

THEATRE ORGAN

August / September

1979



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Cover Photos

Some of the highlights of the '79 Convention were: Top right — Conventioneers leaving Catalina Island. Top left — New Devtronix console at the Great American Wind Machine in Reseda. Right center — console of the Austin organ at the Spreckels Organ Pavilion in Balboa Park in San Diego. Bottom left — the former Los Angeles Paramount Wurlitzer console, now at the Old Town Music Hall in El Segundo. Bottom right — originally in the Forum Theatre, the Kimball organ was moved to the Western Theatre in 1931, later renamed the Wiltern.

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

Preston M. Fleet
July 1978 – Nov. 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

1979 – J.B. Nethercutt

President's Message

I want to thank all of you who have shown support for the Society at the convention or by your many letters. As long as you have the interest and promotion of the organization at heart, I am sure we will continue to grow.

In keeping with a suggestion at the chapter representative meeting with the board of directors, I urge all chapter editors to exchange your newsletter with all other chapters.

I am also urging each chapter to keep a permanent file of all pertinent data from national headquarters to be passed on to any new officers. This was also suggested at the same meeting.

Next year will mark our 25th anniversary. The convention will be hosted by the London and South of England Chapter. They have shown their support by coming to the United States year after year so let us support them with a large representation of members from all countries.

In answer to numerous requests from members, a seminar for amateurs as well as professionals has been planned for the last weekend in October at Wurlitzer University in DeKalb, Illinois. For those of you who are interested in learning more about many phases of theatre organ from several top professionals, this is your great opportunity. Register immediately. See pages 38-39 for details.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tommy Landrum". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Tommy Landrum
President

THE 24th ATOS NATIONAL CONVENTION Los Angeles - San Diego JULY - 1979

By Stu Green, Don Lockwood and others.
Photos by Bill Lamb unless otherwise indicated.



The plans for the 1979 ATOS Annual Meeting called for a good measure of something for everyone. John Ledwon and his appointed committees put together a package which included theatre organs in theatres, homes, restaurants and a private museum. Programs on classic organs were provided and beyond this, a train ride and boat trip were thrown in.

Although nothing was programmed until the evening of the seventh, many familiar faces began appearing in the Bonaventure as early as the fifth. By the time the convention registration desk opened, it was evident that an invasion of organ buffs had taken place.

Even before the official program began, everyone was well aware that Southern California planned carefully for top events, starting with a prelude, offering a preview of things to follow.

OVERTURE

For this, the Los Angeles Chapter presented a program which could have been titled . . .

WRIGHT ON, BY GEORGE!

George Wright delivered a veritable blockbuster for the "overture" which was an optional event for conventioners. The 3/16 Wurlitzer was played as a 3/14 by Wright, because he was unhappy with two ranks.

Wright was in an expansive mood from the start. His good spirits permeated the entire evening and there was good reason. During the first stanza, he played tunes which had gone over well with recent concert audiences. A special number, Moscowky's "Spanish Dance No. 2" was played for a dear friend who was in the audience, organist, Rose Diamond.

He played selections from present-day stage musicals and insisted that "Get Out of Town" was not intended as a suggestion to visiting conventioners. George closed "side one" with his famous "Roller Coaster."

When he brought the white console up after intermission, he was playing "Oh, Dem Golden Slippers" and when he turned to his audience, the golden slippers were on his tootsies — glittering in the spotlight. His only comment was, "Wherever you are, Virgil Fox, eat your heart out!"

When George played "I'm Just Wild About Harry" and "Memories of You," a short man with a mass of silvery locks appeared on stage, George introduced the famous Hollywood conductor, Harry Zimmerman.

George: "I brought him out of retirement."

Harry: "I'm going right back in."

He induced Zimmerman to play some tunes on the organ as he had at the Chicago, Tivoli, McVickers and Uptown theatres during the salad days. Then George added, "Too bad you couldn't bring your orchestra."

Harry replied, "But, I did."

The curtains opened and there on stage was Harry's 18-piece stage band. Their first tune was "El Condor Pasa" with organ frippery by George. George goofed on an entry during the first chorus, so they started anew. It came off well, followed by Bobby Christian's arrangement of "Sophisticated Lady," a real beauty with George's participation at the organ console, now lowered to half-mast.

George dedicated "When Day is Done" to our late national secretary, Reidel West and to those others who had passed away. It was played as a Flugelhorn (a very large Cornet) solo by a member of the band's brass section, with accompaniment by George. The Flugelhornist added a few jazz variations, but played it relatively straight.

But the best was yet to come, an arrangement, slanted for laughs, of "The Sheik," played by the band and George, with interpolations of "Waltz of the Flowers" and "Spring, Beautiful Spring" plus oriental melodic effects by George at the organ. This selection was followed by wild applause. An even wilder "Tiptoe Through the Tulips," followed. It incorporated snatches of "Narcissus," upchuck effects from the trumpets and variations on the melody by George to end all variations, plus a bit of "Humoresque" and the traditional Villain's theme, a soggy trombone solo and a touch of Lombardo, diluted by a Welkish ending. The audience approval was so intense that both had to be reprised. They were even better the second time around.

George: "What can I do to follow that?"

Harry: "We dance."

George played a standup bit at the stage piano while Harry did a sort of soft-shoe bit.

George Wright's closer was a tribute to one of his idols, Jesse Crawford. He told about Fred Beeks' Wurlitzer roll player mechanism. Fred had attached it to the Wurlitzer, and put in a roll of tunes from the Maurice Chevalier-Jeanette MacDonald starrer, *The Love Parade*. George played tunes from the 1932 film, which included the title tune and the esoterical "Dream Lover," a fitting conclusion to one of the most enthusiastically accepted organ programs ever presented at the San Gabriel facility.

For closing, George came out on stage to thank the audience (he left the console to a subdued spotlight while the Crawford roll was playing) and welcomed them to the ATOS Convention. It was a truly inspiring performance.

JOHN STARTS THE SHOW

It was a warm and clear Sunday morning as eager conventioners boarded the buses bound for the kick-off concert scheduled for the renowned Wiltern Theatre on Los Angeles' Wilshire Boulevard. Owned now by an insurance company, this Art Deco house opened in 1931, and like most large downtown theatres, faces an uncertain future. The wrecking ball's aim has been blunted once, so far.

The Kimball was moved from the old Forum Theatre when the Wiltern opened. Thirty-seven of the Forum's circa 42 ranks were used. Excluding the echo organ, there are 28 useful ranks available on the 4-manual console. The stopkeys have been rearranged on the horseshoe to group voices with all stops of one pitch together, replacing the Kimball system of grouping stops according to tone family.

The first organist scheduled was the convention chairman, John Ledwon. How John, weary with the weight of the convention on his able shoulders, managed even to show up, not to mention play, is something of a miracle. But appear he did, bringing up the 4-deck console attired all in white.

After a very orchestral "Poet and Peasant Overture," John turned to show music, including selections from *West Side Story*, and a long-

time Ledwon specialty, a very intricately orchestrated *My Fair Lady* overture. He also included his lilting version of that old warhorse "Granada," then delved into outer space with the "Star Wars March" followed by "Princess Leia's Theme."

The venerable Kimball was a proper catalyst for the expression of the Ledwon orchestral mode of playing, and she behaved beautifully. John Ledwon and the Kimball provided a good starter for our 24th annual celebration.

TOM HAZLETON AND MRS. MOLLER

The concert Sunday afternoon at the Los Angeles Shrine Civic Auditorium got off to a late start due to the length of the chapter representatives meeting, which was rescheduled to an earlier-than-planned noon starting time.

Conventioneers were permitted seating only in the balcony of the 6000 plus-seat auditorium, said to be the largest indoor theatre in America.

A few minutes before three o'clock Lester Pepiot, who maintains the giant Moller, appeared center stage, somewhat dwarfed by the 186-foot expanse on either side of him, and introduced the afternoon's artist, Tom Hazleton.

Tom explained that his would be a classical orchestral concert and that those who expected to hear more up-tempo selections would have to wait and visit the electronic showrooms back at the hotel.

The huge red, white and blue-bulbed crystal chandelier, hanging from the oval tasselled-canopy dimmed to a red glow (bringing oohs and ahhs from the audience) as he launched into his opener, the 17th century "Rigadon."

The 4/78, which he referred to as Mrs. Moller, is not known as an "easy" instrument to play, due, in part, to the great distance of the right chamber from the organist. Tom's program was an ambitious one that included Williams Walton's "Crown Imperial" (written for the coronation of King George), Mendelssohn's "War March of the Priests" and the "Tocatta" from *The Gothic Suite* by Bowman in the first half.

The loss of the combination action early in the concert didn't appear to daunt the artist in the least.



George Wright performs at the pre-convention overture at the San Gabriel Civic Center.



Left — Anna Olive — "The Little Old Lady From Pasadena" — is cornered by Bill Thompson, in, of all places, Pasadena, at the Crown Theatre. Center — Mr. and Mrs. Harry Koenig, from Chicago. Right — Harold Abbott, one of the bus captains, attired in the "costume" of the day in San Diego.



Left — Convention Chairman John Ledwon opens the convention at the Kimball in the Wiltern Theatre. Right — Tom Hazleton and the Shrine Auditorium organ, whom he affectionately referred to as "Mrs. Moller." They made beautiful music together.

Left — these visitors to the Convention Record Shop find lots of records to choose from. Right — the Taylor boys add one more to their long list of conventions attended.



The colorful Kinura, Cor Anglais, Clarinet, and French Horn solo stops were utilized in "Melody in Mauve" written by Tom's former teacher, Richard Purvis.

The concert happened to coincide with the birthday of Tom's wife, Mimi, and all joined in singing a round of "Happy Birthday."

The soft stops on this instrument were used to good advantage, in "Ariol" by Flor Peters, and the string choruses were heard in J. S. Bach's "Arioso."

Also on his program was the haunting and very orchestral "Pavanne" by Robert Elmore.

Despite the slow response of the instrument, the "Tocatta" from Widor's *Fifth Organ Symphony* brought a well-deserved round of applause.

Tom's closer was Sir Walter Davies "Solemn Melody" that built to a thunderous peak, and then ended as softly as it had begun.

Following his program Tom thought it fitting to acknowledge his page turner, Dr. John Atwell, visiting from Australia.

REX KOURY — MUSIC AND ART

The Crown Theatre in Pasadena, California, has its original Wurlitzer, and that organ has been in almost continuous use, except when the house was dark. It's a 3/11 Wurlitzer, plus a French Trumpet with Posthorn overtones installed just before a George Wright concert a few years ago. But the man whose name is most intimately entwined with the organ is that of Bill Wright. He was assistant manager and organist at the Crown (then called the Raymond) during the 50s and 60s, and managed to get some organ music into every show, usually during intermission.

The evening of July 8th was Rex Koury's — his concert for the convention. Rex was introduced by ubiquitous Bob Hill wearing a huge sombrero in addition to other clothing. Rex, attired in a white suit, opened his program with a rather Parisian emphasis, "The Night They Invented Champagne" and "Champagne Waltz," leaving his audience up to here in the bubbly.

Later, Rex played an overture, "The Merry Wives of Windsor." One of his effective novelties was

something we have never witnessed, a slide presentation showing some of Rex's paintings accompanied by appropriate music. There were seascapes, winter forests, snow-covered barns, an autumn landscape, an old mill, an ice-bound creek, boat scenes, forests, mountain greenery and a lovely sunset for which Rex played "When Day is Done."

After intermission, Rex played "I Can't Smile Without You" and "New York, New York." Then he played a spectacular "Slavonic Dance No. 8" (Dvorak). After the final burst of applause, Rex posed at the organ for the many photo snappers present. Fans crowded around the console as the old master Rex held court.

The organ is a proscenium installation. This results in a somewhat uneven sound distribution. In the rear of the theatre there is very little Tibia audible. At the console Rex complained that he was inundated with Tibia. So it goes, something to please or displease everyone.

SEAL BEACH TO LONG BEACH

Moving over 800 people from location to location, each with limited capacity is an exercise in logistics.

Gene Davis, in charge of transportation, accomplished the people movement with such smoothness that no one was aware of any problems, if indeed there were any. For example, on this day the entire conclave was moved from one place to another in six groups. Each group saw and heard the same program, but at different times. There was no confusion, no mixups (that were visible) and no one was left out. A tribute to quality planning. No one can predict when airconditioning will cease to function (as it did a few times) but nobody seemed to complain.

The Bay Theatre, Dick Loderhose, and the Paramount (Times Square) studio organ is an ongoing project. Dick has moved the instrument from his New York studio to the Bay Theatre, Seal Beach, Calif.

It was impossible for him to have the organ ready for our meeting so he presented a recorded session in which the famous Crawford studio organ was involved.

Each recording was selected to show off both the organ and artist's style. Between each playing Dick gave bits of history and anecdotes

concerning the New York music scene at the time of the Paramount-dominated Times Square.

Of course, Jesse Crawford, Ann Leaf, Don Baker and George Wright were mentioned many times and examples of their artistry played. A surprise was the offering of a very rare disc, featuring Helen Crawford playing "Let's Talk It Over" with none other than the great Bing Crosby doing vocal honors.

Although we didn't hear the Wurlitzer gem played "live," we did see the beautiful console and were given a pleasant tour down memory lane. Then it was off to the Koons establishment.

Everyone must, by this time, know about Joe Koons and the motorcycle shop. Seeing is believing. The Wurlitzer hybrid organ is indeed in an actual operating motorcycle shop.

Joe, who installed the organ, has departed this life but his wife, Ida Mae "Spud" Koons, has kept the shop going and has continued the tradition of organ concerts in the shop. "Spud" is an outgoing gracious person and seems to thoroughly enjoy the confusion of many people around.

MC Hiserman read a warm message from Long Beach Mayor Tom Clark welcoming ATOS to his city. Then Del Castillo, a youngster who has been around longer than most kids (it is rumored that he has collected social security for twenty or more years) led off the program. The music played was punctuated by humor, making his portion of the program very delightful. As stated by Del, his version of "Peanut Vendor" requires eleven fingers. He used a book of matches stuck between the keys for the extra finger. He carefully moved the matches at each phrase, to give the rendition proper orchestration. Every selection played showed an element of his pixie-type humor.

For closing he played the "William Tell Overture," announcing that because of tight time scheduling it had to be finished in fourteen and two-thirds minutes. As the playing progressed he began to frantically look at his wrist watch every few measures. Tempo picked up, another look, faster tempo, until the final chord, right on time, or so he said.

Jerry Nagano took over the console and proceeded to show that the newer generations have done enough

homework to compete with the old timers.

He played many well-known tunes and highlighted his program with "Chattanooga Choo Choo" in which a recently-installed locomotive bell was featured.

He also played a beautiful Japanese ballad, the name of which we didn't catch. A nicely done show, and we predict a fine future for this promising young artist, as evidenced by the round of applause at the end of his portion of the program.

BONZAI FOR MARIA

The loaded buses headed down the freeway on July 9th for West Culver City and its theatre organ equipped Baptist Church. The passengers entered a cheerful, bright church auditorium to find the "straight" Leet organ console at the right of the altar. The Leet name comes from a small organbuilder in the New Jersey area. This instrument is an "assembled" organ, employing mostly Wurlitzer ranks put together for a New York residence installation. It was brought west in the mid-60s and purchased by the church. The installer, and still the 3/12's mentor is Ross Farmer, who introduced Maria Kumagai's concert.

Most organ buffs are familiar with the history of Maria Kumagai, a native of Tokyo who came to the U.S.A. in 1969, determined to conquer the theatre and classical organs and learn English. This concert would indicate that she has done far more with music than with the English language.

Because we could not understand all of her announcements on the PA system, we'll venture a few guesses as to titles.

Maria opened with a Von Suppette overture and quickly established her mastery of the instrument and empathy with her listeners. Her next set of tunes (she prefers medleys) was from Jerome Kerns' *Showboat* score, and is also on her newest record, made on Bob Power's "Style 260" Rodgers electronic.

The rapport Maria established with her audience solely through her music was solid. The listeners indicated wholehearted approval in the usual manner. Her program continued with more groupings from her records. Her final note unleashed a wave of popular approval, including



Rex Koury accompanied a slide presentation of his own paintings, with appropriate music at the Crown Theatre Wurlitzer. A many talented artist.



A silent picture. Dick Loderhose explains that the former 4/42, Paramount Studio Wurlitzer, now in the Bay Theatre in Seal Beach, couldn't be readied in time for the convention. Some rare recordings of the organ were heard instead.



The two artists of the day. Jerry Nagano (L) and Del Castillio (R) show "Spud" Koons their appreciation for the opportunity to perform at this Wurlitzer hybrid.

A little circus music, please. Del Castillio switches instruments momentarily and tries a calliope at the Motorcycle Shop.



The welcome sign was out at the Crown Theatre in Pasadena for our program there with Rex Koury.



Convention Chairman John Ledwon makes announcements at the Crown Theatre.

Maria Kumagai won the hearts of her audience at the West Culver City Baptist Church. The mostly Wurlitzer helped win their approval.



the now rather common standing ovation — but this time it was meant with great sincerity.

Maria mingled with her worshippers and posed for the many photographers, elated that she had pleased so many of them. It was also a feather in the cap of Ross Farmer. His Leet-assembled Wurlitzer had provided a colorful palette for Maria's authoritative music.

Back to the buses for a warm journey to the next scheduled event.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS — A SEMINAR

The long-anticipated organ seminar with George Wright was held at the San Gabriel Civic Auditorium on the evening of July 9th. The front rows near the console were loaded with electronic equipment, mostly closed circuit TV items. Bob Power introduced the program, then George rode the white console up the spotlight beam to the markers set by the TV crew.

George referred to his Overture program on the previous Saturday night and added that on the strength of the sensational show's acceptance, orchestra leader Harry Zimmerman was considering abandoning his retirement (applause).

The format of the seminar was to answer questions received in written form from conventioners. The first letter read was from Rodney Bambrick, mailed from Ireland. Bambrick was in the audience and George asked him to the stage to read the questions. George answered according to how he felt about the matters under discussion, sometimes agreeing with Bambrick's conclusions, sometimes not. His frankness was a hallmark of the entire evening.

It should be mentioned that George had serious reservations about the entire seminar idea; he simply did not feel that he could hold the attention of an ATOS audience without the support of his music for an hour, not to mention a whole evening. George was wrong in his modesty; he held his audience in complete fascination for nearly four hours, and with only fragments of music used for illustration. He explained at the start that his answers were based on his own findings and opinions and might not work for others.

George demonstrated some of the voices of the organ, including some solo stops, mentioning how he used them. His accompaniment was on Chrysoglott.

George also demonstrated some registration no-nos. He suggested leaving the Vox Humana out of full combinations, especially during rhythmic passages. He illustrated by playing a passage, then repeated it on the Vox alone to show how that voice could detract from the overall effect. As he said, it sounded like a herd of goats in trouble.

Another suggestion had to do with the use of the Tierce (1-3/5' pitch). George feels that this mutation voice should be used only in combination with the Twelfth (or Nazard) at 2-2/3' pitch. His illustration clarified the point.

George also offered some suggestions encouraging the use of the three manuals at once by stretching fingers for notes on another manual for sounds of another timbre which could compliment the music. He illustrated the effectiveness of this technique.

At one point he explained how he had long ago double-tracked a tune for a particular "speed-up" effect by playing the righthand part an octave lower with the tape machine at half-speed then advancing the tape speed to normal and adding the pedal and accompaniment parts at normal speed and pitch. This results in a very bright and somewhat choppy lead. George added that he long ago abandoned multi-track recording for his pipe records, and what one hears now on his records is the work of two hands and two feet.

George didn't have time to go through all the mail received due to the detail which he had tackled questions of general interest, but he hoped he would have a chance to hold another seminar in the future.

"Gems by George," a listing of some of the questions and answers, will appear in the October/November issue.

SAN DIEGO BY TRAIN

The idea of going from Los Angeles to San Diego, a distance of 127 miles, via Amtrak, created considerable excitement as most members had not been near a railroad for many years.

It took a great deal of negotiating to get the sincere cooperation of Amtrak officials, but when this was accomplished, they, too, began to pick up eager anticipation. The result was a fleet of cars from Amtrak's latest equipment was furnished, together with three Amcafe snack bar diners, equally spaced so that no one had to walk an excessive distance for snacks or libation. The Santa Fe Railroad cooperated by putting the train through with top priority.

It developed that our ATOS trip to San Diego was the largest movement of a single group by Amtrak in its history. A total of 840 members rode 2½ hours each way, talking on our favorite subject, sleeping, or just enjoying the ride.

The San Diego Chapter built their theme around early California days and all host committeemen wore "South of the Border" styled clothes, topped with a straw sombrero, making them easy to find.

Upon arrival at the San Diego depot the chapter lost no time in getting buses loaded and off to the Dennis James program.

At the California Theatre Dennis James had a surprise opening, a "Movietone" newsreel which showed Dennis dressed as an 1890s dandy, complete with straw "skimmer," coming out of a luxurious mansion and entering a chauffeur-driven horseless carriage — a Model T Ford. He was driven leisurely through streets devoid of other traffic (actually Milwaukee) to the theatre. As he walked down the aisle toward the organ the reel gave way to real as the spotlight picked up the same nattily-attired Dennis, sporting his new Toulouse-Lautrec-style beard. He made straight for the console and opened with "The Poet and Peasant Overture."

The Wurlitzer, described as a 2/11, is soft-spoken and sweet-sounding. Even the added Posthorn doesn't change the overall tonal character. Originally a Style D "Special" (it had an added Oboe Horn) in a Northern California theatre, it was donated to the San Diego Chapter by Sandy Fleet who has since given the pipework and parts to bring the total to eleven ranks, including a second Tibia.

Dennis' tunelist included the Crawford arrangement of "Dance of

the Blue Danube," "The Great Waldo Pepper March," a Gershwin medley of five, a slide presentation showing the Ohio Theatre in Columbus where Dennis is the resident organist; a tribute to his teacher, Leonard MacClain; a sing-along with slides showing "Carolina in the Morning" and "In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree;" a 1927 newsreel covering Charles A. Lindbergh's historic solo flight to Paris which introduced the then topical song "Lucky Lindy."

Perhaps the highlight was a silent comedy starring Billy Bevan and Andy Clyde, entitled *Super Dooper Tin Lizzies*, or something close to it. Introduced as appropriate to a "gas-less society" it dealt with an experimenter who invented a gasoline substitute which brought the price of gas down to ten cents a gallon — in the early 20s, yet!

Walrus-moustached Billy Bevan did some gas substituting, too, by unknowingly powering a string of circa 8 jalopies on a public street, thinking he was pushing only his heap. The laughs often drowned out Dennis' closely cued accompaniment.

The San Diego Chapter provided delicious box lunches which the visitors ate in their theatre seats, then it was walking time for the short journey to the Fox Theatre and its long-silent 4/32 Robert Morton organ.



Master of Ceremonies for the day in San Diego was Ernest Osuna, a native San Diegan, who was appointed official Goodwill Ambassador for the State of California in 1973 by Governor Reagan. His great-great-grandfather, Juan Osuna, was the first 'Mayor' of California.



Dennis James looked just like the man in the newsreel.



Some of the 40 members who travelled from England for this year's convention.



Sleepy ATOSers make the long trek to the train, in Los Angeles' Union Station, as they anticipate the Amtrak ride to San Diego.

After a pleasant, nonstop ride along the coast, conventioners arrive in San Diego. The Santa Fe Railroad gave the train top priority.



Clean, modern coaches were supplied for the train trip. It was Amtrak's largest charter.

Dennis James' unique entrance for his concert at San Diego's California Theatre was borrowed from Milwaukee.



On entering the auditorium the large white console (with 4 manuals, but only one row of stopkeys around its horseshoe) was on the main floor in front of the pit center. It had been reconnected to the organ during the two weeks before convention, after having spent two years in *durance vile* because the space it occupied in the pit was needed for other presentations.

San Diego MC Ernest Osuna introduced Ashley Miller who sat down at the console, reached for a mighty opening fanfare — and nothing! Someone had not remembered to turn on the power. This was taken care of in a moment and Ashley opened with a martial "Strike Up The Band" which segued into "Drums in My Heart," for a thrilling start.

The short console installation time didn't allow for fine tuning of some ranks, but old pro Miller got off of such voices as soon as they turned up a sour note, so no damage. The general sound of the organ was good, although it lacks the versatility of most theatre organs due to limited unification. But none of this was apparent while listening to the imposing selections played by Ashley.

At one point, to show off his, and the organ's baroque possibilities, he played a twittery, high-pitched French composition, exhumed from the Renaissance with a name which escapes us. It wasn't really theatre organ music but the imposing presence of Dick Loderhose as page-turner made it interesting.

Ashley's program had a strong international flavor which included the tango "Ole Guapa" (Latin), "Autumn Romance" (Holland), "Serenade to a Wealthy Widow" (English), "Popsie" by Britain's Ernest Broadbent and a tribute to deceased British band leader-composer Ray Noble with his "Love is the Sweetest Thing" and "Love Locked Out."

This time Ashley admitted tampering with Chopin's "Fantasie Impromptu" by substituting "I'm Forever Chasing Rainbows" which has nothing to do with Chopin. It made a lively closer, regardless.

SPACE THEATRE AND "GENESIS"

Although the visit to the Reuben H. Fleet Space Theatre and Science Center cannot be considered an

organ-oriented program, it nevertheless was a "must-see" event.

The theatre auditorium is specially designed to accommodate a huge parabolic screen which curves over the audience. The projected image seems to cover at least 180 degrees of the circle.

The presentation of *Genesis* shown to the ATOS group was truly motion-picture film being utilized to its highest level, showing the formation of the earth and evolution to the present, in motion picture form. The choice of photographed material, the editing, and the production quality makes the entire effort breathtaking to the viewer. To those with phobias concerning heights, flying or falling, it could be an overpowering experience.

The original score, accompanying the showing, was designed to enhance the film with dramatic impact. It succeeded magnificently.

HECTOR OLIVERA AT BALBOA PARK

The famous Austin in San Diego's Balboa Park is a long-established landmark. It has been used for concerts ever since its installation. It is one of very few "open air" organs; the absence of shelter has always created problems, but the concert schedule goes on. Its four manuals and 43 ranks have the romantic aura of the year it was first heard — 1915. There are plans to add some fiery ranks to update it, but meanwhile public support is focussed on just keeping it playing, with a complete overhaul somewhere in the future.

It was after the delicious evening meal served cafeteria-style by chapter members, a meal enriched by an excellent, costumed Mariachi group's Mexican music, that conventioners started trudging toward the Organ Pavilion. Twilight was fast approaching and already the strings of low-power light bulbs which border the semi-circular open air classic arcade and the stage in the center were glowing. At this time, there are scaffolds surrounding the organ chamber enclosure because of extensive repair work, and the console was directly beneath some scaffolding, which provided Hector with an entrance gimmick.

MC Osuna provided the opening words. Then Hector Olivera came on stage carrying a hard hat. In ac-

cents Latinesque he explained that the helmet was possible protection from falling pieces of Skylab whose imminent downfall was then a problem. But he kept looking at the shaky-looking scaffolds; Hector knows how to amuse an audience.

Hector bantered with his audience briefly, then did the thing he does best — purely classical counterpoint, the one by J. S. Bach. It was magnificent in the romantic-classic tradition, no baroque paraphernalia needed. His second number, he explained, was a request for a tune called "You Needed Me." Hector extracted passages from the most beautiful moments of Wagner's love-opera *Tristan und Isolde*. The compelling intro and coda played on celesting strings made it worth the listening.

Hector's next selection he called "Deezy Feengars" and Zez Confrey took a purposeful pummeling. The tune is not suited for performance on a 4/43 Austin, but no matter, Hector was doing it solely for laughs. He played it right, he played it wrong, he injected "clams," he played the melody in one key, the accompaniment in another. Getting discouraged, he went into "The World is Waiting for the Sunrise," later counterpointing it with a strategically-doctored "Dizzy Fingers." The audience seemed to approve. Hammy, but funny.

Patting the console, Hector said, "She's 65 years old, but she's beautiful!" He said the Balboa Park organ practice period was the first which included getting a sun tan.

Next, another impressive Bach work (his announcement garbled the title), then some pops. Hector played "All Day Through I Dream of You," "Sophisticated Lady" and "Over the Rainbow," tunes that are not normally suitable on a classical organ, but the audience seemed to enjoy them because of the care he put into playing them.

One of the last groups was a mish-mash Hector called "Themes." This included "In the 18th Century Drawing Room" and such Beatles favorites as "Yesterday" and "Eleanor Rigby." Hector played a hymn as a tribute to Arthur Fiedler, the Boston Pops conductor, whom many learned for the first time, had died that day.

The buses took the somewhat drooping Angelinos back to the train (they had departed Los Angeles at

7:30 a.m. the same day). They arrived at Union Station shortly after midnight and boarded the buses for the Bonaventure. Many would forego the early concerts next yawning.

CROWN REPLACES ORPHEUM

This event was originally scheduled for the Orpheum Theatre. Unfortunately the chapter crew for restoring the organ could not get it ready for the convention. The group worked long and hard with theatre management cooperating, but all the combined efforts were not enough.

Reluctantly the Convention's Officers rescheduled Bill Thomson's effort to the Crown Theatre, Pasadena. Bill played in his usual professional manner giving each composition special care using his own arrangements in most cases. Space does not permit the inclusion of all his finely-performed numbers. However, we must list his renditions of "Girl From Impanema," "Dancing in the Dark," "Rhapsody in Blue" and the encore piece, "Peruvian Waltz," as being outstanding. The encore number, we understand, was introduced to Bill by Ann Leaf.

Old-time ATOSers will remember that a much younger Bill played our original National get-together in 1958. Twenty-one years have passed, but Bill Thomson's style is just as youthful and fresh as it was at that time.

It should also be noted that Bill seems at home at any instrument, large pipe organ or small home spinet electronic. His performances are always a joy to hear.

NORDWALL STYMIED BY POWER SHORTAGE

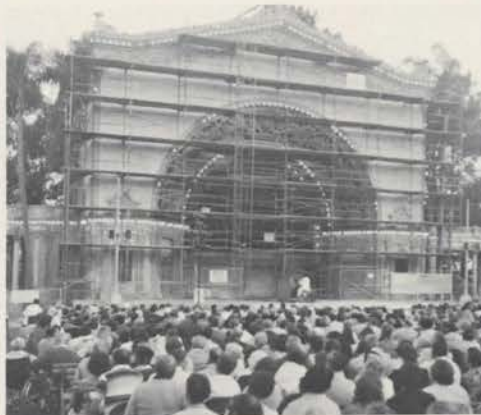
The Elks Building, long a cog in Los Angeles Chapter activities, was the locale for a concert by Jonas Nordwall on the hot and humid afternoon of July 11th. The audience



Ashley Miller banters with his appreciative audience. The Robert Morton console had been stored backstage for two years, and reconnected just in time for the '79 Convention by its protectors, "The Terrible Seven." (Stufoto)



Hector Olivera, minus his hard hat, at the console of the Spreckels organ. He got a suntan while he practiced.



Scaffolding around the outdoor organ's chambers prompted Hector Olivera to appear with a workman's hard hat. (Stufoto)



Bill Thomson talks with his audience at the Crown Theatre in Pasadena. The asbestos curtain is one of the more unusual, and bears the theatres original name (Raymond). (Don Lockwood Photo)



ATOSers gather at the San Diego Fox for the Ashley Miller concert. The theatre was within walking distance of the California.



ATOSers toured the theater/planetarium and scientific exhibition hall during the afternoon in Balboa Park.

Dinner in Balboa Park is accompanied by a strolling Mariachi band.

A standing ovation for Bill Thomson after his concert at the Crown.



filed into the ceremonial room, long ago lost to the diminishing ranks of the Loyal Order of Elks, to view the huge 4/61 Robert Morton console in the far corner of the high-ceilinged hall. It's a four chamber plus echo division organ with some theatrical voices, but more concert ranks, little unification and many couplers. When it's in good shape, it sounds good and the LA Chapter people had seen to it that it had been tuned and dead notes weeded out.

Jonas Nordwall has earned an international reputation for his fine playing and now heads an organ-equipped pizza merchandising complex. His playing is impeccable — but this was not his day, no fault of his.

It was hot in the room when Jonas started, and he bid everyone a warm welcome. He opened with the "Polonaise" from Tchaikowsky's opera *Eugene Onegin*. "Somewhere in the Night" featured a patterned percussion accompaniment against a fat flutey solo, followed by a Vox-mutation chorus, for a sometimes frenetic ballad. Lots of percussion marked "On the Sunny Side of the Street," part of a summertime medley which included "Those Lazy, Hazy, Crazy Days of Summer" in a somewhat Dixieland style. On the classical side, Jonas offered Mozart's music box-like "Fantasia" to end Part I.

Meanwhile the organ was acting up. The DC generator which supplies keying energy had conked out and had been replaced with storage batteries. During the first part of the program Jonas noticed that the combination action was sluggish, that keying response was slowing. He called an intermission and checked the batteries; they were badly in need of charging. Reluctantly, Jonas announced that his next selection had to be his last — no organ power. Jonas closed with "This is my Beloved," a fine artist at a flawed instrument. He rates a rehearsing as soon as possible.

LEANDER CHAPIN CLAFLIN: 'A RIPSNOTER'

The Immanuel Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles houses a 70-rank Skinner organ of 1929 vintage. The artist was Leander Chapin Clafin, known to his friends as "Biff." He played at the '76 convention.

Clafin played a program of time-tested classics beginning with Bach's "Toccatina and Fugue in D Minor" which demonstrated the excellent romantic tonality of the well-maintained instrument. The organist, who was introduced by Neal Kissel, was his own MC. When he introduced Bach's "Air for a G String" he stated, "If this music doesn't move you, you're dead." The Bach tune, all in one key, was given several registration changes. The program included Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance No. 1" and Lemare's "Andantino," better known as "Moonlight and Roses." Biff's one concession to pops. There followed a somewhat ponderous Joplin rag and the oft-played "Toccatina" from Widor's *Fifth Symphony*.

After the intermission, Clafin played a group of Richard Purvis compositions, including the sensuous "Night in Monterey" and the jocular "March Grotesque." The church program closed with Louis Vierne's "Finale" from the *First Organ Symphony*, described by Clafin as "a ripsnoter." It was.

BANQUET

The annual banquet was held in the hotel's California Ballroom. Judd Walton was the interlocutor; he started by directing incoming traffic, Judd introduced the *prominenti* present, among them Fr. Gerard

Kerr from Britain, who has become the regular voicer of the invocation.

Then came pipemaker Henry Gottfried, the last surviving daughter of pioneer pipemaker Anton Gottfried (Orlinda Mathews), organ builder Bob Jacobus, Toss Farmer and his brand new bride, and Lewis Irvin who came all the way from India to attend the convention.

It was brought out that CATOE (Chicago) is working hard to save the Chicago Theatre. Others introduced were Recording Secretary Wynne Davis, ATOS President Tom Landrum, Convention Chairman John Ledwon and his friend Carmella, Mrs. Judd (Verle) Walton, Chapter Chairman Mike Ohman and wife Shari, Betty Mason (publications), George Thompson (publications), the rest of the press crew; new board member Dick Schrum; ex-presidents present, charter members (about six).

Next was the roll call of chapters. The Hall of Fame, MC'd by Lloyd Klos, selected Tom Grierson (deceased) and Dean Fossler to its roll of honor, and George Wright was elected Organist of the Year.

George gave an appropriate acceptance speech.

Honorary member chosen for the 1979 Convention was J. B. Nethercutt, whose Tower of Beauty museum in Sylmar, Calif., preserves many mechanical music makers and also a 4/35 Wurlitzer. Nethercutt was in Scotland so his program director for the museum, Gordon Belt, accepted for him. Nethercutt is credited with donating seven theatre organs.

Attendance at the convention totalled 840.

Entertainment was supplied by the Crystal Palace Orchestra, a group of 12 young people, all serious music students, who earn extra bread by playing from orchestrations written between circa 1900 and 1920. The effect was that of an early theatre pit orchestra, playing such tunes as "That's A Plenty," "Slippery Elm Rag," "Ain't That A Grand and Glorious Feeling" and "Wabash Blues," with all the almost forgotten decorative orchestral frippery that long ago recalls.

The four girls and eight lads were enthusiastically received.

The banquet program closed with a brief plug-in organ interlude played by Britain's Doreen Chadwick.

CONVENTION '79 COMMITTEES

John Ledwon, Chairman
Ralph Beaudry, Vice-Chairman,
Los Angeles

Lois Segur, Vice-Chairman,
San Diego

Jack Shermick, Treasurer
Bernice Neal, Secretary

Committee Heads

Site Selection — Ralph Beaudry

Artist Selection — Neal Kissel

Registration — Mike & Shari Ohman

Transportation:

Los Angeles area, Gene Davis

San Diego area, Coulter Cunningham

Electronic Organ Showrooms —

Kim Nagano

Banquet — Patty Skelding

Hospitality:

Los Angeles area — Virginia Carley,

Catherine Lynch and Charlotte Olson

San Diego area — Ed Barr,

Bob Brooks and Kay & Chuck Lyall

San Diego Day —

Lois Segur, Chairman

Food — Mary Jane Hyde

Space Theatre arrangements —

Sandy Fleet



Leander Chapin Claflin



Left — Mike Ohman, Los Angeles Chapter Chairman, addresses the crowd at the banquet. Right — Judd Walton did a fine job emceeing the banquet.

Leander Claflin performed at the 70-rank E.M. Skinner at Immanuel Presbyterian. Console and pipework are all in the chancel area in the front of the church. (Dan Lockwood Photo)



Jonas Nordwall at the console of the Elks Building Robert Morton. Unfortunately the batteries died.



At the artist autograph party following the banquet were: (L to R) Hector Olivera, Lew Williams, Rex Koury, Bill Thompson and Ashley Miller.



Doreen Chadwick, from England, performs at the Eminent Electronic during the evening of the banquet.

Lloyd Klos congratulates George Wright after he announces that George is the "Organist of the Year."



Left — Banquet Chairman Patty Skelding, who introduced the entertainers for the evening, was escorted to the podium by an "entourage", three of her escorts are Del Castillo, Dick Simonton, and Bob Arendt. Father Kerr is seated at the head table. Right — Tom Hazleton enjoys the banquet festivities.



The Crystal Palace Orchestra performs during the banquet. Their music included Scott Joplin and selections from around the turn-of-the-century.



CANDY AND MIKE

Mike Ohman's Great American Wind Machine restaurant is in Reseda, about a half-hour bus journey from the Bonaventure. This was another day during which the conventioners were divided and bus arrivals staggered to accommodate limited seating. No matter which bus was boarded, the traveler would end up at the Wind Machine to hear Candi Carley and Mike Ohman at the 3/11 Wurlitzer with a shiny new console, or Lyn Larsen playing the now 4/35 Wurlitzer in J. B. Nethercutt's "Cloud 99" room in his San Sylmar Tower of Beauty, but not necessarily in that order.

It was appropriate that Bob Hill was selected to introduce Candi because he has taken an active grandfatherly interest in promoting her career since before her start as a professional. After Bob's words, Candi stepped to the organ platform and took her place on the bench. She was radiant in her green chiffon cocktail dress sparkling with rhinestones. She announced that all of her chosen selections were also on her records, her one commercial.

For the young folks Candi played bouncy "I Can't Smile Without You" with much youthful spirit and a toe-tapping beat. Next, she said she would play "A Sunday Kind of Love" even though it was only Thursday. She then went into just about the sexiest rendition of the tune imaginable; it swayed, it undulated and one could almost sense the aroma of an expensive perfume. When she coaxed the final lowdown wiggle from the tune, one listener with glazed eyes wondered what would be different if Candi had saved it for Sunday. He'll never know! Next it was a jazzy "Sweet Georgia Brown" which got rather wild. Her closer was a group of songs from the Romberg score to the mid-20s operetta, *The Student Prince*. Candi treated the selections with respect and much attention to detail. The end result was a faithful playing of operetta tunes in the mode of their time slots in history. The fact that ours was the fourth group of the day was in no way reflected in her playing. The group expressed their zeal for Candi with the usual palm beating, then it was Mike Ohman's turn.

Mike had just finished attaching the new console (the original was a

two-decker).

Mike's overture was a bright and rhythmic "You." It was a sunny afternoon, the traffic was shizzing up and down Reseda Blvd., and the listeners sat in comfortable folding chairs which temporarily replaced the redwood tables and benches in the neatly maintained pizzeria. The usual guzzlers who normally crowd the bar seeking refills were strangely absent. Candi had started the magic by commanding full attention; Mike continued it.

His second tune was a nostalgic "Makin' Whoopee" which featured the mellifluous Tibia chorus during the bridge and recalled to old timers that the song is forever linked to the entertainer who popularized it, Eddie Cantor. Next, it was "Wind Machine Boogie," an untamed slice of musical savagery which we'll wager once had another title. Mike's "Mona Lisa" had a more winning smile than the subject of Leonardo di Vinci's painting, but so does Mike. Registration included lots of treble mutation-packed accompaniment against a baritone reed (Tuba) solo.

Mike's "Spring Fever" was a fact, comic novelty spawned in the early years of the century. He closed with a somewhat south-of-the-border "Dengo." After the bus riders had expressed their appreciation, cameras held to eye level exploded in bright fireworks which illuminated Candi, Mike, MC Bob Hill and Ashley Miller who climbed onto the bench with Candi at a shutterbug request. Back to the buses and on to San Sylmar.

"CLOUD 99" — SAN SYLMAR

San Sylmar is a nine-story building which dominates the Sylmar architectural scene for miles around. Despite the nine stories, it has only six floors; its owner, J. B. Nethercutt, likes high ceilings. San Sylmar is a private museum about 30 miles from the Bonaventure headquarters via the California system of "freeways" (Which cost one million dollars a mile).

It's an imposing building, with a highly decorative metal gate which opened courteously as conventioners were whisked by "J. B.'s" collection of antique cars (including Rudolph Valentino's), up the stairways and balconies laden with art treasures to

"Cloud 99" — the most incredible music room ever assembled. There one can hear the orchestrions which provided music to the masses in the early days of the century, or Austrian King Franz Josef the First's huge Ehrbar grand piano played by rolls cut by famous pianists — even a coin-operated violin which plays on pitch. The waiting audience heard them all and were slightly dumbfounded.

Dominating the music room is the four-manual console obtained from a famous Hope-Jones installation for Wurlitzer. It's on a lift in the center of the room, surrounded by priceless grand pianos and the aforementioned mechanical music makers. It was a scene of luxury and a dedication to our kind of music which justified the honor bestowed on Mr. Nethercutt at the banquet the previous night.

Lyn Larsen, performing his fourth and final concert of the day, admitted that the old vaudeville "four-a-day" was not easy. He was his usual charming self, bantering exchanges with a fan in the front row, but even though his announcements were sometimes a bit garbled, his music was crystal-clear at all times. Lyn opened with a novelty tune called "Dainty Miss" (not the Helen Dell tune of that title) which smacked of Zez Confrey or Felix Arndt. Next was a wistful, dreamy "When You Wish Upon a Star" in support of film music, then a few minutes of Grieg for which Lyn had precut a computer tape on an especially rigged piano so he could play a duet with himself, adding orchestral coloring at the organ. It worked perfectly.

Lyn also offered a transcendent "Body and Soul," some high kick can-can music by Offenbach, a soporific "That Wonderful Mother of Mine" and again the prerecorded grand piano with organ accompaniment of pop tunes derived from Chopin's music. As usual, Lyn's exceptional musicianship and light-hearted MCing scored again.

It was something of a letdown to leave that lovely air-conditioned setting and board one of the temperamental, uncooled buses for a sweaty safari through the smog back to the Bonaventure architecture, before boarding the 7:30 p.m. bus for San Gabriel and the final official concert of the 1979 ATOS convention.

STRONG PLAYS FINALE

The buses seemed to know their way to the San Gabriel Civic Auditorium as we headed out for our third program there, the last scheduled event of the convention.

Walt Strony rode the Wurlitzer console up with his opener, "I Feel A Song Coming On." He lamented that this year he could no longer say that he was the youngest artist at the convention.

The Friml tune "Indian Love Call" was followed by Stevie Wonder's "You Are The Sunshine of My Life," given an up tempo almost bossa nova treatment. Then Walt brought forth the lush sounds of the instrument in "Clair de Lune" with some interesting percussions added.

Walt's lively version of Gershwin's "Fascinating Rhythm" alternated between 4/4 and 3/4 time.

Although "Londonderry Air" (alias: Danny Boy) seemed to be in contention as the most-often-played selection during the convention, Walt's version, which exhibited moods and tempos not heard before, was perhaps the most timely of them all. July 12th happened to be Orangeman's Day, celebrated by the people of Northern Ireland who prefer orange to green, although that had no bearing on its inclusion in the program.

Walt finished the first half of his program with "You Took Advantage of Me" from Busby Berkley's *Present Arms* and a fast-moving medley from *Oklahoma*.

Walt clung very close to the console after beginning the second half with "I've Got Rhythm" and mentioned that Harold Donsey, of the San Gabriel organ crew, had fallen off the lift the night before, cracking several ribs.

After only a few notes from "The Arabian Dance" during a medley of selections from *The Nutcracker Suite*, Walt bent over suddenly and then jumped from the bench, exclaiming that he'd just been attacked by some sort of large insect, and although startled, was glad that the audience wasn't throwing things, as he at first feared.

As his encore, he performed the "Tocatta" from the *Fifth Symphony* by Joseph Jongen.

Not completely satisfied with just one encore, the audience demanded a second, and the artist obliged, as



Artist, and owner of the Great American Wind Machine, Mike Ohman is proud of the new Devtronix console.



Candi Carley chats with the audience during her program at the Great American Wind Machine.

Walt Strony at the San Gabriel Wurlitzer, the final program of Convention '79.



ATOSers marvel at the collection of memorabilia amassed at San Sylmar by J.B. Nethercutt. (Don Lockwood Photo)



Conventioners relax before Lyn Larsen's program in "Cloud 99" at San Sylmar. (Don Lockwood Photo)



Los Angeles Chapter member Bob Hill announced some of the programs. Right — President Tommy Landrum conducts the National Membership Meeting at the Crown Theatre.



Lyn Larsen, following one of his four programs in "Cloud 99" at San Sylmar. (Don Lockwood Photo)

The J.C. Jonkers came all the way from Amsterdam.



he dedicated "The Stars and Stripes Forever" to magazine staffer Stu Green.

The conventioners again boarded the buses, many for the last time, for the return trip to the hotel.

CATALINA ENCORE

Friday morning, those who were taking advantage of the optional "encore" tour to Catalina, presented by the Los Angeles Chapter, left the Bonaventure via bus for the Catalina terminal in San Pedro.

The 26-mile boat trip to Santa Catalina Island, due south of the mainland, took about an hour-and-a-half. The heavy morning fog lingered during the trip through two-and-a-half foot waves to the popular resort island in the Pacific Ocean.

The City of Avalon is at the southernmost end of Santa Catalina Island, which boasts of only two towns along its 60-mile shoreline. As forecasted, the fog began to dissipate as the boat approached the tiny town of Avalon nestled around a cove dotted with pleasure boats at the base of barren hills whose tops were still lost in the clouds.

While most walked the palm-lined walk around Avalon Bay, some availed themselves of tram service to Avalon's world-famous casino, which first opened in 1929.

The casino is 180-feet in diameter and replaced a former, much smaller structure that was moved to the island's interior to become the world's largest bird house.

We proceeded up a series of interior ramps to the famous circular ballroom atop the 12-story casino complex. There, amidst the silver-chrome, rose and blue Art Deco decoration we enjoyed a delicious luncheon buffet that was expertly served.

While the several conventioners who had arrived aboard a later boat partook of the buffet, others took in the view of the now sunny harbor from the view of the now sunny harbor from the circular balcony that surrounds the ballroom where great bands still continue to play for dancing.

Things were going so well, that the start of the afternoon program was moved up a half-hour to 1:30 p.m. We entered the circular Casino Theatre, directly beneath the ballroom, and easily became ensconced in the plush, luxurious overstuffed seats —



The world-famous Avalon Casino. The circular ballroom is on top of the theatre.



Gaylord Carter in the Casino Theatre tells his audience how hard he will be working to accompany *The Kid Brother*, part of which was filmed on Santa Catalina Island.



Left — George Buck, from Wurlitzer headquarters in DeKalb, relaxes on train to San Diego. Right — a visitor this year, Ron Rhode enjoys the Walt Strony program.



ATOSers enjoy the morning boat ride to Santa Catalina Island for the Convention Encore.

Lunch was efficiently served in the spacious ballroom atop the 12-story complex. There were six buffet lines in addition to a bar.



Conventioners walk around the bay on the way to the Avalon Casino.



Conventioners take in the view of Avalon Bay from the circular walkway outside the ballroom after lunch.



A good number of chapters were represented at the Chapter Representatives Meeting on Sunday afternoon.

(with real springs in the seat backs, yet).

We settled back and enjoyed the stars twinkling in the silver "sky" overhead, and the early Art Deco painting and surrealistic designs surrounding the periphery of the theatre.

Then suddenly it was show time, and organist Gaylord Carter appeared on stage and welcomed us to the theatre. Gaylord had chosen to accompany the film, *The Kid Brother*, starring Harold Lloyd, and with good reason. He said the movie was made the same year in which the casino was constructed, and part of the film, where Lloyd wins over his adversary aboard an abandoned ship, was actually filmed on the other side of Santa Catalina Island.

Before beginning his overture, designed to let us know how hard he would be working in case we forgot he was there, Gaylord reminded the audience that the pipework in the Page organ had been made by Aton Gottfried, whose daughter was attending the convention.

From somewhere over the proscenium, the lush sound of the Page filled the auditorium and we were off on our silent film adventure with Gaylord Carter tying it all together with his magic.

As the conventioners filed out of the theatre, into the bright sunshine there was free time to visit the many shops in Avalon or just stroll along Crescent Beach, filled with swimmers, beach umbrellas and sunbathers. Some walked to the end of the Pleasure Pier, dating from 1910 and still standing, where boats, bait, tackle and even scuba and skin diving gear are rented.

All too soon, as 6 p.m. approached, it was time to head for the boat dock for the return trip to San Pedro. The buses were waiting at the terminal in San Pedro, and one by one wisked conventioners back to the Bona-venture where "good-byes until next year" were exchanged between old friends and newly-made acquaintances. And so, the hectic, but enjoyable week had finally come to an end, but there would be pleasant memories of the Great Southern California Convention. □

**More Convention Tidbits
in the October Issue.**

AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 1979

The Electronics . . .



Ronald Hylton, Rodgers regional manager, and Maria Kumagai in the Rodgers room.



Lyn Larsen in the Rodgers display room.



Left — Allen Organ representatives Jerry Norton, Roger Linbeck and Jerry Schwab in the display room. Right — Eminent artists Paul Wesley Bowen and Jan Bordeleau in the Eminent display room.

THE OPTIONAL TOURS were enjoyed by many of the conventioners. The Richard Simonton Residence 4/75 Aeolian-Skinner was played by Ty Woodward and his 4/36 Wurlitzer was played by Gordon Kibbee. The Old Town Music Hall 4/26 Wurlitzer with dual consoles was played by Buddy Nolan. The Loyola-Marymount 3/10 Wurlitzer was played by Doreen Chadwick. And the Tustin Pizza and Pipes 3/17 Wurlitzer was played by Tom Sheen.

Tom Sheen



Gordon Kibbee



Doreen Chadwick



Buddy Nolan



Ty Woodward



David Ashby (L) and Bill Milligan, from the Wurlitzer factory, demonstrate a Wurlitzer electronic.



Edward Galley, product manager for Conn, in the firm's display room.



Baldwin displayed their Pro 222. Guest artists' were Doris Beanes and John Tolleson.





The ATOS National Board of Directors for 1979-80 are: (L to R) Mac Abernethy, Jr., Betty Mason, George Thompson, Tommy Landrum, (president), Judd Walton, Dick Schrum, John Ledwon, Erwin Young and Bill Rieger.

RESUME OF NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING'S MINUTES

July 8, 1979

Bonaventure Hotel
Los Angeles, California

These minutes are subject to amendments and corrections when read at the next Board meeting.

1. Lloyd Klos presented Hall of Fame nominees, Tom Grierson and Dean Fossler; and, Organist of the Year, George Wright. Approved.
2. Waived the reading of the minutes, approved as printed.
3. Treasurer's report approved and filed for audit.

4. Contract fees to Anagram Corporation be increased to \$2,400.00 per year effective January 1, 1979. Approved.
5. Further breakdown of disbursements in financial statement approved.
6. Directed the financial statement to be published in every April/May issue of magazine.
7. All outstanding bills were approved for payment including cost of letter to members.
8. Directed that future ballots will be numbered and mailed to members with a return self-addressed envelope enclosed.
9. Appointed Neal Kissel as chairman to set up committee of five to establish a set of standards and select a winner for an Organ Craftsmanship Award, with nominee presented to the board for final approval.

John B. Nethercutt — 1979's Honorary Member

Recognition of Mr. John B. Nethercutt's contribution to the theatre organ art and mechanical music makers has been established through the free admission exhibition of his collections and his philanthropic activities, including the donation of

J.B. Nethercutt



restored instruments and the restoration of organs in their original locations. Perhaps the most visible of Mr. Nethercutt's activities is the Tower of Beauty musical instrument collection in his Sylmar museum which includes restored music boxes and orchestrions, as well as a composite 4/35 Wurlitzer theatre organ. He is restoring the organ in a California beach city school he attended (with his future wife), he has donated a theatre organ to the Oakland (Calif.) Paramount Performing Arts Center and a large concert organ to Pasadena for installation in that city's Civic Auditorium, among several others. His no-fee museum is amplifying ATOS efforts to reacquaint the public with the theatre organ because of the thousands of visitors he exposes to theatre organ music in his museum each year. He has been sympathetic to ATOS aims over the years, and it is with pleasure and a sense of honor that we in ATOS bestow the award of Honorary ATOS Member for 1979 on J. B. Nethercutt. □

10. Directed that all minutes be sent to chapter chairman and any non-chapter members by request.
11. Appointed John Ledwon as chairman to set up a bylaw committee of five. Final draft of the bylaws to be sent to Judd Walton who will obtain approval from our attorney. Anyone who wants to work on the bylaws should contact John Ledwon.
12. Officers elected:
Tommy Landrum, President
Lois Segur, Vice President
Wyn McDonnell Davis, Secretary
Erwin Young, Treasurer
13. Accepted with regret the resignation of Vi Thompson as membership secretary effective December 31, 1979.
14. An annual meeting *only* in 1980. (Later changed to London, England at members meeting.)
15. Convention information in the February/March issue of the magazine instead of April/May.
16. J.B. Nethercutt unanimously elected Honorary Member for 1979-80.
17. Appropriated \$1,000.00 from Wurlitzer Seminar funds if profitable, for scholarship for student to catalog library at Elon College.
18. Board action on chapter representative suggestions:
 - (a) Turned over to the bylaw committee:
Updating goals of ATOS
Possibility of month-by-month dues structure
Feasibility of a Federation
 - (b) Chapters urged to keep permanent file of National bylaws, chapter charter agreement and all pertinent data.
 - (c) Establish a survey to get feed-back from members as to what they would like.
19. Accepted resignation of Betty Mason as publisher effective December 31, 1979. Meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m. □

RESUME OF NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

July 11, 1979

Crown Theatre
Pasadena, California

After the 1978 meeting minutes were approved, President Landrum informed members of action taken at board meeting.

London and South of England requested they be allowed to host the 1980 convention. Approved.

Richard Sklenar made a motion to ask the president to request resignations of Tiny James, Betty Mason and George Thompson as directors and replace them with next three highest vote receivers in past election; also the seven board members who signed the letter to members pay cost of same. Sixty-two voted in favor of the motion. Members numbering approximately 450 to 500 voted no. Motion lost.

Motion made that minutes of board and membership meetings and Questions to Directors section set up in magazine to include answers to questions contained in signed letters also annual financial report be published. Motion carried.

Motion made to include Sandy Fleet's name to list of past presidents in masthead of magazine. Approved.

Meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m. □

New Hall of Famers

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

Thomas Grierson

He played theatres in Brooklyn and Toledo prior to settling in Rochester, N.Y. There he served in several houses, culminating in his 15-year stint at the RKO Palace.

Dean Fossler

For some time, he served as second organist under Jesse Crawford at the Chicago, and taught at a music conservatory. For a number of years, he played on the *Amos 'n Andy* radio show.

Theatre Organist of the Year

GEORGE WRIGHT

Our Theatre Organist of the Year has had an illustrious career. Born in California in 1920, he grew up in a musical atmosphere, his mother having been a theatre organist, while Jesse Crawford records were played often at home. His hearing Doc Wilson play the Wurlitzer in San Francisco's Fox, convinced him to become a theatre organist.



In 1934, he began organ study with Inez McNeil in Stockton's California Theatre. During high school in Sacramento, Calif., George served as the school's organist. While holding a church position, he also worked in a Chinese night club in Oakland, Calif.

In 1941, he joined KRFC on NBC, and also played at the San Francisco Fox. In 1944, he joined NBC in New York, doing several shows including one for Prudential Insurance which lasted seven years. He also worked at the New York Paramount, playing the Queen Mother of Wurlitzers, made famous by his idol, Jesse Crawford.

Becoming tired of the eastern weather, he returned to California in the early fifties where he was employed on ABC's *General Hospital*, made many records for Hi-Fi and Dot labels, and played several farewells to the San Francisco Fox. Greatly in demand as a concert artist from coast to coast, he is sought out to play the finest theatre organs available. A recording star and a concert artist, he is greatly responsible for the rebirth of theatre organ music. □

HALL OF FAME

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

1979

Theatre Organist of the Year

GEORGE WRIGHT

NUGGETS
from the
GOLDEN DAYS

Prospected
by Lloyd E. Klos



This time, we include some interesting ads. References were: *Motion Picture World (MPW)*, *Motion Picture Herald (MPH)*, *Local Press (LP)* and *American Organist (AO)*.

May 1924 (MPW) Ad: Organist now in fine Pennsylvania house with large instrument, desires position further north. Prefer New York State. Minimum salary \$60. Only houses wishing highest type work need reply. Experienced. *Motion Picture World*, New York City.

May 1924 (MPW) Ad: Organist at liberty. First-class trained musician. Organ graduate of two colleges. Expert picture player and soloist. Experience, reputation, union. Splendid library, all classes of music. Play all makes. Good instrument essential. State particulars and best salary. Address: Organist, 415 Du Pont St., Philadelphia.

May 1926 (MPH) Ad: Wanted: Your ideas for summer season presentations. Have you any new organ novelties? SEND THEM IN!

Aug. 1930 (Syracuse U. "Daily Orange") The Wurlitzer organ in the Syracuse Harvard Theatre, silent since the house was wired for sound over a year ago, is being heard again before and between shows. The organist is Nottingham High School student, W. STUART GREEN.

May 9, 1931 (MPH) Ad: Feature organist at liberty. Ten years' experience, three solid years with Loew's. Featuring spotlight solos, first-class slide presentations and microphone novelties. Good instrument desired — moderate salary — any location considered. Also experienced manager. If interested, address Box No. 48, MPH, 1790 Broadway, New York City.

May 9, 1931 (MPH) Ad: FOR SALE New seven-stop Wicks theatre organ. Used six months. Bargain for quick cash sale. Address: Arcadia Theatre; Olney, Illinois.

Nov. 1931 (MPH) ART BROWN, "The Maple Sugar Kid," is at the new Paramount Theatre in Charlottesville, Va.

Jan. 9, 1932 (MPH) Ad: WANTED: Small theatre organ. Cheap for cash. Address Hodgson Organ Co., 608 Duke St., Norfolk, Va.

April 1932 (LP) GEORGE JOHNSON, "The Master of Melody," is at the organ of Omaha's Orpheum Theatre.

May 7, 1932 (MPH) Ad: Theatre manager with organ and booth experience desires connection in six-day Jersey town. Address Box 144, MPH, 1790 Broadway, New York City.

Sept. 1932 (MPH) Dr. CHARLES HEIN ROTH, Director of the College of Music of the City of New York, was elected president of the National Association of Organists at a recent meeting in Rochester, N. Y.

Sept. 1932 (MPH) TED CRAWFORD, featured organist, is back at the Phoenix. Arizona Orpheum Theatre after a vacation in Denver. There he found MARY DOBBS (TUTTLE) at the Isis, WEST MASTERS at the RKO,

FRED MARRIOT at the Denver, ERMAINE DE LAVERNE and CARMENZA VON DER LEZZ at the Ogden and MRS. LEE at the Aladdin. Ted reports that FRANCIS "GUS" FARNEY is slated to return to the Capitol in Salt Lake City. Organistically speaking, this season looks great in the West.

Dec. 3, 1932 (MPH) Ad: Theatre Managers. Attention! Combination licensed sound projectionist, organ builder, maintenance engineer, electrician, desires position in southern town. Wife a theatrical organist. Experienced, settled, non-union. Now employed. Box 144, (MPH).

May 1933 (MPH) Ad: HELP WANTED. Organist for new London cinema. Must be a British subject. State experience, salary required and last three positions held. Must be versatile, able to play classical and popular music, and either community or concert-type solos. Apply Bernstein Theatres, 197 Wardour St., London W.I.

July 1933 (MPH) Ad: POSITION WANTED. Solo organist who has played in some of America's largest theatres, desires connection in fall where requirements demand best in versatile ability and showmanship. HY C. GEIS, "World's Tallest Organist," 3547 Rosedale Drive, Cincinnati, Ohio.

July 1933 (AO) "The innovations include a color organ with 900 controls, and a musical organ which can imitate anything from the squeek of a mouse to the roar of thunder," says one of the New York newspapers of the new Music Hall in Rockefeller Center. All of which robs many of us of the ideals we had hoped to find realized there.

How many organists voiced a protest to Radio City over its attitude toward the organ? As one correspondent put it in his letter to the newspaper, "the musical organ can do all these imitations, but can it make music?"

Perhaps a hundred thousand dollars were diverted from the branches of the organ-building industry, all cultured men respect, because a few uninformed men were not conversant with the opinions of men who are competent judges. And that situation persists because the members of the organ profession do not take the trouble to co-operate with the builders whose work they know commands respect.

Musically, therefore, Radio City's boasted Music Hall offers no encouragement for true organ literature, organ composers, organ recitalists, or the brand of organ-building excellence we all respect.

Sept. 1933 (MPH) Ad: POSITION WANTED. Experienced organist, stage unit pianist, leader, manager, desires connection anywhere in United States. JOHN BURKE, 1969 Delaware, Detroit.

July 1934 (MPH) Ad: Wanted to buy used Wurlitzer console or similar three-manual console. State price and condition in first letter. Box 571, Charlottesville, Va.

Oct. 1934 (MPH) Ad: WANTED TO BUY. Cash for used or repossessed theatre unified organ, eight or ten ranks, double chamber, with three or four-rank echo and all traps. Installation must be contracted and guaranteed. Write box 455, MPH, immediately, giving complete specs, final price etc. Must be a bargain.

So long, sourdoughs!

Jason & The Old Prospector

PROFILE OF THEATRE ORGANIST BOB STRATTON

Edited by Lloyd E. Klos

The publishing of the Billy Barnes biography in the December 1975 *THEATRE ORGAN* prompted another theatre organist, Robert Stratton of Alexandria, Va., to provide facts of his life's story in the hope that "possibly mine might have some small interest."

"I was born in Paris, France in 1904 of an American father and a French mother. At about six, I began piano study, and continued seriously with this instrument until I was graduated from high school in Pomona, North Carolina.

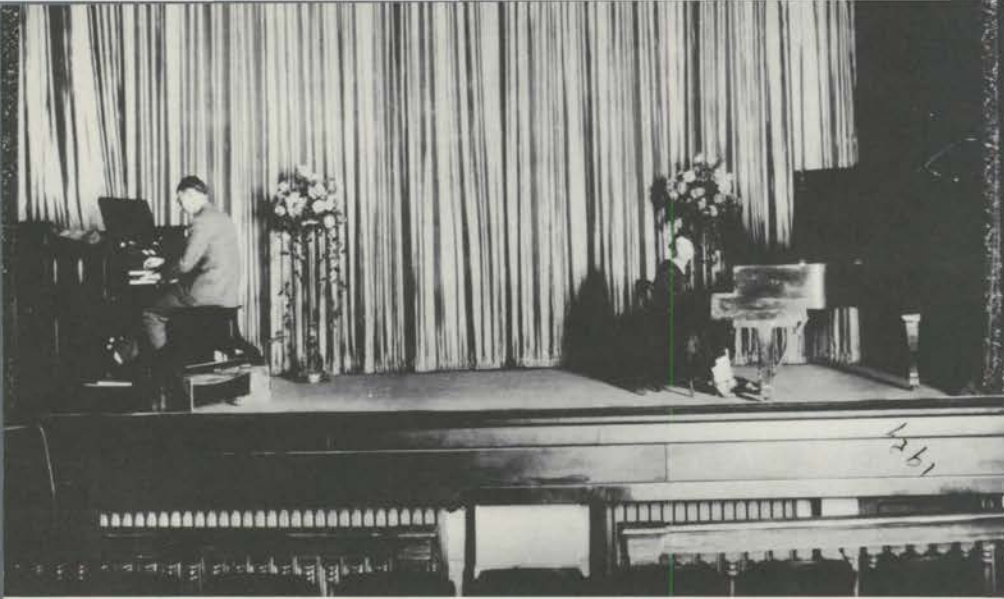
"In 1921, I became interested in the theatre pipe organ, and started study with Bob Rodwell at the old Bijou Theatre in Greensboro, N.C., which had a 2/6 American Photoplayer. This instrument was replaced by a 2/6 Wicks (with Robert Morton name plates on the console).

"The 1800-seat National Theatre in Greensboro was built about this time, and I became assistant organist to Lynwood Williamson at a 2/7 Robert Morton. I also helped organ builder R. A. Brantley remove the Photoplayer from the Bijou and install the Wicks. This is where I learned much of the more 'colorful' English language.

"After Williamson left the National, I became first organist. The theatre also had a house band which

Bob Stratton at the 2/8 Geneva console in the Broadhurst Theatre, High Point, N.C., in the late twenties. Though it had no pistons, it was a nice instrument to play, according to Bob. (Stratton collection)





After Bob removed the Robert Morton console from Danville, Virginia's State Theatre, he installed it on a movable platform on the stage of the Rialto where he performs on stage with his assistant, Leona Ingraham. The Rialto's Morton console is at the left in the pit. (Stratton collection)

was under the direction of Vincent Kay.

"We had stage shows between movies, usually three or four acts of vaudeville. The house did not have air-conditioning, of course, but had a huge exhaust fan up in the dome. This was driven with the aid of a flat leather belt with metal lacing. Every time the lacing passed over the motor pulley, it made a very audible click.

"One time we had a very temperamental soprano on the bill, scheduled to sing, among other things, Schubert's 'Serenade,' which is in 6/8 time. This required the first, third and fifth notes of the measure to be slightly accented. The belt click, however, came on the first and fourth notes, completely upsetting the accompanist. After three starts, we had to turn off the fan, much to the amusement of the audience.

"Incidentally, the National's Robert Morton is the same instrument

now owned by ex-ATOS President Dr. Paul Abernethy in Burlington, N.C.

"I decided to return to school and major in music. It was a choice of the Peabody Institute in Baltimore or the Eastman School of Music in Rochester. After seeing the organ department at Peabody, I chose Eastman.

"My instructors there in the theatre organ course were Robert Berentsen and Harold Osborn Smith. Among my fellow students were Chester E. Klee of Rochester (now an Olean, N.Y. church organist); Frank "Gus" Clement, also of Rochester (now a retired teacher from R.I.T.); Leroy Rogers of Salt Lake City; George Garis of Pen Argyl, Pa.; a tall, thin girl named Jeannette; and a transfer student from the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston who played beautifully as long as she had a score, but could not improvise the C scale without the notes!

In Winchester, Virginia, Bob organized a concert orchestra, "The Capitolians," which played often at the Capitol. The director is standing at upper left. The 2/6 Robert Morton console is at the left. (See Editors note at end of article). (Stratton collection)



With the exception of George Garis, I have completely lost track of the others.

"The class was quite small and many of the straight-organ students became rather cross-eyed from looking down their noses at us!

"After leaving Eastman, I went to Crandall's 1400-seat Strand in Cumberland, Md., as assistant to Edwin Paddock. He, too, had been a student at Eastman, a year or so earlier than I. The organ was a 2/8 Moller.

"From Cumberland, I went to High Point, N.C. The Broadhurst Theatre there, owned and operated by A. B. Huff, had a 2/8 Geneva. Although it had no pistons, it still was a very nice instrument to play. While at this theatre, I commuted the 19 miles daily from my parents' home in Winston-Salem.

"While working at the Broadhurst, an itinerant organist wandered in one morning before the first show and asked if he could try the Geneva. I told him he could. He played rather well and the first thing I knew, Huff asked him what he'd work for. He replied: '\$60 a week.' I was getting \$75. Huff told me that I'd have to come down to \$60 or he'd hire the itinerant. I quit right there.

"The next day, while sitting on the porch of my parents' home, Huff drove up, and asked me to return to work. I was scheduled to start at the York Theatre in Washington the following Monday — at \$75.

"It turned out that the new man couldn't read music at all, and had only a limited repertoire which ran out the first day. He could not accompany any of the stage presentations, either. I thought I had Huff over the barrel, and so it turned out. I returned to High Point — for \$100 a week. In those days, that was a lot of money!

"My next stint was for the Weinberg chain in Virginia, starting with the 900-seat Rialto in Danville which had a 2/7 Robert Morton. When the State Theatre in Danville was closed, I removed its Robert Morton console, and placing it on a movable platform on the Rialto's stage, wired it in to the main organ. Assistant organist was Leona Ingraham.

"Then came assignment to the new 800-seat Colonial Theatre in Winston-Salem, having a 2/8 Robert Morton. The other organist was Carl Hinnant, who played very well.

but was a very slow reader. Whenever we had a stage act booked, guess who had all the rehearsals!

"While at the Colonial, I met Billy Barnes who was playing at the State down the block. I substituted for him several times when he was out of town. Incidentally, he is still playing at the Hyatt House in Winston-Salem.

"Following the Colonial stint, I was sent to Harrisonburg, Va. and the 1028-seat new Virginia Theatre which had a 2/7 Robert Morton. One Saturday afternoon at the Virginia, the house was packed and one of the customers with her brood, was sitting in about the middle of the orchestra floor. The small child in her lap was screaming at the top of its lungs. The ushers had been down to ask her several times to keep the child quiet since he was disturbing the entire audience.

"Finally, after no results, the manager, Maynard Madden, came down and told her that she would have to leave and that her money would be refunded. She stood up in the center of the aisle, looked at Madden and said (and this is an exact quote) 'You're the by-goddest man I ever damn reckon . . . You're no more fit to be manager in spite of hell.' Needless to say, she stopped the show. I nearly fell off the organ bench, the audience was hysterical, and Madden speechless . . . English as she is spoke . . .

"Then it was on to the new Capitol Theatre in Winchester, Va. The house had a 2/6 Robert Morton, the finest I have ever heard. It was just right for the theatre and vice versa. An inspiration to play, it remained so for a long time. I understand that the theatre has been razed, but the organ is installed in a small Maryland church near Dick Kline's residence. (See Editor's Note at end of this article.)

"Not long ago, Cap. Young and I drove up to Utica, Md. where the ex-Capitol Morton was in very poor condition and badly installed. The organ chamber was in the ceiling and the swell opening quite small. Consequently, the sound couldn't get out. Due to lack of proper maintenance, the instrument had cyphers and many dead notes. Also, the combination action was only partially operative. (Editor's Note: This situation has been rectified. See June issue,

Potomac Valley Chapter Notes.)

"While in Winchester, I organized a concert orchestra, composed mostly of upper-grade high school students. They became very proficient and were used for numerous stage presentations during my stay there.

"Known as 'The Capitoliens,' we took some razzing because we were told our music stands looked like tombstones! However, we played such things as Ferde Grofe's 'Mississippi Suite,' Victor Herbert's 'Suite of the Serenades,' and Edvard Grieg's 'Lyric Suite.' The public's musical tastes seemed to be much better then than they are now!

"About 1930, sensing the handwriting on the wall as far as the theatre organ was concerned, I went to work for Western Electric (E.R.P.I.)

and started installing sound equipment in theatres throughout the East. Many of the theatres were still using their organs for presentations at three, seven and nine o'clock.

"The next three years were a little rough. Although I was never out of work, I had to alter my lifestyle somewhat. In 1934, I went to Durham, N.C., as an engineer and there I met Bob Van Camp, who, I believe, was attending Duke University. I stayed in Durham until 1940 when I signed up with the FCC and was sent to Hawaii where I remained until 1944. While in Hawaii, I wasn't near a keyboard of any kind.

"Upon returning to California in 1944, I was appointed organist and choirmaster at the Episcopal Church of the Messiah in Santa Ana, a posi-

In the late thirties, Bob Stratton installed a 2/6 Robert Morton player in the Durham Public Service Co. auditorium. He met Bob Van Camp while at WDNC. (Stratton collection)



tion I held for 15 years. About 1948, I rebuilt the old 10-rank tubular-pneumatic Moller by electrifying the chests and later added 12 ranks of Wicks which had been donated to the church by Spyros Skouras, owner of the local theatre. We therefore ended up with a 22-rank instrument, which, I believe, is still in service.

"After being transferred by the FCC to Washington, D.C. in 1959, I accepted several church jobs to keep my hand in. Among these were St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Washington, United Methodist in Temple Hills, Md., St. John's Episcopal and St. Barnabbas Episcopal, both in Annandale, Va. I was with the FCC until 1966, when I retired.

"In 1970, my partner, Marshall Stone, and I removed a 3/34 Wicks from a Baltimore church where it had been badly installed. The organ chambers had been sunk considerably below the choir floor level, and in addition, the expression shades had been installed so close to the front grillwork that they could open only partly. Thus, the sound could never get out.

"When we reinstalled it in the Christ Methodist Church in Arlington, Va., it was in nice, high, shallow chambers. In addition, the reverberation period was about six seconds. The Wicks is one of those instruments which are readily adaptable to church, concert, popular or jazz without any trouble. These instruments are rare indeed.

"In 1973, Marshall and I went to Antigua, Guatemala, at the request of the Guatemalan Government, to restore an organ in the Church of LaMerced. The instrument was built in 1573, and badly damaged by the 1773 earthquake which destroyed Antigua, then the capital. Seat of government was then moved to Guatemala City.

"When we removed the side panels and had a look at the tangle of pipes, we were ready to catch the next plane home. However, we went to work, straightened and revoiced damaged pipes, patched the reservoir (in remarkably good shape, considering its age), and got the instrument to play again after 200 years of silence. I mentioned to the good padre that I had heard of 'mañana,' but that this was ridiculous! The organ was only eight ranks, 54 notes, one manual and no pedals. It took two men to

play it since one had to pump. The stop knobs were big wooden handles which were turned like the taps on beer barrels.

"Since 1964, I have been building harpsichords. As of April 1976, Stratton Harpsichords had delivered 39 instruments and was working on number 40. Number 40 was a world 'first,' since it had no keyboards. It has an electro-magnetic action to operate the jacks, and was destined to be played from the Wurlitzer console in Ye Olde Pizza Joynt in San Leandro, Cal. It is a two-rank, 85-note instrument, playable at 16', 8' and 4' on either or both front and back ranks on two manuals, and at 16' and 8' on the pedal."

At his home, Bob Stratton has a 3/12 hybrid, assembled in his shop. It has a 3-manual Austin console, with pipes by Casavant, Hinners, Austin and Gottfried. There are Reisner switches, relays and valves. "It works like a charm," he says.

"I don't play much anymore except for substituting occasionally for church services and an occasional program for Potomac Valley Chapter meetings." In 1978, Bob was elected chairman of that chapter.

THEATRE ORGAN thanks Mr. Stratton for allowing its readers to share his experience through text and pictures.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Since the Bob Stratton profile was prepared some time ago, an interesting update is in order.

The organ mentioned as being transplanted from the Capitol Theatre, Winchester, VA to the Lutheran Church, Utica, Maryland has been re-worked by Potomac Valley Chapter members, ATOS. The work crew included George Johnson, Erwin "Cap" Young, Bruce Ricker, and others.

The Reverend William Biebel, well known to east coast members, played a concert on the instrument on April 22nd for the Potomac Chapter and members of the church. The program was played to a full house, the organ performed nicely, and Father Bill captivated the audience. (See Potomac Valley Chapter Notes, June issue.)

During intermission Past Chairman Bob Stratton was presented with a Past Chairman's plaque, and the Chairman of the Ladies Auxiliary of Utica Church was presented with



Playing a 3/12 hybrid in 1978. (Stratton collection)

a picture of their 2/6 Robert Morton pipe organ on its first night in 1929 at the Capitol Theatre in Winchester. It just happened that our Bob Stratton was the organist who played the instrument that night, 50 years ago. (See picture on page 24.) □

**NEXT
SUMMER
IT'S
ENGLAND!**

**FOR
OUR
TWENTY-FIFTH
ANNUAL
ATOS
CONVENTION**

THE FIRST THEATRE ORGAN

and the First Days of the Great Era!

by Lloyd E. Klos

Ever since the rebirth of the theatre pipe organ in the fifties, the question has been asked: "Where and when was the first organ installed in a theatre?" We may have the answer as supplied by Seattle's Ron Baggott.

In 1907, the Estey Organ Co. of Brattleboro, Vermont, shipped Opus 479 to the Sherman Clay Company store in Seattle, the largest music dealer on the coast for many years. The Estey, a self-contained instrument, was installed in Clay's concert auditorium for demonstration purposes.

At this time, several blocks down the street, was the Dream Theatre, owned and operated by James Clemmer. Since its opening, the Dream featured Oliver Wallace, accompanying the pictures at a grand piano, and he had attained much popularity in the city for his novel way of picture-playing.

One day, Clemmer heard the Estey at Clay's. He reasoned that if Wallace could play the organ, it would be a great asset if used to accompany the newsreels. Clemmer returned to Clay's with Wallace to hear the organ. Ollie became intrigued with the instrument, and felt he could learn to play it.

Clemmer ultimately purchased the organ, and it was installed in the Dream Theatre in 1908. The console was installed at a slight angle to enable the organist to see the screen better. For many months, the organ was played only for the newsreel, but as Wallace became more familiar with its resources, he thought it could be used with the "scenics." This also proved successful, and the organ was used for the newsreel and

the scenics, with Wallace returning to the piano for the feature picture.

Eventually, the Estey was used for the entire program, and out of it came the use of pipe organs in other

theatres. "As I remember it," says Baggott, "other instruments were installed in theatres owned by Jim Clemmer's brother, one of which was in Spokane.

Believed to be the first pipe organ in any theatre in the United States, G. Oliver Wallace is seated at the Estey console in Seattle's Dream Theatre in this 1910 photograph. The entire unit was installed at an angle to better enable the organist to see the screen. The grand piano was used for the feature pictures until Wallace became thoroughly familiar with the organ.

(Picture courtesy of the Seattle Museum of History and Industry, originally from the files of the Seattle Historical Society.)



Here are the specifications of the Dream Theatre Estey:

Great

8' Open Diapason 61 pipes
8' Dulciana 61 pipes
8' Melodia 61 pipes
4' Octave 61 pipes

Swell

8' Salicional 61 pipes
8' Stopped Diapason 61 pipes
4' Flute, Harmonic 61 pipes
8' Oboe (Labial T.C.) 49 pipes

Pedal

16' Bourdon 30 pipes
Couplers, swell shutters for swell organ — Crescendo-tremelo

According to Mr. Baggott, Sandy Balcom's firm did not do any of the service work on the organ at any time. However, they have been able to pass on some information.

The Dream Theatre's organ was sold to and installed in St. Joseph Catholic Church in Seattle in 1914. It served the church until 1926 when the building was razed. The exposed pipes and casings were destroyed. However, a part of the organ was retrieved by an independent organ man who eventually sold the remaining parts to a Presbyterian church in Spokane. They added this portion to an existing organ and as near as Sandy Baldom's firm could determine, that organ is still in existence.

Ron Baggott continues: "I can't tell too much more on the growth of the pipe organ in theatres. When I was a sophomore in high school, I was playing the Liberty Theatre in Wenatchee, Wash. The house had a 2/7 Wurlitzer, and was owned by the Jensen & Von Herberg Co. who owned a number of theatres in Washington and Oregon.

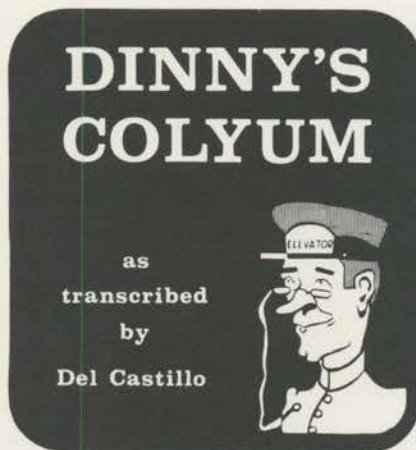
"Because of my ability, Mr. Von Herberg brought me to Seattle to meet Oliver Wallace. At that meeting, it was agreed when I entered the University of Washington in Seattle, I would play under Ollie at the Liberty Theatre. So, for three years while I studied in the music department of the University of Washington, I played for 30 minutes every hour and a half, beginning at 12:30 and ending at 11 p.m. I was given excellent instruction by Ollie, and became a close friend of he and his wife, Claire Burch Wallace, who was organist at the Wintergarden Theatre in Seattle.

"One final thing. The 3/14 Hope-

Jones Wurlitzer (Opus 41) in Seattle's Liberty Theatre was personally installed by Robert Hope-Jones, and as near as I can find out, in 1914. All pipes were installed in the proscenium arch, a tremendously successful organ because of the acoustics and the proper placement of the pipe chambers.

"Wallace did not play the Liberty immediately after its opening, as he was playing an engagement in California. When he visited Seattle, he was so intrigued with the Liberty installation that he returned to the city for good, and achieved his greatest fame at that house."

To Ron Baggott, our thanks for this insight into the first days of the theatre organ. □



To tell you the truth now I been ritin for two magazines the other one is the one called Off The Keyboards by the LA Prof. Organists Club, I get kinda mixed up on what I rote for who and when. But anyways I got a letter from a guy who says that he read what I rote about how to learn to play the organ and they was things in it he never seen anywheres else about how to play. So that kind of encouritched me to give you some more hints on how to learn to play the organ.

The first thing you have to do is to learn where the notes is on the music, and the way you do that is that Middle C is on the extry line that you can put below the right hand part which is the trebble clef or above the left hand part which is the base clef. Then you can find out where all the other notes is because you just count the letters of the alfabet from A to G goin up and then you have to learn the alfabet back-

wards so you can count the notes goin down only you have to remember that you have to count the lines and the spaces so if you go from a line to a line or a space to a space that means you have to skip a key. So then when you do all of that you got a way to know where all the Cees is and it turns out that the next C up from middle C is on the third space and when you count backwards goin down the next C down from middle C on the base clef is on the second space and then if you keep agoin you find out that high C and low C is on the second extra line outside of what the book says is the Grand Staph.

So then the next thing you do is to play all the scales and you gotta say the letters out loud to yourself so you get to remember where all the notes is, only you got to put your fingers in the right place and the way you do that is that they is seven notes to play before you get to the next seven notes and on acct. you aint got seven fingers you have to divide your fingers into threes and fours on acct. 3 and 4 makes 7. That works fine as long as you start on a white key but when you start on a black key the book says not to put your thumb on it so that means you have to start on your second finger and you put your thumb on the places where they is 2 white keys together and that keeps you from turnin your hand upside down to get to the next key.

So you can see they aint reely anythin hard about learnin to play the organ except they is too many doggon things that has to be done all to the same time. So when you got your rite hand on the upper keyboared and your left hand on the lower keyboared and your left foot on the peddles and your rite foot on the peddle that riggles up and down to make it softer and louder and find out where you can take one hand off to change the stops so everthin dont sound the same and you have to keep your eyes on the music because the book says you got to find the notes with your fingers and feet without lookin down because then you lose your place and pretty soon you get mixed up because everthin is agoin in a different direction why you find out it aint as easy as you thought it was and the next time you learn to play any instroomint it is agoin to be the base drum. □

THE MITERING OF REED PIPES

by Herb Merritt

Pipe chambers in homes almost never have the height of original chambers. Hence the hobbyist is sometimes faced with the task of pipe mitering, the most difficult of which is forming the gradual loop in conically shaped reed pipe resonators (trumpets, oboes, tubas, etc.). However, these miters can be made with minimal skills using the procedure outlined and require about 2 to 4 man-hours per pipe.

Mitering is achieved by angular cutting the resonator into segments, rotating these segments about 180 degrees, and rejoining them by soldering so that the speaking length of the pipe is not altered but the physical length is shortened. Mitering also prevents dirt from falling on the reed and strengthens the pipe body. It is important to note that no segment of the original resonator is eliminated in the final pipe. All the segments are simply rearranged. The trick is to know where and how to cut the segments and how to rejoin them.

Referring to Fig. 2, note that the four dimensions "b" do not contribute to the physical height of the mitered pipe (but do contribute to the speaking length). Also note that the loop does three retraces of the dimension "c" but only one contributes to the physical height of the mitered pipe. Hence, mitering shortens the pipe by an amount $S=4b+2c$. One must first examine the pipe length, chest height, and chamber height to determine the amount "S"

that the pipe must be shortened. A 4 to 6 inch clearance between top of the pipe and ceiling is adequate for pipe removal from the chest and to prevent acoustic confining or shading of the top of the pipe. Once "S" has been determined, the following steps detail the mitering procedure:

1. The resonator should be cleaned inside and out (scrub with TSP solution and rinse with a garden hose) and placed with seam up, Fig. 1.

2. Use a grease pencil to mark the resonator where top of socket occurs, Fig. 1. From this point measure up the distance to the shortened "S" plus about 3 inches. For example, if

a pipe height is to be shortened 18 inches, measure up 21 inches from the top of the socket. At this point, measure the pipe diameter "d" and compute "b" from the formula:

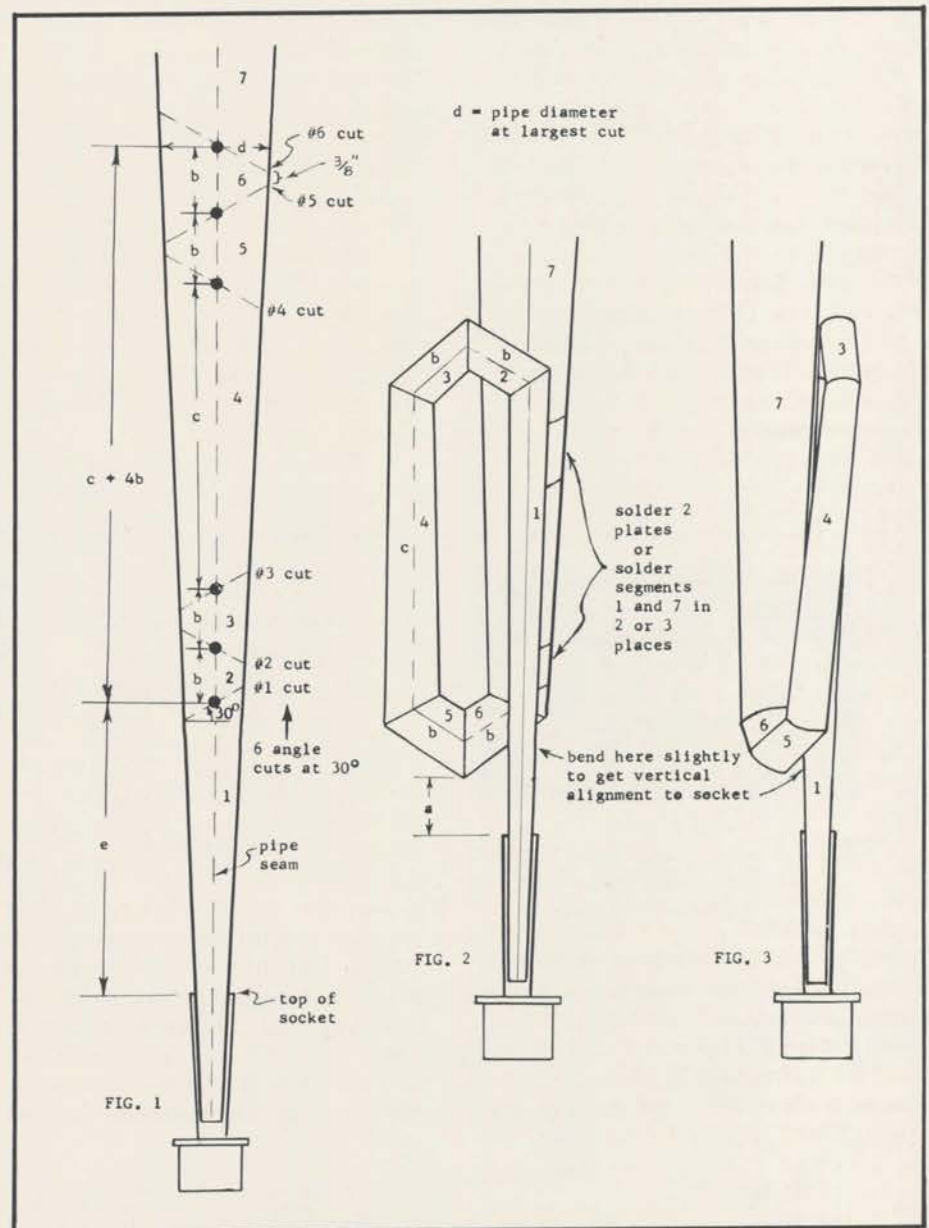
$$b = 0.577d + 0.375$$

For example, suppose $d = 2$ inches, then "b" becomes 1.53 inches. This formula for "b" will yield about 3/8 inch on segment #6 in Fig. 1.

3. Resonator will be shortened by an amount $S=4b+2c$. Solving for c:

$$c = 0.5S - 2b$$

With "b" and "c" now known, start at cut #6 and mark cuts #6 thru #1 on the resonator seam with a grease pencil (large dots in Fig. 1).



4. Now measure "e" on the pipe and compute the clearance "a" in Fig. 2 from the formula:

$$a = e + 0.375 - c - 1.5b$$

"a" will be about 1 inch which is adequate to allow access at the block for movement of the tuning wire. If precision mitering to a specified clearance is desired, then some movement of the cut locations may be necessary.

5. Number the resonator sections #1 thru #7 with a grease pencil to identify parts for resoldering.

6. Starting at cut #1, make the 6 cuts indicated in Fig. 1 with a miter box set at 30 degree angles. When used carefully, a simple miter box with a fine toothed saw is adequate. The miter box should be rigidly held in a vice or securely clamped to a workbench. Further, wood block shims should be C-clamped to both sides of the miter box to support the conical resonator so that its center line is parallel to both sides. (Photo #1)

7. Use a file or knife to remove burrs at all edges of cuts. Tin all edges. Use a 75 to 100 watt soldering iron and low melting point solder (60 to 63% tin) with rosin core.

8. Now completely solder joints #1 and #2 and then joints #6 and #7 as these joints will be inaccessible for total soldering once the loop is formed. As illustrated in Fig. 3, note that segment #6 must be rotated very slightly to form the base of the loop. (Photo #2)

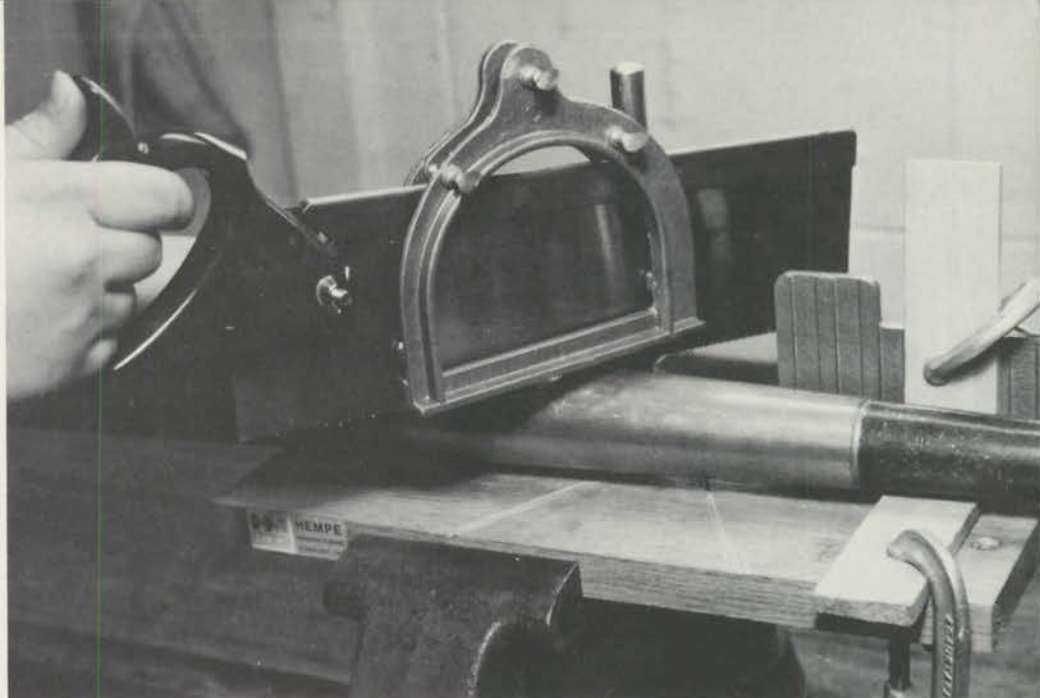


Figure 1

9. The remaining joints must be tack soldered only as segments may have to be moved slightly to achieve total alignment. Align and tack solder (one spot on opposite sides of cut) resonator segments #5 and #6, rotating segment #5 very slightly to form the base of the loop shown in Fig. 3. (Photo #3) Now tack solder segments #2 and #3. (Photo #4) With segment #1 lying flat against segment #7, now hold the pieces to form the loop shown in Fig. 2 and tack solder joints #3 and #4, and finally #4 and #5. (Photo #5)

10. Now inspect for proper alignment, adjust as necessary, then com-

pletely finish solder all joints. (Photo #6)

11. Add 1 or 2 zinc braces to unite the loop to the resonator, Fig. 2, or solder #1 to #7 in 2 or 3 places. (Photo #7)

12. Carefully bend lower portion of segment #1 as necessary to get good vertical alignment of resonator to socket.

13. Remove soldering flux with lacquer thinner. (Photo #8)

14. Check miter by filling resonator with water and inspecting seams for leaks. Dry resonator and solder any leaks.

15. Spray miter area and rest of resonator with clear lacquer to protect zinc from oxidation.

Photos #9 and #10 show the before and after results for the lowest 6 notes of an 8' Kimball Waldhorn mitered by Dennis Werkmeister, ATOSer of New Lebanon, Ohio, and friends. The 8-foot pipe (CC) was shortened 38 inches.

Sometimes a mitered pipe must be re-mitered to a new length. In such cases, it is best to saw the pipe apart at the miter joints and re-solder the segments to achieve the original conical pipe. Then follow the above procedure to re-miter the pipe.

The author will be happy to answer any inquiries: Herb Merritt, 8034 School Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45242.

Editor's Note: Mr. Merritt is the owner of a Wurlitzer organ Opus 1684, now a 2/8. It was been in his home since 1970. □



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Figure 2 ▲



Figure 3 ▲



Figure 4 ▲



Figure 5 ▲



Figure 6 ▲



Figure 7 ▲



Figure 8 ▼



Figure 9 ▼

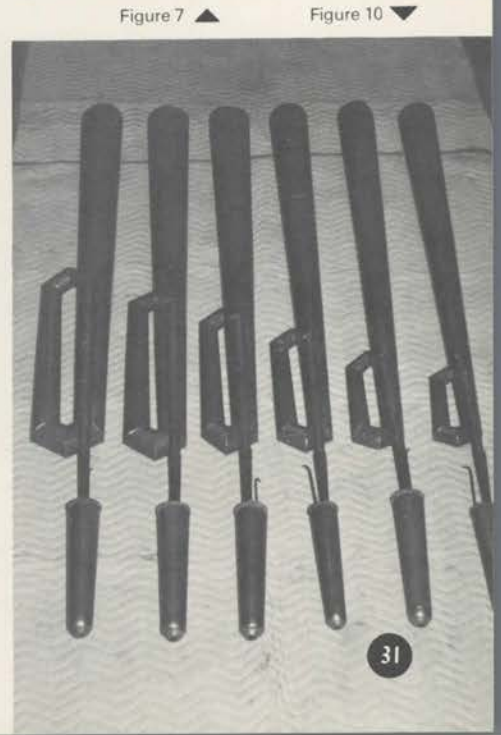


Figure 10 ▼

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

There are few organists as effervescent as Wichita Theatre Organ's resident talent, Billy Nalle. His enthusiasm carries over into his writing, which was one of the reasons we asked him to describe the April concert/dance impressions which came to him while he was playing the Century II's 4/37 Wurlitzer. Here's what he wrote.

"You could taste the electricity in the air and the beautiful lighting from both ends of the big hall, yes, the big mirror-covered ball from the ceiling doing its magic too, seemed to urge the crowd along, not to speak of my playing my tailbone off for four hours, except for a short intermission and a clothes change. 'Wore two concert versions of a jumpsuit, the first was in burgundy and black, the second was in a silvery blue.

"The lighting from above the console and from the mezzanine turned both outfits into many different colors as also they did to the cream and gold console. "Queen Mother-and-Son" truly became Technicolor

Kids! This time we drew many more from the news media, the universities and colleges and even the chamber of commerce. No one came to review anything; all obviously came to have a ball, on both senses.

"Reactions and enthusiasm ran rampant the whole evening until things began simmering down about the last twenty minutes. Requests came in a flood to have yet another in the future and many stopped WTO people to say they enjoyed the concert I played last May more than any in the WTO series to date. That told me I really must have provided the menu which reached them and, of course, it left me with a feeling no money on earth can buy!"

We gather Billy, despite 4 hours hard labor, had as much fun as any of the attendees.



For years veteran organist Chauncey Haines hoped to play a concert for ATOS. He was finally set for the Los Angeles chapter's May concert, then came the gasoline shortage and 75-year-old Chauncey took to his bicycle for trips to the market. All would have gone well but for a strong headwind. Bucking the breeze, the bike chain broke and wrapped around Haines' ankle — snap! Luckily, a ready replacement was found in another veteran organist, Bill Wright, whose story, "The Other Wright," appeared in a recent issue of this magazine. ATOSers arriving at the San Gabriel civic auditorium to hear Chauncey Haines were more than a little puzzled to find Bill Wright's name heading the bill. But



Chauncey Haines put his foot in it.

(Fiddlestuffer Foto)

Chauncey hobbled out onto the stage on crutches, displayed his castbound ankle and introduced Bill Wright.

Bill's concert, which he had put together in less than a week, drew largely from his experiences and tunes played at Kansas City's Midland Theatre in the late '20s. A measure of his audience appeal was displayed after the concert. While photos were being taken, members of his audience gathered around the console and asked for requests. Bill played requests until the stagehands closed the hall.

Meanwhile, Chauncey Haines was rescheduled for November on the Wiltern Kimball organ — but without his bicycle.



The console which controls the San Gabriel (Calif.) civic auditorium



Billy and the dancers. They wanted more.

3/16 Wurlitzer had a close call early in May. When the audience arrived for George Wright's May 11 concert, it was noted that the console was already fully elevated. George explained why. Some work was being done on the organ in preparation for Candi Carley's new record a couple of days previously and since the maintenance crew would return the next day, it was decided to leave the console up. That decision saved the console from a watery death. During the night a water pipe started leaking. Arriving next day, the crew found the sub-pit (which stores the console below orchestra pit level) full of water. It's all been fixed — but whew! Close!



From New York, Ken Ladner insists he's assembling a 2/4 Wurlitzer in his home, but then goes on to describe his pipework: Trumpet, Bourdon/Flute and Violin by Austin; Vox Humana by Moller. Other parts are Austin, Kimball, Skinner and even Wurlitzer. Should be an outstanding "Style B." in North Tonawanda jargon. The console was from the 2/10 Wurlitzer originally in the Plaza Theatre, Bronx, N.Y. Because it was in sad shape Ken decided to reshape it after one of the Radio City Music Hall consoles. He's well on his way; the organ is winded but Ken looks to a long ordeal getting the console finished to resemble its prototype.

After getting most of the hard work completed Ken comes up with words of wisdom all too familiar to those who have aspired to a similar project.

"I've learned one important thing about rebuilding my own organ: it costs a fortune!"



From time to time we catch up with the wanderings of organist Dan Bellomy, who has been doing 5-days-a-week demo-concertizing for several electronic organ builders for the past several years. Tiring of the "travel/play/move on" routine, Dan has decided to settle down to something more solid — such as the Organ Grinder pizzeria in Denver which opened recently with a 4/37 (combined) Wurlitzer. He writes that the pizzeria people made him an offer



Dan Bellomy. A proposition he couldn't resist. (Stufoto)

he couldn't resist — lead organist — so he gave up a life of plane hopping for "what has to be the most perfect theatre pipe organ I have ever played."

The deal includes time off for concerts, so Dan is hoping to get on the pipe concert circuit too. Dan, we predicted years ago you'd come back to pipes some day.



Rochester's RTOS has mastered the promotional arts which result in full auditoriums. That was the case on April 21st and 22nd when Lawrence Welk's Bob Ralston appeared for the third time at the Auditorium



Bob Ralston. Geritol set or not, he drew a crowd. (Dick Harold Photo)

Theatre for RTOS. The previous times, Bob's practice time had been limited due to taping commitments for the Welk show. This time, he had several days of practice on the 4/22 Wurlitzer, appeared on the Eddie Meath TV talk show, and had an informal session on the club's 3/8 Wurlitzer in Eisenhart Auditorium. A total of 3653 were treated to the Ralston brand of playing and personality, with eight bus loads of senior citizens (at reduced rates) a part of the Sunday matinee audience. First half of each program was the playing of numbers Bob recently recorded on the DTOC organ. Second half was devoted entirely to requests, the concertgoers being invited to sign up for their favorites in the lobby at intermission. It was the most successful two-day event for RTOS since Bob first appeared in Kodakville in 1973.



Organist Bill Floyd writes from Richmond, Va. that the now organless Loew's theatre will be redone for the local symphony orchestra, probably in the Philadelphia Academy of Music decor. That means the symphony will be leaving the Mosque which will be sold to the university, and that may bode ill for the Wurlitzer. As Bill says, "I can see the Wurli being replaced by a rack of tin whistles probably imported from Germany." Bill feels that neither the Byrd nor Mosque organs would have been maintained nor even retained had it not been for the maintenance performed over the years by Dick Barlow and Tom Landrum, sometimes for free.



Organist Leon Berry writes about an unusual organ installation he discovered while perusing a library volume. We've heard of strange locations for pipes, such as the one in Captain Nemo's submarine, *Nautilus*, and the one in the Phantom's play pen under the Paris Opera House (both shown with horseshoe consoles in the movies) but these were fictional. One real weirdo location for an organ was the Kilgen built into a circus wagon for "the Big Top's" street parades in the early years of the century, and that was real.

Now Leon Berry comes up with a



Leon Berry. The "Beast in the Basement" organist looks for pipes in offbeat locations.

reference in a book entitled *Memories of the Lakes* which mentions a pipe organ installed in the big bulk freighter *Wilpen* for the entertainment of passengers on the Great Lakes steamer. It states that the organ was installed when the ship was built in 1907, and later removed (so was the circus Kilgen, replaced by the newly developed steam calliope about the same time).

There's a story there, if we have any old sailors among our readers. Thanks, Leon.



Bert Buhrman, was amused at the item in the December 1978 THEATRE ORGAN in which Bernie Cowham, long ago organist of the RKO Keith's Flushing Theatre, was quoted as saying he played "loud and louder." That organ is now used at the School of the Ozarks in Missouri by Bert. "I had never heard of Cowham. But I do know the Vox Humana had been monkeyed with and is not now the best stop on the organ. Apparently, it had been badly adjusted, just to make it loud. The Tibia was more like a Flute until Dave Junchen went to work on it. I have a hunch that the organ wasn't too appealing in the theatre, tone-wise. The workmen who removed it told me it was in a huge house (2974 seats) with the pipes high up from the seating area. So it probably was a strain to get sufficient volume.

"Incidentally, when we unpacked the organ, a note fell out of the blower. It was addressed to Cowham by Freddie Helmes, about some mainte-

nance problem. It seemed a coincidence as Helmes was the chief organ technician at NBC, New York, in charge of that dreadful Kimball in the organ studio (originally in Lew White's teaching studio)."



Marion Martin has done it again! Every now and then Martin stages an outrageous theatre organ concert at the "Palace Theatre" — outrageous because there is no "Palace" in Whiteville, No Carolina, and Martin has no theatre organ. Instead he stages his shows in the South Eastern Community College auditorium, playing a borrowed plug-in. The rest is imagination and Martin has reams of it. To read his script one is almost convinced he's talking and playing in a movie palace of yesterday, complete with pipes. He must be convincing because the public pays \$3.00 a head to be convinced. This time he even asked his audience to imagine themselves in the luxurious "Palace" lobby where he entertained briefly on the "lobby organ" for those waiting for the show to break. Once seated in the "main auditorium" we were treated to an organ overture, a somewhat jazzy version of Bach's "Tocatta in D Minor." The films shown were *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) and Laurel and Hardy's venerable *Two Tars*, with Martin doing consider-

able rip and tear effects as the boys demolish jalopies. One gets the impression he's having a great time, occasionally losing his place or going off on a tangent from which he quickly recovers and continues with sly humor. Could he be adding "clams" just to see if his audience is on their collective toes? Judging from the generous applause on a pirated tape made during the show, his listeners ate it up. This time Martin played a Rodgers "Trio." It filled the bill. He also featured male and female vocalists singing such sophisticated stuff as "When the Moon Comes Over the Mountain." He even illustrated how the "relief" organist took over the console in the dark without missing a bar, with the help of David Eplee.

Despite the horsing around, Marion Martin has a serious purpose — to picture for the students (who are admitted free) the impact of yesterday's movie palaces and their lore, which is delivered as commentary, very well prepared and voiced.

He's offering an important service by keeping important images alive, despite those "clams."



1976 ATOS conventioners will recall the 3/8 Kimball organ in the Broadway Theatre, Pitman, N.J., played in concert with much style by Shirley Hannum. Organist Warren



Marion Martin and student David Eplee. Total darkness covered their bench hopping.

Clark sends us a flyer from the theatre announcing the May appearance of "Belmont, America's Foremost Magician — a real, live stage show . . . spectacular surprises . . . beautiful girls . . . and astonishing magic!" Best of all is the line "Wayne Collins at the Kimball Organ," supplying the accompaniment for the acts. Warren adds that the organ is used during most movie shows and for all stage shows. We wonder — just how dead is vaudeville? There always seem to be acts available when needed.



From Carmichael, Calif., long-time organ hobbyist (and professional puppeteer) Bob Longfield takes us to task concerning the item about Ted Malone and his "Between the Book Ends" poetry radiocast. Why, asks Bob, is Ann Leaf never mentioned in connection with the program? To drive his point home, Bob enclosed a Xerox copy of the sheet music cover for the program's theme composed by Ann after the show had been moved from Kansas City to New York. Malone wrote the words. Bob tells us he visited a "Between the Book Ends" broadcast (presumably from the organ studio in the Paramount Theatre Building) as a guest of Ann in 1937. He met Malone and adds, "... this was a very exciting afternoon for a young organ enthusiast."

So, why wasn't Ann credited? Well, Bob, we were only reporting what we knew about a couple of incidents relative to the Malone show, not attempting to cover the show's entire history, during which a number of organists were involved. Another thing, Ann Leaf doesn't blow her own horn (she doesn't need to). The real reason for this "sin of omission" is probably because you never before sent in the information. Thanks for your addition, Bob.



During the weekend of May 18-20 the Rochester Theater Organ Society sponsored its fourth field trip, the third to Toronto. A total of 111, largest group yet, filled three Greyhound coaches. First two busloads left for the Queen City on Friday morning, to be entertained on a "mystery tour" enroute, which was a trip thru the "African Safari"

near Hamilton, Ontario. The riders were amused by the antics of the monkeys which crawled over the vehicles and looked into the windows, and especially a giraffe who bent his elongated neck to see inside.

In Toronto, where the Sutton Place Hotel served as headquarters, there were trips to the Ontario Science Center, zoo, Casa Loma, and its Wurlitzer, CN Tower, Ed's Warehouse, and on Sunday morning to the Organ Grinder Pizza. Tour coordinator Tom Lockwood played a cameo on the 3/13 hybrid, and then resident organist, Don Thompson rendered three hours of toe-tapping favorites. The return to Rochester was via the Botanical Gardens in Hamilton, and the Sheraton Brock for dinner in a room overlooking Niagara Falls.



We haven't heard much from Canada's leading theatre organ authority, Clealan Blakely, since his marriage awhile back. Rest assured, he has not lost interest in the cause. In May, enroute to Florida, he and

Mrs. Blakely stopped at Cincinnati for four days. "We had a great time at the Emery Auditorium. Tote Pratt made us feel right at home, and gave us a complete tour. This 3/20 Wurlitzer has to be one of the greatest restoration jobs I have ever seen; it is much better than when new. A new Posthorn by Schopp has been added, and it's a beaut: lots of fire on a Marr & Colton chest. The place has a very dedicated organ crew, under Tote's direction. Projection equipment is superb. We were given passes one evening to the show, and Jack Doll played the interludes. He is a good organist with a pleasing personality, and we really enjoyed it."



Many have asked why the "George Wright at the Chicago Theatre, Volume 2" album was released by Century Records as a "conventional" recording rather than in the direct-to-disc process which distinguished the first release in the series. We knew all of George's tunes for Century had been recorded by the direct-



George Wright extends his gratitude to those who saw fit to elect him to the Theatre Organist Hall of Fame by designating him Theatre Organist of the Year 1979.



Special affectionate remembrances to those who assisted with events at San Gabriel Auditorium:

Fred Beeks	Marian Cook
Harold Donzé	Mike Hunt
Ken Kukuk	Mike Ohman
Bob Power	San Gabriel Crew
Frank Sele	Bill Shaw
Harry Zimmerman	The Big Band

to-disc method, so why the return to conventional taping? We learned that the direct-to-disc original had been damaged in handling, so the tape made simultaneously was substituted. Besides being several bucks cheaper, a number of purchasers compared it with Volume 1 and reported they heard no difference in recording characteristics.



"A new broom sweeps clean," in an old saying applied to the taking over an enterprise by a new operator. Such is the case in New York where the famed Radio City Music Hall has been undergoing changes in entertainment format. Even the name of the place has been extended: The Radio City Music Hall Entertainment Center. The Hall had a refurbishing in what full-page ads described "to its magnificent art-

deco splendor of opening night, December 27, 1932." Entertainment for the family is stressed: stage extravaganzas, film music classics, special events, the premier of a Broadway-style *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* in October, and the spectacular Christmas show, opening on Thanksgiving and closing New Years day. Lance Luce, personable 19-year-old from Detroit, and Chad Weirick have been engaged to preside at the 4/58 Wur-litzer. The famed 36 Rockettes have been retained.



Mrs. Dolph Gobel, widow of the organist who once played New York theatres and radio stations, reports that on May 29th, one of the New York television stations presented a nostalgic film portrait of Loew's Kings Theatre in Brooklyn. The

house, with its 4/23 "Wonder Morton," opened in 1929 and now stands closed. "Lee Erwin played an electronic organ background while the commentator talked about the beautiful theatre in its heyday and questioned its future. Some people upon being interviewed said they heard it was to be razed, and anything from an office building, super market or recreation hall would rise in its place." At last report, the organ is still in storage. One prospective buyer refused it because of its condition.



Though its organ has long been removed, Loew's Valencia Theatre in Queens still serves, but in a field far different than what was intended when the ornate 3500-seat house opened in 1929. The ex-movie palace is now the Tabernacle of Prayer for All People. The congregation has spent \$250,000 to restore it to much of its pristine grandeur. There are some modifications, however. Where the screen was hung, a huge cross now is the centerpiece. The stage has been boxed in for better choral acoustics. The naked females atop the proscenium arch have been equipped with wings to simulate angels. Only the 2500 seats on the main floor are used.

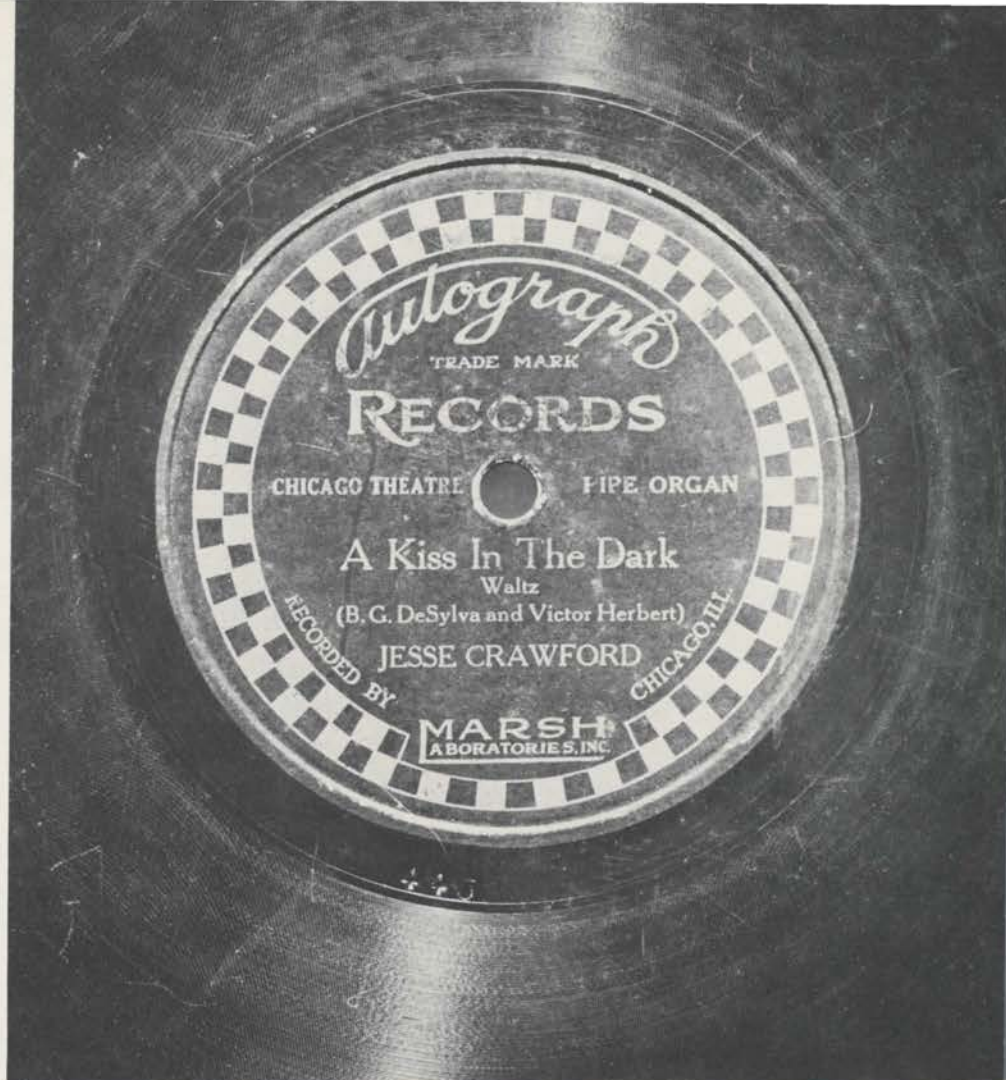
The Valencia was a gift to the congregation in June 1977 from the Loew's Corp. Originally, Loew's Kings had been negotiated for the religious body but the deal was not consummated, although the theatre is closed. Other ex-Loew's houses in New York include the 175th Street and the Pitkin which also serve as houses of worship, the "multiplied" Paradise, and the Metropolitan which is still a movie house. The first four had 4/23 "Wonder Mortons" and all except the 175th have been removed.



Credit Dave Teeter of Elmira, N.Y. for discovering the widow of a theatre organist in his area. Edna Ross, spouse of Robert Wilson Ross, who played organs in Philadelphia, the Pittsburgh area, Rochester, N.Y. and Kane, Pa., has a wealth of material on the musician. In due course, THEATRE ORGAN readers will be regaled with a biography of one who worked in the great era of the instrument. □



? WAS THIS THE FIRST COMMERCIAL ELECTRIC RECORDING



Autograph Record Number 445. Was this a first?

(Photo courtesy Doric Records, Frank Killinger)

Until the 1920s, all recordings were done acoustically. That is, the sound was picked up by a large horn or cone and the recording stylus was activated directly by the vibrations collected and transmitted through the horn. This was basically the original Edison concept.

Needless to say, the method was primitive, requiring musicians to be placed awkwardly close around the sound-gathering horn, the frequency range was extremely limited (about 164 cycles to less than 3000) and the resulting sound was thin as well as distorted.

With the advent of radio, experiments were conducted using microphones and amplifiers to activate a magnetic recording stylus for improved fidelity. A number of research projects along these lines were in progress by major laboratories such as RCA and Western Electric. General Electric was experimenting with a light beam method.

It was known that electric meth-

ods could increase fidelity to 100 to 5000 cycles, a large increase for the time.

Brunswick demonstrated an electrically recorded sound in August of 1924. Columbia, (in Great Britain, not the U.S. company) had experimented in the fall of 1924.

However, at the same time an independent researcher in Chicago by the name of Orlando Marsh was also working on an electrical recording system.

Marsh's work is mentioned in Dr. John Landon's book, *Jesse Crawford, Wizard of the Mighty Wurlitzer*.

Checking into dates, it seems that Mr. Marsh may have released an electric recording before any of the major companies. It is known that he worked with Jesse Crawford at the Chicago Theatre as stated in Dr. Landon's book. Marsh had cut some jazz records with Jelly Roll Morton and King Oliver. The dates of the jazz renditions have been established

as September, 1924.

The Crawford Chicago Theatre sessions were thought to have been sometime earlier and if correct, it would mean that the first commercial electrical recording was done with a theatre organ and Jesse Crawford was the artist.

It can't be stated for certain, but that is the way it appears. Do any of our readers have additional information?

Jesse Crawford in the Chicago Theatre. Orlando Marsh, on the stage, beside a rack of amplifiers to the right of the console.

(Photo courtesy of Dr. John Landon, Author of *Jesse Crawford - Wizard of the Mighty Wurlitzer*.)



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FROM OUR MEMBERSHIP

*A Program Planned for Amateurs and
Hobbyists as Well as Professionals!*

THURSDAY THRU SUNDAY
OCTOBER 25TH THRU 28TH, 1979
AT THE WURLITZER UNIVERSITY
WURLITZER CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS, DeKALB, ILLINOIS

AREAS OF STUDY . . .

Playing Techniques — This section will be conducted by John Muri and Lowell Ayars. It will include various styles indigenous to theatre organ playing.

Harmonization will be conducted by Gordon Kibbee.

Pipe Organ Operations — The emphasis of this portion, conducted by Judd Walton and the Wurlitzer Pipe Organ Crew, will be the actual mechanics of the unit pipe organ. Areas to be discussed are trouble shooting, pipe repair and soldering, how to correctly miter a pipe, electrical wiring, how to adjust reservoirs, tremulants and other pneumatic - mechanical devices, and many other technically related subjects.

Registration — Ashley Miller and Gordon Kibbee will conduct this in-depth look at registration on the theatre organ. They will cover many styles and combinations of pipe and electronic organ sounds used in theatre playing.

The Intimate Theatre Organ — This will be of interest to all people with home organs or recently moved chapter organs. Judd Walton, Ashley Miller, and the Wurlitzer Pipe Organ Installation Crew will discuss the possibilities and problems involved in installing and playing a high pressure pipe organ in a smaller environment than it was originally intended.

Included . . .

- Transportation to DeKalb and return to O'Hare Airport for those flying.
- All ground transportation from motels to and from Wurlitzer University Campus during seminar.
- Motel Lodging — Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights.
- Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner Friday and Saturday and Breakfast Sunday.
- All educational material.
- A color photograph of each student sitting at the console of the Mightiest Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ.

A LEARNING EXPERIENCE! Not a Regional Convention

AGENDA

THURSDAY — OCTOBER 25th

12:00, 2:00
and 4:00
(Chicago Time) Buses leave O'Hare for DeKalb Hotels
Dinner on your own (Bus leaves from
outside the Baggage Claim area of
American Airlines.)
6:30 p.m. Buses leave Hotels for Wurlitzer Hall/
Registration
7:30-8:00 Wurlitzer Welcome/Overview—*G. Buck*
8:00-8:30 Organ Concert — *Ashby*
8:30-9:30 Organ Tour — *Buck/Ashby*
9:30-10:00 Organ Concert — *Ashby*
10:30 p.m. Buses leave for Hotels

FRIDAY — OCTOBER 26th

7:00-8:30 Breakfast — Special Education Bldg.
9:00-9:45 Lecture — Playing Techniques —
Muri/Ayars
9:45-10:45 Workshop 1A
10:45-11:15 Break
11:15-12:15 Workshop 1B
12:15-1:45 Lunch
1:45-2:30 Organ Showcase — *Ayars*
2:30-3:15 Lecture — Harmonization —
Kibbee/Miller
3:15-4:15 Workshop 2A
4:15-4:45 Break
4:45-5:45 Workshop 2B
6:00-7:00 Dinner
7:30-8:30 Open Forum
8:30-9:15 Organ Showcase — *Kibbee*
9:30 Buses leave for Hotels

SATURDAY — OCTOBER 27th

7:00-8:30 Breakfast — Special Education Bldg.
9:00-9:45 Lecture — Pipe Organ Operations —
Walton
9:50-10:20 Elective Period 1
10:25-10:55 Elective Period 2
10:55-11:15 Break
11:15-11:45 Elective Period 3
11:50-12:20 Elective Period 4
12:20-1:45 Lunch
1:45-2:30 Organ Showcase — *Muri*
2:30-3:15 Lecture — Registration —
Miller/Kibbee
3:15-4:15 Workshop 3A
4:15-4:45 Break
4:45-5:45 Workshop 3B
6:00-7:00 Dinner
7:30-8:30 Open Forum
8:30-9:15 Organ Showcase — *Miller*
9:30 Buses leave for Hotels

SUNDAY — OCTOBER 28th

7:00-8:30 Breakfast — Special Education Bldg.
9:00-10:00 Lecture — The Intimate Theatre Organ
(20) Installation — *Walton*
(20) Voicing — *Buck/Milligan*
(20) Playing — *Miller/Ashby*
Break
10:00-10:30 Expanding Your Tonal Resources —
Walton/Wurlitzer
10:30-11:30
11:30-12:00 Finale
12:15 Buses leave for O'Hare

WORKSHOP ASSIGNMENTS

Wurlitzer Hall Central — 240 cap.	Wurlitzer Hall East — 60 cap.	Wurlitzer Hall West — 60 cap.
1 — A Ayars	1 — A Ashby	1 — A Miller
1 — B Muri	1 — B Ayars	1 — B Ashby
2 — A Kibbee	2 — A Muri	2 — A Ashby
2 — B Miller	2 — B Kibbee	2 — B Muri
3 — A Miller	3 — A Kibbee	3 — A Ayars
3 — B Kibbee	3 — B Ayars	3 — B Ashby

Ex. Dining Room

60 cap.
1 — A Kibbee
1 — B Miller
2 — A Ayars
2 — B Ashby
3 — A Ashby
3 — B Muri

Library

80 cap.
1 — A Muri
1 — B Kibbee
2 — A Miller
2 — B Ayars
3 — A Muri
3 — B Miller

Elective Sessions

1. Combination Action — Gordon Kibbee
2. Mitering Pipes — Bob Jacobus
3. Releathering Pouch Pneumatics — Linda Williams
4. Repairing Pipes — Lou Rosa
5. Theory of Operation — Dave Ashby
6. Trouble Shooting — Judd Walton
7. Voicing — Bill Milligan
8. Wiring — Ron Curran

REGISTRATION

Registration must be in the hands of the Registrar by Monday, October 1, 1979.

Fees are \$199 per person (single or double occupancy) limited to the first 500 registrants.

Send your name, address, phone number, number attending, check and accommodations required to . . .

Ray Snitil, Registrar
2849 14th Avenue S.E.
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Upon receipt of your check by the Registrar you will be sent acknowledgment of your registration, complete details of our extended weekend program, your motel assignment and pre-enrollment questionnaire.

Motel Reservations will be dispensed on a First-Come/First-Served basis with the more deluxe accommodations being released first. We regret that due to time limitations only Seminar Faculty will be able to actually play the Mightiest Wurlitzer.

NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH

by John Muri

Misinformation usually produces controversy. So does hatred. Lying and ignorance make still more; so I was pleased when John Simon, who used to be a movie critic of sorts, began a series of articles in *ESQUIRE* magazine castigating college professors and English teachers whose writing was not only incorrect but nonsensical. I praised him for his enterprise, but I felt (and still feel) that he has been whistling in the wind. Communication is getting worse, not better. Much musical history, criticism, and advertising is windy and pretentious. The effusions of the rock music crowd are the worst of all. The meaningless and often profanely obscene rock commentary now getting into print makes one recoil from the image of the kind of life its writers live. Truth is elusive. Back in 1930, crusty old H. L. Mencken said, "The real facts of history are always lost. Only balderdash survives." One cannot help becoming sceptical about historical truth after spending a little time trying to dig out facts about theatre organs. Much of it is distorted, inaccurate, and untrue.

Bias and ignorance display themselves clearly, particularly when one of our younger commentators (who wasn't alive in the twenties) begins to pontificate about the "old days." I listened to one of these again recently. He was extolling the greatness of silent movies on "the giant screen." He didn't know that giant screens didn't appear until well into the thirties, long after silent movies were defunct. Many a converted store-theatre had screens no larger than 12 by 16 feet. In 1918, the average theatre in Chicago seated 1600 and showed films on a screen about 15 by 20 feet. Big screens did not come in until after sound movies became popular. Magnascope was one of the first of the big ones. Then came the curved

screens which displayed unwarranted distortions. Cinemascope arrived in the thirties, creating problems of focusing and photographic layout that have not been solved to this day. The silent-film screen was a rather modest-appearing thing. Built in the ratio of .75 to 1.0, it did not dominate nor dwarf the building.

Few of us organists ever got to play on 4/20's. Most of us had to play 2/6's. Many an organist had only four ranks to play on. We were lucky if we got to work on a three-manual. I can remember only six theatres in Chicago (among at least 350) that had larger than three manual consoles. None of this is surprising when we learn from the 1922-3 *Film Daily Yearbook* that only 46 percent of the movie theatres in the U.S.A. had pipe organs in 1923.

Misinformation centering on Robert Hope-Jones, his inventions, and his relations to the Wurlitzer Company is rampant. An attempt at cataloguing Hope-Jones' work was made as early as 1909 in George L. Miller's book, *The Recent Revolution in Organ Building*. It included the following:

- (1) The unit organ.
- (2) Large-scale, leather-lipped tibias — four varieties.
- (3) Larger windchests, providing 73 pipes for a 61-note keyboard.
- (4) Greatly expanded use of couplers.
- (5) Extension of the pedal board up to G, creating a 32-note board.
- (6) Swell-shutter indicators.
- (7) The diaphone.
- (8) Wind pressures as high as 50 inches, never less than 5.

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

- (9) Movable consoles.
- (10) Stop-keys or tablets.
- (11) Quintadena Celeste.
- (12) Suitable Bass.
- (13) Brick, stone, and cement swell-boxes to prevent conduction of sound.
- (14) Sound-reflectors.
- (15) Electro-magnetic actions.
- (16) Improvements to diapasons, permitting voicing to 30 inches.

It's a formidable list, but it needs qualification. For example, item 5, the larger concave and radiating pedal board. Hope-Jones did not invent it, but he was the first to use all the characteristics together. Item 10 would more correctly state that Hope-Jones produced the first horse-shoe-style console using stop-keys. Item 15 should properly read "the first electromagnetic action that worked." I presume that some of this, if not much of it, will remain in dispute.

So be it. Now, what about the role of Farney Wurlitzer in producing the Mighty Wurlitzers? Farney was not interested in getting publicity for himself, even though Hope-Jones and Rudolph Wurlitzer were out of the picture long before theatre organs were installed in large numbers. It was Farney (born December 7, 1883) who was the propelling influence in the theatre-organ business. He began work early in the industry, and he was in on it at the finish. Sent by his father to Europe in 1901 to study coin-operated machines, he became aware of the potentialities in theatre organs. The organ that stirred his ambition was the one in the Seattle Liberty Theatre, where he observed enthusiastic audience reactions that gradually spread along the California coast as organs were installed. It was after Hope-Jones had left the firm that the heavy production and selling took place under Farney's supervision for at least thirty years.

Much of the argument about these issues is based on incomplete information. But what shall we do with a complete ignoramus? Such a one broke out in print a couple of months ago in a keyboard magazine suggesting that in 1927 there were no movies, radio, or automobiles. He doesn't know that in that year many hundreds of theatre organs were operating all over the United States. Movies by the thousands were being

made and shown, and business was good. He said that Rudolph Wurlitzer came along with Robert Hope-Jones (sic) with "a contraption called the movie organ." Whoever used that term "movie organ" is unknown to me; it was not used in any publicity of the twenties. Furthermore, Rudolph Wurlitzer died in 1914; Hope-Jones left the company in the same year. The writer continued that Mighty Wurlitzers did much to debase popular taste and fatally corrupt public taste for organ music. To the contrary, the theatre organ, played by a fine organist (and there were many such players) brought the only decent live music that was regularly available. Not every theatre organist played "Ja-Da" or "The Darktown Strutters' Ball" while Little Eva was dying.

Anyone with a small streak of fairness must be compelled to credit Hope-Jones with a good deal and not glibly refer to his work as a "contraption." There are other belittlers, too — those who say he was little more than an adaptor of other people's inventions. So where does all this take us?

It takes us to a familiar conclusion: too many people are happy to belittle and tear down the work of their betters. Too many are inclined to idolize somebody who has made a name for himself. Idols and living legends prove on examination to be very human. Once the Hope-Jones idolators and detractors know specifically what they are talking about, and when those who break out in print know the difference between Rudolph and Farney Wurlitzer, we may begin putting more faith in the printed page. □

LEW WILLIAMS AT MUNDELEIN

by Almer Brostrom

CATOE had the privilege of hearing an outstanding musician perform in June at St. Marys of the Lake Seminary, Mundelein, Ill. This was Lew Williams and if you have any doubts as to Lew's ability, clear your mind. His technique and musicianship are excellent.

Some ATOS members heard Lew at the Atlanta Convention and also at the Phoenix Organ Stop Pizza. Bill Brown, owner/manager of O.S.P. seems to have a knack for super organists. In addition to Lew, Ron Rhode and Walt Strony are regulars and recently Lyn Larsen was also on the staff.

Lew Williams' program included something for everyone. Variety was it. There was contemporary, oldies and classical. No, he does not have a disc, but perhaps after so many queries, he will get one started.

Lew is a native of Lafayette, La. He played organ by ear at first. Then studied piano followed by a thorough classical background at Texas Christian University where Emmet G. Smith was his instructor. While at TCU, Lew played the 3/11 Wurlitzer at Casa Manna Theatre before shows.

After TCU, Lew studied with Pierre Segond at the Conservatory of Geneva, Switzerland. Then it was So. Methodist University where Dr. Robert Anderson was his tutor and Lew earned his Masters Degree. All this excellent training is evident in



Lew Williams played at Mundelein for CATOE.

his performance. All diligent and hard work, but worth it!

St. Mary's organ (Mundelein) in the auditorium was installed in 1934 and the console was one of the twins at the Chicago Theatre. A CATOE crew is now maintaining the instrument and they must be doing it right as the organ came forth beautifully. It is one of the treats of our area. □

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ROBERT F. VAUGHN

PART II

As told to Bill Reed

Several conversations with Bob Vaughn have been recorded relating to his new-found career as silent movie accompanist at San Francisco's Avenue Theatre, as well as at various universities and museums in Northern California. What follows are his own thoughts and reminiscences of his musical career and his experiences as a young theatre organist in the 1920s.

"I am a silent film buff as you know. Most of the time I lived in smaller cities or towns and rarely heard any "big time" organists. I went to many movies in the silent days but did not pay much attention to the musicians — they were there — still I had a nagging interest in the organist who played the approximately 6 or 7 rank Robert Morton at the old Temple Theatre in San Bernardino. I had heard the original score for full orchestra and organ at Grauman's Egyptian in Hollywood, for Fairbank's *The Thief of Bagdad*, and was interested in the Temple organist, his music for the film and a brief "atmospheric prologue" on the Temple Theatre's tiny stage. How well I recall another time when the Temple was full of people waiting for a Harold Lloyd feature, *Grandma's Boy*, but the print was delayed and the organist had to fill in for 30 to 40 minutes until the film finally arrived for the one show scheduled that night.

"At the San Bernardino Strand Theatre there was an old American Photoplayer organ used regularly — and, I recall, the lady organist there once belabored the Rimsky-Korsakov

"Song of India" for a Pola Negri epic. The local opera house was the "class theatre" with no organ — accompaniment was usually by a 3-piece orchestra. For epics such as *The Covered Wagon* and DeMille's original *Ten Commandments* there were big, really "huge" traveling orchestras of maybe 12 to 15 members. In 1924 the big new West Coast Theatre came in, with what I recall was a 2/10 Wurlitzer. It had no big reeds, but the sizeable Tuba and sizzling Kinura came off as pretty hot stuff now and then. That year San Bernardino faded out, when I was moved to Long Beach. I was a sophomore in high school then.

"The West Coast Theatre in Long Beach showed good program pictures with stage shows. The organist occasionally played song slide solos in addition to handling the film backgrounds. Solos were discontinued for a while, but I recall a fine lady organist, Elfreida Orth, who handled the Wurlitzer for the movies — an excellent musician. Later, Iris Vining, long a favorite at the San Francisco Paramount, came to the West Coast with her new husband, and orchestra leader, Don Wilkins. Her playing of "Kitten on the Keys" as an opening solo was considered a masterpiece. One of the big theatres in Long Beach was Hoyt's on the "Pike" amusement zone. As I recall it had a small, miserable straight Estey organ. The main organist was a fine musician named Hart, and he got all anyone could from the organ. It was he who played (the first time for me) the

Sousa's "The Stars and Stripes," inserting that famous piccolo counter-theme so beloved by all organists. Other downtown houses had mostly old straight organs, but the Palace had a small Wurlitzer in the pit, about an 8-ranker with no Tibia. I soon came to feel that a Wurlitzer without a Tibia was something of a lost soul. Bess Rudisill was the main organist there for years. Then, in 1924, West Coast Theatres opened the rather small Imperial Theatre next to the big West Coast — it was a "class" house — most of the big films went there, and the organist was Roy L. Medcalfe, assisted by a rather young George Broadbent. The organ was a 2/12 Robert Morton — a powerhouse in this relatively small theatre. Roy played overtures and solos, but the organ, essentially a movie organ, was voiced to handle such work wonderfully. All films were meticulously scored.

Roy and other theatre organists then were seldom trained as concert organists, but many of them brought us moviegoers our first taste of excerpts from lesser-known symphonic and opera scores. It is difficult for our present generation to realize we then had none of the music facilities we take for granted today — no TV, few symphony orchestras, and little large-scale music on the radio. Few had quality phonographs to reproduce the old 78 rpm records. The conscientious film organist frequently filled the void as he planned his film music. Still, with the advent of good music created for silent films, use of over-worked classics was avoided. Certainly few organists even then would drag in the "William Tell Overture" or Mendelssohn's "Spring Song" except to provide humorous overtones.

"And when I heard Roy's score for *The Phantom of the Opera* — well — that did it! I had to "become an organist." But I didn't really want to become a musician. I took piano and church organ for about six months from a Long Beach organist. His church had a fine Skinner organ with a fourth, or solo, manual which was loaded with orchestral stops approximating the theatre organ sound. And, I was soundly rebuffed for fooling around with the church organ "goodies" rather than practicing my lessons properly. At last, I could stand it no longer. I approached

Mr. Medcalfe who accepted me as a student. I arranged for practice time at the Palace Theatre, and they wanted \$1.50 an hour for practice time. Well — \$1.50 an hour for practice on an organ that didn't have a Tibia???? Ridiculous! So I moved out to the Brayton, a theatre nearer my home and only \$1.00 an hour. As I recall, it had a 2/8 Marr and Colton. It wasn't long before I was earning my practice by playing for the kiddies' matinee on Saturday — who cared what I played? We always had two Westerns and a serial — and the organ didn't stand a chance against the whooping youngsters. In time I was also given the Sunday afternoon shows to play on occasion.

"I would say that about 1926 I was also playing for the movies on weekends at the little Home Theatre. It had a four-rank Smith with a blasting Trumpet that only went down to tenor C and so was virtually useless on the pedal. But it had the sweetest Vox this side of heaven. I seem to remember there was a small financial advantage to playing there. And I was also called to play, from time to time, at the Dale Theatre which had a Moller straight organ of about nine ranks with a xylophone but no other percussions or toy counter. The console was in the balcony, and the organ was a powerhouse in its way. The organist wasn't too bothered with the noise — he was comfortably far away. I also played at the Ebell Theatre which had a 2/7 Robert Morton with a stop list by Otis Hoyt of the old Hoyt Theatre on the Pike. How he hated an organ with any guts; he would never permit such weird things as twelfth or thirteenth on the Flute rank. No Tibia, of course.

"Finally, even though I was going to school regularly, late in 1928 a job opened at the old Carter Theatre — seven nights a week and Saturday and Sunday matinees. Oh yes, there was some time out for dinner — the films just ran very silently. But for me, what a thrill — a 2/8 Wurlitzer with full percussions and toy counter. Then — in 1929, sound finally reached out to our theatre and I was out. Good thing, too, between overwork and continuous schoolwork, including college; I wound up in bed with pleurisy. It was stated that Long Beach was too damp for me, so after five years, back to San Bernardino.

"By the time I returned to San

Bernardino, Fox Theatres had opened the California and installed a fine 2/10 Wurlitzer complete with English Horn. In time a very fine organist, Rene Becker (he spelled it Becquer), came to play the theatre and broadcast on the local radio station. He could play fine orchestral type classical music, great ballads and really romp on pop tunes. Many times I sat down front during broadcasts, and when there came a chance for local college students to participate in city activities for a day, I had a chance to play the California organ for the shows of the evening. Now — that was a thrill.

"Once in a while in the early 1930s I would get into Los Angeles. Milton Charles was playing solos at the Paramount Theatre with Gaylord Carter as house organist. Carter,

also, in this general period played at the Wiltern. Grauman's Egyptian (which had long given up stage shows), and he was at Warner Brothers Hollywood. Also, while visiting at the University of Southern California about 1933, it seems, I went to a movie at the West Coast Figueroa Theatre for a Saturday matinee. At the end of the feature I heard a couple of pedal notes that could only have come from a theatre pipe organ. I didn't expect anything like that and went racing down front. Sure enough, there was a Wurlitzer and a young boy about to play it. It was a kiddie show excellently accompanied, and the organist was a very young Buddy Cole. We talked briefly, and he invited me to come back the next day when he would be practicing. I did so; I was able to

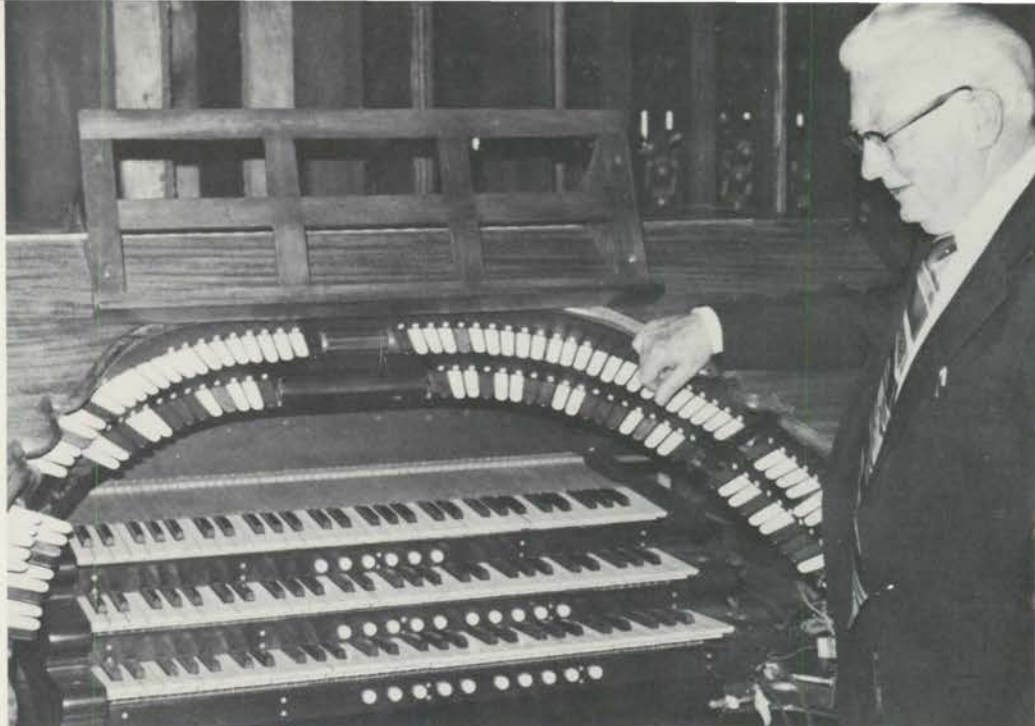
Bob Vaughn at the Avenue Theatre Wurlitzer.

(Jon Kleefield Photo)



play the organ, and — in recollection — I heard pops music played as I had never heard it before on an organ. Buddy was young, independent, not the studied musician he later became, but was a fantastic performer in the most modern style embracing all he learned from other organists and pianists such as Art Tatum. To me it seems he had, way back then, all the harmonic individuality that characterized his later playing and recordings. Buddy generously arranged for me to have the use of the nearby 3-manual Wurlitzer at the West Coast Boulevard Theatre.

“Really, I have to go back to the last of the silent film period. Occasionally I would make it to Los Angeles. I heard Gaylord Carter play the next to the last silent film to be shown at the old Grauman’s Metropolitan — everything precisely timed and scored with music and played impeccably. At the United Artists were Price Dunlavy and John Hammond. I never forgot one lesson from these two — the film was *Ramona* and Dolores Del Rio was mourning the death of her beloved Alessandro. Hammond took the prescribed music but brought it to a tremendous dramatic climax. Dunlavy (who had been chief organist at the Forum Theatre at the big Kimball, later to go to the Wiltern) treated the same scene in the softest possible way. Both treatments seemed so completely valid and illustrated so vividly the joy we oldsters had in seeing the same films more than once — never was the organ score precisely the same. Later John Hammond briefly played silent films at the famous Los Angeles Shrine Auditorium on the big Moller organ. A fine lady organist



Bob meets an old friend — the 3/11 Wurlitzer from San Francisco’s El Capitan Theatre. (Lenko Gazija Photo)

scored silent films at the downtown Pantages Theatre (later Warner’s Downtown) — I wish I knew her name. She was good. Claude Reimer was a fine film organist at the downtown Loew’s State.

“I have recollections of organists we continued to hear and sometimes see after sound wiped out the silent film. Oliver Wallace played brief solos at the San Bernardino Fox California — then hopped over to the conductor’s podium to lead the orchestra for Fanchon and Marco stage shows. He also soloed at the Los Angeles Paramount and the Wiltern. It has always been one of my greatest regrets that I never heard Mr. Wallace play for silent films — my teacher said he was the greatest when it came to manipulating themes and pertinent bits of contemporary music to point up the screen action.

“Frank Lanterman broadcast

from the Alexandria Theatre at Glendale, California, then moved to San Diego where he broadcast almost daily. Although it was hard for us in San Francisco to give up our famous Fox 4/36 Wurlitzer, it was always a private source of satisfaction that the beauty went into the home of a man who had been years before a real honest-to-goodness theatre organist. I well recall in those hungry early 30s journeying all the way to San Diego to hear him play in person. Came solo time and he popped out from under the stage, struck three chords on the organ, then turned around and said to the audience: “Tonight I would like to play for you on the piano.” He did — and it was all very nice — but I figure he still owes me one in-person organ solo.

“Harold Curtis played a daily program from a good Morton in a Hollywood radio station and was house organist at Grauman’s Chinese during one of the larger presentations there. Price Dunlavy played regularly from Warner’s radio KFWB. Following Lanterman, Roy Medcalfe broadcast from the Alexandria Theatre daily then moved over to the newly-opened class house, the Fox Wilshire, where he soloed on a pick-up instrument that was basically a 3-manual Wurlitzer. Also he played an Estey Minuet organ in the lobby with a violinist and cellist to greet the patrons as they entered. Later he became “manager” of the Carthay Circle which was dark, but he played

Bob talks to the students during a presentation to Antioch schoolchildren.

(Lenko Gazija Photo)



the organ for one performance a day necessary to sustain the lease on the theatre, and finally he was heard from Radio KGER in Long Beach. During the last of the silent days he had broadcast over Long Beach KFOX from both the Imperial Theatre and from a small Morton upstairs in the Middough Building. Harry Q. Mills broadcast from the Marr and Colton organ in Warner's Hollywood during the later silent era and played some of his programs while the silent films were on — the music very likely didn't follow the movie.

"In this general period of the early 1930s, of course, Jesse Crawford and Ann Leaf could be heard from New York, and Fats Waller broadcast a few times from the big upstairs Paramount Theatre organ. One of the fine organists coming from the East by radio was Francis Cronin who broadcast from Boston, and I was just barely able to bring in direct from Dallas, Texas, the Saturday midnight broadcasts by the famous Canadian organist, Harold Ramsay.

"About 1933 I started to play dance music with small orchestras in the Los Angeles area — never anything important. But that led in 1936 to a nationwide tour with a traveling show orchestra until May, 1938. It took me through 38 states in the midst of the depression period. It was a rough go, but very educational. During a Christmas week vacation, some of us made it to New York City for one day. For me it was Radio City Music Hall with Liebert at the console, the Roxy — rotunda organ only, and Don Baker sharing honors with the Casa Loma Orchestra at the Paramount. Later, in Atlanta, Georgia, I heard the big Fox Moller and had just a few moments to play it. I was lost, of course. Returning to California, it seemed it would be more fun to settle down and eat regularly. So I took the necessary examination, went with the Immigration and Naturalization Service in San Francisco and turned my back. I thought, on the music I had once found so important.

"While I was not a chaplain's clerk during my four years in the Army, I was on call for chapel music for many faiths. I would sometimes join with civilian dance orchestras off the post which kept my hand in that type of music. I got out of the service on New Year's Eve of 1945,

married Frances Nold in February, 1946 and returned to work in San Francisco. In addition to my regular nonmusical work, I helped out playing piano for local USO entertainment.

In an emergency, I was asked to play organ and lead a pick-up choir for Christmas services at St. Patrick's church in downtown San Francisco. It went well. The organ was a fine old Ernest M. Skinner designed by the famous G. Donald Harrison. I stayed on at St. Patrick's as organist and director of a men's choir for 19 years. But in all this time no silent movies — no popular music playing — nothing really to hark back to the old days.

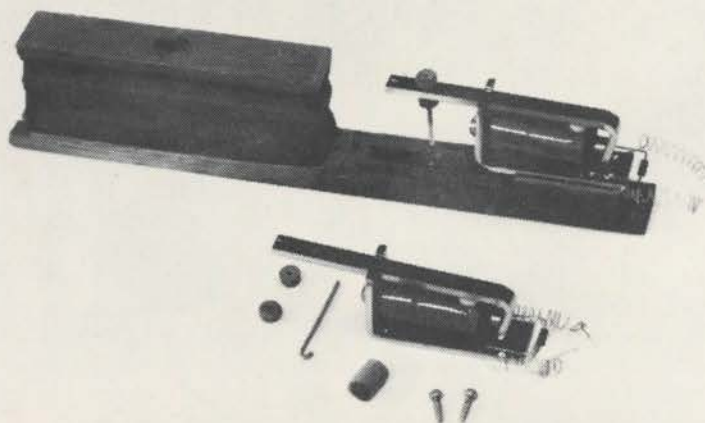
"In 1967 circumstances permitted that I go out to the Avenue Theatre to sample the then 3/14 Wurlitzer installed on stage there. The theatre had been open for silent movie and special sound programs, but was then closed and the organ was on its way out. A volunteer group determined that this should not be. The organ was reinstalled when I went out to sample it. There was a need for a silent movie organist, and I

agreed to take a crack at it — after all, 40 years earlier I had been rather hard at it doing that very thing — even dreamed of it as a career.

As Bob puts it, "I came along too late to hear many of the fine organists in their heyday — certainly too late to aspire to one of the better film-playing jobs in the old days. But I did play for most of the fine films in the closing days of the silent era. So — how wonderful it has been at the Avenue Theatre. What greater fun and reward can a fellow have in retirement than to be able to return, in part, to that which he wanted to do so long ago. What a thrill to be at the console again week after week with the silent film on the screen. And, from the quiet, attentive response of the audience, no matter what age, you know "you've got 'em" — they're enjoying the old film classics every bit as much as I am. Could I ask for more?"

So for all of Bob's many fans — we hope he doesn't permanently leave the San Francisco area — tours are okay as long as he doesn't move to the many places that would like to have him for keeps. □

ARK 50 60 75



REISNER ARK REPAIR KIT

As in the past, REISNER has directed its' R & D towards the needs of the industry. The latest addition to our product line is a conversion kit for the Austin primary pouch magnet. The problem of releathering the primary pouch on these is time consuming and expensive. We have designated a simple adaptation of our C/8 magnet which will replace the leather primary valve and the valve magnet on the job in a matter of minutes.

All components for this assembly come in a package referred to as the Austin Action Repair Kit. In ordering, specify operating voltage and wind pressure. Reisner Inc. 240 North Prospect Street Hagerstown, Md. 21740. (301) 733-2650.

Scaling Practices and Tonal Balance

by R.J. Weisenberger

Centuries ago it was determined that an organ of any appreciable tonal range could not be built by building a set of pipes all of the same diameter.

For one thing, the long pipes would be easily overblown before the short pipes could barely speak. If the toe holes were compensated for this, you would end up with a rank sounding like soft strings in the lower register and loud flutes in the high end.

Later it was found that if the diameters would also be reduced in proportion to the length, a given tonal quality and volume could be maintained over several octaves. Unfortunately, this scaling method was only successful for the largest scales of pipes of the lowest pitches, for the diameters required for the treble pipes would become so small that they could no longer be made to operate efficiently, or at all.

Finally, scaling practices developed that would allow for a gradual decrease in diameter, but still allow for the treble pipes to be large enough in diameter to operate. Although, every builder more or less had his own methods of doing this, and the most successful builders were ones that had a "good ear" for music.

Later, the use of logarithmic scaling became widespread, and one could calculate the best scaling methods for any given rank. General pipe-work, such as flutes and diapasons would often halve diameters on every 16th pipe, while smaller scales, such as strings would choose every 21st pipe to halve their diameters. At this point, various tonalities reached their present state of development. Although, there was still no universal

way of maintaining tonal balance throughout each rank, other than by having a voicer with a "good ear" for his profession.

Around the beginning of this century, builders had, for the first time in the history of organ building, more power at their disposal, due to the development of the electrically-driven blower. Builders such as Hope-Jones, Barton, and others began experimenting with higher operating pressures and unheard-of pipe scales to produce a generation of organs that to this day, have no equal. Unfortunately, these builders and their instruments were severely criticized by the "Back to Bach" movement originated by those such as George Audsley and his followers.

As sound motion pictures came, the builders of these magnificent instruments, therefore no longer had a profitable market, for the public had been pre-conditioned that these organs were not suitable for other uses.

It has taken two generations to realize differently, and we are now desperately trying to save the last of these few remaining great instruments.

Today there is a growing interest in pipe organs, but the competition from electronic music is so great that the few surviving organ builders are but a handful, and most of them are building only "classic" instruments voiced on low pressure, and are not capable of meeting today's "heavy" musical demands.

There have been recent developments in organ keying and cancel systems using the latest digital technology, but unless one is lucky enough to restore one of the great instru-

ments of the theatre organ era, one can not imagine the sound. Too many people are still equating organ music with the sound they hear in church, which may or may not be made by a pipe organ, much less one of the great ones. Thanks to recent developments in the science of acoustics, the design of new pipe organs equal to (and even superior to) any of the past is now possible. This does *not* mean we should lose any interest in saving our existing ones.

More people *must* be made aware of what a pipe organ is, how it works, and its yet *unexplored* capabilities, if organ building is to remain a LIVING art.

The key questions are "How does it work?," and "What are its capabilities?"

Anyone with experience working on organs can tell you "how they work," or can they? The answer is a definite maybe, for all one knows about something is the knowledge gained from past experience. Areas that have not yet been investigated have no definite answers. We are in desperate need of many such answers, of which history cannot provide.

As far as knowing the capabilities, this is still to this day, a matter of personal judgement of the individual builder.

Installers of sound equipment for theatres, auditoriums, convention centers, stadiums, etc. have known

**CONVENTION
1980**



ENGLAND

for years, the approximate amplifier power required, with given speaker systems to produce a given sound level over a given area.

Unfortunately, organ builders have never had any set rules as a guide in this area *until now*.

My continuing series of articles is to promote a greater understanding of why pipes sound the way they do, so that future organ builders will not be working under this handicap.

My next article will explore the dynamic capabilities of several familiar ranks, based on the results of hundreds of actual tests.

Enclosed is a pictorial diagram, drawn to scale, based on actual tests, of how to best maintain tonal balance over a range of five octaves.

You will note that such a scaling system is that of a FORMANT, in which the higher tones will possess a lower degree of harmonic development, as is the case with most organ stops.

FOR FURTHER READING:

Outline for a Course in Theatre Organ — 2, by John Muri. THEATRE ORGAN, June '75 (points out the need for scientific research).

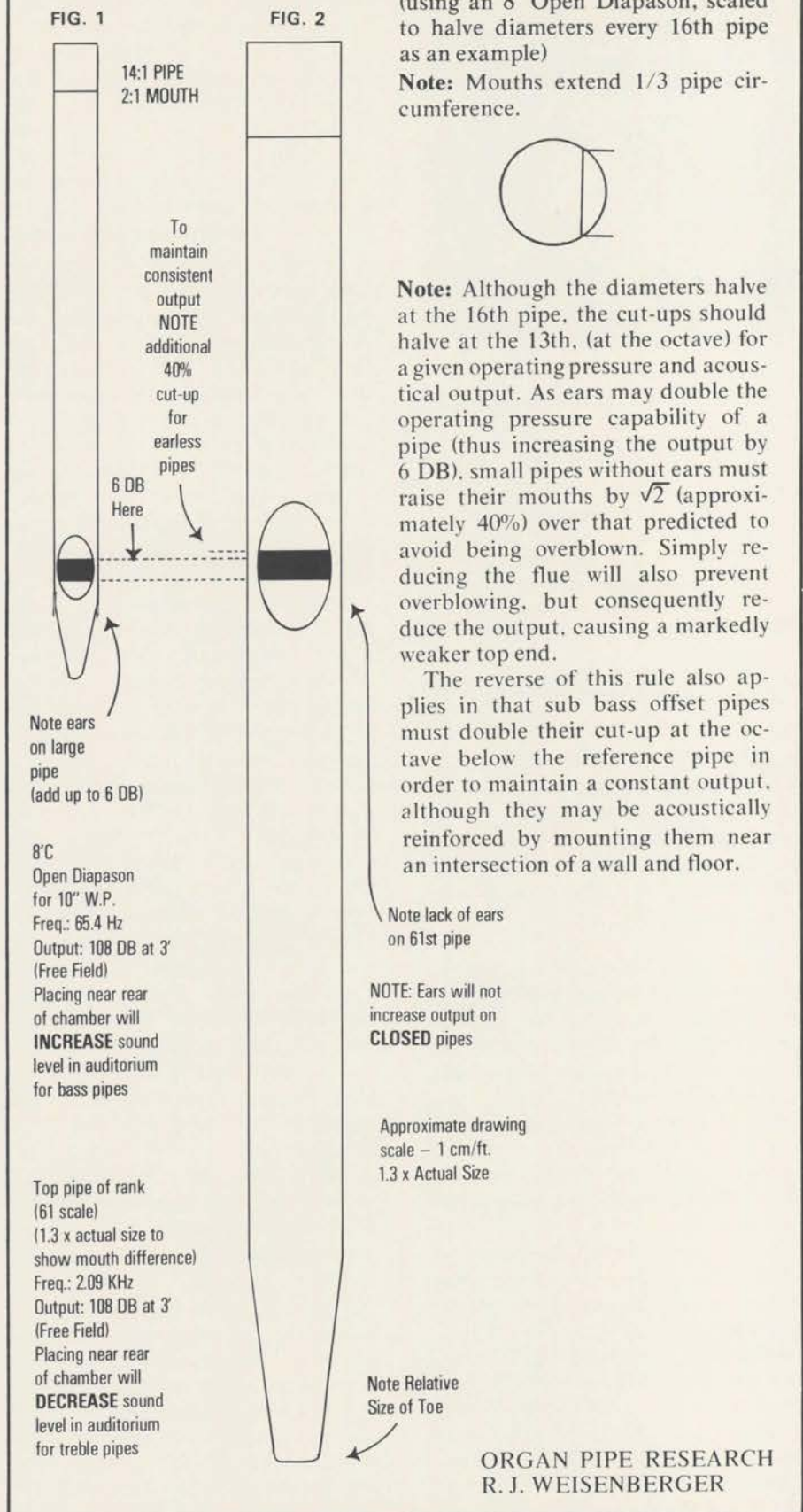
A Layman Looks at Pipe Scales, by Ben Levy. THEATRE ORGAN, July '76 (clearly shows pipe-maker's art is based mostly on trial and error methods and success of past designs).

If we continue to follow blindly in the footsteps of the past, and not explore the *physical* aspects of sound production in pipes, we may be left with only our few remaining instruments as a reminder to a bygone era. Should we be satisfied to save *only* these remaining few?

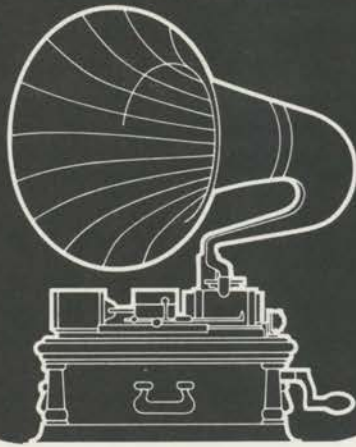
The art of organ building has become almost extinct during the past fifty years. If we see the light before it's too late, we will not only succeed in preserving the tradition of the theatre pipe organ, but add a whole new understanding to the art of organ building itself.

A scientific understanding of sound production in pipes will reopen this almost forgotten art to a new generation of people with technical skills, and bring about its rebirth, resulting in a whole new generation of mighty pipe organs. Should future generations see the pipe organ as nothing more than a "nostalgic curiosity" from the past? □

MAINTAINING TONAL BALANCE THROUGHOUT A RANK BY AVOIDING POWER LOSSES IN TREBLE PIPEWORK



For The Records



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

AYARS FROM THE ARMORY. Lowell Ayars playing the Wurlitzer style 240 in Gray's Armory, Cleveland, O. \$8.50 postpaid from Western Reserve Theatre Organ Society (WRTOS), 3911 Oakes Rd., Breckville, Ohio 44141.

Lowell Ayars holds the distinction of having performed more ATOS convention concerts than anyone else. This record does much to explain why. There's something upbeat and cheerful in his stylings, even when he's presenting a heart-breaking ballad. On this recording, his second, Lowell also displays his baritone voice but sparingly, singing only two selections.

Lowell has selected a program of enchanting oldies, ballads, show tunes and novelty selections: *Annie Get Your Gun* medley) "Kiss Waltz" "Something to Remember You By" (vocal); "I Left My Heart at the Stage Door Canteen;" "Fleurette" (Victor Herbert); "Just Like a Melody Out of the Sky;" "Toot Toot Tootsie;" "Poeme" (Moonlight Madonna); "If Ever I Would Leave You" (vocal);

"Rag Doll;" *The New Moon* medley; "I'll Be Seeing You."

The organ is a joy. Originally a 3/13 in the New Warner Theatre in Erie, Pa. it was moved in 1969 to Gray's Armory in Cleveland, a project undertaken, and completed in 1972, by ATOS' Western Reserve Chapter members. It's a very late model Wurlitzer, having been installed in the theatre in 1931, four years after "talkies." Much tonal work is evident, judging from this recording. A Quintadena and a 32' octave of Diaphones have been added.

The recorder, Jack Renner, has done a remarkable job of minimizing what could have amounted to excessive reverberation in the very "live" hall, so Lowell is able to use small combinations in reasonably closeup perspective without losing intimacy. Even when he uses full combinations, there is almost no loss of definition; the music never "swims" in reverb. Lots of registration possibilities and Lowell takes full advantage. He favors solo voices, too.

Lowell's arrangements tend toward doing justice to the tunesmiths' work, rather than adding his own "flash." He is especially effective during the show tune medleys with much tempo and registration changes during "The Girl That I Marry," "Doin' What Comes Naturally," "They Say That Falling in Love is Wonderful," "Got the Sun in the Morning," from *Annie Get Your Gun* and "Stout Hearted Men," "Softly as in a Morning Sunrise," "Lover Come Back to Me" and "One Kiss" from *New Moon*.

Of the single selections, Victor Herbert's "Fleurette" is an enjoyable remembrance of silent movie cues calling for "neutral music." Nacio Herb Brown's "Rag Doll" is a piano novelty of the "Nola" type which features percussions, and Walter Donaldson's "Just Like a Melody" is more Ayars than reminiscent of the 1928 Crawford record. And there's a wonderfully dated "riff" during "Tootsie."

There is so much musicianship, know-how and experience displayed here, it's difficult to find much fault. There were a few thumps in the review pressing grooves and we would like to suggest to Lowell that he avoid the strong melody duplication on the organ during his vocals, so the two won't be competing. Out-



Lowell Ayars. His music "jingles."
(Bill Lamb Photo)

side of those — Zilch!

Jacket notes provide comments about the tunes and give registration information. It's a neat and satisfying package. WRTOS organ curator Claude Hawks, Chapter Chairman Bill Tabor, the many helpers, and Lowell Ayars have turned out a fine biscuit.

GEORGE WRIGHT'S SHOW-TIME, played on the San Francisco Fox 4/36 Wurlitzer organ. DO 1417 stereo. \$6.95 postpaid from Doric Records, Box 282, Monterey, Calif. 93940 (additional records in the same order are priced at \$5.95).

This is a re-issue of the Hi-Fi record released over 20 years ago, one of the series on that label which made George Wright known everywhere theatre organ is appreciated. Doric Records has acquired rights to all of the original tapes and will re-issue some of them periodically. They couldn't have selected a better opener. It was released in the late '50s as *Showtime*. The instrument is the late, lamented San Francisco Fox Wurlitzer, an instrument on which the Wright talents shone brightly. Fortunately, the original tapes were made in 3-track stereo. This gave Doric's recording wizard,

Frank Killinger, some margin when he re-equalized and remastered the tracks for this release. Using equipment and techniques unavailable at the time of the Hi-Fi release, Killinger has extended the frequency range. This is especially marked in the new bass response, but there is an over-all smoothness and balance which a comparison will reveal.

The selections: "There's No Business Like Show Business," "My Funny Valentine," "The Lady is a Tramp," "Little Girl Blue," "The Man I Love," "Just One of Those Things." Side 2 is devoted entirely to the Jerome Kern *Showboat* score: "Make Believe," "Bill," "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man," "Why Do I Love You?," "You Are Love," "Ol' Man River."



George Wright.

When we reviewed the original Showtime, we gave it an enthusiastic endorsement. The new technical improvements and packaging (all new jacket notes, an area Hi-Fi rarely gave more than a lick and a promise) add to musical values and general attractiveness. Incidentally, the cover photo shows the console of the 5-manual Vaughn Wurlitzer, the instrument used by George for most of his Hi-Fi releases. This photo will be used to mark all the re-releases in the series, Doric tells us.

Here's an opportunity to hear George (and a fine instrument) as he sounded in his early recording days. There is nothing in these grooves which date artist nor recording technique.

GOLDEN MELODIES — 1928 - 1978, Rex Koury at "the biggest little Wurlitzer" in the Rahway Theatre. \$7.50 postpaid from HMR Records, 574 West Court, Scotch Plains, New Jersey 07076.

A Rex Koury record release is always a welcome event, because what he records offers so much variety in style from record to record. In the past he has recorded the Death Valley Scotty Welte, the San Sylmar "Tower of Beauty" organ, the Old Town Music Hall Wurlitzer, even the "Dowager Empress" in Wichita's Century II Civic Hall, so he's played the big ones. This time it's a little one, the carefully restored 2/7 Wurlitzer in the Rahway (New Jersey) Theatre. This album sprung from the theatre's 50th anniversary celebration, an event duly reported in a previous issue (Aug./Sept. '78) of this magazine. It was a celebration beyond many theatres, as they had "bit the dust" long before their 50th year, and even more remarkable for a theatre with its original organ. More amazing than that, even, was the return of one of the house's original organists — Rex Koury, who became Chester Kingsbury's assistant. Rex was then 14.

The day after the anniversary show in 1978 Rex taped enough tunes for a record to further celebrate the event. That's the background.

Rex is fully aware of the competition from records made on larger instruments; some buyers feel their purchases should buy the sounds of as many ranks as possible. The fallacy of this assumption was proved by Jim Melander who prefers to record smaller organs, say 8 ranks. The quality of his music on the smaller organ is tops. So, there was a precedent for the Rahway 50th year project, although one not universally known, nor accepted. But HMR's Balfour, who is also manager of the Rahway, encouraged Rex. So Rex sought out the most possible registration variety on the 2/7, even to coming up with some synthetic reeds, and it would appear he has won his case.

The tunelist includes time-tested favorites over the 50 years of the theatre's service to patrons. Only one, "Tico Tico," seems out of place on a pipe organ record, probably because of over-exploitation on that

other instrument. The rest are carefully selected to omit the over-recorded tunes which clutter release after release.

Included are: "Sweet and Lovely;" "I Write the Songs;" "When You're Away" (V. Herbert); "Blue Moon;" "Tenderly;" "I Get A Kick Out of You;" "Without a Song;" "Sentimental Journey;" "One Alone" (*The Desert Song*); "You Light Up My Life;" "The Very Thought of You;" "Til We Meet Again."

The number of combinations Rex coaxes from the seven ranks is amazing, a variety extended by the deft use and non-use of tremulants. But Rex doesn't depend on registration to sustain interest. He injects so much interest value in the arrangements, one isn't looking for frequent



Rex Koury. He made a little one sound big.

(Stufoto)

registration changes. The basic ensemble sound is a silvery one, Tibia and Diapason-dominated. There is a very mellow brass solo reed, and the previously mentioned synthetics, plus some small combinations heavy with mutations (heard during "Tenderly"). The solo reed (Tuba or Trumpet) is heard in the baritone register during "Sweet and Lovely." A nice beat marks the more than four minutes devoted to "I Write the Songs" while the lovely melody line of "When You're Away" reminds one of the romantic ballads of so long ago. There is considerable key changing within selections. All of the tunes are well phrased and the 2/7's double swell shade control of volume is much in evidence.

Recording is in big hall perspective. Jacket notes provide some theatre history and credit the Garden State ATOS Chapter for assistance in producing the album. While it cannot be claimed that this is a great album, it is certainly an enjoyable one and a proper tribute to a theatre and organ which have survived 50 years, and will span another 50 or more if present landmarking plans jell.

ANYTHING GOES. Larry Vannucci playing the 3/13 Robert Morton organ in the Marin Pizza Pub, San Raphael, Calif. \$6.95 postpaid from Alameda Organ and Piano Studio, Box 2174, San Jose, Calif. 95109.

This is Larry Vannucci's first pipe organ record since his release played on the San Francisco Golden Gate Theatre organ 18 years ago, now a collector's item. Between, he has cut some records played on the better grades of electronic organ but we have been aware of his affinity for pipes ever since hearing him long ago playing the lamented SF Lost Weekend bar's 2/9 Wurlitzer, now gone. Larry is a much respected institution in the Bay Area of California, and a very active one, organ-wise. This recording will explain why to newcomers unfamiliar with "the Vanooch" and his music.

This release introduces an organ not previously heard on records. It's a 3/13 Robert Morton which Larry helped previous owner Dave Schutt remove from the Peninsula Theatre in Burlingame, Calif. in 1958. It is now in a pizzeria but there's nothing on this release which even remotely suggests the pasta atmosphere. It's one of the most orchestral sounding medium size organs we've heard, which may be attributed in part to the musical acumen of the organist, partly to the organ craftsmanship of Dave Schutt who produced this album, not to mention the Morton artisans who designed and built it in 1926. It is 13 ranks of expertly blended pipework in its present installation.

Larry is not one to cram a lot of titles on a record; he needs room to expand his ideas. So this platter boasts only eleven titles — but what treatments! Larry's artistry is manifested in every detail of his carefully



"The Vanooch" and the 3/13 Robert Morton. 18 years between pipe records is too long.

orchestrated arrangements. Let's examine each one.

"Anything Goes" features a rich color reed ensemble with rhythmic accompaniment featuring piano. The tune sports one very oddball but ear-catching harmonic progression built around the melody. "Aint Misbehavin'" has the bounce and spirit of a Fats Waller record; Fats is one of Larry's idols. The current pop, "I Write the Songs" is expertly adapted to theatre organ registration and styling without sacrificing its "today music" status. Even a dour tune such as "Send in the Clowns" is spruced up with a "Vesti la Giubba" (Pagliacci) intro and an "Entry of the Gladiators" closing — on the organ's calliope. "Honky Tonk Train" is a study in infectious boogie-woogie motion. The "Mahogany" theme becomes a thing of soaring beauty in Larry's care. Vintage oldies include "You Were Meant for Me," a Glock-studded "Blue Room" and "Anything Goes," all played with reminders of the orchestrations in use when they were current but also with the modern harmony and subtle registration common to Vannucci arrangements, especially in the elaborate intros. He goes off on melodic tangents occasionally, but never to the detriment of the tunes. "Memories of You" is in the same vintage class, featuring a Tuba solo, some piano and an accompaniment that

often sounds like a choir behind the solo voices. "Heart and Soul" is just as captivating. He puts special loving care in the "Chelsea Bridge" melody line, using a growly, complaining combination of voices and later a solo Trumpet and Trombone (actually the Tuba in both cases). It's vaguely reminiscent of George Wright's bluesy "Espanharlem." He successfully combines two melodies briefly; during "You Were Meant for Me" we hear a few bars of "Jealous" superimposed, just for fun.

Larry Vannucci is one of those organists who resist classification. Although he's basically a purveyor of pops and standards, one can never predict what he'll do with them. And what he does is often something wonderful.

The jacket shows a recent color photo of Larry at the Morton console, plus two shots made in 1958 before the organ was moved. Notes are brief but to the point, including a stop analysis which provides an interesting sidelight; the Main Chamber houses a Violin and two Violin Celestes, one tuned flat, the other sharp. This is an old trick, not often practiced these days, but one which has got to add much richness to the orchestral ensemble.

Recording is good. The review pressing was especially smooth and noise free. It was worth waiting 18 years for. □

Closing Chord

Joseph Robert Chadbourne, 89, died in May after a long illness. He will be remembered by thousands of his friends as their host at his annual May concerts held in the former hay-loft of his barn on a fruit ranch in Suisun Valley. It was known locally as the "Carnegie Hall of Suisun Valley," (pronounced Sue-soon — an Indian word meaning "West Wind").



Joe Chadbourne.

Associated with Joe in these many fine annual programs was Myrtle, his Wurlitzer theatre organ, Opus 909, whose story appeared in *The Tibia*, Vol. II, No. 2, entitled, "Myrtle, a Queen in a Barn."

Joe, as a youngster, showed a keen interest in music. On the family ranch, he had his own hand picked Steinway grand. He graduated in music and taught in the local schools. He was organist for his Masonic Lodge for years in addition to serving twice as Worshipful Master. Joe also played in theatres throughout the Bay Area.

The barn concerts started in May, 1948, always on the first Sunday in May. Organists from far and wide came to play at these events, always lending their talents generously and without fee. The list, far too long to be included here, includes many artists still playing the concert circuit. Joe's guests were not "invited" — they came from every where — neighboring ranchers, friends and visiting firemen. The last concert was held in

1972, as always in May. His cousin, Mrs. Shirley Walp, was his hostess at these affairs. Forced, by declining health, to sell his ranch, Joe moved to a retirement home. The new owners proved to be unsympathetic to concerts continuing on their property, and it was necessary to find a new home for Myrtle in the Pizza Machine Restaurant, in Modesto, California, where she holds forth to this day. One of Joe's last wishes was that his beloved Myrtle be kept intact to provide music for as yet unborn music lovers — exactly what she is doing.

The first Annual Meeting of the American Theatre Organ Society was held at Joe's barn in 1958, with Tiny James, Gordon Kibbee, Everett Nourse, Dave Quinlan and Bill Thomson as featured artists.

A member of the American Theatre Organ Society since its inception, Joe was always grateful when interested members would stop by to meet Myrtle and himself. A gracious host, he always had a cute story or saying which reflected his good nature. He considered his friends his most precious asset. Joe will be sorely missed, but remembered by his many friends.

Judd Walton

Billie C. Johnston was born March 16, 1914 in West Union, Iowa, and died May 7, 1979 in Denver, Colorado. Bill played piano for silents for a while, then played at the Minneapolis (Minn.) Theatre under the tutorship of Eddie Dunsteder. He also did early radio broadcasts from his apartment on Sunday afternoons locally for a year in 1950. Bill offered



Bill at the 4/15 Page organ, Embassy Theatre, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Music Therapy at Fitzsimons Army Hospital for shell-shocked patients from 1944-46 and it was one of the first programs of this nature. He was post organist for Fitzsimons from 1943-1948. In his spare and off duty time he played at the Yucca Supper Club in Aurora, Colo., during World War II.

Bill did 50 years of church organ work in Iowa and Colorado, retiring in 1975. He was theatre organ instructor and salesman for Gateway Music Co. in Aurora, Colo., from 1967-1970 and he played the last concert on the Denver Theatre Wurlitzer before it was removed in May of 1970.

Bill was a past chairman of Rocky Mountain Chapter ATOE in 1973, crew chief and house organist of the Aladdin Theatre in Denver and worked on many installations in Denver and Fort Wayne, Ind. He fulfilled his life-long dream in September, 1978 of playing at the Chicago Theatre. He was always helping young people involved in building or playing theatre organ. Bill played his last concert in December of 1978 at the Rocky Mountain Consistory Lodge for Christmas — a job well done.

Charles Kolbik, organist at the Lansdowne (Pa.) Theatre and St. Timothy's Church in Philadelphia for many years, died in May at the age of 27.

One of Charlie's dreams was to become a motorman on one of Philadelphia's trolley cars, but he settled for driving a bus for the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority, a job he enjoyed. It was through his choice of this career that he met his death. Although Charlie did not argue with the passenger who was nine cents short in his fare, he was stabbed 13 times with a six-inch knife. He managed to pull his moving bus over to the curb, concerned for the safety of his passengers. A policeman noticed the unusual movements of the bus, and arrested the criminal. Charlie was pronounced dead on arrival at a nearby hospital.

Charlie will be missed as a talented theatre and church organist, and as a member of ATOS, AGO, Dickinson Theatre Organ Society and Rail Fan Club of Philadelphia.

Shirley Hannum

Richard C. Simonton died on August 22, 1979. A Closing Chord will be in the October/November issue of this magazine.

Arnold Le Verenz, organist at Tacoma's Pantages Theatre in the 1920s and 1930s died in Tacoma in May. Born in Manitowoc, Wis., he had lived in the Tacoma area for the past 64 years. In addition to his work at the Pantages, he also played at the Colonial and Rialto Theatres in Tacoma, and the Liberty Theatre in Seattle. For many years he was musical director for the Afifi Temple of the Shrine. His biography appeared in the August/September, 1978 issue of THEATRE ORGAN. He is survived by a daughter and two grandchildren.

Jut Williams died June 10th at Pomona Valley Hospital following a stroke and brain surgery. While Jut wasn't very active in ATOS affairs he was certainly a pioneer in our effort to preserve the old theatre organs of the silent picture period. He purchased the 3/8 Wurlitzer from the Fox Wilshire Theatre and installed it in his home in Monrovia many years ago and was organist at Monrovia High School where he played the 2/10 Wurlitzer for at least 25 years and taught other subjects there as well.

Jut was probably one of the most popular teachers Monrovia High ever had; at least that's what our youngest son Jack (taken by cancer in 1966) always said. Maybe that was because Jut was an old "organ-grinder" like his old man. Even after Jut left the high school, five years ago, he continued teaching organ and had scores of pupils in the San Gabriel Valley. Jut and I never saw a whole lot of each other through the years — me busy managing theatres and playing organs and he with his day and night teaching, but I always considered him a good friend and I think it would be appropriate and nice if ATOS and members would send cards to his wife Ruth at 503 Wildrose Avenue, Monrovia, California 91016.

Most Sincerely,
Bill Wright □

AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY, INC.

BALANCE SHEET (Cash Basis)

December 31, 1978

ASSETS	
CURRENT ASSETS:	
Cash	\$21,175
Inventory	7,929
Advance - Convention	1,500
Total current assets	\$30,604
OTHER ASSETS:	
Office furniture	1,131
Total assets	\$31,735

LIABILITIES AND NET WORTH	
CURRENT LIABILITIES:	
Note payable - bank	\$ 9,000
Total liabilities	\$ 9,000
NET WORTH:	
Balance, December 31, 1978	22,735
Total liabilities and net worth	\$31,735

1978 RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS

RECEIPTS:	
1978 Dues Collected in 1977	\$31,886.83
1978 Dues Collected in 1978	56,887.55
First Class Mailing	999.18
Advertising	12,470.60
Binders	912.50
Rosters	9.00
Back Issues TO	1,473.00
Extra Membership Cards	7.00
Savings Interest	1,018.56
Bal. Atlanta Conv. Account	2,418.55
Misc.	323.93
Total Receipts	\$108,406.70
Loan, Middleburg Nat. Bank	9,000.00
TOTAL OPERATING FUNDS FOR 1978	\$117,406.70
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS FOR 1978	124,833.15
OPERATING PROFIT (Deficit) FOR 1978	(\$ 7,426.45)

NOTE: 1978 receipts were slightly above the budget estimates for the year but the several large unexpected expenditures listed below were responsible for the operating deficit shown.

Loss on 1978 Atlanta Convention	\$8,596.87
Transportation to Wilmington Board meeting	2,222.37
Transportation to SFD Board Meeting	1,228.83
Purchase of binders for Theatre Organ	3,960.00
	\$16,008.07

1978 RECEIPTS AND BALANCE

CASH ON HAND 1/1/78	\$31,597.48
RECEIPTS:	
Dues (1978)	\$56,887.55
Dues (1979)	28,479.00
Dues (1980)	15.00
First Class Mailing	999.18
Advertising	12,470.60
Binders	912.50
Rosters	9.00
Back Issues TO	1,473.00
Extra Membership Cards	7.00
Savings Interest	1,018.56
Bal. Atlanta Conv. Account	2,814.55
Misc.	323.93
	\$105,409.87
TOTAL INCOME PLUS CASH ON HAND	\$137,007.35
LOAN MIDDLEBURG NAT. BANK	9,000.00
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR 1978	\$146,007.35
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS FOR 1978	124,833.15
BALANCE ON HAND 12/31/78	\$ 21,174.20
DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS	
Middleburg National Bank Checking	\$ 2,408.90
Middleburg National Bank Savings	576.67
Savings Certificate	5,000.00
Bank of America Checking	11,493.75
Salinas Checking	75.88
Livonia Checking	1,619.00
	\$21,174.20

GEORGE A. ROBERSON
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT
48 GIBSON STREET
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22304
773-3000
June 22, 1979

To the Board of Directors of American Theatre Organ Society, Inc.

We have examined the cash basis balance sheet of American Theatre Organ Society, Inc. as of December 31, 1978, and the related statement of income and net worth, prepared on the same basis, for the year then ended. Our examination was made in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and, accordingly, included such tests of the accounting records and such other auditing procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly the assets, liabilities and net worth arising from cash transactions of American Theatre Organ Society, Inc. as of December 31, 1978, and the operations resulting from cash transactions for the year then ended, on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year.

George A. Roberson
George A. Roberson,
Certified Public Accountant

1978 DISBURSEMENTS

HEADQUARTERS:	
Contract Fees	\$4,200.00
Telephone	2,256.70
Postage	1,119.87
Printing	377.60
Supplies	412.75
Transportation	1,050.17
Misc.	214.86
	\$10,371.15
MEMBERSHIP:	
Contract Fees	\$1,800.00
Computer Service	1,500.00
Telephone	161.08
Postage	3,517.10
Printing	1,419.12
Supplies	1,667.81
Binders	3,960.36
Transportation	276.00
Misc.	297.00
	\$14,598.47
President:	
Telephone	\$ 86.12
Postage	36.03
Printing	367.28
Supplies	23.11
Transportation	598.00
	\$1,110.54
THEATRE ORGAN:	
Contract Fees	\$ 5,098.00
Telephone	901.58
Postage	6,996.02
Printing	60,650.15
Freight	489.07
Supplies	1,222.59
Storage	581.80
Transportation	1,785.15
Advertising Expense	1,315.81
Misc.	1,887.00
	\$80,656.17
Insurance and Bond	793.00
1978 Convention Advance ATL Chapter	1,500.00
1979 Convention Advance LA Chapter	2,000.00
1983 Convention Advance Valley of The Sun Chapter	1,000.00
Elon College Scholarship Fund	500.00
Loss on 1978 Atlanta Convention	8,596.87
Transportation to Special Board Meeting at Wilmington	2,222.37
Transportation to Special Board Meeting at SFD	1,228.83
Tax Prep. Service	150.00
Legal Service	105.75
	\$124,833.15
1979 ESTIMATED BUDGET	
INCOME:	
Dues (5800 at \$15.00)	87,000.00
Advertising	13,000.00
Back Issues TO	1,500.00
Interest	1,500.00
Binders	1,000.00
Misc.	5,000.00
	\$109,000.00
EXPENSES:	
Theatre Organ Printing	65,000.00
Theatre Organ Mailing	8,000.00
Contract Fees	13,000.00
Postage	5,000.00
Telephone	4,000.00
Loan Repayment	9,000.00
Computer Service	2,400.00
Misc.	2,000.00
	\$108,400.00 □



A Dedicated Teacher . . .

JACK OLANDER

by Cathy Koenig

Jack Olander, a long-time member of CATOE, is director of choral, keyboard and theory classes at Maine North High School in Des Plaines, Ill. His education in music was quite formal and he has academic degrees in piano and organ from the Chicago Conservatory College, but his method of teaching is quite *informal*. He believes in stimulating student interest by introducing new projects. For example, the keyboard class is building a two-manual harpsichord from a kit, and they are also restoring old pianos — and enjoying it.

During the past two years Jack has also been teaching a course in theatre organ techniques. This class meets on Monday evening in the auditorium of Maine North where the CATOE 3/10 Wurlitzer is installed. Tuition is \$20.00 for ten weeks and CATOE members are entitled to a reduced rate. Students get a weekly lecture-

demonstration and a 45-minute practice session during the week at a pre-arranged time.

"The uniqueness of the course," Jack says, "is demonstrated by the fact that nationwide only about a half-dozen high schools have theatre organs, and of these, only the one at Maine North is being used for classes."

He goes on to say, "Having the organ available for study in the high school has been an inspiration to the kids, and we have three young students who are already good organists. They practice two or three times a week and often play in programs."

In addition to his teaching at the school, Jack is also music director at Holy Trinity Church in Glenview, Illinois, and was consultant for the new 32-rank Casavant organ recently installed. □



the letters to the editors

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

Address:

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

Dear George,

In the June/July issue of THEATRE ORGAN, a letter from Indiana native John Mecklenburg further confirms the increasing popularity of theatre organs in restaurants and other non-theatre public locations. Those whose vision and appreciation of music are far less "versatile" than the theatre organ itself lament and carp at this. They point to pizza palaces that use their organs, as theatre folk say, on the "grind" basis, the instruments, being played like Army tanks advancing in warfare. However, Mecklenburg speaks of the other emporiums which employ serious, first class musicians who give the patrons *musical* music. These last places can, and are doing, tangible good in providing the theatre organ to be a *musical instrument*, not a monster calloiope.

Like this Indiana man, I also have stopped to observe and listen in a variety of installations around the country, in most cases purposely undetected by performers and owners. In an encouraging majority of cases, the music has broken par, or better, with reactions of children, teenage and college people, these particularly, making it obvious that

they were being won to the instrument. Yes, there are some clowns hither and yon who "carry on" with high wire acts at low level (low in more than altitude!) and, of course, they delight those who prefer their circus under a hardtop. If the total scene were left to these last, the fatality of theatre organ would be assured! However, *thank God*, there are the others, owners and musicians, who are not allergic to thinking and caring. Their combined contributions indeed *are* winning a new audience.

Here in my home base in Wichita, the Wichita Wurlitzer has won steadily more and more people at a variety of occasions, being presented in terms as to increase respect for, and serious interest in, theatre organ. Among these have been two public dances, two television specials, musical solos for TV inserts and on September 15th Peter Nero and group will join me in concert. A full concert last January was divided into four sections, with sufficient time between sections for the audience and me to jawbone back and forth on both music and instrument. Children sat on the auditorium floor near the platform and others came onto the platform itself during numbers and to ask questions. The whole presentation was unorthodox and, no doubt, caused chagrin within those whose prejudices make them stiff at *both* ends. The results then, and since, speak for themselves.

There are many who profess love for the theatre organ who might take Mecklenburg's warmhearted, objective approach and look beyond just one pattern and place of usage and realize that *any* musical instrument, *including* the youngest of all the major ones, cannot remain static, either musically or geographically, and hope to have a future that matters. Those who can be as big as the instrument will need to work at it because responsibility for theatre organ's future lies *equally* on *both* sides of the footlights.

Billy Nalle
Wichita, Kansas

Dear Editor:

All members of ATOS belong to the organization for one basic reason, a great love the theatre pipe organ and its unparalleled sound.

Within the local chapters is a relatively small group of members who give unselfishly of their time and talents to present programs at chapter activities for the enjoyment of their fellow members. These artists, professional and amateur alike, are rarely paid for these chapter programs.

I was recently invited to present a program for the Wolverine Chapter at the Detroit Theater Organ Club 4/34 Wurlitzer. Even though I am thoroughly familiar with this instrument, I devoted many hours of practice time to careful preparation of my program to insure a good show for my audience. It had not entered my mind to prepare for the actual experience.

Upon finishing my opening number I stepped to the microphone and discovered, to my horror, that I had a heckler in the front row. Although this heckler did not create a scene for the audience, his comments and his actions had an unnerving effect on me. Waiting for the next taunt was like waiting for the other shoe to drop. A review of the tape after the program told me how his presence had degraded my performance. Sadly, this heckler had been a professional theatre organist for many years and should have known better.

Audiences at ATOS functions are the best in the world. It might be well, however, to remind members and guests that many of the artists who appear in performance for chapter activities are not accustomed to performing in formal concerts regularly. Even though they may appear to be cool, calm and collected, a seemingly harmless comment or funny face may be just enough to cause a disaster. No artist wishes to put on a bad concert. No audience wishes to see that happen.

Professional or amateur, any artist is under stress when performing. Lets make his performance enjoyable for him and a memorable experience for the audience.

Donald W. Jenks
Brighton, Michigan

Dear George:

I think I should call your attention to the fact that Stu Green had several lapses of memory in his review of the new Moon River recording which appeared in the last issue of

THEATRE ORGAN magazine.

1. The E.J. Quinby organ in Summit, N.J., which we used for the 1955 Moon River Music recording, was a lot more than an 8-rank Moller. In addition to the Moller, there was, in a second chamber, a 5-rank Wurlitzer and in a third chamber several ranks of U.S. Pipe Organ. The instrument is still intact and Commander Quinby has it sounding better than ever! If the original Moon River album didn't have the "sexy voices" that Stu Green felt were missing, it was the fault of the old mono recording, not the Quinby organ.

2. There certainly was no such thing as an "authentic" Moon River style tune or composition, although Stu seems to think there was. We played everything from Bach to the latest pop tunes of the day. By a very

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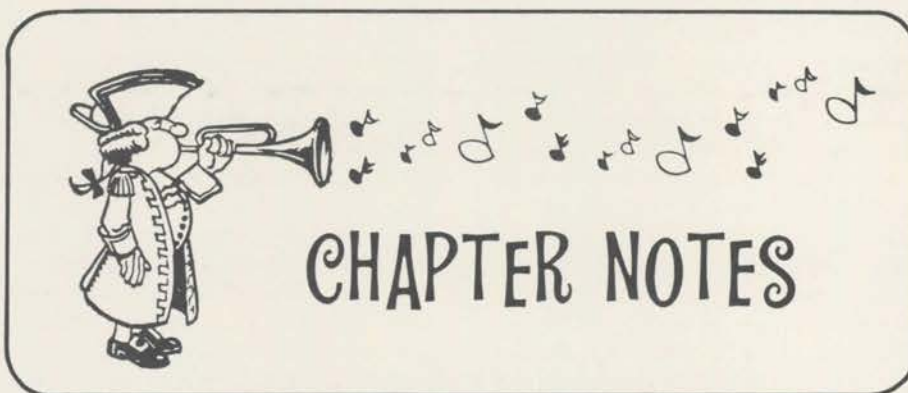
strange coincidence, Gene Perazzo, the pianist-organist who used to play the Moon River program on my night off, was in the audience last night at the Vagabond Theatre here in Los Angeles where I am playing the Keaton, Chaplin, Lloyd Film Festival. I had not seen him for years so there was much to talk about after the show, including the type of music we used on the Moon River program. Gene said, "We played anything we wanted to play. I remember specifically one night when you played compositions by Vierne and Tournemire!" Perazzo, by the way, is living in Los Angeles and is as busy as he ever was, playing solo piano and accompanying opera singers. I am sure that many readers of THEATRE ORGAN will remember him from his WLW days, and later on, in New York, where he played music for most of the original mystery shows on radio.

3. Stu's memory also was not "perking" if he thinks he ever heard a taped version of the Moon River Theme "Caprise Viennois" with "jangling sound effects." I *did* use, at many concerts, a tape of the voice of Ted Creech reading the Moon River poetry in authentic style, over the live organ music theme. Any sound effects on the tape at concerts were reserved for music of the Beatles or other "far out" poetry.

I would like to remind Stu that not only are there five or six former Moon River organists alive and well, and still performing, there are also millions of Moon River listeners still around! And they attend concerts and silent film presentations everywhere. At a recent concert where we did a "Moon River Revisited" program as part of the show, we had several thousand former fans. After the show, one lady said, "I've been waiting for over 30 years to get your autograph and now that I have it on your new album, I'm going to give you the pen that you used just for luck — you'll sell a million albums!" I hope she's right. I'm certainly going to guard that pen.

Best wishes to all the THEATRE ORGAN staff. Sorry that I was so busy playing at the Vagabond Theatre here in Los Angeles during the convention that there was almost no time to visit with everyone.

Sincerely,
Lee Erwin □



CHAPTER NOTES

Let us know what's happening in YOUR Chapter!

Send Photos and News to:

GEORGE THOMPSON
P.O. BOX 1314
SALINAS, CALIFORNIA 93902

Deadlines

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



Jo Anne Harmon (seated here at her Conn 651) played the Christensen Wurlitzer at the May meeting.

BEEHIVE

Chapter members and their guests were hosted by Annette and Cal Christensen, chapter chairman, at their Emigration Canyon home on the evening of Sunday May 27th.

Jo Anne Harmon, staff organist at the Organ Loft for many years, played the original score for the silent feature *Sally of The Sawdust*,

a 1925 D.W. Griffith epic starring Carole Dempster and W.C. Fields. The 2/7 Wurlitzer, originally installed in the Colorado Theatre, Pueblo, Colorado, never sounded better.



Console of the Cal Christensen residence Wurlitzer at Emigration Canyon. Tone chute from basement chamber is at right.

After the movie, refreshments were served and open console was in order.

Harry Weirauch reported on the progress being made on the restoration of the Capitol Theatre organ. A great boost came as a result of the Telephone Pioneers Club, Mountain Bell and Western Electric. They have donated cable and connectors to replace the fifty-year-old cable that had to be removed for the remodeling. They also will assist in hanging the cable and hooking up the color-coded wires. We are fortunate in having civic-minded organizations such as these who are able to help us in this project.

CLARENCE E. BRIGGS

CENTRAL FLORIDA

Our members during the past few months have been participating in Tampa in work sessions restoring many parts of the 3-manual Wurlitzer pipe organ ranks. Five ranks have been completed, and the focal point for the Tampa Theatre is a beautiful instrument replaced there for the enjoyment of all.

Our chapter is most fortunate to have the services and expertise of Seth Evers, who is a fine craftsman who participated in the removal of the original pipe organ from the Tampa Theatre. Our group is also very happy to have included as a member and chairman of our chapter, Charles G. Stanford. He is presently the staff organist at J. Burns Pizza and Pipes in Tampa. When J. Burns first opened in March, 1976, the staff organist was Don Baker.

One day he called Stanford and asked him if he would like to try out the pipe organ. "I didn't know it then but that was my audition," Charles recalled.

Charles Stanford is no newcomer to music. He learned to play the organ twelve years ago from his father, Ewell O. Stanford, Jr. (also a chapter member). The elder Stanford was once billed as the youngest theatre organist in the South when he accompanied silent movies in the 20s and 30s. Tampa Theatre has a monthly film club schedule, On the Silver Screen and is billing Mr. E.O. Stanford as accompanist for such silent movies as *The Mark of Zorro* at the electronic organ.

There is always an open invitation awaiting anyone vacationing or visiting Tampa, whether or not we are busy — we are not too busy ever to share our enthusiasm and hospitality.

WINONA A. SULLIVAN

CENTRAL INDIANA

May started off with a very special weekend for CIC. Along with Footlite Musicals, Inc., we had Ron Rhode in concert on May 6th and 7th at the Hedback Theatre. Ron presented an interesting and varied program along with the silent film, starring Laurel and Hardy, *Making Whoopee*. We are always glad to have the chance to hear Ron, and he did a beautiful job showing what the 2/10 Page pipe organ can do.

What made this a special weekend was a group from CATOE that came

down to Indianapolis on Saturday afternoon. Their bus brought them first to Manual High School where the CATOE members and our group heard Kurt Von Shakel play the 3/16 Louisville Uniphone pipe organ. Nine of the original Louisville ranks are in the organ and the other seven are hybrid from various organs. We appreciated Kurt playing for us so very much. There was open console time afterwards.

The CATOE people attended the concert at Hedback that evening. We were so glad that they could attend an after-the-show get-together with us as it gave us an opportunity to visit with them.

On Sunday morning, the CATOE group and our members were privileged to have an early morning concert at the Paramount Music Palace with Donna Parker and Bill Vlasak each outdoing themselves. Bob MacNuer and John Ferguson and the staff at the Paramount made it possible. We are very proud to have the Paramount Music Palace and these two talented artists in Indianapolis.

On Sunday afternoon, we toured the Scottish Rite Cathedral. Before entering, we were serenaded by Fred Kortepeter on the carillon. Mr. Kortepeter gave us a brief tour, then we heard Ned Siebert at the magnificent 5/100 Aeolian-Skinner pipe organ in the cathedral. Open console followed for those who so desired.

It was only a short distance to the Meridian Street United Methodist Church, where we heard a 1953 4/52 Casavant pipe organ. The Canadian-built organ is prepared for additional ranks which will make it

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a 60-rank instrument. We were privileged to hear Mrs. Dorothy Scott in a truly beautiful program.

It is so easy to take our ATOS membership for granted along with all of the beautiful music we are able to hear as members. Many people all over the world enjoy these opportunities through the work and efforts of many members. How fortunate can we be?

The May meeting was held at the Gethsemane Evangelical Lutheran Church with 45 attendees. The organ is a 1952 — 2/4 M.P. Moller, Opus 8342. We were happy to have Larry MacPherson play the organ for us. Open console time followed.

The June meeting was held in the home of James (Mike) and Lil Trinkle in the rolling hills just outside of New Albany, Indiana. The woods and small private lake was further enhanced by a perfect spring day. The 47 present had the privilege of playing or listening to the 2/7 Welch, West Virginia Wurlitzer pipe organ.

After a delicious meal, Mike led the way to the Graceland Southern Baptist Church, where we heard and played the 3/13 Wurlitzer that Mike has been diligently working on for three years. The organ was originally housed in the Astor Theatre in New York City.

On Sunday, June 10th, the Paramount Music Palace presented an inaugural concert with the musical showmanship of Lyn Larsen at the Mighty Wurlitzer. His performance, a blending of warmth and vibrant personality, along with his dynamic and aggressive approach to the keyboard, was enjoyed by those fortunate enough to have purchased their ticket before they were sold out. We are all very happy to have the Paramount Music Palace in our community!

BARBARA ATKINSON

CENTRAL OHIO

Kay MacAbee presented a summer concert in the star-studded grandeur of Marion's Palace Theatre, in June. The 3/10 Wurlitzer responded to his artistry as he presented a variety of selections which proved pleasing to an audience of young and old alike. The nostalgia of "Clair de Lune" gave way to a medley of perennial favorites. Kay's organ accompaniment to silent film stars Charlie Chaplin and Charlie Chase was the artist at his best. His encore, "Dizzy Fingers," was a flashy finale to an appreciative audience.

Our annual potluck outing at Ginny and Ed Lawrences took place in June. Chairman Bob Richards conducted the business meeting during which Willard Ebner announced, with just pride, that the air line assembly in the left chamber of the Worthington High School Wurlitzer was virtually complete. This will permit wiring and pipe installation to proceed. The customizing of the air line to contour with chamber dimensions has been a time-consuming task.

The business meeting was followed by a delightful program of COTOS talent which featured artist Charlie Prior at Ed's Conn 650. Organ selections included "Dreamsville," "Music Box Dancer" and "On Broadway." Open console followed.

The superb food, the comarade, the hospitality of the Lawrences all combined to make this meeting special.

JOHN R. POLSLEY

CHICAGO AREA

Our second Chicago Theatre Spectacular occurred May 20th with success all the way. This was the result of many hours of planning and

work over a good stretch of time. It takes a lot of coordination from all concerned to bring one of these affairs off correctly.

George Wright headed the bill at the marvelous Wurlitzer. There were a few hitches, but finally all went well and George gave a memorable, varied and interesting program.

Al Morgan with his musical group performed excellently and was enthusiastically received. His "menu" included many old favorites which the audience loved.

Glenn Miller's orchestra, conducted by Jimmy Henderson, consisted of 16 red-jacketed musicians and 6 vocalists. Their section of the program was also super and much appreciated.

From the Detroit Fox 130 organ buffs came via Amtrak to be with us plus a group from Rockford, Ill., and the Central Indiana Chapter.

CATOE's hospitality gals were on hand to give information and assistance to the crowd of about 2900. Jack Olander was at the lobby piano doing a wonderful job providing atmosphere before the show and during intermission.

George Wright concluded this delightful program with his beautiful rendition of "The Lord's Prayer." So now thoughts are turning to the next program for the Chicago Theatre. Could be very soon!

Our board of directors election is now past resulting in two changes: Barbara Meisner is secretary, replacing Ione Tedei, and Herb Ingram replaces Bill Benedict who also decided to withdraw. The rest of the board remains the same.

The Central Indiana Chapter hosted a bus load of CATOERs in May for a weekend outing. Tim Needler had a super program of a Ron Rhode concert at the Hedback Community Theatre, a morning at



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the Paramount Music Palace and a trip through the exclusive Scottish Rite Cathedral including a concert on their auditorium organ. The finale was at the Meridian Street Methodist Church where their organist, Mrs. Scott, gave a beautiful concert. Ione Tedei arranged the bus trip which was very well-done and all expressed their deep gratitude for the planning and work of all.

We all feel honored to know that two of CATOE's youth won the Midwest Yamaha Regional. Greg Mackintosh won the Senior Division I, and Scotty Striker topped the Youth Division II. We all wish them the best.

The Central Indiana Chapter visitors who were with us for the Chicago Theatre Spectacular were busing around the day before the show and stopped at St. Marys of the Lake, Mundelein, where Fr. Tom Franzman showed off the theatre organ, part of which was once in the Chicago Theatre. This group really gets around and we were happy to have them with us.

Our Paul Swiderski is chief organist at the Elm Rink, not the Hub Rink, as was stated in the past June/July issue; my fault.

CHICAGO NEWS BITS:

The Pipe Organ Pizza formerly on Chicago's N.W. side, Peterson Avenue, decided to close and has sent its organ to N.W. Milwaukee for installation in an eatery there. It will be well used.

Dave Junchen bought a 57 rank Moller in Columbus, Ohio. It won't be silent too long.

Mr. and Mrs. Russ Joseph moved to Bella Vista, Ark., an area with many organ clubs. These clubs are electronic deals, but soon they will be hearing pipes. Russ was very active in CATOE for several years.

He will keep out of mischief in Arkansas. Russ was pleasantly surprised to hear the quality of Frank Renaut's musicianship at a Lowrey concert he attended. Oh yes, there are good ones at those electronic keyboards.

Ex-CATOEer Dennis Minear, now living in San Francisco, is selling organs and is ad rep. for Keyboard World.

Dave Hamilton is convalescing at home after a rather serious operation. A recent visitor, Ione Tedei was so happy to hear him at the keyboard when she approached his door. We wish him a quick recovery.

ALMER BROSTROM

CONNECTICUT VALLEY

The April meeting of the Connecticut Valley Chapter was held at the home of Don and Lois Reed in Longmeadow, Massachusetts.

On May 19th and 20th, Connecticut Valley Chapter presented Ann Leaf in concert at the Thomaston Opera House, and the lady really packs a wallop. The diminutive artist's prowess at the console and its impact at the Opera House were considerable. Her approach to theatre organ is basically orchestral. She is the concert master, the conductor of the orchestra, maintaining the musical blend, but giving each section of the orchestra, each voice of the organ, its due as soloist at some interval during the orchestration. Ann's musical skill is also enhanced by her pixie sense of humor in poking fun at the works of some serious composers. After one of her improvisations, she laughingly said that a number of "old boys" must be rolling over this evening, and she hoped they were enjoying it.

Our charming guest artist made

an attractive and colorful picture in vivid green satin evening pants topped by a long sparkling silver tunic. She's much prettier than her pictures which don't show those dancing dark eyes that are her outstanding feature.

For her second encore, Ann Leaf said "good night" as she must have done so many times in her radio days, with the lovely strains of her theme which she composed — "In Time." Time has certainly been kind to Ann Leaf — she isn't getting older — she's just getting better.

JUNE L. GAREN

In June we had our membership meeting at the fascinating home of Irving and Anita Twomey in Manchester, CT housing a 2/7 Wurlitzer Style "E" pipe organ, along with pianos, player pianos, all sorts of music making machines, an astounding collection of historic cash registers, and the charm of Irv and Anita's homemaking. It is a marvelous place for a meeting of organ enthusiasts. It has been made available to us a good number of times and we are most grateful to our host and hostess for their extraordinary hospitality.

After an afternoon of open console, a break for dinner, and a short business meeting. Program Chairman Paul Taylor introduced our artist for the evening, member Joe Graif. Joe has given some thought to playing professionally and presented a very enjoyable program made up of well-known popular songs, some motion picture scores, including some of May Steiner's *Gone With the Wind*, and "A Little Bit of Johann (Bach)." The reception of this program by the assembled members must have been encouraging to Joe.



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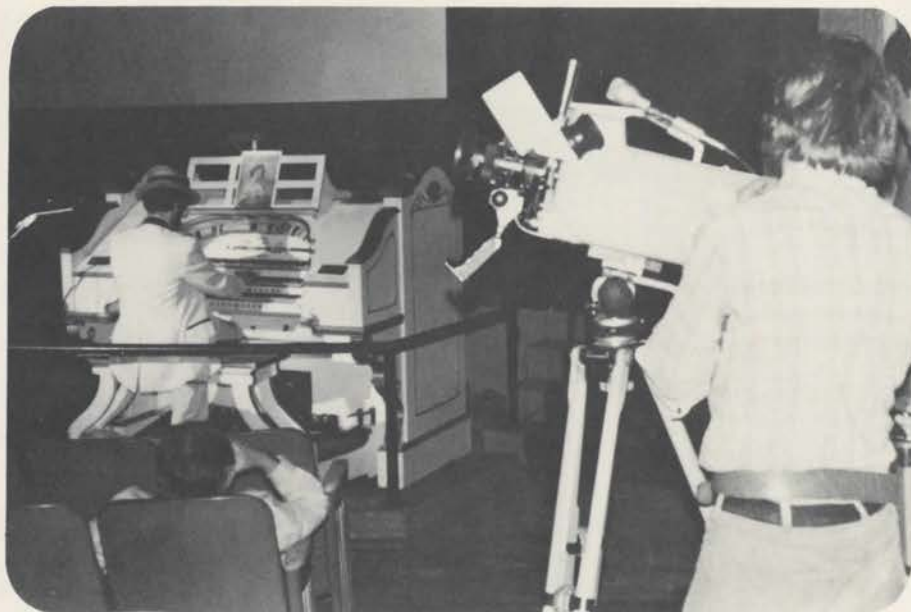
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Our August meeting is scheduled in North Haven, CT, and in September we may journey again to No. Truro on Cape Cod, travel conditions permitting. There, Bill Hastings and Joe Colliano have a fine Wurlitzer installation that formerly was called the State Theatre in Waterbury, CT.

Our next concert at our fine Marr & Colton in the Thomaston Opera House, will be September 22nd and 23rd when Rex Koury will preside at the console. In October, the 20th and 21st, Jim Bensmiller will be at Thomaston. All are welcomed. Ticket information is available from Concert Tickets, Box 426, Seymour, CT 06483, telephone: 888-9696.

WILLIAM F. POWER



Dennis James at the Avalon Wurlitzer (Milwaukee). Local TV station filmed his entrance prior to his program.

DAIRYLAND

The 50th Anniversary of the Avalon Theatre, held on May 9th, was a smashing success. Planning for this concert began in January when the board decided something had to be done to improve the quality of our concerts.

In a January board meeting, we tossed around the idea of holding a spring concert at the Pabst Theatre. No action had been taken at that time because we wanted to discuss the possibility of cosponsoring a concert at the Pabst with Wisconsin Heritages, a local nonprofit organization involved in restoring the Pabst Mansion as a Milwaukee landmark.

Wisconsin Heritages, however, was undergoing some reorganization and their newly-hired director felt the group could not afford such a venture at this time. Furthermore, the organ at the Pabst is not theatrical in design and probably would be a poor substitute for the Avalon's Wurlitzer.

So, in February, we decided to keep our concerts at the Avalon for the foreseeable future. This was no simple matter, for in the last year, the theatre has been threatened with closing, suffered severe water damage in the left chamber, and more recently, possible removal of the organ. We all are indebted to Fred Hermes for buying the organ and leaving it in the theatre for us to use. It was only through Fred's friendship with John Hill that there even was a 50th Anniversary Concert.

The idea of splitting up into smaller committees to concentrate on certain areas within a concert really paid off. The publicity committee persuaded two of the three commercial TV stations here to do some very good concert coverage.

The local NBC affiliate, WTMJ-TV, gave us some good air time the morning of the concert. Unfortunately, the live transmission from the theatre was blocked by some technical difficulties.

WISN-TV, Milwaukee's ABC affiliate, filmed the entire concert and presented a half-hour special on their Sunday news program.

The publicity committee also invited many public officials with an acceptable amount of success. Committee member Bill Campbell came up with an idea of making a news-reel-style movie for Dennis James' entrance. It would start out with Dennis practicing "Avalon" on a piano at Greg Filardo's stately old mansion. He would walk down the grand staircase, into a waiting car and be driven past several Milwaukee landmarks to the Avalon. After walking through the lobby and into the theatre, Dennis would be hit by a spotlight and proceed to the orchestra pit, climb on the organ bench and start playing.

The movie at first seemed like an impossible idea, but with the help of Greg Filardo, the Channel 12 film crew and Carry Nelson-Prod, and of course Dennis James, the film

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was made.

The night of the concert as 8 p.m. arrived, the house lights dimmed and the movie began. The audience soon realized that it was a film of the artist actually coming to play this concert. By the time he was hit with the spotlight, people were applauding.

Dennis James' concert was a masterpiece in itself, and he played no music that was written later than 1929. He wore his straw hat throughout the concert.

He began with "Avalon" and his selections included "Butterflies in the Rain," "Poet and Peasant Overture" and music from Jerome Kern's *Showboat*.

During intermission, manager Tony Grough was presented with an award by the City of Milwaukee for the Avalon's 50 years of service to the city. And even though his health was failing, the manager of the Avalon Theatre on opening night was our very special guest of honor.

After the concert, people were buzzing about what D.T.O.S. was doing. Several people joined our chapter, and one elderly woman said, "anytime you have another concert here, I will buy tickets, no matter what the cost."

Without the dedication of the organ and house committees this show would not have been possible.

Our next concert will be in October with Rex Koury at the Avalon.

WILLIAM CAMPBELL

EASTERN MASS.

Spectacular, dynamic creative, artistic and, above all — musical, describes our Hectic Hector weekend! Hector Olivera returned to EMCATOS for his fourth and best concert series beginning May 18th

at the much improved Stoneham Town Hall 3/14 Wurlitzer.

Hector fairly flew up the steps on the new steel custom-made console platform, designed and built by Patsey Fucci with some membership assistance. A rousing "That's Entertainment" got things under way while his young daughter, Suzette, was remembered in an elaborate, tender ballad "He Needed Me."

Hector played ballads, Bach, and Boogie Woogie (the latter with sound pyrotechnics). He played slowly and with lushness; at other times with "finger-busting" speed and untremmed full organ. There was something for everyone from a gorgeously registered Debussy's "Claire de Lune" to an above the speed limit "Tico Tico." Hector's rewarding encore and finale was "My Way," done his way — beautifully.

May 19th Hector appeared at Babson at our own 3/13 Wurlitzer, commenting, in his inimitable manner, that this was his fourth chance to be with her (the organ) and he felt very lucky to be returning for his fourth time. He repeated some of most spectacular offerings to everyone's delight, but much was new.

Both nights Hector commended Arthur Goggin, organ crew chief, and his dedicated group for their efforts on both instruments. "Organs need people in order to live," he explained. Hector closed with "76 Trombones" interspersed with a medley of *Music Man* selections. As the last note died all rose with wild applause which demanded more. Hector will return, again and again!

As a very special bonus, our chapter sponsored Hector for yet a third concert, open to the public, on Sunday afternoon, the 20th, at historic Trinity Church, Boston, at the gorgeous 117-rank Aeolian-Skinner

organ. George Faxon, organist/choirmaster and chapter member, made this dream come true! Here was a rare combination of a theatre/classical/jazz organist. Hector is never far from the classics, and they are skillfully woven into the fabric of his every program.

The May meeting was held in Stoneham Town Hall on a Sunday afternoon. Chairman Royal Schweiger announced Pat Fucci had sold 500 tickets. His sales efforts, received a good round of applause as did his work on the new console platform.

Our program chairman then introduced the artist of the day, long-time member, Lenny Winter. Len's playing goes back to featured organist at several North Shore theatres, notably the Salem and Lynn Paramount Wurlitzers, so he has "that touch." He is no stranger to the huge 145-rank concert organ in Hammond Castle near Gloucester, plays church organ and makes his living playing his Hammond X-66 in a leading restaurant's pub.

Len makes good music with his cheery personality reflected in his playing. Customary open console attracted a number of volunteers, including two of our newest and youngest members, Mary Jane Jackman and Billy Moore, undaunted by pipes and people. It was a relaxing Sunday afternoon and the Wurlitzer was still in top concert voice — who could ask for anything more?

The last regular gathering before fall was held at Babson, June 23rd. Royal remarked that we may consider more alternate locations this coming season to better equalize travel distances because of gas shortages. Bob Legon gave a glowing report on the "new" Radio City Music Hall with the use of the twin consoles. Announcement was made of



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the resignation from the board of directors of Garrett Shanklin with Tim Bjareby moving to full director and Dick Johnson as an alternate.

Tim Holloran then presented our evening's organist, Mark Renwick, who will be attending Syracuse University in the fall, thus his "farewell" concert. Mark stated that his program would consist of mostly music of the 20s, 30s and 40s era. He always prepares his music well and tries for the more obscure, yet colorful numbers. Open console closed the evening's activities, but not before more good Wurlitzer music was enjoyed.

Sunday, June 24th was the occasion for what has become an annual outing at Rosalie and Pat Fucci's Waltham residence. The cookout attracted about 70 to the high land above their home with its picnic tables, shade trees, cool breezes and mouth-watering food, to say nothing of our hosts' friendly hospitality.

With the "inner man" satisfied, Pat's 4/19 Robert Morton beckoned all present to enjoy Tim Bjareby, Lenny Winter, Bob Legon and others at the impressive white and gold console. One of Charlie Clarke's silents with organ articulation added interest.

This annual is always "Food, Fun and Friendship — at Fucci's," to quote Stuart Hinchliffe, editor of our paper, *Eastern Pipes*. It never fails!

STANLEY C. GARNISS

GARDEN STATE

The last several months have been hectic indeed for the chapter's Trenton work crew. A wide variety of programs have been presented at the War Memorial Auditorium featuring the beautiful 3/16 Moller.

An unusual presentation on March 4th featured the Moller in combination with the trumpet and jazz band of Joe Scannella. Local organist Tony Santucci, first try at theatre pipes, managed to get some rather interesting sounds from the pipe chambers, and was well-rewarded by the crowd for his efforts. At one point, dancing in the aisles ensued, thus demonstrating the enthusiasm of Trenton audiences for this type of program.

On Sunday afternoon, April 29th, Lyn Larsen brought the concert series to a fitting close. New Jersey audiences had long awaited Lyn's appearance in this state, and no one was disappointed. Selections from light classics to modern novelties kept the audience spellbound while he spun his musical magic. Fortunately, the Moller obviously appreciated being handled by a master, and responded by behaving perfectly for the entire concert. The prolonged standing ovation at the conclusion of his program should have been ample evidence for Lyn Larsen that he is always welcome in the Garden State.

The May meeting was held at The Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel in North Bergen, N.J., where the "St. Joe" crew is presently restoring a 3/12 Moller in what used to be the Broadway Theatre. It was unanimously agreed at that time to make June, 1979 Open Console Month in New Jersey. Open consoles were scheduled for June 3rd at the Pasack Theatre in Westwood; June 10th at the Olde Rahway in Rahway; June 17th at The Casa Italiana in Newark, and June 31st (actually July 1st!) at the Trenton War Memorial.

June 3rd turned out to be another "bummer" Sunday, weather-wise, but in spite of the heavy rain and flooding, 18 hearty enthusiasts show-

ed up at the Pasack to play, or listen, to the 2/8 Wurlitzer. It was with a little sadness that we filed out of the theatre at 1 p.m. when the "little people" started trooping in for the matinee show. Our thanks to the wonderful people who manage the Pasack for allowing us to enjoy a fine open console session, despite the awful weather.

The June 10th open console at the Olde Rahway was attended by 16 members who showed up with sheet music and tape recorders for a pleasant morning of playing and listening. Although the sky was cloudy and threatening to rain, there was lots of sunshine, good music and camaraderie inside.

June 17th, Fathers Day, started out beautifully, but the clouds moved in once again! Walt Froelich was a bit late getting there to open up, arriving with Mssrs. Ron Buhlmann and Russ Shaner, visitors from R.T.O.S. Attendance started out slowly, but soon we had 35 members and friends either playing or listening to the 3/15 Wurlitzer, or taking the backstage tour. As was expected, the clouds opened up, and the question was passed around as to who might head up a construction crew to build an ark.

PETER PANOS &
DON PLENKERS

LONDON AND SOUTH OF ENGLAND

It is with immense pride that to the ever-growing list of top-line international organists which our chapter is bringing to England our first addition this year should be the great Ashley Miller — making his first appearance on this side of the Atlantic.

Ashley's first date, sponsored by our chapter, was at our prime and

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favourite venue, the Gaumont State, Kilburn in Northwest London, where an audience of nearly 700 enjoyed an immaculate performance at the 4/16 'Torch' Wurlitzer.

Ashley's very fine registrations and orchestral stylings were complemented by his relaxed personality. A large group of chapter members were able to enjoy an 'afterglow' of dinner and music at 'Wurlitzer Lodge,' Northolt, the ever-convivial home of Edith and Les Rawle.

Ashley then fulfilled engagements in Holland. These were followed by an exemplary performance on the 4/21 'Queen' Wurlitzer in the Free Trade Hall in Manchester under the sponsorship of the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust (LTOT).

Coinciding with Ashley's visit was the exciting presence of Hector Olivera in the UK for a wide-ranging electronic organ trade tour.

Hector's uniquely sparkling performances were first witnessed by many chapter members — notably at Guildford in Surrey where about 20 of us foregathered. Soon after his arduous tour was over he came to Wurlitzer Lodge to relax.

To our great satisfaction, both Ashley and Hector are our most welcome new chapter members.

Only a few days later about ten chapter members journeyed to Southampton to hear our own very great Reginald Porter-Brown at the famous dual-purpose Compton organ in the Guildhall there. Thus we had had the unique experience of seeing and hearing three world class console stars inside of one week.

Phil Baldwin, genial editor of the highly-popular monthly magazine *Home Organist* was in fine form at the 3/19 'Granada' Wurlitzer in March and young Bernard Tilley produced a bright and entertaining evening in April.



New-generation theatre organ talent in London. Hector Olivera with London's own highly-proficient prodigy 17-year-old Pauline Dixon — seen together at 'Wurlitzer Lodge' during Hector's recent visit to the UK.

As usual, our 'Young Organist of the Year' Pauline Dixon opened both evenings. With hard practice, an increasing diary of concert dates and plenty of encouragement, Pauline is proving to be a most accomplished musician and dedicated theatre organ fan of whom we are immensely proud.

An extra attraction in early April to help swell chapter funds was a special musical evening with Len Rawle at the 4/25 (ex-MGM 'Empire' Leicester Square) Wurlitzer in his delightful home at Chorleywood.

Both Phil Baldwin and Pauline Dixon, with her talented drummer twin sister Jacquie, at very short notice took part in a Pipes, Piano and Yamaha electronic show at the Gaumont State organised by Len Rawle for the Cinema Organ Society (COS). The planned presentation on Easter Monday had to be cancelled because of the organ lift being out of

action, but Les nevertheless featured the Wurlitzer playing from 12 feet below stage level!

Also on Easter Monday the traditional afternoon concert at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church at Hornchurch in Essex, sponsored by our well-known and ever-enthusiastic member Father Gerard Kerr, featured Bernard Tilley at the Compton theatre pipe organ now installed there.

One of our bright and earnest young stars, and basically trained on the theatre organ, Bernard is sales manager for a nearby piano and organ studio and already has a fine recording on a Baldwin electronic to his credit.

We are also particularly pleased that popular theatre organ recitals are to be revived at Father Kerr's former Church, St. John Vianney, Clayhall, Ilford, where the fine 3/6 Compton, formerly in the 'Ritz' Nuneaton in the Midlands, is installed in a perfect acoustic setting.

Our second birthday presentation at the end of May was a new venture combining pipe and electronic organs. Staged at our prime concert venue, the Gaumont State Theatre, Kilburn in Northwest London, this 'Pipe and Plug-in Organ Bonanza' featured welcome stateside favourite Dennis James at the 4/16 'Torch' Wurlitzer on its turntable lift with Britain's own keyboard master, Brian Sharp, at the fantastic 'Riha Orchestra' console placed on the theatre's main orchestra lift.

Stemming from an idea of ever-enthusiastic manager Bill Weir, this bold experiment was a complete success with both artistes providing exemplary performances — separately and, in the finale, together.

Pauline Dixon's continues with great pace and enthusiasm. Most recently she shared a fine concert

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Dennis James and stewards at Gaumont State Kilburn.

(John D. Sharp Photo)

with veteran Gaumont British Star Alan Cornell at the vintage Compton theatre organ at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church at Hornchurch in Essex. After only a very short period of familiarisation, she typically acquitted herself exceptionally well.

The 41-year-old Kilburn Wurlitzer continues in fine voice, thanks to a steady programme of maintenance work by chapter members. Further restoration is just beginning, initially with the recovering of the Howard seat, soon to be followed by redecoration of the distinctive console and some rearrangement of the percussions in the chambers.

Ashley Miller recorded the Wurlitzer for the Amberlee label during his visit earlier this year and several more broadcasts have also since been made.

Our May chapter club night at Wurlitzer Lodge featured Dennis James and the June event the ever-popular veteran Bobby Pagan (who had a notable period of residency at the Gaumont State Wurlitzer in its heyday). In a career spanning the years of silent films through to his newest assignment as current host of our famous radio programme *The Organist Entertains*, Bobby is one of

the all-time great and much-loved names of the British theatre organ scene and it was a great joy to have him with us.

Paul and Hazel Kirner have just inaugurated the (slightly enlarged) Compton theatre organ formerly in the Odean Wealdstone (near London) in their home at Stony Stanton in Leicestershire.

All-in-all, we are happy to report a most satisfying and enjoyable programme of activities — with frequent overseas guests to add to

the exceptional fellowship and enjoyment of our chapter federation, as we enter our third exciting year.

LOS ANGELES

April ended on a musical note here in Los Angeles with Ron Rhode playing the Wiltern's magnificent Kimball organ. Ron's well balanced program featured some of the lesser known musical numbers from the '20s such as "Moonbeam Kiss Her For Me," a genuine 1926 arrangement of "Am I Blue?" and "Red Lips Kiss My Blues Away," but Ron proved he's right up to date with "I Write the Songs," "Come Touch the Sun" from Butch Cassidy and the Theme music from Monty Python's *Flying Circus*. Ron's captivating personality matches his musical artistry — a winning combination! Coincidentally, on the day of Ron's concert the LA *Herald Examiner* published a special full color magazine section titled "Save the Wiltern." Copies were distributed free to the concert-goers.

After publicizing Chauncey Haines as our May artist, a bicycle accident



Ron Rhode at the Wiltern Theatre Kimball.

(Zimfoto)

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FRANK CIMMINO
Organist

resulted in a broken ankle and a substitute organist. Bill Wright, recently featured in THEATRE ORGAN Magazine, gladly and beautifully filled in for his friend Chauncey. Bringing San Gabriel's Wurlitzer up with "Keep Your Sunny Side Up," Bill proceeded to keep his sunny side up for the next two hours playing everyone's favorite melodies. Being one of the few organists from the days of the silents who has worked continuously, Bill's repertoire is nearly inexhaustible! He even played a medley of "ice skating music" just as he does every night at the Paramount Ice Rink.

RALPH BEAUDRY

NOR-CAL

The May 20th meeting was held at the New Bella Roma in Concord, where the staff served brunch to 151 members and guests.

Dave Reese's concert began at 11 a.m. with a rousing "Music Box Dancer," with dancing puppets keeping perfect time to the music. The puppets are a new installation at Bella Roma, and created by Ken Simmons, situated on their own stage up on the east wall. At a touch of a button on the organ, the velvet drapes part to show three computerized zany characters three feet tall. When the organist depresses a pedal, the puppets' left feet go up, when any note is touched on the accompaniment manual, the puppets' raise their right foot — very clever and original. Dave reports that the puppet show is a big hit with the children who visit Bella Roma.

Dave Reese, who formerly played at Salt Lake City's famous Organ Loft, before coming to Bella Roma I in Martinez, is now at the Bella Roma II in Concord. As he showed us in his program, he is a very tal-



Dave Reese at the Bella Roma II in Concord, California.

ented young man who can play any kind of music and do it full justice.

Our thanks to the owner of the Bella Roma restaurants, Frank Ciaramitaro, for hosting the chapter, and for having the 3/16 Wurlitzer finely tuned.

FLORENCE LYDON

NORTH TEXAS

Once again the chapter returned to the beautiful home of Drs. Robert Lloyd and Bob McGillivray for our June meeting. The beauty of the lush green grounds nestling around an inviting swimming pool was quite a contrast to our last visit to their home when these same surroundings were snow-sprinkled, making it a glittering scene for our Christmas gala. Now, in June, in spite of the warm weather and an acute gasoline situation, a fine attendance was on hand to enjoy the great fellowship that pervades our chapter, and to enjoy, for the last time, the

magnificent installation of their 652 Conn, installed by Gene Powell and Dick Nichols. The instrument has been augmented to make it the equivalent of a 3-manual, 17-rank pipe organ, according to Lew Williams. It has a total of 51 speakers and 12 35-watt amplifiers. In addition, it has 12 toe studs, six attached to the general combinations, and six to percussion. A crescendo pedal has been added and the organ has been changed from a 3-channel to a 4-channel organ. The setting of the console is against a floor-to-ceiling brick wall with six electronic pipe units placed attractively above the console, effecting a beautiful setting for a performance. In addition, six Leslie units are hung near the ceiling of the large music room and two Leslie speakers are on the floor.

A short business meeting brought forth current progress reports from our project director, John Beck-erich, concerning the refurbishing of



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our Robert Morton. The up-to-date report from the Ft. Worth workshop at Jim Peterson's shop and the Garland workshop at Gene Powell's Organ World was enthusiastically received by the members. Fund raising plans were discussed by Bob McGillivray, treasurer, to insure further funds will be available for completion of the work being done on the Robert Morton. Chairman Nichols discussed the proposed "caravan" trip being planned to make arrangements for several chapters to travel together to the "Mightiest Wurlitzer" opening in October.

The highlight of the meeting was Bob McGillivray's "Swan Song" concert which he designed as a tribute to the chapter, his last for a long time, as he has accepted a professorship as head of the accounting area in the College of Business at Loyola University, New Orleans. He will continue as treasurer of our chapter.

Bob opened his concert with a rousing "From This Moment On" which was a perfect introduction for the brilliant program that followed, pleasing everyone with old standards, up tunes, show tunes and three production numbers that were really finger busters, displaying his dexterity at the keyboard. Bob's delightful program drew two standing ovations and his program left us hopeful that he will return from time to time to play another one.

LORENA MCKEE

OKLAHOMA CITY

Betty Yetter began Theatre Organ Day, at the annual Arts Festival, and our 4/15 Kilgen got a good workout. A steady stream of appreciative listeners furnished inspiration to the six members of our chapter during the afternoon and



evening, and quite a few attended the entire session.

Following Betty, Billy Burke, a theatre organist from the early days, now a teacher and entertainment organist, gave us some memorable Jesse Crawford ballads.

Starting the third concert, Lou Ann Rice, of the Rice Family Society Orchestra, changed pace with big band era atmosphere.

Curt Chambers, long-time organist, teacher, and entertainer, spiced things with his own arrangements that have become well-known throughout the state.

Dorothy Hamilton, capable of any call from classical to Western, put us back in the days of films with her renditions of many scores, plus "Dizzy Fingers."

Mickey Reynolds, radio organist, band leader and one of OKC's long-

time entertainers, played some of the old, and a lot of new, modern arrangements as only Mickey can do, to round out the six-hour program which ended at 8 p.m.

Members Wendell Boaz, our treasurer, and Greg Robertson of Audio Associates who produced the Ken Wright memorial record, operated their Communications Center for the Festival, playing organ music and making announcements preceding each concert.

One thing that had been noticed, in the romantic softness of the auditorium lighting during the concerts, was the 'fading out' of the console, except for the keyboards, lights and stop tablets, because the casework was ebony black. One of our members, Robert Shead, a professional interior decorator of long standing, and a theatre organist 'back when,' noticed this in particular. We are now restoring all of the silver trim and adding a Shead-designed "K" to each of the two panels on the cheeks of the console. An appropriate logo is also in the making for the music rack; all a gift from Robert Shead.

PAUL N. HAGGARD

OREGON

On a beautiful Sunday afternoon, May 20th, we again had the honor of hosting the chapter at our home in Milwaukie, a suburb of Portland. Over 50 members turned out to hear the organ with one pipe: a 3/1 Conn 650. The "1" stands for a single rank of generators, amplified out into eight speakers including two Leslies. Each has independent phase shift to produce a multi-rank chorus and tremulant effect. The one pipe is a 16' wood powered by a 15" woofer to provide very heavy bass at the bottom of the pedalboard. The con-

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sole speakers are silent; the others are located in a loft over the living room.

Our program was played by Terry Robson, chairman, and board members Bert Hedderly, Gerry Gregorius, Glen Briody, Joe Gray and the writer. This was followed by open console, with many members participating. We were fortunate to hear top professionals Marti Lynch and Gerry Gregorius.

On June 17th we saw a special silent film showing at the Sherwood Oriental Theatre near Portland. To the many of us who love steam locomotives as well as theatre pipe organs, this program had it all! It started with a silent Laurel and Hardy comedy followed by a generous selection of solo numbers played by Bill Blunk at his 5/24 Marr &



Bill Blunk at his 5/24 Marr & Colton in the Sherwood Oriental Theatre. (Claude V. Neuffer Photo)

Colton. Then came the civil war classic, *The General*, a full length feature. Bill is far too young to have accompanied silents during the 20s, but his full use of all five manuals, precise timing, and inspired improvisation make him sound like a veteran.

Thanks to Bill Blunk, Bob Roschild and Gene Stoller of the Sherwood Oriental.

BUD ABEL

POTOMAC VALLEY

Rosa Rio packed 'em in on Saturday night, May 26th, at the Weinberg Center for the Performing Arts in Frederick, Maryland. This was a paid concert to obtain funds to complete the installation of the Potomac Valley Chapter's own 3/28 Kimball at the Adult Education Center of The University of Maryland. As there was excellent pre-concert publicity, the general public came out in force as well as us ATOSers. As Rosa commented, there were a good number of young people in the audience. Rosa was excellent, treating everyone to the nostalgia of the radio themes with which she had been associated. Bill Yeoman, Rosa's husband, narrated some slides they had brought along showing the people who were the performers on these old programs.

The organ itself, a fire engine red 2/8 Wurlitzer, is in fine shape and its voices separated so well that the 1920 stereo effect is sensational. Rosa made the 8 ranks sound like 50.

As a change of pace, our gal left the organ console and went to the grand piano and did a masterful rendition of "The Butterfly" and a Fritz Chrysler (yes, the violinist) piano arrangement of "Midnight Bells."



Oregon meeting at the home of Bud Abel. L to R, Glenn Briody, Mrs. Bud Abel, Bud Abel and Joe Gray. The organist is unidentified. (Claude V. Neuffer Photo)

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Rosa Rio. (Harold Richman Photo)

And there was a silent film, Laurel and Hardy in *The Finishing Touch* and Rosa's accompaniment was superb.

An encore of W.C. Handy's "St. Louis Blues," ended the evening in fine fashion.

Our June meeting was held at the residence of Olean and George Johnson in Alexandria, Virginia. Because of the small space available for seating, the concert, played by chapter member Lou Hurvitz was split between Saturday night and Sunday afternoon. Lou played the 2/7 augmented Wurlitzer in a superb fashion. His finger dexterity was amazing, and it was apparent that he is a professional theatre organist in every sense of the word. Lou's concert contained something for everyone.

Open console followed with several chapter members playing and enjoying the well-maintained Wurlitzer.

The last week of June, Bruce Rick-er, Tommy Landrum (ATOS president) and Cap Young (ATOS di-

rector) completely restored the 50-year-old console cable in the Byrd Theatre Wurlitzer in Richmond, Virginia. The cable had been giving some trouble from being flexed for all these years by a lift which rises about 15 feet each time the organ comes up. Congratulations and thank you to those who worked on this project. This instrument is one of the few that is played daily and its concert master is that wonderful musician Eddie Weaver.

RICHARD R. HAIGHT

PUGET SOUND

On Fathers Day, members of the chapter boarded a ferry for the delightful hour-long trip across Puget Sound to Bremerton, Washington, the home of the Bremerton Community Theatre, owned by the Bremerton Park Dept. Inside sits a beautiful organ, perhaps more valuable to us, than the "Mighty Mo" which is docked at Bremerton. This was the scene of our concert by Tom Cotner.

The theatre restoration was financed by public grants and private pledges and there is a nostalgic feeling about this 200-seat theatre. The stage rigging came from the Seattle Orpheum Theatre, torn down to accommodate Seattle's new Washington Plaza Hotel, and the seats are from the Seattle Music Hall.

The organ is owned by the Bremerton Pipe Organ Society, and they have every right to be proud of it. It was formerly owned by the late Don Adamson, a well-known organist and technician. Many volunteers have given of their time and expertise to make it the beautiful installation it is. The organ has a 2-manual Wurlitzer console and 11 ranks of pipes.

Tom Cotner's ability and knowledge of the pipe organ was quite



Tom Cotner played the June concert in the Bremerton Community Theatre. The organ is owned by the Bremerton Pipe Organ Society.

evident, and his concert proved so enlightening, that we almost missed the ferry.

THELMA R. SMITH

RED RIVER

After our April concert at the Fargo Theatre, and with the extra labor necessary for that show, we have pretty much taken time off from our organ project for the summer. No regular meetings are scheduled until September.

Aside from our organ work, we are progressing with the restoration of the stage area of the theatre, which apparently hasn't seen use since the late 1940s. We unearthed some posters and handbills dating back thirty years while cleaning out old props and ropes. Plitt, Inc., gave us permission to fly the screen and now there are many possibilities for stage use in the near future. We want to continue to reacquaint the public with the capabilities of this wonderful old theatre. Plans are underway for our fall show in early November.



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Rob Richards signs programs after his April concert at the Fargo Theatre. (S. Carlson Photo)



The new three-manual console for the Fargo Theatre. (S. Carlson Photo)

This spring two visitors to our area stopped by the theatre to play the Wurlitzer, which boasts a new 3-manual console. Fred Bock was here, as was Bob Ralston, who was appearing at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minn.

On Sunday, July 1st, KTHI-TV presented "A Tribute to Mary Pick-

ford," and showed her silent film *Sparrows* with an organ score recorded by Lance Johnson at the Fargo Theatre during one of our silent movie nights.

SONIA CARLSON

ST. LOUIS

Information was received that Chicago radio station WENR's Wurlitzer, which is now located in Webster Groves, Missouri, was used on the *Amos 'n' Andy* Show by Dean Fossler, not by Gaylord Carter as we had reported in the last issue. Our apologies to Mr. Fossler, a truly great organist, and our thanks to Len Clarke for the correction. (Reference: THEATRE ORGAN BOMBARD, June and August 1969.)

An outstanding May meeting in Alton, Illinois, was hosted by Ethel McGinnis and Ethel and Clarence Budde. They treated the entire St. Louis, membership to a delicious supper and a fine musical program on a Conn Deluxe theatre organ. Dale Lockard, a well-known Alton public school teacher, church organist and choir director played a delightful medley of wedding music and concluded by singing "Ah Sweet Mystery of Life" to his own accompaniment. Then Mrs. Bert Loyet, an organ teacher from Highland, Illinois, played a wide variety of show tunes. Participation in open console was lessened by second and third trips back to the supper table which was constantly being replenished by our genial hosts.

Chuck Wiltsch, organist at St. Francis Xavier College Church in St. Louis, demonstrated his virtuosity as he played a classical program at the church's magnificent sixty-rank Kilgen during our June meeting. Open console was a thrill to many who had never experienced such

power and beauty at their fingertips.

BILL ANTHONY

SIERRA

The chapter has been very active the first months of this year but we just haven't sent in our column, so we'll remedy the situation now.

Jim Riggs played for us at our Cal-Expo organ in January. He plays excellent organ and goes for the good old ballads which he plays in the good old theatre organ style.

Our February meeting was held at Arden Pipes and Pizza and Warren Lubich came up from San Francisco to once again give us a very musical afternoon. He is a pizza, concert and theatre organist, the latter at the Avenue Theatre in San Francisco.

For our March meeting, Jim Paulin played up a storm for us at the Grant High School organ. The former RCMH organist is one of those who 'play' stops almost as fast as keys and the poor Wurlitzer was really panting for air by the time Jim had played a program with two ovations.

Ed Smith played our April concert at the 3/17 Wurlitzer at Big Top Pizza and Pipes and his long and varied experience as both a radio and theatre organist was very evident in the choice and presentation of his numbers.

Our May concert was played by the ever-popular Korla Pandit at our Seaver Memorial organ in Cal-Expo's Golden Bear Theatre. This was one of the yearly concerts for which we sell tickets to the public and it was a great success. Korla still has the drawing power he had when he was "that hypnotic Hindu" in the early days of TV. Our Golden Bear Theatre has several new sets of curtains, and the old steel folding



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chairs have been replaced with beautiful upholstered permanent seats finished in dragon-red to match the theatre decor. As usual, Rod Daggett and John Carleton had the Wurlitzer in top condition.

We closed our activities for the summer with open console and a business meeting, again at Cal-Expo. We plan to make this an annual event to permit the membership to make known its ideas and desires. Our former chairman, Art Phalen, started open console, and each player was limited to six minutes. Herb Dunkley followed and asked Sue Lang to join him at the piano for a lovely duet of "Tenderly."

Gary Kronis, who is studying to be a professional organist, proved that he will be a good one. Chairman Jim Hodges then called the board to a long table on the stage and a question and answer session lasted for approximately thirty minutes. After a brief intermission Randy Warwick, Burt Kunz, Ed Smith and Sue Lang took their turns at the console.

BOB LONGFIELD

SOONER STATE

Oklahoma's Pipe Packin' Platoon has been busy again! Bristow is about forty miles down the turnpike from Tulsa, and the Presbyterian church there had agreed to sell its 3/14 Kimball to Bruce and Martha Wilson of Claremore. (The church replaced the Kimball with a new Moller). Since the Wilsons could have the organ as soon as Easter was over, they planned a week's vacation to get started on the little stuff, but sent out a call for the Pipe Packers to help with the rest on the last Saturday in April.

Responding to the call were Phil Judkins, Hervey Barbour, Jim Reel,

Bob and Betty Weddle, the writer and her husband, Lee Smith.

This time there was an obstacle course of organ chambers with openings above seven-foot high walls (where the swell shades had been), a long narrow hallway, and a thirteen-step stairway. Bruce and Martha, with John Price's help, had already stacked as much as they could in a large reception room at the top of the stairs. The largest speaking pipes, as well as the chests (one a six-rank), regulators, relay board, and switch stack — had to come out *up* over those seven-foot walls. Kimball certainly believed in building solid pipe organs! And then everything — including the console — had to come down that thirteen-step stairway. We bucket-brigaded for hours, sliding parts down those stairs and stacking them outside. With the brown-painted duct-work pipes strung out all over the grass it looked like we were taking an elephant apart! The blower was in the basement, where the only way out was through the church kitchen. It took about ten hours to get it out and loaded on the truck.

And *then* they wanted to know who could come to Claremore (about thirty miles northeast of Tulsa) the next day to help *unload* the truck! Well, he could never do it without help, so we set out again. Bruce, Martha, and Martha's brother, Gene Waldorf, had already taken out all they could, but all the big (and heavy!) pieces were left. He plans to spend the next year (or two?) reinstalling it in the garage loft. And again, the only way to get the console into the living room was the way we'd got the old one out: through the front windows, removed for the occasion, up and over a two-foot-high rock wall.

Our May meeting was held out-

doors in Harry and Beth Rasmusen's cool backyard driveway-patio. Entertainment was open console on Harry's Artisan installed in his garage, with refreshments provided by our hosts.

Bill Roberts hosted, and substituted for Phil Judkins as instructor, at our May technical session. Bill explained the difference between a "straight organ" and a "unified organ;" Bruce Wilson continued with a discussion of the electrical wiring differences between the two.

June found us back at Harvey Young's "Island" on his airport property for our annual potluck-picnic. We enjoyed good conversation, fishing and announcements about some possible future activities with the Oklahoma City Chapter. Afterwards, Harvey invited us to his house for open console on his Conn 652.

DOROTHY SMITH

SOUTHEAST TEXAS

The chapter has been incorporated as a nonprofit organization under the laws of the State of Texas.

For the April meeting a Hammond Concorde electronic organ was brought onto the stage of the Jefferson Theatre in Beaumont for a confrontation with the 3/8 Robert Morton. Nobody's mind was changed.

The Jefferson Theatre Preservation Society has employed Taft Associates to design a restoration proposal for the Jefferson. The Preservation Society has asked the citizens' committee, advising Beaumont city council members on spending redevelopment funds, for \$100,000 for next year for restoring the theatre. Last year \$50,000 was approved through this means. At the Preservation Hall membership bash

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on June 2nd, Vice Chairman Ralph Lindholm accompanied a silent movie; this was only the second time in thirty years that anyone other than chairman Al Sacker had presided at the console for a public performance.

We sponsored Miss Teresa Trahan as a Princess in the 1979 Neches River Festival, an annual affair in Port Arthur.

With the help of car-pooling, the chapter held its May meeting at the Fun Factory pizza parlor in Greenspoint Mall on the north side of Houston. Both staff organist Jon Steen and our own members played the completely restored Wurlitzer there. Thanks to Fun Factory's Charles "Bud" Yeoman.

In June the chapter met at the home of members Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Howell, who are dealers in musical antiques. The center of interest was a 1911 Welte automatic organ, originally purchased for their Michigan mansion by the Packard family, after whom the automobile was named. It is about 10 feet high, 8 feet wide and 4 feet deep and contains eight ranks of pipes, all played from rolls that provide complete control. We heard only a small portion of the 20 hours of programming provided by the Howells' 128 rolls.

IRA M. WILLIAMSON

VALLEY OF THE SUN

With the advent of warm weather, the chapter moved outside for most of the May meeting. Held at the home of chapter member Jay Hein, the first part of the evening included swimming and a delicious potluck dinner. Following a short business meeting, we moved inside and Jay demonstrated a few numbers at his Allen digital computer organ, then invited members to participate in open console.

Ron Rhode resigned as chapter chairman as of June 1st, due to time-consuming professional activities. In accordance with our by-laws, Vice Chairman Charles Creighton assumed the office.



Ron Rhode and Lyn Larsen played duo concert for Valley of the Sun Chapter in June.

Sunday, June 3rd, our chapter sponsored a duo concert at Phoenix College to raise money for our Wurlitzer restoration project there. Our featured artists for the program were Lyn Larsen and Ron Rhode. Performing at a Gulbransen Rialto II, each organist played three solo numbers. Then, with Lyn at the organ and Ron at the grand piano, we heard "Play A Simple Melody." Lyn played "Caprice Viennois" as a piano solo, and Ron's talent at the piano was evident when he played "Kitten On The Keys." With Lyn at the piano and Ron at the organ, we heard "The Militaire Polonaise," then they changed places for the "Polonaise in A Flat Major." A standing ovation brought Larsen and Rhode back for an encore.

Later that evening, several members were able to hear Lyn Larsen at the organ again as he accompanied three singers in a tribute to the American musical theatre. This program was presented by the Del Webb Corporation at the Open air Sun Bowl in Sun City. The program was narrated by member Dave Lindsay, who has written lyrics for several Lyn Larsen compositions and is himself a talented organist.

Meanwhile, chapter members keep busy on the Phoenix College



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MADELINE LIVOLSI

WOLVERINE

Our May gathering at the beautiful Meadow Brook Hall was attended by 40 members and guests who witnessed one of John Muri's very fine programs. His playing of "Scheherazade" displayed the kind of music that was often played on the Aeolian residence pipe organs. And his Unbegun Symphony by P.D.Q. Bach — well, one could say



Members gather at Meadow Brook Hall, in Rochester, where Wolverine held the May meeting. (Ed Corey Photo)

the inspirations for the various movements of the selection were that kind of music, too. As always John Muri's program was delightful and tasteful. The dinner in the Wilson Room was very much appreciated. The management of Meadow Brook Hall was most pleasant and cooperative in planning this event.

In June, John and Louise Rinn and Robert and Vickie Clifford co-hosted the Wolverine bunch at the Rinn residence. John's Wurlitzer came to him from the Stratford Theatre in Detroit with time spent as a church installation in between. Originally, the organ had no Tibia when installed in April, 1916. John added a Tibia, a Xylophone, and Orchestra Bells shortly after he acquired the organ in 1959. All the percussions and traps had been removed prior to the church installation. There is a 16' wooden String in the organ that is believed to be original. Clair Dunham, who once worked for Wurlitzer, helped install this organ when moved from the theatre to the church and again when it was moved to the Rinn residence.

Past-Chairman, Scott Smith was recently named to the Board of Directors of DaCapo, the group with the goal of purchasing and restoring the Michigan Theatre in Lansing,

Scott was the liaison between the Wolverine Chapter and DaCapo since the formation of the latter group whenever we wished to make use of the Barton theatre pipe organ installed there (and that is quite often).

The summer season holds many theatre organ events for us to travel to, both near and far. If the gas holds out, we will all have many opportunities to enjoy and pass the word on to others not yet involved with theatre organ. If you are traveling in our area this summer (or any other time) look us up; we have lots of theatre organs to show you.

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John and Louise Rinn and their 2/8 Wurlitzer. (Ed Corey Photo)

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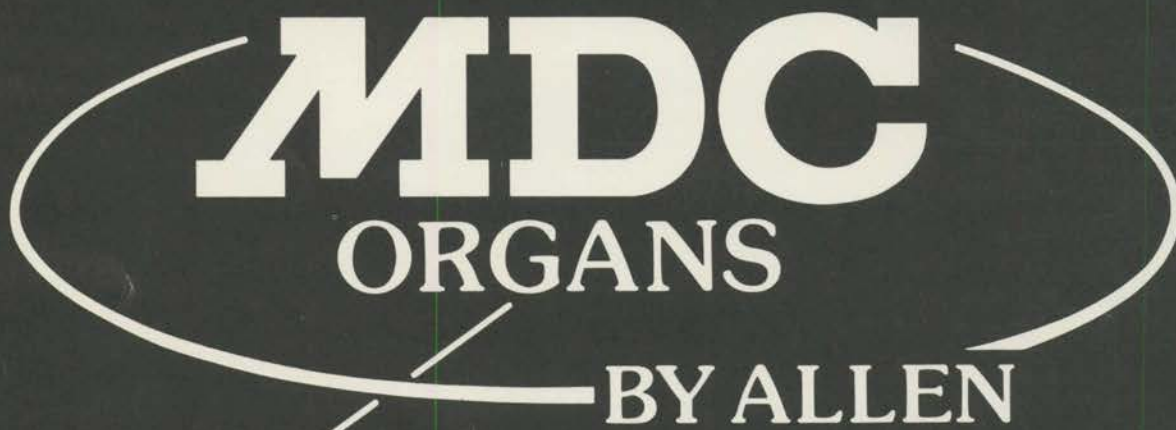


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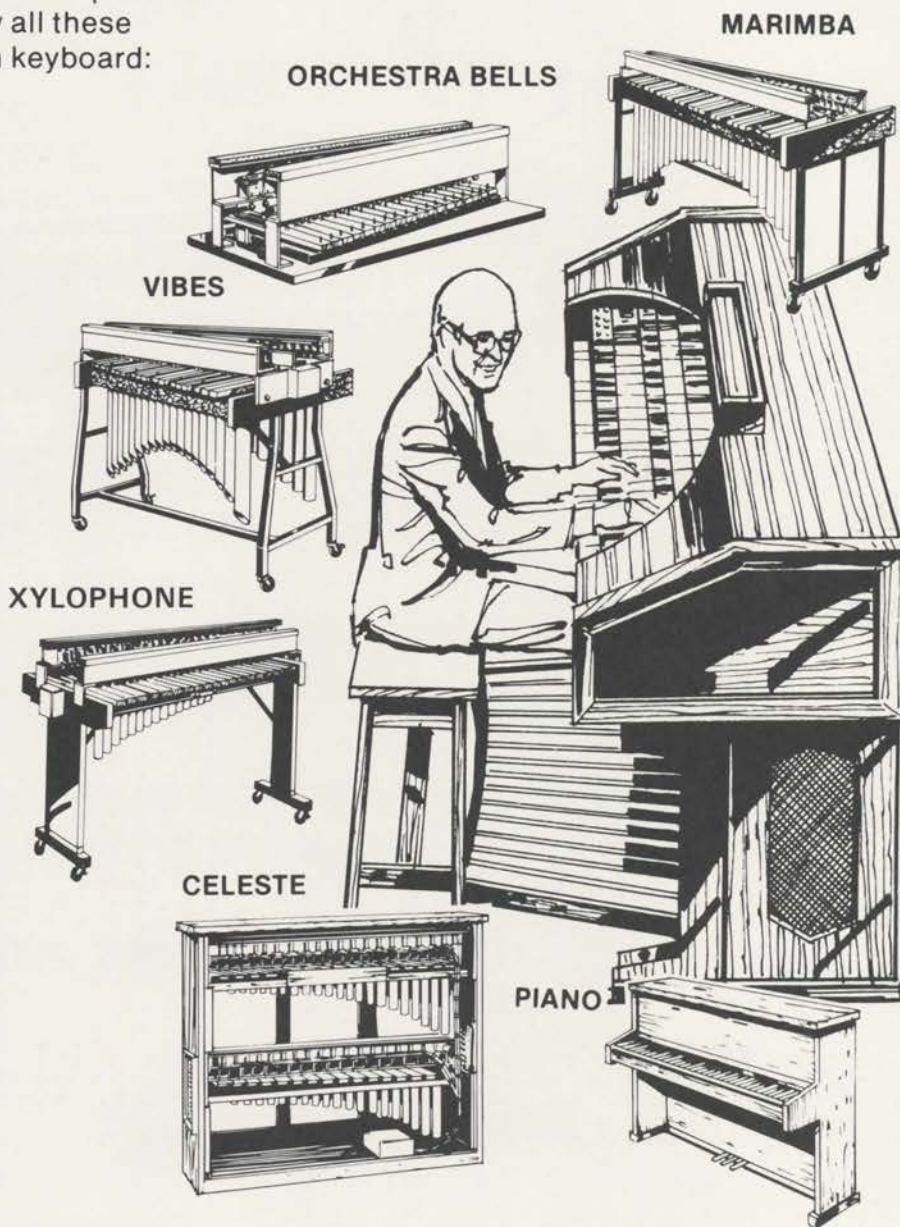
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Letter of November 22, 1977
Curtis H. Layton, D.P.M.
Wilmington, Delaware

In this day of plastic molded consoles and "automatic wonder fingers," it's encouraging for us to hear from people like Dr. Layton. People who appreciate quality. Who don't get caught up with a flashy demonstration. Or lights that show them where middle C is. We think you're a lot smarter than that, too!

We'd like to hear from you. But even if you don't send us a nice letter like Dr. Layton's, we'll keep our commitment. Just building the finest organ money can buy. Maybe not for everyone. But for you. When you're ready.

RODGERS ORGAN COMPANY

I'm ready to at least read some of your literature. Please send me your color brochure on the new Trio.

NAME			
ADDRESS			
CITY	STATE	ZIP	PHONE

Clip and mail to: Director of Marketing Services, Rodgers Organ Company,
1836 N.W. Couch Street, Portland, Oregon 97209.