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WINTER, 1960-'61

# theatre organ

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF THEATRE ORGAN ENTHUSIASTS



Charles F. Smith and one of last F. W. Smith & Son organs built. See page 5.

Also in this Issue:

*"The Consoles are up in Richmond!"*

WURLITZER LIST • CHAPTER NEWS • Letters from Readers

# CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## NEW PUGET SOUND CHAPTER ORGANIZED.

On Tuesday evening, December 27, a number of A.T.O.E. members assembled at the Mt. Baker Theatre in Bellingham, Wash., and voted to form the Puget Sound Chapter.

Then Andy Crow at the console of the Wurlitzer presented a program in-



Andy Crow at console.

cluding, among others, these numbers: "Veradero," "Edelma," "Autumn Leaves", "Yours", "I've Got the World on a String", "My Happiness", "Love Is Here to Stay", "Granada", "Jingle Bells", and "White Christmas."

The Chapter members especially thank Fox-Evergreen and Leroy Kasher for the use of the theatre.



Chairman Bruce Jacobson and Secretary M. H. Strickland Jr., of Puget Sound Chapter.

## LAND O'LAKES

A business session of the Land O'Lakes Chapter was held early in January in the home of Herbert Dunkley, in Minneapolis. However, because Herb has a fine collection of organ records and an unusual Artisan electronic theatre organ, the meeting was not all business!

the Hiser theatre in Bethesda until last fall. It has been completely reconditioned and installed by Bob White; with the assistance of Darrell Stuckey. Darrell was the featured organist at the January 22 meeting.

On the evening of December 10, the Potomac Valley Chapter held its first Baltimore meeting in the State Theatre, with an excellent turnout of members and friends. The program was opened by guest organist Warren Glock, of Baltimore. He was followed by members Jimmy Boyce and Darrell Stuckey. Volunteers then provided the music for the rest of the night.

Chairman McAuliffe expresses the Chapter's thanks to White, Stuckey, Boyce, and Charles McClelland for the many hours put into the job of reconditioning and tuning the State Theatre Wurlitzer, and to Manager Timmy Rosenberger and his assistants, who were on hand "until the last note was played, to take care of the lighting, etc., and to see that everything was done to make the meeting a success."

Manager Rosenberger, says McAuliffe, will provide time on any evening for an organ interlude.

## POTOMAC VALLEY

A meeting was held on Sunday afternoon, January 22, in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Wendell Hill, Silver Spring, Md. The Hills' organ, according to John J. McAuliffe, Chapter chairman, is the 25 Marr & Colton that was in

## CONNECTICUT

On November 25, at 11:30 p.m., a group of about 100 specially invited organ enthusiasts gathered at the Allyn Theatre in Hartford for a concert

( Turn to page 13)

## CHAPTER CHAIRMEN AND SECRETARIES

### Delaware Valley

Chairman - Richard Loderhose, 84-25 Radnor, Jamica, Long Island, N.Y.  
Secretary - Don Reichert, 27 Alice Lane, Clark, New Jersey

### Northern California

Chairman - Francis Aebi, 537 Brookside Dr., Richmond 10, Calif.  
Secretary - Frank E. Bronson, 2545 Alameda St., Vallejo, Calif.

### Potomac Valley

Chairman - J. J. McAuliffe, Rt. 1, Box 331, Oakton, Va.  
Sec.-Treas. - Mrs. Louise Bartlett, P. O. Box 67, Oakton, Va.

### Niagara Frontier

Chairman - Myron Limburg, 76 Dexter Terrace, Tonawanda, N.Y.  
Secretary - Laura Thomas, 3534 Bowen Road, Lancaster, N.Y.

### Mid-West

Chairman - Kay McAbee, High Road R-3, Lockport, Ill.  
Secretary - John Seng, c/o Jack Gibbs, 7333 N. Bell Ave., Chicago 45, Ill.

### Land O'Lakes

Chairman - Byron Carlson, 4132 Oakland Ave., Minneapolis 7, Minn.  
Secretary - Donald R. Taft, 5309 Bernard Ave., N., Minneapolis 22, Minn.

### Ohio Valley

Chairman - Herbert C. Wottle, 2846 Madison Road, Cincinnati 9, Ohio  
Secretary - Joan A. Wottle ( same address)

### Dallas

Chairman - Walter Kuehne, 4106 South Better, Dallas, Texas  
Secretary - E. W. Johnson Jr., 5436 Glenwick Lane, Dallas, Texas

### Connecticut

Chairman - Allen R. Miller, 383 Forbes St., East Hartford 8, Conn.  
Secretary - Joseph M. Tobin, 1565 Blvd., West Hartford, Conn.

### Puget Sound

Chairman - Bruce R. Jacobson, 930 Indian St., Bellingham, Wash.  
Secretary - M. H. Strickland Jr., P. O. Box 457, Bellingham, Wash.

### Eastern Massachusetts

Chairman - Al Winslow, 1 Fairbanks Rd., Foxboro, Mass.  
Secretary - Bob Thompson, 9 Gardner Rd., Norwood, Mass.

# theatre organ

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF THEATRE ORGAN ENTHUSIASTS

THE EDITOR NOTES . . .

**REMEMBER?**

Many a bold slogan, many a famous line, and many a tender love song begin with something to remember. Battles have been fought, wars started, and much violence has persisted because of unwillingness to forget. To most of us, to remember is not to recall alone. It includes recalling with a purpose, with feeling. The feeling that accompanies the memory establishes its outcome.

Occasionally something dramatic appears that catches the imagination of multitudes. This event can be a solo flight across the Atlantic. A hero overnight is taken into the hearts of much of the world and forever remains, dimmed only slightly by the solo flight of Time. An archduke may be murdered and start a war that embroils the entire world. Yet most of the world's happenings, even those that capture for a moment, pass into history or into oblivion.

Seldom, indeed, do we, as a people, see events clearly enough to permit our recognizing their value at once. We are inclined more to watch and wait until the sands of time have sifted and we shall see what history has destined.

Moods are recalled with greater fidelity than events. One remembers that a scene was breath taking, or that music was magnificent, or that a performance was inspired. Or one recalls that he was angered, hurt, or disappointed.

Time will fade brilliant colors, erode sharp peaks, and smooth out a landscape. It does the same to our memories. A mountain is still a mountain, even though some of it becomes the valley beneath. A forest is still a forest while many of its trees rot at the feet of others. Flowers wither into dust. Other flowers bloom with the next Spring, and again the air is a perfumed zephyr.

Memories are the stuff of which dreams and poetry are made. For the benefit of our present needs we recall the moods of the past. As an excuse for venting our anger, we recall unrevenged sufferings. With enough misery for the present,

we drift back in time to a moment when we were joyfully happy. We may do this in an easy manner, an effortless trip into an enchanted land. Unless it at one time lived in the heart of a man, no memory is possible.

Each of us is today the sum total of all his yesterdays. We can omit none, we may acquire no others. If these yesterdays once were happy todays, then their memories are recreated joy. If one cannot recall the past without the intrusion of unhappy thoughts then he knows again a sad today. With the passing of time go friends and moments that one would have live on forever. If one can say to himself, in whole truth, that he did what he could on that occasion to make a life happier, lighter, or easier; then he is rewarded again. To stand in this position, one must live today. He must take the hand that friendship extends to him now. He must say the comforting word while the ear still can hear it; he must bestow the kiss while the lips are sweetly warm.

Memories of lost opportunities will be with us always. Always we shall be able to look back and see a path taken in error. For someone who is now beyond our reach we shall review moments we could have brightened. We look forward to great things. We shall make restitutions for our thoughtless acts then. We may reflect images of the past in which we failed, when we withheld the effort needed to make the image pleasant. No matter how one counts his time, he lives only today. He may relive parts of yesterdays, adding their ingredients again into the events of today. But the kind word is spoken now or not at all. The hand not clasped now is rejected. In memory only can one reach back into the past. In action today one stores memories for tomorrow with happiness. This he can share forever without diminishing its pleasure to give or to receive.

Of Myself, Abraham Cowley said:

*I would not fear nor wish my fate,  
But boldly say each night,  
Tomorrow let my sun his beams display,  
Or in clouds hide them; I have lived today.*

A.T.O.E.

President's Column	4
Chapter Activities	2
Wurlitzer List	12
Letters	14

ARTICLES

Smith & Son Organs	5
Richmond (Va.) Organs	10

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## THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by

*Judd Walton*

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**OUR RESPONSIBILITIES**

O

In the early days of A.T.O.E., when many Theatre Organ Enthusiasts were discovering the organization for the first time, we received many, many letters which all contained a phrase identical in meaning, if not in exact wording: "I thought I was the only one in the whole world who still loved the theatre organ." Practically all of the writers went on to express their delight at discovery of A.T.O.E. and fellow hobbyists with whom to share their interests. As a matter of fact, we still receive many such letters from long-lost enthusiasts just now finding their way out of solitary confinement!

E

The point is that it is in the sharing that one finds the realization of true enjoyment. Sharing, however, can appear in many forms. Chapter Meetings, unexpected calls from visiting enthusiasts "just traveling through and I wondered if I might stop by", correspondence, playing and listening to an organ, collecting old records or purchasing new releases, installing a pipe organ in your home - "it won't take up much room, honey, and I can get it for practically nothing" -- these are all forms of sharing our mutually enjoyable hobby. The visits, the music, the work and the grime are all part and parcel of good times -- but without sharing, it becomes less appealing and sometimes pointless.

Another form of sharing that is of vital importance to all of us who enjoy the activities of A.T.O.E. and its Chapters -- or any other similar organization, for that matter -- is SERVING! A recent study made in the Pacific Northwest revealed that less than 1% of the members of all organizations surveyed were willing to SERVE their organizations. The members simply did not want to share the responsibility of carrying on the very activities which they as members enjoyed.

A.T.O.E. is not exempt from this law of human behavior. (Would that it could be repealed!). We have learned that some of our Chapters have had difficulty in electing new officers to direct their activities. This is indeed regrettable, and we may consider ourselves very fortunate to have had the volunteer services of so many fine people, past and present!

As my second and final term draws to a close, these matters have come into focus more clearly. On the one hand I will be glad to be relieved of my duties and perhaps then spend more time on my own organ project. (Who knows, I may some day even get it completed, although perhaps secretly hoping I won't!!!) On the other hand, however, I must be concerned that my successor will carry on the duties and responsibilities of the office. I am re-assured as I assess the possible candidates, knowing that among them are none who would assume the duties and shirk the responsibilities.

So even in our hobby -- in our fellowship and our fun, we must look to the future and OUR part in making the theatre organ a lasting hobby. For after all, there is only one person who can really guarantee that the theatre organ will never die; who must give it the time and the attention and love it must have to nourish it -- and that person is the one now sitting in your chair!

We are pleased to report that as a result of our last column statement, and help from ads in The American Organist and The Diapason, our membership has now passed the 900 mark. This insures the continued success of A.T.O.E. and Theatre Organ. A.T.O.E. Membership is Four Dollars per year, and includes a subscription to Theatre Organ, for the four issues produced for that fiscal year. 1960 members will receive the four issues of Volume II, and 1961 members will receive the four issues of Volume III, etc. Membership subscriptions do not start with the "current issue", but are retroactive to the first issue of the year in which membership is paid.

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SEE PAGE 10 FOR ANNUAL MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

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# THE SMITH UNIT ORGANS



By Douglas Marion

Can you imagine how a Model T buff of today, perhaps born several years after the last such car was built, would feel if he could meet the late Henry Ford? Or even be able to be in the shop where the first Model T was built? Such was my feeling when I met Charles F. Smith, son of Frederick W. Smith, founder of the SMITH ORGAN COMPANY. Such an opportunity is rare indeed, and perhaps I can extend to you through the medium of the printed page some of the thrill that I experienced on this occasion!

But first, Charlie's story. His dad, F.W. Smith, who passed away in 1948, was an Englishman who was an organ builder in 1892 when he met Robert Hope-Jones in England. They combined forces at the Birkenhead shop, and later, in 1903, Smith came to America. He associated himself with Ernest M. Skinner as designer, and it was Smith who, in 1905, first conceived the horse-shoe-shaped console arrangement of the stop tabs.

It was during this association that Hope-Jones said of his friend and collaborator, "The man at the head of our building department is Mr. F. W. Smith, than whom there is not a more skilled or scientific organ builder in America. Mr. Smith has been closely associated with me for many years."

In 1912, Smith established his own organ business at North Tonawanda, N.Y., which he called The Smith Organ Co., Inc. His product was called "THE SMITH ORCHESTRAL ORGAN." From that date on, the chronological development of the Smith Organ is

Winter, 1960-61

F. W. Smith, designer and inventor, playing a three manual Smith Unit Organ.

quite complex and interesting, taking on many names in combination with Smith.

In 1917, Smith combined forces with the J. P. Seeburg Company, and the plant was moved to 419 West Erie, Chicago, Ill. Thus the famed Seeburg-Smith got its name. Then in 1922, Seeburg's interest was purchased by Mr. Harry Hogan, and the operation was moved to Geneva, Ill. It was then that the organs were called Geneva-Smith Unit Organs.

Smith separated himself from this partnership after a few years, and moved to Alameda, California, in November of 1923. He established the Smith Organ Company, assuming the original company name for the operation. Some of the organs produced in Alameda by Smith were sold by the Leatherby Company of San Francisco, and these were called Leatherby-Smith Organs.

Finally, in 1924, Smith sent for his son Charles, who joined his father in a partnership called F. W. Smith and Son at the Alameda location. There the operation continued until the company ceased activity entirely in early 1928. This, then, accounts for the many names found on the Smith Organs.

Basically, the Smith organ construction did not change even though business relationships did. The chests were built with a side-mounted pneumatic which opens the pipe valve on the old Roosevelt Chest pattern.\* Or-

gans for theatres were built with relay and chest primaries, and those for churches were built without primaries. The price differential was about 10%. Pipes were never made by this firm, but were purchased from Gottfried (reeds) and from Samuel Pierce, Reading, Mass., (flues), now known as Dennison. Percussions were from Lyon & Healy of Chicago and Deagan and Kehler. Actually constructed, therefore, were the consoles, relays, chests, reservoirs, actions and other appurtenances.

Charlie Smith estimates that about 1000 instruments were made and sold during the companies' career, mostly theatre organs. They were designed for 8 and 10 inch pressure. A complete list of installations does not exist, although a partial list is included here.

Charlie has continued in the organ game ever since the close of the business in Alameda, except during the last World War. He has rebuilt many organs in the Bay Area, and continues his regular service work today. He has all of the factory drawings, patent papers, tools, catalogues, and correspondence in his possession and this is fantastically interesting reading! He still makes switches, valves, pneumatics, and relay parts for Smith organs.

\* Small chests holding one rank were commonly used; three ranks was the maximum size built. They are very compact.

It was he who finally convinced his father to give up making the Smith Magnet (which gave trouble due to its slow operation) and to adopt the Reiser Magnet, used in all of the companies, later work. He still makes chests for Smith organs on order.

In other words, in a real sense, the

Smith THEATRE ORGAN still lives today through the efforts and devotion of Charlie Smith. Persons interested can contact Charlie by writing to him at 1295-78th Ave., Oakland California.

I give you Charles Frederic Smith, an organ factory worker at 12, draftsman at 17, general organ building superintendent, installer, builder and all-around fine fellow!

## PARTIAL LIST OF SMITH ORGANS

### California

Orpheum	Oakland
Garden	Burlingame
Golden Gate Theatre	Oakland
Lincoln	San Francisco
Orpheum	San Rafael
1st Cong. Church	Oakland X
California	Pittsburg
Turlock	Turlock
Verdi	San Francisco
Piedmont	Piedmont
	(Oakland)
Art Gallery	Coronado
Pasadena	Pasadena
Liberty	Fort Bragg
Hotel Leamington	Oakland
Hippodrome	Napa
Glendora	Glendora
Christian Sci. Church	Oakland X
Egyptian	Long Beach
United	Eagle Rock
New Fruitvale	Oakland
Home	Long Beach
Hayward	Hayward
United	Anaheim
15th St. M. E. Church	Oakland

### New York

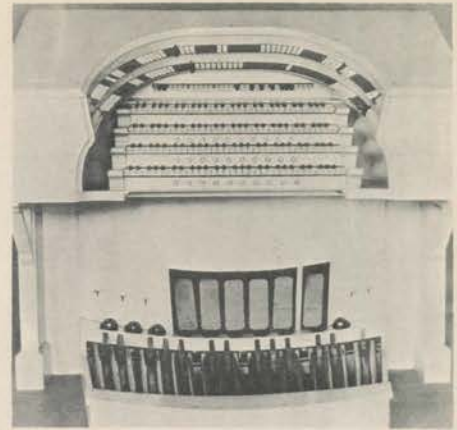
West Chester	Mt. Vernon
34th Street	New York City
R. Catholic Church	Buffalo
Superior	New York City
Belmont	New York City
Strand	New York City
Cosmo	New York City
Plaza	New York City
De Lancy	New York City
R. Catholic	Buffalo
Capitol	New York City
Belmont	New York City
Rivoli	New York City
Columbia	Far Rockaway
Mason Lodge	Buffalo
Beverly	Brooklyn
Forest Hill	Long Island City

### Pennsylvania

Shiloh	Mt. Washington
Metropolitan	Pittsburg
Frederick	East Pittsburg
Bison	Brownsville
Wick	Kittaning
Bellevue	Bellevue
Iris	Vandergrift
Sedler	East Pittsburg
Charles Johns	Republic
Venango	Oil City
Orpheum	Franklin
Main	Sharpsburg
Grant	Millville
Braddock	Braddock
Regent	Beaver Falls
Wm. Penn	New Castle
Majestic	Rochester
A. S. Maple	Point Marion
Beedle and Sons	Cannonsburg
Stahl	Homestead
Grand	Butler
Lyric	Butler
Polk	Mt. Washington
Smith	Greenfield
Grand	Greensburg
Brown	Brooklyn
Elliott	Elliott
Strand	Greensburg
Eagle	Jeanette
Liberty	McKeesport

### Illinois

New President	Chicago
Swedish Church	Chicago
Biltmore	Chicago
Brookline	Chicago
Blaine	Chicago
Bell	Chicago
Fischer	Danville
M. E. Church	Chicago
Peerless	Chicago
Wicker Park	Chicago
Fox	Aurora
Rialto	Elgin



The largest Smith built was this four manual installed in Forest Hill Theatre, Long Island City, New York (see next page). Smith Organs had the stops arranged by family, i.e., Bourdon 16', Flute 8', Flute 4', Twelfth 2-2/2', Piccolo 2' followed by perhaps String 8', String 4', rather than the usual groupings of all 8' stops together in order of their loudness, followed by the 4' stops, etc.

### Virginia

Olympic	Portsmouth
America	Norfolk
Wells	Norfolk
Granby	Norfolk
Bijou	Richmond

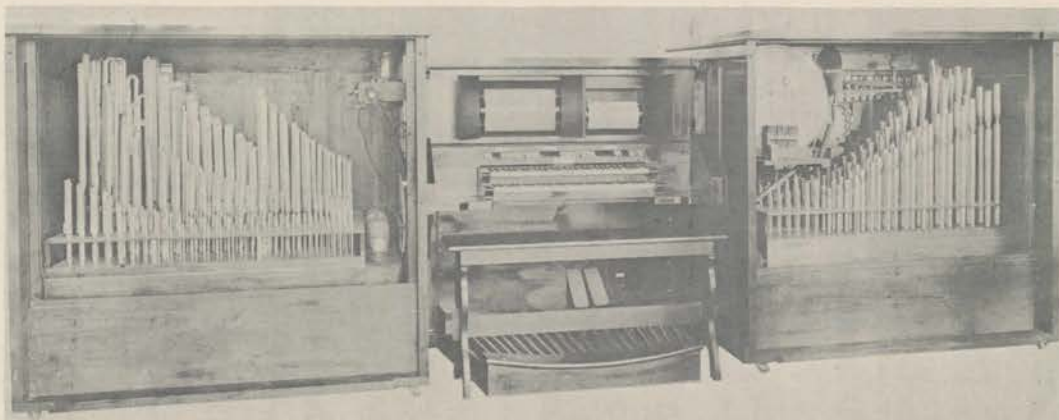
### Indiana

Washington	Richmond
Rialto	Indianapolis
Sourwine	Brazil
Riviera	Anderson
La Salle	South Bend
Castle	South Bend
Orpheum	Elkhart
Lincoln	Goshen
Alhambra	Indianapolis
Luna	Lafayette
Mars	Lafayette

### Miscellaneous

Palace	Muscatine, Iowa
Fulton	Jersey City, N.J.
Strand	Wichita Falls, Tex.

( Turn to next page )



A Smith pit organ with flute, string, clarinet, trumpet, vox, percussions and traps, double tracker bar player on piano console. Lower manual did not have 88 keys as found on Wurlitzer, but 61 keys.

# Forest Hill Theatre Smith Orchestral Organ, Long Island, N. Y.

MAIN Chamber	Compass Pipes Pres.		Pedal		Accomp.		Acc. 2nd T.	Great	Great 2nd T.	Solo	Echo
Tuba	8'-4'	73	10''	8-4	8	8	8	8-4	8	8	
Trumpet	8'	61	10''	8		8		8		8	
Open Diapason	16'-4'	85	10''	16-8-4		8		16-8-4		8	
Oboe Horn	8'	61	10''	8		8		8		8	
Kinura	8'	61	10''					8		8	Amplex 8
<b>SOLO CHAMBER</b>											
Tibia Clausa	8'-4'	73	10''	32r-8-4	32r	8-4		8		8-4	
Gamba	16'-4'	85	10''	↑16-8	↑8	16-8-		8	16-8-4	8	16-8 Amplex 8
Violin	8'-2'	85	10''			8		8-4-2		8	Amplex 8
Viol Celeste	8'-4'	73	10''			8		8-4		8	
Clarinet	8'	61	10''	↓8	↓	8		8	16-8	8	8 Amplex 8
Flute-Bourdon	16'-2'	97	10''	32r-16-8	32r	16-8-4-2 2/3-2		16-8-4-2 2/3-2		8-4	
Vox Humana	8'	61	6''					16-8-4		8	
<b>ECHO CHAMBER</b>											
Flute	8'-2'	85	6								8-4-2
Violin	8'-4'	73	6								8-4
Cor Anglais	8'	61	6								8
Vox Humana	8'	61	6								16-8-4
Chimes		20									x
<b>PERCUSSION CHAMBER</b>											
Marimba		49				x		x vib. stroke	x	8-4-2 2/3	Single Stroke
Xylophone		37						x	x	x	
Glockenspiel - re-it.		37					x	x		x	
Orchestra Bells*		37						x		x	
Chrysoglott		49						x			
Chimes		20						x		x	
Bass Drum*				x							
Kettle Drum - re-it.				x							
Cymbal*				x							
Roll Cymbal - re-it.				x							
Chinese Crash Cymbal	Toe Piston			x							
Snare Drum						x					
Tambourine						x					
Castenets						x					
Chinese Block						x					
Tom Tom						x					
Triangle									x		
Surf				ToePiston							
Couplers				S8-G8-A8		S8		S8	G4-G16-S8-E8	S8	Amplex - S8
Pistons				3		10		10		10	

## NOTES ON CHART

- \* means single stroke
- Tubas to be very bright and penetrating
- Vox Humana Large Scale
- Clarinet larger scale
- Echo Cor Anglais made with Brass Bells
- Marimba - vibrato double touch (we presume re-it)
- General Crescendo
- General Swell
- One Swell for Flutes, Strings, Vox Humana, etc.
- One Swell Pedal for Percussions
- One Swell Pedal for Heavy reeds and remainder of organ.
- Three stop keys for connecting all 3 swell pedals to the General Swell Pedal
- One stop key for controlling Swells from Manual on all Swells from Great Organ Orgoble 1700 rpm.
- Generator
- Tenuto Arrangement - organist can hold chord on one or two manuals by holding down toe piston after chord is played.
- Console and stool old ivory finish
- Console light
- Toe Pistons - Chinese Crash Cymbal
- Surf
- Manual Tenuto Hold

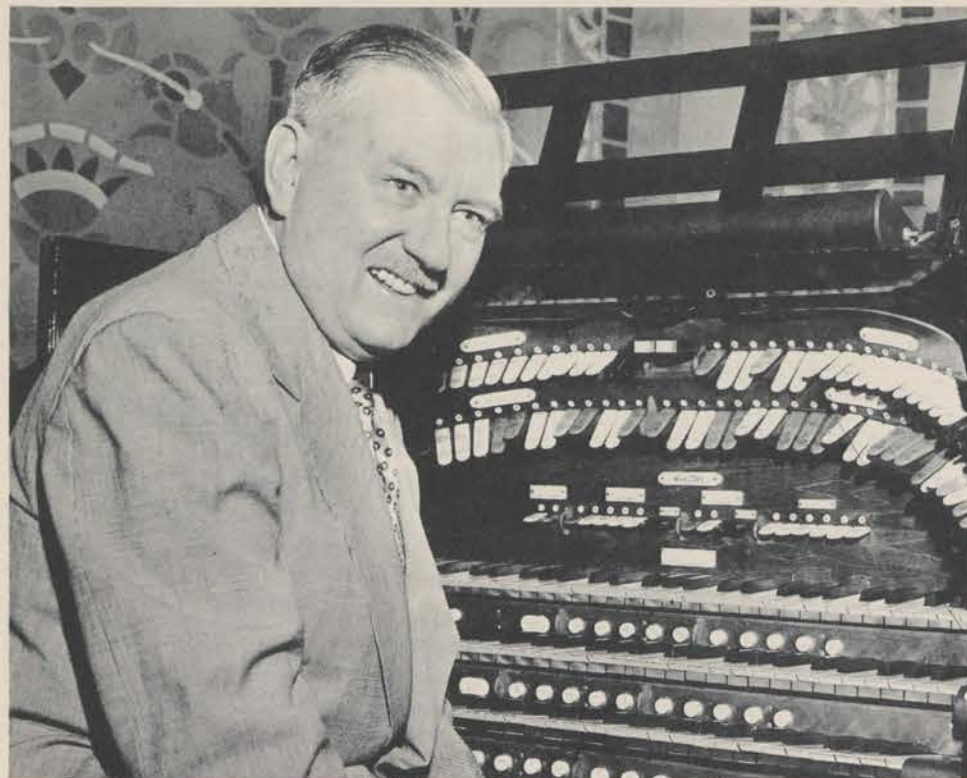
## PARTIAL LIST OF SMITH ORGANS

Miscellaneous ( Con't ).

Rex	Wierton, W. Va.
Rialto	Stanford, Conn.
Lincoln	Union Hill, N.J.
Casino	Greenville, S.C.
Castonian	Castonia, N.C.
Imperial	Charlotte, N.C.
Rialto	Boone, Iowa
Strand	Waterloo, Iowa
Riviera	Niles, Mich.
Liberty	Beaumont, Tex.
Lyceum	Winnipeg, Man.
Strand	Bandon, Man.
Paramount	Lake Charles, La.
Garrick	Madisonville, Ky.
Stoughton	Stoughton, Wis.

AND MANY OTHERS

(X-Rebuilt)



Foort at the 3/17 Mosque Wurlitzer, Richmond.

## REGINALD FOORT

One of the "all-time greats" of the organ world, "Reggie" Foort, was the top European concert and recording organist for 25 years, before he moved to America in 1951. Since coming to this country, this British-born artist has not only made outstanding classical recordings of the great organ in the Boston Symphony Hall, but with his popular organ records made at the Acca Temple Mosque Wurlitzer in Richmond, Va., he started the current revival of theatre organ music in America.

A man of remarkable energy, precision, and imagination, Foort is one of those rare organists equally at home with Bach or "rock". Educated at Rugby and the Royal College of Music in London, he received the coveted degree of Fellow of the Royal College of Organists (F.R.C.O.) at the age of 17. After five years in the Royal Navy during World War I, and several years of serious piano study under a pupil of Leschetizky, Foort began his meteoric career as a theatre organist in 1925. His activities from that moment on were characterized by "firsts".

Foort, in 1926, was the first organist in Europe to broadcast on, as well as the first to make a recording of, a Wurlitzer theatre organ. When the British Broadcasting Company set up its organ department in 1937, Foort was chosen over hundreds of applicants as its staff organist. With his own theme song, "Keep Smiling", his friendly chit-chat, and his superb artistry, Foort so endeared himself to the British public that he was named first

in the radio popularity poll conducted by the London *Daily Express*, circulation 4 million, winning out over all other entertainers, actors and orchestras. And as the most popular organist of England and Europe, he opened 43 new theatres, played over 2,000 radio and TV programs in twelve different countries, to which he piloted his own plane, and somehow also found time to make more records than any other organist on the Continent - over 200.

Perhaps the most spectacular undertaking of Foort's career was his 25-ton "traveling organ". After several years at B.B.C., he resigned to tour the vaudeville theatres of Great Britain with a 5-manual 27-rank specially designed and constructed Moller Theatre Organ. To transport the console, the 2,000 pipes, and the many electrical and mechanical units, Foort used five 30-foot long 13-foot high trucks, and carried with him a staff of 14 organ builders, electricians, stage riggers, etc., to reassemble the giant instrument in each theatre.

When the advent of World War II ended this project, the organ was sold to B.B.C., and Foort undertook a rigorous schedule of giving five recitals a week, each in a different town or city, in churches and concert halls throughout Great Britain. He maintained this pace for ten years before coming to America on Christmas Day 1951, to join an organ venture in Suffolk, Va.

Shortly after his arrival from Eng-  
(Turn to page 10)

# The Consoles are up in Richmond!

By Mac Murrill

With three theatre organs still in active use, Richmond, Virginia, has laid claim to the title; "Theatre Organ Capital of America". In support, Richmond organ enthusiasts point to the following: Eddie Weaver, who for nearly three decades was in the live organ spot at Richmond's Loew's Theater; the Byrd Theatre Wurlitzer, revived three years ago, featured Harold Warner nightly at the console until his recent death; and the famous Mosque Wurlitzer, like the previous two, is kept in first-class condition, and is played for many of the public functions held there.

In addition, a dozen recordings on Richmond theatre organs have been made in recent years by Reginald Foort, Dick Leibert, Ann Leaf, and others.

What are the fortunate circumstances which have led to all of this theatre organ activity in a world of talking pictures and Cinemascope screens?

Let us go back to the silent movie days in Richmond. The mighty theatre pipe organ, an instrument of almost unlimited musical resources, was at its peak of popularity in this entertainment world of over thirty years ago. Every movie house at that time boasted of its "giant organ", used to provide the mood-music and sound-effects for the silent "flickers", as well as a

spectacular novelty solo at intermission time, and accompaniment for the between-reel community sings. This was the era when Jesse Crawford and Ann Leaf were national idols. In Richmond a dozen organs were pouring forth throbbing, spine-tingling music at the old Bluebird, Isis, Bijou, Lyric, National, Colonial, and Strand, as well as at the newer Brookland, Capitol, Mosque, Loew's and Byrd theatres. Even the Tantilla Garden Ballroom had its own pipe organ for between-dance interludes.

Then all of this was changed. With the introduction of talking pictures in 1928, the expensive organs and organists were no longer needed, and theatre organs throughout the country gradually fell silent. Today it is difficult to find a city with a theatre organ playing. Even in New York, only one, at the Radio City Music Hall, is still regularly featured.

But in Richmond the glorious organ music was not forgotten. Although many of the organs here vanished during the Dark Ages (1928-1952), and others went into a more sedate existence - such as the fine Brookland Theatre Wurlitzer now in the Broad Street Methodist Church - fortunately, due to far-sighted managers and some talented

(Turn to page 10)



Weaver at the 4/17 Byrd Wurlitzer, Richmond.

## EDDIE WEAVER

Edward J. Weaver, a genial fellow with a ready smile and a quick wit, was born in Catasauqua, Pa. in 1908. He learned piano from his mother and later studied violin for five years. At the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N. Y., Eddie mastered the church and concert organ, but when someone offered him \$100 to learn to play a theatre organ to accompany silent pictures in a Rochester movie house, his career was determined. After playing in various theatres in New York and in Florida, he went to New Haven in 1926 where he was a star attraction for ten years. Eddie learned some of his organ tricks from Henry Murtagh in Buffalo and from Jesse Crawford and his wife in New Haven. Even today Eddie can give out with a "Crawfordese" glissando which is close to Jesse's best.

The author first met Eddie while a student in New Haven and recalls the many pleasant moments spent listening to his organ numbers at the Paramount, and later dancing to his 15-piece band, which Eddie directed from the Hammond, at the Hotel Taft. It was a delightful surprise, then, on returning to Richmond, to find that Eddie had preceded him here by a few months. That was in 1937, and Eddie Weaver, "Weaver of Songs", was a main feature at Richmond's Loew's Theatre from that time until very recently.

It is not difficult to understand Eddie's long popularity in his three jobs: at Loew's Wurlitzer (three to four shows daily for 24 years), at the Ham-

mond, playing luncheon and fashion show music, in nearby Miller and Rhoads department store tea room (21 years), and on his daily morning radio show over WRNL (10 years). His technique is flawless, sprightly and imaginative, whether he is playing Chopin or Chacha. He has a bubbling personality and a keen sense of humor, and his wit and originality have always shown up in his steady production of new and interesting organ novelties - which must have been quite a trick to keep turning out after more than 20 years at the same stand. (For these, as well as his original parodies of popular songs, Eddie credits his wife and his daughter, Joan, an English teacher, with assistance).

One of Eddie's spectacular organ interludes, which run from three to nine minutes in length following the song-slide "community sing", features Eddie playing three tunes at once: "There's a Long, Long Trail A-Winding" with his right hand, "Keep the Home Fires Burning" with the left, and "Just a Song at Twilight" on the pedals. (If you think it's easy, just try in on your own Wurlitzer!) For another novelty, Eddie plays the "Minute Waltz" in a minute, racing against a clockhand projected on the screen. His imitation of various types of organs and organists from church to steam calliope and from Jesse Crawford to Ethel Smith is most realistic, while his famous horn-pipe dance (dancing out the tune on the pedals) and

(Turn to page 10)

Below: Warner at the 4/17 Byrd Wurlitzer, Richmond.





## THE CONSOLES ARE UP IN RICHMOND! (continued)

and dedicated individuals, Richmond's three largest organs at the Loew's, Byrd, and Mosque survived the changing times, and have been thrilling a new generation of audiences with their mighty sounds.

At the Loew's Theatre, the live organ spot on the three-manual, thirteen rank Wurlitzer has been a constant drawing card for audiences ever since the theatre first opened on April 9, 1928. The Loew's astute management has kept the organ playing daily from that day to the present, setting a record unmatched in any other American city. A succession of good organists has played there: Lloyd (Wild) Oscar, Tim Crawford (no relation to Jesse), Waldo Newberry, Bill Dalton, and Felix Gotschalk, who played the morning radio broadcasts. But the "Old Master" was Eddie Weaver, who delighted audiences daily at Loew's until very recently-in fact, over a period of 24 years.

When the Byrd Theatre opened on Christmas Eve, 1928, Richmonders were greeted with the music of the "largest theatre organ in the South". And despite the "talkies", born the same year, the mighty four-manual seventeen rank Wurlitzer in the Byrd was featured with each show for more than a dozen years, beautifully played by Carl Rond, Art Brown, Bill Dalton, Slim Mathews, "Paul Nelson" (Winston Nevell), "Bob Mack" (Bob McComb), Waldo Newberry, and others. And even after the organ spots were

### HAROLD WARNER SUFFERS FATAL HEART ATTACK

Harold L. Warner, Jr., died of a heart attack suffered in the organ chamber of the Mosque, Richmond, Va., on Monday, February 13, 1961. Many A.T.O.E. members will remember that Warner received nation-wide recognition in an ad featured by the Bell Telephone Company and carried in most leading magazines several years ago.

Warner had been in telephone contact with A.T.O.E. President Judd Walton regarding plans for the National Convention to be held in Richmond in June, many times in the weeks immediately preceding his death. He was very enthusiastic about the coming event, and although the matter has been debated since his passing, it has been decided to carry out plans for the meeting in Richmond, as it is an almost sure thing that Warner would have wanted it that way.

He had apparently stopped in at the Mosque to work on the Wurlitzer he loved so well on his way home from work. He was stricken about 4 P. M. and was found in a sitting position the next morning by workmen who saw the lights on and heard the blower running. He still held a pair of wires he had been working on in his hands.

discontinued (a World War II casualty), the theatre manager, Robert Coulter, jealously guarded his fine instrument against rats, children, and time; so that today, thanks to his wise policy, the Byrd organ is still in tip-top shape.

The huge and exotic Acca Temple Mosque opened on January 9, 1928 featuring spectacular stage shows and movies. Early organists at the console of the three-manual, seventeen rank Mosque Wurlitzer were Charles J. Possa, Waldo Newberry, and Ferdinand Himmelreich. The last was a blind organist whose wife sat on the organ bench with him to cue his playing to the action on the screen.

After the Mosque was closed down as a movie house during the depression, the building was little used for almost a decade until it was acquired by the City of Richmond as a civic center. Fortunately, during this time, the organ chambers on the fifth floor level were locked and inaccessible to plunderers. However, years of dust and neglect had made the organ unusable, and when renovation bids ran as high as \$30,000, the city decided to junk the instrument. At this critical moment, Harold Warner, a telephone company employee, offered to donate his services in restoring the organ (see The Tibia, Fall 1956).

For two years, with the help of some other enthusiasts, he spent his spare time renovating the organ, an action which earned him the Sertoma Service to Mankind Award from the mayor of Richmond, and national recognition from the Bell Telephone Company. Today the beautiful Mosque organ is again in use for public concerts such as the recent ones by David Ulrich and Reginald Foort, as well as being featured with visiting symphony orchestras and at conventions, graduations, and such events as the Kiwanis travelogues, when genial Russell MacDonald presides at the console.

It was the revival of the Mosque organ which catapulted Richmond into international fame in the organ world. Shortly after the instrument was restored, Cook Laboratories of Stamford, Conn. made some high fidelity recordings at the Mosque of Reginald Foort, England's top theatre organist. With the records, it issued an illustrated folder about the Mosque organ. When the Foort Mosque records were exhibited in the Audio Show at the New Yorker Hotel in October 1952, the "tweeter-and-woofer" set took to them en masse, and interest in the theatre organ, with its challenge of extreme range in pitch, dynamics, and color, crescendoed into a revival of appreciation for the long-neglected Wurlitzers, Mortons, et al. in America. Soon scores of other recording companies jumped on the "one-man-band" wagon.

The close of the First Golden Era of the Theatre Organ, precipitated in

## REGINALD FOORT (Cont.)

land, Foort was asked by Emory Cook to make a theatre organ recording for the high fidelity "Sounds of Our Times" series. The search for a theatre organ in good playing condition ended happily when Reggie was introduced to the Mosque Wurlitzer by Harold Warner, Jr., who had just completed a two-year renovation of the instrument. Foort's four LP releases on the Mosque organ started a boom in organ recordings which is still in progress.

Foort, who has a grown son and daughter, lives in Chicago, where he is with the Organ Division of the Baldwin Piano Company. He still finds time to make recordings on various organs throughout the country, as well as give public concerts, such as the one in 1959 at the Mosque sponsored by the Richmond Organ Enthusiasts Club.

Very enthusiastic about America and particularly American automobiles, Reggie is the opposite number to the American foreign-car addict.

"The last four cars I owned in England were American," he says. "I never get tired of driving, even in Chicago in the rush hour!"

Of the Mosque organ, Foort says: "I consider this organ, with its setting in the unique acoustics of the Mosque, as the finest I have ever played."

### EDDIE WEAVER (cont.)

his "haunted organ" act are real classics of showmanship. But he is at his very best when he features one of his arrangements of a classical number or a popular ballad "dressed up" in all the subtleties of the Weaver registration and nuance.

Someone should record this fellow!

1928 by the introduction of the "talkies", had culminated with the shutdown of the North Tonawanda factory in 1943 when the remaining stocks of Tibias and Flutes were burned and the Trumpets, Tubas, etc. were smashed into junk. And though a few consoles, such as the Loew's, remained lighted

(Turn to next page)

### ANNUAL MEETING - - 1961

A.T.O.E. will go to Richmond, Virginia for its annual meeting. The arrangements have been made, and the Mosque and Byrd Theatres will be the sites of our concerts. Saturday afternoon and evening, June 24th, were chosen as the best available time when these organs could be had exclusively. Further announcement will follow shortly, and details will be given as they become certain. With the death of Harold Warner, this meeting and its music are projected as a tribute to his tireless efforts - - we know he'll be listening.

## THE CONSOLES ARE UP! (continued)

during the benighted decades of canned theatre music, we may properly mark the beginning of the Second Golden Era with the Foort recordings in 1952 at the Richmond Mosque.

In the wake of this revived interest there sprang up a national organization the American Theatre Organ Enthusiasts, and two organ magazines, Al Miller's *Kinura* and the A.T.O.E.'s *Tibia*, predecessor to *Theatre Organ*. The story of the Mosque organ was carried in these and foreign magazines, as well as in nationwide advertisements of the Bell Telephone Company.

"The Mosque organ has brought this city a great deal of publicity and good will," says Marshall Rotella, Richmond's Chief of the Bureau of Recreation, who manages the Mosque. "Visitors from as far away as Australia have stopped to see the organ they have heard so much about."

Besides Foort's three recording sessions at the Mosque which have produced for LP records, another top company, Westminster Records, has turned out several recordings here in Richmond. Dick Leibert, Radio City Music Hall organist, had tried out the Byrd organ more than 25 years ago. When the Westminster people wanted him to do a theatre organ recording in 1956, he remembered the lush sound of this organ and suggested that it be done here. The result was the album "Leibert Takes Richmond", which besides its stirring music contains several pages of photographs and descriptions of the Byrd instrument. The following year Leibert returned with Ann Leaf and Graham Jackson for another session at the Byrd to produce several more outstanding records.

"We have a fine instrument here at the Byrd," says Robert Coulter, manager, "and I am happy that it is being heard both in the theatre and throughout the country on the Westminster recordings."

The unique sound of the high wind-pressure orchestral-voiced theatre organ, with its mellow tibias and flutes, shimmering strings, distinctive reeds, brilliant brass trumpets, and tinkling and crashing percussions, cannot be conveyed in words. However, a close look at the Byrd Wurlitzer, the largest in Richmond, will reveal that the term "mighty" applies to more than just its tone. Built at a cost of between \$30,000 and \$40,000 (1928 value), the Byrd organ is housed in a row of four adjacent rooms four stories up behind the large golden grillwork above the stage. Here the blower and relay rooms flank the long shallow Main and Solo Chambers with their 1229 pipes, ranging up to sixteen feet in height, which are unified to produce the effect of 6,577 pipes.

The Byrd Wurlitzer's seventeen ranks are: Tuba Horn, Brass Trumpet, Gottfried French Trumpet (originally Tuba Mirabilis), Diaphonic Diapason, Tibia

Plena, Tibia Clausa, Orchestral Oboe, Kinura, Clarinet, Brass Saxophone, String, Viole d'Orchestre, Viole Celeste, Oboe Horn, Quintadena, Flute, and Vox Humana.

There is also a Concert Grand Piano, (with Mandolin effect), visible in the left balcony box, an unenclosed Master Xylophone under the piano, an unenclosed Marimba-Harp, under a decorated Stringed Harp visible in the right balcony box, an enclosed Xylophone, Chrysoglott, Glockenspiel-Bells, Chimes, and tuned Sleigh Bells, as well as a bass drum-kettle drum, snare drum-tom tom, tambourine, castanets, chinese block, sand block, triangle, cymbal, crash cymbal, aeroplane effect, surf effect, wind effect, birds, horse hoofs, fire gong, steamboat whistle, auto horn, doorbell, and two thunder pedals. The 390 percussions and effects are unified to produce 568 sounds.

The four-manual velvet-draped mahogany console is on a centerstage elevator which rises from the sub-basement. There are 202 stop tablets, double bolstered, and 39 combination pistons. The console with its 1680 key contacts is connected by a cable of 1882 wires to the relays, where over 10,000 contact-points are controlled by magnets and pneumatics. From these another cable of 1359 wires goes to the various pipes. Over 2300 magnets and several miles of wire are used

throughout the instrument.

While the organ is being played, the relay room sounds like the chatter of a busy telephone exchange, reflecting its heritage from the inventor of theatre organs, the English telephone engineer, Robert Hope-Jones. And here in Richmond, two telephone company employees, Warner, until his recent death, and Tommy Landrum, have spent their spare time keeping the big organs in the Loew's, Byrd, and Mosque in top electrical and musical condition. Without the technical skill and the hundreds of hours of labor of these two, no theatre organ would be playing in Richmond today.

In view of all of this activity, then, it is not difficult to understand why Richmond has been called the "Theatre Organ Capital". For not only is it the birthplace of the Second Golden Era of the Theatre Organ; this city actually is still living in the First, which never ended here. Richmond has always been a "theatre organ" town, never without "live" Wurlitzer music, from the early days of the gifted Carl Rond to the Eddie Weaver era.

Virginians have a proud tradition of preserving what is best from the past; perhaps this is the real reason that in Richmond today the Mosque, Byrd, and Loew's Theatres still resound to the throbbing, spine-tingling music of "The Mighty Wurlitzer".

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### NOTE ON WANAMAKER ORGAN SPECIFICATIONS

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The John Wanamaker Organ Supplement enclosed with this issue of THEATRE ORGAN is furnished by courtesy of Anna and Joseph Oelhaf (A.T.O.E. members who have the former Radio City Rainbow Room Wurlit-

zer in their Greenwich Village, New York City, pent-house) and Margaret and Jay Quinby (A.T.O.E. members who have the former State Theatre, Orange, N.J., expanded U.S. Pipe Organ in their Summit, N.J. coach-house).

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### CINEMA ORGAN SOCIETY OF ENGLAND PURCHASES WURLITZER

The largest Wurlitzer Theatre Organ in Europe, the Trocadero Cinema 4 manual 21 rank Wurlitzer has recently been acquired by the Cinema Organ Society of England to be installed and used by Club members, it was announced recently in the Society's official journal. Using funds saved for the purpose, and relying on popular subscriptions, the club's officers made the decision to purchase the organ and to put it in storage for the time being. Later on it is hoped a suitable place will be found to install the instrument where concerts and practice sessions can be held.

In response to the call for cash subscriptions, A.T.O.E. President Judd Walton forwarded an A.T.O.E. check in the amount of \$25.00 to be used for the organ project by the Society. "This is one way we can express our friendship and mutual feelings to our fellow enthusiasts in England," said Walton. "We send with it the best wishes of our members for

success in this monumental project," Walton said on making the announcement. We will follow with interest the Society's undertaking, and A.T.O.E. members can help individually by subscribing to the Journal and making whatever other donations they might like to send. For either purpose, write to the Society's overseas treasurer, R. Nicholson Elmhirst, 118 Kings Avenue, Woodford Green, Essex, England."

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### VISIT TO A CHRISTIE CINEMA ORGAN

The newly formed THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA, in one of its sessions last year, saw about 50 members and friends paying a visit to a Christie Cinema Organ. According to John Clancy, secretary, the organ is now located in the Church of St. Columba at West Ryde, N.S.W.

Says Clancy, "Master Organist Ray Myers used to play this organ in Gordon Theatre at the tender age of 16! Now 21, he ably demonstrated the eight units with improvisations, then opened

(Turn to page 13)

# WURLITZER FACTORY SHIPMENT LIST

CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE

1206	285	Buffalo, N.Y. Shea's	11/30/25	1258	E	Chicago, Ill. Boulevard	1/27/26
1207	B	Plainfield, N.J. Liberty	11/23/25	1259	E	Cleveland, O. Lyric	1/30/26
1208	215	Los Angeles, Calif. 10th & Western	11/24/25	1260	B	Columbus, O. Columbia	1/30/26
1209	Church	Daytona, Beach, Fla. Community Meth. Church	11/28/25	1261	D	Milwaukee, Wisc. Alhambra	1/30/26
1210	F	Shamokin, Pa. Family	11/28/25	1262	Spec.	Chicago, Ill. Masonic Temple	1/29/26
1211	B	Miami, Fla. Dramatic	11/25/25	1263	D	Mt. Vernon, Wash. Lincoln	2/ 2/26
1212	B	Los Angeles Schulkin & Conan	12/ 2/25	1264	109	Bend, Oregon Liberty	2/ 2/26
1213	B	Chicago, Ill. Elston	12/ 4/25	1265	F	Baltimore, Md. Embassy	2/ 5/26
1214	215	Los Angeles, Calif. Manchester	12/ 4/25	1266	B	Brooklyn, N.Y. Beachview	2/ 5/26
1215	H	Brooklyn, N.Y. Ambassador	12/ 2/25	1267	Spec.	Chicago, Ill. Tower	2/ 6/26
1216	H	Berlin, N.H. Albert	12/ 4/25	1268	H	Nashville, Tenn. Loew's Vendome	2/ 8/26
1217	235	Fresno, Calif. New Wilson	12/ 4/25	1269	D	Bronx, N.Y. Laconia	2/ 9/26
1218	210	Ocean Park, Calif. Venice	12/ 5/25	1270	100	Swedesboro, N.J. East Coast	2/10/26
1219	H	Youngstown, Ohio Albee	12/ 8/25	1271	235	Memphis, Tenn. State	2/12/26
1220	216	San Fernando, Calif. Maclay	12/10/25	1272	H	Brooklyn, N.Y. Surf Ave.	2/12/26
1221	D	Plymouth, Mich. Penn. Allen	12/12/25	1273	H	Elizabeth, N.J. Fabian	2/13/26
1222	D	E. St. Louis, Ill. Majestic	12/12/25	1274	105	Springwells, Mich. Ford Grand	2/19/26
1223	Church	Tonawanda, N.Y. 1st Pres. Church	12/11/25	1275	Spec.	Chicago, Ill. Belmont	2/20/26
1224	H	Brooklyn, N.Y. Carlton	12/14/25	1276	216	Taft, Calif. New	2/22/26
1225	H	Kenmore, N.Y. Kenmore	12/15/25	1277	B	Bronx, N.Y. Crescent	2/23/26
1226	E	Newark, N.Y. Capitol	12/16/25	1278	210	Fruitvale, Calif. Roosevelt	2/24/25
1227	D	Brooklyn, N.Y. Oxford	12/17/25	1279	B	Brooklyn, N.Y. Knickerbocker	2/25/26
1228	Spec.	Moorestown, N.J. Community House	12/21/25	1280	105	Palmerton, Pa. Colonial	2/24/26
1229	100	Bradley Beach, N.J. Palace	12/19/25	1281	E	White Plains, N.Y. Loew's State	2/25/26
1230	D	Gowanda, N.Y. New	12/31/25	1282	B	Syracuse, N.Y. Harvard	2/27/26
1231	B	Dayton, Ohio Conservatory of Music	12/22/25	1283	Lodge	Sacramento, Calif. Elks Lodge	2/25/26
1232	D	Dunsmuir, Calif. Dunsmuir	12/21/25	1284	Church	Lackawanna, N.Y. Lady of Victory Church	3/ 1/26
1233	E	Oakland, Calif. State	12/22/25	1285	E	Buenos Aires Cario	3/ 2/26
1234	E	Charlotte, N.C. Imperial	12/23/25	1286	235.	Newark, N.J. Ritz	3/ 2/26
1235	100	Wilberforce, O. University	12/24/25	1287	Church	Quincy, Fla. First Baptist Church	3/ 6/26
1236	F	Berkeley, Calif. Atkins	12/24/25	1288	Lodge	Springfield, O. Masonic Temple	3/ 5/26
1237	E	Poughkeepsie, N.Y. Stratford	12/26/25	1289	E	Kansas City, Mo. New Madrid	3/ 6/26
1238	B	Milburn, N.J. New Milburn	12/26/25	1290	Spec. H	Chicago, Ill. Embassy	3/ 6/26
1239	E	Martinez, Calif. New	12/31/25	1291	210	Brooklyn, N.Y. United	3/10/26
1240	Church	Ft. Pierce, Fla. 1st. M.E. Church	1/ 7/26	1292	109	Rochester, N.Y. Lincoln	3/16/26
1241	E	Fall River, Mass. Plaza	12/31/25	1293	B	Clinton, Mass. Strand	3/15/26
1242	E	Titusville, Fla. Van Croix	1/ 7/26	1294	216	Los Angeles, Calif. West Lake	3/13/26
1243	F	Denver, Colo. Rialto	12/31/25	1295	Spec.	Chicago, Ill. Congress	3/18/26
1244	B	Sanford, Fla. Milane	1/ 4/26	1296	D	Akron, Ohio Orpheum	3/19/26
1245	E	Dayton, O. Colonial	1/ 9/26	1297	Church	Bellefontaine, O. St. Patrick's	3/20/26
1246	Church	N. Tonawanda, N.Y. Grace Lutheran	1/11/26	1298	Church	New York City, N.Y. The Methodist Episcopal	3/20/26
1247	235	Chicago, Ill. Grove	1/15/26	1299	E	Miami, Fla. Capitol	3/20/26
1248	E	Sioux Falls, S. Dak. State	1/15/26	1300	E	Long Island City, N.Y. Boulevard	3/22/26
1249	B	San Francisco, Calif. Wilson	1/15/26	1301	235	Irvington, N.J. Sanford	3/22/26
1250	D	Hollywood, Calif. La Mirada	1/16/26	1302	E	New London, Conn. Garde	3/24/26
1251	Military	Chicago, Ill. White City Roller Rink	1/23/26	1303	E	College Point, N.Y. New College	3/25/26
1252	D	Ontario, Calif. New	1/18/26				
1253	D	Los Angeles, Calif. New	1/16/26				
1254	E	Stockholm, Sweden Scandia	1/21/26				
1255	E	Fargo, N. Dak. Fargo	1/22/26				
1256	235	Norfolk, Va. Loew's	1/25/26				
1257	Spec. E.	Salem, Oregon Guthrie	1/29/26				

(Continued in Next Issue)

theatre organ

## CHAPTER NEWS (continued)

and console party using the recently rebuilt Austin. Everett Bassett of Waterbury opened the program with a Paramount Newsreel pantomime. This was followed by 45 minutes of mood music. The organ performed beautifully, even to the low 16' D cipher, which soloed during one of the soft numbers. But Allen Miller and Joe Tobin headed for the chamber, and the cipher was eliminated in less than a minute!

Miller, who supervised and did most of the work on the organ, took over the bench at 12:20 a.m., and put the organ through its paces with quick registration changes and percussion effects. Several comments were heard on his arrangement of "Baubles, Bangles, and Beads", with its rhythmical triangle and xylophone glissandos, and the 8' tuba solo on "Mighty Lak a Rose."

George Fay, a local organist, played some of the real "oldies", and Fred Mitchell, of the Austin Organ Company, then started off with "I'm in the Mood for Love", and went on into "Whispering", "Laura", and "Sentimental Journey", in which he used every effect the organ had. He concluded with a medley of tunes, and "Tea for Two".

Barbara Williams, a young, charming organist, who insisted "I never played a theatre organ before in my life!" offered her version of "Dizzy Fingers," and sounded as though she had been born at the instrument. And several others tried out the organ before the evening was over. The general comment was "More!", and it is certain this organ will be heard again.

## NIAGARA CHAPTER



Members of the Niagara Frontier Chapter having a "go" at the console of the Palace Wurlitzer, Rochester, New York, at their meeting there several months ago. Tom Grierson, the featured artist, is in the foreground talking to an interested group of admirers.

Winter, 1960-61

## VISIT TO A CHRISTIE CINEMA ORGAN (continued)

the program with Dvorak's 'Humoresque.'

Members then followed, as listed: Vice President Norm Stinson (Fantasia in G Major); Rod Blackmore (special arrangements of three hymns); Secretary Clancy (Bach's "God's Time is the Best", and "Fugue in C", by Bach); Roy Williamson (Prelude and Fugue in D Minor - Bach); Peter Ellicott (Coppelia Ballet Music); Ken Jordon (La Paloma); and Ray Myers, who offered a number of selections including "Bird Songs at Eventide", "Roses of Picardy," and others.

The visit ended with an inspection of the pipe chambers, and photos were taken.

Secretary Clancy gives the history of the organ as follows: "In the year 1928, the owners of the King's Theatre, Gordon, N.S.W., Australia, installed the Christie Cinema Unit Organ, manufactured in England by Hill, Norman and Beard Ltd. The eight rank organ was played by many of the leading theatre organists until 1958, when television caused many theatres to sell their organs. It was then that the Church of St. Columba purchased the organ for about \$800.

"A member of the church, Noel Stokes, a telephone technician and amateur organ enthusiast, supervised removal and re-installation of the organ. No attempt was made to turn it into a church organ, and thus it sounds better in many ways in the church acoustics than it did in the theatre . . . Played in a cinema organ style, it sounds very well. Played as a straight organ, it sounds much better than a lot of standard church organs around Sydney."

Going briefly into some of Clancy's comments on the organ: "The open diapason rank is very full and satisfying, particularly useful for straight organ playing. The geigen diapason is a soft stop giving some delightful sounds with the swell box closed. The Violone is small scaled and has the rather nasal sound of Christie Strings, but combines well with other ranks. It is the softest pedal rank.

"The Bourdon-Tibia is powerful on the pedal 16 foot extension, the Tibia sounds delightful, and the temptation here is to use it too much. The Clarinet is a very useful reed, very smooth and even. The Vox-Humana has rather a 'bleating' tone and is rather disappointing.

"The Tuba had to be softened for the smaller hall. This removed some of the 'honking' sound, and it now forms a good addition for a climax, or can be used on Solo manual with 2", 2-2/3rd and 1-3/5th' to give a good full swell effect. Bird-whistle, boat-whistle, sirens, etc., were removed as they obviously would not be used in a church service. Tuned percussions

(chimes, chrysoglott, xylophone, tolling bell) were retained, as were the bass drum, snare drum and cymbals.

"Foot pistons vacated by effects," says Clancy, "have been used to provide: full organ reversible, double action; general cancel; soft organ, and solopedal coupler. Four pedal combination action pistons have been duplicated for left foot as well as originally for right foot.

"Solo and main tremulants are provided, plus individual tremulants for Tuba, Vox-Humana and Geigen Diapason. Ventilals are provided on all 61 note chests."

The next scheduled visit of the Society was to be to the Arcadia Theatre Organ, at Chatswood, N.S.W.

## An Open Letter To Mel Doner, Former Editor of Our Official Journal.

Dear Mel,

It was with considerable alarm that we learned that you had suffered a second heart attack on February 20th. Eleanor wrote to us the very next day, and we have, of course, since answered her letter. Our thoughts and prayers were with you constantly and we are relieved to know that you are making steady progress in your recovery. We know that you enjoyed the recent Eddie Dunstetter broadcast, and that you are kidding the nurses, and this is good news.

Now that you are able to again enjoy the hobby that has meant so much to you, and which you have shared with so many through your service as Editor of our Official Journal, to say nothing of the many personal contacts you have made, we want to wish you the best of everything possible in the days, weeks and years ahead. Take good care of yourself, and remember that all of us who know you, as well as those of us who have shared your hobby through your efforts, extend our greetings to you.

Sincerely yours,

Judd Walton  
President

## THE ORGAN PLAYER Edited by PHIL RABOIN

To inform and instruct the  
HOME ORGANIST

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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir:

Just a few lines to tell you how much I enjoyed the last issue of THEATRE ORGAN and especially the article about "The Crown Prince of Tonawanda" and Dick Loderhose.

Pleased to say that through the efforts of Bill Summers who did most of the work on the 8 rank 215 Wurlitzer here in our local Rivoli Theatre, it is now working again and is on the air over radio WLBC every day from 12:15 to 12:30, Monday through Friday. Mr. Summers plays it each day, in a program called "Summer Airs."

Yours very truly,  
Sylvan K. Ketterman  
322 North Mulberry St.  
Muncie, Indiana

Sir:

After the splendid stoplist layout you devised for the Picadilly Kilgen, it is disappointing to see the so-called specifications of the Loderhose Wurlitzer in the current issue. It is impossible to tell with certainty, 1) which are the thirty-seven ranks, 2) from which ranks the Clarion and Harmonic Fife are borrowed, and 3)

whether the Ophicleide is a rank of that name or a borrow, 4) the compass of the Diaphone, 5) which rank serves as resultant, and the like, and 6) what is Bass 16'?

The footnote to the specifications is meaningless, because no first Post Horn is shown anywhere on the specifications, much less a second one on the Bombarde; no Quint Celeste is visible with or without cutout; and which are the "added traps and effects" shown on the "above specifications"?

These are all important factors in tonal design, which your layout would make instantly apparent, but which are discoverable from the Loderhose format only after much study.

In addition, stoplists should show for each rank--as your own layout does--disposition by chamber, compass, number of pipes, and wind pressure. It is further desirable that chamber and overall figures be given for number of ranks, number first touch stops, number second touch stops, total stops, and pipes.

Please permit me to urge that all future stoplists in THEATRE ORGAN

be presented in your excellent style, with the additional figures mentioned in my previous sentence. You may be sure that those submitted by me will do so.

Cordially yours,  
T.F. Burroughs, III  
600 Fifth Avenue  
New York 20, N.Y.

(Ed. NOTE: We concur with Member Burroughs. Whenever possible we will use the more comprehensive chart specification layout. This was originally devised by President Judd Walton with the aid of Bill Steward.)

Sir:

You T.O. fellows have gone overboard with your superlatives--"mighty Wurlitzer", "big sound", "king of instruments." It's about time someone took you down a peg or two!

This was attempted recently when I picked as my opponent one Richard Weber of Mariaville, N.Y. I challenged him to an organ power duel. Mr. Weber has a 3/17 Wurlitzer in his home. I have an Estey 1/1 Reed organ that

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The outcome? I lost miserably! All proposed duels have been cancelled. Discretion is the better part of valor.

Reedily yours,  
Ira Freedman  
46 Bailey Avenue  
Latham, N.Y.

(Ed. NOTE: We re-it: MIGHTY WURLITZER!)

### ERRATA

In Fall 1960 Issue; Page 12:

Correct address for Derrick Marsh is,  
52 Hest Bank Lane, Hest Bank,  
Lancaster, England

## CLASSIFIED ADS

Classified ads are accepted at the rate of ten cents per word per issue. A ten percent discount allowed if remittance accompanies your order.

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Artisan kits wired, unwired. Frank B. Frank, 205 Castle Bldg., Tulsa, Okla.

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Wurlitzer 2m/4r Style B. Flute, Vox, String and Trumpet. Good condition. Toy counter, Glock and a poor Xylophone. New single-phase motor 220/110 volts. Price \$750. Also a Marr & Colton 3m/9r, Gottfried Reeds, Post Horn, etc. Real snap. Organ complete, toy counter & percussions. Very good condition, price \$1800. Both organs are used nightly and can be seen and played anytime. Viking Roller Rink, 236 - 12th St., Astoria, Oregon.

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Wurlitzer Theatre Organ. 2m/5r. Oboe 61, Salicional 73, Voix Celeste 61, Flute-Bourdon 85, Vox Humana 61. No percussion or traps. Price \$500 Midwest location. Write: Mr. Martin Wick, Wicks Organ Co., Highland, Illinois.

Late model 6-rank Wurlitzer chest: Tibia, Trumpet, Diapason, Flute, Vox, Violin, very clean \$300. Regulators, trunk and beaters \$150. Located at Lindsay, California. Crating extra. Wurlitzer Concert Flute, 85 pipes from 8' CC \$65. Style D Trumpet, some missing and bent pipes, make offer. Dave Schutt, 2251 Watt Avenue, Apt. 313, Sacramento 25, California.

Morton 16' Tuba, 12 pipes with chests; 8' Tuba, Diapason, Clarinet, Violin, Celeste. All in good condition. Priced very low as I need more shop space. No crating. Write: Solon Marburger, R. D. No. 1, Birdsboro, Pennsylvania.

Two 3 manual Welte Consoles. \$200 each. Edward Nawyn, 109 No. 12th St., Patterson 2, New Jersey.

### FOR SALE

Alden E. Miller, Theatre Organ Historian, Collector of Theatre Organ Memorabilia, 3212 - 34th Avenue South, Minneapolis 6, Minnesota.

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