

THEATRE ORGAN

October/November 1978



Journal of the American Theatre Organ Society

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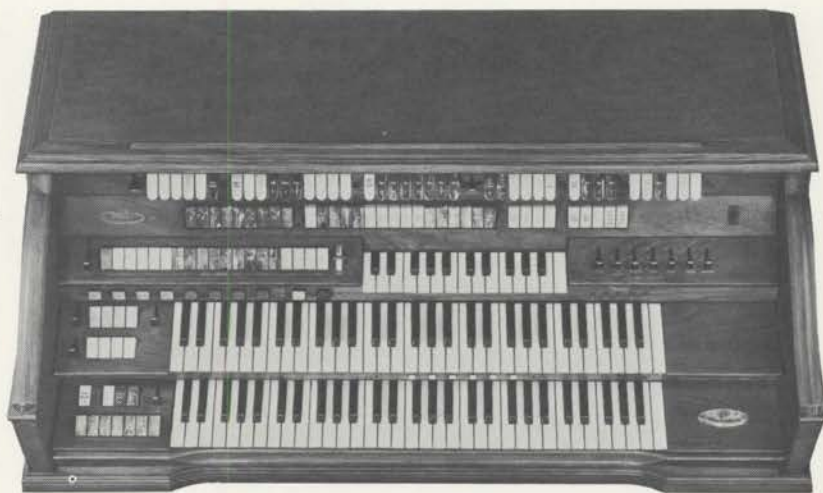
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Editorial Address

THEATRE ORGAN
P.O. Box 1314
Salinas, California 93902
Phone: (408) 663-3238

Advertising Address

ATOS Advertising
2231 North Burling Street
Chicago, Illinois 60614

ATOS Corporate Office

ATOS
6900 Santa Monica Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90038

Office of the President

Preston "Sandy" Fleet
P.O. Box 1346
Rancho Santa Fe, Calif. 92067
Phone: (714) 756-3744

National Headquarters

ATOS
P.O. Box 1002
Middleburg, Virginia 22117
Phone: (703) 364-2423

National Officers

Preston "Sandy" Fleet, President
Erwin Young, V.P. — Treasurer
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Curator

Paul Abernethy
Campus Box 2213
Elon College, North Carolina 27244

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Editor — George Thompson
Associate Editors — Lloyd E. Klos,
Peg Nielsen
Editor-Emeritus — W. "Stu" Green
Photographer — Bill Lamb
Publisher — Betty Mason
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features . . .

- 5 The Beautiful Tennessee
- 8 When the Organs Play at Twilight
- 9 1978 Hall of Famer Honored Locally Stu Green
- 12 The John Wanamaker Grand Court Organ Lloyd E. Klos
- 16 Confessions of an Ear Player Bill Reeves
- 22 Tacoma's Pantages Theatre Lloyd E. Klos
- 25 Hector Encores in Atlanta Fran Verri
- 26 Flint Theatre Organ Club
- 28 Trash John Muri
- 37 Frank R. White Robert A. Pereda
- 40 Resume of Special Board Meeting

technical . . .

- 20 The Acoustical Consultant R.J. Weisenberger
- 36 Questions and Answers Lance Johnson

departments . . .

- 4 Presidents Message
- 24 Dinny's Colyum
- 29 For the Records
- 41 Vox Pops
- 47 Nuggets from the Golden Days
- 48 Music Review
- 50 Closing Chord
- 50 Letters to the Editors
- 52 Chapter Notes
- 66 Classified Ads

Cover Photo

The Tennessee Theatre, Knoxville's most famous entertainment landmark, marks its 50th anniversary. The story of the theatre and its 3/14 Wurlitzer pipe organ begins on page 5.

John E. Miller Photo

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PAST PRESIDENTS

Richard Simonton
Feb. 1955 – Oct. 1958

Judd Walton
Oct. 1958 – July 1961

Tiny James
July 1961 – July 1964

Carl Norvell
July 1964 – July 1966

Richard Schrum
July 1966 – July 1968

Al Mason
July 1968 – July 1970

Stillman Rice
July 1970 – July 1972

Erwin A. Young
July 1972 – July 1974

Paul M. Abernethy
July 1974 – July 1976

Ray F. Snitil
July 1976 – July 1978

HONORARY MEMBERS

1959 – Jesse Crawford

1960 – Fanny Wurlitzer

1961 – Mel Doner

1962 – Leonard MacClain

1963 – Eddie Dunstedter

1964 – Reginald Foort

1965 – Dan Barton

1966 – W. "Tiny" James

1967 – Erwin A. Young

1968 – Richard C. Simonton

1969 – Judd Walton

1970 – Bill Lamb

1971 – George and Vi Thompson

1972 – Stu Green

1973 – Al and Betty Mason

1974 – Lloyd E. Klos

1975 – Joe Patten

1976 – Floyd and Doris Mumm

1977 – Les and Edith Rawle

1978 – Len Clarke

President's Message

I am most pleased and honored that your National Board of Directors has chosen me to serve you during 1978-79. ATOS is an active, healthy and fun organization that relies on the strength of its members. Your active participation at the local Chapter's level in the concert events and activities are what make it all worthwhile. This last year was a good year for ATOS. Working together we can make this year even better. I believe in an open door policy and will appreciate your constructive comments and suggestions during my term of office. I intend to visit as many of your programs as possible on my travels around the country during this coming year. Please let me know as early as possible when you wish me to attend your program.



Southern California Chapter's members are already at work planning your 1979 convention. Mark your calendar now for the week of July 8 through 12, 1979 to get in on the fun. This promises to be the best program in ATOS history.

Preston M. "Sandy" Fleet
President

50TH ANNIVERSARY

The Beautiful Tennesse

On October 1, 1978, the Tennessee Theatre, Knoxville's most famous entertainment landmark, marked its 50th anniversary. Designed by the Chicago firm of Graven & Mayger, and built by Publix Theatres at a cost of \$1,000,000, it seated 2,000 people and was advertised as "The South's Most Beautiful Theatre." Of Spanish-Moorish design, one

passes through an inner vestibule into the grand lobby, over two stories in height, 34-feet wide and extending over half a city block to the orchestra foyer. Five huge chandeliers light the ornately designed hall with its green and coral terrazzo floor, at the end of which are impressive carpeted stairways on each side leading to the balcony. Many fine pieces of antique

furniture and original oil paintings decorate the orchestra and balcony foyers, as well as the lower lounge areas.

The ceiling of the unusually wide auditorium features a large elliptical dome within a much larger one encircled by Moorish figures and griffens, silhouetted by striking cove lighting around the entire perimeter which

The auditorium of the Tennessee Theatre as it looked in October 1928.





The stage and auditorium of the Tennessee Theatre, Knoxville, from the right side of the balcony showing original curtains in 1928.

Grand Lobby of the Tennessee Theatre, looking toward the orchestra foyer.



changes color to create different moods.

Of primary interest to theatre-goers has always been the 3/14 Wurlitzer pipe organ on its own lift. The big red and gold French-style console, of Arabic design, is on the left side of the orchestra pit. The 1,125 pipes and toy counter are located in ornately framed chambers on either side of the elaborately designed and lighted proscenium arch. The well-equipped stage, with its 42 lines and three levels of dressing rooms were termed "a paradise for theatre folk." The proscenium width of 54 feet made it easily adaptable to the 50-foot CinemaScope screen installed in October, 1953.

The opening show on October 1, 1928, featured Jean Wilson at the Mighty Wurlitzer, Don Pedro and his Melody Boys Orchestra, the stage show "Joy Bells" and on the silver magnascope screen, Clara Bow in *The Fleets In*, with other Vitaphone specialties. Admission prices were only 10¢ and 40¢ for matinees and 15¢ and 60¢ for evenings.

A special section in the *Knoxville Sunday Journal* heralded the opening: "Tennessee Theatre Palace of Splendor." "Magnificent temple of amusement launches Knoxville into a new theatrical era," read one newspaper account and a bank ad congratulated Publix on "the South's 'Little Roxy' — a veritable temple of pleasure!"

Some of the famous stars and shows that appeared on the stage during the past half-century were: Van Arnhem's Minstrels in 1932; Gene Austin, Tom Mix and Tony; Nick Lucas, Dan Fitch Revue, in 1933; A.B. Marcus Revue; Ray Teal and his Floridians; Earl Carroll Vanities, in 1934; Broadway touring shows, "3 Men On A Horse," "Mary of Scotland," with Helen Hayes, Philip Merivale and Pauline Frederick; Ziegfeld Follies with Fanny Brice; and Ben Blue, in 1935. Glenn Miller and Vaughn Monroe came later with their bands, and Desi Arnez, John Payne and Donald O'Conner made personal appearances in the '40s.

Several world premieres have been held at the Tennessee, including *So This Is Love*, in 1953, with Kathryn Grayson, Walter Abel, Joan Weldon and Merv Griffen in attendance; *All The Way Home*, in 1963, with



Lyn Larsen played a benefit show sponsored by Knoxville Heritage, October 19, 1976.

Robert Preston and producer David Susskind present, and *The Fool Killer*, in 1965, with stars Tony Perkins, Henry Hull and Arnold Moss adding lustre to the occasion.

On December 14, 1966, the theatre was closed for two weeks for refurbishment and reseating. Care was taken to preserve the original beauty and design of the theatre which reopened Christmas Day.

Many famous organists have played at the Tennessee, including C. Sharpe Minor, Johnny Winters, Randy Sauls, Jimmy Beers, Lee Erwin and Lyn Larsen, but undoubtedly the organist best remembered by Knoxvilleans is Billy Barnes, who was house organist from 1937 to 1942, and whose radio broadcasts during these years and from 1946-1950 were heard daily.

The organ was little used during the early fifties, and in 1956 Alfred Lunsford and Breck Camp cleaned up the console and restored the organ to good playing condition. One misguided soul repainted the console black and gold in 1956, but Steve Brown performed the noble task in 1961 of restoring the console to its

TENNESSEE THEATRE ORGANISTS THRU THE YEARS

- | | |
|---|---|
| Oct. 1 - Oct. 19, 1928 — Jean Wilson (Opening) | Oct. 15, 1937 - March, 1942 — Billy Barnes (Daily. Broadcast daily on WNOX - then WROL during most of this time; returned in 1946; played daily on WROL, 1946-1949; did special events at theatre, such as Miss Tennessee Pageant, 1949.) |
| Dec. 2, 1928 - Jan. 19, 1929 — Grace Justus | May, 1952 — Ernie Dalton |
| Feb. 11 - May 18, 1929 — Harry Waters | Summer, 1956 — Charlie Hunnicut (A.G.O. Regional Concert 6/26/57) |
| Dec. 28, 1930 - Jan. 10, 1931 — C. Sharpe Minor | 1956 - 1958 — Breck Camp |
| Jan. 18 - May 16, 1931 — Johnny Winters | April 4, 1959 - May, 1966 — Steve Brown |
| June 29 - July 9, 1931 — Johnny Winters (2nd appearance) | Fall, 1966 - Dec. 25, 1966 — Hugh Livingston |
| Dec. 23, 1933 — Billy Orr (Benefit and daily radio program also during early 30's on Tennessee organ) | 1967 - 1978 — Preston Spaulding |
| April 18 - May 1, 1934 — Johnny Winters (3rd appearance) | 1969, 1972, 1973, 1975 — Lee Erwin (Special appearance) |
| June 2 - June 15, 1934 — Randy Sauls (with Loulie Jean Norman, singer) | 1976 — Lyn Larsen (Special appearance) |
| Aug. 15 - Aug. 25, 1934 — Jimmy Beers (with Harvey Bell, singer) | 1940s — John Reese (For several special events) |
| Dec. 22, 1934 - Jan. 5, 1935 — Jimmy Beers (2nd appearance) | 1953 — Pearl Francis (For World Premiere <i>So This Is Love</i>) |
| Feb. 2 - Feb. 14, 1935 — Dick Betts | 1970s — Cecil Whitmire (Occasional substitute for P. Spaulding) |
| Sept. 2 - Oct. 14, 1935 — Randy Sauls (9-15-35 with Mary Cowerd - 2nd appearance) | 1978 - March to present; Chris McDowell, Bill Snyder, Bill Dexter, Peggy Rogers, Betty Hudson, Casey Pickle and Barbara VanEpps at various times. |
| 1936 — Jimmy Hart | |
| May 9 - July 7, 1937 — Carl Hinnant (Daily) | |



Billy Barnes at the console on June 10, 1978.

original red and gold finish. Thanks to the playing and tender loving care given the organ by Steve from 1959 to 1966, and Preston Spaulding from 1967 to 1978, the instrument still sounds as good as ever.

ABC Southeastern Theatres closed the theatre November 3, 1977, however, a new company, Tennessee Theatre Classics, reopened the theatre March 15, 1978 with gala showing of *Grand Hotel* and is continuing to show old Hollywood classics. Preston Spaulding presided at the console for reopening night. In June, the theatre brought Billy Barnes back for a week, and his always current selections included music from *Star Wars* and *Rocky*, as well as a parody to "Hello Dolly" entitled "Hello Knoxville."

In August, an American Cancer Society benefit had Dennis Morgan in person, with his old film *Shine On Harvest Moon* on the screen. Preston Spaulding was at the Mighty Wurlitzer. October 19th will be Patricia Neal Night when the star and former Knoxville will be honored, and Billy Barnes, an old friend, will be back again at the console.

Gone are the huge vertical sign and graceful marquee with the flashing sequence lights so fondly remembered by nostalgic moviegoers, but the interior grandeur of the past still remains. Views of Spanish balconies, stained glass windows and vast spaces under the huge blue dome, echoing the tones of the mighty organ, still give one the feeling of having enjoyed a "real experience!" □



OCTOBER 20, 1978

When the Organs Play at Twilight Around the World

Sit back, close your eyes, and imagine the thrilling symphony of sound as Mighty Wurlitzer pipe organs unite in a reverberating chorus of song. Not just two or three organs playing together, but dozens of magnificent instruments joining together in concert. It's an exciting idea that stimulates the senses and captivates the imagination.

And on October 20th, the idea becomes reality when Mighty Wurlitzers from around the world participate in an unusual, if not unparalleled concert. Mighty Wurlitzer Days 1978 is a musical happening like none other; the day theatre pipe organs around the world join together in song.

Last year's concert, the first such event for Mighty Wurlitzer theatre pipe organs, was a tremendous success. Here was a chance to awaken public interest in one of the most fascinating instruments ever created. Although theatre organ enthusiasts knew what a vital role pipe organs played in the glittering era of the silent screen, the public did not. It was time to create public awareness and recognize the theatre pipe or-

gan's vital role in shaping 20th century music. More than just an accompaniment to the staccato movements of silent greats, Mighty Wurlitzer pipe organs were the unspoken emotions of the screen, the multifaceted voice that could swell like pounding surf or roar with the impact of a dozen thundering trains. And last year's concert paid tribute to these giants of a bygone era.

This year is even more significant. It's a continuation of last year's concert, expanded to an international scope. Beginning at 8 p.m., October 20th, Mighty Wurlitzer pipe organs in different parts of the world will play the same arrangement at the same local time, starting at the International Date Line and moving westward for an entire 24-hour period. Continuing in last year's tradition, Mighty Wurlitzers will play "When the Organ Played at Twilight," a favorite of the legendary organist Jesse Crawford. The number was arranged by another well-known organist, John Muri, 1977 ATOS Organist of the Year.

Since the first universal Mighty Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ con-

cert was staged October 14, 1977, word has spread. Organs that were still in restoration, have been completed; organists who had prior engagements last year have kept October 20th free, and many organists or establishments housing theatre organs who were not familiar with Mighty Wurlitzer Days are now preparing to participate.

Among first-time participants in this year's concert, is Wurlitzer's own Mightiest Wurlitzer, the most complete Mighty Wurlitzer pipe organ in existence. Housed at Wurlitzer Corporate Headquarters in DeKalb, IL, the Mightiest will lend its own unique sound to this musical happening.

Be part of Mighty Wurlitzer Days this year when theatre organs around the world unite in song. Listen, and you can almost hear the powerful Tibias coming to life. It's the music that has dazzled audiences for decades, the nostalgic voices of theatre pipe organs. Be part of this event, this musical blending of past and present, designed to generate new enthusiasm for pipe organs around the world. □

1978 Hall of Famer Honored Locally

by Stu Green



Milton in 1923 as he appeared on the sheet music of "Since You Went Away."

The evening of August 5, 1978, saw a tangible tribute to the organist selected this year for membership in the ATOS Hall of Fame, Milton Charles. While the organist had received the official letter from committee chairman Lloyd Klos, some of Charles' friends and fellow ATOSers felt that a celebration was in order. Bob and Alice Power were the sparkers. Their organ-equipped home is not far from the Charles residence in Ojai, California.

On the appointed evening a small group of friends met with Milton at the Power home for dinner. Bob Power read both the Klos letter and Milton's letter of acceptance. Then Milton was asked if he would like to play the "style 260" Rodgers organ, now vastly improved through the electronic and musical wizardry of Lee Sundstrom.

Milton Charles (center) poses with hosts Bob and Alice Power. (Stufato)



Milton said yes, he would play, but first he wanted to talk — about the people who influenced him during his theatre days. He explained that the honor of being chosen for the ATOS Hall of Fame had gotten him to thinking about the people he had known along the way, and that he wanted to share some of the history with his friends.

Luckily, Ray Hoepple had brought along a tiny tape recorder. What follows is a fusing of what Milton Charles said on that memorable night with information the writer obtained from the organist subsequently. It's a fascinating, although abbreviated account of the wonderful days when the theatre organ was new. We start in 1918.

Oliver Wallace! Of all the organists I've known, he was the greatest improviser of all time.

The Liberty Theatre, Seattle — it all started there. It had one of the first real theatre organs. In a short time Seattle was the capitol of theatre organs in those early days. That's where Wallace started.

When Jesse Crawford came to San Francisco he made a tremendous impact. He played so meticulously, and what he played was so well thought out. He had a big following there.

Another big one was Eddie Horton, a good showman. Then there was Charlie Minor — or 'C Sharpe

Minor,' as he was billed. Charlie made the most of the least musical ability, but was the best showman of the bunch.

I had a little playing job next to the Rialto in San Francisco where Minor was playing. When the newsreel was on I'd run next door to hear Charlie play it, especially the parades with drums ablaze.

I marvelled at his sounds — and he let me sit on the organ bench next to him. Great showman — played "Poet & Peasant" good — and fast.

One day, while I was playing in Stockton (Cal.), the phone rang and a voice said "This is Sid Grauman." I damn near fainted. Grauman was the West Coast's great theatre magnate.

Sid said "we'd like you to come down to L.A., to the Million Dollar Theatre. We'll pay you \$85 a week." I was shaking but I accepted. Sid said "When you get there tell them you're the boy from the Owl Drug Store. They'll understand."

When I got to the Million Dollar, Charlie Minor was the head organist since Jesse had moved to the California Theatre. The Million Dollar had a 3/17 Wurlitzer, one of the really big ones in the early '20s.

I soon learned the routine. 'C Sharpe' or I played a concert at 11:00 a.m. Then he'd disappear so I played from before noon straight through to 12:00 midnight — and

they brought me sandwiches from the Owl Drug Store. Then I saw the whole Owl picture — but that wasn't all.

After a 10-hour stint playing silent movies I'd crawl home. Then Sid Grauman would sometimes phone me and say he had some friends from New York, and would I come back to the theatre and play for them.

I was young then, and I'd run all the way back to the theatre. I loved it all. I recall being called back by Sid to play for the famous actor, Carter de Haven, vaudevillian Jack Coogan (sometimes accompanied by little Jackie) and Charlie Chaplin. But the funniest guy in those groups was Sid Grauman. He was an absolute riot! Sometimes Gloria Swanson would sit on the organ bench and sing. She had a beautiful voice. This was in 1918 and 1919.

Those were the days the ATOS award brought back to me and I got to thinking about the people who should have got the credit — but often didn't. I don't often get sentimental about such things. We've got to acknowledge that Crawford was a tremendous influence, but I must give credit to the big guy — Oliver Wallace.

Ollie was finally lured from the North to Los Angeles to play at the Rialto on Broadway. It had a small Wurlitzer, about seven ranks, and I'll never forget the night he played for us. Jesse had told me about him, but the first time I heard him on that Rialto organ, it was a revelation. How he could extemporize on a theme!

Only a few years later Walt Disney heard him and was impressed by his talent for improvisation. Walt hired him to score movies and that was the end of Ollie's organ career. He spent the rest of his life writing and conducting for Disney.

He used to visit me while I was playing at the King's Arms restaurant in Toluca Lake. We would reminisce about the old days. Then the customers would start coming in with their often vacuous requests and Ollie would look at me and shake his head in disbelief. But back to the early days.

Once, I heard about a fabulous organist playing at the Liberty Theatre in San Jose and I decided to



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visit him. When I went into the theatre, and it was early in the morning, the movie was running and the organist was playing the score of the opera *La Boheme* and he played it throughout the film — a western! The morning audience was sparse and he wanted to study the Puccini score, he told me later. No one complained.

That's how I was introduced to Albert Hay Malotte. We became great friends. Everything Albert did, he did well. He played piano with precision, he was an amateur boxer and he flew his own plane. But music was his first love. I think anyone would agree that his accompaniment for "The Lord's Prayer" is one of the great musical settings.

In those early days the path followed by many organists was down the West Coast, then to engagements in Chicago and the East. Jesse Crawford was seven months ahead of me in this trek.

There was a guy named Jake Kalber who was high on the hierarchy of the Remick Music Co. in Chicago. Jake visited Los Angeles, heard Crawford and hurried back to Chicago to tell Sam Katz, of Balaban & Katz theatres, "There's a guy out in California who plays organ like you wouldn't believe."

So they lured Jesse to Chicago to play at the Tivoli until the Chicago Theatre was ready.

On Jake's second trip he heard me and told Sam, "There's a punk out there who isn't bad," so they brought me to Chicago.

Years later I played an M-2 Hammond at the King's Arms Restau-

rant. Why an M-2? Mainly because it fit under the elaborate piano bar that was already there when I arrived on the scene. I wasn't going to play that beat-up piano.

I had recently helped Roy Rogers pick out an organ as a present for his wife, Dale Evans. I was doing the music for their radio show. Roy chose the M-2. I recalled this when the King's Arms people agreed to an organ. It had to fit without major changes. I played that M-2 for 20 years — until my retirement.

At the King's Arms I soon learned that the trick of playing in a bar is in liking people. Musicianship isn't the answer. If you don't like people — forget it. A lounge organist is really a musical bartender. He becomes adept at listening to the customers' tales — but doesn't get involved in their affairs. But I sang for the customers.

I started singing in 1929 while playing at the Los Angeles Metropolitan. It had a huge Wurlitzer and there was a PA system with a microphone at the console. I tried some vocals and they seemed to go over well, so I added vocals to my act.

Next year I continued with the vocals while playing at the Philadelphia Mastbaum, which also had a large Wurlitzer. I had improved vocally, and had even more success. I guess that's about all I have to say.

I wanted to tell you about a few of the things that meant so much over the years. We all have memories of the things that influenced our lives — the breaks. What set me off was the ATOS award.

If I have made one point here, it is my tribute to Oliver Wallace. No one ever topped Ollie Wallace. He was unique.

Then Milton Charles sat down at Bob Power's vastly altered Rodgers organ and played a variety of selections for his small audience. These included such originals as the wedding march he composed for his granddaughter's wedding, "Kathy" (a tune for his daughter), "Up to Jupiter" (space music), followed by such standards as "Easy to Love," "Rose Room," "Street of Dreams" and then an improvisation which was a whole overture in itself. It was ample proof that Milton Charles retains the musical ability which earned him fame during the "Golden Years." □

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John Wanamaker

GRAND COURT ORGAN

by Lloyd E. Klos

The Wanamaker Grand Court Organ! The very sound of those words is in keeping with the prestigious rank which this instrument enjoys when one mentions the great pipe organs of the world. Though it is not a theatre instrument per se, it does have some percussive stops, and the Wanamaker Store was a focal point for one of the sessions of the 1976 ATOS Convention in Philadelphia.

The original organ was but a third the size of the present instrument. It was designed by George Ashdown Audsley and was built by the Los Angeles Art Organ Co. for the St. Louis Exposition in 1904. It required 11 box cars to move the 10,059 pipes, console, and other appurtenances.

Not much is known about the organ's early history. It was installed in the Festival Hall of the exposition, and was played by Alexander Guilmont and nearly every great organist of the time. When the exposition closed in December 1904, the instrument was dismantled and stored in a warehouse for six years. Enter Rodman Wanamaker.

Organs and organ music have

The Grand Court organ console. Notice the 11 expression pedals. There are 729 tablets and 168 pistons included in the 964 controls. It is situated in an alcove high above the main floor. ▶

(Wanamaker Photo)



been a part of the John Wanamaker tradition since 1876. The store's founder, John Wanamaker believed that musical inspiration should be a part of life and work, besides being a form of relaxation and amusement.

On one of his tours of inspection while the store was nearing completion at 13th and Market streets, Rodman Wanamaker, upon seeing the possibility of the Grand Court's being used as a music center, said, "I want the finest organ in the world built up there above that gallery."

Knowing that it would take too long to design an instrument which would fill the area, he sent a staff member to St. Louis to investigate the Exposition organ, still in storage. As a result, the organ was brought to Philadelphia and installed in the store by an organ designer William B. Fleming, and technician William Ruff. It was first heard publicly on June 22, 1911, and has been heard on every business day since.

However, it was soon apparent that the instrument was not large enough for the spacious Grand Court, and additions were made. By 1914, 8,000 pipes were added. In 1917, a five-manual console was completed to handle the 92 new stops. Further additions were made from 1923 to 1930, and the present 2½-ton, 6-manual console installed. The organ had achieved its present size of 469 ranks and 451 stops.

Ironically, Rodman Wanamaker did not live to see the completion of the work, his death coming in 1928. He had stated that "as long as I live, we will continue to enlarge, improve and beautify the organ until it combines the grandeur of a great organ with the tone colors and beauty of a great symphony orchestra."

Space limitations preclude our running the complete stoplist of this organ. However, to get an idea of its immensity, we have provided a list of divisions, ranks, number of pipes, and wind pressures as follows:

Orchestral	38 ranks,	2774 pipes,	15" to 25" of wind
Ethereal	23 ranks,	1679 pipes,	25"
Solo	52 ranks,	3796 pipes,	15"
String	88 ranks,	6424 pipes	15" to 27"
Great	50 ranks,	3170 pipes,	5" to 16"
Swell	71 ranks,	5171 pipes,	5" to 22½"
Choir	24 ranks,	1752 pipes,	5"
Echo	33 ranks,	2421 pipes,	5"
Pedal	90 ranks,	2880 pipes,	5" to 25"

TOTALS 469 ranks, 30,067 pipes

The console is situated in a niche on the east side of the court, on the second floor. It rests on a pivot and track and can be turned at will. There are 42 foot controls, 964 controls, including 729 tablets and 168 pistons of which there are 46 masters and 46 reversibles.

Tremolo pulsation levers to the right and left of the music rack, two for each division, are used to control the tremulants in ten stages. The idea, invented and patented in the Wanamaker shop, enables the organist to adjust the speed of each tremolo, or all of them, to suit his desire.

The string division occupies the largest organ chamber ever built. It is 60 feet by 30 feet and 22 feet

high.

The percussion section is expressive and operates on pneumatic and vacuum action. The major chimes are usually called "tower chimes" because they were made for outside-tower playing. The largest of the set, Note C, is 12 feet long, five inches in diameter and weighs 600 pounds. It is struck by a leather-topped hammer, four inches in diameter, the stroke being nine inches. It weighs 18 pounds, has an impact of 72 pounds of pneumatic pressure. There are 37 major chimes, ranging from Tenor C to C.

Other percussive effects include 25 tubular minor chimes, ranging from C to G; a Metalophone of 49 bars, from tenor C to C²; a Mustel

The Wanamaker Store, 13th and Market streets in Philadelphia. It is 12 stories high and over 65 years old. Nearby is Philadelphia's City Hall, its tower surmounted by the famed statue of William Penn. (Wanamaker Photo)



Celeste of 49 bars, tenor C to C²; Piano I; upright piano II with vacuum action and player piano action attached; Harp I; Harp II; and 49 metal-bar gongs with pneumatic action and a range from tenor C to C².

The history of the instrument in Wanamaker's has been linked to some of the world's greatest organists. For example, on March 27, 1919, a high point in organ history was reached when 15,000 music lovers from Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore and Washington gathered to hear the Philadelphia Orchestra, led by Leopold Stokowski, with Charles Courboin, the Belgian virtuoso, at the organ, in the first American performance of Widor's Sixth Symphony.

The following season, 150,000 attended a series of 27 evening recitals, featuring Courboin as guest soloist in which he played 275 compositions from memory!

At the close of 1920, before 12,000, Stokowski, organists Courboin and Pietro Yon presented a program which featured Saint-Saens' Third Symphony, and Yon's "Concerto Gregoriano" for organ and orchestra.

In 1921, Marcel Dupre, organist at the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, made his American debut, and for three years, alternated with Courboin in Grand Court recitals.

Other noted organists at the store have included Mario Enrico Bossi in 1924, Alfred Hollins in 1925 and

1926, Louis Vierne, Nadia Boulanger, Fernando Germani, Dr. G.D. Cunningham, and Virgil Fox.

Choruses, bands, choral groups and soloists have performed at Wanamaker's. The 300-voice Mormon Tabernacle Choir has appeared. And when statesmen, royalty, explorers, artists, authors, actors and other celebrities have been honored guests, the Wanamaker organ has provided background music.

From 1922 to 1928, Wanamaker's operated a broadcasting station, WOO, and thereby became the first to feature organ music on the air. The programs were heard throughout the United States, as well as in Canada, England, Europe, Africa and Australia.

A history of the Wanamaker Grand Court Organ is not complete if we fail to mention the names of those who were hired to play it during store hours.

First on the staff was renowned Mary E. Vogt who played the organ for over 50 years. A pig-tailed youngster from Germantown, Pa., she was first hired to play sheet music for the customers at \$2.50 a week. This was followed by a job as office girl for the store's musical director.

When the organ was being installed in 1911, she began to familiarize herself with it, and former organ technician, George W. Till, showed Mary how to work the pedals. One day, she heard someone playing the organ after hours, and she helped him find the right pedals.

It turned out to be Rodman Wanamaker. "He laughed when I attempted to apologize, and shortly after, I got a \$1,000-a-year raise which just about tripled my wages."

Afterward, she was sent to Europe to sign up guest organists. She easily accomplished her mission, and also collected films on lives of great composers which were shown in the store's auditorium. Her success was rewarded with subsequent trips to Europe for talent and music.

Of small stature, only 5 feet 2 inches and only 115 pounds, Mary Vogt, although she grew up with the Wanamaker organ, had very little formal musical training, none on the organ. Yet, by all reports, she handled the instrument as well as any formally-educated professional. She had to have something going for her, because 50 years in one position says quite a lot. Her whole life was involved in her work, and she lived only a few blocks from the store.

Mr. Reeves Wetherell, Wanamaker's Director of Public Relations, who has been most helpful to the writer in supplying information, has this to say about Mary Vogt:

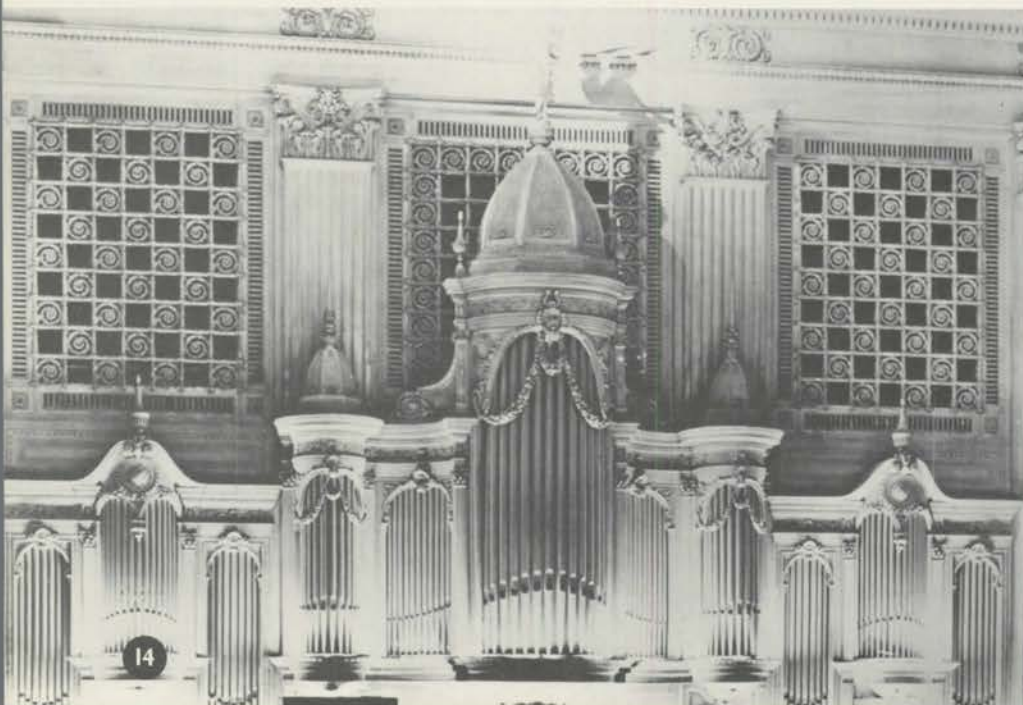
"She was the person best known as related to the organ. Mary came to work at Wanamaker's when she was about eight years old. Children of that tender age were employed in stores before there were child labor laws. She took over the concerts about 1917, was a fine musician, and played until 1966 when she had to retire for health reasons. She died a year later.

"She was most beloved by all and extremely popular. No one really knew her age as she kept it a very dark secret. All during her tenure, there were others who subbed (including Leonard MacClain), but she was the regular."

After Mary, Keith Chapman became Wanamaker's staff organist. He burst on the musical scene in 1966 when he was appointed to the post at the tender age of 19. Studying music since age five, he had progressed steadily until he was named assistant to his teacher, famed Richard Purvis, at San Francisco's Grace Cathedral. Later, he was awarded a four-year scholarship to study organ under Dr. Alexander McCurdy at Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music.

Mr. Chapman's professional cred-

Wanamaker's decorative casework, situated at the end of the Grand Court, at second-floor level. There are other chambers situated above these three. (Wanamaker Photo)



its are impressive. He has appeared with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Leopold Stokowski and Eugene Ormandy, and also recorded with that organization. Holder of a Master of Music Degree, and an Associate Degree of the American Guild of Organists, he has served as a recording consultant for RCA Victor. Heard over WUHY-FM weekly from the Grand Court, Mr. Chapman has made two recordings on the instrument. One is out of print, the other still selling very well, (in 1976 when this was written).

Several recording companies tried over the years to capture the sound of this instrument. Virgil Fox did a recording some years ago which was the first really acceptable sound. It is now out of print.

"Wanamaker's organ," says Mr. Wetherell, "has been played by almost every notable organist. They come from all over the world to play it, and of course, they are very welcome. Actually we allow qualified people to play upon request, and many people take advantage of this.

"When the organ was transported to Philadelphia from St. Louis, it required 13 flat cars. To move it in its present state would require 26 cars.

"Maintenance has always been a big problem. The leather bellows wear out, and there is a never-ending repair and maintenance job to do. John McCormack and Nelson Buechner are our two maintenance men, and both have been with us many years. People with their abilities are rare, believe me.

"One thing we have discovered regarding maintenance is that as our civilization produces more and more carbon, mostly from automobiles, this carbon seeps into the store and the organ. This element eats the leather bellows, and slowly and painfully, the crew is converting from leather to plastic. With 30,000-odd pipes, there is much to do."

For those desiring to hear the Wanamaker Grand Court Organ when in the Philadelphia area, there are three concerts daily when the store is open. Of 30-minute duration, they are scheduled at 10 a.m., 12 noon, and 5:30 p.m.

It is a memorable event to hear this fabulous instrument, as those who heard it during the 1976 ATOS Convention will attest. □



The staff organist of Wanamaker's with the longest tenure of service was Mary Vogt. Here she poses in April 1929 at the five-manual console which was replaced by the present one in 1930 as the organ was enlarged.

(L. Klos Coll.)

Leonard MacClain, Hall of Fame organist, shown at the Wanamaker console in 1961. "Melody Mac" frequently subbed for Mary Vogt.

(L. Klos Coll.)



"No, I couldn't do it," I told my friend Johnny. "You know I'm only an ear player who's never had any music lessons!" Johnny owned a machine shop which, during this wartime period, was netting him some \$17,000 a month, and, long an organ buff, he wanted to buy an organ radio program every Sunday evening for half an hour to advertise his shop. He had a Hammond with Leslie speakers at home which I often played, but he wanted me to play his program on the radio station's small pipe organ. "Come on!" he said. "I'm taking you down to the Musicians' Union and buy you a membership, and you'll be paid at the rate of thirty dollars an hour."

Wow! I'd never had an hourly rate that high in my life. But I told him, "Sure, I play our own Hammond at home, and yours, but I can't play a pipe organ. Anyway, I'm no pro! I'm not a public performer. How could I play on the air?"

"Quiet!" said he. "The way you play my favorite piece 'Poor Butterfly' — that alone is plenty good enough for me." The thirty dollars an hour, even for half an hour a week, was just too much of a temptation for me, a poverty-stricken schoolteacher with a family, and with a pressing need to increase the family budget in any way possible. So I finally told him I'd risk it, and as we went on the air the first Sunday evening I was shaking in my boots, hands a-tremble, as I went into the theme he'd chosen, "Memories." But I comforted myself with the thought that an ear player who plays a tune he knows in a familiar key can hardly go wrong, and as the weeks passed I got along well enough

to begin to receive requests by mail. I played the tunes I knew, ignored the rest. Then, about the fourth week into the program, I made the mistake of my life and almost died on the organ bench with the ensuing horrible nightmare experience.

That week I had received a handwritten request from some poor old

CONFESSIONS OF AN EAR PLAYER

by Bill Reeves

widow 800 miles away who wanted me to play "Evening Star" from *Tannhauser* in memory of her dear departed husband. I didn't know the number too well, but you can't let a fan like this down on a program called *Memories*. I looked up the music, memorized it, learned it the way the composer had intended it, and we went on the air.

Didn't I know any better? My memory has always been a treacherous trickster. I've always marvelled at Rubinstein, with a memory like a computer, who seems never to have forgotten any piece he's learned over a span of some 70 years, who still

can sit down and expertly render, note for note, a long, intricate, difficult classic he hasn't played for ten or more years! Yes, of course, I forgot my painstaking memorization right in the middle of the old woman's request. There I sat, with the "on the air" red light on, conscious of the technicians watching me, mindful of Johnny and our other friends listening at home. "This can't be for real!" I told myself in horror. "This must be death!" Somehow, some way, I kept monkeying around until I actually blundered back on the track and completed the number, and later our loyal and uncritical friends said they'd noticed nothing wrong. But it's a wonder my thinning hair didn't turn white that night, and I've had enough sense never to depend on memory since then. If I can't play it by ear, I don't play it. Rubinstein I'm not!

Well, self-taught is a poor way to go, the hard way. Certainly no prodigy, still at age seven I was easily playing "My Country 'Tis of Thee" and other simple tunes with one finger on our old family piano, banging whatever single note seemed to fit in the bass. This drove my poor mother wild, but I kept fooling with it until in time I could fill in the right hand a little in the key of "good ol' F" and supply four or five chords in the left. But all the time I wanted an organ and spent many bewitching hours in the silent movies on the front row just to watch and hear the organist accompany the picture. Though little more than a kid, I saved my money and one day saw advertised, by an aged missionary who'd taken it to China and back, an old Mason and Hamlin reed or-

Ol' G Flat Bill murderin' "5-Foot-2"



Doris — wife and duet-partner for 43 years.



gan for thirteen dollars. It had badly-leaking bellows which I didn't know how to repair, but I bought it, pumped like the devil to keep up the air, almost wore it out completely practicing, and loved it. I knew I'd never be rich enough to own and maintain my own pipe organ, so it would have to do.

Then one day in college I got a lucky break and moved up the scale with far-reaching consequences. A friend handed me a chart of fourteen chords, written in keyboard-map style with numbers, given him by someone who had bought a course in piano playing by ear with which he'd made no progress. This course was offered by a teacher with a school and a weekly radio program which demonstrated his considerable skill. His system was all in the key of G-flat, using mostly the black piano keys, to make it easier for beginners to keep their place and not get lost among the unbroken array of white keys. I took the chart home, learned the fourteen chords, and was soon wheezing away playing every tune I knew in this odd key of G-flat on my old reed organ. Now, with more chords in my arsenal, and by gluing my ear every week to the man with the radio program, I was able in time to "astonish your friends," as his ads promised. Eventually I went on to transfer from this key into half a dozen more common ones, and picked up a book listing and naming all the chords, learning how to form majors, minors, sevenths, augmented, diminished, a big help in trying to sight-read a new piece of popular sheet music without having to use "all them bunches of black grapes," as a friend calls written notation.

My familiarity with the key of G-flat was heaven-sent when my wife and I got our Hammond organ, at that time the only plug-in on the market and the next-best thing to a pipe organ. Unlike my old and beloved reed organ, the Hammond had pedals, bass notes played by the feet, and it took only a little practice to master these mostly black pedals in G-flat without peeking, and it formed a useful preliminary in going from there to the other pedals, learning them by touch. Then, when many other makes of plug-ins finally came on the market, we fell in love with the pipe organ-like Tibias on the Gulbransen Rialto theatre organ,

New System to Take Affect . . .

NOTICE REGARDING 1979 RENEWALS

1979 membership renewals are due by December 31, 1978. With our membership list now on a computer, we are able to issue renewal notices on a selective basis.

If your 1978 membership was submitted by a chapter, you will not receive a renewal notice from ATOS headquarters: rather, it will appear in your chapter newsletter and you should pay your 1979 ATOS dues through your chapter treasurer.

Renewal notices from ATOS headquarters will go only to those 1978 members who **did not** pay 1978 dues through a chapter. This is our first attempt to use the computer list in this manner and since there could be some omissions, please consider your 1979 membership renewals as due now.

We will not be able to mail 1979 membership cards until early in December.

bought one, and I was already right at home with it. And whenever I tend to louse up the pedalling in other keys, I can always drop easily back into my sure-footed old G-flat!

One evening a guest brought his violin and suggested we play duets. I had the notion then that to a violinist all keys were about the same, and boldly led forth with "Miami Shores" in G-flat, while he sawed uncertainly along, demanding at the end, "Say, what key are you in, anyway?" We stuck to C, F, and G after that. Another time a guest who thought he could sing asked me to provide organ accompaniment to his "Danny Boy." This one I started off in F, only to have him ask, "Just move that up half a step, will you, please?" Why, sure, pal, my pleasure! Half a step up from F is what else, my old key of G-flat, and away we went, touchingly.

Now, if he'd asked me to move it *down* a half step, into what to me is the very unfamiliar key of E, which operates with a fistful of chicken tracks, sharps to you, and in which I don't think I could play "Shave and a Haircut." I would have had to tell him, "Look ol' buddy, you'll sing it in F or you won't sing it at all!" He must have thought, mistakenly, that I am one of those rare

prodigies who play anything at all, equally well, in any key. I wish I could! We've long known a grand Polish lady who can do this, and I want to tell you about her later.

One evening a friend sat down beside me on the organ bench as I ran through "I'm Always Chasing Rainbows," and remarked, "I've always wanted to play the organ like that. Will you show me how?" I told him no, I couldn't, I was still trying to learn myself, and he should get a good professional teacher of popular music. At this he acted somewhat resentful, as though, if I weren't so darned mean and really wanted to, I could easily show him a few simple short-cut secret tricks which would enable him, with no previous experience, to sit right down and rap off "Oh You Beautiful Doll" the way I do it. I told him "Podner, it doesn't work that way." Then he added ruefully, "Well, at least you could tell me how you know what keys to press." I stared at him, speechless, and I'm still trying to figure out a simple, one-sentence answer to that one!

Another evening we went to an organ party, where a guest I didn't know mounted the organ to play "Shanty in Old Shantytown." From

his first notes I realized he was in my old G-flat, and I went over to the piano and accompanied him. "Hey!" he hollered. "You're the only guy I've ever met who can play in my key!" No, he'd never heard of the play-by-ear course in G-flat mentioned above, like me had never had any lessons, but by some strange coincidence had been playing by ear in this key for years. He had an odd way of always playing the melody in his left hand with a right-hand obligato, but the other guests loved our duets and kept asking how, if we'd never met before, we could stay together in perfect time on the tunes we both knew. My new friend explained, cryptically, "You have to be able to count beyond three." Since he, like us, had a piano and an organ at home, we've happily been playing duets ever since, in guess what key?

This lovely Polish lady mentioned above who plays anything in any key by ear and reads anything at sight is a marvel, truly a born organist. I won't reveal her age except to say that as a young girl she got her first job playing silent movie pipe organ. She had played all the top spots in the Los Angeles area until she and her husband bought and beautifully refurbished their own cocktail lounge. An electronics wizard turned organbuilder, he installed a basic Hammond to which he added three more manuals, featuring dozens of unusual sound effects all operated from the console, grand piano full of solenoid switches, banjo, marimba, accordion with compressed air, every kind of bells, you name it. On this magnificent instrument, proudly called by her husband the largest and most versatile Hammond in the world, our Polish friend presides nightly, playing thousands of requests of every kind by ear and memory. You should hear her electrify the patrons with her rousing "Poet and Peasant"! She has mastered the dozens of stop-tablets and other controls so effectively that she offers a constant variety of tonal surprises, so much variety, in fact, that she sometimes finds herself ending a number in a different key from the one she started with. But the customers love every note.

She knows so many thousands of pieces that once in a while she has a little lapse common to most mu-

sicians, forgets the bridge to a particular number. She just improvises a bridge of her own! One evening I requested an old favorite of mine, "Mean to Me," and she rendered it delightfully. But I told her, "Great! But you played the bridge to 'I Ain't Got Nobody'!" She laughed, ran it through again in a different key with other sound effects. "That was beautiful," I told her, "but this time you had the bridge to 'Am I Blue'!" She threw back her head and really laughed, changed stops and key, and went through it again, right this time. The patrons loved it all.

One day her husband, Sam, called me up. He is understandably proud of the five-manual electronic marvel he has built for his wife, but his real love has always been the pipe organ, though he himself doesn't play. He told me he had bought the huge four-manual Wurlitzer formerly in the Los Angeles Carthay Circle Theatre, now used in a large dance studio. "I don't know yet where I'm going to install it, Bill," he told me, "but before I dismantle and move it, I want to give you a chance to play it." We hurried over to the studio and joined other friends. I mounted this monster, ran off as many requests as I knew, including Sam's favorite piece "Yours." "I'd give my right arm if I could play this organ like that!" he declared, and I had to remind him of the legendary one-armed, busy paper-hanger with the hives and tell him he'd likely have a little more trouble with only one arm. Then he began pushing down the banks of stop-tablets on his side of the console, ordering me to do the same on the other side. "Let's get this show on the road!" he hollered. "Let's get every stop on, and you open this beast up full blast so I can really hear what I've bought!" This was around Christmas time, and, swell and crescendo pedals floored, I burst forth into verse and two choruses of "Jingle Bells," shook the building, wowed the guests, and gave myself the thrill of my life. If I do say it in all modesty, I'd never heard a "Jingle Bells" like that before. Or since, either!

My wife is a trained vocalist, pianist, church organist, and super sight-reader, but with all this, still it takes something more, some special gift, to be an ear player. She can't do it, and it makes her furious to hear me

running off many dozens of pieces with nary a note in sight. And like many other musicians we know, she can't play even "Happy Birthday to You" or "Auld Lang Syne" on New Year's Eve without reading from the music, while I must have six or seven hundred numbers at ready command. I can't read the spots, the "black grapes," with anything like her fluent expertise, and she can't run off "Mississippi Mud" and the like without them. So the way we do, I hand her a fistful of popular tunes from our huge stack dating back to the 1900's, let guests choose which ones they want to sing at the piano, and away we go in a good old snappy toe-tapping rhythm, she reading her notes, and I trumpeting along on the Rialto by ear. We, and our guests, have a ball!

The ideal to dream about, of course, would be our longtime Polish friend's ability to play by ear anything she's ever heard, to read any music expertly and artistically, even difficult classics, but yet through it all, through the years, to keep every note in unflinching retention in the memory, like Rubinstein. Well, we can dream, can't we, while we go ahead just doing the best we can with what we have? I envy my wife's skill and her access to the whole musical range of classical literature denied me, though if a classic has a recognizable tune such as "Liebestraum," "Granada," "Jalousie," and others, my ear version of it seems to please nontechnical listeners. My wife, in turn, wishes heartily that like me she could rap off without the notes "The Darktown Strutters' Ball," "St. Louis Blues," and all the rest, just in case she ever finds herself at a party where there's a piano or organ but no sheet music.

But perhaps it's just as well. We have a barrel of fun duetting on the beloved old tunes like "Whispering," "I Cried For You," "Five Foot Two," "One Alone." We even duet on Pearl Curran's classic "Dawn," the second half of which, in our copy, is written in — are you ready for this? — six flats, my old G-flat! Duck soup! Together in our duets, each in our own individual ways, we make a complementary pair, like the sun and the moon — though, wait a minute, in this age of Women's Lib, I don't dare suggest which might be which! □

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THE ACOUSTICAL CONSULTANT

The Decibel - An Acoustical Yardstick

by R.J. Weisenberger

As I have taken an entirely new approach to the art of organ building, it is important that acoustical terminology be understood more fully.

I hope to clear up any misunderstandings, by explaining the meaning of acoustical terms in this and future articles. I invite questions from the reader to clarify any misunderstandings, as well as questions dealing with any acoustical or solid state problems of any given installation.

I can advise against getting too much, or too little, organ from anything from a home installation to one in a stadium. I will need to know the number of ranks, their operating pressure, the working dimensions of the largest pipe in each rank, and the dimensions of the auditorium. I can also give specialized tips on revoicing flue pipes for a different pressure, and how to preserve the original tonality as best as possible, or to give it an added high end brilliance or

low end punch to compensate for a dull auditorium, if given the dimensions of the 8°C pipe of each rank. I will also advise against revoicing if the figures supplied indicate that the pipework is already well-suited for a given installation. Since one unfamiliar with pipe voicing could ruin an organ, I will restrict such information to professionals.

This article is intended to familiarize the reader with the decibel (DB), what it is, how it is measured, conditions affecting it and how the ear responds to sound.

Since the ear is sensitive to sounds over a frequency range of 20 Hz to 20,000 Hz (cycles per second) and to a power range as great as one billion to 1 (0 DB to 120 DB), the decibel represents a more convenient means of expressing power ratios. The decibel was named in honor of Alexander Graham Bell (decibel meaning 1/10 Bel) and is abbreviated as DB.

The DB scale is a logarithmic scale used to express the ratio of a given

level as referenced to some standard level. In the absolute DB scale, 0 DB is referenced to the threshold of acute hearing at a frequency of 1 KHz (1,000 cps), which is 10^{16} W/cm² (watts per square centimeter), or .0002 uBar (millionths of barometric pressure). Every increase of 10 DB is an increase of power of 10 to 1, or an increase in voltage or pressure of about 3.2 to 1.

As can be seen, a modest increase in DB means a large increase in sonic pressure, and an astronomic increase in acoustical power. The dynamic range (ratio of loudest to softest sound) of a large pipe organ is typically 40 to 50 DB, although a dynamic range of 60 DB can be achieved in high pressure organ designs.

One acoustical watt may not seem like a very large amount of power, but considering a 2% efficient speaker (most home speaker systems are from 2 to 5% efficient) operated below 200 Hz, where its output is for all practical purposes, nondirectional, it would take a 50 watt RMS amplifier in order to produce one acoustical watt (a level of 108 DB at a distance of one meter from a non-directional source in free space).

Through tests I have found that a single, well-voiced flue pipe is capable of producing this level on a pressure of 10" WP. I also found that by making the proper modifications to the design of the pipe's mouth that the pipe could be operated efficiently over a pressure range of 16 to 1. Test equipment recorded and verified the expected change in output of 24 DB.

$$DB = 10 \log \frac{P_{\text{output}}}{P_{\text{input}}} \text{ for power}$$

$$DB = 20 \log \frac{E_{\text{output}}}{E_{\text{input}}} \text{ for voltage or pressure}$$

	DB	POWER RATIO	PRESSURE RATIO	PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS	
	0	1	1	silent (anechoic room)	
	20	100	10	quiet (watch ticking - 3')	
	40	10,000	100	quiet room (ambient noise)	
Pipe	60	1,000,000	1,000	soft (music or conversation)	
Organ		100,000,000	10,000	moderately loud (music)	
Range		80	10,000,000,000	100,000	loud (music)
		100	1,000,000,000,000	1,000,000	very loud (danger - can cause permanent hearing loss)
	120	1,000,000,000,000,000	1,000,000,000		

with an error of less than 6 DB in every design of pipe tested. This is a ± 3 DB tolerance, about as good as can be expected from a high fidelity speaker over its frequency range!

I have proved that pipes definitely follow a predictable pattern of behavior and can be analyzed objectively — apparently something never before actually proved or attempted.

I also found that a large pipe of the closed variety, when placed near the corner of a room, would have its output substantially increased, just as the bass output of a speaker may also be increased in this manner.

All measurements of decibels will be meaningless unless some standards are rigidly adhered to.

First, the international reference of .0002 uBar must be always used as 0 DB, and secondly, the distance from the source should always be 1 meter (39.37") unless otherwise specified. One yard (3") will be close enough for most purposes.

Sound levels will decay by 6 DB every time the distance from the source is doubled, or by 3 DB if the power is halved. If a sound level meter (SLM) is used to measure music, the flat response "C" weighting must be used for an accurate measurement, also the meter must be set to fast response to include peak levels of complex waveforms.

In reverberant rooms and auditoriums a point will be reached where a further increase in distance does not appreciably affect the overall sound level. This is known as the critical distance, and it is typically at a distance of 1/3 the length of most rooms from the sound source. At this point the direct sound level will balance with the reverberant sound level. (Incidentally, this is one of the best positions from which to listen to or record a concert.)

The power required to produce a given sound level will be directly proportional to the cubic volume of a room.

The ear, although extremely sensitive, hears sounds in their true perspective and balance only at the higher levels of sensation (90 DB to 110 DB). Levels in excess of 110 DB are again unbalanced, produce pain, and are dangerous to your hearing. Below 90 DB, it takes considerably more power to produce low bass tones of 32 Hz than it does to produce sounds in the range of voice fre-

quencies (200 to 2000 Hz). Organ chambers provide a natural compensation for this odd property of hearing, because the short wavelengths of high frequency sounds are much more easily attenuated (reduced) by passing through swell shades than are the low frequency sounds, having wavelengths over double the length of the open pipes, and over quadruple that of the closed pipes. The large offset pipes being located near the walls and floors of the chamber receive the increased output they need to achieve tonal balance with the rest of the organ.

The most successful installations are those where the organ is capable of producing maximum levels between 100 DB to 110 DB in the auditorium. Obviously, large installations require considerably more power than small ones.

An organ built for a large theatre or auditorium, would be deafening if installed in a home, unless the pipework is installed in the nonliving quarters of the home, separate from the console. The reason for this is simple. The sound level is inversely proportional to the cubic volume of a


room for a given power, while the power is directly proportional to the cubic volume of a room for a given sound level.

At all levels of sensation the ear is most sensitive to sounds over the frequency range of 2 to 4 KHz (the approximate top octave of a 4' stop). A large organ can achieve an excellent tonal balance with only a couple of powerful stops in this range or above. A moderate number of less-powerful stops at these pitches will also give good results.

Lord Kelvin, in 1883, said, "I often say that when you can measure what you are speaking about, and express it in numbers, you know something about it."

For further reading, the reader may consult the following source. *Acoustical Engineering*, by Harry F. Olson, Ph.D., Copyright 1957, D. Van Nostrand. Chapter II — Section 2.2 (will show the effects of chamber walls on closed offset bass pipes). Chapter XI — Architectural Acoustics. Chapter XII — Speech, Music, and Hearing.

A future article will explore power requirements of pipe organs. □



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TACOMA'S PANTAGES THEATRE

by Lloyd E. Klos

In the spring of 1977, Tacoma's devotees of the arts were excited over the possibility of the city's purchase of the 1299-seat Roxy Theatre (successively named Pantages, RKO Orpheum and Roxy) for use as a performing arts center. If successful, the theatre will have come "full circle," as it was built and opened as a legitimate theatre in 1918, the pride of Alexander Pantages.

Pericles Pantages had left his native soil of Greece for America when he was nine, changing his name to Alexander in awe of the ancient military leader. Holding odd jobs in San Francisco until 1898, he sought his fortune in the Yukon where gold had been recently discovered. However, he got into the theatre business when he persuaded Klondike Kate to invest in a theatre in Dawson. He had a way in presenting the best acts, often enticing

attractions from the competition.

Returning to Seattle, he launched into the theatre business in earnest and by 1910, owned or held interest in 26 houses. Continuing to acquire more, he controlled 72 by 1926.

The Tacoma Pantages was designed by architect B. Marcus Priteca, who was associated with Pantages from 1911 until 1936.

Though the Pantages was not a "motion picture palace" of the style of the glamorous twenties, it still was very ornate. It had about the maximum amount of sculptured ornamental plaster and terra cotta possible. A specialty of architect Priteca, a sunburst glass ceiling, about 20 by 30 feet, was in the middle of the high dome. It also had a big sculptured torch in the center of the proscenium arch, plus ornately decorated Greek pillars on either side of the stage.

The theatre opened in 1918 with a strictly-vaudeville bill for the matinee and two evening performances. No films at all. In 1920 and 1921, a one-reeler was run before the vaudeville acts. In 1922, came continuous operation with feature pictures and vaudeville. To accompany the picture, a special chamber orchestra was hired, which was smaller than the vaudeville aggregation.

A pipe organ was installed in 1923 and split the picture accompaniment with the small orchestra. By 1924, the organ was used for all picture work.

It is impossible to talk about this theatre without mention of two men who were called "The Edisons of the Stage," the twin brothers, Carl and Clyde Ellis. Carl, the theatre's stage manager, and Clyde, its projectionist, became well-known in theatre equipment circles for their development of colored mediums for the evolution of stage lighting effects. So revolutionary was this development that Alexander Pantages used it in the other theatres of his circuit.

Before the debut of the "Ellis System of Stage Lighting" in 1920, theatregoers were treated to "straight" colors and "straight" whites. In place of this, the Ellis Brothers substituted powerful globes, combining the old scheme with their patent color mediums. The most powerful light did not fade or dissipate the color mediums, which were stained glass, similar to cathedral window glass, and cut in narrow strips to allow for expansion in the presence of heat from the 1000-watt

Exterior view of Roxy (formerly Pantages) marquee in 1954.

(Leverenz Coll.)





Lobby of Tacoma's Pantages Theatre. The house was built before the motion picture palace era, as the rather plain decor will attest. (Leverenz Coll.)

bulbs.

The idea was emphasized in the border and footlights. The original borders of the Pantages had 150 to 200 globes. The Ellis system was substituted, containing four lights of 12 globes each. Cost of lighting was cut in half, but the stage was given several times more light. Also, every possible color was included: red, green, blue, amber, and their combinations, which were perfect for vaudeville acts requiring special lighting effects.

Two persons long-connected with the Pantages are Corky Ellis, the present stage manager, and Will Conner, whose Conner Corporation ran the house and four others in Tacoma from 1959 to 1974. They have fond memories of the theatre.

"This is one of the last great theatres in the area," says Will Conner. "Look at that terra cotta in the balcony. You just couldn't afford to build a structure like this now. I remember when that terra cotta was installed. It came from a plant in Auburn, Wash., when I was a boy there. It was shipped here by the wagonload."

Corky Ellis, whose father, Carl, was the stage manager of the house when it was opened, says that every theatre had its greenroom. Why, no one seems to know, but they all had one. The one in the Pantages was located below the main floor and hasn't been used in 46 years. From

this green, rectangular room, are doors leading to small dressing areas, each having a sink, make-up table and a mirror, bordered with light bulbs. The main room served as a sort of living room.

"In those days, a \$100-a-week act was a headliner, but they paid their own travel, room and meal expenses. They spent a lot of time here between performances. Coffee was provided. I can remember when I booked Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy for \$75 a week.

"Times were tough in the thirties and we'd have to watch the performers very closely. They'd sneak in hot plates and try to cook their meals down there.

"This building was constructed for use as a legitimate theatre, not as a movie house. But, the stage hasn't been used since the thirties."

"When I operated it as a movie house," says Conner, "I'd put on a stage show occasionally. But, it was always in front of the screen, not back on the stage. One act I booked in this fashion was the Mills Brothers in the late 1930's."

Corky says that the last time the stage was put to use was in 1930. "We had Bela Lugosi in *Dracula*. We rigged some special equipment so the 'vampires' could fly across the stage. Things were tough in those days. The show ran two or three days and bombed. However, I believed he made enough to get out of town."

Will recalls The Great Davy who juggled cannon balls. "At least, he said they were cannon balls. Not unlike some performers who were heavy drinkers in those days, Davy would sit in the dressing room and drink a whole gallon of moonshine. When the five-minute buzzer alerted him, he'd go over to the sink, get rid of what he had drunk, and go out to give a perfect performance. Following his act, back to the dressing room he went to resume the cycle."

Corky remembers Elvira and the Weaver Brothers, a country music group which he says was so good, they'd even be great today. Then there was Cliff Arquette (Charlie Weaver) who appeared often at the Pantages. Babe Ruth also appeared on the stage, and would hit a baseball, attached to a string, into a net.

But Corky's most vivid recollection was of heavyweight champion, Jack Dempsey. "They set up a ring and he came out and boxed a few rounds with some locals. Once in a while, one of the boys would try to make a name for himself. One caught the champ with a pretty good punch. It was the worst mistake he ever made!"

Corky recalls the pipe organ whose console rose from the pit. "The guy who played it regularly was Arnold Leverenz." The organ in the Pantages was a 3/10 Robert Morton and boasted the first console elevator in the Northwest. The Pantages became the RKO Orpheum about 1929 and renamed the Roxy in 1934. □

Arnold Leverenz at the 3/10 Robert Morton console in the Pantages. (Leverenz Coll.)



DINNY'S COLYUM

as
transcribed
by
Del Castillo



Sometimes I think organists they are funny people. First off they is the church organ players who is two kinds. The first kind is the ones who look down on all the other organ players on acct. they mostly like to play Bach and belong to the American Guild of Organists and think that if you only use your left foot you aint really a organist. Then they is the second kind which is the ones the first kind look down there noses at and call them Sunday Organists. They is the ones who mostly play out of piano music and they wouldnt know what a Passycallia was if they fell over it. Well, that is the story on the church organists. So then we get to what the church organists call the Saloon Organists and they is the ones who play popular music in restyrants and bars and they wouldnt know what a Passycallia was either. Some of them play pretty good and can play things like music from operas and ballett and overtures and things like that, and some of them they play only pop tunes for people to sit around the organ and sing. Mostly all the different kinds they keep pretty good time because the people they play for is either singing him or pop hits.

They they is the concert organists who you mite say is the Aristokrats because they get advertised a lot so that people get to know who they are and they pay to go here them give a concert. They can generally play all different kinds of music and they do a lot of practicin. And then finely down at the other end of the scale they is the hobby organ players who buy home organs for thereselfs and just play for fun. They join little clubs where they can meet oncet a month and play for each other and probily they have the best time of

any of the different kinds. Some of them is jest beginning and pickin out tunes with one finger and they buy little organs that have all kinds of doo dabs to make it easy to play. They have lites under the keys that show which ones to press down for different cords and somtimes they have numbers over the keys and you jest look for the number and then sometimes they have a jigger where if you put down one key it will play the cord for you and even ad a lot of base notes to go with the cord.

Well, the reason I got to goin on all these different kinds of organ players is because before you got to thinkin how many different kinds they was you would of thought they should all be one big happy family because they must all like organ music or they wouldnt of been doin what they are doin. But you see it dont quite work out that way on acct. they have all got together in seperate little compartments and think they are better than the other kinds of organ players. And then they is the question of money. The big church organists look down on the little church organists because they dont get as much money, and the saloon organists they look down on the church organists because the Union that they belong to has what they call Mininum Scales that is a lot more jack than the church organists can make. And then the Saloon Organists they get mad at the Non Union

PLAN
AHEAD

•
LOS ANGELES
SAN DIEGO
IN
1979

Organists who make just as much money without havin to pay dues to the Union so what with one thing and another it turns out that all the organists aint One Big Happy Family atall.

I think that is too bad because like I say they all like organ music so why cant they all get together and enjoy it. They is room for all different kinds and I can have a good time whether I am sittin in a restyrant lissenin to Sweet Georgia Brown on a Hammong electronick organ or in a auditorium lissenin to the Poet and Peasant Overture on a big Wurlitzer or in a church lissenin to a Tocatter and Fudge on a big church organ. And if the guy plays good I dont care whether he is a Family Man who belongs to the Musicians Union or a Old Buck who never paid no dues to nobody except maybe Alimony on his Three Divorces. □

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(Nicholas Cole Photo)

Hector Encores in Atlanta

by Fran Verri

Atlanta — after four days, and many organ concerts, the '78 National Convention officially ended. On the fifth day the final event was the Afterglow, including Hector Olivera as one of the artists. Hector had already performed two benefit concerts along with his release of an album recorded on the Fox's Mighty Mo' with proceeds going to

help save the Atlanta Fox Theatre and the Moller theatre pipe organ, and he is most familiar with the organ (it was his fourth performance).

On the same evening the Atlanta Symphony under the direction of Louis Lane, was presenting clarinetist Benny Goodman as guest artist. Mr. Lane also attended the Afterglow concerts. The symphony sum-

mer series included such luminaries as Van Cliburn, Ferrante & Teicher, Mel Torme, the aforementioned Benny Goodman, and an announced concert with Virgil Fox to be presented on the 20th of July.

At the time of Hector's Afterglow concert, it was learned that due to illness, Mr. Fox would be unable to appear. Immediately after the Afterglow performance, Louis Lane met with Hector and his manager to see if he could and would play the scheduled concert on the 20th with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Lane then requested of Hector that for his solo portion of the program he repeat the same format that he demonstrated at the Afterglow. Hector stated that he would be honored to play.

Within a week Hector found himself once again in Atlanta. The orchestra and guest artist were ready to perform the *Symphony No. 3 in C Minor*, Opus 78 ("organ"), by Camille Saint-Saens.

In his review in *The Atlanta Journal* next day, critic David Ogg wrote . . . "Olivera swept his audience away with absolutely Olympic organ virtuosity."

For the first part of the program, conductor Louis Lane led his orchestra in a vibrant, often exciting performance of the St. Saens work, while Hector played the rather sparse organ part, much of it being pedal notes.

It was after intermission that the ex-Argentinian had his opportunity to shine in a solo performance which included "Evergreen" and homage to the '40s with dazzling reworkings of "Sweet Georgia Brown," "Moonlight Serenade" and "In the Mood." "These," wrote critic Ogg, "were enough to put Olivera in a class by himself." He also offered a transcription of one of Bach's chorale preludes, a medley of "Danny Boy," "Dixie" (always an audience rouser here) and "Battle Hymn of the Republic."

As during the Afterglow, Hector made his own announcements and succeeded in putting his personality over as well as his music.

Critic Ogg wrote, "Olivera exudes an unexpected charm and wit something on the order of a bantamweight Jose Jiminez. His delightful commentary between numbers produced almost nonstop giggles through-

out the program's second portion, which spotlighted him in solos on the organ."

The conductor, plus many members of the orchestra, remained to meet Hector after the concert. It was honor enough to have performed with this great orchestra, however it was an even greater thrill to have so many of his peers remain after his second half solo performance to acknowledge their delight at both his classic and theatre stylings as well.

This experience was particularly rewarding, stated Hector later. It was an opportunity for him to witness how enthusiastically an audience unfamiliar with theatre organ stylings can respond.

By playing a classic/theatre organ concert at a totally "open-to-the-public" event with a classical slant, the artist was able to present the wonderful world of theatre organ to an audience which normally would not be aware of its existence, thus expanding the vistas of the theatre organ as an art form. Well done, Hector! □

A Barton Is Saved

FLINT THEATRE ORGAN CLUB

The Capital Theatre, in the heart of Flint, Michigan, announced the closing of its doors forever with the showing of the 'last picture show' on October 2, 1976. It could no longer fight the exodus of moviegoers to the suburban theatres.

The announcement came as glum news to members of the Flint Theatre Organ Club who had spent ten years restoring the 3/11 Barton to mint condition.

The group had presented regular weekend intermission programs and monthly 'ladies day' volunteer concerts. One evening a month, members had gathered at a local restaurant then moved to the theatre following the last movie for an open console session. Suddenly this was all coming to an end.

Fortunately, Earl Berry, manager of the Capital, and Lyle Smith of Butterfield Theatres, Michigan's largest movie house chain, had always been interested boosters of the

Capital Barton. If certain conditions could be met, the organ would remain in Flint.

The scramble was on to find a new home for an 11-rank organ with toy counter. The acoustics would have to be good and it would have to be close by where it would be used and enjoyed as well as be a benefit to the community.

More good news. The Flint Institute of Music and Fred Peryer, director, wanted the organ and the MacArthur Recital Hall met all the requirements.

Hardly more than a month after the Capital had closed its doors, the great move started. Within two weeks, both pipe chambers had been emptied and all equipment piled on stage. The console, the main switchstack and two large wind-chests required professional movers, who donated their equipment for the occasion. Everything else had to be loaded manually into trucks and



It's Dues Time

See page 17
for details on how to
pay your dues for 1979.

Don't Miss an Issue!



Ron Dring, Bob Burnham and Harold Renico construct the retaining wall at F.I.M.



Harold Renico and Ted Decker hoist drywall during chamber construction.



driven over icy, slippery snow-covered streets during one of the coldest Novembers Michigan has known.

Parts were stored in the basement of Dort Music Center, home of F.I.M. until a retaining wall for the shutters could be built.

A scale model of the new chambers was built by the installation crew, with Ron Dring and Norm Lawless serving as technical advisors. The chambers were to be constructed above the dressing rooms which are part of a permanent backdrop, in an area 55 feet long, 12 feet deep and 20 feet high. Everything progressed well and the wall was completed during the Christmas holiday recess for the college.

The time had come to reassemble the Barton. Carpenters suddenly appeared to build the structure for the wind-chests. Then came installation of the windline. When it came time for the wiring and soldering, several of the women 'turned-to' and suddenly developed a "knack" for wielding a soldering iron. The blower was reactivated and the main cable wired to the console. Next, a movable platform was built so the console could be rolled from the wings to center stage for performances. This was covered with red carpet and gold fringe to match the red and gold Barton console.

The group now looks back and remembers, with a warm glow of pride, that even though the hours of work were sometimes long and tedious, there was cooperation within the ranks of the work crew and never a conflict or grumble. There was a job to be done and everybody donated their particular talents where needed.

And a *very* special relationship

Ron Dring and Bob Burnham set the retaining wall in place in January, 1977.



Velma Burnham, house organist at the Flint Institute of Music.

(Lawrie Mallett Photo)



Dennis James at the Barton console in the fall of 1977.

(Lawrie Mallett Photo)

Norm Lawless helps to install swell shades for the Barton at F.I.M.



Marv Cook (president of F.T.O.C.) and Ron Dring hoist the tremulant motor into place.



developed between the work crew and Ben and Max, the friendly custodians at F.I.M.

In the spring of 1977, Mr. Peryer asked Bob and Velma Burnham to look for an artist-in-residence for the 1977-78 season. For eleven years, Velma has served as staff organist at the Capital Theatre playing Saturday and Sunday intermission programs. Throughout the years of escorting Velma to and from the theatre, Bob had developed a special affection for the Barton. Though many artists were considered, their thoughts always came back to Dennis James as the one who would be able to "bring it all together."

Dennis agreed, knowing it was his responsibility to show the people of Flint what theatre pipe organ was all about. And this he did, during the one-week visit each month for seven months from November through May. It proved to be a grand awakening for theatre organ lovers of Flint.

Velma Burnham is presently house organist at F.I.M. Bob now serves as coordinator between F.I.M. and the Flint Theatre Organ Club and was the one who accepted the responsibility for moving the organ to its present home. Both are now members of the Activities Board at F.I.M.

The Flint Theatre Organ Club can now say they are the first to offer instructional opportunities to the community within a college complex, through a series of private lessons, workshops, concerts, sing-alongs and silent movies with organ accompaniment. This has been made possible by a grant awarded by the Mott Foundation for an artist-in-residence at the Flint Institute of Music.

Although not affiliated with ATOS, about half of the Flint Theatre Organ Club members are individually active in the Motor City Chapter.

Not unlike a fairy tale, with everybody living happily ever after, this story, too, has a happy ending. Although forever is a long time, F.T.O.C. members are thankful that their Barton is in a position to teach the coming generation a very important part of this country's history — the theatre organ, its music, and the enjoyment of playing, listening and preserving its sound. □

TRASH

by John Muri

You can't tell about word-meanings. Much of the time you have to guess. We are now assaulted by locutions like "real bad, real cool" and hyperbolic adjectives like *fantastic* and *fabulous*. If everyone who uses them is correct, we must be enjoying the greatest musical age the world has ever seen. The current devotion to a mangled construction of the adverb *hopefully* shows that many, many people are carried away more by the sounds of words than by sense. When reading some of our concert reviews, we have to guess at what happened; so much is left unsaid, merely suggested, or expressed ironically.

There need be no equivocation about musical trash, offal, detritus, refuse, or junk, whatever you call it. For a long time, so-called purists have been calling theatre organs, their players, and their music trash. We have shrugged off the words of Dr. Audsley and E. Power Biggs (who is reported to have called the theatre organ "a vulgar instrument.") If the latter did so, he was blaming an inanimate object, while what he should have been blaming were irresponsible, over-enthusiastic, and tasteless players. He would have done us a service by defining his adjective, had he cared to do so. The word *tasteless* is continually bandied about in "legitimate" musical literature.

What is good taste? Briefly, we might say it consists in expecting or asking no more of an instrument than it is capable of producing adequately and pleasingly, if not completely. But what do we mean by those last three adverbs? The endless excoriation of Vox Humanas and tremulants by purists who never fail to include those devices in their organ specifications is indicative of a singular inconsistency, to put things mildly. One doesn't blame a trombone for being a trombone, even though it can't sing the highest,

sweetest melodies. Nobody expects it to.

Some theatre organs can be said to have been thrown into their chambers, but this can be said of church as well as theatre work. I know many in which large blocks of electrical connections were left unsoldered. You couldn't always blame the organ manufacturers, though, when they were pressured into getting the instruments working without enough time to finish the installations. Many organs were "thrown" in because of the demands of theatre owners who wanted organ sound for opening performances. Many organs today are in bad condition, with their owners complaining about the lack of economic return or of time needed to do a good piece of work. I have heard a hundred excuses why organs are in junk condition: poor health, no money, no time, etc. The "legit" theatre organ in first-class condition is a rarity. There are at least three organ owners who persist in offering organ shows (I can't call them concerts) on instruments that hang together by "baling wire and a prayer."

The main weakness of theatre organs has been their lack of enough stops to create more than a few interesting tonalities. A related weakness is a frequent lack of good foundation tone, despite the insistence of organists on playing heavy works, like Bach fugues, on organs too small or too ill-voiced to produce more than a travesty of performance. When appropriate music was used, some fine playing could be done on small instruments, that most theatre organs were inadequately serviced added to the critics' dislike and the organists' discomfort. The careless, hasty way in which many organs were installed, jammed into inaccessible chamber-space, made them trash from the beginning. One could only sympathize with the people who had to play and service them. As for the organs being over-balanced

with Tibia sound, you would always turn off the Tibias if you didn't like the sound provided you had enough other stops from which to choose. The purists hated theatre organs particularly for the excessive doses of Crawford portamento or Hawaiian roll. There they had something to complain about, but then they should have blamed the organists and not the instruments.

Purists have rarely been willing to give theatre organ manufacturers credit for pioneer experimental work in creative pipe-making, winding, electrical work, and reliability of mechanism under hard use. William H. Barnes is the only fair-minded critic I have read on the subject. The purists have never been remiss or tardy in appropriating good new ideas from theatre organ people. A detailed account of their borrowings is long overdue.

A little dip into history shows, surprisingly enough, that organs in general were long in disrepute, even with churchgoers. Between 1642 and 1644, at the beginning of the English commonwealth period, the instrument was so hated that troops of soldiers were given orders to invade churches and destroy the organs. Organs were torn apart wholesale under a January, 1664 ordinance of the House of Parliament. John ("Father") Howe, the most famous organ builder of the time, lived to see most of his work destroyed.

The thing really to criticize is trashy playing. It was hard to score fine music for trashy films, but one could do such a thing with a little extra effort. Although we could make some excuses for the overworked player of the twenties, we can't excuse today's console-jockey who in an hour and a half persists in using the following five most horrible organ clichés:

(1) the opener using a trill followed by a run up several octaves (*a la Rhapsody in Blue*) to a few wild chords succeeded by a dynamic drop to the first simple bars of a mediocre pop tune.

(2) the use of the Crawford portamento every four bars, sometimes on

loud combinations of stops,

(3) wild, meaningless runs up and down the keyboard during ballads,

(4) buildups from soft to loud and *vice versa* every few cadences, and

(5) endings consisting of protracted loud chords followed by two staccato fillips.

Our jockey becomes specially trashy when he uses inane, insulting, or profane remarks while addressing his audience. It is good to report that he is a rarity. We must call attention to one player on the circuit who calls himself the trashiest of theatre organists, meaning only that he specializes in simple, ragtime, first quarter-of-the-century pop tunes. Those of us who know him are aware that he isn't using the term literally or pejoratively, and that he is reminding us again that we need always to judge language in the light of the spirit and the intelligence with which it is used. □



Lowell Ayars.

the most theatrical Kimballs we've heard, either in person or on records. And Lowell takes every opportunity to exploit those qualities. Big hall miking helps with the "I'm sitting in the best seat in the house" illusion.

Lowell Ayars started his career near the close of the silent film era, so he knows all the methods of getting the most from a theatrical instrument. He prefers mostly the mellow, full combination sound to the brassy, punctuated ones but he also uses some intriguing solo combinations. His playing is satisfying rather than startling. While his arrangements are pure theatre organ he has included such recent titles as "Summer of '42," "Time in a Bottle" and "I Wish You Love," tunes which adapt well to theatrical stylings. But it's his 10-minute medley of four tunes from *Showboat* which benefit most from Lowell's stylings.

Lowell is known as a "singing organist" and has included two pleasant vocals, "I Wish You Love" and "They Didn't Believe Me." He pays tribute to much-neglected tunesmith Neil Moret with a medley of "Song of the Wanderer," "I Got a Woman Crazy for Me" and durable "Chloe," still being pursued through the Everglades by a determined suitor.

He knows how to wring a torch song dry, too, as during "I Got a Woman" and "Can't Help Lovin' That Man." The oldies are obviously Lowell's strongest area and he does well by a brass-studded "You're



LOWELL AYARS AT LAST, playing the Dickinson Kimball. DTOS-2001 stereo. \$8.00 postpaid from Dickinson Theatre Organ Society, 1801 Milltown Road, Wilmington, Delaware 19808.

As the jacket notes inform us, Lowell Ayars has performed at more ATOS conventions than any other organist (over the past 15 years), but this is his first grooving. Hence, the album title, the one Lowell's many fans have been waiting for.

The organ, a 3/19 Kimball when in the Philadelphia Boyd Theatre, has been enlarged by 11 well selected, matching ranks. It is one of

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

the Cream in my Coffee" and the most haunting "The Boy Next Door" since George Wright's mid-'50s version. His registration gets a bit ponderous during "Liebesfreud," a tune composer Fritz Kreisler conceived as a violin solo with piano accompaniment, but no more so than other organists who have recorded this concert piece.

Percussions are used sparingly and even then are kept in the background, except during "The Woman in the Shoe," a '20s novelty tune. Recording is top drawer, with emphasis on large auditorium perspective. Grant Whitcomb's jacket notes provide information about the instrument, artist and tunes from a well-informed viewpoint. The review pressing was exceptionally smooth and noise free.

Here's a fine recording of a seasoned artist performing his arrangements of selections well adapted to theatre organ, and played on one of the most satisfying theatre instruments. Understatement is the rule but Lowell's "Old Man River" is as majestic and emphatic a tribute to the big stream as one could hope for.

THANKS FOR THE MEMORY. Don Croom playing the Arden (Calif.) Pizza & Pipes 4/20 Wurlitzer. Upbeat label (stereo). \$5.95 (record, 8-track or Cassette) postpaid from Upbeat Records, 4431 Lockwood Way, Sacramento, Calif. 95821.

When submitting his record for review, Don Croom enclosed a note: "This album, at best, is an introduction to the professional music career from which to grow . . . toward an understanding of orchestration, composition and the performance of music." As Don states, it's an introduction, not the end product; if considered in this light, it offers many enjoyable moments.

Don's working experience adds up to about a year of performing for pizza parlor denizens, although his musical background started at age seven. He's had his schooling so this record has got to reflect the music close to his experience, an album designed to sell over the console to enchanted pizza enthusiasts (besides, the inclusion of "Somewhere My Love" is a dead giveaway). But Don's



Don Croom.

musical values do not stop there. He has turned out a variety program with titles with appeal to many tastes.

The organ is the one originally assembled from two smaller Wurlitzers for the Replica recording studio in Des Plaines, Illinois by Bill Huck in the '50s. From there it went to the home of Dr. Ray Lawson in Montreal, where a few professional releases were made. The Replica studio was a "dead room," but the organ recorded well in the Lawson residence as a theatre organ. It is somewhat less theatrical in the Arden location, probably the penalty of becoming a "pizza organ."

Too often the sound is thick, almost "churchie," and the trem adjustments don't help, except for an attractive Tibia chorus which is heard for less than a minute. From the recording we can't tell whether the organ has a ponderous 8' pedal, but it certainly "sticks out" during several selections. It could be the miking.

Don starts out with a delightful

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potpourri entitled "I Love Kids," during which the tune sleuth will recognize "Pink Panther," "Mickey Mouse March," "Popeye the Sailor-man," "That's All, Folks," "Small World," "Heigh-Ho" and several others of that genre.

"Star Trek" bears some resemblance to the sci-fi program signature but is melodically and harmonically inaccurate. It will not please "Trekkers."

"And I Love Her" coupled with "Yesterday" are a pair of tender Beatles tunes with too much "upper work" in the registration to be classed as tender. Otherwise, well played.

There's plenty of bounce and syncopation applied to "Rock Around the Clock," a welcome '50s "oldie."

"William Tell Overture" (actually the Finale) is more Lone Ranger than Rossini. Don plays all the notes but for an uncritical audience.

"The Hustle" suffers from that obtrusive pedal, plus a few pedal clinkers. Otherwise OK.

"MacArthur Park" starts almost as film score music and graduates to the frenetic. One of Don's best arrangements.

"Duelling Banjos" is a perfect example of "Gebrauchsmusik." It makes sense as used in the film *Deliverance* but minus the plot it doesn't add up to much. Yet Don's performance gives it color.

"12th Street Rag" is heavy with percussions, and good use is made of the Brass voices. It's well played, including the variations, but marred by obtrusive schmears.

"Raindrops Keep Falling on my Head" is a charmer, aided by subtle use of Glock and Chrysoglott near the end.

"Somewhere My Love" introduces a fine sounding Tibia chorus for a few seconds in the verse. And there's a brief counterpointing of the "Nicholas & Alexandra" theme near the end. It helps add new life to this over-recorded potboiler.

"Syncopated Clock" is well played, so is the closer, "Thanks for the Memory" with its diverse tempos and offbeat harmonic treatment.

Next to closing is Ferde Grofe's "On the Trail," one of Don's best. This selection alone places his abilities far above those of the typical "pizza plunker." We'd venture the opinion that he's a comer.

Recording is in closeup perspec-

tive. Jacket notes supply some history of Don Croom and the instrument. Summarizing, it's a promising first try.

CANDI, played on a 2/11 Wurlitzer by Candi Carley. No. MxRC 2001 (stereo). \$6.00 postpaid from Minx Record Co. Box 737, Norwalk, Calif. 90650.

This is the record debut of a young lady we've been watching and listening to for several years, watching because she's a pleasure to look at, listen-to because her music has a very strong appeal. Her repertoire range is wide, from Dixieland to rock, from ballads to classics. Now in her mid '20s, Candi (yes, that's really her name) has been musical since about the age of two. Blind since shortly after birth, she turned to music. Her story was told in the June/July issue of this magazine.

It was inevitable that Candi would turn to the pipe organ. She took a job at the "Great American Wind Machine" (formerly "Pipe and Pizza") in Reseda, Calif. The pizzeria opened in 1969 with the 2/10 Wurlitzer originally installed in the Beverly Theatre, Beverly Hills, but the instrument was not thoroughly reconditioned until current owner Mike Ohman came on the scene. He promptly added a brand new Posthorn.

Candi's record was played on the now 2/11 as reconstituted by Mike, and the transformation changes it



Candi Carley, shown at the flower-decked console during her recent concert at the Los Angeles Wiltern. (Pepic)

from an adequate instrument to a very good one. The balance is excellent and the one small flaw we noted was that all the ranks were not fully in tune with one another on some tunes, a condition only the "true pitchers" will catch, and then it isn't much of a deviation.

Candi soon proves that she is interested in many styles of playing and she is able to perform with great

accuracy, not to mention a delightful flair for catching the essence of each selection. The '20s style selections include "Oh!" (1919), "How Lucky Can You Get?," "I'm Confessin'" (with a hint of Crawford), "I Got Rhythm" and "Way Down Yonder in New Orleans." Candi's jazz stylings are done with all the abandon and freedom of an after hours jam session participant. Her "rides" are

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well constructed, and her orchestration is superb.

Candi reconstructs a swinging 1942 styling of "Things Aren't What They Used to Be" with all the verve and interplay between brass and reeds remembered from those days. Then she goes into a soporific "You Light Up My Life" which would put dollar signs in the eyes of Debbie Boone, not to mention a couple of tears. Other current tunes are "The Candy Man," "The Way We Were" (a beauty) and John Denver's "Sunshine on my Shoulder." She also includes the 1935 tune, "These Foolish Things," a favorite of Wind Machine guzzlers and chompers. Candi's salute to rock is an intense and exuberant "Philadelphia Freedom." In fact, it's wild.

The jacket includes notes about Candi and the music, plus two photos of her. Recording is in closeup perspective and we'd venture a guess that some reverb has been added. Incidentally, the producer of the record was Maria Kumagai, a skilled organist in her own right. Miss Kumagai also taped the music.

There's an exuberance in Candi Carley's arrangements and performance that words can't quite describe. For example she adds little, expressive touches in unexpected places, and she usually avoids using an end-phrase filler or riff a second time, preferring to come up with a new device next time around. Her head is obviously bubbling with musical ideas that demand expression so Candi loses no opportunity. She's the most innovative newcomer to records of the current batch.

HEARTS AND FLOWERS. Robin Richmond playing the 3/19 ex-Paramount/Odeon Wurlitzer, Newcastle. DJM 22073 (stereo). \$7.00 postpaid (surface mail) from Robin Richmond, 16 Bathurst Mews, London W2 25B, England. Checks on US banks okay.

British organist Robin Richmond has become known to US aficionados through his two concert tours in the USA and his previous recordings. US audiences have come to expect British stylings of Robin and he comes through, although he does so using about 99 percent US-originated tunes. His latest release is a



Robin Richmond.

(Stufata)

good example. Actually, it's a continuation of his "The Hollywood Years" release reviewed a year ago, but it isn't as ambitious an undertaking on the part of DJM Records Ltd; the jacket artwork and program notes are minimal compared with those afforded the previous release. And our review copy had been pressed just enough off center to put a slight "wow" in the pitched percussions, and on both sides.

But, if the buyer is blessed with a perfectly centered pressing, this album has much to recommend it. First, there are only three selections played in pure quickstep tempo — "Over my Shoulder," "I'm a Dreamer," and "Toot, Toot Tootsie," the latter with well conceived jazz riffs. Some readers claim that the quickstep thing makes all organists sound alike. If you are one of those, here are 3 tunes by any British organist whose name you fancy.

Robin Richmond is especially strong in the ballad area: "Sweet Mystery of Life," "Memories of You," "Goodnight My Love," "When I Grow Too Old to Dream," "Hearts and Flowers" (yes, that one!) and "Sonny Boy," although that last tune suffers from repeated melody errors. Then there are the novelties; "Redwing," "Stormy Weather" (a ballad with organ-generated storm sounds), "Dance of the Cuckoos (loosely based on the Laurel and Hardy film title theme), "Coppin' Robbers" (the familiar villain theme followed by chase mu-

sic), and a "Blue Horizon" with the inevitable train sounds. Then the dance tunes: "Broadway Melody" and "Carioca," both with a strong beat.

In all it's an interesting show despite small flaws. Incidentally, note that we listed the price by surface mail delivery (you couldn't afford air mail anymore); it takes up to 3 months, so don't get impatient.

The organ is now installed in the Kitchen Brothers motor showroom at Diss, Norfolk. The acoustic environment is good. It's a fine sounding instrument. Jacket notes total 6 lines but there's a good photo of Robin at the console.

MEET JERRY NAGANO, playing the 3/16 Wurlitzer in the San Gabriel (Calif.) Civic Auditorium. Jerri-Co lable, No. JCP-1001 (stereo). \$7.00 postpaid from Jerri-Co productions, 905 Alfred Place, Montebello, Calif. 90640.

Jerry Nagano first caught our ear when he played at the LA chapter's 1973 stanza of its annual *Stars of Tomorrow* show, when he was 16. The way he handled that 4/37 Wiltern Theatre Kimball indicated he was well on his way. This, his first recording, reaffirms the confidence he earned 5 years ago.

The San Gabriel organ is well known to readers of this column, having been recorded in the past by Greg Rister, Gaylord Carter, Helen Dell and George Wright. In brief, it's an excellent recording organ.

Jerry's program has much variety, with a range which includes gospel (disguised as pops), marches, current pops, standards, movie themes, show music, an authentic Japanese pop — even a favorite Italian folk song.

Jerry's overture is a jazzy arrangement of modern hymn tunes, the PTL (video) program theme, with a hint also of "Bringing in the Sheaves." Show tunes include "Aba Daba Honeymoon," "Comedy Tonight" (from *A Funny Thing Happened on the way to the Forum*) and "Everyone Says I Love You" (from the Marx Brothers' *Horsefeathers*). "Bugler's Holiday" is happy music, and "Blaze Away" finds us in the reviewing stand as Jerry's brass band swings by. "Rainy Days and Mon-



Jerry Nagano.

days" is a current pop which Jerry hopes will do for him what it did for The Carpenters — become a "million seller."

To start side 2, Jerry again opens his hymnal and produces a peppy bit of intermission music, "I Never Shall Forget the Day," just right for the popcorn break. He seems to enjoy making hymn tunes sound like something else; even his "Onward Christian Soldiers" has the majesty of a coronation march. But he takes few liberties with "Mattinata." In

his hands it's still an ode to sunrise. "China Night" is the Japanese tune; it has the sound of a Hollywood oriental fantasy.

Our favorite is Jerry's sensitive reading of the 1934 hit, "Stars Fell on Alabama." He plays it as its writer intended, an ode to a beautiful night, and with supernal registration.

Jerry Nagano is a product of modern conceptions of playing, especially in his ever-changing registration. He seems to have no set style, preferring

to approach each title with no preconceptions. He does what his imagination tells him to present the tune in its best light. He has developed an amazing technique. His agility on the pedals gives him the equivalent of a third hand, and he performs without mannerisms.

Recording is good, with just the right balance between hall sound and closeup miking. Ken Kukuk and his ATOS crew had the Wurli in top shape for this session. □

Warren Lubich Performs at Historic Theatre.

In July, Warren Lubich, no stranger to these columns, flew from San Francisco to Boise to play an inspired program on the 2/8 Robert Morton organ in the perfect acoustical environment of the Ada Theatre. The 1100-seat auditorium was a near sell-out.

Warren's prologue extended from the delicate moods of Victor Herbert to the rousing marches of John Philip Sousa; this was followed by a half-hour sing-along. The organist's ability to communicate with his audience

produced a vocal participation seldom experienced.

Next on the program was one of Mack Sennett's comedy shorts, *The Daredevil*, starring Ben Turpin, followed by Buster Keaton in *College* (1927).

Warren's tonal narration was always harmonious with the action on the screen; his well-timed climactic improvisations kept the audience in an almost continuous state of uproar. At the final note a thousand people were instantly on their feet with enthusiastic applause and tribute.

However, Warren must share the success of the program with a dedicated and determined group of public spirited citizens; the Egyptian Foundation (the Ada was originally named the Egyptian) and the Idaho Historic Preservation Council, which were instrumental in having the building officially designated as a National Historic Edifice just prior to its intended demolition by Urban Renewal. The organ was saved by the generosity and efforts of a group of Boise businessmen led by Ron Thurber, a prominent Boise architect. Romaine G. Hon is one of the prime movers in the Boise Chapter of the National Historic Society. Thanks to them, we and future generations will be able to hear the sound of that marvelous instrument.

Just a few days prior to the program, it was discovered that vandals had broken into the theatre and stolen a dozen pipes, and removed several others. However, it was possible to obtain replacements from Twin Falls (100 miles away) in time.

Our thanks to the Ada Theatre management and Warren Lubich for a most memorable evening.

HERMAN WERNER □

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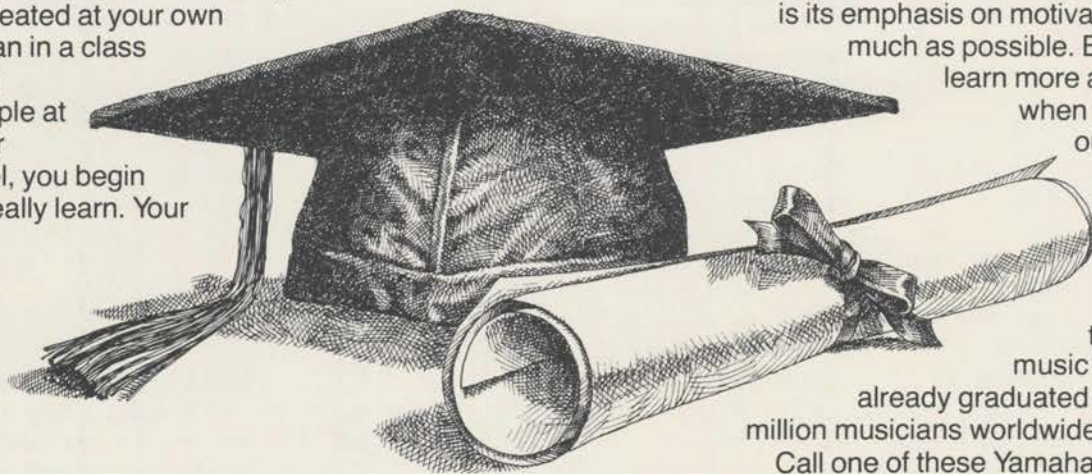
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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE TECHNICAL SIDE

by Lance Johnson

Do you have any questions?

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Several of our readers have written to me from time to time regarding the use of leather substitutes in theatre organs. Rather than answer each one individually in the column, I will try to summarize what my findings have been in researching this matter with the members of the American Institute of Organbuilders and others.

Several major builders of organs and organ supply houses have experimented with the product called perflex for use as pouch material rather than traditional leather. Some builders have had good success with long life, others not. One fact stands out; there is no way to simulate aging in perflex. On low pressure, that is church and classic organs, the perflex has found its niche. This was true as long as it was not used in a very humid climate and that it was not exposed to the sun or other sources of ultra-violet energy. Builders who began using perflex experienced some disastrous results until they learned how to use it.

With regard to theatre organs, the consensus is that it has never been proven as a leather substitute. Problems are ranging from coming

loose from frog-mouth type pneumatics to ballooning under very high pressure. They all seemed to think that perflex should not be used under any circumstances in high pressure work, say over 5" wind. Since most theatre organs use frog-mouth or "bellows" pneumatics, the perflex must crease somewhat in order to operate. Perflex must not even come close to creasing or its life will be shortened considerably.

The best leather substitute for theatre organs is pylon. This material is actually a fabric resembling spinnaker cloth (for sailboats) that is air-tight and extremely tough. Band organ technicians have been using it to recover outside pneumatics on drum actions as it is water resistant. Special adhesive called PVC E glue is required for bonding.

Q. I have quite a number of zinc basses that have been mitered to 6'-0" overall length. I don't like the appearance and would like to straighten them before installing them in my organ chamber. Can you tell me how to do this?

A. Unless you have had much experience in soldering zinc, I do not recommend you do this yourself. It is even difficult for professionals to straighten mitered pipes and have a neat job when finished. If you still insist, you will have to cut all miteres with a fine tooth hacksaw first. Then you will have to obtain the use of a disc sander so the cut ends can be sanded for perfect joining. Then all the old solder will have to be filed or sanded off and edges beveled. To begin soldering, use at least a 50 watt tip that has been well tinned. I use rosin core solder with rosin paste to keep the solder flowing well and the joint always clean. Place the two first pieces together on a flat surface and tack them with small portions of solder only enough to hold them together. Then test your joint to make sure the pipe is going to be *straight*. Do not complete the joint until you are satisfied that it is straight and if it isn't, break the joint apart and do it again. After you have completed the joint by running the bead of solder around, clean off the solder paste while it is still warm. Then take an aluminum file and file

joint so the solder is flush with the metal. If you plan to paint your pipes, be sure to wash them with lacquer thinner to get the old varnish and grime off completely, then prime with metal primer and apply your finish coat, preferably sprayed.

Q. Our organ club has contracted with an organ builder to install our club organ, a 3/19 Kimball, in a studio. It was originally a church and has all hard surfaces and excellent acoustics. The organ chamber was dug down below floor level with the shades being mounted starting at floor level. The chests and regulators will be on the level below the studio. Our organ builder has layed out the organ so that the chest rack boards are actually three feet below the tone opening. I have questioned this procedure since I always thought that the pipes should speak directly to the listener. What do you think about this?

A. If you were installing a classic organ, I would disagree with your builder's philosophy quite strongly. Since it is a theatre organ, I am sure you will hear the organ quite adequately with the pipes below tone opening level. I don't foresee any masking of tonal balance with this layout.

Q. I have a 2/7 Kimball theatre organ circa 1920 with a straight stop rail. The console now has combinations. I was thinking of building a horseshoe rail for this organ and adding stops. Can I still use the combination action?

A. I am afraid you will have to sacrifice your combination action if you go to a horseshoe stop rail. They are built into a mechanical frame that cannot be altered. You would have to install all new stop action magnets if you want combinations and wire them to a recorder drawer, or go to a solid state setter system. □

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Little Known Organist Identified...

FRANK R. WHITE

by Robert A. Pereda, as told to
Lloyd E. Klos

When our feature story on Dr. C.A.J. Parmentier ran in THEATRE ORGAN several years ago, a picture accompanying the epic showed the five-man organ staff of New York's Roxy Theatre during its first few weeks. The fifth organist was Frank R. White. Through the years, we wondered about him; how good an organist he was, his strong points as a musician, etc. Still, not too much is known about him.

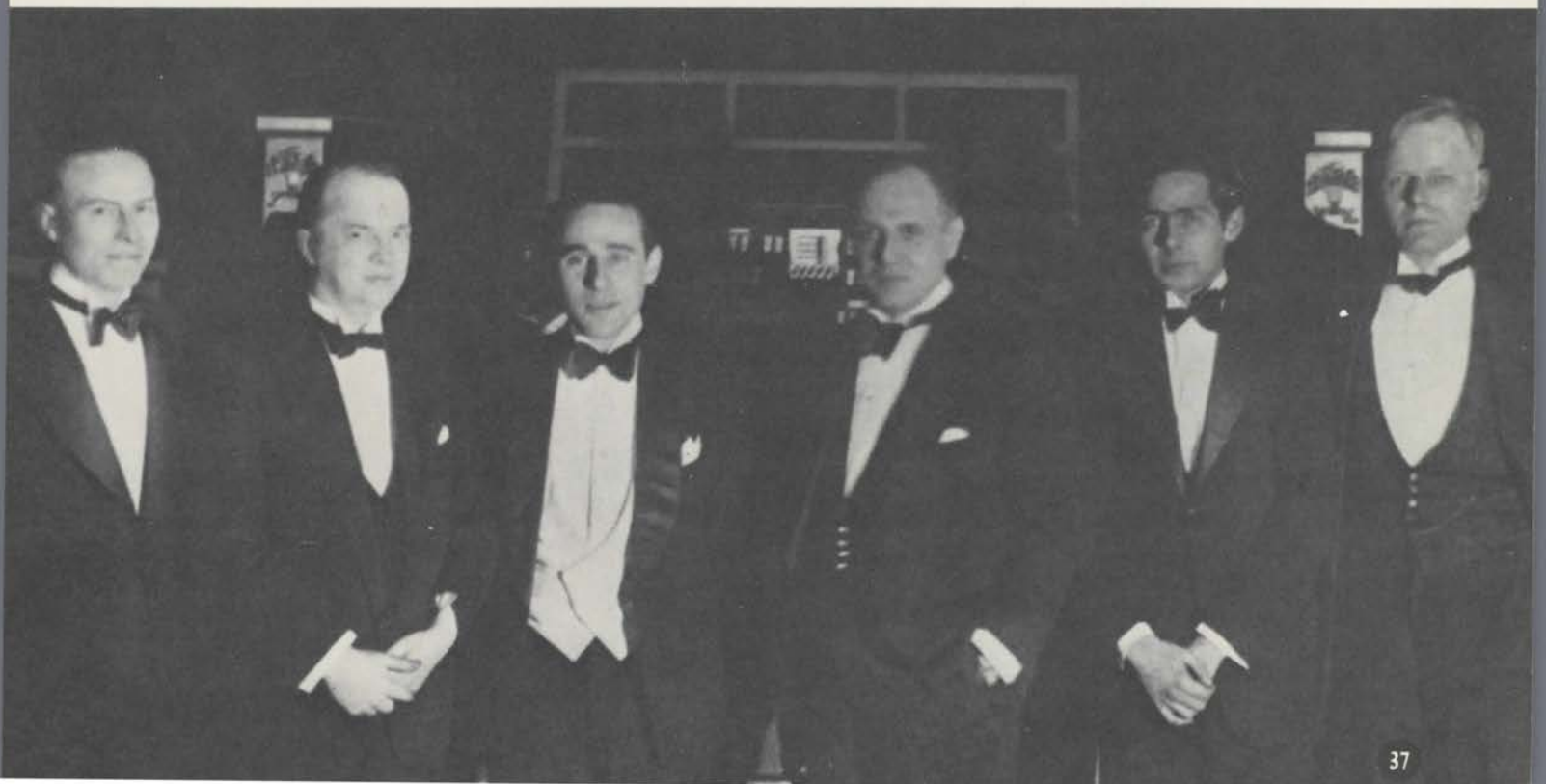
Fortunately at the 1974 Detroit ATOS Convention, it was our pleasure to meet Robert A. Pereda, an organist living in Vero Beach, Florida. A good friend of Hall of Famer Fred Feibel, Mr. Pereda knew Frank White intimately during the years of the theatre organ's first great era, and he subsequently probed the recesses of his memory for information about Mr. White.

"The name of Frank R. White

is not well-known when names of theatre organists are discussed," says Mr. Pereda. "He was, however, one of the early pioneers and it was my good fortune to know him in my youth when he was coming to the conclusion of a long career as a theatre organist. I have never forgotten that I owe him something, in fact, a great deal, for the friendship and encouragement he showed me.

"Frank White was a successful

Roxy poses with his organist staff about two months after the theatre opened in 1927. Left to right, they are Dr. C.A.J. Parmentier, Deszo von D'Antalfy, Lew White, Roxy, Emil Velazco and Frank White. White was the oldest organist of the group and his style was not compatible with that of his younger colleagues. *(Parmentier Coll.)*



church organist and choir director at the time pipe organs were first being promoted for use in theatres. This was about 1910. Mr. White was called upon to dedicate the two-manual, 16-stop Moller organ, Opus 1783, which had been installed in the 925-seat Regent Theatre in Pittsburgh, and obtained a leave of absence from his church to go there.

"Being a Moller, I can state with certainty that it was a straight organ. Moller did not come out with 'unit orchestras' until about 1927, and of the hundreds of pipe organs they built up to that time for theatres, such as those in the Loew's and Fox chains, none had any traps. The only percussions were Harp, Chimes and Orchestra Bells.

"Frank's venture, in the eyes of the management and audience, was a rank failure, because all he could play were preludes and offertories. After a week, he was discharged.

"The following day was Sunday. He sat in a public park, listening to a band concert. When Sousa's "The Stars and Stripes Forever" was played, Frank began to think of the specs

of the Regent organ and the possibility of their imitating the sounds of the band. The next morning he bought a copy of the piece and asked permission of the Regent Theatre's management to work something out. The result was beyond his expectations. With considerable imagination, he was able to approximate the band's orchestration, even to the piccolo obbligato. This becomes more remarkable because of the Moller's limitations, as mentioned above. When he finally came to play a true unit orchestra, he was prepared for it and had more to offer.

"The manager gave Frank a second chance at the Regent and his newly-found theatre style led to much success and acclaim. This was the beginning. He went on to adopt all types of orchestra scores to the new idiom. It led to engagements about the country until a 3/13 Wurlitzer was installed in the Century Theatre in 1912 on upper Broadway in New York. He continued there until the organ was moved to the 1200-seat Montclair (N.J.) Theatre, Frank moving to that house. When the

2137-seat Wellmont Theatre was built in Montclair, the organ was moved a second time and installed in several chambers above the proscenium a la the Byrd in Richmond, Va.

"When Roxy was assembling his personnel in advance of the opening of his New York Roxy Theatre in March 1927, he remembered Frank, and engaged him to be on the five-man organist staff. The others were Dr. C.A.J. Parmentier, Chauncey Haines, Deszo Von D'Antalfy and Emil Velazco. Haines left after six weeks, succeeded by Lew White.

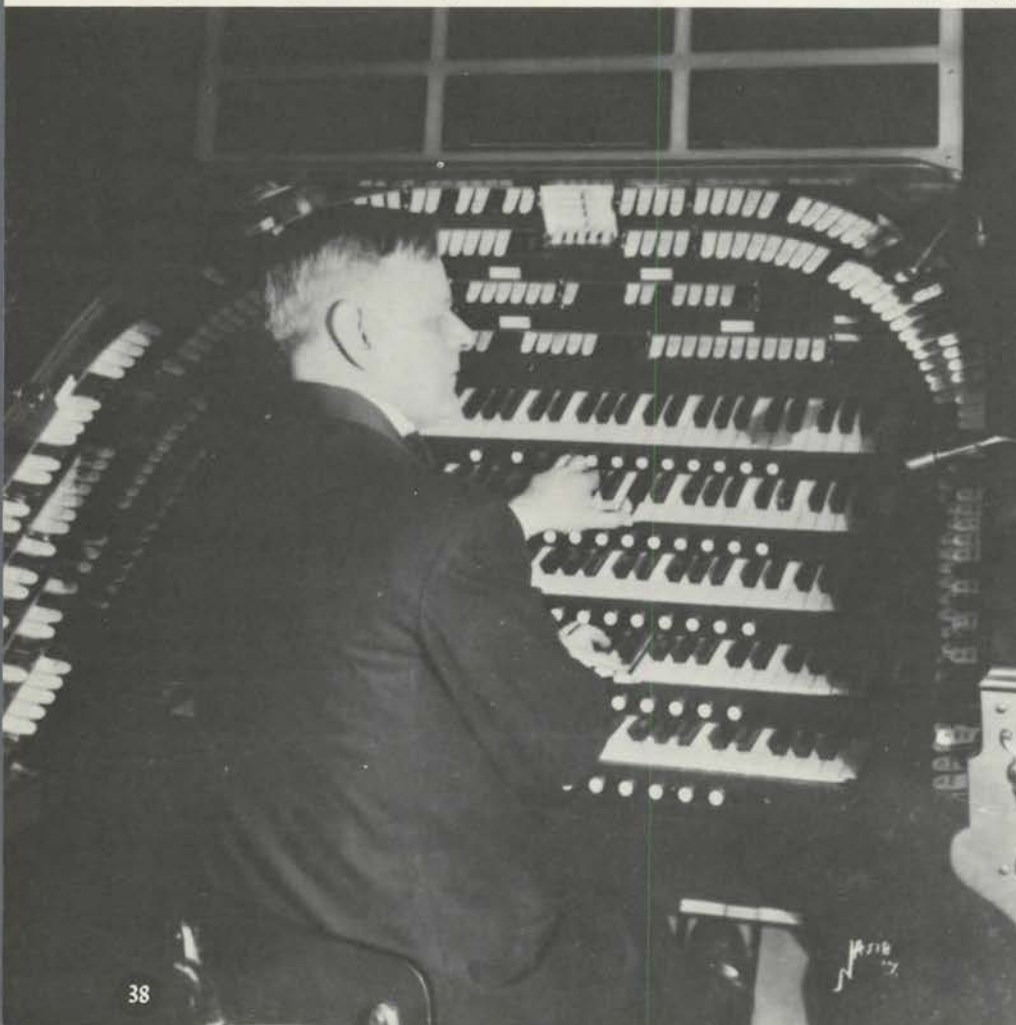
"While Frank's appointment was a great honor, the move proved to be unfortunate for him because his forte was in the field of organ interpretation of orchestral classics, a talent seldom equaled by anyone else. It was much appreciated by audiences in the early days of the theatre organ, because people did not have the opportunity to hear great symphony orchestras. The other members of the Roxy organ staff were younger men with an emerging new style. Frank was assigned to play for hours on end at the rotunda Kimball, with an air-cooling vent blasting on him without mercy. After a few weeks, he resigned and returned to New Jersey.

"Sound movies were an established fact in the early thirties, but the bulk of organists were still active, doing spotlight solos, sing-alongs and radio broadcasts. The Stanley Warner circuit used organists in its larger houses in the Newark, N.J., area, and Frank White was at the 1946-seat Tivoli in Newark where there was a 3/11 Wurlitzer. This organ was situated entirely on one side of the theatre, the solo chamber above the main, thus making it an ideal broadcast instrument, only one microphone required for pickup.

"Frank had a twice-weekly radio program, sponsored by a laundry. He invited me to share the program with him, he playing classical numbers and I the popular songs and ballads. It was during this period that I began to learn something of his long career. We would sit and chat for hours after broadcasts, and he'd always drive me home.

"I can remember the right front car door would not remain closed, and had to be tied shut with a piece of clothesline, and after he tied me

Frank White at the main console of the New York Roxy's Kimball in 1927. He performed for several weeks at the big theatre, mostly at the rotunda organ. (R. Pereda Coll.)



in, off we'd go! He always threatened to get this repaired but his mind was on other things. It was through his influence and encouragement that I went on to serious study, afterwards spending all my life as a church organist, recitalist and choir director.

"Unfortunately, I do not have sufficient material for a full biography of Frank, such as when and where he was born, early musical education etc. Most of the organists of his era have gone on to play in Valhalla. What I do know about his professional career, however, is of interest and should clear away some of the clouds of mystery surrounding him. He was not one to seek publicity and bask in its limelight.

"In 1934, there was a social gathering where a number of organists were present. Frank made a startling announcement, saying he had heard on the best authority that a group was experimenting with an organ which would produce its tones solely by electrical circuits and vacuum tubes. He foresaw a wide use for such an instrument which would provide new opportunities for unemployed theatre organists, and in a wide

range of public places.

"Also, the portability and low price would make it possible for such instruments to be placed in private homes. There was a look of amazement and disbelief on the faces of most, while others laughed heartily. However, it wasn't ten months later that Captain Ranger introduced his Electric Pipeless Organ, followed soon afterward by the introduction of the Hammond. Everything which Frank White foresaw has come to pass — in spades!

"At one time, he was in the organ-building business. His only product of which I know was in the 728-seat Goodwin Theatre in Newark which I never heard. It was a four or five-rank unit with a grand piano altered to serve as a console.

"After the house-cleaning of musicians in the theatres was completed in the late thirties, I lost track of Frank, and the next (and last) time I saw him was during the summer of 1940 at the New York World's Fair, playing a Hammond at the Ford Pavilion. After he finished his stint, I went backstage. He seemed glad to see me and we spent an hour

chatting.

"This is but a fragment of Frank White's story, and it will be the only opportunity I'll have to pay tribute to a very fine gentleman. I am indebted to THEATRE ORGAN for allowing me the chance to give some credit to a man to whom I owe much in this world, Frank R. White." □

Durst Changes Name

Durst Organ Supply Company, Inc., has recently announced a name change. The company will be known as Organ Supply Industries, Inc.

The change was brought about in order to reflect the company's current position in the organ field. The development of the company since the merger of the two parent companies in 1972, Durst & Company and Organ Supply Corporation, has resulted in an expanded product line and improved customer services. Organ Supply Industries, Inc., better describes the business as it exists today, and it will continue to provide excellent products and services as America's leading pipe organ supply house. □

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Resume of Special Board Meeting

October 8, 1978
Holiday Inn, S.W.,
Newark, Delaware

Vice President Erwin Young called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

Officers present were: Preston (Sandy) H. Fleet, president; Erwin Young, vice-president/treasurer. Secretary Riedel West was absent.

Directors present were: W. "Tiny" James, Thomas Landrum, Betty Mason, William Rieger, Richard Simonton, George Thompson, Judd Walton and Past President, Ray F. Snitil.

Minutes of July 11 and 12, 1978 accepted as corrected.

Financial report was made by Treasurer Young.

President "Sandy" Fleet made a presentation on his views on the future of ATOS.

Treasurer Young is to pay all outstanding bills of the Atlanta Convention.

Discussed the present status of the New York Chapter and deferred any action pending the results of their meeting on October 14, 1978.

Discussion on regional meetings in 1979 and 1980. Further details as soon as more positive commitments are obtained.

Considerable discussion was centered around more positive direction by the national board on the planning and execution of future national conventions.

Preliminary report given by committee appointed to study the national office operations. No final decisions reached. Further meetings scheduled within the next 60 days.

A legal opinion shall be obtained on the issue of recording concerts at conventions.

Meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m. □

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When Sister Played the Piano at the Silent Pitcher Show

by Nova Trimble Ashley

*When Sister played the piano
At the silent pitcher show;
Her fingers danced like raindrops
On the keys-so long ago.*

*Sometimes the show was funny
We yelled and laughed aloud
And then the music chucked
As it rippled thru the crowd.*

*When Sister did the sad scenes
The tune held sorrow, too;
And when the show was eerie
Dark fear came tinkling thru.*

*When the hero chased the villain
Sister's fingers beat like mad
As she banged a wild crescendo
Till the good man got the bad.*

*The love scenes! Oh, the love scenes
As we read "Will you be mine?"
She played a tender love song
Soft and sweet, to match the line.*

*Oh, what pleasure munching popcorn
As we watched the pitcher show
And listened to the music
Of our Sister, long ago.*

Reprinted from *Ideals*
with permission of the author.

Submitted by Esther Higgins

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.

George Wright comes to us with goodies this time. The good news is that he's going to have a studio organ again, and is busily collecting parts. From Dennis Hedberg's "pizzery leftovers," George has purchased Wurlitzer ranks for Concert Flute, Open Diapason, Viol d'Orchestre, Vioi Celeste, Salicional, Horn Diapason, Tuba, Clarinet, Vox, Orch. Oboe and Kinura. A friend in Denver released pipes for a Wurlitzer Trumpet and Tibia.

While George was in Binghamton, N.Y. last April, famed organbuilder Ed Link donated a blower, swell shutters, traps, percussions and his remaining personal stock of Wurlitzer and Gottfried pipework. He even crated and shipped the parts to Los Angeles. And Howard Vollum (Portland, Oregon) came through with a set of rare Wurlitzer Musette pipes.

This will be George's second organ. The first, on which he made many memorable records, was lost in a fire years ago. Asked why he would go through the rigors of set-

ting up another pipe organ, this time in his Hollywood home, George replied:

"I feel the need for a small studio organ for my practice and possible recording needs."

With 15 ranks of pipes available, it's doubtful that it will be "small." George has some space limitations and that's why he can't install the 3/16 Wurlitzer donated to him by an anonymous San Francisco couple about three years ago. It has large-scale pipework, much of it on 15" pressure. Tonally and physically too massive for a residence. George says he will return the Wurlitzer to the donors, who have already several locations in mind.

For all that Wurlitzer pipework, George's instrument will be played from a 3-deck Moller horseshoe console, similar to that in the Trenton War Memorial, an item he acquired from Jim Glass in Hinsdale. George says:

"I particularly like this console. It has many stopkeys and the highly desirable feature of hold-and-set pistons."

George is currently burning the midnight oil, formulating installation plans.



While speaking of George, reader John Cantrel takes us to task for referring to him as an "intermission organist" during his three years at the New York Paramount. John writes that he caught George's act many times and it was never music for the popcorn break but an integral part of the show during which audience members remained in their seats and absorbed the music. He describes George's appearances as in the solo organist class, much like Crawford before him. The spotlighted solo usually ran to three special pop arrangements, the last usually being an upbeat number, Cantrel says.

While we are correcting our sins against George, let it be known also that he contributed \$1000 to the Connecticut Valley Chapter, not the piddling \$100 we reported last issue, as several ConValChaps have reminded us.



Brother Andrew, leading light of the Theatre Historical Society, un-



Don Baker 'at the mighty Hammond' — for one day. (Churchill Photo)

earthed a late-thirties ad which proclaimed Don Baker playing a "mighty Hammond" at the New York Paramount. Asked if it were true, because the organist is known to have played the "Queen Mother" for close to 14 years, Don replied "we tried something different one day. It was the only show when I didn't do my usual Wurlitzer solo. We had two dozen Hammond speakers spotted around the theatre, from the orchestra floor to the top balcony. The Hammond console was on the orchestra lift in the center of the band setup. I played two numbers featuring the Hammond with the band, just as a change from the songfest and organ solo."



The Movie Music show at the Ohio Theatre on September 24th may have been the final appearance of Dennis and Heidi James on the same stage; they have undergone a "dissolution of marriage" as they call divorce now. We noted earlier this year that Heidi was writing an original orchestral score for the show's chosen film, Harold Lloyd's *Safety Last*, work which involved composing many pages of music, then scoring her work for the Columbus Symphony orchestra. After all that work, Heidi was dealt a low blow when the film was switched to *Broken Blossoms*, for which the ancient Gottschalk score was played by Dennis at the Morton and the symphony orchestra.

Undaunted, Heidi prepared a 10-minute overture for piano, organ and orchestra from her *Safety Last* com-



Heidi. Going it alone. (Bob Hill Photo)

positions, which was also spotted in the same show.

She also played "Warsaw Concerto" with orchestral support, while Dennis and the orchestra contributed music from *Ben Hur*. The orchestra offered music from Max Steiner's *Gone With the Wind* score and Erich Korngold's *Robin Hood*. Quite an evening, saddened only by the separation of the well-established star duo.

Presumably, Dennis will continue as resident organist at the Ohio Theatre, and pursue his very successful concert career. Heidi has a job; she's now Director of Development for the American Music Scholarship Association in Cincinnati.



A clipping from the *Columbus Dispatch* submitted by Bob Cotner, reveals that the Palace Theatre in Marion, Ohio, celebrated its 50th anniversary on August 30th with a debut concert on its new Wurlitzer played by Dennis James. As always, there's a story connected with an organ going into a theatre, and there's usually a strong personality behind the project. In this case it's ATOSer Tom Yannitell, who until a few years ago could be seen snapping photos at ATOS events, particularly in Chicago where he conducted a re-

corded theatre organ radio show. When he moved to Marion, he started a search for an organ for the Palace.

Unless we are mistaken, the new Palace Wurlitzer came from the Detroit home of Betty and the late ATOS ex-pres. Al Mason. It was, and as of now, it is still a 3/10.



Californians J.B. Nethercutt and wife Dorothy have reason to remember the Artcraft organ in Santa Monica High School. When both were students there they participated in drives for newspapers for recycling. The money thus earned helped pay for the organ and its installation in the school auditorium. They recall the part it played in school activities fondly. Years passed and the organ fell into disuse and deteriorated. In the same time period J.B. and Dorothy married and built up Merle Norman Cosmetics into one of the big beauty aid manufacturers. Always interested in organs, they set up a music room with a now 4-manual, 30 ranks plus organ in their San Sylmar "Tower of Beauty."

When the condition of the high school organ was brought to his attention, Nethercutt volunteered his help in putting the organ of his youth back in playing condition. His offer was eagerly accepted. Over the summer, parts of the Artcraft (predecessor of Robert Morton) were moved to the workshop in the San Sylmar museum building where Gordon Belt, Nethercutt's organ tech. and museum curator, could supervise the work. At this writing, the pipe chest and console re-leathering has been completed. Looks like another one will soon be back in action in time for the 1979 ATOS convention, thanks to the Nethercutts.



Bert Buhrman, who keeps theatre organ a very live entity in the School of the Ozarks in Missouri, checks in to tell us that the annual July series, featuring him at the 3/15 Wurlitzer, was very successful for the umpteenth year. This year, the organ, in response to repeated requests, was featured more, and time devoted to vocalists was reduced. That is one part of the country where the mighty Wurlitzer is appreciated!

Incidentally, Bert says that the

Jones Auditorium, wherein the organ is installed, has a novel way to maintain even temperatures in the chambers. "We air condition with river water, pumped 350 feet to the campus. It is then run thru pipes, and fans are directed on the cold pipes, keeping the temperature a stable 55 degrees. It works like a charm and is very cheap, compared to other means of air conditioning. Ozark ingenuity!"



John Landon reports on his recent European trip: "I enjoyed England most of all, partly because there is no language barrier, and because there are many interesting organs to see and play. People there are always so friendly and warm-hearted. I had a chance to try both Les and Len Rawles' theatre organs. Les has increased the size of his instrument to 18 ranks, having enclosed his patio for more chamber space. Len has the former Empire Theatre organ which Jesse Crawford played on his tour of England in 1933. It is, I believe, the finest home installation I've ever heard."



During the '78 convention, organist Lee Erwin told us of an interesting possibility — an organ removed from a theatre going back into the same theatre.

Several years ago the 4/23 "Wonder Morton" in Loew's King's Theatre (New York) was removed for re-installation in New York's Town Hall. It languished in storage for



Lee Erwin. A "first" if it comes to pass. (Stufoto)

five years while the Big Apple went broke. End of dream? Not entirely. In the interim, King's Theatre was taken over as a cultural center with the assistance of New York University, and the U's president, wants the organ back. Chances are slim but it would most likely be a "first."



Mention of Roy L. Metcalfe, organist at the Raymond Theatre in Pasadena, Calif. in 1924 & 1925, in these pages awhile back brought fond memories to ATOS member, Dick Mead of North Hollywood. "Around 1930, Mr. Metcalfe played a Wurlitzer pipe organ in the Alexander (now Alex) Theatre in Glendale, Calif. before showtime, and I operated the equipment for remote broadcasts." According to records, Metcalfe played the Empress Theatre in Missoula, Mont. in 1913-1915, and moved to the Los Angeles area around 1923. He served as director of the Los Angeles Society of Theatre Organists for several years, while he played theatres in Long Beach. He also broadcast over KFOX Long Beach, from his home studio in 1929.



Congratulations are in order to Clealan Blakely and to Virginia Hesel who became Mrs. Blakely on June 24th. Clealan, a lifetime organ enthusiast, has often contributed articles to this publication and loaned us photos (remember his words and photos for the story "Requiem for the Roxy" and his tribute to Dan Papp a few years back?). He is especially well informed about the Crawford's New York period because he attended the Times Square Paramount regularly during the late '20s. He has a hybrid pipe organ in some state of playability in his Bancroft, Ontario home.

A widower for 7 years, he tired of the solo life. He writes, "Virginia likes the same kind of music I do, so now I'm converting her to a theatre organ fan." The newlyweds enjoyed a brief honeymoon in the Canadian Rockies where there are no theatre organs, but Clealan did locate a Knabe concert grand piano at Chateau Lake Louise:

"It had a beautiful tone," writes the groom.

The wedding and honeymoon were

what kept Clealan from attending the ATOS 1978 convention, "the first one I have missed in a long time." He has a very good excuse.



Walt Beaupre, our written music reviewer, advises that the 1977 book, *Fats Waller, His Life and Times* (Contemporary Books) makes the point over and over that the theatre pipe organ was Waller's first love. As one music critic stated, "The organ is the instrument of Waller's heart; the piano that of his stomach."

In the book we meet young Thomas playing the family harmonium; his mother was organist at the Abyssinian Baptist Church. The boy dropped out of school and left home to play organ for \$25.00 a week in Harlem's Lincoln Theatre. Later he was lured to the Lafayette where there was a Hope Jones organ, although most of his later jazz pipe records were played on a church organ. In 1936, Fats stated, "I am the finest jazz organist alive." This was certainly true. Author Joel Vance believes that the final recordings made in 1943 (on a Hammond) are the most personal statements of Fats Waller, the performer. He recorded these in a Hollywood studio and they reached GI's overseas via V-Discs. Fats died on the train returning him to the east.

The current Waller renaissance includes the Broadway musical, *Aint Misbehavin'*. He wrote the title tune. And 1976 Safari-goers were treated to a preview of Waller records made from piano rolls played on an organ in Bolton, England. Wonder if the records were released?



Nick Snow! The name goes back a long way, when Nick was going to college and located a 2/8 Morton organ in the Manos Theatre, Indiana, Pennsylvania. Nick got the organ in playing shape and played both for theatre audiences and broadcasts over WISR radio. Nick sent us a tape of his playing and it was good. That was way back in 1962 and we reported Nick's accomplishments in the magazine we published at the time, *The Posthorn*. That's the last contact we had with Nick Snow until Fran Verri sent us a copy of the May-June issue of the excel-



Nick Snow playing the Manos Theatre organ in 1962.

lent newsletter he does for the Pittsburgh Area Theatre Organ Society, the *Pipes of PATOS*.

There on the front page was a photo of Nick Snow presenting a concert on the PATOS 2/6 Wurlitzer installed in the Keystone Oaks High School through the efforts of club members. Nick shared the concert with veteran organist Harold Rouse who cued some Chaplin comedies with skills acquired over a half century ago, *Pipes of PATOS* reported.

Perhaps Nick has been around all the time and we just never saw accounts of his feats, although Fran Verri refers to him as "the new Nick Snow." Anyway, welcome back to one of us, and, Nick, if you still want that Manos tape back, shoot us an address.



We have been hearing a lot about an electronics engineer who has a magic touch in improving the theatrical voices of electronic organs in Southern California. First, he built a new Vox Humana "rank" of generators for Bob Power's "style 260" Rodgers. And what a Vox sound! Then he gave Ray Hoeppe's Allen truer theatrical voices. He has also worked some improvements into the 3-deck Rodgers 340 in J.B. Nethercutt's Antique Auto Museum at San Sylmar. He modified the Tibia and Vox along the lines of the changes made in the Power organ.

When we caught up with him it turned out to be Lee Sundstrom. We



Lee Sundstrom. He has the magic touch. (Zimphoto)

first sampled Lee's magic while he was working for Thomas, before they moved to Chicago. Lee had a prototype of a Tibia that came very close to the pipe sound, and demonstrating it was Eddie Dunstedter, who gave his approval. Lee's circuitry wasn't incorporated in stock models.

Talking with Lee now, he is still deeply interested in improving the state of the art.

He says "I became rather fed up with a sine wave flute sound fed through a Leslie speaker coupled with very dead reed voices plus innumerable automatic devices."

So Lee developed what he calls "timbre modulation," an entirely different system of tone generation now being patented so we can't give details yet.

But we can reveal that Lee puts much emphasis on the attack of a given voice. He has added "attack transients" (a subdued chuff) to the Tibia and Post Horn on the Power organ. Bob likes the result. Lee is also critical of tremming methods.

He says "It will be much better to stop shaking the oscillators and develop vibrato after the oscillators."

With paino sales increasing because of the complexity of learning to use all the gimmicks on current electronics, Lee may be just what the electronic organ field needs. He puts pipelike tone generation at the top of the list.



Is your chapter in the doldrums? Are you losing members? Is your concert attendance declining? If the answer to any or all of those

questions is "yes" perhaps a copy of the pamphlet "How to Improve Your Chapter Programming and Publicity" by Lee Bristol, Jr. may provide some helpful hints. The American Guild of Organists member has prepared some suggestions to improve matters. Copies are obtainable for 50 cents each from Order Dept. AGO National Headquarters, 630 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2010; New York, NY 10020.



During an interview over KFAC radio, concert violinist Isaac Stern made the following statement:

"We can't impose on modern ears the sounds, smells and feel of the 18th century." The "baroquists" will not agree.



Remember Marty Dohm? Last time we encountered him, he had just gotten the 3/10 Kimball in the Madison, Wisconsin Orpheum in playing shape. In fact, the main feature story in the Dec. 1962 issue of *The Posthorn* was about Marty's restoration of the Kimball. Then 16 years passed without a word about Marty, until we received a letter from Matt Smith of Sullivan, Wisconsin. Matt found Marty playing an 1899 Farrand & Votey tubular-pneumatic action church organ in Baraboo, Wis. Later the pair went to the Al Ringling Theatre and Marty played on the 3/8 Barton, which is played often, according to the theatre's manager. Marty told Matt that he now spends the sum-

mer months playing an X77 Hammond at the Ishnala Restaurant in Lake Delton.

In the years since the *Posthorn* story, Marty rescued the Kimball from the Orpheum when it was in danger and now has it stashed, awaiting a proper place to install it. Bravo, Marty!



On September 1st, KCET, the non-commercial educational TV station for Los Angeles scheduled the 1927 German utopian film, *Metropolis*. This was brought to the writer's attention when the phone started ringing a few minutes after the film started and excited voices advised us to tune in to "get a load of the 'score'!" We recall seeing the silent classic, directed by the great Fritz Lang, on its first run at the New York Criterion Theatre, accompanied by a large symphonic orchestra playing a special score. So, we assumed KCET would at least come up with an organ score.

But no; there was no music at all, just sound effects and a synthesizer issuing squeals, grunts, bleeps, bleeps, sworls, thuds, and generally regurgitational noises which did much to impede the story flow and draw attention to its audible grossness. As this film dealt with a serious theme, the klops, plinks and yowls couldn't have been intended as a joke. They even gave screen credit to the guy who honked the synthesizer after the final fadeout, as though he had contributed something of value. But we tend to agree



Marty Dohm at the Al Ringling Barton.

(Matt Photo)

with one of the telephoners who described it as "an insult to Fritz Lang, the cast and the art of the silent film."

This is "educational" television?



In mid-July Baton Rouge celebrated a 3-day Arts and Humanities Festival — and theatre organ was a part of it. The 2/6 Robert Morton in the Paramount Theatre was played by Dolton McAlpin (he recorded it for the Concert label 10 years ago), in concert and to cue a film comedy.

Dolton reports that the Festival marked the first public performance played on the Morton for several years, and the response was overwhelming — six full house performances over the Festival weekend. Dolton's presentation included cueing Laurel & Hardy's *Big Business* (Dolton's first whack at cueing silents) and the audience ate it up. The organist writes, "I have never seen such enthusiasm for the theatre organ by the general public as I witnessed this weekend." The theatre owners were likewise stunned and are making plans for more silent films with organ accompaniment. Naturally, Dolton is encouraging them.



Bill Hagey, who plays the Wurlitzer in Salt Lake City's *Pipes and Pizza*, has a fan in reader Buncha Chimchinda, who writes:

"I like his style and I told him he played a 'mean organ.' Bill replied that the organ isn't mean at all since he and his boss, Cal Christensen, had lavished so much hard work and TLC on it in recent months. Bill is tops in my book and I recommend him to anyone passing through Salt Lake City — as well as the inhabitants."



Organist Don Lorusso isn't allowing those two heart attacks to cramp his style. Now fully recovered, he's on what he calls a "limited schedule" — only four nights of playing each week. He's doing a couple of nights a week at Milwaukee's Pipe Organ Pizza, Fridays at Dot's Supper Club in West Bend and Saturdays at Chuck's Supper Club in Silver Lake,



Don Lorusso.

the latter with a quartet.

The former Englishman finds playing for pizza munchers quite different from his BBC broadcast days, especially that Command Performance for King George and the Royal Family in 1947.



Andy Kasparian. Back at home base — briefly.

It was "old home night" at the Lansdowne Theatre in Lansdowne, Pa. when Andy Kasparian returned to his home town to fill in while the regular organist (probably Shirley Hannum, Ed.) was absent for a night, reports Andy's flack, Margaret Sabo. The Lansdowne is still operated as a family theatre and the Kimball organ has always been a feature of the entertainment. Some members of the audience recognized Andy from the days he played there as a youngster. He was heard in concert on this same instrument during the 1976 ATOS convention.



Rev. William E. Biebel, of Erie, Pa., has been playing concerts throughout the East for a number of years. He has had extensive training in piano, organ and theory, so that background enables him to perform most adequately on either a drawknob or horseshoe console. In June, he performed on Dick Kline's installation in Maryland, followed by a recital in Miami. On November 30, he makes his initial Rochester, N.Y. appearance.



The Garden State chapter follows a concert ticket sales policy which might be followed profitably by others. In a letter signed by Bill McKissock, listing the cost of a five-concert series, the prices ranged from \$15.00 to \$25.00. However, senior citizens and students can hear such artists as Hector Olivera, Lyn Larsen, Keith Chapman and Dennis James playing the Trenton War Memorial Moller for \$2.00 a concert, or \$10.00 for the series. There are no fans with greater interest than the oldsters who experienced the "golden era" in person. And we are dependent on youth to carry on. Yet ever-increasing admission fees are barring both groups from performances. And there are all those empty seats at theatre concerts. One way to get them filled is to make concessions to youth and the elderly.



In Los Angeles, John Ledwon picked up an unexpected organ gig when the manager of the Wiltern Theatre asked him to play a brief



1979 ATOS Convention Chairman John Ledwon at the Wiltern Kimball console.

(Bob Hill Photo)

concert before a special midnight showing of *Tommy* on September 1, 2 and 3. John reports that the organ music was well received and that the 4/37 Kimball was on good behavior except the combo pistons were temperamental.

There was an impressive memorial service for Fred Feibel held in Vero Beach, Fla. on May 20th. The late organist's long-time friend, Bob Pereda, played the music, and the

church was filled to capacity. Bob used music composed by Fred for the service. There were two hymns sung by the mourners and as the procession left the church Bob used Fred's sign-off theme from his CBS network *Organ Reveille* show, "Thanks to the Dawn." A most fitting tribute.

When CATOE hosted the ATOS Convention in 1969, a late-evening concert by Eddie Weaver was held in Whiting, Indiana's Hoosier Theatre, a 3/11 Wurlitzer sounding forth. Changes have occurred in the house since then. Owner Bob Montgomery is transforming the Hoosier into a sort of four-channel studio. He is revamping and augmenting the Wurlitzer, installing a 4-manual console in the process. His automatic roll player came from the organ which was once in Chicago Mayor Anton Cermak's home. Bob is being assisted by five Viet Nam veterans.

He says that eventually the balcony will house considerable pipework.

No need to mention it because you'll be reading about it in Chapter News, but Ashley Miller was in fine form during his summer concert excursion to southern Calif. He played for the LA Chapter, then at the Nethercutt Museum at San Sylmar, then on to San Diego to play the Wurlitzer in the Mesa Organ Power pizzery and later the newly installed 2/7 chapter-owned Wurlitzer in the California Theatre.

Did you notice anything wrong with the photo at the top of page 35 in the June/July THEATRE ORGAN? Quite a few readers did; the photo was reversed in the publishing process. Therefore the names listed should be associated with the people shown from a right to left perspective. □

A Note From The Past...

The following item appeared in Jacobs Magazine, June 1927, and was submitted by Lloyd E. Klos:

R. Wilson Ross, feature organist at the Victoria Theatre, Rochester, NY, was organist at the Liberty Theatre, Carnegie, Pa. (a suburb of Pittsburg) before locating in Rochester, and was previously organist of the Trinity Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia. Before the war, he was a pupil of Pietro Yon, organist at the Vatican, Rome. The Eastern connections of Mr. Ross are musically strong, including a two-year course at Coombs University, Philadelphia, and organ study under Henry Fry, John Crist, and Daniel Phillipi. In 1921, he joined the National Association of Organists and later became a colleague of the American Guild of Organists.

Mr. Ross has been organist at several large churches, was with the Stanley Theatre Co. for three years, served as concert organist at the Rivoli Theatre in Philadelphia, and followed his Rivoli engagement by specializing for the Marr & Colton Organ Co. in important recital engagements and feature programs

opening new Marr & Colton organs in various theatres. He has given a great many guest recitals in eastern churches.

Mr. Ross was introduced to the Pittsburg district by an engagement at Maute's Theatre in Irwin, Pa., where he dedicated a large Marr & Colton organ, and stayed for two years as organist before accepting the engagement at Carnegie. While at Irwin, he gave free Sunday afternoon organ recitals to thoroughly introduce the new theatre organ to the people of that community. His success in both Eastern and Western Pennsylvania attracted the attention of the Rochester theatre management, and his engagement at the Victoria Theatre followed as a matter of course. At the Victoria, where he assumed charge of the music February 15, he featured organ recitals on the new Marr & Colton \$30,000 organ. These recitals met with the enthusiastic favor of Victoria patrons, and completely justified the wisdom of installing the new organ and securing Mr. Ross to play upon it, even without considering the important contribution they make to the photoplay presentation. □

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George Thompson 793 Echo Valley Road Salinas, Cal. 91901			
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NUGGETS from the GOLDEN DAYS

Prospected
by Lloyd E. Klos



Pot luck columns are popular, so here we go with nuggets from all over the Mother Lode. References were: *Etude (E)*, *Motion Picture World (MPW)*, *Local Press (LP)*, *Motion Picture Almanac (MPA)*, and *Motion Picture Herald (MPH)*.

1910 (E) The Rudolph Wurlitzer Company of Cincinnati has purchased the entire plant of the Hope-Jones Organ Co. of Elmira, N.Y. The organs of this concern will hereafter be built at N. Tonawanda, N.Y. in connection with the Wurlitzer establishment. Mr. ROBERT HOPE-JONES will absolutely control the production of these famous instruments, his retirement from the management of the Hope-Jones Co. enabling him to devote his entire time and attention to the production and further improvement of "The King of Instruments."

April 1924 (MPW) Theatres being remodeled: Princess in Bloomington, Ind.; Centennial in Warsaw, Ind.; Liberty in Marietta, Okla.; Leopold Street Theatre in Corpus Christi, Tex.; and Victory in Anacortes, Wash.

July 3, 1924 (LP) Peery's Egyptian Theatre opened in Ogden, Utah. FRANZ RATH, Jr., "The Artist Supreme," was at the silver-toned Wurlitzer, playing his personally arranged *An Old Refrain*. On the screen, Lon Chaney appeared in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* with supporting cast of over 3,000.

July 1925 (MPA) JOSEPH L. BRITE is appearing with MILTON CHARLES in a special organ act this summer at the Balaban & Katz' Tivoli Theatre in Chicago. Joe, who attended the University of Wyoming, lists motoring, golfing and swimming as his hobbies.

Sept. 12, 1925 (MPW) This week at the Capitol Theatre in Chicago, organist LEO TERRY is playing *There Ain't No Flies On Auntie*.

March 15, 1926 (MPA) RAMON BERRY opened the Finkelstein & Rubens-owned 1124-seat Fargo (N. Dakota) Theatre and is solo organist at the 2/7 Wurlitzer.

Sept. 25, 1926 (LP) Rochester, N.Y.'s newest neighborhood theatre, the 1508-seat Riviera, opened this evening. At the console of the 3/11 Marr & Colton, REGINALD E. WEBB, one of the world's most famous organists (sic) and formerly of the Martha Washington Theatre in Hamtramck, Mich., played the overture *On the Riviera*. On the screen were a Hal Roach Our Gang Comedy, *Uncle Tom's Uncle*, and Colleen Moore in *Ella Cinders*.

Oct. 1, 1927 (MPW) The Gladstone Theatre in Kansas City has reopened after being closed six weeks for repairs and improvements which include a new cooling system and a pipe organ. (A Style B Wurlitzer).

Oct. 1, 1927 (MPW) A new \$12,000 Robert Morton pipe organ is to be installed in the Regent Theatre in Newton, Kansas.

Dec. 27, 1927 (LP) Birmingham's new \$1.5 million Alabama Theatre opened yesterday. Esther Ralston and Neil Hamilton starred in the movie *Spotlight*. Ralph Pollock and the Alabama Stage Orchestra presented the stage revue *Banjomania*. JOE ALEXANDER, at the console of the "Golden-voiced Organ", introduced himself with the presentation *Organs I Have Played*.

April 1928 (Syracuse U Daily Orange) High schooler W. STUART GREEN is spelling BART WRIGHT at the Syracuse, N.Y. Regent's Marr & Colton nightly.

June 26, 1928 (LP) DEL CASTILLO has been doing weekly broadcasts from his organ school over WNAC, Boston, in the evening. Organist WILBUR BURLEIGH has been concertizing over Boston's WEEI weekly in the afternoon.

Sept. 1930 (MPA) MERLE E. CLARK has been appearing as solo organist at Toledo's Paramount, a Publix Theatre since May 15. Educated at the Malek Conservatory of Music in Grand Rapids, Mich., Merle's hobbies are "all sports."

Oct. 24, 1931 (MPH) At San Antonio's Texas Theatre, EARL ABEL's song-slide presentation included these late hits: "Moonlight Saving Time," "Loveless Love," "It's the Girl," "Nevertheless," and a nifty parody to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne." His original solos are well liked.

Feb. 13, 1932 (MPH) ARTHUR GUTOW at Detroit's Michigan Theatre, substitutes for Dorothy Dix or Beatrice Fairfax in a musical skit called *Leap Year Lovelorn*. A special set of illustrated slides helps the comedy angle with special lyrics. The songs played include "Hoosier Little Sweetheart," "Goodnight, Sweetheart;" "You Call It Madness" and "All of Me."

Sept. 24, 1932 (MPH) FLOYD WRIGHT at the Berkely (Cal.) United Artists Theatre officiated at the magnificent organ in masterly style at the opening of this new house. He was formerly at the California Fox and received a warm reception. He offered a distinct novelty when he presented three fellow organists in concert after his formal dedication of the instrument. CHARLES WILSON of the Oakland Fox offered selections from *Aida*; EDDIE SELLEN of the San Francisco Paramount played Fritz Krisler's "Caprice Viennois"; and RICHARD AURANDT of the San Francisco Fox presented his own arrangement of "St. Louis Blues." Wright wound it up with a humorous rendition of "The Whistler and His Dog."

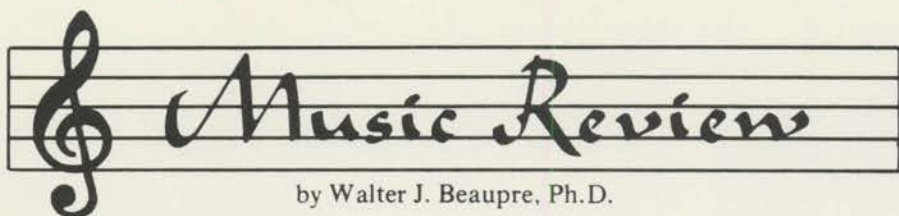
Oct. 22, 1932 (MPH) More than 150 songs were written by San Diego composers for a recent song contest, staged by the Fox Theatre and a local newspaper. The audience judged the winners of the best ballad and waltz. RON BAGGOTT and DON MOORE (Ron & Don), organist team, played the songs as part of their act.

Oct. 22, 1932 (MPH) MILTON SLOSSER has just signed another year's contract to remain at the console at the Ambassador Theatre in St. Louis. This makes 13 years in the City of Blues for Milt; 8 at the Missouri and 5 at the Ambassador. Milt says that he has decided to stay in St. Louis "until Kate Smith gets that moon over the mountain!" This go-getting young fellow also plays over KMOX, "The Voice of St Louis" every Wednesday nite from 11:45 to 12:15.

That should do it. So long, sourdoughs!

Jason & The Old Prospector

□



Music Review

by Walter J. Beaupre, Ph.D.

Lee Prater and Bill McMains, ICING THE CAKE: Volume I & Volume 2, Keyboard Designs: Division of Writers Equity, Ltd. (available by mail from Harmony Cottage, Ltd., P.O. Box 706, College Park, MD 20740, at \$4.50 per volume).

There is much to admire in the new "How to . . ." books of Lee Prater and Bill McMains. The Accordafolo feature (fold out pages eliminate page turning during the playing of arrangements) of their earlier *Cinema Organ Styling* books has been wisely retained. Light-hearted humor in the instructional commentary is another plus, although this reviewer found the cook-book-cuteness of it all a bit much in spots. Don't expect complex, sophisticated arrangements of newer songs in these two books. Such is not the function.

The avowed purpose of *Icing The Cake: Volume I* is, according to Prater and McMains, "a totally new way to play tunes." It is intended for the very new organist who can read music well enough to pick his way through the stuff that came with the new organ as "ten easy lessons." General pop organ playing is the ultimate goal rather than theatre styling *per se*. But the approach is truly unique and — to my way of thinking — well worth trying. Here's how it works:

First you play "Hua Hua' i" as a very simple arrangement with a single note melody line, sustained triads in the left hand, and sustained pedal notes. No sweat, this establishes the basic melody and harmony of the piece. The second chorus becomes a fox trot by virtue of alternating root and fifth pedal notes and rhythmic left hand triads. You seesaw between foot-hand-foot-hand. The third chorus of "Hua Hua' i" introduces "pivot tones" in the left hand along with the seesaw pattern of the fox trot chorus. Now the tune has a counter melody and sounds more

professional. Essentially, what you now have is a three chorus arrangement with each chorus a bit more "jazzy" to add variety. By keeping all choruses in the key of G and the notes essentially the same, Prater and McMains figure that you'll discover the process and be able to do likewise with other tunes. It seems logical to the reviewer that home organists with any sense of "closure" at all will, in fact, benefit from this approach.

"Love's Old Sweet Song" shows you how to do the same thing with a waltz. "House of the Rising Sun" demonstrates how to convert a waltz into a fox trot. "Down By the Riverside" introduces what the writers call Aunt Fanny's Favorite Fill — which turns out to be a descending counter melody in the left hand for added interest. Victor Herbert's "Isle of Our Dreams" adds chromatic glissandos a la Jesse Crawford. This arrangement contains a serious notation goof. The 9th measure in the second chorus (page 19) should fill out the E⁷ chord in the left hand with notes D and E above middle C. The chord is misprinted as E-F, and the resulting discord is hardly a "dream."

"Somebody's Knockin' At My Door" is a nothing tune but introduces the important technique of phrasing the melody line. Key changes and a rhythmic bass to contrast legato melody are added attractions. As a learning piece it works well. "Lonesome Road" is a good vehicle for demonstrating the differences between Chicago style and 4-to-the-bar jazz bass. Prater and McMains again make very sure you know exactly what you are doing and why. "Long Tall Daddy" introduces duet harmony in the right hand, while "Worried Man Blues" — another eminently forgettable original — demonstrates the use of a walkin' jazz pedal line. Some of the tunes named have only two choruses; others require three choruses to

make points.

Registration tips at the end of *Volume I* are very good, especially for pipe and tab instruments, and probably should be studied carefully by every new organist. I liked their suggestions concerning the over-use of tremolo and vibrato: short, but very much to the point.

Icing The Cake: Volume 2 builds upon the skills introduced in *Volume I*. Various rhythms are skillfully introduced: jazz waltz, latin beat, gentle rock and beguine. Block chords, pyramid chords and scale tone fills round out the techniques demonstrated in various selections.

Some of the public domain tunes you'll recognize from the titles: "Amazing Grace," "Ay Ay Ay," "Dark Eyes," "Go Down, Moses," "My Heart at Thy Sweet Voice," "Martha" and "Two Guitars."

"Moonlight Concerto" is better known as the theme from the Rachmaninoff Second Piano Concerto or "Full Moon and Empty Arms." The other mystery title "Bach on the Rachs" may make more sense to readers as the bright instrumental novelty tune of a few years back called "Lovers Concerto" which also borrowed from Johann Sebastian Bach.

An original tune by Lee Prater "Siempre de la Ti" is an exercise in mastering the beguine. An open harmony bridge provides the necessary tempo variety.

In general, *Volume 2* doesn't strive for any degree of harmonic sophistication beyond the jazz seventh. The melody line as prescribed by Prater and McMains for "Go Down, Moses" bothered me, and it may jar others also. The musical phrase ". . . let my people go" usually has an F# (with a D major chord) for "people." This arrangement uses F-natural with a D-minor chord consistently, so it was obviously intentional and not a printer's error. So chalk up one to musical license!

At the end of *Volume 2* Prater and McMains provide specific recipes for jazzing up all the pop tunes in the *Robbins C&G Chord Organ Series*. Simply use their handy-dandy chart — and you can't go wrong! I haven't tried it, but I wouldn't be at all surprised if it works.

For those home organists who yearn to learn the tricks of faking pop songs on their own without bene-

fit of a live teacher, these two *Icing The Cake* volumes should be both a boon and a bargain. The tricks are there for the taking with very little left to chance. Prater and McMains have a decided talent for making their "How to . . ." books crystal clear and great fun. However, dyed in the wool theatre organ buffs will probably find their *Cinema Organ Stylings* more satisfying. Before you invest, it might be wise to check our Music Reviews of earlier Prater/McMains books along with other reviews of methods by Fred Feibel or Al Hermanns to get a better idea of what would be best for you — considering your own personal musical goals and tastes.

Erno Rapee, MOTION PICTURE MOODS FOR PIANISTS AND ORGANISTS, (facsimile of 1924 G. Shirmer ed. published at \$30.00) Available for \$3.98 plus \$1.60 handling as catalog item 4258 AE, Marboro Books Inc., Dept. 802, 205 Moonachie Road, Moonachie, N.J. 07074.

I couldn't believe that this all-time classic was available for mere peanuts, so I ordered a copy to inspect before alerting other T.O. fans. Yep! It's the real thing! Be warned that the arrangements are strictly for piano and presuppose your ability to adapt for organ. There are no chord symbols and the massive hard-back tome is bulky and awkward to manage on your music rack. No matter. *Motion Picture Moods* is so loaded with gems you won't find elsewhere at any price that it's silly to quibble. Would you believe the "National Hymn" of Uruguay, "Aeroplane" music by Mendelssohn, "Fire Fighting" by Otto Langley, "Music Box" by Rudolf Friml, "Monotony" by Frederic Chopin? Just the titles will keep you happy for weeks. Every page of music has a quickie index so that you know right where to flip for Birds, Horror, Orgies, Purity, Railroads, etc.

I just opened the book at random to page 367 — "Indian Agitato: dramatic excitement for Indian emotional scenes, rivalry, jealousy, expectancy, apprehension, etc." and it's by Otto Langley. You're a winner before you ever play the opus! And it's all good clean fun: no special

themes for Arab Oil Interests, Legionnaires Disease or Anita Bryant — but that would be expecting a bit much from a book published in 1924. Mr Rapee also warns you that he has avoided foxtrots and two-steps because these are "readily available in music stores." Even if you don't own an organ or can't play a note, this can be a fun book for you.

Bob Ralston, THE BOB RALSTON TOUCH: VOLUME 1, T.B. Harms Music Co. (distributor, Belwin Mills Publishing Corp., Melville, N.Y. 11746, \$3.95).

Certainly the Lawrence Welk Show did much to further the phenomenal success of Bob Ralston as the crowned prince of plug-ins. Lesser known is the fact that young Bob was blessed with excellent training and the blue blood of talent from the outset, making him ready for fame and fortune as few are ready. Any doubting Thomases (or Hammonds, Lowreys, Yamahas, Conns, etc.) would do well to take a close look at a collection recently published as *The Bob Ralston Touch*. It is a decided departure from the usual "pop classics arranged for organ."

Ralston claims — and it's true — that nowhere in any of his arrangements will you find either the left hand or the right hand playing more than one note at a time. "The advantage of this," according to Bob, "is that you will avoid the heavy, thick sound that all too frequently turns people away from organ music." What Ralston modestly doesn't tell you is that he is a past master of the art of devising solidly written counter melodies. Be further advised that these "no chords" arrangements are not so easy to play well as they first appear on the printed page. One flubbed pedal note, buster, and you're in trouble. These are not for the beginner nor for the casual amateur.

Nine of the fifteen tunes are by Jerome Kern and Richard Rogers. Perhaps the most successful of the Kern arrangements is "The Last Time I Saw Paris" which stands tall as a one chorus solo. "All The Things You Are" maintains the harmonic integrity of the original but is thin in spots, especially the bridge. Ralston's

economy of notes is excellent discipline, but doesn't make for a totally satisfying performance. "Look for the Silver Lining" fares better with its mostly-thirds verse and chromatic glissandos. To add interest the melody line is shifted to the left hand. "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes" shows one how to avoid the monotony of the same notes by playing the repeat on the upper manual with the right hand so that the melody line switches from reeds to strings and Tibia. The bridge is not much of an improvement over other printed arrangements for organ. "Make Believe" and "Yesterdays" are both charming in their simplicity and again demonstrate Ralston's flair for counter melodies. The effect is that of a small, intimate chamber orchestra.

Richard Rogers contributes three tunes: "My Romance" and two from *Carousel*. "If I Loved You" is the best of the trio. "You'll Never Walk Alone" is tastefully done as a Bach-Gounod-type prelude with melody first in the left hand and later in the right. It sings quietly, which is a welcome change from the usual "big finish" production numbers heard at so many theatre organ concerts. However, if you buy the tape which Bob Ralston has produced to illustrate these selections, he explains how to manipulate your Leslie speakers to achieve the big sound. Clever, if your speakers rotate mechanically.

Michel LeGrand tunes from *Umbrellas of Cherbourg* require some rather tricky pedal support. "Watch What Happens" is the more difficult of the two; "I Will Wait For You" has its booby traps confined to the bridge. Both arrangements are worth the effort required for mastery. Bob has included two original songs in the album. The first, "Raindrops," is similar to the rhythmical effects achieved in "Last Time I Saw Paris." The second, "We Loved By Starlight," has far and away the most demanding right hand melody line in the book. You may want to save this one for that day when it hits the charts.

"Little Green Apples" and "Vanessa" complete the selections. The less said the better. Even the demonstration tape doesn't help much. The cassette (or 8 track, or record) does not come with the album. You must order it separately from Bob Ralston.

This reviewer had access to the cassette and found Bob's friendly, informal comments and his playing of the arrangements most helpful. Ralston only allows himself to be carried away once — a swing version of "Watch What Happens" which is fun to hear but bears little resemblance to the printed music.

The volume is quality printing throughout. Page turning has been avoided by eliminating a separate pedal stove; be advised that pedal notes appear on the bass clef staves.

One last consideration: could learning these Bob Ralston arrangements help the home organist create similar treatments of other tunes? Probably not, unless one has had considerable training in counterpoint. What the Ralston treatments will do, however, is to broaden one's perspective as to what makes for really good pop organ playing (*i.e.*, variety of approaches). This reviewer came away from *The Bob Ralston Touch* with a much better understanding of what separates the pro's from the dreamers. Unless you are truly satisfied with your present approach to playing pop standards, you'll welcome this one. □

Closing Chord

One of California's most beloved and respected pipe organ authorities, **Charles Hershman**, died in July at age 82 following a lengthy illness. He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Ruth.

Charles Hershman devoted over 60 years of his life to pipe organ building. He will be most remembered by clients and associates alike for his generosity of spirit and unyielding adherence to the highest standards of craftsmanship and business ethics. Toward the end of his career he devoted himself to giving freely of his knowledge to young people, who were ever grateful to receive the benefit of his unique experience.

Charles Hershman was thoroughly trained in all phases of pipe organ work from factory to installation and from church and concert instruments to theatre organs. He began his career with the M.P. Moller Co.

prior to the start of World War I. After serving in the Army overseas, he joined the Robert Morton Company of Van Nuys, Ca., becoming one of their prime installation and tonal-finishing experts. While there he was responsible for the installation of many of their most prestigious instruments, such as Loews New Orleans, the Orpheum (former Pantages) in San Francisco and the University of Southern California.

In the early 1930s, he settled in San Francisco to open his own pipe organ business which he continued until his recent retirement. Specializing in rebuilding and installation, his achievements were manifold and notable. He installed numerous sizable instruments for M.P. Moller, rebuilt and enlarged many instruments for prestigious churches and was a major participant in the theatre field, not only during the golden age of the movie palace but in the recent theatre organ revival.

Mr. Hershman often recalled as the highlight of his career his selection by the National Broadcasting Company to be fully in charge of all pipe organ installation and maintenance for the Pacific Network. In this capacity, he was responsible for two NBC organs in San Francisco, most notably the former Paramount Hollywood Studio Wurlitzer, which he so successfully reinstalled at the San Francisco Radio City studio where it was played by his friend George Wright.

What probably has become the most broadcasted and recorded organ in the world was designed, rebuilt and installed by Charles Hershman at the NBC Hollywood Studios. This was the famous "Bride to Dreamland" organ built for Paul Carson and used on *One Man's Family*, *Amos 'n' Andy*, and so many other famous radio programs. This organ was created especially for NBC by Mr. Hershman, using the best of available pipes and components from both Wurlitzer and Welte instruments.

Charles Hershman was known and respected by numerous famous organists and organbuilders, as well as lesser-known musicians and enthusiasts. His ever humble and helpful attitude, knowledge and craftsmanship will be sorely missed by all who were fortunate enough to know him. □



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. Klos:

Your letter, notifying me of my induction into the Theatre Organists Hall of Fame, rekindled some fond old memories. Those early theatre days are among my most treasured remembrances.

I thank you for the honor of being included in the Hall. It's nice to be remembered. Please convey my thanks to the selection committee.

Bob Power gave me a dinner August 4th in recognition of the award, and he read your letter of notification to his guests.

Many thanks for your good wishes.

Sincerely,
Milton Charles,
Ojai, Calif.

Dear George,

I would like to take advantage of your column to express my gratitude to the fellows who took part in the jam sessions at the Music Grinder during the convention.

Many people remarked how well the artists played in the jam sessions, and everyone who attended got caught up in the spirit of having a good time. Rather than the artists being the stars of the event, the music was. This was exactly what we had hoped would happen.

Several of the artists who played

discarded their policy of never playing before or after another artist, and putting their inhibitions aside, they all worked hard for the music. Because of their unselfish gifts to us listeners, the musical "highs" we experienced instilled so much enthusiasm among national members that they expressed a desire to see such an event become a standard feature of the annual conventions. To that end, Walt Winn and I will be happy to furnish the format we used at the Music Grinder.

I'm sure all the artists would join me in a special thanks to Allen Miller for his superb voicing and regulating work he did on the Music Grinder organ, and to Dick and Audrey Weber for graciously letting us use the Music Grinder for the jam sessions. Special thanks should also go to Walt Winn, who thought up the idea of a jam session during the convention, and who helped work out the format each evening.

Sincerely,
Jay Mitchell
Atlanta, Ga.

Dear George:

As chairman of Connecticut Valley Chapter's Scholarship and Music Education Committee I must correct the information found in a "Vox Pops" item in the June/July 1978 issue.

Susan D'Angelo of Oakville, Ct., was the winner of this year's Roberg Memorial Theatre Organ Arrangement competition. The cash award was in the amount of \$100.00 and not \$150.00 as stated. The item further states that second and third prizes were awarded as well as an honorable mention. That information is false. Only one prize was given.

While this misinformation has appeared elsewhere in print it was without the knowledge of my committee, I felt that THEATRE ORGAN is the official magazine of ATOS and that the information should be corrected "for the record."

Sincerely,
Tom Gnaster,
Bloomfield, Conn.

Dear Mr. Thompson:

We wish to extend our "sincere thanks" for the review of the book on the Rialto Theatre — *Jewel of Joliet*.

We have received several orders which are probably due to the review. However, in talking to organists some are so busy they have not read the June issue! I can understand that because I find myself getting deluged.

The state legislature has now created the Joliet Metropolitan Exposition and Auditorium Authority of which I'm secretary/treasurer — appointed by the Governor. The Will County Cultural Arts Association's three-fold objective is just about completed. Landmark status should be coming within a few weeks — if the last report from the Department of Interior is correct. Our concern has created the impetus needed here.

The Authority has received \$500,000 from state funds. The transfer of property to the Authority should be completed about September 1st.

We have an enormous task before us as we (the Authority) are purchasing the entire Rialto complex with commercial and office space. However, the important thing is that the theatre is going to be preserved. The intention is to make it a cultural and performing arts center.

Again, thank you very much for your interest in our project.

Sincerely,
Dorothy Mavrich,
Will County
Cultural Arts Association,
Joliet, Ill.

Dear George,

On behalf of the "Friends of the Fox" in Detroit, I should like to clarify an item which appeared in the August/September 1978 THEATRE ORGAN Magazine under the Wolverine Chapter news.

The article gave the impression that the May 21, 1978 concert at the Detroit Fox Theatre was only the May meeting of the Wolverine Chapter. The program was actually a public show featuring artist Gary Reseigh, now playing at the Roaring '20s pizza parlor in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and was presented by the Friends of The Fox, Inc., the organization which is restoring and presenting programs on the mammoth 4/36 Wurlitzer.

We would like, however, to thank the Wolverine Chapter and its many members who have given us assistance in restoring the finest Wurlit-

zer remaining and the over 1000 people who came from across the country to attend.

Sincerely,
Greg J. Bellamy
Detroit, Michigan

Dear Mr. Thompson:

Mr. Ben Levy's excellent article, "What Will Happen," in the June/July issue of THEATRE ORGAN is a point well-taken. One other important point which should be made is the difficulty caused by the disparity of electronic control systems for pipe organs.

The difficulty of doing maintenance on original control systems (switch stacks and relays) on theatre pipe organs is somewhat facilitated by the fact that the controls for almost all original theatre organs were similar. Most control systems by each organ manufacturer were almost identical, with variations in size and placement. For instance, if you have ever repaired one Wurlitzer, you could repair almost any Wurlitzer. Also, different manufacturers had usually only slight variations between their product and the controls of other makers. For example, if you have repaired a Wurlitzer, you have a good idea of how the controls work on a Robert Morton, or a Marr & Colton, etc. Thus, there were very few really different types of organ controls.

Today, however, almost every electronic control system (sometimes referred to as computer control system) for pipe organs is different from all others, due to the many makers who originate their own designs. This means that working on one electronic control system usually does not give you much aid in trying to understand the controls of another pipe organ.

As Mr. Levy suggests, standardization of electronic systems and their components would be wonderful for the maintenance of pipe organs. In the meantime, there is a necessity to create (or have created for you if someone else is making your electronic control system) all of the needed documentation (circuit diagrams, parts lists, etc.) for any electronic systems installed on pipe organs. This documentation should be kept in a place which is easily accessible to the pipe organ, so that it does not become lost, and will be

available for later repairs or changes to the system.

Sincerely,
Paul Duerr,
Tarzana, Calif.

Dear Sir:

The thought occurred to me that possibly some of your readers might be hesitant about ordering records by mail.

I have purchased several hundred records by mail after learning about them through THEATRE ORGAN and other sources, and have never been disappointed. On only two occasions did I receive a record which was marred or broken, and both times I received a prompt replacement with no questions asked.

In my opinion, the record sellers are doing their best to make mail order buyers happy and satisfied.

Sincerely,
Dean J. Kehoe,
Milwaukee, Wis. □

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Nov. 1st. for Dec./Jan.

ALABAMA

The chapter was pleased to be host for one day for those who attended the 1978 ATOS Convention. We hope all of you had a great time in Birmingham and enjoyed Eddie Weaver and Don Baker at the Alabama Theatre Wurlitzer and Dr. Edward Tibbs at our Civic Center

Theatre. It was a long day, we know, but we certainly thank those who came to see us. Come back again.

Our August meeting was held on a beautiful summer Sunday morning, and our members had a great time discussing the convention. Our program was in the hands of a very talented young man from Birmingham, Mark Landers. Mark is a student at Samford University majoring in marketing, but he really can do a selling job on the Alabama Wurlitzer. He has been a music and organ student for several years, having studied with Bernard Franklin (who is house organist at the Alabama Theatre) and Dr. Tibbs at Samford University. He has played the Alabama Wurlitzer for some of the special student movies, and also is performing on the electronic organ at one of the local country clubs.

Mark's program for our August meeting began with a salute to the day, "Oh What A Beautiful Morn-



Mark Landers during his August program at the Alabama Theatre.

(Tom Hatter Photo)

ing," and we were treated to a wide variety of selections ranging from moody melodies to the folk rock music of James Taylor. He also shared with us one of his own compositions entitled "Cindy's Song." Mark is a versatile musician and this was most apparent in his reharmonization of "Finlandia."

The chapter is beginning to plan for a special concert in connection with the Birmingham Festival of Arts next spring.

RIEDEL WEST

CENTRAL INDIANA

The July meeting was held at Betty and Phil Hedback's lovely and interesting home. Their abode has been publicized before as they have a collection of antique cars and musical instruments. At least one instrument per room and several cars in the barn!

The Indiana weather held true to form. Following a heat wave, there were thundershowers in the afternoon forcing the catered party into the barn with the antique cars! However the spirits of ATOS members could not be dampened by a mere downpour.

The Wurlitzer Organ Company furnished a beautiful model 950 console for the occasion and local manager Sam Eberwein put on a fine concert exploiting the organ's capabilities. Sam's capability was "right in there" too; some pretty fast footwork. His repertoire consisted of a variety of popular and show tunes, standards and some classical numbers.

The August meeting was held at

the home of Ed Morris and was a "pitch-in" dinner plus swimming in the pool. The Morris hospitality was super! We thank you.

Virginia Rhexoris was the surprise unscheduled artist of the day and came through with flying colors. The organ was a 2/9 Hilgren-Lane with a Barton console. It was in excellent playing condition and the bench was kept warm by members during open console until a late evening hour. There were approximately 80 in attendance at this meeting.

BEE BUTLER

CHICAGO AREA

CATOE was well represented at the Atlanta convention, after which our members literally departed in all directions before returning home. Then it was back to business. On Sunday afternoon, July 30th, over 150 of our members drove to Mundelein (a short distance north of Chicago) for a social at the auditorium of St. Mary of the Lake Seminary. Just visiting the grounds alone is a beautiful experience, but we had a real treat as well. Tim Needler, of Indianapolis, presented an excellent program at the theatre organ. ATOSers who remember this organ from the 1965 and 1969 conventions, and John Seng recordings, may wonder about the status of the organ. The organ is, and always has been (since 1934), the property of the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago. The beautiful black four-manual Wurlitzer console, originally one of the early Chicago Theatre consoles, is still in excellent working condition. Fifteen

of the 24 ranks of the organ are still in place and playing beautifully, while the other nine departed without authorization several years ago. Through the offices of new CATOE member Father Tom Franzman, CATOE was invited to take over the maintenance of the organ, and under the careful skill of Tom Cotner and Fred Kruse its familiar brilliance and beauty was there for Tim's program.

On August 20th, CATOE had its first annual picnic at one of the Chicago area's many forest preserves. Nearly 70 attended. The highlight was the three-manual Conn Theatre, furnished by member Dick Canfield. Yes, a three-manual organ in the middle of the woods. A portable generator provided the power, so we didn't have to look for volunteers to pump!

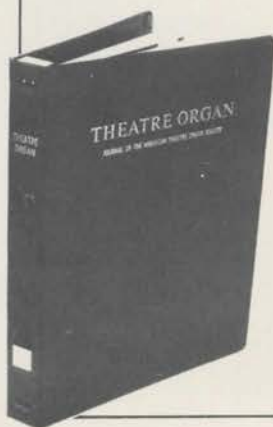
By the time this issue reaches you we hope to have completed a very successful Chicago Theatre Variety Revue, and we'll have a report in the next issue.

The Montclare Theatre's 3/10 Barton has been sold, and is slated to go into a local restaurant. It was sad to see this happen, as this was the first organ CATOE restored.

CATOE elects its officers in mid-year, and our new officers and directors took office on July 1st. Jim Taggart is the new chairman; John Peters is vice chairman; Ione Tedei, secretary; Beverly Barton, treasurer; Marie Pond, *Vox Catoe* editor; and Virginia Ferroli, membership chairman. The remaining directors are Bill Benedict, Joe Duci Bella and Greg Simanski.

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EASTERN MASS.

Although no formal meetings were held during July and August, regular Wednesday evening work sessions (except convention week) were continued by the organ work crew under the direction of Art Goggin. The focus of attention is the 2/14 Wurlitzer in Stoneham Town Hall with a long-needed major rebuilding of the chests being undertaken — a considerable job.

Over 40 members, family and friends attended a summer social Sunday, August 6th, at the Ipswich home of Tim and Kaarina Bjareby, which has evolved into an annual event. Their kindness and easy hospitality always insures a good time, with the focal point a 2/8 gold and white console controlling a beautifully-installed Robert Morton.

With many playing members present a wide variety of styles were enjoyed and showed the versatility of the instrument. One member, Dr. Jonathan Kleefield, after his first encounter, was enthusiastic in his praises and loudly exclaimed in his amazement "and everything works" — not a universal state even with the best maintained. Our host, Tim, was in top form, making the organ sound twice its size and being played with four hands and feet. Others did a very creditable job at this little gem which has recently been further improved with a Tibia extension and single stroke added to the Chryso-glott.

This summer interlude had all the ingredients for a "fun" gathering — good fellowship, good listening and good homemade "eats" — who could ask for anything more!

STANLEY C. GARNISS

GULF COAST

"Porgy and Bess" could describe this better than I can. It's summertime and the living has been easy. Too easy, I suppose, for we haven't accomplished too much during the summer!

The board of directors has met regularly to keep the business in order and make plans for the winter concerts and meetings. We are in the process of changing a minor part of our by-laws as suggested by our chairman, B.D. Rhea, M.D.

We have reserved our beloved Saenger Theatre here for two concerts late in October. This will be the 27th and 28th of October. We plan to put on *The Phantom of the Opera* for both nights. We received many requests to do this again this year. Our staging was spectacular and pleased the crowd immensely when we put on the *Phantom* last year.

Tom Helms, our premier organist and spark plug, gave the chapter, and its invited guests, a pre-convention preview of his convention concert. This was well-received and for the ones who didn't get to the convention, was a special treat. For those of us at the convention — we

got to hear it again on the Moller. Great!!!

DOROTHY STANDLEY

LAND OF LINCOLN

Our chapter held its annual picnic and meeting at the Bob Tuttle home in August. Officers and board members were elected for the coming year, and reports for the past year were read. Members Bob McKee and Orrill Dunn gave a very fine report on this year's ATOS Convention. Bob's pictures, along with Orrill's commentary, made us all wish that we could have been there.

The big attractions at Bob Tuttle's farm are the John Brown tracker or-



LOLTOS members and friends enjoy a feast at the annual picnic.

(Bob Schmoock Photo)



Don Rublee at the LOLTOS annual meeting.

(C. Albin Anderson Photo)

gan in the house and the Page theatre organ in the 75-seat theatre Bob has created from the old granary. These, along with numerous player pianos and music boxes, always make our visits there pleasant.

On August 12th, LOLTOS and the Coronado Theatre hosted about 800 children for the final outing for the Rockford Public Library summer reading program. Bob Coe presented a description of the organ and a silent movie, all very much enjoyed and appreciated by the kids. The Coronado Barton is undergoing replacement of stop switches and eventually all stops will be converted and all air eliminated from the console. October 22nd will be the date for the Coronado's 51st birthday and the occasion will be honored with a variety show featuring Myron Floren of Lawrence Welk fame, and Chad Weirick will be at the organ.

BOB SCHMOOCK

LAND O'LAKES

May brought our annual organ crawl of Minneapolis churches. Would you believe that 71 members arrived at Soul's Harbor lobby at 8:15 on a Saturday morning? Not a flaw in the whole trip; everything came off right to the scheduled minute, with two busloads!

Our first stop was Park Avenue Covenant Church, where Ledona Wall, staff organist, played beautifully at the Moller pipe organ. A guest, C. Wesley Anderson, who was affiliated with the public school music department for forty years, played several fine selections. Our new member, Alan Lowrie, from Toronto, also did a fine job at the console. Paul Bowen and Alan Gerber gave us a mini-sample of their talents; thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Our second stop was the Basilica

of St. Mary where we were escorted into the organ room, which is seldom permitted, and enjoyed hearing Bob Vickry play the 45-rank Wicks pipe organ, which echoed beautifully through the huge marble structure. "Pomp and Circumstance" was his opener. Between numbers, he explained the organ, the pipe installation, the church and then played several requested numbers.

Our third stop was at St. Mark's Cathedral, the historical landmark of "Lowry Hill" where Howard Small gave us a twenty-minute concert. The organ, built by Welti, has a Moller console and an antiphonal Kimball. While members played, others were permitted to walk about the church to view the beautiful carved wood and paintings.

The climax of our tour was the Twin City Federal Bank, where Paul and Alan, on double organs, really let go! Paul played the Eminent and Alan was at the Baldwin church organ. Their "Stars & Stripes" was a headliner! After more music with several others trying both organs, we decided to call it a day at five o'clock in the afternoon!

June was our super deluxe concert, featuring Kay MacAbee at the console of Byron and Lillian Carlson's gold and white, 5/21 Wurlitzer pipe organ in their luxurious home. With an almost complete sellout of tickets for the two concerts, the weather cleared and Byron's new central air made everything very comfortable and pleasant. Mr. MacAbee was more than we had expected! His warm, friendly personality had us in the palm of his hand before he started. His selections were thoughtfully-chosen, and as he played, he remarked, "This is the second five-manual organ I have played," but during intermission, while talking to Byron, he realized this was the

organ he had played in its original home. His opener, "Jalousie," was beautifully handled; as were selections from *Carousel*, Leitz' "Hungarian Rhapsody," "Clair D'Lune" and "Dizzy Fingers." The organ responded to his mastery with all its beauty. A standing ovation at his closing brought an encore (with gusto); we all loved it!

BEA ENGLUND

The LOL chapter has added a new dimension. A "Home Groups" plan, developed by member Ed Hirschhoff, has been in effect since last spring. Five groups of about 14 members each were established according to geographical location. Meetings of the groups alternate between homes; monthly during the winter months, less often during summer.

Benefits are many. There is closer association than is possible with only full chapter meetings. There is also the opportunity to play various instruments, perform for others and learn from seminars and discussions. Learning and performing problems are discussed and solutions sought. The plan is now in full swing, with about 70 members participating.

Marge Shepard, chapter chair-ma'm, is participating in one of the groups, and is enthused with the results.

Nine LOL members enjoyed the many fine concerts and camaraderie of the '78 convention in Atlanta.

Our chapter was again favored to hear Lou Hurvitz, long-time LOL member. After his return to West Point following the convention, he came to Minneapolis for a special concert on Claude Newman's 3/18 Wurlitzer at Cedarhurst near St. Paul in August.

It was a brilliant performance. Lou's flawless technique, brilliant styling and exciting orchestration



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Lou Hurvitz at the console of "Goldie," Claude Newman's 3/18 Wurlitzer, after his concert for the chapter in August. Lou is the only professional theatre organist in the U.S. Army, with rank of MSgt. (Ed Hirschhoff Photo)

brought the audience of 140 to its feet in a standing ovation. Imbued with a true love for the pipe organ as well, Lou's fame has been growing rapidly the past five years.

Other recent events included a Twin Cities Organ Crawl, and a performance by Carl Eilers in July on TV station KSTP's famous Wurlitzer, which members have recently brought back to musical life.

EDWIN C. HIRSCHHOFF

LONDON AND SOUTH OF ENGLAND

However enjoyable and newsworthy may be our four major concert presentations during each year, it is the imaginative series of intermediate functions — home concerts,

parties, film shows and coach trips to organ venues in other parts of the country — that are the real stuff of the year-round foundation of our chapter.

Principal venue for monthly chapter Club Nights is "Wurlitzer Lodge," the congenial home of Edith and Les Rawle at Northolt, just outside northwest London (generally on the last Friday evening of each month if American friends are in the UK).

Most recently, we have featured Doreen Chadwick at the 3/19 Wurlitzer. A great star of the halcyon days, we are exceptionally fond of Doreen's exquisite combination of delightful personality and sheer musical professionalism. Global theatre organ ambassador and good friend George Blackmore has also entertained in his usual impeccable

style. Ever-popular stylish young David Shepherd (who has just returned from another triumphant Stateside concert tour) is frequently with us on both sides of the organ bench.

In deference to our several steam enthusiast members, one recent outing combined a rail excursion trip to one of the many East Anglian havens of steam locomotive, traction engine and fair organ exhibits and memorabilia with a visit to the 3/19 Balaban Style 4 Wurlitzer now in the showroom of the Kitchen Brothers motor garage at Diss on the Norfolk/Suffolk border. Formerly in the Paramount-Odeon Theatre in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in the northeast of England, and much admired by the great Jesse Crawford who played it during his UK tour in 1933, this luscious instrument is immaculately preserved and highly popular both live and on record.

Our member Les Bezley, proud owner of the famed EMI Studio Compton of earlier years and now in his home in Cornwall in the west country, notably gave a most polished performance here.

A most rewarding recent chapter coach trip has been that to the home of member Graham Kent and his charming family at Thornbury near Bristol for the inauguration of his beautifully installed British-built Compton theatre organ that was originally in the Savoy Cinema in the London suburb of Stoke Newington. In a major extension to the family house built on a steeply sloping site, the organpipework is installed in chambers under the floor of the music room with horizontal shutters on either side of the slimmed console.

We have also had glowing, if somewhat envied, reports from our

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well-known member Father Gerard Kerr who attended this year's ATOS Convention at Atlanta. Gerard is, together with our Chapter Chairman George Harrison, mentor of a beautiful vintage Compton now installed in St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church at Hornchurch in Essex, just outside east London, and still retaining its full theatre specification.

A measure of the overall progress that we are making in our second year of association is the fact that chapter membership has now topped the significant 150 mark — from all parts of the UK, and indeed from continental Europe and the USA itself.

LOS ANGELES

The month of June was especially important to members of the Los Angeles Chapter for they were entertained at the San Gabriel's 3/16 Wurlitzer by famed Radio City Music Hall Organist, Ashley Miller. This appearance had a special significance to the 46 stalwarts for whom he had played at the "last show" at Radio City in April.

While on the West Coast, Ashley also appeared in concert for the San Diego Chapter and at the 4/35 Wurlitzer in San Sylmar, the famous Merle Norman Tower of Beauty in the San Fernando Valley. Among his listeners there was the incomparable, George Wright, who indicated that Ashley was one of this favorite artists. A reception was hosted in his honor at the studio-home of Liaison Chairman, John Ledwon, where the Miller magic poured forth from the 3/26 Wurlitzer in John's magnificent cathedral beamed 30 by 50-foot living room.

Our artist for August was youthful David Shepherd from London, England, who presented a delightful



David Shepherd at the San Gabriel 3/16 Wurlitzer.

(Zimfoto)

and varied program at the San Gabriel Civic Auditorium's 3/16 Wurlitzer. Gently kidding we colonists, as well as his fellow countrymen in the business, he proceeded to demonstrate some of the basic differences in "English" and "American" theatre organ styling.

Now it seemed time for another organ crawl. After all, we had only been to New York City, Atlanta and San Francisco Bay Area for such events this year. Rod Skelding and wife, Patty, cooked up one which started at Vice Chairman Mike Ohman's Great American Wind Machine Restaurant in Reseda. After a bit of open console at Mike's 2/11 Wurlitzer, more than 80 members were bused to the home of Glenn Spelman for a program at Glenn's 2/6 Robert Morton by ATOS Music Merchant, Ken Rosen.

Next stop was the home of Stan Weisbard, where Jim Melander and Stan himself played the 2/7 Wurlitzer. Difficulty was encountered in

luring the crowd away, not only from the organ, but from Stan's incredible collection of restored cars and workshop in his backyard, not to mention his two battling tortoises.

After a luncheon stop at The Wind Machine Restaurant, and a bit of open console on the Wurlitzer again, it was straight to the home of Chapter Chairman Bob Power and the one-of-a-kind Rodgers "Style 260" custom *almost* theatre pipe organ. And, take our word for it, with that full wall of speakers and a real toy counter, it could fool a lot of people. Here the artistry was provided by Bob himself, Rod Skelding and Mike Ohman.

At the John Ledwon home, the artistry was provided by a real favorite: composer, conductor, organist, Lloyd del Castillo — whose repertoire includes everything from Bach to boogie, and all the stops in between. Following del, to present the British style, was Rod Skelding.

Last stop was again the Great

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One excited Niki Gordon at the Robert Morton console. *(Tad Photo)*



Major Jack Moelmann and Dalton McAlpin after Sunday afternoon entertainment at the Robert Morton. *(Tad Photo)*



Bill Oberg — all the way from Memphis, Tennessee for this weekend. *(Tad Photo)*

American Wind Machine Restaurant for a bit of open console and music by staff organist, Candi Carley, who sees more with her other four senses than most of us do with our eyes.

Tired of trips? Hardly. Rod and Patty just left for a 17-day tour of England on September 1st.

BOB HILL

MAGNOLIA

All planned events for 1978 came to an end with "Jack's Last Fling" July 2nd. Major Jack Moelmann presented his last public concert at the Temple Theatre Robert Morton. The show was complete with sing-along, a vaudeville act presented by the male chorus from Keesler AFB and *It's A Gift*, starring Snub Pollard, circa 1923.

Mark Smith, a former member

of the male chorus and now of New Orleans, entertained the audience with "The Lord's Prayer," "This Is My Country" and "God Bless America."

The concluding number of Jack's concert was our national anthem, and the enthusiastic audience of about three hundred called for an encore, but Jack did not return to the console. A number of people wondered why, not knowing of the show business tradition that when a show is concluded with the national anthem, no other numbers are played.

The weekend of July 8th and 9th was another two days of theatre organ music, this time a private, by invitation only, event at the Jeff Seale Robert Morton in Laurel, Ms. On Saturday afternoon, Dalton McAlpin of Starkville, Ms. was at the console.

Sunday afternoon, a group from Meridian was entertained for more than an hour, everyone sat, and listened to a Jack Moelmann that we had never heard before. His program was inspired. There was music we had never heard him play before, showing his classical and church training. He closed his concert with the parting song "Auld Lang Syne."

Without too much coaxing, Dalton McAlpin played thirty minutes of popular and traditional music.

The console was then opened to others who wanted to play. Esther Stanton presented some of the old standards from bygone days. She was followed by Niki Gordon, and I have a feeling we will be hearing more from this young lady and the pipe organ in the future. Bill Oberg journeyed from Memphis just for this event, took his turn next, and surprised us with some fine organ



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playing. Bill is the sole support for two very fine pipe organs in Memphis, the Malco Wurlitzer, and the dual-consoled Kimball in the Memphis City Auditorium.

C.S. Soley, now owner of the fine Robert Morton of Jeff Seale, has assured us that the organ will not be sold, nor will it leave the City of Laurel, and that is good news.

Meetings of the chapter are usually held at the Temple Theatre on the second Monday night of each month. Though our attendance is usually small, we keep trying to increase our membership. Those present discussed ways that we could increase our membership and generate public interest in the theatre organ. A number of plans were covered, from an all-out assault on the media to the production of a slide show to be presented to various civic groups and clubs across the state. If there are any chapters that have had similar problems or have tried different ideas, please pass along the results, or any other ideas that you may have.

TOMMY DARSEY

MOTOR CITY

Our annual picnic this year was held in July at the home of Mert and Rita Harris. Some 85 chapter members enjoyed the potluck meal as well as the Harris' three manual Wurlitzer.

Our fifth annual private charter moonlight cruise on the 76-year-old excursion steamer *Columbia* in August was attended by 550 members and friends. Dance organists for this year's cruise, in the order of their appearance, were: Tony O'Brien, Wilma Steslick, Lance Luce, Ken Saliba and Dennis James. The organ was a Rodgers Trio, courtesy of Musical Heritage in Royal Oak.



The 76-year-old excursion steamer *Columbia* back at the dock after another successful private charter moonlight cruise for Motor City members and friends. (Don Lockwood Photo)

Our three-hour cruise took us up the Detroit River and out into Lake St. Clair while people danced, relaxed or strolled the decks of the 2500-passenger steamer.

The Second Sunday program at the Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor in July was an open console session at the 3/13 Barton. The artist for the August Second Sunday program was Ron Morocco, 16, from Royal Oak.

George Krejci was the featured artist at the Fourth Sunday program at the Royal Oak Theatre in July. Those who took advantage of open console at the 3/16 Barton afterward were Sigmond Ross, Amy Reimer (from Muskegon), Gladys Nancarrow, Jerald Nagano (from California) and Steve Stephani. The artist for the August Fourth Sunday program was Evelyn Markey.

Sales of organ pendants, manufactured exclusively for our chapter, went extremely well at the convention in Atlanta and are still being

sold at the Redford Theatre boutique counter. This counter, in the theatre lobby has turned \$1000 over to the "Buy the Redford" project.

Our continuing series of bi-weekly films on Friday and Saturday at the Redford has been a help in keeping current with the many expenses of owning a 1500-seat movie house.

DON LOCKWOOD

NOR-CAL

Our belated congratulations and thanks to both the Atlanta and the Alabama chapters for another entertaining and memorable convention. Approximately 22 Nor-Cal members attended the national conclave and enjoyed the programs, artists and instruments. A delightful experience in the Southland.

One of the many outstanding organists in the San Francisco Bay area is Larry Embury, a resident artist with Bill Breuers' Pizza and



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Eddie Vodicka at the Campbell console after the August concert. (Dan Creswell Photo)

Pipes restaurant chain. Larry was the guest performer at our July meeting in Redwood City at the 4/23 Wurlitzer. This talented showman got the 170 attendees to their feet immediately for his opening number, "The Star-Spangled Banner," played entirely on the pedal board. After resuming our seats we were treated to a varied program including tunes ranging from "Danny Boy" and "Donkey Serenade" to blues and jazz melodies. It was announced Larry will tour Australia and New Zealand this fall. Members "Down Under" who attend his concert will be richly rewarded by his excellent musicianship.

The August meeting was held at the Capn's Galley Pizza & Pipes in Campbell, Ca., housing the 3/23 former Buddy Cole Wurlitzer-Morton instrument. The guest artist was Eddie Vodicka from the Chicago area. Eddie is a touring concert artist for Conn Organs. It was Nor-Cal's good fortune to be the first ATOS chapter to enjoy this young man's talents. Eddie's debut featured smooth ballads, snappy Latins,

rousing marches, a rolling waltz, light classics, comic and light-hearted novelties. Eddie Vodicka is another of those up-and-coming musicians who will be a credit to the profession. He exhibits the ability to promote pipes and electronics equally well. Registration, expression and arrangements were well-done. A nearly full-house was most appreciative of his efforts, and required two encores.

Our future 2 p.m. meetings will be at Pizza & Pipes in Redwood City, Ca., for the balance of the year. On October 15th Everett Nourse performs and on November 5th, Tony Fenelon, from Australia, concertizes. Come join us.

JIM DUNBAR

OREGON

In July, we were guests of Mr. and Mrs. Milt Kieffer for a picnic and final hearing of their 2/9 Wurlitzer

in their beautiful home near Vancouver. Fortunately this fine organ will not be lost to our area as it is to be relocated in a restaurant in Vancouver, Washington, just across the Columbia River from Portland.

The open console program was provided by many very competent members, including top professionals Jonas Nordwall, Gerry Gregorius and visiting Patty Simon from Seattle.

Our August meeting was scheduled for the studio home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Koep near Eugene. But, because of the sudden death of Mr. Koep, an informal gathering was substituted at the home of Marti Lynch, near Portland. Marti has a fine three-manual Conn with standard stop arrangement, making pipe organists feel right at home.

The open console was expertly played by many of our members, including our gracious hostess. A surprise bonus was the superb playing of Everett Nourse of San Fran-



Everett Nourse, at Marti Lynch's open house for the chapter.

(Claude V. Neuffer Photo)



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Marti Lynch at her open house.
(Claude V. Neuffer Photo)

cisco Fox recording fame, who happened to be visiting in the area.

We are grateful to Marti Lynch for saving the day with beautiful music, and opportunity to socialize; impossible at a formal concert.

BUD ABEL

PIKES PEAK

Chapter members continue to work hard on our many projects. Work still continues on the installation of the Chief Theatre Wurlitzer in the Colorado Springs City Auditorium. The organ sounded its first note on July 4th. We now plan for completion by Thanksgiving. Tight scheduling for the auditorium leaves us little time for work on the organ.

PPATOS continues to maintain the 3/9 Wurlitzer at Penrose Hospital on which the local historical society recorded recently. The recording, played by two of our members, was used as a soundtrack for a slide show on the life of famous local poet Helen Hunt Jackson. Using the magic of modern recording techniques we were able to "cue" the slides with the narration beginning with the beautiful theme song "Ramona" inspired by Mrs. Jackson's novel of the same name. The historical society was very much pleased with the results and promised us future projects of the same nature. This is certainly a good way to get theatre organ back to the public, fulfilling the purpose for which it was designed.

PPATOS members in Pueblo are currently restoring the solo division on the 65-rank Austin in Pueblo's Memorial Hall. The organ has suffered much deterioration over the years and new problems appear as fast as the old ones are fixed. Hopes are for the organ once again to be-

come a viable concert instrument in Southern Colorado.

SCOTT CHRISTIANSEN

POTOMAC VALLEY

The June meeting was hosted by the Gordon Keller Music Store, Alexandria, Virginia. Featured artists for the musical portion of the meeting included four of our own group of creative entertainers, Doug Bailey, Earl Sharits, Robert Stratton and Todd Strickland, with a solo performance by Fred North, who is on the staff of Gordon Keller. During the business portion of the meeting Frank Lybolt was voted in as an honorary chapter member, a token of our appreciation of his outstanding work on behalf of the chapter.

Three musical instruments were available to us: a Shimmel grand piano; a Gulbransen Rialto II and a Rodgers Model 250 electronic augmented pipe organ. The Rodgers is unique in that the tones of its electronic components, through computerization, are so compatible with its eight ranks of Ruffatti pipes that the ear cannot differentiate between the intermixed voices of pipes and electronics.

Several long, discussions closed out the business meeting. Appropriately, Doug Bailey, seated at the Rialto II electronic organ, opened the informal concert session by announcing that he was abandoning his prepared program of "upbeat" music, and proceeded with an unbroken, single medley of quiet, low-key tunes in the relaxed and polished Bailey style and manner.

Fred North is an accomplished organist at the St. Michaels Catholic Church in Annandale, Virginia. He is also the Washington area consultant for Rodgers organs. Fred,



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L. to R. Robert Stratton, Doug Bailey, Earl Sharits and Tod Strickland.

(Harold R. Richman Photo)

with his right leg in a cast, nevertheless, with finesse, played on the Rodgers, classics as written, lighter classics and moderns. He included some silent movie music to demonstrate the capabilities of the Rodgers as a theatre organ.

Todd Strickland had prepared no formal program. In its place he offered musical selections as they came to mind, such as he would play for his own amusement and relaxation at home. He then, with no further comments, forgot all about us, it seemed, and did just that. Toe and heel-tapping pieces of variety and oldie theatre, radio and movie music followed, extemporaneously. His handwork at the console and footwork at the pedals came naturally and faultlessly.

Earl Sharits, as in the past, had dug into his legendary stock of "old stuff" of the 20s, to play for us some oldies, each with its recall of memories for the oldsters. Included was a 1925 "Symphonic Dearrangement" of the Rogers and Hart tune,

"Manhattan." Earl concluded with the complete theme for the 1923 silent film epic, *The Covered Wagon*.

To cap off a thoroughly enjoyable program, Bob Stratton at the Rodgers, Earl Sharits at the Gulbrandsen Rialto II and Todd Strickland at the Shimmel grand presented, completely unrehearsed, a trio rendition of the Ketelby "In a Persian Market" — skillfully synchronized, in a manner which brought the appreciative house down.

Potomac Valley Chapter members numbered 56 at the Atlanta convention. We believe this could be the largest attendance of any chapter.

HAROLD R. RICHMAN

PUGET SOUND

Ashley Miller presented a concert at Greenwood Pizza and Pipes to a warm and appreciative audience. This climaxed a short vacation-stay in town during which we were

able to enjoy his company as well as his music.

In July, a farewell party was held for Donn Clayton at Bellevue Pizza and Pipes. He has played here four nights a week for three years, along with his duties as church organist in Everett. He will be giving his time and attention entirely to the church as musical director for a large church in Merced, California. His many friends here will miss him.

In August, we convened for our yearly potluck — truly a banquet with Annabel Browning filling her usual role as organizer to perfection. A white elephant auction was conducted most successfully by Ken Gallwey. Following this we proceeded to open console at the club organ.

The following day, fifty friends and members convened at Seattle Center in the early morning to view the King Tut exhibition. Of special interest — a bronze trumpet with gold overlay. When shall we see a King Tut Trumpet of gold in the pizza parlor chambers?

GENNY WHITTING

RED RIVER

Our chapter had Chicago visitors the middle of August when Jack Olander and family came through Fargo on their way home from a camping trip. Lance Johnson took them to the Fargo Theatre where he played a movie intermission for the enthusiastic crowd. Jack later had a turn at the 2/8 Wurlitzer. He was nice enough to write a very complimentary letter to the editor of our paper about the organ and the public's response. Thank you, Jack!

The following week we had another visitor. Rob Richards, associate organist at the Organ Stop Pizzas in Arizona, spent a few days



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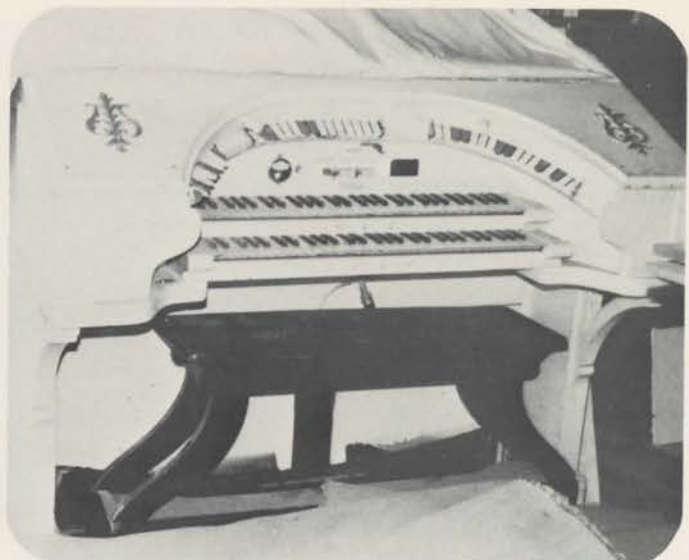
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The crew — L. to R. — Dave Bishop, Ivan Duff, Harry Krzywicki, Don Wick, and Steve McCormick.



Our own 2/6 Wurlitzer, Opus 1370.

here. He played for a half-hour preceding the early movie at the theatre. We enjoyed seeing and hearing him again.

Plans are not far enough along to name a date and program for our fall show this year, but we're aiming for late October or early November. The Fargo Foundry is working on the parts for our lift which will be installed at the theatre soon. The lift will be large enough to accommodate a three-manual console, so it can be used for our own chapter organ someday. Other improvements are possible also; perhaps the big sign outside may be painted at last.

SONIA CARLSON

ROCKY MOUNTAIN

Hooray and hallelujahs, we had it comin' to us — (sorry for the corn), but our little old chapter just purchased its very own pipe organ. It is a 2/6 Wurlitzer with chimes, Opus 1370, originally installed in the

Legion (now Rialto) Theatre in Alamosa, Colo., in 1926. This piece of Colorado music history has the reputation of being probably the last regularly used theatre 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. Stops are Trumpet, Tibia, Vox, Flute, Clarinet, String and Chimes.

A few years ago, Joe was killed in a holdup at the theatre. Later our chapter was instrumental in obtaining his song slides and projector for the ATOS National Library. After trying vainly for a number of years to obtain the organ, we heard that it was sold to Ron Rhode in Phoenix. We contacted Ron and asked for the option to buy should he want to sell. Well, it was not very long when we got a call from Ron and he said to come and get it by April 23rd, 1978. Well, we really had some fast board meetings and decisions to make.

Guess what? No money.

One of our very active members, Mr. Ivan Duff came forward and handed us a check for the full amount and said, "Keep smiling boys, it's only a loan." We voted, kept smiling and accepted the offer. After much scurrying around, we got a team together for the trip to Phoenix and another off to Alamosa. The Phoenix job was fairly easy. The pipes were boxed and the console ready to load. This was done and the trip was started to Alamosa to meet the other team in time to load the chests, and all the rest of the stuff that goes with it. Everything worked out like clockwork. We have it stored in Bill Arthur's garage. Winter is coming. Help!

We are now on a money raising party and all tax deductible donations are cheerfully accepted. We had our annual picnic at Jack and Nancy Walden's in August and raised \$142.50 which is helping a great deal.

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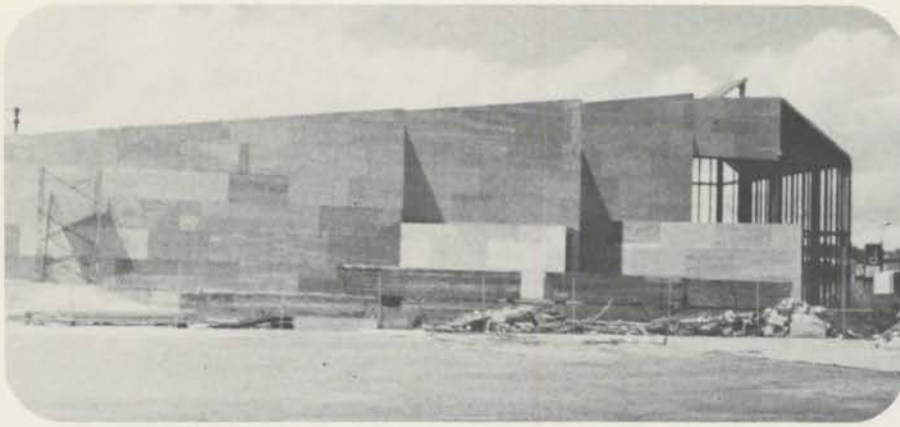
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Side view of the Organ Grinder Restaurant in Denver. Rear of the building, is almost three stories high.



Dave Bishop and Steve McCormick hoist the relay.

rant being built here (Denver), has got to be the biggest building in the neighborhood: acres of parking and right in one of our large shopping centers. The front looks like it will take 32' pedal pipes standing free with room to spare.

The 2/6 Wurlitzer at Fred Riser's is really coming along now. The blower is running, the relay is wired and the wiring to the back of the console was started. The winding in the chambers is about completed.

We hope to have it playing for our Christmas party and election of officers meeting.

We now have 42 members to brag about and more coming in right along. The crew at the Aladdin Theatre played the overtures for the evening shows of *The Sound of Music* to very full houses. The old Wicks is sounding pretty good now due to the efforts of the Saturday morning work crew. We still have not figured out how to get the combination action up out of the boiler room yet, but we will.

Bill Arthur's Marr and Colton is all hooked up and playable from the console. It is not in tune yet but we'll get it done.

Work is being done on the Paramount Theatre organ in Denver in preparation for another silent movie late in the fall.

FRANK R. GANDY

SAN DIEGO

July and August have been "vacation" time for our chapter as we had no concerts during these months; nevertheless, we have some exciting news and a great deal of work has been going on behind the scenes.

First of all, our chapter is very proud that the founder of our chapter, Preston M. (Sandy) Fleet, has been elected National ATOS president. We all are looking forward to a great year for the society under his enthusiastic guidance.

During this summer interlude our membership chairman, Bob Brooks, with the dedicated help of member Myra Genter, published our new roster — it is really an outstanding booklet of which we are very proud. Many, many long hours went into its preparation and we are appreciative of the work Bob and Myra have done for our chapter.

August 26th was the date for our annual summer membership meeting-social-get-together held at the beautiful home of Jan White, high atop a hill, in Rancho Santa Fe. Picnic tables were set up on the lawn by the swimming pool, and there were two grand pianos and a brand new Conn 652 organ in the glass-enclosed music room. We had the pleasure of listening to Carol Jones and Col. Harry Jenkins, as well as many other members and guests. We have so much talent in our chapter that there is never a lack of musicians to provide entertainment.

It was announced at this time that Sandy Fleet had donated six additional ranks for our organ in the California Theatre and work has already begun on their installation.

The chairman told the meeting that October 28th would be the date for our opening concert at the California Theatre. All of our members are going to be working hard to make this the outstanding event of the season. Much interest has been shown by various San Diego civic organizations in our efforts to bring the sound of the Mighty Wurlitzer once again to the public in its original setting, and it is felt that our ef-

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forts are an important part of insuring the continuity of San Diego's historical tradition.

Sandy Fleet then told us about the exciting events being planned for the 1979 Southern California national convention and spoke briefly about the goals he hopes to achieve during his tenure of office as national president.

After the meeting was adjourned we gathered on the terrace. After much more beautiful music and enjoyable fellowship, the third annual August meeting came to a conclusion.

Now our various committees will be working hard to put on the best show ever at the California Theatre October 28th and to make the 1979 convention an outstanding event.

MARJORIE GREER

SOUTH FLORIDA

We promised Don Ursem a return engagement and return he did, to the heraldic salute of the Brass Trumpets, Tubas and Tibias of the Andre Wurlitzer.

Eighty-two people attended the kick-off meeting of our '78-'79 season, following a July recess to attend the Atlanta convention.

As before, Don's program was a

well-balanced blend of nostalgia and current favorites arranged with all the schmaltz of the most popular artists of the twenties. The Andre organ enjoys the benefit of bright acoustics and acute presence which, when combined with a capable artist provides pleasure to all.

Ahead awaits a visit from Lee Erwin with *The Phantom of the Opera* at Gusman Hall in October and a field trip to our West Florida organs, in November.

Look us up, you snow birds, and join the fun when you visit our Sunshine State.

STEVE FITZGERALD

VALLEY OF THE SUN

During the long, hot summer, life slows down some in Arizona. Our activities during July and August were basically informal gatherings.

Our July social meeting was held at the First Christian Church Fellowship Hall, where Chairman Bill Carr is in the process of installing a 2/12 Wurlitzer for the church. Our artist for the evening was twelve-year-old Jeff Orr, an organ student of chapter member Jack Framke. Though he only had three ranks to work with (and had to compete with a noisy windline), the boy did a fine job. We

hope to have him play for us again when the organ installation is completed. Following Jeff's program, we heard a report on the national convention in Atlanta, and were pleased to hear that the Phoenix-Tucson area was chosen as the site for the 1983 convention.

Jay Hein hosted our group in August. We discussed nominations for our upcoming election of officers. Later, some members enjoyed open console at Jay's Allen organ, while others sat in the backyard to view some slides taken of our organ crawl to the Los Angeles area in May.

On August 27th, several members of our group drove down to Tucson to hear a home organ concert featuring sixteen-year-old Lynn Staininger. Lynn was one of the four young people we presented in a program at the Mesa Organ Stop Pizza this past May. Our hosts in Tucson were Rudy and Bea Kotasek of the Southern Arizona Chapter. We thank them and Lynn for a very pleasant afternoon.

Some work has been done on the Phoenix College and First Christian Church Wurlitzers this summer, but many more hours still need to be devoted to both of these projects.

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16 Diaphone	8 Open Diapason	16 Tuba	8 Post Horn	ff Tibia	Set piston
16 Tibia Clausa	8 Tibia Clausa	16 Tibia Clausa (Tenor C)	8 Tuba	Tibia Bright	Cancel piston
16 Bourdon	8 Viol d'Orchestra	16 Vox Humana	8 Open Diapason	Tibia Sustain (Great)	Eight toe studs
8 Open Diapason	8 Salicional	8 Tuba	8 Tibia Clausa	(Accompaniment)	
8 Flute	8 Vox Humana	8 Open Diapason	8 Oboe		
8 Cello	4 Piccolo	8 Tibia Clausa	8 Solo String		
Pedal Sustain	4 Viol	8 Ciarinet	8 Piccolo		
Bass Drum	4 Snare Drum	8 Oboe	4 Glockenspiel (metal bar)		
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Cymbal	Chinese Block	5-1/3 Tibia Quint			
Pedal ff	Cymbal	4 Piccolo			
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		8 Piano			
		Piano ff			
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				Rock 1 (Moderate Rock)	
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