackstone (Sr. and Jr.), Thurston and many others who are regarded as the greatest, all of whom have performed on the Yogi stage. Many outstanding acts retain membership in Yogi though not all can attend meetings because of the need to remain on the road.

The purpose of the Yogi club, Phil Thomas told me, is to "promote the art of magic among the members and give them an opportunity to perform on stage whether they be neophyte or professional." The first Saturday of each month is devoted to a nonbusiness meeting held strictly for the entertainment and education of members. Those who have a birthday in that month are invited to perform one feat on stage as a gift to the club on their birthday.

Performers backstage.

(Anastasi Photo)



"If it is a first time for a beginner, he is before the friendliest of audiences before whom he will ever perform. Yogi people are ever ready to help him with honest advice aimed at improving his technique and polishing routines." Thus, each person, whether beginner or pro, has the opportunity to appear in the course of the year. This experience prepares them for such events as the annual Yogi Christmas show.

The Yogi Magic Club's 33rd Annual Christmas Show was held December 3, 1977, in Baltimore, Maryland (See Potomac Valley Chapter Notes, April-May 1978 issue). Here I found a working model for field research.

The routines offered by members of the Yogi group brought back memories of the good old days of the traditional vaudeville variety shows. This was family-oriented material, appealing to the young of *all* ages. There were stand-up comedians; a sand-artist; puppeteers; magi-clowns who worked in the aisles directly to the children; high-riding, pyramid, juggling unicyclists; levitation and transference, optical illusions galore, and the Amazing Richard. He and his wife do a unique escape act. His wife, Richards proudly told me, is the "fastest strait jacket escape artist in the country. She gets out in eight seconds." Dorothy, "Girl Houdini," is trying for an entry into *The Guinness Book of World Records* for being the first female in the U.S. to perform such an unusual feat. Tom Sikorsky and two young brothers, Albert and Barry, did a fantastic three-man-high juggling, unicycle act which they have been performing since ages eight, six and four. The team is self-taught, routines its own acts and designs its costumes and props. Bob Myers and Sandy offered their Magic Review which included the most ancient and popular Girl Cut in Half illusion. Myers has been a professional for eleven years and began magi-fects at age five.

Acts were accompanied by Todd Strickland on a three-manual Conn organ, donated for the evening by Baltimore's Hammann Music Co., a most capable instrument, with a host of voicings attuned to this particular occasion.

Buck Clayton, a member of the Baltimore Police Department and of the Yogi Magic Club, has indicated

to Todd that the department is very enthused about the potential of the magic craft as a means of "getting the kids off the street, cleaning up their minds and associating the youngsters with down-to-earth solid citizens. It certainly makes a good boy better. He gets recognition and prestige from his buddies, not because he is tough, but because he has an interesting talent that isn't easy to come by, nor imitate. In the process of learning, the novice becomes involved in physics, physical and social aspects, and is taught to stay in front of people and think on his feet."

It is the consensus of magicians I have met that constant practice is the key word for attaining success in the mechanics of manipulative magic and illusions. However, the point was also made that success professionally is hard to achieve. Ed Sparrow, after 30 years of performing magic, juggling, puppet shows, comedian acts and designing TV magic kits, told me that there are but five or six individuals in the U.S. able to afford an avocation of full-time magic. Another handful have other types of work and income to fall back on, or do magic occasionally or part-time. Magic is not recommended for young people professionally until they have first availed themselves of a well-rounded formal education. All recommended the basic art as a hobby, one which will provide "fun, experience and the development of self-confidence that comes with the opportunity to perform in front of people." Unlike other performers, the budding magician must be his own booking agent, which requires business aptitude; his own director, lighting technician, stage manager and builder of his own props.

Functional props comprise a large part of a magic act. A magic effect isn't as simple as it is made to appear. It is what you are made *not* to see that is most important. "There are quite a few things a magician can carry in his pockets for close-up performances," Todd reflects, "such as multiplying balls, cards, silks, etc. But when you get into 'stage work' you have to consider quite a bit of an investment and bulk. Transporting and setting up all this becomes a fantastic problem." Big-time illusionist Ra-Mond once told Todd



Clowns with Grand Yogi Phil Thomas.

(Anastasi Photo)

that in his travels in Europe he has had as many as seven trucks or vans just to carry props, scenery and costumes. For example, the main act for the Baltimore, Maryland, Yogi Magic Show needed over two and a half hours to unload props from its van to back stage, excluding time needed to unpack and set up on the stage.

Todd recalls that he was recently prepared to buy the most famous of illusions, A Lady Cut in Half, until the dealer told him that the equipment would require about seven assistants. Todd remarks that the illustrations didn't show anything but the girl, the equipment and the magician. "Oh yes," the dealer explained, "but that's only part of the act. It takes a lot of people to do that thing."

The organist cannot carry his own musical instrument. He must depend on oftentimes poorly-maintained or rarely-exercised and balky organ installations. "The biggest mechanical problems I have encountered over the years relate to the pipe organ pedals," says Todd. "These are often allowed to get all out of adjustment. Some push hard, some too easy, some rattle, pound, and some don't play at all. It's very difficult if you intend to do some fancy pedal work — you might as well forget it." Pre-concert pedal adjustments or repairs often require hours of work. "Many times in-theatre swell shades won't work properly," he continues. "As a result, you play with open shades or closed shades, losing your direct



Bob Myers and Sandy, in two pieces.

(Anastasi Photo)

means of expression such as can be accomplished with varying the amount of open or closed organ. Sometimes the swells stick halfway open, or only partway." Ciphers occur when one pipe, because of a mechanical problem, whistles all the way through a program, resisting all efforts of the organist to kick it off. Quite frequently Todd encounters one or more ranks of pipes that won't play at all. These are a few of the things that Todd checks out before a show (and usually alone). If a theatre employs a maintenance man, the organist is all set to go, but many theatres wait until something breaks down so badly that the artist cannot go on with a show. Only then, does the management call in a technician.

Consequently, for a concert, the artist will most always arrive in town the day before a show to prepare the way. On the other hand, the artists who perform for the "self-serviced" ATOS chapter installations need concern themselves with "setting-up exercises," not the status of the mechanical well-being of the organ; assuming a "tune-up" has been done by the experts of the local chapter.

Mishaps sometimes occur even after the most elaborate pre-performance set-up. For example, some years ago, Strickland directed a 50-voice male glee club in the U.S. Air Corps Cadet program at a theatre in Nashville, Tennessee. "We always

closed such a show with a prayer; a cappella — no accompaniment," Todd recalls. "So, proper pitch is mandatory. This night, when I tried to activate the proper piston, to give the pitch, instead of getting a note, I got a tambourine. Of course, I went backstage and gave the chorus the pitch on a grand piano behind the screen. The show closed nicely. Afterward we went up into the organ loft and found that some mice had made a nest in the circuitry, and had eaten through and short-circuited some wires in a cable. Very embarrassing."

The accompanist must be resourceful! Todd knew two weeks in advance who would be in the Yogi Christmas show, but the substance of the acts themselves, as they developed on the evening of the performance, were as much of a surprise to him as they were to the audience. He likens the situation to "playing a silent picture, while watching it for the first time, along with the audience." Silent pictures most often come with a cue sheet and occasionally a composed orchestral score; not so for an unpredictably variable magic show. For professional reasons secrecy of method is paramount to magic, in all its numerous forms. Tricks are rarely played to script, show to show, nor performer to performer. Repetition tends to give away the mechanics of an effect. The ancient and traditional Woman-Cut-in-Half routine

may be done with buzz saw, hand saw, swords, blades, etc. Each performer has his own interpretation and adaptation of a "trick," in his own style, which varies tremendously. Consequently, the musician who provides a background for the magic act must have a fantastically large backlog of memorized melodies to fit any particular situation that comes along.

Todd had about 250 selections ready for that night in Baltimore. "During the show, by my own record," he said, "I used about 130 different tunes or pieces of tunes as the acts went on." The organist is also kept busy changing registration to suit variations he makes in the continuity of the melodies.

Unlike accompanying a silent movie, the organist playing for a magic show, which has no rigid routines, must be ever ready to improvise. Todd cites an example, "So often the trick is over before you are prepared for it to end, so you immediately break into a modulation — give a good, big sound to add spice or encourage applause at that point. You must be prepared to follow a performer whose custom may be to walk on unexpectedly, beginning a trick before reaching center stage." Improvisations may also be in order near the end of an act. Before the organist works into the finale, he may be caught in the middle of a tune as the magician concludes his act. "That's when you have to modulate into a nice close and give the performer a good rounder to sound out a particular act."

Emphasis is not always made by sheer volume. Todd noted that you do not necessarily play a "Big Bombard" to add emphasis, which might be distracting, for something like a placid silk routine or sand picture act. To create the emphasis or atmosphere for such as these the organist plays very softly. This forces constant attention of the audience on what is happening on stage. To accompany the desert scene in a Sand Picture act in the Baltimore magic show, Todd played "In A Persian Market" and immediately the audience related to a Far East setting. Then, during the unicycle routine, "I went right into circus music — "Punch and Judy," "Circus Day in Dixie," and that type of thing, directly from Barnum and Bailey cir-



Sisters Charlotte and Bonnie Jo Strickland, "Magicians" in June, 1947 at the Palace Theatre, Olean, New York.

cus orchestration." The responsibility of the organist is to follow an act and mentally set the pace and the place for the viewer.

Well-known music? Todd suggests that two courses are available. You can use familiar or title numbers, or, use an unfamiliar number or improvisation. Organ set-up doesn't really matter; dependence is on registration. Tying in certain registrations add color or atmosphere to a stage setting. For example, Todd explained, a minor key is automatically a sad tune. A glockenspiel, played rather quickly brings out gaiety. Fast runs and a fast arpeggio create the thought of gushing waters. The minds of people, through the years, have been conditioned to relate to particular sounds. "It's a matter of proper registration, manual or presets, often with only a split second to set it up. On the other hand, many times an organist can go right into a very familiar tune, simplifying quick change procedures."


The prime advantage of the electronic, such as used in the Yogishow, over the pipe organ is the compact nature of, and portability of the electronic. Todd emphasized that he prefers the pipe organ, when available, even though the electronic is equipped with the best of synthesized systems. "The electronic cannot truly simulate the full, rich and vibrant voicing of a pipe organ. The pipes give an invigorating feeling of command. When you are playing

an electronic organ, you are right there on a bench; and that's it. But with pipes you have the command of these big lofts, huge pipes and the fantastically beautiful sounds which can fill a huge theatre — all at your finger tips. You are the director of, and have the capability to reproduce, multiple instrumental effects, essentially, a symphonic orchestra." Todd sums it all up with the comment, "The result is a feeling of accomplishment that cannot be matched by the playing of any other instrument."

Strickland says he prefers a small orchestra or band to canned music — if a pipe or electronic organ is not available for accompanying a show. When the magician uses taped or canned music as a last resort, "he must work under tension to accompany music previously set up. A competent organist, with a simple cue sheet and a good working knowledge of registration makes the music fit and follow the magic — synchronize with it, no matter what changes in format or timing in an act are made from time to time." This

seems to be the more precise management and control. "An organist presents the right registration and emphasis and follows changes in mood at exactly the right time. He follows the magician's lead. The magician is the soloist and should not have to confine his timing to previously recorded music," Todd adds. When a magician sets up his routine to recorded music he can go through his act one way, no 'flubs,' or he must completely remake the recording to fit the change. A small orchestra or band led by an alert conductor is more versatile than pre-recorded music, but it cannot respond to unpredicted changes in an act as readily as the organist who is leader, musician and orchestra all in one person.

With the current level of the vigorous revival of interest in both the theatre organ and magic, and the dedicated support and works of such groups as the ATOS and the Yogi Magic Club, it would appear that their survival and further perfection seem virtually assured for the foreseeable future. □



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Care will not seek for thee.
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*Down the valley of a thousand yesterdays
Flow the bright waters of Moon River.
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To carry you down to the land of forgetfulness,
To the kingdom of sleep . . . to the realms of . . .
Moon River,*

*Where vain desires forget themselves
In the loveliness of sleep.*

Moon River . . .

*Enchanted white ribbon
Twined in the hair of night,
Where nothing is but sleep.
Dream on . . . sleep on . . .
Care will not seek for thee.
Float on . . . drift on . . .
Moon River, to the sea.*

SUBMITTED TO THEATRE ORGAN
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by Jerry Stein

Long before Audrey Hepburn had *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, Moon River was a favorite of many people across the country. In this case, however, it was a radio program, not a song by Henry Mancini. For nearly forty years, Moon River was broadcast nightly over WLW, "The Nation's Station," in Cincinnati. At one time, when WLW was putting out a 500,000 watt signal (that's right, 500,000 watts) the program was even heard in Europe. On April 30, 1978, the Ohio Valley Chapter presented an authentic re-creation of the show, featuring Lee Erwin and other cast members from the show. The Ohio Valley presentation was a benefit to kick off a fund drive for the renovation and restoration of Emery Theatre, home of the chapter's Wurlitzer. The show was a rousing success and was sold out a week in advance. The following, reprinted by permission, is a review of the show by Cincinnati Post critic Jerry Stein which provides a view from someone outside theatre organ circles.

The trip down Memory Lane last night at the Emery Theatre was paved with pleasure. The occasion was the American Theatre Organ

Lee Erwin at the console of the Emery Theatre Wurlitzer during "Moon River" show in April.

(Blanche Underwood Photo)



Society. Ohio Valley Chapter's, salute to the old WLW radio program *Moon River*.

On hand for the tribute were some of the show's most important ghosts who made the past come to life for two-and-a-half hours in grand style. Lee Erwin, who played the Wurlitzer theatre organ at the Albee in the '30s, returned from New York last night for a reunion with the Albee organ that is now housed at the Emery.

Erwin also was organist for WLW's *Moon River* show for 11 years. Once again, he was commanding those musical dreams from the big instrument's pipes — "Always," "I Don't Know Why I Love You Like I Do," Broadway ballads, Gershwin . . .

While Erwin wove his musical spells in which he takes full advantage of the organ's many musical moods and voices, the *Moon River* studio at WLW was re-created on stage. There was Cecil Hale seated at the actual black and chrome desk used on the show reading love poetry. Hale's big, soft baritone voice was so filled with romanticism it suggested what Cupid might have sounded like had he ever reached adulthood.

The audience of 1300-plus was especially pleased that Ruby Wright, a *Moon River* vocalist, was on the bill. Still exuding that quiet simplicity in style and tone, she offered several selections including "Poor Butterfly," which has become her song as far as Cincinnatians are concerned. She looked radiant.

Acting as host for the show was perhaps *Moon River*'s youngest veteran, genial, low-key Bill Myers. Like Hale, Myers also read poetry on the show and confessed *Moon River* gave him quite an opportunity to be a Romeo. "Who else had the chance to read love poems to his girl friend (now his wife) over a 50,000 watt station?" he asked.

The program had its lighter moments, too. Erwin played organ accompaniment for a droll Colleen Moore silent entitled *Ella Cinders Goes to Hollywood*. There was a sing-along after which Erwin, pointing to the theatre organ, told the gleeful, enthusiastic audience, "It was the first time I can remember an audience overwhelming this instrument." They were a good match, too.

Erwin opened the program with

medlies from the 1890s and another from the Broadway Theatre. The songs were filled with sound effects and musical tricks that often made charming comments on the material. Erwin doesn't just play; he interprets.

The Organ Society's program last night was the first in a series of entertainments to raise money for the renovation of the Emery Theatre, a fine old house with good acoustics and comfortable sightlines.

It was an evening of arriving and leaving. *Moon River* is gone but the Emery definitely is on the way back. □



ANN LEAF, LIVE IN CONCERT AT THE ORPHEUM'S MAJESTIC PIPE ORGAN. Quest (stereo) QOM 5002S. \$8.48 Canadian postpaid from Praise Records Ltd., 6879 Curragh Ave., Burnaby, B.C., V5J 4V6, Canada. For US buyers this record is available from Doric Records, Box 282, Monterey, Calif. 93940. Doric's price in USA is \$5.95 plus \$1.00 handling.

This is the second in a series of records featuring the restored Vancouver (B.C.) Orpheum Theatre style 240 Wurlitzer. Like the previous Reginald Foort disc, this was taped during two concerts played by Ann in the winter of 1977. The album carries 13 of the nearly 70 tunes she played for Vancouverites. The tunes selected illustrate a representative cross section of the Leaf talents and repertoire, ranging from classics to standards, from film music to novelty, then — sheer musical impishness. The latter category includes her

famous Sousa style "Blue Danube March" and her not so "Hungarian 2nd Rhapsody," which composer Franz Liszt just might recognize as arranged by Ann in fun. Of course she includes her CBS radio signature, "In Time." A dramatic classic played straight is the somewhat ghoulish "Danse Macabre" (Saint Saens) and Alfred Newman's "Street Scene" reflects the ever-changing big city mood. There's medley of tunes suggesting romance: "Love & Marriage," "Love Tales," "Lover" and "I Can't Give You Anything But Love." The standards include "That's Entertainment" (corned up with silent movie noise makers), "The Song is Ended," "I'll Get By" and an energetic "Dizzy Fingers" played with careful abandon.

Ann's biography is the story of the theatre organ from silent movies, through radio, then soap operas and now concerts, so we won't repeat. Readers have known her for years. The gal wasn't so well known to Vancouver audiences — until she played her concerts. Then the local press poured out a stream of accolades rarely accorded a visiting artist. The tunes offered here represent a cross section of the music that turned the critics on.

There is some applause following tunes, and the level is kept reasonable. Some of Ann's introductions are retained. She chats with her audience briefly in her little girl's voice, and her charm comes through. Recording is in big hall perspective which favors ensemble combinations but loses the intimacy of solo voice close-ups. The organ has been well-restored but still needs some of the special TLC in regulation and trem adjustment so necessary for recording instruments. But these are minor items which may reflect personal preference; over-all it's a fine recording. The surface of the review copy was exceptionally smooth and flaw free.

The well-conceived jacket notes provide comments on the music. Ann's performance and her career from a fresh perspective. They were written by Herb McDonald who is the prime mover in the Orpheum organ artist presentations.

There hasn't been an original installation in-theatre Ann Leaf release since she recorded the now gone Los Angeles theatre style 216



Ann Leaf

(Stufoto)

Wurlitzer circa 10 years ago. This example of Ann's finely honed musicianship will be of interest to new and veteran aficionados alike.

Good show, British Columbia!

GEORGE WRIGHT PLAYS THE CHICAGO THEATRE ORGAN. Direct-to-disc stereo. \$13.95 postpaid from Century Records, 6550 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, Calif. 90028

This album is a landmark in the recording of organ music. Tape recording has been eliminated and recording is done directly on wax or acetate discs, as was standard practice until tape arrived to make recording easier if less distortion and noise free from about 1950. The difference is a very marked one in favor of total organ sound. There is a presence in the miking which defies words. It's the nearest thing to sitting in the theatre we've yet heard.

There are other factors involved in the excellence of this album: (1) George Wright's artistry, (2) the 4/29 Wurlitzer so carefully brought back to life by CATOE members and (3) a satin-smooth pressing.

It's a limited edition; only so many pressings can be made without reverting to disc copying practices which could introduce distortion. The price is an admittedly stiff one, yet the over-all quality of all aspects of this effort is bound to endear it to all who hear it.

In the jacket notes George reveals that Jesse Crawford, who opened this instrument in 1921 stated to him that he preferred it to all others. Crawford made one attempt to re-

cord it on the Marsh label in the early '20s. The records were released but early electric recording left much to be desired; thereafter, Crawford recorded only in studios. The instrument has a mellowness of ensemble associated with instruments designed for silent film accompaniment, even to the Post Horn which blends well into the ensemble. This is in contrast with later models which emphasized the more fiery voices associated with solo work after silent film accompaniments were passe. The "haunting, lyrical quality" (George's words) of the organ is quite evident in these original grooves.

The selection of tunes is perfect for such a debut. All are standards. George has recorded some of them before, although not recently. Whether recorded previously or not, all of the tunes are like new when registered on this instrument. Tunes are: "Bongles of Harlem," "Yesterdays" (Kern), "Liza," "I Only Have Eyes For You," "Roller Coaster," "Down in the Depths" (Cole Porter), "Mickey Mouse March," "Here's That Rainy Day," "Black Moonlight," "I Left My Heart in San Francisco," "I'll See You Again," "Veradero."

By now, readers have got to be familiar with the quality of George Wright's arrangements, registration and performance, so we'll spare the eyestrain of repetition.

Besides the jacket note comments by the organist there is some GW puffery by Kathryn Manners which seems totally unnecessary and a wonderful commentary about the organ and music by veteran organ



George Wright during his Chicago Theatre concert. The record lived up to expectations. (Stufoto)

hobbyist Roy Gorish (we recall his contributions to Al Miller's "Kinura" in the mid-'50s) which adds much to the enjoyment of the music.

This is a very special album.

THERE IS ONLY ONE BILLY NALLE, played on the 4/37 Wurlitzer organ in Wichita's Century II Exhibition Hall. WTO (stereo) No. 1458. \$7.00 (\$8.50 outside the USA), postpaid from Wichita Theatre Organ Inc., c/o Central Ticket Agency, Century II Center, Wichita, Kansas 67202.

The title puts it on the line. This guy has a style all his own, just as distinctively his as were the styles of playing practiced by Jesse Crawford, Buddy Cole or Eddie Dunstedter. Although Billy has made a number of records, starting with *Swingin' Pipe Organ* (1958) played on the same instrument in its original New York Paramount Theatre home, we are confident that most will agree that this is his most innovative work to date.

There's no point in simply listing the selections; each is a work unto itself. Billy's opener is an untypical version of a typical console-riser, "From This Moment On." It's distinctive in the free style harmony employed, one of the Nalle trademarks. Billy specializes in what we call "suspense harmony," more simply stated by the resulting question — "How's he gonna get out of this musical cul-de-sac in time?" But he always manages to establish resolution before the downbeat of the next phrase. It's sometimes maddening, those harmonies left hanging for an unnerving moment. Distracting? Not at all. Such spice is what makes his music fresh, even when he's grinding out a jaded chestnut. Added to an original harmonic approach is his registration versatility. Of course the expansive facilities of the 4/37 organ help. Yet we don't recall any previous artist massing all the organ's strings for a super-Kostelanetz sound as Billy did for a too short portion of "Take the A Train." But that's show biz; leave 'em wanting more. The arrangement has much more to recommend it, including some wrenching rhythmic twists.

Billy has a way of making musical sense from meager material. His treatment of "Touch Me in the

Morning" is an example. His "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child" is somber but it is loaded with captivating harmonic beauty. This one is for the musicians; others may find it dull. But it isn't if given the proper study. There's a hint of "The Lonesome Road" woven into the harmonic structure, and it's not easy to pinpoint.

If the listener likes the old Paramount News march (lifted from *La Boheme*, not *Tosca*, as once stated), the "March of Time" and similar *Gebrauchsmusik*, he'll like Billy's original, "Parade Day." It's nothing like those marches except in spirit.

Billy puts more than 7 minutes into an understated, subtle arrangement of "Where is Love?" Pure dream music, with interesting key changes on some exquisite low-keyed instrumentation and featuring some of the organ's solo reeds. That ode to the self-centered, "I've Gotta Be Me," isn't much to begin with (despite borrowings from Johann Strauss), so Billy works doubly hard to put it across, using dramatic stings and offbeat harmonic treatment. A much more attractive offering is the



Candid shot of Billy Nalle during his recent concert.

lively theme music to the long running TV series, *Mannix*, played in the same lilting style as during the show's titles. Billy reaches back to the '50s to re-create a scene from a Hollywood musical. He pictures musically the memorable dance by Gene Kelly performed on a soggy studio stage — "Singin' in the Rain." It features a brief, suggested rainstorm and is easily one of Billy's best. So is the closer, Barry Manilow's "I Write the Songs." Billy plays it in the "rum-te-tum" style so popular with

the younger set, yet manages to maintain an interesting musical level through his instrumentation and harmonic embellishments.

This is the initial record release sponsored by Wichita Theatre Organ Inc., caretakers of the 4/36+1. It is well recorded. Stereo separation is not overdone. Interesting jacket notes by Billy and Mike Coup put the finishing touches on a very attractive package.

NIGEL OGDEN, THE MIGHTY SOUND OF MUSIC, Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust/Acorn. Available by mail at 3.30 (British Pounds) from Cyril Castle, 66 Athlone Avenue, Astley Bridge, Bolton, Lancashire, England.

During the '76 Organ Safari in England a youthful Nigel Ogden impressed us more as a witty raconteur on those interminable bus jaunts than as an organist. Then in early '78 we heard a much improved Nigel Ogden on the broadcast tapes of the "Queen" Wurlitzer dedication concert in Manchester's Free Trade

Don Baker




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Lowell Ayars

Tom Hazleton

Lyn Larsen

Eddie Weaver

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.

Hall. Once again his playing seemed to lack the authority and sparkle of his illustrious colleagues on the program. Consequently, I was totally unprepared for what is, in the writer's opinion, one of the finest theatre organ records in a blue moon.

Nigel kicks off with a hectic little show tune "This Could Be The Start of Something Big" and instantly this "dawg" becomes a thing of beauty. The bouncy full Wurlitzer opening chorus gives way to a quiet, introspective, small ensemble treatment which glows with wit and sentiment. Ever searching for new tempos, the song moves toward its climax with surprise after surprise.

Then the "Theme From Summer of '42." No one has played a ballad that well since the late Buddy Cole. Exquisite harmonies and perfect registrations. But this was no imitation. This was Nigel Ogden doing his own thing his own sweet way. All too soon Nigel was jazz waltzing his way through "What The World Needs Now" wedded to "Wives and Lovers." Some liberties with melody notes? Yes, at times. At times ever a few slips — but when you are flying that high and that well, a bit of turbulence just adds to the excitement.

Next a respectful reading of "Love's Old Sweet Song" which has to be the ultimate recording of this sentimental classic. Duke Ellington's "Flamingo" is a pleasant interlude which gives the listener a chance to relax before the next blockbuster. And Nigel has fun with the old chestnut, "Chloe," but again, his humor is not ridicule. It is as though we were laughing at ourselves for forgetting what a lovely powerful dramatic song "Chloe" really is.

Side 2 begins with one of those inevitable British marches, "Down With The Curtain." Nigel's treatment is lighthearted so that one feels like skipping along. The British approach to marches usually leaves us

cold; this one didn't. "Pink Panther" is titillatingly funky and mysterious without being too cute. Nigel suggests the beat without hitting us over the head with it. His registrations are masterpieces of understatement and the Wurlitzer Marimba has never sounded better on a recording. The church-like solemnity of "Rose of England" never becomes stuffy or over-selfconscious. Some of the patriotic English pieces are a bit much to American ears. This one, as played by Nigel, has power without pomposity. "Rush Hour" is one of those snappy novelty tunes British audiences like so well. The organist turns tinsel into silver and glass into emeralds.

"The Party's Over" reminded us again of Buddy Cole, only because Nigel manages to turn the song inward with the controlled passion which we came to expect in Buddy's best. Tibias and voxes are back, and better than ever! The album jacket warns us that Nigel has chosen "Those Were the Days" as his signature tune. We are not warned that Mr. Ogden is quite capable of turning a worn out trick into a superb new treat.

There are a few flaws. Occasionally Nigel opens the swell shades a bit too abruptly, and there are tiny pinhole lapses in transitions here and there. The fidelity and balance of the recording are technically miracles of perfection. Perhaps it is the four chamber installation of pipes, or the acoustics of Free Trade Hall, or inspired recording engineers, or the restored integrity of the "Queen" Wurlitzer, or Nigel's familiarity with his tonal resources. No matter, the end result is diamonds on velvet, a glorious sound that sparkles and shimmers. Even the tremos will please American ears.

The record envelope features an impressive overview of Free Trade Hall with an insert of Nigel at the four manual console. Commentary includes a statement by Eric Penny, head of the L.T.O.T. technical team. L.T.O.T.'s Honorable Secretary John Potter writes, "I would be surprised if, within the next few years, Nigel does not become a very much sought after organist internationally. Welcome to the top of the bill — Nigel Ogden." To that we can only add "Right on!"

WALTER BEAUPRE □

DINNY'S COLYUM

as
transcribed
by
Del Castillo



Well now, these is the days, like they say in All In The Family, when they is organ players convenshuns along with everbody else. We had the one down in Atalanta where I noo it would be so dum hot I jest skipped the hole thing, even tho I woulda liked to here that organ in the big theayter. Then Bill Worrall he had another one of what he calls his Home Organist Adventures in Pasadena California and he gets about fifteen organ dealers and they all bring in there noo organs and there best players to soup up there sails. And so they is a humdinger of a organ concert everyday and they is organ music acomin rite out of your ears from all the show rooms agoin full blast, and then they is meetins and work shops where they is lectures and discussions and so forth and so on like they say, and that goes on four-five days until everbody is all tuckered out.

Then up near Frisco they is ever year what they call the Home Organ Festival they been having one ever year for so long I lost count. They got two things agoin for them that makes me want to go. First off they is a champain party ever afternoon by the different organ dealers. And then the grub is great and three times a day everbody falls into long lines and they is told which section they got to sit in that is after they go down the line where they is three shefs aladlin out good tastin meals. And then late at nite they is jam sessions where everbody cuts loose and makes the welkin ring as they say tho I never found out what makin the welkin ring is. Must be it is somethin like a big gong.

Where they have it is at a place by the name of Asilomar wich is a Cal.

state park in Pacific Grove rite by the ocean. The concerts is packed with peepul so much they have to show them on a speshal TV they got rigged up in the next room. It comes in the middle of Sept. so they is still time to get on bored this year and if you never gone to one of them you ought to try it. Last year wich was the 18th one they had thirteen different kinds of organs and mostly good organ players like Ann Leaf and Gaylord Carter and Bill Thomson and peepul like that there.

And then they is things like fashun shows and a costoom party where ther is prizes and everbody dresses up funny, but in between times they dress up in any old thing because that is the kind of a place it is. Ever day they put out a paper by Mr. Stew Green wich he calls a Poop Sheet wich is a word he made up that means Parlor Organ Offishal Press. Mr. Green he is a funny riter and he goes asnoopin around to find things to put in the Poop Sheet and he gets

some pretty good ones. Like he says about Mr. Tiny James who is called Tiny because he aint, he says Tiny James come out without a coat because it was reprocessed by Omar The Tentmaker, and he says Mr. Bud Iverson he played Fascinatim Rythm and he dedicated it to the Birth Control peepul. And he says Dont leave the Champain glasses on the grass because it makes the squirrels drunk and besides they need to use the glasses again for next day. Oh that Mr. Green he is a card.

And then at the end he tells about the two organ players and the first one says Whats for Breakfast and the second one says Hammond Eggs and the first one says Now dont Conn me, and the second one says his wife left him and the first one says Well dont Kawai and then he says I see you lost all your hair and the second says Thats OK I like to see the Baldwin. Well, that gives you an idea. But just the same it was a good convenshun. □



Rex Koury chats with his listeners in his informal manner of entertaining. A lightly-draped sound outlet covers the passage between the chambers while providing maximum volume to the music room.

BEEKS 3/12 HAS A BUSY WEEK

by Ray Sawyer

One six-rank Smith plus one six-rank Wurlitzer tied into a three-manual console provides the expected good listening to those present during a series of concerts in Fred Beeks' charming music room here in Reno. It is played frequently by local organists as well as many leading performers from out of town. Rex Koury entertained twice this week, once for an arranged organ-crawl for a bus-load of Sierra Chapter ATOS Sacramento members (Note: see Sierra Chapter Notes) and the second time for an enthusiastic group of handicapped athletes who thoroughly enjoyed Rex's bright crackling style.

Later in the week the Pacific Locomotive Association, (steamtrain buffs!) hosted the legendary Tiny James. Few organists may boast the years of experience Tiny has obtained while playing a wide variety of installations, all of which differ greatly, thus the Beeks organ posed no problem. Upon getting his fill of playing "Johnny One-Note" on the locomotive's whistle up in Virginia City, Tiny got acquainted with Fred's instrument and, as with Rex Koury, gave a masterful demonstration. Tiny's tunelist embraced mostly songs from away back while indicating his liking for second touch, the principle stop being a meaty Gottfried Tuba.

Kudos must also go to the Beeks family, offering the only theatre organ in the area to any number of groups, as well as access to their comfortable home. □

NEW PIPES BUILT IN TONAWANDA FOR MIGHTIEST WURLITZER

Delaware Organ Company employees prepare to place top section on a 32' Diaphone. Robert Colby, president of Delaware, supports the tallest and the shortest pipes of the 12-note set.

(Photo Courtesy Buffalo Evening News)



*Condensed from material supplied
by ATOS member Harvey Elsaesser*

Upon preparing for the installation of the Mightiest Wurlitzer at the headquarters of the Wurlitzer Company in De Kalb, Illinois, it was discovered that no 32' diaphones were in the inventory of pipe ranks. A search proved there were no Wurlitzer diaphones readily available, therefore, a set would necessarily have to be made.

The contract for the 12-note set was given to the Delaware Organ Company of Tonawanda City, N.Y. Company President R.C. Colby stated that his firm had furnished other parts, had acted as a consultant to the Wurlitzer Company on the project, and was elated to have the opportunity to furnish the 32' octave for the Mightiest Wurlitzer.

A touch of irony is the fact that the Delaware Organ Company, as a supplier and manufacturer of organ parts, is located only a short distance from the original Wurlitzer Pipe Organ Factory which produced all of the Mighty Wurlitzers. Mr. Colby started his career as an employee of Wurlitzer. □

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.

Veteran organist Jane McKee Johnson, whose *Just Playin' Jane* record is doing very well, had another encounter with pipes in Tacoma, Washington for three days in March during which she played a 20-minute prelude and a 20-minute intermission for the "Junior League Follies," on the 2/9 Kimball in the Temple Theatre, the last remaining original pipe installation in Tacoma. It was the most the venerable Kimball had been used in years and Jane reports many encouraging comments.

When Rosa Rio learned of the saving of New Orleans' Saenger Theatre and its 4/26 Robert Morton, she was overjoyed. "John Hammond opened the place in 1927, and was succeeded by Ray MacNamara. Herbie Koch also had a stint there, and his wife, who was a very beautiful girl, often appeared on stage at the second console, holding down a chord while Herbie played. Ray MacNamara and I did duets, and one of them was done with a small

house built around the console. We played 'Together' as we looked out a window. I played the final program on this instrument when the organ's use was discontinued." Rosa is hopeful that when the organ is again fully restored, she will be signed to do a re-dedication concert.

From Dallas, Texas, organist Lew Williams informs us that Gordon Wright has removed his 2/9 Wurli from his home (wasn't it originally a 2/6?) and will soon replace it with the 3/15 from the Dallas Capri Theatre (and didn't that used to be a 3/11? Things sure grow big in Texas!).

At a recent Rosa Rio concert, Norman L. Ray, chairman of Conn. Valley Chapter ATOS stated that the pipe organ, formerly in the Allen Theatre in Hartford, is being renovated, prior to its installation in Shelton High School, and will hopefully be ready for concert activities early next year.

On a visit to his mother's home in Cape Coral, Florida, organist Jimmy Boyce kept hearing rumors of a terrific pipe organ in nearby Fort Myers. Doing some sleuthing he found the instrument in an arching studio, a magnificent 3/15 carefully assembled by Walter Draughon of Fort Myers. So, for the past two years Jimmy has been giving concerts on it for the local AGO chapter. The organ is a real mix, says Jimmy: the

Tibia, Flute, Salicional, Sal. Celeste, Diapason, Clarinet, Vox and Style D Trumpet are Wurlitzer; two Strings are Robert Morton and the Gamba is Gottfried; the Kinura is Marr & Colton; a second Vox is Morton; there's also an Estey Flute d'Amore and a VDO. He adds that the studio has a cathedral roof and the acoustic qualities are excellent.

Dick Sklenar reports another incident involving Chicago's Oriental Theatre. Last time it was a suicide-bent rodent in the organ's blower. This time it was a fire in the balcony during a June matinee. It started in a metal butt container, one which had been stuffed with paper cups and napkins. 2,000 people who had come to see *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Deathport* lost no time piling out of the house and demanding their money back. The ornately decorated walls, a corridor ceiling, and a carpet were damaged to the tune of \$25,000. Water from fire hoses helped. The organ was not damaged.

The Oriental was built in 1926 on the site of another theatre, the Iriquois, where 600 persons perished in a 1903 fire.

The Oriental reopened a day after the fire with a closed balcony.

Dick Loderhose tells us that the installation of his 4/42 augmented Wurlitzer in his 430-seat Bay Theatre in Seal Beach, Calif., will be well underway by September. Dick has spent much of the summer in the



Jimmy Boyce at Walter Draughon's 3/15 console.



Dick Loderhose. His project is moving. (Stufoto)

east, packing the remainder of his huge instrument for the westward trek. He is also picking his installation crew in southern California with much care. With a little luck and elbow grease Dick will have it ready for the '79 convention in Los Angeles.



In the pages of the *Sunday Rochester Journal-American* of May 11th, 1930, appeared an answer to a question Jesse Crawford was once asked: "Do you like the organ?"

"Do I!", was the immediate response. "Once when I was getting along on a \$25-a-week salary as a piano player in a Spokane movie house, I quit to work for \$10 in a smaller theatre. And the reason I did this was because the latter place had an honest-to-goodness pipe organ."



The 445-seat Wheeler Opera House in Aspen, Colorado, is in the market for a theatre organ donation. It's a "safe" theatre, owned by the city and manager Jon Busch has the go-ahead but no money from the city fathers. Jon is hoping some generous person has an organ up to 3/15 to spare. He has lots of chamber space.



Remember the 3/27 Wurlitzer which was a feature of the Orpheum Restaurant in Clearwater, Fla., in 1976? After a traumatic start when a tornado swept into the area on opening night, the place closed six months later. Thru litigation, the place is now in the hands of the original owners, but the organ is in stor-

age in Cincinnati, the property of one of the principals of the Orpheum Corp. Don Baker, who played it in the restaurant, is now at the 3/25 Kimball in Burns Pizza & Pipes in Tampa. His schedule allows him to concertize on theatre organs about the country.



Terry Charles continues to be the number one organist at the Kirk of Dunedin, though other artists are interspersed in the concert series from time to time. On January 12, Charles played his 70th formal concert. The organ has been restored since the disastrous fire in 1977. On May 11, he gave his 75th concert in the 10 years of the Kirk series. Some of the best-known organists on the circuit have appeared in Dunedin: Helen Dell, Ann Leaf, Billy Nalle, and Rosa Rio, to name a few.



Billy Nalle, whose latest platter is reviewed in this issue, has another reason for rejoicing: he's drawing better than rock concerts. Despite a holiday concert when large numbers took to the road, Billy's recent concert netted over 2000 admissions to the Century II auditorium in Wichita to hear Billy play the 4/37 ex-N.Y. Paramount Wurli. Contrast that record with the scheduled presentation of the rock group chosen to represent the USA in a tour of Russia. On the eve of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band's scheduled holiday concert in Century II, the group's manager cancelled

the show, because only 300 tickets had been sold (1500 had been sold at the same point in time for the Nalle concert). Score one for theatre organ!



Word reaches us from Jim Foley in Syracuse, N.Y. that the Landmark (ex-Loew's State) Theatre is busily serving as the community's performing arts center. "It has been going just great, with lots of bookings and other activity." The 2900-seat theatre was saved by community effort last year. Diligent fund-raising by citizens, plus a state grant, assured purchase of the property. Volunteer effort has been responsible for cleaning, polishing, and refurbishing. Priorities in 1978 include roof repair, new stage flooring, and acquiring a pipe organ. The original 4/20 Wurlitzer, Opus 1825, was spirited away by a west coast organ broker in the sixties. Efforts to re-purchase it from the present owner, who has had it in storage 12 years, were unsuccessful. Those who played it at Loew's included Paul H. Forster, Maurice Cook, Betty Lee Taylor and Lew Baker. Sure would be nice to see the instrument back where it belongs!



The Grande Dame of the theatre organ, Luella Wickham, who always looks forward to attending each ATOS convention, has experienced a spell of adversity since January 3rd. She had a couple bad falls, one which broke her hip, and which



Billy Nalle's audience at Century II. His organ concert bested a rock concert.



Luella. She's the greatest.

(Stufoto)

necessitated hospitalization. At last report, she is recuperating at her home, 833-715 E. Brighton, Syracuse, N.Y. 13205. She was a noted silent film organist in the Salt City during the big era, and Stu Green, who described himself as "a pimply-faced adolescent," would sit at the orchestra rail and converse with Luella. They couldn't believe that the talkies would supplant the silents. How about a get well card?



The June 2nd issue of the *Washington Star* ran a full page article about how many towns are rescuing the remaining movie theatres from the wrecking ball — but not the nation's capitol. One reason for the lack of urgency is the presence there of the Kennedy Center and the American Film Institute where performing and cinema arts are secure. Writer Vincent Canby muses about the Radio City Music Hall living on borrowed time and praises Atlanta Landmarks and other groups which have joined in the battle to save theatres.



Another performing arts center with pipe organ has been added to the growing list of such installations. In May, a two-day dedicatory program inaugurated the 4/24 Robert Morton, newly installed in the Forum in Binghamton, N.Y. The organ was formerly in the America Theatre in Denver, reinstalled in the Alma Temple, from which it was removed

in 1970. It was acquired from broker Roy Davis by the Binghamton Savings Bank in 1975 as a gift to the Forum.

Dennis and Heidi James, the famed organ-piano duo, played before near-capacity houses in the 1521-seat theatre, and their program of classical, semi-classical and popular music received an excellent reception from the audiences. The Binghamton Kiwanis Club plans to sponsor an organ concert in the fall, and another next spring.



While in Britain, George Wright sent us a clipping from the London Times, supposedly giving a deadpan account of the British Chapter of Midnight Organ Supply, at least on first examination.

"Three mortuary technicians charged with having taken organs from a Stoke and Trent hospital, for sale to Sweden, will appeal."

Then the zinger. The organs for sale to Sweden were pituitary glands removed from "customers."

Judd Walton and Bob Jacobus who attended Wright's April concert in Britain report the sold out event was top drawer.



Our now and then correspondent Margaret Sabo safaried to her old northwest stamping ground around Easter and discovered much new pipe activity since her move to Pennsylvania a few years ago.

One of her discoveries was Bob

White a promising young organist who plays for the Breuer chain of pizzerias. She found Bob being cajoled by a parrot at the Seattle Pizza Shop, but resisted the urge to state toward which feathered friends the art was going.



Our correspondent-at-large, Doc Bebko, had a stroke of luck, rather wife Stella did. The couple are looking forward to October when they will have an 8-day, all-expense paid trip to London, courtesy of Buffalo's Studio Arena Theatre. Mrs. Bebko won the prize in a drawing. So, Doc will probably be scouting a few Comptons, Christies and Jardines across the pond. May they have a jolly good show in Britain!



From Beaumont, Texas, Al Sacker reveals that the "mystery organ" he used for his recent *Music of the '20s and '30s* album was actually the 31-rank hybrid in the Pipe Organ & Pizza in Houston. Built around the 3/13 Wurli from the St. George Theatre, Staten Island, N.Y., it has been enlarged with Morton, Kilgen and Moller components.



The George Eastman House in Rochester is a noted museum of photography. It also has a rich archive of silent films. On May 29, an explosive fire destroyed four buildings



Bob White and friend. No, he didn't get the bird.

on the property. Lost in one were 329 motion picture negatives, including such films as *Boys' Town* and *Strike the Band*. Loss was placed at \$1 million. A new building had been planned, but lack of money prevented construction. Only 60 of the 329 films had been copied. Spontaneous combustion, coupled with the 90-degree outside temperature caused the ignition of the nitrate-based film. The storage building, which had no humidity control or sprinkler system, originally served as an incinerator, and it sure lived up to its name!



The *Project UFO* TV show has revived interest in the Air Force's "Project Bluebook" which is the basis for the Jack Webb-produced series. One especially interested individual is retired AAF Colonel Harry Jenkins who worked on the investigations for "Project Bluebook." Jenkins, who was a theatre organist way back when and more recently a circus organist for 10 years, has been receiving invitations to speak on the UFO phenomenon before various groups, one being the San Diego UFO Association. He appreciated the high level of questions asked, and reassured his audience that the AAF did not quit the investigations in order to keep secrets from the public. They admitted that 12 percent of the sightings have not been explained but added that no UFO activities have been antagonistic, only curious. They do not see UFOs as any threat.



Organist Shirley Hannum has done it — committed matrimony, that is. The lucky man is red-headed Alan Keiter, a chemical process engineer who served on the maintenance crew for the Kimball organ in the Lansdowne Theatre, Lansdowne, Penna., Shirley's stomping ground for approximately the past 15 years. She played intermissions and her music turned Alan on. It all came to a head on May 13th at the Drexel Hill Baptist Church where Rev. Kurt Frank tied the knot. Then a reception at the Alpine Inn, Springfield, Penna. An interesting detail of the ceremony was a rendering of "O Perfect Love" on handbells, instruments close to the bride's heart.



They merged. Alan Keiter and Shirley Hannum. Shirley was so excited she forgot the organ star's first commandment — to ditch the cheaters when being photographed. (Clair Pruett Photo)

The honeymoon trip was to Hawaii. Our good wishes are with you — kids!



Organist Gunnar Anderson, who plays in the Bellingham, Washington area, discovered on a recent visit to Panama what had become of the one-time 3/27 Wurlitzer which was once installed in the Panama Hilton. Originally from the Atlantic City Warner's Theatre it was moved to Panama through the efforts of Leroy

Lewis, who played it in the hotel's El Bombarde room after its installation. Now in storage, it has been discovered by a die-hard pipe enthusiast, Pablo Herrero, who has talked the manager of another Panama City hotel into buying it (for an alleged 45 grand). By the time this hits print, installation should be well underway.



In his biography of Gaylord Carter in the October 1967 *THEATRE ORGAN*, Lloyd Klos mentioned Ethel Percy Andrus as being Gaylord's principal at Lincoln High School in Los Angeles over 50 years ago. It was she who advised the future ATOS Hall of Fame organist: "I hope that whatever you do which takes the most time, will be the thing you enjoy most." Considering the fact that Gaylord Carter is over 70 years young, his principal's advice hasn't slowed him one bit. "I did De Mille's *King of Kings*' 20 times during the 1978 Easter season, including once on a 5/125 Rufatti. I'll be in Wichita Century II in December and the Ohio Theatre in Columbus in April. I manage to keep busy with concerts, recordings, workshops, seminars, film festivals and electronic promotions. I like what I'm doing." He has never lost that boyish enthusiasm and drive for entertaining audiences.



Enthusiast Ken Veneron took a week off in May for an organ-hopping trip with wife Jane. He first vis-



Pablo Herrero. He is rescuing a fine instrument. Pablo is shown here at his Hammond X66, soon to be replaced by pipes.



Hector Olivera

ited Hector Olivera at his Pittsburgh home to see his installation, and then headed for Chicago where Hector, in spite of a recent accident to a hand, played up a storm in the Oriental and Chicago Theatres. Ken had a nice visit with Bismarck Hotel Lounge organist, Barbara Sellers and her Hall of Fame mother, Edna. Then to Rockford and the Coronado where Bob Coe played the Barton. DeKalb, Ill. was along the way where the mightiest Wurlitzer of them all is being assembled. In Spring Green, Wis., the couple visited the House on the Rock, replete with band organs and other mechanical instruments. At Platteville, Wis., the Venerons saw the Timbers Restaurant organ; mostly Conn electronic, but with some pipework augmenting. That is the type of vacation enthusiasts dream about.

"When I saw Al Jolson in *The Jazz Singer*, I knew theatre organs were on the way out," says ex-theatre organist Robert Stratton of Alexandria, Virginia. So, he turned to electronics and ended up with a long stretch with the Federal Communication Commission (FCC). He retired recently and went immediately to his first love, music. He assembled parts from four church organs into a 976 pipe organ for his home. Stratton also custom-builds Harpsichords (45 to date) and repairs ancient organs. One in Antigua, Guatemala, hadn't played since 1773 when an

earthquake silenced it. Stratton was one of a team of two commissioned to get it going, and they did.

In his spare time, Bob Stratton, now 73, is Chairman of the Potomac Valley Chapter of ATOS, a 200 member group which is currently moving the organ from the Washington Warner Theatre to the Adult Education Center at the University of Maryland, where it will be much safer.

Stratton was the subject of a spread in a recent issue of the *Alexandria Gazette*.

Commenting on our review of one of his recent records played on the London Odeon Compton organ, Don Knights explained why he ended "Gaitie Parisienne" with a horrendous palm smear. His reply is probably the most reasonable excuse we've heard.

"I wanted to musically picture a can-can girl ending her dance with a split. The smear seemed to fit the picture." So be it.

We are sometimes accused of ignoring the electronics, even condemned for calling them plug-ins. To get us off the hook, here's a photo of three happy people, too joyous to ignore. It was taken at a concert played by Dwight Beacham at Nags Head, North Carolina. The occasion was the dedication of a new Allen Organ in the home of Joe and Mary Pool, for which they built a music

room onto their home which will seat 40 people. Dwight showed off the versatility of the new instrument to an overflow audience.

There, we seen our dooty and we done it.

The 4/22 Marr & Colton in Elmira, N.Y.'s Samuel Clemens Center is now undergoing modernization in the very latest sense. For some time interested persons have been trying to raise money to update the instrument, and one donor gave \$10,000 to the cause. In May, two boxes of printed circuit cards arrived from England. Total cost of these units was \$10,000. An automatic relay unit arrived on the same day, the \$5,000 cost being borne by the Center. A third acquisition which will be ready for the fall concert season, is the "Jolly Green Giant", a blower from a dismantled organ in Philadelphia. The original blower just couldn't provide sufficient air for all the ranks. Volunteer labor has cut the cost of restoring the Elmira organ from \$80,000 to \$30,000. While the organ is idle during the summer, the new appurtenances will be installed by crew chief Lauren Peckham and his associates. Peckham feels the restored M&C "will be one of the finest."

Bill Blunk advises that the Sherwood Oriental Theatre, in Sherwood, Oregon (near Portland) is open on Fridays and Saturdays during the



Dwight Beacham (left), Mary and Joe Pool. Happy with their electronic.



Bill Blunk

(Alice Blue Photo)

summer. The show starts at 7 p.m. The Oriental is the home of the 5/24 Marr and Colton originally in the Rochester Theatre in that N.Y. state town. Bill recently installed Peterson solid state relays. "They worked perfectly the first time" says Bill.

Don Thompson was visited by Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau at the Toronto Organ Grinder pizzeria recently. Trudeau brought his two small sons and all seemed to appreciate Don's performance. A few days later a "thank you" note on official stationery arrived.

Jimmy, you've been one-upped!

Enthusiast Eric Reeve is trying to determine the whereabouts of the following organists, or any news of them: Bob West, Henrietta Kamern, Elsie Thompson, Doc Whipple and Stanleigh Malotte. Drop Eric a line at 1630 Elmwood Drive, Minot, North Dakota 58701.

One doesn't hear from the Minneapolis area too often, especially in regards to the Civic Auditorium's Kimball made famous by Eddie Dunstedter. According to ATOS member, Luther Winquist, the instrument's 124 ranks are playable from the 5-manual draw-knob console, and 21 of these ranks are also playable from the 4-manual horse-shoe keydesk. The theatre console is used for some ATOS events and for background music for other affairs.

The classic console is used mostly in church functions, such as the Episcopal Convention which was held in September 1976.

Several readers sent us a clipping from a May Wall Street Journal, a story about 28-year-old Gavin Mc Donough, owner, manager and sole employee of the B.A.B. Organ Co. headquartered in East Burke, Vermont. (population: 150). Interested since boyhood in amusement park carousel organs, McDonough was apprenticed for two years to one-time Wurlitzer organ repairman Ralph Tussing. The older the carousel organ, the greater the value

from the antique viewpoint, and Mc Donough says he has more business than he can take care of.

"Why do I do it? I guess I want to preserve what could become extinct. When I get those things playing, that's my reward." □

WHERE IT IS!

The cover photo on the June/July, 1978 issue of THE-ATRE ORGAN is the five-manual Wurlitzer at World Headquarters for the Wurlitzer Co. at Dekalb, Illinois. This information was inadvertently omitted.



Closing Chord



Norville Hall, veteran organist and pipe organ builder, age 68, passed away May 5th while attending a convention, in Detroit, Michigan, where he was giving a concert at an electronic organ. His death occurred instantly, on stage, as he was playing the concert.

Although he was born in Livingston, Alabama, he spent his childhood in Birmingham, living with his parents and four brothers and sisters. His family always had a piano in the home and he became interested in the piano at an early age. At about age 10 he was given permission to practice on the church organ at the Episcopal church where they were members.

After graduating from Phillips High School in 1927, Mr. Hall began working as an apprentice organ builder with Orla Allen, well-known organist and choir master for the Church of the Advent and a representative for the Aeolian-Skinner pipe organ company.

The Alabama Theatre was under construction and young Norville Hall, who was also an usher at the Strand Theatre, became a frequent visitor to the construction site. One night, after he had closed the Strand, he went to the Alabama and was invited into the building to see the Wurlitzer console which had arrived that day. The night the organ was completed, Mr. Hall was the



Norville Hall

first to play it and, in his words, "This was the greatest musical moment of my life."

In 1931, he attended the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago, where he majored in piano and studied organ. Mr. Hall, in the depths of the great depression of the 1930s, began playing organ at a skating rink. He also played organ at a number of churches, theatres, night clubs and radio stations in the Chicago area.

In 1944 he returned to Birmingham and became staff organist for radio station WSGN. Also, during this year, he fell heir to Orla Allen organ business and in 1945 started

his career as a builder of pipe organs. It was during this time that he obtained the contract to maintain the Alabama Theatre Wurlitzer and continued to do so until it stopped being used on a regular basis.

Mr. Hall was a member of the American Guild of Organists and the Alabama Chapter of ATOS. He was admired and respected by his many friends from all walks of life.

Though he is well-known for the many concerts he has given throughout the eastern and southern sections of our nation, his lasting tribute will be in the many churches whose pipe organs bear the plaque, "Built by Norville Hall and Associates."

Fred Feibel, Hall of Fame theatre organist, and one of the staff at the New York Paramount for seven years, died on May 16th at Vero Beach, Florida.

He was born in Union City, N.J., in 1906, and at an early age was a musician, playing several instruments for high school basketball games and dances. After playing organ in several theatres, he was named to the staff of the New York Paramount at the age of 21.

He served for 35 years as organist for the Columbia Broadcasting System on such programs as *The Goldbergs*, *Our Gal*, *Sunday* and *Starlight Theatre*. He did more than 8,000 radio and TV broadcasts before moving to Vero Beach in 1962.

Widely known as a composer, he had 100 original compositions to his credit, in addition to arrangements for musical shows and textbooks on popular music.

In his years in Florida, he played 22 concerts for several organizations, and founded a trust fund for scholarships in Indian River Community College.

Mr. Feibel is survived by his wife, Lenore, a daughter, and two grandchildren.

Lloyd E. Klos

Albert L. Heckman, organist in the Rochester, N.Y. area for over 35 years, died on June 21st.

Mr. Heckman served as WHEC organist in the forties. Following his radio career, he served as organist at Aldersgate Methodist Church. He is survived by his wife, a son and a daughter.

a tribute to pearl white

Pearl White died the other day. When I found out, I cancelled my own day; I wept and I wrote this note. In some ways this is a eulogy, in other ways a commentary on the sad state of so many of my fellow musicians.

Pearl wasn't a complainer. She survived two marriages, "Both," in her words, "rotten." In fact she survived many things and always smiled. I was eighteen when I met her in 1958 and she was forty-eight. We were on our way to try out the organ in the Belmont Theatre (now a bowling alley). She was in high spirits. It was to be the first time she had played any theatre organ in thirty years. This one, a Publix #1, had given her enjoyment in the late twenties. I remember she said, "I haven't played this organ in years." Well, she did play it, and wonderfully. Pearl White was playing the music in G^b and D^b long before it was an assigned task of George Wright imitators. They happen to be very good keys!

Born a virtuoso pianist, Pearl made piano rolls as a teenager. That was before the days of royalties; and, while coming from a wealthy family, she made nothing more than her original 'recording' fees. She was firstly a consummate pianist and her florid hands reflected the technique which eludes so many of us.

Musically, she was a humble genius. She was a child-like person. She was perhaps the most rhythmic theatre organ player I have ever heard. She had this musical "thing" of double-timing rag time melodies on the organ. It took a huge technique along with a fine rhythmic sense. It was *hot*. It was *fabulous*. Most important, it was *original*!

Like many organist-musicians, Pearl wound up playing in a bar. The place serves very good steaks. The management is terribly nice to the customers but not too gracious to the help. Pearl was "help," playing on a badly maintained, electronic organ to a mostly unattentive audience. She was overworked and underpaid. She died in her sleep. She had no bad thoughts about her job or her situation. I pray to God that I can be such a positive person.

I miss you Pearl. You play so well.

John Seng

Reynolds Galbraith, 1978 program chairman for the Valley of Sun Chapter, died of a heart attack in his Mesa home on March 8th.

Originally from the Pittsburgh area, Reynolds moved to Arizona about two years ago. Previously he had been both an evangelistic and theatre organist. He was active in the Valley of the Sun Chapter for a year and wrote an article for the local newsletter after his return from the 1977 National Convention. Galbraith appeared often in the Chapter Notes

from West Penn, Delaware Valley, and other ATOS chapters, in past issues of THEATRE ORGAN.

Galbraith has no survivors in Arizona. His memorial services were held in Pittsburgh.

Winifred Rhoades Emmanuel, concert and theatre organist in the Northwest for more than half a century, died in Seattle, Wash., June 12th, after a brief illness.

Mrs. Emmanuel, 70, began her

career as a theatre organist at age 13 in Lewiston, Idaho. Later she played in theatres including the Pantages in Spokane and the Seattle Fox, and in clubs throughout the Northwest in addition to doing regular radio concerts.

Her repertoire ranged from popular to classical music and she was known to play continuously for up to six hours without the aid of sheet music.

During the late 1960s, she gave concerts at the Food Circus in the Seattle Center. She played many benefit concerts including some at a Rodgers organ in her home.

She was born in Denver, Idaho, and had lived in Seattle for the last 33 years. Her husband of 32 years, Samuel J., survives along with cousins. □



the letters to the editors

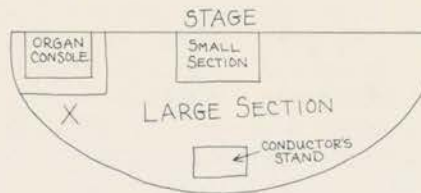
Letters to the Editor concerning all aspects of the theatre organ hobby are encouraged. Send them to the editor concerned. Unless it's stated clearly on the letter "not for publication," the editors feel free to reproduce it, in whole or part.

Address:

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

Dear Mr. Thompson,

Greeting from one of the newest members of ATOS. I just received my first issues of THEATRE ORGAN and what a pleasure it was to see the article "The Fox Is Saved." I have played in the Fox many times and as a bass player, my spot on the bandstand was just in front of the console of that fine Moller. I don't



The organ lift, the main orchestra lift and a smaller section were all controlled from switches on the conductor's stand. The smaller section had room enough for a 14-piece band with a baby grand piano. A 50-piece orchestra was generally used for pops concerts at the Fox but the Met used a 65-piece orchestra during their spring tour. The author used to play in stage bands for the Met, and usually sat near the organ console (marked X) when playing with larger orchestras.

think a person who hasn't had the opportunity to hear or play music in the Fox can really comprehend or appreciate the superb acoustics of that theatre.

At the time I played there, the organ was in sad condition and I used to think what a shame to let something so noble in voice deteriorate like it had then. It is nice to know that something has been done to restore that voice to its true grandeur again.

I have enclosed a drawing of the

bandstand in the Fox as it was then. In the April/May issue the picture on page 37 shows a bench, but when I played in the Fox it had a seat as shown with the console pictured on page 38.

Best Regards
Jim Hopperstad
Citrus Heights, CA

Dear Mr. Thompson:

I have been a member of ATOS for fifteen years and would like to thank your organization for the immense pleasure which it has brought to me during that time.

It has been most gratifying to see how ATOS has grown and matured over the years and how it has taken on the difficult task of moving from organ preservation to theatre preservation as well. Were it not for the efforts of ATOS, many cities in this country would be much the poorer.

As is the case with anything we care deeply about, we always want it to be better than it can ever be. I find myself wishing that all ATOS chapters could accomplish what the

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most active ones have done, and that all factionalism could forever be removed. I also wish that some fine efforts in theatre organ restoration could be publicized more, but there are always those modest souls who refuse to brag about themselves.

My strongest wish, however, is that ATOS continue with its fine work and the expression of that work through your magazine, and that it continue to excite and attract people of all ages and interests.

Very truly yours,
Henry B. Aldridge, Ph.D.
Ypsilanti, Mich.

Dear Editor:

Down through most all of your issues, which almost always contain informative and concise record reviews, I have found little disagreement with the record-reviewer. However, in the Feb.-March '78 issue, I can't share the reviewers disappointment concerning a recent record *A Lyn Larsen Concert* made on the former Fisher Theatre Wurlitzer which is now owned by the Detroit Theater Organ Club and is in that city's Senate Theater. Here, Lyn plays an excellent array of selections so popular on the big movie palace Wurlitzers in their hey-day. The reviewer claims Mr. Larsen has done much copying in re-creating the arrangements of Jesse Crawford and George Wright. Contrary to the reviewer, if you want the best in theatre organ sounds which help you dream you are back in the great movie palaces at intermission or concert time, you'll find Lyn Larsen's "re-creations" choice entertainment.

It's hard to believe that Lyn (who is too young to have played in the big movie palaces) knows something the reviewer doesn't. This could be the established surmise that, theatre organists like Jesse Crawford, Don Baker, George Wright (alphabetically) and many more, created these arrangements while practicing (if you will) with their back to an acre of empty seats in these darkened palaces of splendor. In the wee hours of the morning or late evening, after the show, these organists put together startling combinations and registrations as they were considering not only the size and decor of the theatre and the movie showing that week or month, but they tried to

anticipate the very temperament of the next day's audience. All of these considerations put together became the inspiration which these organist-entertainers needed to create these arrangements of the popular tunes of the day. These are the things which projected this attraction from the ivory and gold console, bathed in blushing hues, from the proscenium up to the box office, where the manager realized that his mighty Wurlitzer had become a very important part of the daily program.

While not neglecting a respect due all young theatre organists who, today are playing all kinds of things on salvaged mighty Wurlitzers in all kinds of public places, they are certainly keeping the king-of-instruments from becoming a curiosity in somebody's parlor. Until such a time that their efforts are recorded as the theatre organ sounds of an era, I'll look forward to any and all records like Lyn Larsen at the Senate Theater Wurlitzer, re-creating the music like it was played from the N.Y.

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Also looking forward to all future issues of THEATRE ORGAN, I remain

Your very truly,
John Mecklenburg
Central Indiana Chapter

Dear Sir:

I found the article by John Muri, "Our National Music," quite interesting. One thing which happened along the road to the selection of a National Song, or "Anthem," was overlooked. Mr. Muri was probably too young to have encountered it.

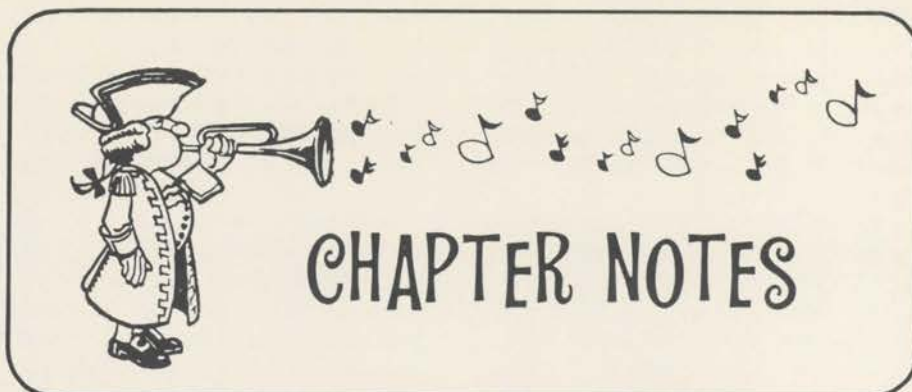
About the time I was in third grade grammar school (1911-12) a form of petition from the school children of the U.S. was being prepared. All school children were polled as to their preference for "The Star Spangled Banner" or "America The Beautiful." We were told that Congress would be notified of our vote when they took up the matter of legalizing our National Anthem. "America The Beautiful" won out because, to us, it was easier to sing and was more inspiring.

Congress voted the other way and the "Star Spangled Banner" was finally legalized as our National Anthem. The objection to "America The Beautiful," we were told, came from those with an anti-religion sentiment who complained that the piece appeared in "too many Hymnals" of different denominations. For that matter in recent years that has happened to "God Bless America" as well.

From years of playing in theatres, for large audiences, and, at the circus during patriotic pageantry, "America The Beautiful" brings the best audience participation, or response, and the most spirit. I, therefore favor that piece.

This same subject recently came up in the Retired Officers Association publication "letters" with somewhat similar results. It seems that there is a movement to finally make "America The Beautiful" our National Anthem.

Yours sincerely,
Harry J. Jenkins
Lt. Col. USAF, Retired
San Diego, Calif. □



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and versatility of numbers at the Alabama Theatre Wurlitzer made for most enjoyable listening.

Our chapter was saddened by the passing of Norville Hall this past month. He was a valued and loved member of our chapter, having known the Alabama Theatre since it was constructed and actually helped to uncrate and install the Alabama Theatre Wurlitzer in 1927. We will all miss him.

RIEDEL WEST

ALABAMA

May and June were very busy months for the members of the Alabama Chapter — all of us were involved in planning for the 1978 ATOS Convention. This is a team effort in every sense of the work, and I believe our chapter has the best possible members any chapter could want — nearly everyone has pitched in to make sure the "Alabama Day" is a success. Our monthly meeting for May was planned as open console to allow our various committees to get together and firm up the last bit of planning for the convention, and also to allow our members to try their talents on our 4/20 Alabama Theatre Wurlitzer. The music and planning were well-received.

For our June meeting, we were delighted to have Cathy Hoffman back with us. Cathy and her parents made the trip down from Bristol, Tennessee, and delighted our members with two programs. Her first stop was at the Don Cole's, in Northport, where she had a ball at the 2/6 Robert Morton that Don and Alleen recently installed. Our members in the western Alabama area were treated to a great performance by this young lady. Cathy's stylings, registrations



Cathy Hoffman, artist for the Alabama Chapter June meeting.

CEDAR RAPIDS

This coming September 1, CRATOS extends a big invitation to join us in celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the opening of the Paramount. It is in unbelievably pristine condition, having just been completely redecorated to exactly like new. True, it doesn't have palm trees, minarets, an Arabian Nights motif, star-studded ceiling, or elephant heads taunting the patrons, instead it is a non-

distracting house which accommodates whatever personal mood you brought in with you. It probably is the outstanding example for its age with the fewest changes in basic design of circa 1928 theatre architecture.

Present plans include a day-long celebration with Hector Olivera as the featured performer.

We believe that a lot of people will be surprised to find a theatre exactly as they remember it. We also wish to again reiterate our municipal gratitude to CRATOS member Peter F. Bezanson who gave the theatre to the city of Cedar Rapids as a Theatre for the Performing Arts.

Once again, the Paramount housed a near-SRO audience on May 20 for our 18th Silent Movie Night/Organ Spectacular featuring Ron Rhode. He played a nice program which was well-liked by the people. We were impressed with his use of original music which was free of distraction to accompany the Laurel and Hardy film. CRATOS is proud to proclaim a paternal interest in this young man.

LOREN FRINK

CENTRAL FLORIDA

Well, here it is finally, our first Chapter Notes. Bet you thought we'd never do it.

Our first meeting was held in March at J. Burns Pizza & Pipes, 103 E. Fowler, Tampa Fla. Approximately 20 ambitious members arrived and enjoyed the food, fellowship and organ music of Don Baker at the 3/25 Wurlitzer. An election of officers was held, the results are as

follows: Charles Stanford, chairman; Jan Bennett, vice chairman; and Tom Hoehn, secretary-treasurer. Since Don Baker resides in the area, a motion was made and carried to initiate him as an honorary member.

Our goal at the present is to find and install a pipe organ in the Tampa Theatre. Since the theatre has been named a national historical landmark, federal funds are coming into the cigar city to restore the theatre to its original condition, including the pipe organ. The three staff organists at J. Burns have volunteered, along with the management, to give a benefit concert for the Tampa Theatre organ.

Our second meeting was held at Stanford Music in April. Secretary Tom was in Sebring, Fla., concertizing so veep Jan took over the pen and scroll. Open console was held on the Conn 580 Theaterette. The chairman called the meeting to order and presented ideas for stationery and membership cards. The ideas were accepted and sent to the printers. A program chairman was elected, Bill Coffman of Lakeland.

Moving along to our third meeting, our members were treated to the splendor of the "Andalusian Bon-Bon" of the Tampa Theatre, complete with "doves circling in the balcony, peacocks preening on the organ grilles and Christopher Columbus discovering the orchestra pit," to quote Ben M. Hall. The meeting opened with a short concert given by Bob Lillie at the Wurlitzer Model 950 plug-in. Open console followed the regular business meeting after

which we toured the pipe chambers. It was discovered they could hold up to fifteen ranks instead of eight as per the original 2/8 installation plus use of the proscenium arch for percussions. It was decided at this meeting we would participate in a musical film festival at the Tampa to raise money for the organ fund.

For our fourth meeting we traveled to Lakeland to play the 2/4 Barton at the Carpenter's Home, a remarkably well-designed installation with the organ and chambers at the left side of the auditorium. Open console was welcomed by all. The regular meeting was held at Holiday Music in Lakeland, Fla. Our logo was submitted and accepted by the membership.

At this writing, we have thirty members and two Wurlitzers at our disposal. The J. Burns Pizza organ 3/25 and a 2/7 Style E at Central Music Warehouse, St. Petersburg, Fla. Our membership area includes a 125-mile radius from Tampa. Anyone wishing more info about our chapter, may contact us — P.O. Box 82419, Tampa, Fla. 33682.

Bob Lillie of Holiday Music, in Lakeland, has consented to donate a Wurlitzer electronic spinet to us to raffle off at one of our benefit concerts. We are also in the process of getting our corporate and nonprofit status. Wish us luck!!

TOM HOEHN

CENTRAL OHIO

Dave Love and his mother, Martha, hosted our March meeting. Dave had his Hammond and Kim-

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ball available for our use. We enjoyed a fine concert by Dave and two of his students, Alberta Lipp and Ruth Chervier, attested his success as an organ teacher. With two organs available it was pretty much a night of duets. Tom Hobson and Stanley Jay are good in this area and we are always glad to have both present when more than one organ is on hand.

April was the "How Sweet It Is" month with our Wurlitzer at the Worthington High School sounding for the first time. Our program began with two movies from Willard Ebner's collection of oldies and a slide show presented by Bob Shaw showing some of the restoration of the organ when it was in a downtown warehouse plus the pictures of the actual moving of the Wurlitzer to the school. Secretary Tom Thornton said it best in his newsletter and I quote: "So folks, the last meeting was a high point in our work. We were all most happy. I think the expression on Stan Arsenault's face told the story. Stan, our closest contact with the school, had to have real wondering, was this thing really going to be worth the time and effort we were putting into it, and more important, would it be an asset to the school? That meeting let us all know it is worth it and will be a great joy to the school."

We have a long way to go to completion. Actually hearing the organ was what we needed to rejuvenate sagging spirits and bent backs. The adrenalin is running and it is now full steam ahead.

Going from our own pipes to electronic might seem like a letdown but not when the meeting is hosted by Dale Durthaler. Dale's Home of the Lowery Organ is a great meeting place but even greater when you get Dale's expert demonstration of the organs. Members were all over the studio enjoying, listening to and playing the multitude of organs. On leaving, Dale gave each family a copy of the Dennis Awe recording of the Lowery.

Our June meeting was a nice change of pace. We met at the summer cottage of Jim Hamilton along the Muskingum River near Zanesville for a potluck picnic and games and Honda riding. A very pretty and nice place to be on a hot summer day. In the evening we went to the

Zanesville home of Rosemary and Bob Hamilton to enjoy their 3/21 Morton. The guest artist was Earl Reisdorff. A pre-med student, Earl plays a 3/9 Kimball at the Lamplighter Restaurant in Olmstead Falls, Ohio. Many members were aware of his adeptness at 'trilling' — not too often heard on a pipe organ, and outstanding solo pedal work. Also a composer, Earl played his own tune, "Forever Yours," arranged in the 1940's style of pop ballads. Open console followed Earl's concert with many members taking part.

Our congratulations to Heidi James on her election to membership in the American society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (A.S.C.A.P.).

IRENE BLEGEN

CONNECTICUT VALLEY

In May, we were introduced to Rex Koury in concerts at the Thomaston Opera House. His first performances in Thomaston were most enthusiastically received and justly so. We were treated to a program which was varied, well-chosen, generous, and truly artistically executed.

To the obvious delight of the audience, the program was liberally interspersed with music of several of the enduring composers; Tsaikowsky, Bizet, Herbert Friml, Chopin and Thomas. We are seldom favored with such musical variety. The program covered the musical spectrum with classics, standards, and contemporary selections.

A special delight was the "Grande Valse Brillante" (Chopin), very nicely keyed to the organ. For an "extra," requested by Rosa Rio, was the *Gunsmoke* theme music, composed by the artist and, he said, played by him about 4,000 times. Heard in its entirety, it becomes an enjoyable composition.

Rex Koury was with the late Jesse Crawford for awhile in New York, so our program included, as a tribute to Crawford, musical pieces most frequently featured by him, all done in the Crawford style, and very well, too. Victor Herbert and Rudolf Friml were given a place on the program with selections from their operettas from both stage and screen. It is obvious why their work remains

popular through the years.

The final scheduled number on the program was a masterful rendition of the "Carmen Suite" (Bizet). The opera house Marr & Colton organ was given a real workout with this one, and both organ and organist shone brilliantly.

Needless to report, after this rare treat, we called it an evening, but not without having our concert committee chairman, Stillman Rice, announce that Mr. Koury will be back next year. Good news, indeed, and "thank you," Mr. Koury.

Our June meeting was held at the home of Preston and Bea Miller in Glastonbury, Ct. Open console was the order of the afternoon. At 7:30 p.m., Chairman Ray called the business meeting to order and went through the items expeditiously, so that member Allen Miller, our chapter founder, could get on with the promised concert on his own pipe organ which he designed and built. This is a remarkable instrument and an outstanding example of Al's technical capabilities.

His musical talents are also noteworthy as we once again enjoyed an hour of Al's fine arranging and playing. We especially enjoyed hearing him play his very own instrument.

Al will appear with Tom Gnaster in formal concert at the Thomaston Opera House on September 22nd and 23rd.

The Scholarship Committee, this year under the chairmanship of Tom Gnaster, took considerable satisfaction in this year's competition. The playing this year was outstanding. Senior competition winners were David Senak, 12, of Bristol, first prize, and Ronald Fabry of Shelton, second prize. Junior competition winner was Cheryl Larri-vee, 12, of Waterbury.

WALLACE F. POWERS

DAIRYLAND

In May, members and friends were treated to an excellent concert by Kay McAbee at the home of Fred Hermes.

Kay started out with a medley from *Carousel* to show off the versatility of Fred's Wurlitzer. His program also included two excellent classical pieces.

Aside from the music, our host

explained to us that it has taken him twenty-two years to get his installation looking like it does. Recently, Fred has been adding to the decor of the place by installing parts of a leveled Racine theatre. The organ out of this theatre is being installed by club members at the Racine Theatre Guild Building. He has installed some of the grillwork in front of his swell shades and is presently working from the organ pit to the rear of the theatre. Probably, if all goes smoothly, he'll be done in another twenty-two years.

Our project at the Racine Theatre Guild is coming along fine and should be ready in early 1979.

Member Perry Petta is really starting to make a name for himself. In May, he played a concert for CATOE at Downer's Grove High School and is also playing at the Organ Piper in Milwaukee. Not bad for a teenager. Well done, Perry.

Clark Wilson, the new organist at Pipe Organ Pizza, played a concert at the Genesee Theatre in Waukegan, Ill., for our June social. The Barton Organ was completely rebuilt by members of CATOE from a water soaked mess. Both the organist and the organ received a well-deserved round of applause from members who attended.

WILLIAM CAMPBELL

EASTERN MASS.

How does one do justice in describing the talents of our spring concert artist, Eddie Weaver, who made his fourth appearance in May? It was evident that he is a very talented organist who has played theatre organ continuously for over 50 years. Few others have such a record! This exuberant showman is a witty, humorous personality with an unusual ability to tailor his programs to please all musical tastes. Between playing pipes two shows nightly at the Richmond, Va. Byrd Theatre Wurlitzer, concertizing, broadcasting, recording, and entertaining at a Hammond at the Miller & Rhoads Tea Room, there is no shortage of energy with Eddie.

Eddie's program on our club Wurlitzer was a real crowd pleaser with something for everyone. Those busy hands and feet made our organ work with constantly changing combi-



Eddie Weaver at the Stoneham Town Hall 2/14 Wurlitzer, explains how Chopin wrote the "Minute Waltz."
(R. Schweiger Photo)

nations for endless tone coloring and appropriate use of traps and percussions. He remembered the earlier radio days with the beautiful theme of the Firestone program and that of TV's *All in the Family*. For novelty, he played Chopin's "Minute Waltz" with a large timer near the console, and the 60-second buzzer sounded just as our veteran organist played the last note — a dead heat.

The youngsters present were not forgotten as Eddie showed that theatre organ is "right with it" (as he is) by cleverly playing familiar music with a disco beat, including "The Hustle."

Charlie Clarke supplied a fine old silent comedy, *The Blacksmith* with Buster Keaton, allowing our old pro full scope with marvelous cueing. A further nostalgic touch was a brief sing-along. Eddie received a hearty and deserving ovation for his excellent program and we were rewarded with the lively "Granada" as a fitting encore.

The second weekend concert was on the Stoneham Town Hall 2/14 Wurlitzer. Two bus loads of senior citizens who were in attendance for the afternoon performance were among those welcomed, including all mothers, by Chairman Royal Schweiger. He expressed thanks to Art Goggin and his crew for the many hours spent in getting both organs concert-ready, and then introduced our artist. Eddie gave a similar concert without the silent (too much light) and introduced a clever vari-

ation in playing one number, then a second, followed by both simultaneously. Our seniors responded heartily to the brief sing-along with many in good voice, and his thoughtfully planned program had music appropriate for both Mothers' Day and Sunday, which gave further balance to his program. The concerts were over all too soon for this rare career theatre organist of the older school who has kept pace with his constant playing. Eddie explores the organ and is in tune with his audiences.

May 27 was our regular meeting night at Babson with Royal "at the helm." Tim Holloran introduced our artist of the evening, Dr. Jonathan Kleefeld. When Jon is not at Massachusetts General Hospital as a skilled neuroradiologist, he is happy on the bench of a theatre pipe organ. His pleasure in performing is very evident in his playing as well as his avowed "wedding to this mass of wood and pipes, for a long time," he hopes.

His program was well thought out with numbers of Leroy Anderson, Broadway showtunes, old favorites, movie music and other listenable tunes, tastefully registered, resulting in long applause and an encore.

Sunday afternoon at Babson, May 28, was a casual open house gathering around the Wurlitzer with several playing members, including our ex-theatre organist, Len Winter. He included a "Name-That-Tune" segment as well as a request session.

Rosalie and Pat Fucci had their annual cookout for EMC members and guests on Sunday, June 11. Their hospitality extended to the basement where resides a 4/19 Robert Morton. Pat and Charlie Clarke showed slides of the organ's rebuilding as well as a number of short subjects, followed by several having a go on the bench as a perfect close to the event.

Our final meeting until September occurred at Babson, June 24, again with Royal in charge. Program Chairman Holloran introduced member Tim Bjareby as our evening artist, giving a thumbnail sketch of his organ background. Tim's best-known teacher was Miss Doris Tirrell, a regular on the Boston airways "back when."

Tim has changed and improved his style along with commentary between selections. His program showed very careful planning and the fitting of available tone colors to best advantage. His first selection was in the style of Ken Griffin with little improvising, following closely to the melody. "I Never Knew," in the Jesse Crawford mold, was next and both could easily be indentified. A typical beginner at the piano was well-imitated at the organ. The balance of his program were nice arrangements of Cole Porter, George Gershwin and old favorites, including the complicated Brahms's "Hungarian Dance No. 5." Tim also included a tango with all the required traps and percussion in skating-rink tradition of playing. His good form earned him long and appreciative applause by an attentive audience, resulting in a nice encore.

STANLEY C. GARNISS

HOUSTON AREA

Past chairman of the Houston Area Chapter, William H. Tunstall, has left Houston to accept a position as building manager of the Buckner Square Office Park in Shreveport, Louisiana.

A native of Mobile, Alabama, Bill and his wife, Mary Jo, came to Houston about six years ago. During their stay here they made many friends and were active in various musical groups. They were instrumental in helping to organize the Houston Area Chapter last summer.

Bill and Mary Jo are truly dedi-



William Tunstall (George R. Hockmeyer Photo)

cated theatre organ enthusiasts and they are missed by their fellow members in Houston.

On April 1st Danny Ray took over Jerry Bacon's duties at Pipe Organ Pizza's 3/31 Wurlitzer after Jerry returned to Dallas after a little more than a year in Houston.

Danny, who comes to Houston from Landmark Pizza & Pipes in Dallas, where he put in two years as musical director and organist, has already made many friends among the Houston pizza and organ lovers. Shortly after his arrival he joined the Houston Area Chapter.

Born in Ft. Worth, Texas, Danny was a music major at Texas Christian University. Here he studied church music, concentrating mainly of the pipe organ. His initiation to theatre organ was at the famous Casa Manana, where Rex Koury played a concert several years ago on the 3/11 Wurlitzer which had originally resided in Fort Worth's Worth Theatre.



Danny Ray (George R. Hockmeyer Photo)

Although Danny collects and listens to theatre organ recordings, he has developed his own style. He greatly admires the work of George Wright. Danny believes Houston has a great potential as a city of many theatre organ enthusiasts and looks forward to working with members of the Houston Area Chapter.

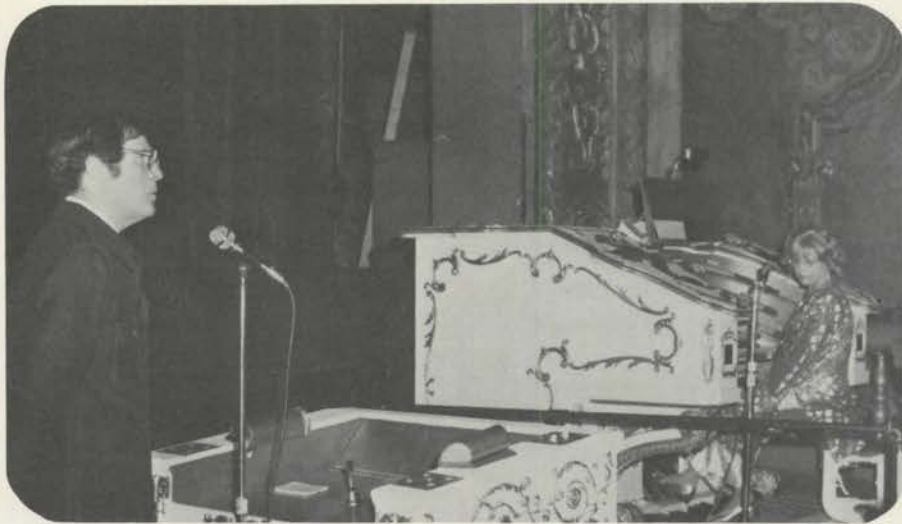
GEORGE R. HOCKMEYER

INDIANAPOLIS

The chapter May meeting was held at the Anderson Music Co. in Anderson, Indiana. Tim Needler was the artist of the day, playing Bruce Thompson's 2/6 Wurlitzer and everyone enjoyed his playing as always. His program consisted mainly of Cole Porter selections and a closing rendition of "Waltz of the Flowers" from *Nutcracker Suite*.

The news media has it that the beautiful old Indiana Theatre has been saved from the demolition squad and is in the hands of the city of Indianapolis. This will be the new home of the Indiana Repertory Theatre. The Indiana is to undergo some remodeling but the Spanish Baroque of glazed terra cotta tiling and interior Grand Corridor will be preserved. The Indiana Roof Ballroom (past home of the big bands and name performers) will be used for a convention center as well as for social events. It is nice to know that the profound efforts of many can still save something beautiful from the past and put it to good use for the future.

The June meeting was held at Frank and Francis May's home in in Kokomo. There was a good attendance and the day was a success. The wonderful 4/18 Barton installation in the Mays' home is really something to be proud of. Frank has worked on this installation for sixteen years. He certainly turned out a beautiful product. An electronic string bass and a side pull-out drawer which houses a synthesizer was added. It is a magnificent sounding instrument and has a nice easy-playing action. The artists of the day were Carroll Copeland, Ken Double and Tim Needler. Carroll, for an opener, played a medley of nostalgic hits. Ken then played a mixture of new and old including Barry Manilow's "I Can't Smile Without You." His arrangements were interesting



Husband-manager Bill Yeoman narrates as Rosa Rio plays soap opera themes at Rockford's Coronado Theatre. (Bill Lamb Photo)

and very enjoyable. Tim then joined him on the Hammond "H" in a jam session playing old-time standards. Tim couldn't stay away from the pipe so finished off with a beautiful arrangement on "This Nearly Was Mine" from *South Pacific*. Open console followed.

BEE BUTLER

LAND OF LINCOLN

On June 15th, Rosa Rio appeared in concert at the Coronado Theatre in Rockford, Ill., in *Rosa By Starlight*. She did an excellent job on many concert numbers, but the outstanding feature of the evening was a nostalgic look back to the days of the radio 'soaps,' when Rosa played the background music for many of the old favorites. Husband-manager Bill Yeoman, narrated while Rosa played the old themes on the 4/17 Barton, and slides of the stars of the shows appeared on the screen. She closed her appearance with a splendid performance of Ferdie Grofe's *Grand Canyon Suite*, while pictures taken in the depths of the canyon were shown in wide-screen splendor. Comments from the audience indicated that everyone enjoyed an evening of great entertainment.

Everyone in LOLTOS is looking forward to October 22nd, when the 51st birthday of the Coronado will be celebrated with another great variety show. Myron Floren of *The Lawrence Welk Show* will be the featured attraction, Chad Weirick will be the organist, Jay Marshall will emcee. The Great Lamberti will

provide us with balancing feats, and De Yip Loo, World's #1 Chinese Magician will confound all present with amazing magic.

Restoration of the usher signal system at the Coronado is now complete, which also includes signals for the artists in the dressing rooms from the switchboard back stage. We would be interested in how many of these signal systems are still working around the country. If you know of one, please write to LOLTOS, c/o Coronado Theatre, P.O. Box 118, Rockford, Ill. 61105.

BOB SCHMOOCK

LONDON AND SOUTH OF ENGLAND

We have had the pleasure of having our mutual good friend Lowell Ayars over to establish a significant first on the British organ scene — a home pipe organ tour. Playing British Comptons and Christies in three residence venues, he also gave two delightful musical evenings at Wurlitzer Lodge, home of Edith and Les Rawle. Lowell also played the Compton in the Regal Cinema at Henley-on-Thames. He gave another concert at the very fine sounding Compton/Christie organ in the Town Hall at Ossett in Yorkshire — which was supported by a chapter coach party from the London area.

What else is there to say about the great George Wright that has not already been said so many times over. When he comes to London for his first pipe organ concert, the answer is — plenty.

Having him in person in our best theatre, on our 'Anglicised' Wurlitzer, and before our own audience, added a whole new and unexpected dimension to our already fullsome appreciation of this sensational and legendary star, on the celebration of our first birthday.

As it turned out, George is particularly fond of London, took an instant liking to our favourite 4/16 'Torch' Wurlitzer in the famous Gaumont State Theatre, Kilburn in North London, and was a sellout attraction several weeks before concert day on Sunday April 30th.

This was the day that so many of the British theatre organ fraternity had awaited so long — the day when we would be able, for the first time, to hear George at a Wurlitzer organ in England. Never before, in its colourful 40 years can the Gaumont State have been the focal point for enthusiasts from all parts of the country and indeed from several parts of the world (including the Netherlands, Spain, Australia and the USA), and it certainly was most heartening to our chapter, as well as the theatre management, to see the 1,800-seat auditorium filled to capacity with so many dedicated and appreciative people. We were also delighted to have West Coasters Judd Walton and Bob Jacobus with



Lowell Ayars during his home pipe organ tour in England. (John D. Sharp Photo)



George Wright and Len Rawle prior to George's concert at the 4/16 Wurlitzer in Gaumont State Theatre, Kilburn. (John D. Sharp Photo)

us, who had come over especially for this concert.

Opening with his up-beat rendition of "I Got Rythm," George's programme was a mixture of his greatest standards carefully and delightfully blended with modern and lesser-known items. Chosen almost on-the-spot to match the mood of the day, every number drew its own particular appreciation, all characteristically in the 'Wright' touch; all combined to provide a feast of musical charm and delight. Each was played in absolutely exquisite, if mainly muted, stylings and registrations.

George showed that his most delectable tones are produced by small registrations, often with merely two to four stops and with the shutters only just open. Thus, he was able faithfully to reproduce so many of the sounds which have long been familiar to us through his records. The tonal percussions and traps also became particularly effective when they were not drowned by massive sound.

The famous Wurlitzer had never sounded as it did on this momentous occasion, for at George's request, considerable attention had been given to it during the week prior to the concert, with George himself donning overalls in order to help re-set the tremulants to provide the shimmering splendour that we were all able to enjoy so much.

At the conclusion of his performance Edith Rawle, current Honorary ATOS member and our energetic chapter secretary, presented George with an engraved silver salver

in appreciation of his first visit to Kilburn.

This most exciting day was then rounded off with a delightful dinner at a nearby hotel — in what was also effectively the first mass social gathering of chapter members.

Two more discs have emerged on the Amberlee label — which interchanges with Doric. The British label that is run by Organ Enthusiasts for Organ Enthusiasts, is the highly successful and appreciated venture of chapter members John Peters and John and Noreen Fosskett.

Our universally popular transatlantic member David Hamilton, now resident in Chicago and giving musical promotions and presentations throughout the world for Conn, has cut *David Hamilton in Conn-cert* (AEL 205) featuring the three-manual Conn 651 with Conn electronic pipes and electric band. This is almost certainly David's best disc to date.

Simultaneously appearing is the long-awaited *By George* (AML 310) featuring the outstanding talents of our member George Welling — entertaining at the strident 3/8 Wurlitzer until recently in the Granada Theatre in the London suburb of East Ham. As well as being a bright and exciting display of musical choice and musicianship, this also provides the first up-to-date recording of one of the famous Granada fleet of 3/8 Wurlitzers that were the highlight of the imaginative organ policy of this noted British theatre chain from their inception in the mid-1930s.

Our monthly chapter at home meetings, mainly held at Wurlitzer Lodge, are highly popular and well-attended. Live organ music, chat, records, tapes, silent films and slide shows have all been featured.

Good news, too, on the organ front itself from two other well-known chapter members — Father Gerard Kerr and George Harrison. Together they have most successfully transplanted the delightful vintage Compton formerly in the Rialto/Granada Leytonstone in East London to St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church in nearby Hornchurch, Essex. Opened and dedicated during the 1976 ATOS Safari, this instrument is a frequent and popular chapter attraction and currently consists of seven conventional pipe ranks plus two ranks of harmonics for synthetic reeds (Krumhorn, Clarinet and Baryphone). By adding a relay to the top (coupler) manual it is now intended to add a further seven ranks to be operated from this manual and the appropriate work is already well-advanced.

On a sad note, we mourn the passing of our member Ernest Houlden, a life-long devotee of the organ and organ music. His technical knowledge of organs, theatre as well as traditional, was very extensive and over the years he had amassed a vast collection of data on installations and specifications which has been bequeathed to the Royal College of Organists. In the mid-1930s Ernest was invited to join the committee of Bernstein (Granada) theatre circuit organists — which notably also included Reginald Dixon — to devise the specification of the famous and distinctive Granada 2 3/8 Wurlitzers subsequently installed in their theatres in the London suburbs of North Cheam, Harrow, Clapham, Greenford, Welling and Slough — of which that at Clapham is probably the best known, and the fine example at Harrow is now maintained by our well-known chapter members Les and Len Rawle. In more recent years Ernest wrote a masterly 'Treatise on the Wurlitzer Organ' which was serialised in the Journal of the Cinema Organ Society (COS) — and which it is hoped that the COS will soon re-publish in booklet form. His passing is a great loss to the theatre organ world.

NORMAN BARFIELD

LOS ANGELES

An organ concert played by officers of the chapter was held on April 30th to promote a scholarship fund. The cause was the late Joe Koons Scholarship, a memorial to the wonderful guy who was for 10 years a one-man ATOS chapter in his organ-equipped cycle shop in Long Beach, Calif.

The organists were 1978 Vice Chairman Mike Ohman; Liaison Chairman John Ledwon; Chairman Bob Power, and Program Chairman Rod Skelding, the latter being a recent import from Great Britain.

We had prepared what we felt was a fitting and witty account of this extraordinary event for display here. Then we received our June/July issue of THEATRE ORGAN and discovered that Dinny Timmins had scooped us with an account of the concert written in his semi-ignorant style which tells the whole story, despite lousy spelling and a syntax we can't begin to cope with. Therefore, readers who want to find out (or review) what happened on that fateful April morning at the LA Wil-

tern Theatre we refer you to page 17 (Dinny's Colyum) in the June/July 1978 issue of THEATRE ORGAN. Scooped by — Ulp! — Dinny Timmins! Gad!

May 21 was a day of triumph for Candi Carley. It was the day of her first major pipe organ concert, played at the Wiltern Theatre for the LA Chapter. Her story was told in a recent issue of THEATRE ORGAN so we won't repeat. It suffices to state that Candi is blind. Therefore, the organ crew had been extra cooperative to make certain Candi had all possible advantages. One was to mark every stopkey on the console stoprail with a self-adhesive label marked in Braille. Her program in Braille was taped over the console's ATOS nameplate. Candi was ready.

Yet a lot of things went wrong. The Wiltern projectionist, who was supposed to run the spotlight and channel the PA system through the house speakers, failed to show. Crew members jumped in to fill the void.

Candi came up on the 4/37 console as though nothing was wrong and took her audience along with her. Here was a blind girl playing



Candi

(Max Herr Photo)

one of the largest and most complex organs in southern California, in complete control. Her varied program had something for all tastes.

"Is she really blind?" was a frequently heard question as the audience filed out. It was difficult to believe, so skillfully had she performed. Yes, in one sense she is sightless. But there are compensations and an inner sight. Candi Carley has them, and more.

On Friday, May 19, a plane load of LA Chapter members safari'd 500 miles northward to the Bay Area to visit organ installations. First stop was the Cap'n's Galley in Redwood City where Tom Hazleton did the honors at the 4/18 Wurlitzer. Next stop was the Avenue Theatre where surprise artist Ann Leaf played a concert on the 3/14 Wurlitzer. Next day it was on to Daly City where Warren Lubich presided at the Pizza & Pipes 3/22 Wurlitzer. After that it was the Pizza Pub in San Raphael where Larry Vannucci did his stuff.



Elmer Fubb hands out worthless "prizes" to concert participants Mike Ohman, John Ledwon, Bob Power and Rod Skelding. (Zimfoto)

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DENNIS JAMES CONCERT SCHEDULE

August 30 — Palace Theatre, Marion, Ohio
September 3 — Free Trade Hall, Manchester, England
September 10 — Regal Cinema, Henley-On-Thames, England
September 17 — Granada State Theatre, London, England
September 24 — Ohio Theatre, Columbus, Ohio
September 28 — Civic Center, Sioux City, Iowa
October 7 — Indiana University Auditorium, Bloomington, Indiana
October 27 — War Memorial, Trenton, New Jersey
October 28 — Ohio Theatre, Columbus, Ohio
October 31 — Indiana University Auditorium, Bloomington, Indiana
November 4 — Dort Music Center, Flint, Michigan
November 7 — Paramount Theatre, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
December 1 and 2 — Emery Auditorium, Cincinnati, Ohio
March 24 — Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana
March 25 — Civic Opera House, Chicago, Illinois

On Sunday morning some went to a Grace Cathedral service during which the huge Aeolian-Skinner was heard. Others went to Concord for a session with the Bella Roma Pizza's Wurlitzer. The two groups converged at Ye Olde Pizza Joynte in Hayward in the afternoon to hear Ann Leaf at the 3/12 composite Wurlitzer. There was ample time for sight seeing and shopping between shows. The group planed back to Los Angeles on Monday morning. All agreed that Ralph Meeker did a fine job of organizing the excursion.

The LA Chapter manned a booth at *Keyboard World Magazine's* May 18-24 "Home Organists' Adventure," through the courtesy of publisher Bill Worrall. The event was held in a Pasadena hotel. Chapter members Annie Olive and Ralph Beaudry made pitches in behalf of pipes and ATOS to the predominately plug-in oriented visitors.

On Saturday, June 17, at 8:30 p.m. former Radio City Music Hall Organist Ashley Miller performed for the chapter at San Gabriel Civic Auditorium. It was Ashley's first concert on the 3/16 Wurlitzer and he explained how pleased he was experimenting with all the colors available.

For the next two hours he proved his musical prowess with outstanding arrangements, an Ashley Miller trademark.

MIKE OHMAN

MAGNOLIA

It is with sadness that we must announce the passing of two avid supporters of the theatre organ, Jeff Seale, of Laurel, Ms., and Norville Hall, of Birmingham, Ala. Both were members of the Magnolia Chapter.

Jeff Seale, perhaps the quietest of the theatre organ enthusiasts and whose deeds and contributions spoke louder than any spoken word, passed away April 20, 1978. Jeff had the best of any home installation in the state, and perhaps the Southeast. Jeff spared no time, energy nor money to have the best that could possibly be. With the aid of Senton Granberry, and Tuddy Soley, he achieved just that.

Dolton McAlpin, Starkville, Ms., played a concert on Sunday afternoon April 16th. Jeff passed away while listening to a tape of that concert. There is no doubt that Jeff will be missed.

Norville Hall, a long-time organ mechanic, and an organist of the silent movie era, passed away on May 5th in Michigan. As reported in past issues of THEATRE ORGAN, Norville played at the Alabama Theatre in Birmingham, and at the time of his death was active in the repair and maintenance of organs. Many times in the past Norville helped with the tuning of the Robert Morton in the Temple Theatre prior to a concert, and without his help the job would not have been completed on time. This writer was most impressed by his knowledge, and his willingness to share that knowledge. The Alabama Chapter will be most vacant without him.

On May 22, 1978 the Magnolia Chapter celebrated the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Saenger's Temple Theatre in Meridian. It was a tough go after the Robert Morton suffered another dousing from the air-conditioning in September of last year. A lot of hard work on the part of a lot of members brought the organ back and playing on Thursday night, four days before the celebration. Without the hard work of Frank Evans, Pop Evans, Marl Cobler,

Sam Feltenstein, Tuddy Soley and Jeff Seale, the job would not have been completed.

Reproductions of the original 1928 program were available for sale, and there are a few that are still available. Please send \$1.25, to cover cost and handling, to Tommy Darsey, 2217 25th Ave., Meridian, Ms. 39301.

The opening day program was duplicated as closely as possible. We were not able to obtain a print of the original movie, *We Americans* so the second movie to be shown at the theatre *Speedy* starring Harold Lloyd, was featured. The organist for the evening was Tom Helms, of Pensacola, Fla. The standing ovation that he received after the show speaks of his talent better than words can say.

As previously reported, Major Jack Moelmann is leaving the Mississippi area. Jack has been an integral part of the rebuilding of the Saenger Theatre in Biloxi, now used as a fine arts house. Numerous concerts have been held by Jack, at his highly modified Hammond, in an effort to raise funds to refurbish the house, and this job has almost been completed. The Magnolia Chapter would not be what it is today without the aid of Jack. We will miss him.

TOMMY DARSEY

MOTOR CITY

Our Second Sunday program at the Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor featured Steve Stephani in May and Bob Cowley (from Springfield, Ohio) performing at the 3/13 Barton in June.

Rupert Otto was the artist at the 3/16 Barton for the Fourth Sunday at the Royal Oak Theatre, and John Lauter did the honors in June. Open



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National Yamaha Competition winner Lance Luce displays his trophy won at the finals in Los Angeles.

console follows each of these regular chapter activities.

Rex Koury returned to the Royal Oak Theatre for a two-night engagement in May. He accompanied three silent two-reel comedies in addition to his concert selections. It was evident from the response of the audience that they enjoyed his program.

Our giant two-day garage sale and paper drive at the Redford Theatre in June netted the chapter over \$3600 which included the profit on over 14 tons of newspapers collected by members and supporters of the Buy the Redford project. Many chapter members provided continuous music at the console of the Barton throughout the event. Theatre tours were available for any who were interested.

Our first bi-weekly film series proved to be profitable so a second

series of eight films began the end of June. Each evening features a top box office attraction of the past, with a few in 70 mm and 6-channel stereo sound. Chapter members will continue, as in the past, to provide the organ overture and intermission music throughout the series.

In June, chapter member Lance Luce won the National Yamaha Competition in his division (Senior I) held on the campus of the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

After first winning the local competition, Lance won out over 24 other entrants at the regional competition in Wisconsin, enabling him to compete in the finals as one of the four regional winners. The prize was a \$2000 cash scholarship and a trophy. Lance hopes for a career on the concert circuit.

DON LOCKWOOD

NOR-CAL

The Johnson's Alexander Vineyard Winery in Healdsburg, California was the site of the May meeting. The Johnson family, our gracious hosts, opened the winery doors, picnic ground, and 2/7 Marr and Colton to us. Members and guests kept the bench occupied all afternoon with continuous music. Visitors to the wine tasting room were intrigued with constantly changing organists. Not every ATOS meeting can be so pleasant and accompanied with that unique wine keg fragrance.

On June 11 at the Capn's Galley in Campbell, California, Larry Vanucci entertained about 250 members and guests with his fine theatre stylings! Larry has a tremendous following which was further increased after the Sunday concert. He is a polished and versatile mu-

sician adept at pure entertaining. "In the Mood" and "Lady Be Good" selections demonstrated his excellent arranging. The Latin melodies and marches had to be heard to be appreciated.

The organ is the former Buddy Cole 3/26 Wurlitzer/Robert Morton. Bill Breuer's technicians had worked hard to have the instrument in top shape for the concert.

Following the concert, open console was held. Lori Fraser, a new, young talent, played for us the first time. She is a student of Marian Richie and is well on her way to becoming a fine musician. Ten other members entertained us for an hour.

An afterglow was held at the home of Dave Schutt in San Jose. Featured was his 3/10 Robert Morton, a grand piano, a pump organ, a new shiny Hammond, and a room full of musical antiques. Needless to say, the musical sounds continued to flourish for hours.

JIM DUNBAR

NORTH TEXAS

A regular meeting was held at Gene Powell's Organ World in Garland on June 25. Business involved a few modifications of our by-laws, including separations of the officer positions by dropping "chairman-elect." If the membership so desires, it can keep a chairman for as many terms as it desires. The announcement was made that two new members, Neil Gower, of Plano, and Dr. Robert Lloyd, of Dallas, raised our roster to an even 100 members.

Most of the progress so far on our ex-Loew's Jersey City Wonder Morton has been verbal and on paper. The main result of meetings, besides learning a lot of detail about the varied and myriad facets of the



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Chairman Charles Evans beside the Wonder Morton console. (Koski Photo)

refurbishing and installing of the instrument, was a feeling of closer cooperation and team effort among the members.

As mentioned, many of us need more training and experience in leatherwork, woodwork, metalwork, electrical wiring and crafts and skills found in organ work. Details will be left to the leaders of the various work sessions. The site committee will be making an evaluation chart to determine which location gets the best overall grade. We have already had several offers of potential sites, and they need to be evaluated before the October 1st deadline set by Site Committee Chairman Gordon Wright. There are many things to be considered, not the least of which is financing. Secretary-treasurer Lorena McKee's financial report at the meeting indicated we are keeping our head above water and making our loan payments, but we still have a good distance to "swim" and need all the help we can get, financially and otherwise.

The June 25th session at Organ World concluded with cameos by

three of our talented organists, Grace Lerner, Bob McGilvery and a rousing finale by Gene Powell at his Organ World theatre organ installation.

JOE KOSKI

OREGON

In April we had the opportunity to hear nationally-known Rex Koury at Bob Burke's 3/13 Wurlitzer. This organ was acquired by Bob from the Criterion Theatre in Medford as a 3 manual Special Style "D" in 1963. It is a basement installation, clearly speaking up into a beautiful living room through a very large floor grate. The organ is now 13 ranks including a Post Horn, plus a piano, and represents a most successful transplant into an existing home.

Rex Koury, a veteran theatre organist, played a varied program ranging from nostalgic tunes such as "Blue Skies" to selections from *Star Wars*. A special bonus was "Center City USA," a march composed by Rex to inaugurate the installation of the former NY Paramount 4/36



Rex Koury at Bob Burke's Wurlitzer in April.

(Claude V. Neuffer Photo)

Wurlitzer in Wichita, Kansas. Rex's playing is ultra-smooth and professional, with excellent registration.

Thanks to Bob and Laura Burke for their hospitality and the use of this magnificent organ.

On May 21st we assembled at Benson High to hear a new member, Marti Lynch at the 3/18 Kimball. As previously reported, several ranks have been added to each of the two chambers, their stop tabs located on the back rail, with couplers required to assign them to different manuals as desired. This, plus the console location making it difficult for the organist to hear the left chamber, usually requires several sessions to get acquainted with this complex but beautiful sounding instrument. But because of school activities, Marti was limited to only a last minute study of this organ. However this handicap was not at all apparent in her superb playing.

Marti Lynch has appeared on radio and TV throughout the Midwest and was on concert tour for



Marti Lynch at the Benson High School Kimball.

(Claude V. Neuffer Photo)

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Hammond. She had been in semi-retirement in Florida while raising a daughter, has now moved to the Portland area and plans to resume her career. Her style is quite unique, combining fine theatre counter-melody with fresh modern harmony — the best of both worlds. An unusual feature is the artistic non-use of tremulants. Her phrasing and expression are exquisite, whether punching out a fast rhythm number or a sentimental ballad.

Marti's carefully planned program was arranged in groups, each with it's own theme and appropriate numbers.

Our chapter is proud and happy to welcome this most talented and charming lady. Florida's loss is Oregon's gain.

BUD ABEL

PIKES PEAK AREA

The PPATOS is eagerly anticipating the completion of the Chief Theatre organ in Colorado Springs City Auditorium. As usual for organ projects we are well behind schedule but we will still be done in time for the planned dedication this fall. The organ has now filled the new chambers and winding and wiring are underway. The purchase of a second blower from a Montana theatre will ease our installation by alleviating long and inconvenient windline runs. There will be a blower on each side of the auditorium running directly up to the chambers.

Many of our talented members will be performing for the local chapter of the Amateur Organ Association International. We will be playing for the group in the home of a local music store owner on an electronic organ. The program will be a good chance to see "how the

other side lives" and to recruit some new people to our cause.

SCOTT CHRISTIANSEN

POTOMAC VALLEY

Monthly concert-meetings of the chapter alternate between Virginia and Maryland to accommodate the geographical separation of suburban membership. In April 70 members met at the former First Presbyterian Church, in Ellicott City, Maryland. The church, originally constructed in 1844, was rebuilt in 1894 after it collapsed while under restoration. In 1959, the building was donated to the Howard County Historical Society. The imposing, stone faced edifice, has been preserved as a museum.

Of particular interest to the PVC was the Hilgamacher (Erie, Pa.) 2/9 tracker organ, installed in the original church in 1850. The tracker console is now set on a raised platform in the main auditorium of the restored building. The organ has mechanical intermanual couplers and a manual to pedal coupler — all mechanical. Since these fascinating instruments operate on low wind pressure of 2 to 2½ inches, voices are subdued and very pleasing to the ear, particularly in the relatively small room into which the organ speaks. Originally hand pumped, it was only recently equipped with a blower.

Bob Stratton, Lem Keller, Don Johnston and Marshall Stone spent many hours repairing and tuning the tracker. Frank Harris made the arrangements that permitted us to hold the meeting at the museum.

The concert portion of the April meeting was informal. Ron Kragler and Michael Britt, with no prior practice time to familiarize themselves with the different "feel" and

action of keyboard and pedals of a tracker type, demonstrated the capabilities of the instrument, playing appropriate classical selections and a sprinkling of popular tunes. Charles Affelder played at open console.

May 19-21 was a memorial weekend of organ music away from home in another aura of a backdrop of history. Saturday evening at the Williamsburg United Methodist Church, Marcia Koller enthralled our group with a varied program of light classics. She showed to advantage the full capability of the 2/23 Moller and her mastery of it. She is currently a lecturer in organ at the College of William and Mary.

Our own Earl Sharits followed and despite the lack of tremulants and only a "nodding acquaintance" with the Moller, made the church ring with theatre style tunes, old standards and musical film numbers. He studied with Johnny Winters at the Colorado Theatre in Pueblo, and by 1927 was the youngest featured organist in that state. Earl came to Washington in 1934 and worked with the IRS for 37 years.

Sunday afternoon, Frank Lybolt was the featured artist at the 3/15 "Johnson-Kimball" in the Williamsburg home of P.K. and Annis Johnson. Much of the organ was built by Mr. Johnson, including the console and some pipes. Though the Kimball is not a theatre organ, Frank thrilled guests with light classical numbers. Frank showed the wide range of his skill and easygoing style by responding to requests which were in the popular theatre style. Those joining in for open console included host, Mr. Johnson, Earl Sharits, Ron Miller, Ted Ansink, Marion Long, Layton Fordham, Margaret Martin, and Delores Dyke.

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PUGET SOUND

The chapter continued its spring program in May by proceeding north to Bellingham to hear a concert by Gunnar Anderson on the 2/10 Wurlitzer in the Mt. Baker Theatre. This was followed by lunch and a drive to Mt. Vernon, approximately halfway between Bellingham and Seattle where the Lincoln Theatre still houses a Wurlitzer Style D Special. Jeffrey Fox of Bellingham, who has been spending his weekends restoring the organ, did a concert there.

Other concerts of interest have been the two sponsored by Granada Organ Loft at Bellevue Pizza and Pipes: Helen Dell in May and Bill Langford of the Pizza Joynt in Hayward in June.

Our pre-summer programming will conclude with a July concert at Seattle Pizza and Pipes by Ashley Miller, as a finale of his west coast tour.

The 3/8 Wurlitzer from Seattle Center, formerly installed in the Food Circus, was auctioned by the city on May 4th. High bidder was member Bill Carson, who also manages time after his regular work to keep the three area Pizza and Pipes Wurlitzers functioning.

GENNY WHITTING

RED RIVER

The local educational TV station, KFME, has a new way to begin their Friday night double feature of old movies. It starts with film of the Fargo Theatre marquee and then moves into the theatre itself, showing various angles, while our chairman, Dave Knudtson, plays the Wurlitzer. The big velvet curtain opens, and the organ music fades into the movie overture. Also, this spring,

the Coordinated Arts Fund Drive had the Wurlitzer for background music for their TV ads, as Lance Johnson played an abbreviated version of "Petite Waltz."

On June 20th, Ted Larson, instructor of film studies at Moorhead State College, brought a group of high school students, who are taking a summer theatre workshop, to the Fargo Theatre for a special program. After introductions by Dave Knudtson and Ted, our own "Incomparable Hildegard" played a short concert for the kids who gave her their rapt attention and a standing ovation. She began with silent movie music, without the movie, so they could form their own movie from the music. Following a break, Ted introduced Lance, who scored a silent comedy feature. The students toured the theatre and were given a demonstration of the organ. They asked many questions. Hildegard talked with them and told of some of her experiences getting started in her career, and of the famous people she had met, such as Jimmy Stewart and other film stars.

After summer vacation, our first project will be to install a lift at the theatre. It was donated to us last spring and will be undergoing a few changes to resemble a Barton four-poster.

SONIA CARLSON

ROCKY MOUNTAIN

Our chapter is overjoyed with the idea that we have been able to purchase our very own Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ. It is a 2/6, Opus 1370, that was installed in the Legion Theatre in Alamosa, Colo. The name was later changed to the Rialto. This piece of Colorado music history has the reputation of being one of the

last regularly used theatre organs in the country, mainly due to the efforts of one man, the late Joe Brite. Joe was theatre manager and organist and many a theatre organ buff made his pilgrimage to Alamosa to see and hear this historic instrument.

Our efforts began a few years ago when Joe was killed in a holdup. We helped obtain his song slides and projector for the ATOS National Library and made inquiries as to the future of the organ. The theatre owner was contacted and asked to donate or sell the organ to us for preservation. Unfortunately, even after repeated letters and phone calls, the owners sold the instrument to a well-known organist, Ron Rhode of Phoenix. We then contacted Ron who agreed to let us have first option to buy should he ever sell it. We had in mind that this might happen some time in the future. Well, it happened in April of this year, and we were given the option to buy the organ.

Our board of directors discussed the possibility, but saw no way of raising the money within the allotted time of April 23, 1978. It was announced at the last meeting held at the Aladdin Theatre and lo and behold, a miracle happened. One of our newest and most active members, Ivan Duff, agreed to loan the chapter the money. With this new source of funding, an emergency board meeting was called and voted unanimously to accept the offer. The organ is part of Colorado theatre history and preserving organs is one of our chapter's stated objectives. It would serve to be a unifying project for the chapter which has gained momentum in the past couple of years, has been involved in other successful activities and is gaining a national reputation. The ranks are:

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97; Clarinet, 61; Tibia Clausa, 73; Vox, 61; Chimes, 18.

There are no percussions. At this writing there are two crews enroute to pick up the organ — one to Phoenix and one to Alamosa and we hope the Phoenix crew meets the Alamosa crew and all will get to Denver at the same time 'cause they only have one moving van.

Work on Fred Riser's Wurlitzer is progressing better than average. As soon as the wires are connected to the main box, we're gonna turn 'er on and stand back.

FRANK R. GANDY

ST. LOUIS

Jim Grebe, chapter historian, and his wife Dolores hosted the May meeting in their home. Jim's pride and joy, a 2/8 Kimball theatre pipe organ, is on the lower level of their home. It was originally installed in 1921 in the Wheaton, Illinois, Grand Theatre (now known as the Wheaton). In 1937 the organ was reinstalled in the Kankakee, Illinois, Presbyterian Church until 1976

when it was replaced by a Keates classic organ of 30 ranks. Jim obtained the organ and with a lot of help from his friend, Bernard Nordmann, another chapter member, began the tedious fifty-three-week job of installation, voicing and tuning. Bernard was also the guest organist for this meeting and he demonstrated with first-hand knowledge all ranks, percussions and an infinite number of registrations as he skillfully played a program of show tunes. The evening was concluded with open console.

The June meeting was in reality a going away party at the home of Anne and Fred Pillsbury honoring their 3/19 Wurlitzer theatre organ which they have sold. The organ was originally built for the McVickers Theatre in Chicago. Pillsbury sold the organ to make room for another Wurlitzer, the famous 4/26 (originally 21 ranks) organ from the now-closed Ambassador Theatre in St. Louis.

The evening of this June meeting was special in many respects, but



Gerry Marian, one of St. Louis' most talented organists.

the professionalism of so many of the guests present enhanced the enthusiasm of the entire group. Bill Bartlow from Rushville, Illinois, was a guest who has a 2/12 Wurlitzer in his home where St. Louisians have spent many enjoyable hours. Bill Hansen of Quincy, Illinois, and Harry Hoffman of St. Louis were there and had spent many hours before the meeting preparing the organ for the occasion and their efforts proved invaluable. The guest organist, John Ferguson, was the former chapter chairman and presently pizza organist in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He expertly played a full program with something special for every taste.

During open console, former San Diego pizza organist Jack Jenkins, who is now minister of music at the Granite City Baptist Church, took his turn followed by Joe Barnes, formerly of Rochester. Leo Kikendall from Springfield, Illinois also played.

Gerry Marian, former organist on



Jim Grebe at the console of his 2/8 Kimball which he refers to as 'My Lady of the Lower Level.'

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the 4/36 Crawford Special Wurlitzer at the St. Louis Fox Theatre for many years as well as many other organ spots, then took over the console. It was quite evident why Gerry is considered one of the most talented organists in this area. He knows the capabilities of an organ and how to get the most out of one. Gerry studied music at Meremac College and Washington University and was for many years associated with the St. Louis theatre organist, antique collector and TV comic Stan Kann, who now lives in California.

BILL ANTHONY

SAN DIEGO

These are exciting times in San Diego. The organ installation is moving along with Ray Krebs directing a dedicated volunteer group which works every Wednesday night and Saturday morning. The organ can make sounds now; and very soon it will be ready for tuning. The old California Theatre will once more

resound to the beautiful sounds of organ music.

One Sunday last spring we met at the home of Ray Krebs in Mira Mesa. After many hours of tedious work, his two-manual Wurlitzer is in playing condition and sounds beautiful. It was a treat enjoying open console and seeing his collection of player pianos.

A few weeks later several of us went to a Joe Koons benefit concert held in the cycle shop in Long Beach. Several professional artists as well as a number of the regular Saturday nighters took turns at the 3/34 Wurlitzer Welte pipe organ installed in the back of the shop.

Our spring concert was a big success. The 3/12 Wurlitzer at Organ Power Pizza sounded beautiful when three of our own talented chapter members performed.

Tim Kriefels, started the program with several medleys, including show tunes, sweet ballads, oldies-but-goodies and closed with "The Impossible Dream."



Gerald Nagano at the Organ Power Pizza.

(Ed Minder Photo)

Leslie Wolf, a young organ teacher, church organist and advisor to Young Keyboard Artists, continued with a wide range of tempos and stylings.

Following intermission Chris Gorsuch, popular staff organist at Organ Power, finished the concert with gusto. The Wurlitzer responded beautifully to his changes in mood and tempo.

Maria Kumagai did an outstanding job at the Wurlitzer for our April concert at Organ Power Pizza. She has a special talent which can easily transport one into another world — a world of nuances, expressed with delicate sensitivity.

A week later our chapter met at the home of Tim Kriefels in La Jolla. Following an abbreviated business session, music filled the air as member after member entertained at the three-manual Rodgers.

In late April we had a tour of San Sylmar the "Tower of Beauty — a unique treasure house devoted to the concept of beauty." Unlike other museums everything here is completely restored and in use. Mr. and



(L to R) Chris Gorsuch, Leslie Wolfe and Tim Kriefels at the Organ Power Pizza.

(Bob Cochrane Photo)

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On Sunday afternoon, May 7th, Gerald Nagano, an exciting and dedicated young organist from Los Angeles, took command of the three-manual Wurlitzer at Organ Power Pizza. Jerry captivated his audiences with his charming personality and his ability to produce entertaining organ music. His concert covered a wide range of tunes and tempos to please everyone.

In June members of the chapter met at the California Theatre, in downtown San Diego. We got rid of the business in a hurry so that we could, for the first time, admire, play, listen to, talk about and share our joy for our very own pipe organ — a gift from Sandy Fleet.

Wayne Seppala played the organ as the curtains parted, unveiling our Style D Wurlitzer surrounded by the volunteers who worked hours and hours to install it. Following the unveiling Colonel Jenkins, a retired serviceman, still going strong as an organist despite arthritis in one hip and pins in the other, did a mini-concert which took us back over the years.

June 25th was Ashley Miller Day in San Diego. What a day; perfect in every conceivable way from Organ



June 25 was Ashley Miller Day in San Diego.
(Ed Minder Photo)

Power Pizza in the afternoon to the California Theatre in the evening. We had a bonus concert by Ashley for those who had attended the afternoon concert. We were totally enthralled by the beauty and sounds of our now perfectly-voiced organ. The master musician wove his sound magic with ease and dexterity as exemplified in "The Flight of the Bumble Bee."

What a day, what a way to close our concert series for the summer. Ashley Miller, for using your terrific talent in such a beautiful and generous manner to make us happy, we thank you.

GWEN O'CONNOR

SIERRA

Saturday morning, May 6th, found about 40 enthusiastic chapter members aboard a chartered bus headed for Reno to hear Rex Koury. What excitement! Imagine a whole afternoon with Rex who was to play for us at three different organs — including one in his own home. We felt privileged indeed.

We stopped at Boomtown, a casino just across the California border

in Nevada, for brunch and a chance to "win or lose a few" before reaching our first destination — the home of Fred Beeks and his three-manual Wurlitzer-Smith where Rex Koury was scheduled to give his first concert at noon. He was a little late, which gave us the opportunity to hear a young man, nearly blind, give us a mini-concert at the grand piano. Then we listened to a perforated tape which actually played the Wurlitzer.

We were primed and eager to hear Rex's magic touch and gave him a warm welcome. He didn't disappoint us as he made many familiar tunes come alive in his special style. He ended his concert with several arrangements of "When the Saints Come Marching In," including a jazzy piano version on the electrically-coupled grand piano.

Then we headed for the First Baptist Church of Reno, where Rex presides at the specially-designed Artisan "straight" electronic organ. He was as much at ease playing "How Great Thou Art" as he is at great movie themes.

Leaving the church, our bus followed Rex's red pickup truck out of Reno southward to the Koury home at the base of a snow capped mountain peak. We all squeezed into his home and again listened to the master as he involved us in a group of sing-along numbers on colored slides. Then we laughed our way through a silent comedy as Rex cued each scene with appropriate songs and sounds.

There was more fine organ music ending with Mrs. Koury inviting us for dinner, served buffet style.

The music didn't stop there for some of our members played Rex's Artisan and others discovered another organ, a Thomas electronic, in the family room. We also discovered a stack of Rex Koury records and



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eagerly purchased most of them. Some wouldn't give up until we coaxed Rex to the Thomas and then to his piano.

We are indeed fortunate to have such talented members as Rex Koury and several excellent pipe organ installations available for our frequent enjoyment.

SOONER STATE

Now it can be told! Things were quiet in Tulsa early this year because of our long faces — the American Christian College, home of the 3/10 Robert Morton where we'd had many delightful meetings, was to be closed and the organ put up for sale. Could we raise the money to buy it? And if we did, where would we put it? Time was running out; if we bought it, we had to remove it by May 31st. We're a small group — could we round up enough people to take it out by then? Here was probably our last chance to acquire a theatre pipe organ of our own, right in our back yard — IF we could do it.

Well, we did it! After much discussion, and being told about all the problems we would face, we came up with an acceptable bid and the Robert Morton was ours! Our May meeting started on Mother's Day at 4 p.m. (all the speaking pipes were out and the small ones wrapped by 8:30 p.m.) and lasted for the next ten days! We did have lots of help: Phil and Laura Judkins; Bruce and Martha Wilson and sons Derek (age 11) and Deshayn (age 5); Lee and Dorothy Smith and son Jeff; Jim and Helen Reel and son Tony; Bill Roberts; Bob Busby; Harry Rasmussen; J.B. Ellis; Joe Crutchfeld; Sam and Nona Rhoades; Paul Lynch; Bob and Betty Weddle; Harvey Young; Drs. Raymond Maguire and Jim

Routsong; John Roberts; Gene Robinson, and Fern Dean — all contributed many muscle-hours, when and where their work schedules permitted. By Sunday, May 21st, everything was out and in storage except the relay and switch stack. We took one night off to recuperate, then came back Tuesday to do the rest.

The organ is in storage for now, but we expect to find a suitable home for it so it can be heard again before too long.

DOROTHY SMITH

SOUTH FLORIDA

In May, we gave "Welk"ome to Bob Ralston, for matinee and evening concerts on the Gusman Hall Wurlitzer. Lest the reader form an erroneous opinion, let me state that while Bob has champagne taste in music, it was not champagne music that Bob coaxed from the sometimes balky beast. A T.O. concert was promised and T.O. style music it was, to the delight of those who braved the tropical downpour to attend. A professional musician, Bob quickly earned the respect of the skeptics, playing around the occasional cyphers, while charming his fans with his personal magnetism. Bob's sunny show more than made up for the dreary, wet day. A champagne toast to this trooper, mit lots of bubbles!

Fr. Bill Biebel needs no introduction to most lovers of the Jesse Crawford, Don Baker, Gus Farney, Lyn Larsen styles of playing. We were fortunate to corral Fr. Biebel for one of the few concerts his Bishop allows him to give each year.

The Andre Wurlitzer, in Bob and Vivians dream-come-true hall, never sounded better.

Was it the magic of the evening, or the artist, or the electric moon,

that prompted begging Bill Biebel, theatre organist, for encores? It was a very enjoyable, relaxing evening of scrumptious arrangements, crying tibias, wailing voxes and mesmerized members.

Our thanks to a very gifted artist. And, "It's only a hobby," he says!

STEVE FITZGERALD

SOUTHEAST TEXAS

The first Sunday in April, 1978 was a most strikingly beautiful day in the Sun Belt when the Southeast Texas Chapter held its meeting at the ornate Jefferson Theatre in Beaumont where the second half of *The Mark of Zorro* was shown on the smaller of two screens, accompanied on the famous Robert Morton pipe organ by Al Sacker. We were delighted to have several visitors to be with us and enjoy this superb silent film.

Again, we thank Nick Harper, our program chairman and projectionist, for providing his expertise and the film. Our business meeting mostly concerned a proposed trip to spend a weekend in Baton Rouge, La., as the guest of Don May who has been responsible for the maintenance of the fine 2/6 Robert Morton pipe organ in the Paramount Theatre, where a fine friend, Dolton McAlpin, once presided at the console.

The next day, we continued our journey to New Orleans and the beautiful Saenger Theatre to be the guest of Dr. Barry Henry and hear and play one of the greatest of them all, the 4/26 Robert Morton, which was the prototype of the later famous Wonder Morton (which, if you recall, were five in number and installed in the New York Metropolitan Area). The Wonder Morton from the Jersey City Theatre is now the property of the North Texas Chapter and



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The May meeting was devoted to a board of directors meeting, open console and delightful refreshments, at the Jefferson Theatre. This meeting gave members an opportunity to relax with the Robert Morton.

The Robert Morton console, which was mahogany for only five years of its fifty-year history, was disassembled in May for complete restoration and refurbishing.

The June meeting was in the form of a summer picnic, held at the home of Ralph and Ruth Lindholm with good ol' Texas barbecue as the entree. Don Lyons of Lyons Music Co., the local Hammond Organ dealer, performed at the Hammond Concorde organ along with Spence Adams, Ralph Lindholm, Thelma Debes, Ruby Holleman Monore, a former Jefferson Theatre organist, and several others. A grand time was had by all.

AL SACKER

VALLEY OF THE SUN

May was a busy month from beginning to end — especially for Program Chairman Don Reasor. We found out just how capable an organizer he really is!

The chapter presented a program at the Mesa Organ Stop Pizza restaurant as part of our monthly social meeting. The program was presented without charge, and the public was invited. We featured four young local artists at the 3/25 Wurlitzer — our own vice-chairman, Steve Schlesing, Lynn Staininger of Tucson, Dave Broskowski (who filled in for another organist at the last minute), and chapter member Michael McCullough of Scottsdale. These young people gave excellent performances, presenting a variety of music. Special thanks go out to Organ Stop owner

Bill Brown, restaurant manager Nita Seamen, and Organ Stop's featured artist Ron Rhode for their cooperation and assistance in making our program a success.

Friday, May 19th through Sunday, May 21st, we were on the move. Members of the Southern Arizona Chapter joined us on a chartered bus for a weekend excursion to the Los Angeles area. We started the weekend by attending a George Wright all-request concert at the San Gabriel Civic Auditorium on Friday night. We returned to San Gabriel Saturday morning for a closer look at the Wurlitzer installation and open console. Our host was Bob Hill of the L.A. Chapter. Our lunch stop was at the Great American Wind Machine Restaurant in Reseda, where we munched on pizza and sandwiches while some of our members played the 2/13 Wurlitzer.

The most breathtaking part of our weekend was our tour of the Merle Norman Cosmetics Tower of Beauty at San Sylmar.

Saturday night we heard the 4/24 Wurlitzer at Old Town Music Hall in El Segundo while watching some old-time silent and sound comedies. Sunday morning we attended a concert at the Wiltern Theatre in L.A. which featured Candi Carley. We were back in Phoenix by 10 p.m. Sunday night.

Also in May, chapter members gathered at the Don Reaser residence for a farewell party for our vice-chairman, Steve Schlesing. He left at the beginning of June on a world tour with a musical group from his church.

It was silent movie time again in June, at Gammage Auditorium at Arizona State University. Several chapter members gathered there to hear Lyn Larsen play an original pipe organ score for *The Phantom*



Michael McCullough made his pipe organ debut at Organ Stop.



Lynn Staininger — youngest performer at VOTS program.



Steve Schlesing also emceed VOTS Chapter organ program.



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Dave Broskowski filled in at last minute notice.

of the Opera. The movie was good, too!

We held our June social meeting at Phoenix College, where past chapter chairman Bill Hagey performed a varied program of organ music on the college's partially restored 2/9 Wurlitzer.

At our June-July board meeting, Michael McCullough was appointed vice-chairman to fill the vacancy left by Steve Schlesing.

For the rest of the summer, we will be mostly occupied with the completion of our organ restoration project at Phoenix College. We still

hope to have a dedication concert on the instrument before the end of the year.

MADELINE LI VOLSI

WOLVERINE

Our May meeting was at the Fabulous Fox Theatre in Detroit, with Gary Reseigh at the console of the 4/36 Wurlitzer. The long-awaited concert (nearly 2½ years after the re-premiere) began not in the auditorium, but in the lobby with Don Jenks at the 3/13 Moller for a nice "warmup" concert.

The 5000-seat auditorium had been relamped prior to the occasion, as was the giant spherical chandelier in the center of the dome. After a brief introduction, the console appeared on the stage lift, center stage, against a star-studded, dark-blue background. The lift descended to stage level and the console, mounted on the band cart, moved forward to the orchestra lift as Gary played his opening number. The program was well performed, widely varied and well-received.

On June 25, the Flint Capitol Theatre Organ Club and several of our own members traveled to Fr. Jim Miller's residence to see, hear and play his 2/7 Barton.

Our First Saturday programs have been gaining attendance each month, and the summer months seem to have no deterrent to folks who drop in at Lansing's Michigan Theatre to hear the 3/11 Barton. In May, Scott Smith and Fr. Miller performed an all-improvisation concert. In June, Barry Rindhage and Dave Dunlap, from the Flint-Saginaw area, split a program. Highlighted were several interesting numbers, including some live violin solos, accompanied by the organ. July was the 50th Anniversary of our Barton, and we celebrated by premiering a new star at the console, the very talented Gary Wick of Holly, Michigan.

Da Capo Inc. continues its efforts to purchase Lansing's 57-year-old, 1500-seat Michigan Theatre for use as a performing arts center, including Barton Opus 206. The building itself is architecturally fascinating. It houses not only the main auditorium, but a two-story arcade. A former bowling alley lies beneath the whole affair. John Eberson designed this theatre (originally the Strand) with the intention that it be a cultural center. Da Capo director, Tom O. Thompson, intends to see it return to that capacity, as does the Wolverine Chapter.

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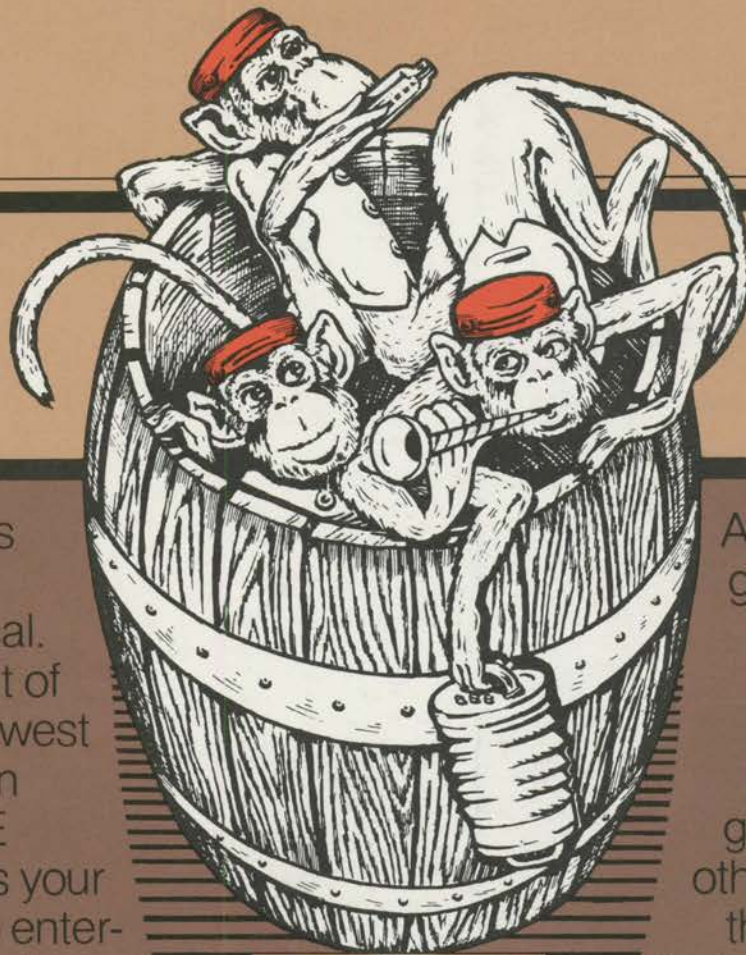
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