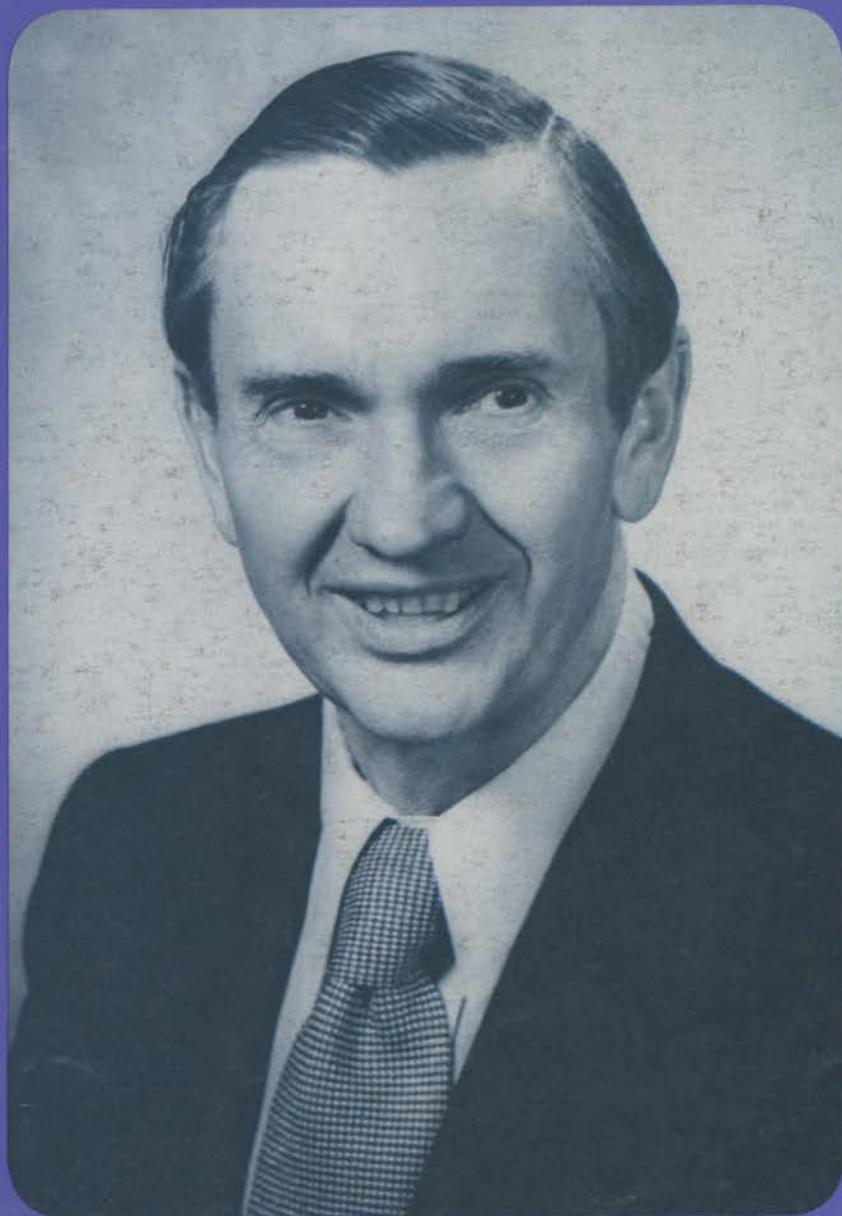


THEATRE ORGAN

October/November

1979



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Cover Photo

The late Richard C. Simonton was one of the founders of ATOS in 1955, when the organization was known as the American Association of Theatre Organ Enthusiasts. See Closing Chord on page 41.

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President's Message

The American Theatre Organ Society was offered the use of the Mightiest Wurlitzer around which to plan a seminar that would have gone a long way towards answering the requests of many members of ATOS for more technical information on the theatre organ. Considerable planning by a well-qualified staff went into the project but the support by ATOS members was so poor that it was financially unacceptable to proceed with the project and it was decided not to have it at this time. Why has this happened?



We were planning this seminar under the assumption that we were providing a needed service for the members and are at a loss to explain the lack of interest in it. We would be happy to receive your comments, which hopefully will indicate that we have misread the situation and can reschedule the program next year at possibly a more acceptable time.

Sincerely,

Tommy Landrum
President



**Next
Summer
It's
ENGLAND
for
Convention!**

**See
Important
Notice
Page 11.**

The Eastman Organ . . .

THE LARGEST EVER BUILT!

by Lloyd E. Klos

The Eastman Austin's console was mounted on an elevator and so arranged that it could be rolled onto the stage. Given to a church in 1972, at last report, it was stored in a barn. *(Dick Reiser Photo)*



It occurred to us not long ago that THEATRE ORGAN had never printed an article about the largest theatre organ ever built, the 4/150 Austin installed in Rochester's Eastman Theatre in 1922. Although the organ no longer exists, its story is still an interesting one.

The man responsible for the building of the Eastman Theatre was the Kodak King, George Eastman. He had come to Rochester early in life with his widowed mother from Waterville, N.Y., where he was born in 1854. He got a job as a bookkeeper at \$3 a week at Rochester Savings Bank, and while there, observed preparations one of the staff took before taking pictures. The fellow had to literally take along a dark-room to assure development of the wet plates! This intrigued young Eastman. "Why be burdened with all that paraphernalia?", thought he.

He began to experiment with silver, salt, gelatin and other chemicals in his mother's kitchen with an eye to a process leading to a dry plate. The rest is history: the organization and success of the Eastman Kodak Co. with the money rolling in beyond the wildest dreams of any get-rich-quick Wallingford. More money begets a higher standard of living, and Eastman was no exception in spite of his conservative leanings. But even after he had moved into his grandiose Georgian-style mansion on Rochester's haughty East Avenue in 1905, the money still accumulated. Though he couldn't play a note (flute lessons early in life accomplished nothing), Eastman liked good music. He had a pipe organ in his residence and had music played during breakfast.

He became interested in the establishment of a school of music as a department of the University of Rochester, and in 1919 acquired property within a block bounded by Main St. E., Gibbs St. and East Avenue for this purpose. In this area, the Eastman Theatre building rose.

The result was a magnificent structure which includes the 3,000-seat theatre, possessing perfect acoustics; the school of music; and 512-seat Kilbourn Hall, a recital auditorium for the school and housing a 4-manual Aeolian-Skinner.

While the theatre was being built, Harold Gleason, the head of the or-

gan department, went into conference with the leading organ builders in this country and Europe to get ideas for designing an organ suitable to the resources of the theatre. Mr. Eastman's decision to place the pipe chambers backstage proved the biggest detriment to the instrument. He reasoned that the primary purpose of the instrument was to accompany the silent movies, so the organ music should come from behind the screen!

There were many discussions about this, and the architects, organ company executives, even Gleason, who was also Eastman's private organist, all agreed that the pipe chambers should be located in the conventional location on both sides of the proscenium. The Wurlitzer Co. wanted to put a large organ into the theatre, according to the late RKO Palace organist, Tom Grierson, who was a demonstrator for the firm at the time. The firm even devised a plan whereby the valuable friezes on the auditorium walls by Ezra Winter and Barry Faulkner would not be disturbed. However, Eastman, who was paying the bills, could not be budged from his position, and though the theatre will ever be an impressive monument to his memory, the placement of the pipes backstage was a colossal blunder.

The organ contract with the Austin Co. was signed in 1921. By May 1922, the organ was being shipped to Rochester in four railroad cars, after having been under construction

for about a year in Hartford, Conn. A staff of 10 men was sent to Rochester to install it. In August, 1922, a press release from the Eastman Theatre best describes the organ, and we provide excerpts. Some of the features of this great instrument were truly astounding.

"With the opening of the Eastman Theatre, Rochester will be able to claim fame and distinction as the home of a super musical instrument — a truly great organ. This instrument not only is the largest organ in any theatre anywhere, but in point of tonal quality, musical scope and mechanical ingenuity, excels any known instrument the world over. If it may be said that a great organ is the 'King of Instruments,' it may truly be said of this super instrument, 'Here is the king of organs!'

"Plans and specifications drawn for the organ by Mr. Gleason represented months of study and investigation. Mr. Gleason visited the principal organ manufacturers in this country and Europe, and inspected and played a number of the most important organs here and in England and France. Then he set out to design an organ, combining the best features of his own. The plans were submitted to a number of eminent organ experts and organists of important motion picture theatres. Their opinion was that the instrument would be the most important and complete theatre and concert organ ever constructed, embodying all the latest ideas, refine-

ments and improvements in organ construction. Then, 18 months ago, the contract for building the instrument was awarded to the Austin Organ Co., which has built and installed some of the greatest organs in America, including the great Panama Exposition organ; the organ in the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, the Ledger Auditorium organ in Philadelphia, and the organ in the Rivoli Theatre in New York City.

"The eight divisions of the Eastman organ, all really separate organs, any one of which is larger and more complete than the average church or theatre organ are: Great, Swell, Choir, Solo, Orchestral, Echo, String and Pedal.

"The Great contains the diapasons or stops of pure organ tones, which are the foundation tones giving breadth and volume. The enclosed part of the Great contains string, flute, brass and diapason tones.

"The Swell also contains flute tones with enough diapason tones to give it proper balance, and in addition, such solo steps as Barytone, Tromba, Vox Humana and delicate string tones.

"In the Choir are solo stops such as Clarinet, Vox Humana and a group of celestial strings.

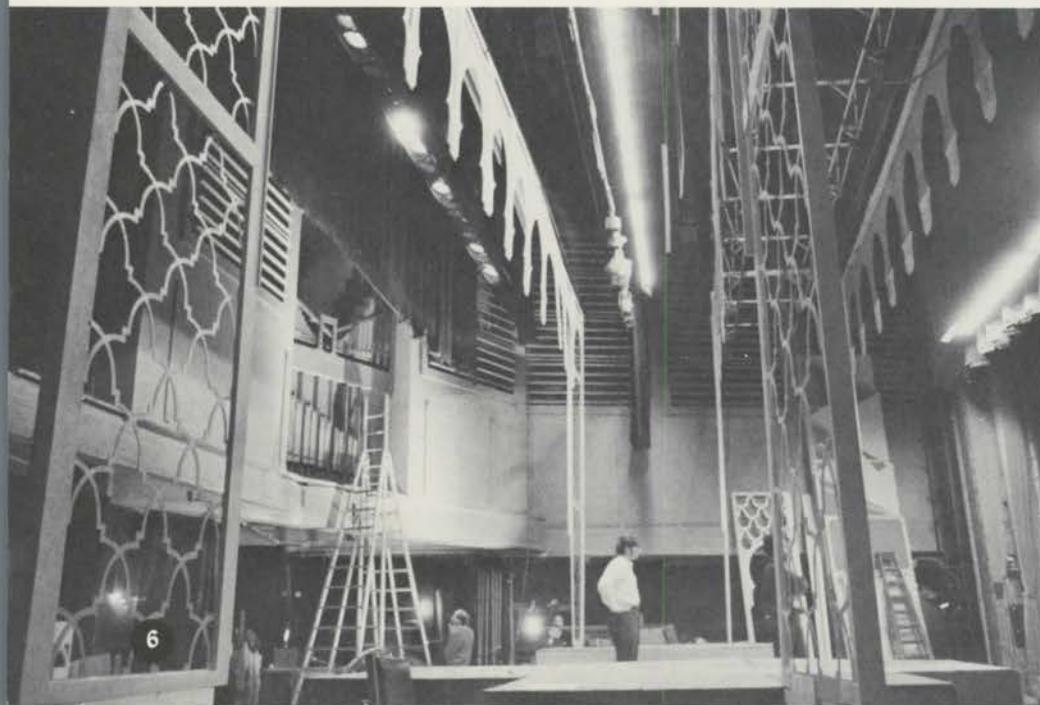
"The Solo has a number of broad string tones. It contains the Tubas and also the big, high-pressure Tuba Mirabilis. In this division also is a set of deep-toned chimes of different quality from those in the Echo organ.

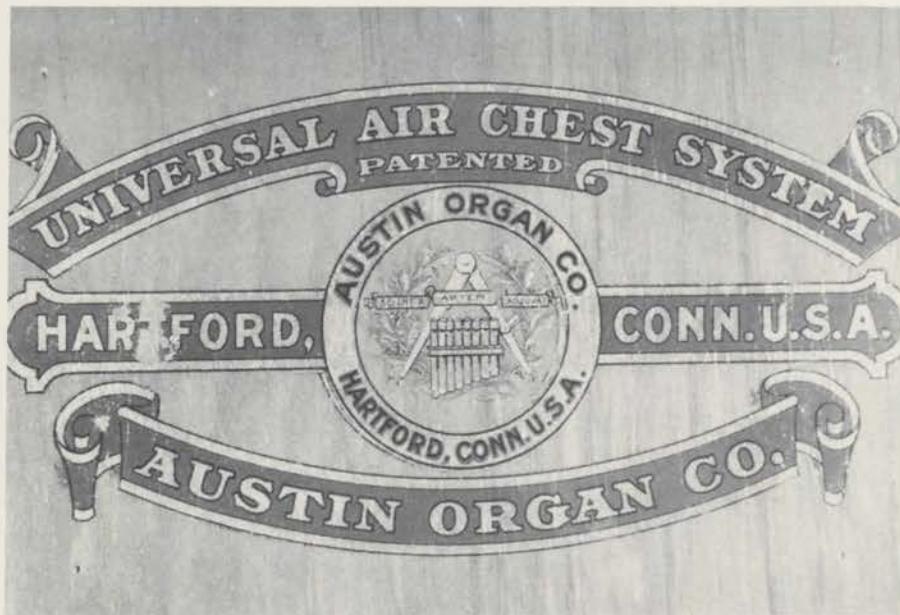
"The Orchestral organ is composed of stops of pipes purely orchestral in tonal quality. It contains Cellos, Violins, Bassoons, English Horns, Oboe, French Horns, Muesette Corno di Bassetto, Oriental reed, Bass Clarinet, Piccolo and Flutes, and a big bass Vox Humana. This is a floating division, playable at will from any of the manuals of the console.

"The Echo organ is located above the central dome of the ceiling, the tones being conveyed to the auditorium through the grill by means of a large tone duct. This 1000-pipe division contains mostly ethereal tones, supplemented by a night horn, Vox Humana, Chimes, Celestial Harp and bird notes.

"The double string division has all of the violin tones of a symphony

The Eastman stage showing placement of the eight pipe chambers. Opera department of the School of Music is erecting sets. Shutterless chamber shows Tibia and Quintadena on lower level and Diapason on upper level. (Dick Reisem Photo)





The ornate identification on the air chest system developed by John T. Austin. His unique idea eliminated air "robbing," due to changes of air pressure. (Dick Reisem Photo)

orchestra. This division is also floating and may be played from any of the manuals on the console.

"The Pedal division, which bears the same relation to the organ as the double basses in an orchestra, contains the deepest tones and also the largest metal and wood pipes, some of them large enough for a man to crawl through, the largest pipes measuring 32 feet in length and weighing over 400 pounds.

"In addition to these eight divisions, the organ contains a complete percussion and trap department, including tympani, fire gongs, castanets, tom tom, Chinese block, triangle, bird call, cymbals, tambourine, steamboat whistle, horses' hooves, doorbell, auto horn, harp, xylophone, glockenspiel, sleighbells, drums and deep bells.

"The more than 10,000 speaking pipes are located in eight expression chambers built in two tiers above the stage floor on the south end. The largest of these chambers is 30 feet long, 12 feet wide and 25 feet high. The organ speaks through the proscenium arch, instead of above or on either side, as in the case in most theatres, this arrangement contributing to its effectiveness in accompanying the orchestra. (Sic!) The sound is controlled to give the desired gradation of tone by horizontal shutters on the face of the chambers; the shutters opening and closing at the will of the performer at the console.

"The pipes stand rank by rank on

air chests. These chests are a feature of the Austin universal air chest system, invented by John T. Austin, who recently was awarded the Edward Longstreth medal of merit, by the department of science and art at the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, for his many decided and revolutionary improvements in organ building. This air chest system is the fundamental feature of the Austin organ as it provides that which is of the utmost importance in voicing and artistic tone production, namely: absolute and uniform pressure to each and every pipe under all conditions of use. All the pipes are fed directly and individually from this universal air chest, on one side of which is the reservoir moving horizontally and balanced with springs to the pressure required. This displaces, uniformly and instantly, any quantity of air which is used, overcoming the variation of air pressure delivered to the pipes under varying conditions of use.

"Such variation or unsteadiness of wind, commonly called 'robbing,' is due to the weight and friction of the air itself in trying to travel quickly any distance through trunks or conductors. 'Robbing' is always present where the air is stored at any distance from the pipes and brought to them through trunks or conductors, as it is a well-known fact that a conductor of a given size cannot maintain a uniform pressure if it is to carry a varying quantity. To illus-

trate: Suppose a house is supplied with a water pipe. As long as no water is being drawn, the pressure in this pipe is absolutely that of the water main in the street, provided all pipes are on a level. Now turn on a faucet and you will find the water pressure has decreased in the pipe. Leave this faucet turned on and open others, and you will find the pressure decreases more and more in proportion to the amount of water used.

"Air at the low pressure used in organs acts in exactly this manner, and the result is most serious, for as indicated, pipes which speak their true note alone, will be out of tune, weak in tone, and sometimes off their speech when used with others. Under such conditions, art and delicacy in voicing is impossible, and the full organ tone, instead of being solid, dignified and steady as a rock, is weak, empty and gasping.

"Four main air chests insure the Eastman Theatre organ against the unfortunate conditions due to air 'robbing.' The largest of these is 34 feet long, 12 feet wide and 7 feet high. All can be entered by means of air locks while the air is on and while the organ is being played, as readily as in going from one room to another. In the largest one, in fact, it would be quite possible for 75 persons to sit comfortably at tables and be served with a banquet. When entering the airlock or vestibule, one feels the air pressure on ear drums, but only for an instant. There are no air currents perceptible, even when the full organ is being played as the pressure is necessarily uniform throughout, and each pipe, whether speaking alone or in combination with all the others, receives the same absolute maximum pressure.

"One of the air chests contains a higher pressure than the others, a pressure adequate for pipes whose majestic tones call for a heavier blast, and yet again a still higher pressure for certain reeds of preeminent power and sonority. The wind pressures are 7 and 20 inches.

"The wind is furnished to the eight divisions of the organ by two 40 hp blowers located in the basement tunnel. The air is conveyed to the chests by 24-inch and 12-inch galvanized pipes. There is a smaller blower in the property room to step up the pressure for the sonorous

Tuba Mirabilis. There are two 50-ampere low-voltage generators to supply the current for the organ action, both driven by the large blower motors.

"The Italian walnut console is mounted on an elevator and turnstile, and can be moved from orchestra pit to stage if desired. It is exclusively electric in all its mechanism, as no air pressure is required. Consequently, there are no valves, pneumatics, nor a single piece of leather in its construction. The manual keys slope so that each row is at the same relative angle to the player, and the pedalboard is concave and radiating. The key action is capable of producing 50 repetitions per second.

"Ninety-one pistons are employed to bring into operation the desired groups of stop keys. All combination pistons and pedals are adjusted by moving the registers to the desired combination, while the piston is held in, or the pedal held down. There is a device for interchanging the Choir and Great organ manuals, and a second touch on the Great to operate the Choir.

"There is also provision for playing certain traps from the pedals, and there are cut-outs for each general division of the organ in case any pipe speaks voluntarily. The builders also have provided their latest improvement in 'general combination pistons,' 10 in number, which can be set to give immediate changes on all manuals and pedals simultaneously. This console, in addition to functioning as described above, controls and plays a grand piano by means of a movable player placed

over the piano keys.

"The entire organ weighs approximately 45 tons. About 15 tons of wire were used, consisting of platinum, silver, brass, copper, lead, tin, zinc, iron, steel, bronze and aluminum. More than 30,000 feet of lumber were employed, consisting of ebony, walnut, oak, birch, maple, white-wood, pine and cherry.

"The work of installing and tuning this great instrument was an immense task, and several weeks must elapse before some of the lesser divisions such as the percussion and trap departments will be available. This work is in charge of Ferd Rassmann, the Austin Company's expert who has had charge of the installation and tuning of important organs in 35 states."

In September 1922, the organists for the Eastman Theatre were announced, both from New York City. One was John Hammond who had an extensive background in both classical and theatre organ. The other was Dezso von D'Antalfy, also an organist with excellent formal education, and late of the Capitol Theatre in New York. When Mr. Eastman built or organized anything, he always went for the best. Money was no object in the building and furnishing of the theatre, and in the process, he secured two of the best organists in the business.

The Eastman Theatre was formally opened on September 4, 1922 before a glittering formally-attired audience. The first week's program included the Eastman Theatre Orchestra, conducted by Arthur Alexander, playing "The 1812 Overture." Next came a film of current events,

followed by a dance number. The "Eastman Theatre Magazine" was next; a vocal selection by Marion Armstrong; and then the feature movie *The Prisoner of Zenda*, with Lewis Stone, Alice Terry and Robert Edeson. The final spot on the program was labeled "Organ Exit" with Von D'Antalfy and Hammond alternating at the console.

The admission price? If you attended the matinee performance, an orchestra seat cost 30 cents; mezzanine 50 cents; loges 40 cents and grand balcony 20 cents. Evenings were more expensive, of course. But the theatre-going public really got its moneys worth then!

In January, 1923, the completed organ was featured in a screen presentation for a week so that the public could become aware of the resources and tonal wealth possessed by the instrument. With D'Antalfy at the console, slides were projected on the screen illustrating the growth and development of the modern pipe organ, from the rude contrivance sent in the eighth century by the Byzantine emperor to the King of France, to the modern instrument as represented by the Eastman Austin.

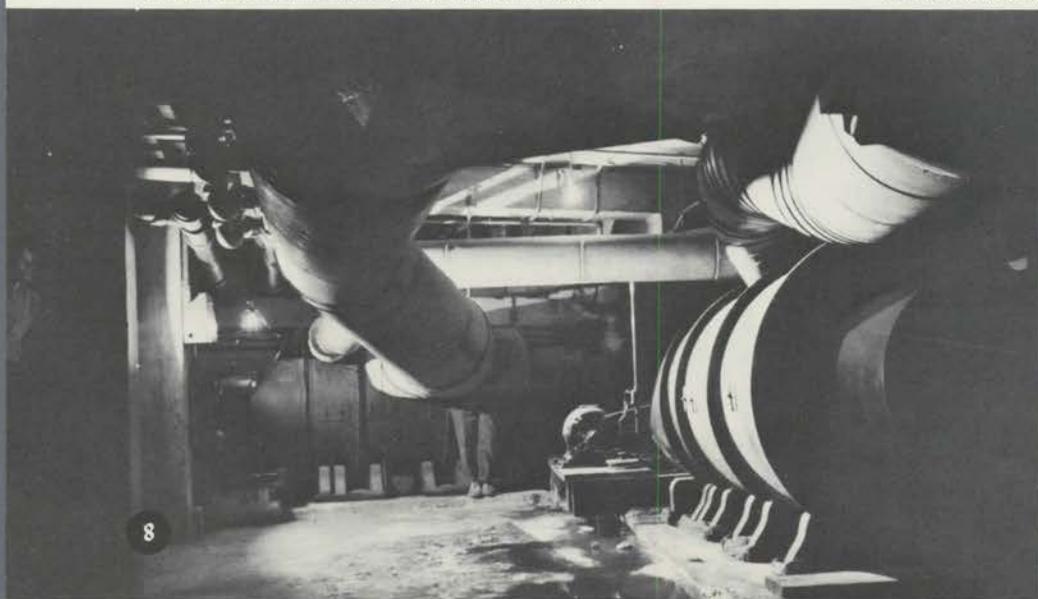
That summer, the Eastman Theatre was a focal point in a convention of the National Association of Organists (See April, 1972 T.O.).

In September, 1924, John Hammond left the Eastman to return to New York, and an engagement at the new Piccadilly Theatre. He was succeeded by Harold Osborn Smith of New York. D'Antalfy left his Eastman post later to return to New York, and eventually an organist's post at the Roxy Theatre. He was succeeded by Robert J. Berentsen, also of New York.

The idea of Mr. Eastman was to present the very best in movies and stage entertainment in the theatre, as the phrase "Dedicated to the Enrichment of Community Life" proclaims in stone on the building's facade. For a while, the idea was satisfied. A high class motion picture was shown for five days a week, except during the opera season, with a 50-piece orchestra and the organ providing accompaniment.

A favorite actor of Eastman audiences was Harold Lloyd, who appeared in *The Freshman*, *Safety Last*, *Sailor Made Man*, *Grandma's*

Wind was supplied to the Austin's pipes by two 40 hp blowers situated in a basement tunnel. The 24-inch and 12-inch conductors ran from the blowers to the air chests. (Dick Reiser Photo)



Boy and *The Kid Brother*. Other great pictures included D. W. Griffith's *Orphans of the Storm* with Lillian Gish, *Oliver Twist* with Jackie Coogan, *Robin Hood* with Douglas Fairbanks Sr., Samuel Goldwyn's *Eternal City*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* with Lon Chaney Sr., *The Covered Wagon* with Lois Wilson and *The General* with Buster Keaton. The list of the great films shown at the Eastman is endless from 1922 to 1928. And all were good family entertainment!

Beginning in 1928, the Eastman was caught in a squeeze. The rising film companies would release their films only under exclusive arrangement. As a result, the Eastman, Piccadilly and Regent theatres in Rochester were leased to Paramount-Publix for five years. Then, attendance dropped due to the depression.

The advent of the talkies precluded use of the Austin for its original purpose, accompanying the silents. The use of the organ steadily declined. However, the author was witness to its playing on several occasions. In the late forties it was used by Guy Fraser Harrison, conductor of the Rochester Civic Orchestra, in a pop concert. Harrison, who was an organist in the Philippines when tapped for the conductor's job at the Eastman, performed several numbers at the instrument.

In April, 1954, Radio City Music Hall former chief organist Dick Leibert played the Widor "Toccata," Bach's "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" and Tschaiakowsky's "1812 Overture" in a pop concert. Six months later, Virgil Fox was featured at the Austin. In 1964, Sacred Heart Cathedral organist Francis Pilecki

and Chicago organist Pearl White played it for a session of the ATOS convention. It was used during its remaining years for about half a dozen events a year: oratorios, graduations, and preludes for travel films.

In January, 1970, classical organist E. Power Biggs performed at the organ in conjunction with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra. He admitted to *Times-Union* reviewer George H. Kimball that the Austin wasn't his ideal and didn't think that it was worth restoring. "Not even for curiosity value. It's too full of contradictory sounds." He thought it would be better to replace it with an organ half its size or less. "That's all you'd need," said he.

When the theatre underwent extensive renovation in 1971-72, aided by a \$1.7 million grant from the Eastman Kodak Co., the organ was not included in plans for the future. A save-the-organ drive was begun by a Kodak employee, Dick Reisem, and, for a time, it looked as if something might be done to save the instrument. Dr. Howard Hanson, Director Emeritus at the Eastman School, was interviewed on the subject at that time:

"The problem with the great Eastman Theatre organ," he said, "is that it has never had a proper home. Designed both as a solo instrument and as an accompaniment for motion pictures, the second of its obligations took precedence in its location.

"I had many discussions with George Eastman about this great organ. He steadfastly maintained that as an accompanying instrument, it was not supposed to have too great prominence. I, on the other

hand, argued that it was a magnificent solo instrument, but that in a symphonic concert in which the organ was used, the concert set blocked out the sound.

"He allowed me to do some experimenting, even to the extent of having huge speakers from the organ chambers mounted on either side of the proscenium arch. It was a noble experiment, except for the fact that it didn't work very well!

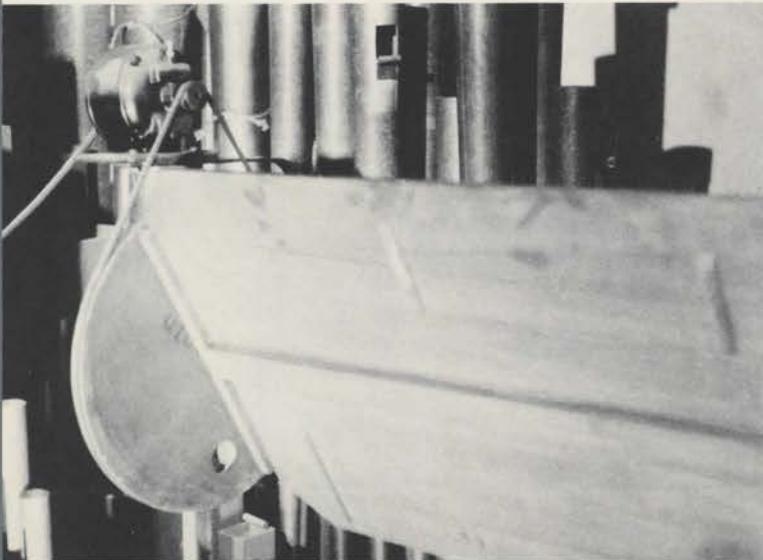
"My final proposal was that, at concerts where the organ was the solo instrument, we raise the set completely and have only the bare brick walls of the theatre stage as our sounding board. This worked well, but the public did not take too kindly to the sight of the bare brick walls!

"So, after 50 years, we still have a magnificent instrument and no way in which it can be properly heard. We need something like another Mormon Tabernacle in which this giant might give forth its beauty and its power. It would be quite thrilling!

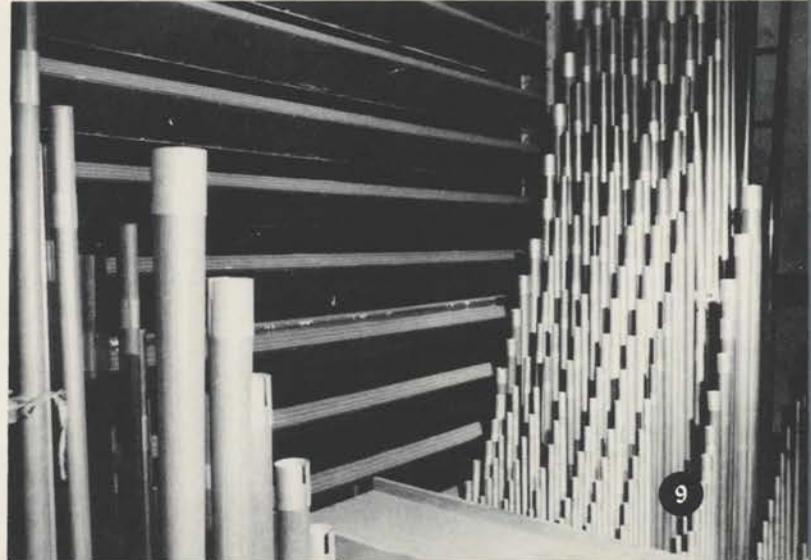
"I think they ought to let the organ stay where it is. They argue for the extra nine feet or so at the back of the stage. If they get rid of the organ, they could hang one more flat or curtain. But the amount of opera and ballet there is small."

The arguments which the organ's opponents presented were several: "Improper funding for maintenance has left much of it in sad disrepair; the acoustical shell muffled its sound as will the new one; it crowds the backstage space; it doesn't fit the current pro-Baroque, anti-Romantic taste makers' concept of how an organ should sound; it represents the past."

One of the Austin fan tremulants used in the Eastman organ. Each was activated by a small electric motor. (Dick Reisem Photo)



Interior view of an Eastman chamber. Notice the opened horizontal shutters. (Dick Reisem Photo)



The save-the-organ drive came too late. The renovators were well into the work, and the Rochester Theatre Organ Society was given only a couple of days to take what it wanted. About 18 ranks were salvaged. The console was given to an area church and is in storage in a barn, according to last reports. The echo organ remained high above the chandelier, too risky to remove, as access to it is gained by narrow catwalks.

The rest? Pipes, relays, shutters etc. were thrown onto a heap backstage near the stage door for easy access to waiting dump trucks. The writer recalls that scene; it was enough to wonder why and to cry out in protest. Too late! The fault lay with University of Rochester officials. They did not give potential savers of the organ sufficient time. When the contractors were working in the backstage area, RTOS volunteers had to literally work around the clock to salvage what little they did get. There was also fear of accident, which was a factor.

Now, only the memories remain, and we have been fortunate in obtaining the impressions of the Eastman organ held by some who once played it. Margaret Culp Morrow, a theatre musician following her graduation from the Eastman School, but still an organist in one of Rochester's churches, remembers. "The organ had a nice sound, especially if the curtains were open, but when the curtains were closed, I had to play full organ to make it sound effectively. I enjoyed playing it because it was principally a straight organ.

"I did the supper hour from five to seven, and remember the first time I played it. Robert Berentsen was playing the movie, I was sitting on the bench observing, and suddenly he said 'take over!' I was petrified, but managed to get through the performance. A couple pictures I played included a silent with Greta Garbo in the role of a singer. I played the aria to *Tosca*. The other picture was an Indian story with Richard Dix. The dramatic pictures were easier to play than the comedies, simply because the former were slower paced."

Rosa Rio remembers the Austin. "We students learned on the Wurlitzer theatre organ up in the screening studio, no lessons being given on the Austin. Harold Jolles and I did

NOTICE

The Wurlitzer Seminar planned at DeKalb has been canceled — see the President's Message on page 4.

get to play it as 'unpaid relief organists' to give John Hammond or Robert Berentsen time to go to the little boy's room.

"I loved the sounds of this great organ with its piano action, etc. My experience there won me my first big job at Loew's Willard Theatre in New York. Several men organists turned down the job. They either did not like, or were unfamiliar with the Austin action. When I told Mr. Lees, Loew's musical director, that I liked the Austin, he almost fell out of his chair!"

Former theatre organist Harold Jolles of Cattaraugus, N.Y., also has fond memories. "For some reason, the Eastman Austin still has a soft spot in my heart. When I arrived at the Eastman School in the fall of 1923, there was no first year class in theatre organ. I'd had a few lessons from Henry B. Murtagh at Buffalo's Lafayette Theatre's 3/15 Wurlitzer, plus some at the Moller in Buffalo's Plymouth Methodist Church, and at a 4-manual Hook & Hastings in Jamestown.

"George Eastman once told John Hammond and me that the Austin was built to be heard from behind the curtains, etc. The organ was Eastman's pride and joy, but he never liked percussions played on it. At first, after hearing so much of the Lafayette Wurlitzer, I missed its sobbing Tibia and terrific volume when playing the Austin. However, there was a piston setup on the Austin with all reeds on fan vibrato (or no vibrato) which was very good.

"John Hammond used to say that if an organ had good reeds, that was half the battle. The Eastman Austin had some great, exotic Oriental reeds, and a great string section. I believe there were 11 ranks of floating strings which could be used on any manual just by pushing a piston.

"A great deal of the organ was on fan tremulant, but at least half was on the regular box tremulant. All the echo organ of 18 ranks plus its own 16' Bourdon was on box tremu-

lant. The Tibia, Doppel Flute and soft Trumpet for the Solo could be heard well anywhere. Hammond used to play Debussy on echo alone for scenics. Both he and Bob Berentsen were great playing *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

"The organ was a great instrument and did not deserve to be thrown out. In its heyday, it could really drown out an orchestra of 90 men! A sad contrast with the time I heard it at the 1964 ATOS convention."

Edward C. May, once a leading theatre organist in Rochester, says: "I had the privilege of playing the Eastman Austin on several occasions, the most memorable of which was for a dance recital of Lorraine Abert's classes. Due to some mechanical difficulty, the console elevator did not work. So, the keydesk remained below the wooden floor of the orchestra platform.

"My half-hour program before the dancing had to be played with my hearing only faint sounds. For the recital, Hazel Gleason directed the 6-man instrumental group, and she gave me cues by stomping her foot on the platform! We got through the evening, but I'll never know how. The music was a bit soft, due to the fact I could not hear what I was playing, and kept down the volume rather than spoil the show. The Austin was a big rascal and loads of fun to play — under normal conditions!"

Chester E. Klee, Mr. Music of Olean, N.Y., and graduate of the Eastman School, remembers how he played the silents at the Austin. "I used a certain amount of classical music and pop tunes as they came along. The scores of *The Big Parade* and *The King of Kings* were sent along with the film and I played these pictures at the Eastman all week without getting bored. For the big horror films such as *The Phantom of the Opera*, I just turned out the console lights and went to work without any music. We used to improvise a lot from the cue sheets, using the printed melody and going on from there."

Such are the memories of five who played this organ. There were many others, as there was always a ready supply of eager students, and part of the curriculum was to play a complete picture before an audience. This was a prime requirement for

graduating from the motion picture organists course.

The Eastman Theatre's Austin organ was a magnificent instrument, possessing several ranks which were not duplicated in any other organ. The fact that it was installed in the wrong place cannot detract from its greatness, and the organists who played it agree. The title of "World's Largest Theatre Organ" was a fair label. But one wonders: Had it been installed properly, would it have been compared with perhaps the greatest of all Wurlitzers, the New York Paramount? The writer believes it could very well have. □

**IMPORTANT
NOTICE
FOR
1980
CONVENTIONEERS**



Are You Going to London?

The London and South of England Chapter, hosts for the 1980 ATOS Convention, July 20-27, 1980, need to know approximately how many people to expect in order to prepare their budget and reserve hotel rooms.

If you are planning on attending the Convention in London, please drop a post card immediately to:
National Headquarters
P.O. Box 1002
Middleburg, VA. 22117

We must let our English cousins know how many of us will be with them for this 1980 ATOS Convention.

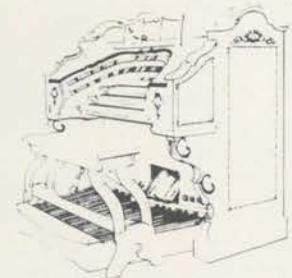


Bill Lamb, official ATOS photographer. Bill photographs everything and everybody but no one ever photographs Bill. (George R. Hockmeyer Photo)

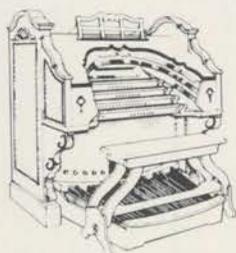
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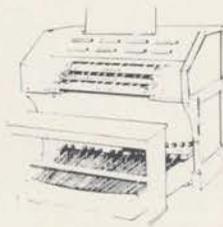
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MAGNIFICENT Illusion

by John Muri

Those of us who enjoy poring over the photos of long-destroyed movie palaces must be aware that those buildings were erected (1) to create something of a dream environment, different from everyday life, and (2) to make money by housing thousands instead of hundreds of customers. The dream-world was a clever idea that could cover up the weaknesses of a movie by enhancing its setting and by supplementing it with a big orchestra, organ, and stage-show. It provided strong psychological relief and elevation to frustrated humans who could find little peace or beauty in their personal worlds. No cement block-house movie theatre of the sort we throw together today in shopping centers produces such feelings of temporary luxury and importance.

Our current preoccupation with "reality" has had minor rewards as critics are finding such escapist material as *Star Wars*, *Close Encounters*, *Battleship Galactica*, etc. to be pretentious rubbish, with little human appeal. Science, considered to be the bringer of rich new life for everyone is looking foolish and incompetent as "scientific" computers make mistakes that are alternately laughable and infuriating. Pseudo-science fiction cannot compete with reality in rousing fears of what deviltry scientists can unleash as a space station falls back to earth, as nuclear power plants scare the daylights out of multitudes, as experimental chemicals pollute and poison us. Pop singers scream about the ugliness of life; pop writers tell us how animalistic we are — all in the pretension of a reality that authors and composers think they understand better than the rest of us. Is reality all that bad? What part does illusion play in our concepts of reality?

I suppose this is the kind of talk you'd expect from some college

"professor," but the idea is simple: much of what we accept as real is illusive. Take music. It doesn't seem to have much intellectual content, but it stimulates moods and visions in symphonic works as well as pop tunes. There is intellectual pleasure in the perception of form in music, in its repetitions, contrasts, inversions, and variations, just as a mathematician finds delight in series, reciprocals, imaginary numbers, and complex variables. The appeal in most uncomplicated pop music is repetition. The moods and images are self-induced.

Our worlds of sight and sound are strange functions in human bodies that are only partial receptors of the stimuli about us. The sounds that a phonograph record and a stylus make in an amplifier-speaker system are imitative illusion-noises, and we interpret them as the real thing.

Take pipe organs. As everyone knows, or ought to know, organ music is the result of air vibrations impinging upon eardrums that translate the vibrations into perceptions that no one really understands. It is all done by means of a compound of wood, leather, glue, and metal, through which air is blown by means of a blower run by electricity, the nature of which no one understands. The science in every step of the process is only a description of what happens, not an explanation. The way music itself affects people is in itself a mystery.

Sir James Jeans, the British scientist, concluded that since the sound of a piano came from the impact of a hammer against the string,

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

there was no scientific way of telling the difference between the touch of an amateur and a virtuoso. The same could be said of organ playing. The mechanics stand between the player and the product. Nevertheless, it is possible to tell the difference. It has to do with legato and staccato touch, portamento, duration of note-values, and strength of impact. The blend of the different strokes needed to play a composition is a unique product, different from all other performances of the same work. If the great scientist says it is unmeasurable, he is admitting that artistic performance goes beyond man's powers of mathematical measurement. Spiritual or aesthetic messages (which music conveys) must then be outside the boundaries of science.

The union of pipe organ music and the flickering shadows cast on a silver screen was a highly satisfactory device for playing upon people's emotions during the first third of this century. In the late twenties the addition of recorded sound to the picture was only another illusory contrivance to give an impression of reality. A host of phantom movie stars was created with pictures shown rapidly at sixteen to twenty per second, on a screen that was dark one half of the time while the next picture was being drawn into position in the projector. One hour of every two of motion picture projection consists of a dark, blank screen! It is what is called "persistence of vision" that makes this situation tolerable. Concerning sound, we have learned that what we hear from a recording is a self-deception, that what we hear is a suggestion of a singer or an orchestra or an organ, and that our minds interpret them as semblances of reality. We are surrounded by audio-visual mysteries.

In organ playing, there is one illusion that all of us need to use. Soloists are called upon to make small five to eight rank organs sound impressive. It can be done. Here we encounter another illusion, the illusion of volume and power.

Some lengthy essays have been written about what the human ear interprets as loudness. Other papers on architectural acoustics and their relation to volume of sound, reverberation periods, etc. have proliferated, even though not many architects have been profiting from the



Vi Thompson (second from left), along with four other membership secretaries, who have served the Society. Left to Right: Ida James, Vi, Betty Mason, Veryl Walton, and Marilyn Schrum. (Bill Lamb Photo)

Vi Thompson Retires After Fifteen Years of Service

At the National Board meeting held in Los Angeles in July, Vi Thompson resigned as Membership/Circulation Manager effective December 31, 1979.

From the inception of ATOS in 1955 until 1964 the membership and circulation chores were handled by the president's office, which caused the mailing address to change every other year or so.

In 1964, it was decided to set up a permanent office for circulation matters and Vi agreed to assume the chore of addressing magazine envelopes, keeping mailing records, and generally keeping all member mailings in order. The memberships continued to be processed by the president's office.

In 1972, the National Board, in an effort to improve our growing organization, decided to combine membership and circulation into one office and Vi took on the added chore.

It became necessary to devote half of their house to ATOS activities for this "one office."

She handled the entire operation alone, except for day to day help during the annual renewal period. As the membership grew, the work load became heavier until it became apparent that something better than a hand-cranked address machine and typed stencils would have to be found to handle mailing of magazines. This, coupled with the fact that shipping the addressed envelopes to the printers for stuffing became expensive and inefficient, necessitated a change.

In 1976, ATOS member Marvin Lautzenheiser offered to computerize the membership lists through his Anagram Corporation, a Springfield, Va., computer service. This relieved the tedious job of setting up each mailing by hand.

All membership and circulation

matters were still to be funneled through Vi's Salinas address, which is the current system.

When she resigns at the end of the year, Vi's successor, Lee Prater, of Falls Church, Va., will be located near the computer operation. This will be advantageous from a quick communications standpoint.

The job of handling memberships and circulation is taken for granted and most people are unaware of the many, many hours required for this detailed chore. This was evident from the many letters received asking "one of your staff" to check on a magazine or membership problem. Vi was the *entire* staff.

Vi started working with the ATOS membership lists as a part-time operation but it developed into a full-time, year-round job with all attending headaches increasing as the years rolled by.

Not only the officers and the National Board of Directors, but the entire membership thanks you, Vi, for the years of work, the patience you have had with the daily effort required of this job, and the efficiency with which you accomplished your contribution to ATOS. □

lessons in them. So, to put the matter simply, we repeat the old formula that there are six perceptible gradations of loudness for humans: ppp, pp, p, f, ff, and fff. The extremes of ppp and fff are possible of performance on our largest and greatest organs. A small four or six rank instrument is capable of producing only between p and possibly ff. In order to make the ff range sound truly loud (and the human ear will accept it as quite loud if one does not use it often) one must play for a

longer than ordinary amount of time on the softer combinations. On small organs, a good rule is to play everything at least one gradation quieter than on a large one. One should keep in mind that access to the great range of a huge instrument doesn't mean that the player has to use large combinations of stops. Playing on a single rank of a fine solo stop for a while can result in some overwhelming subsequent ensembles. On very small organs, play two gradations quieter; then you will be impres-

sive. The volume will operate in the mind of the listener. The manipulation of relativities in power and volume makes an organ impressive. Loud playing from beginning to end is an abomination, but discrete balances between loud and soft keep things interesting. Then you'll be making the most of that with which you have to work. Considerations like these make the great dramatist's line "We are such stuff as dreams are made on" more meaningful than ever. □

GEMS by George

During the 1979 ATOS Convention in Los Angeles, organist George Wright conducted an evening seminar-workshop, using the 3/16 Wurlitzer in the San Gabriel Civic Auditorium to illustrate his points. George was careful to forewarn his large audience that the replies to the written questions were strictly his own opinions, things that had worked for him. He touched on many subjects, and was completely open in his replies. It was the first seminar George Wright has attempted (he insists he's a "lousy teacher") and no one was more surprised than George when midnight approached and he still hadn't exhausted the supply of questions, and the audience wanted more.

Following is a sampling of George's replies concerning music and registration which we felt would be of interest to readers. Because no tape recorders were permitted, what follow are not quotes but a recreation based on notes scribbled hastily in the dark. We trust we have preserved the essence of George's remarks.

Q. Why do so many pipe organists tend to sound dated (in their stylings)?

A. To play rhythmically on any pipe organ you have to goose it a little (this is only a partial reply; George expounded further on "dated" styles).

Q. Would it not have been better had Hope-Jones used a whole rank of pipes for each pitch on the stoprail instead of unifying one rank at several pitches?

A. No, unification results in musical effects not obtainable on straight ranks. (George then illustrated with the organ's Tibia and its scaling, providing sounds in the unified Tibia chorus not characteristic of straight ranks.)

Q. What recent development would you like to see become part of future theatre pipe organs?

A. Electronic voices and effects, sounds which extend pipe's areas of musical usefulness.

Q. What brand of organ do you prefer?

A. I have heard some fine sounding Robert Mortons with three, four, five and six ranks, but rarely a good sounding Wurlitzer in those sizes. However, I prefer the sound of the Wurlitzer in the larger size organs, the lush sounds, especially in the reeds — Brass, Trumpet, Krumet, Saxophone, Oboe Horn or French Horn — and Quintadena among the flue pipes. These provide color in the larger Wurlitzers.

Q. How can one improve music read from a "fake book" where only the melody and suggested simple harmony are provided?

A. Get a good teacher who knows harmony. Also, learn to play piano. There is no better preparation for organ playing than piano studies. On organ, take your hands completely off of the keys at the end of a phrase, as Jesse Crawford did. (He illustrated at the organ with exaggerated gestures.)

Q. Which voice is the backbone of the theatre organ, in your opinion?

A. The Tibia is the sound which helps set the theatre organ apart from all other types.



George Wright during his convention seminar, at the San Gabriel Civic Auditorium. Though the Wurlitzer was seldom heard, the audience was held in rapt attention until nearly midnight.

(Bill Lamb Photo)



Q. Give some examples of a glissando, please.

A. (Using the closed circuit TV which did not screen with clarity, George performed several types of fingered glissandos wherein only the inner voices were "rolled." He also condemned the "palm schmear" adding that when an organist performed one, he walked out. He drove his point home by performing an unfingered "wipe" which was as obnoxious to the ear as George had planned it.)

Q. What's the difference between playing on pipes and electronic organs?

A. Almost no difference in the technique. Of course the faster response of the electronic, especially those with speakers mounted in the console, must be considered.

Q. In preparing your arrangements, do you write out every note?

A. No. I don't relish the task of writing notation. In fact, I used no written arrangements for my records. I just sit down at the organ, say a prayer, and let my fingers take over. I realize I have a God-given talent for doing this and I try to respect it. I depend on intuition and it seems to work well for me. There was one exception, the *Tribute to Jesse Crawford* album. To capture the Crawford intricacies I had to write out every note while listening to his old 78s. □

SEEN AT THE CONVENTION

PHOTOS
BY LEN CLARKE

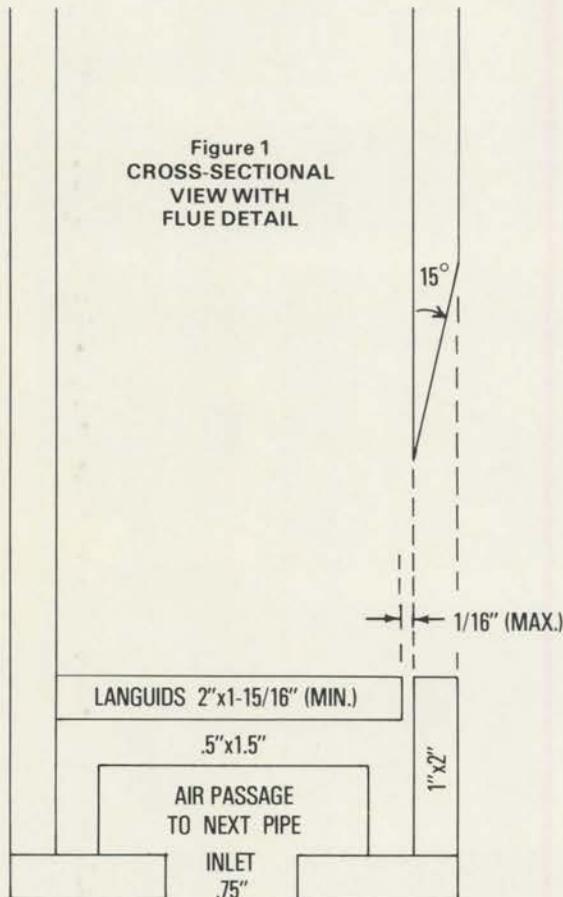


Candid photos from the Southern California ATOS Convention – July 1979.

THE ACOUSTICAL CONSULTANT

A REALISTIC BOAT WHISTLE EFFECT FOR YOUR TOY COUNTER

by R.J. Weisenberger



1/4" SOLID WOOD CONSTRUCTION

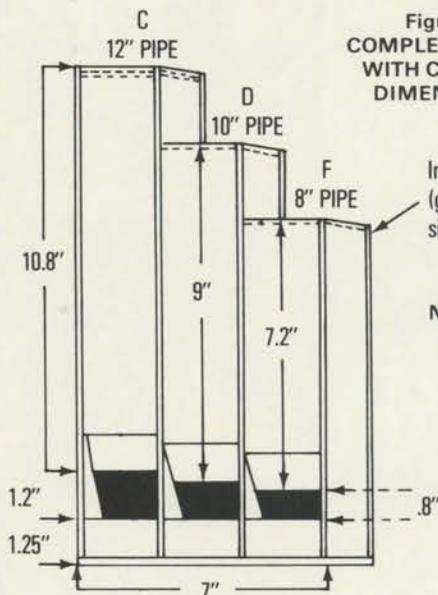
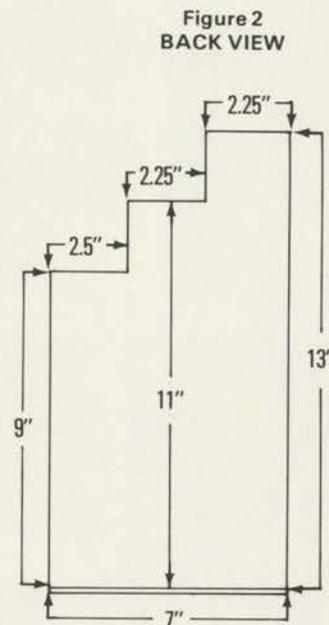


Figure 3
COMPLETED VIEW
WITH CRITICAL
DIMENSIONS

Internal stoppers on each pipe
(glued in place as shown)
single back common to 3 pipes.

NOTE: ALL PARTS MUST FIT AIR TIGHT!

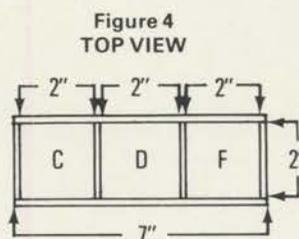


Figure 4
TOP VIEW

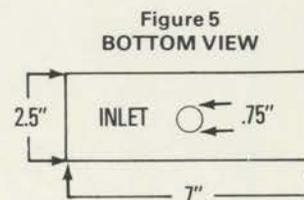


Figure 5
BOTTOM VIEW

No one can claim to possess a complete knowledge of organ pipes without ever having built one. Enclosed is a small project designed to give the layman a little practical experience in building three scales of pipes of various pitches, and all designed for the same pressure and acoustical output.

Not only will the reader have the satisfaction of building actual working pipes, but as a boat whistle effect, its tone and volume will be a revelation to most organ enthusiasts, and will prove a great addition to any toy counter.

Anyone with a good woodworking ability will be able to build this whistle — optimum voicing has been determined for this design through the building of several prototypes.

I appreciate comments by those who have built and are using this whistle.

Specifications:

3 note chime (C, D, F) Tuning not essential
10"-20" inlet pressure (33-47 CFM)
112-118 DBC output at 3' (Loud as most auto horns)
84-90 DB in 1,000,000 cu. ft. auditorium (Max.)

Pipe complement:

12" (6:1); 10" (5:1); 8" (4:1)

CLOSED

Mouth cut-ups:

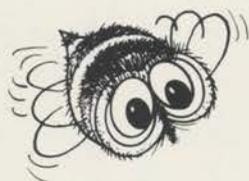
1.2"; 1"; .8"

Building this whistle will not only acquaint the reader with the basics of flue pipes, but will give owners of theatre pipe organs a powerful, deep-voiced boat whistle effect to add to their toy counter.

Note: This whistle is designed to operate in a fundamental frequency mode, as are real whistles, not in a harmonic mode, characteristic of most imitations. (A 1/2 scale version of this, using a 1/2" inlet, will result in an equally impressive train whistle effect.) □

INSIDE HECTOR OLIVERA

by Stu Green



Photos courtesy of
Walt Molt Management

— Part 1 —



Hector today.

Those who claim that the U.S.A. is no longer a land of opportunity would do well to examine the career to date of Hector Olivera. Of course Hector had been touched by the Muse from the beginning. At five years of age he was sufficiently advanced in music to take over his dad's church organ job in his native Buenos Aires. At nine, the Buenos Aires Symphony honored the boy by playing Hector's "Suite for Oboe and String Orchestra" at a public concert. By that time the lad was an accomplished organist. He could even reach the pedals.

His musical education was thorough. Hector studied first with his father, later at the B.A. Conservatory of Music and the University of Buenos Aires, graduating from the latter at 18.

Despite his ability, Hector seemed destined for a life of playing for church services, funerals and weddings, a calling lacking in financial remuneration. The Olivera family was very poor. His father had to moonlight to make ends meet. Tiring of the gnawing poverty, Hector sought an outlet for the faith he had in his ability — and turned to "the

land of opportunity" — the Estados Unidos. There he might make enough money to help his family. He was 18 and teaching at the Collegium Musicum when he heard of music scholarships available in the U.S.A. By this time he had played over 300 concerts in Argentina and Brazil on most of the great concert organs in those countries. He had even done broadcasts on a Hammond! Now he envisioned new worlds to conquer. The U.S.A.!

When he was 19, Hector Olivera zeroed in on North America, specifically New York. He arrived in June 1965, all 98 pounds of him. His financial resources on arriving: one dollar and 49 cents. The air fare had eaten up the cash he had saved for ages.

Luckily, Hector located a friendly priest who offered lodging. His first jobs were menial, so menial in fact, that a position sorting mail in a company's mail room seemed like a boost to a vice presidency to the recent immigrant. The fact that Hector knew only a few words of English didn't assist him with mail sorting tasks. But the job helped Hector survive in his initial encounter with the

"land of opportunity."

There is a certain almost childish trust in the Olivera scheme of things; that slogan about the U.S.A. being a place where hard work pays off — well, he took that at face value. While doing menial jobs far removed from music, Hector kept his antenna up. He visited churches. There were opportunities. He landed a low budget job as choir director of a Baptist church. So, Hector became a Baptist. He also met a choir girl named Lucy.

His first encounter with a fine U.S. pipe organ occurred less than a month after his arrival in New York. Ask Hector why he came to the U.S.A. and he may say, "To latch onto a music scholarship — and to hear a 32-foot organ pipe." The second fulfillment came first. He visited New York's Riverside Church while an organist was practicing for a concert. The shy youth approached the console and was noticed by the organist, who asked if Hector played. Hector managed a "Si" and the organist asked if he would like to play.

Would he! Of course his first notes were played on the 32' pedal stops, the first time he had ever heard such rumbles. Then he played something on the manuals with a 32' pedal Bombarde. *This* was living! The immigrant never forgot the kindness of this organist, and he reminded Ted Alan Worth, who attended a

Many persons who have marvelled at the musicianship and showmanship of Hector Olivera are not aware of Hector's origins and his struggle for recognition. We hope this article will help readers know him better.



Hector was playing in church before he could reach the pedals.



Hector started composing music almost as soon as he had learned to play. By nine, he had penned a piece the Buenos Aires Symphony found worthy of public performance.

concert played by Hector in San Francisco 14 years later. It was the first time Ted had had the opportunity to hear Hector since the Riverside Church introduction.

Hector really scrounged for playing jobs in the early days. He was successful in qualifying for a scholarship at the Juilliard School of Music in New York, and supported himself with his mail room work, the Baptist church choir directing job and any playing assignment he could come by.

Despite the quality of his musicianship, the inexperienced youth, with only a small command of the English language, was paid very poorly for his services, especially by dealers selling electronic instruments he sometimes demonstrated. He

needed money now more than ever. Only a month after his arrival in the U.S.A. he received word from home that his father had died. That left his mother without support. Then there was Lucy. He had proposed to Lucy, a quiet girl whose Puerto Rican ancestry had gifted her with a command of Spanish, so they had a common language.

The wedding took place on June 10, 1967. One demonstration job took him to West Sunbury, Pennsylvania, a town near Pittsburgh. The dealer liked his playing and offered Hector a job demonstrating electronic organs. He even agreed to relocate Hector and Lucy. By this time (1970), Lucy was expecting, so the Oliveras accepted the offer. They moved into a trailer home in West

Sunbury. There, ever restless Hector decided he needed a pipe organ in his trailer home, so he constructed one. First it was a one-manual, two-ranker. Later it was enlarged to two manuals and four ranks.

One of the Oliver characteristics is an abhorrence of inactivity. He has to be doing something to fill every minute of every day. The poverty of his boyhood days taught him to utilize his abilities to their fullest. Even while he was in Buenos Aires he lost no opportunity to earn even a small fee through his playing. After all, playing the organ was his great love; if people would pay him to enjoy himself — why not?

Hector kept no record of the many \$8.00 church jobs (mostly funerals) he played to bolster his salary in West Sunbury.

In nearby Pittsburgh, Hector met a dealer in candy named Walt Molt, an event which would again change his life almost as much as Lucy had. Walt and Hector quickly became friends. In January 1971, Walt arranged for Hector to play a concert in Pittsburgh's Carnegie Hall for a fee of \$75.00 the most he had ever received for playing a concert. Walt spent a bit more promoting for three months prior, but it put Hector on the map in the area. The Hall management stated that "there were five times more in attendance than any organ recital in their history."

Here was a musician of excellent ability in the classical field, a Juilliard organ major, playing for pittance, just for lack of proper management. Walt Molt started collecting Hector's reviews and press no-

Parishioners had no idea that the scrawny kid they saw moving about the church was responsible for the music which enhanced masses.





Hector at 12. Now his feet could reach the pedals.

tices, and when a playing job was anticipated he flashed the material before the client. It worked. Hector's fees started to climb.

"Walt how would you like to manage me? You don't want to sell candy the rest of your life." The idea appealed; Walt Molt gained weight just by being in the same room with confectons.

It started very slowly, with classical concerts which Hector performed with such brilliance that even jaded reviewers had to take notice. Hector could play any organ, pipe or plug-in, and make it sound great.

At 18, Hector had exhausted the supply of organs up to concert standards in his home area. Yet, financial returns were minimal. He began to think of new worlds wherein to try his luck.



Then Hector discovered something new to him — the theatre organ. Of course he had heard people playing light music and jazz on the electronic organ in stores, but the thought that he might qualify in the "pops" field had not occurred to him — yet. That all changed while he and Molt were returning from a classical engagement which took them through Richmond, Va. There they met famed organist Eddie Weaver who invited them to the Byrd Theatre with its 3/17 Wurlitzer. It was the first time Hector had sat on a theatre organ bench. It was an instrument totally foreign to his classi-



Diminutive Hector enjoying the applause after the Buenos Aires Symphony's performance of his "Suite for Oboe and String Orchestra." Orchestra members stand in respect for the youthful composer.

cal concepts. He tried all the voices those stopkeys controlled, and he was fascinated. This was a whole different soccer game! That was his first encounter with a theatre organ, and the only one preceding an event which would once more alter the Hector Olivera thrust.

To be continued.

In the concluding installment, Hector encounters no pickles at Heinz Hall, classical reviewers praise him and the TO crowd accepts him — opening a whole new career. The Oliveras find a home near Pittsburgh — with pipes, of course. □

An organ typical of the many instruments Hector played in concert in Argentina and Brazil by the time he was 18.



Q. In enlarging a two manual Wurlitzer console to three manuals, what procedure would you use on the case and where would you add the additional stops now on a single row all the way around?

A. Unless you are a highly skilled cabinet maker, I would not recommend that you enlarge your Wurlitzer console. Any enlargement would look makeshift in the end and the value of the organ would not be enhanced. I would suggest you advertise for a used three manual console and sell your two manual. Quite a number of organ buffs will enlarge their three manual and obtain a four manual console.

Q. Can I run my Wurlitzer 2/6 relay and switch stack directly off static pressure? My blower is rated at 12 inches which is what you recommended in your column.

A. I would run your relay and switch stack off the static line by first inserting a regulator or winker of at least two square feet to deliver quick bursts of wind when needed. A relay should never be winded without a regulator even though it may be just a winker type.

Q. I have an Aeolian regulator which will require heavier springs in order to operate on ten inches wind. What size springs would you recommend for this regulator.

A. First of all, I don't recommend using this regulator for high pressure. Most of these were designed for about five inches, not ten. The spring tension will have to be about 200 pounds, or four fifty-pound springs.

Q. I have built a residence type organ of six unit ranks in which the Great and Swell chests each have three ranks. They are both winded by a common reservoir (Kilgen) measuring 3' by 3'-6" of the curtain valve type. Because I want tremulation on both chests, I have winded the tremulant (7" by 16") with a 3" conductor totaling ten feet with three elbows off the huge reservoir. The problem is that the trem sounds terrible as it beats twice for every stroke of the tremulant. I have tried for hours to change the air flow gate, the slider

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on top of the trem and even added weights to the reservoir. I thought by just the correct adjustment of all the above variables I could effect a good tremulation. I have consulted other organ builders (professionals) without success. They are just as stumped as I. Any suggestions? Shall I dump this trem and get a larger one?

A. Your huge reservoir is too large for what you want it to do. You say you want trem on both chests so this would preclude winding your trem off the Swell chest. The reason for your double stroke is because your curtain valve and reservoir are so large that the action of the wind suddenly dropping upon the down stroke of the trem drops the reservoir top so quick that the air loss is made up faster then the trem can feel it. Therefore, your conductor has double pressure nodes inside causing the trem to double stroke at the reservoir even though it has dropped only once. I would suggest you make two little winkers measuring 7" by 14" and mount them right to the bung of the chests. This will cancel the nodes within the conductor and should smooth out the tremulation. Since winkers can many times reduce the amplitude of the tremulant, I think you will find that this will not happen in your case. I would not waste your time weighting the reservoir as it will just reduce its efficiency. Substituting a larger tremulant will just make the problem worse.

Q. I am completely restoring my residence pipe organ and find that I will need more blotting paper for gaskets. I want to perform my renovation in a strict, historic manner so as to maintain the value of my organ. Can you suggest where to get this gasket material?

A. To my knowledge, most builders have ceased using blotting paper. In checking supply houses, they no longer carry it. I have had the best success with packing leather (horse hide) as it will always keep your components air-tight and is easy to glue on. Although it is expensive, I feel it is well worth it. In our own area, we have ceased using cork because it dehydrates in winter months and dries up hard and leaks. □

Long Beach Gets Its Second Organ

by Effie Klotz
Photos: Peg Nielsen

There comes a day in the life of every organ buff who ever installed his own pipes a peak moment, when he says "This is it. I'm ready to show my project to my friends and the public!"

That moment came for Harold J. Bradley of Long Beach, Calif., on April 19, 1979, the date he set for the presentation of his project to a group of invited guests. Harold lives in a modest home in Long Beach in an area which is zoned "commercial" so nearby residents can't complain should the sounds of an organ ever become a problem.

Harold describes himself as a "handyman," meaning he has many talents and abilities. This soon becomes apparent to the visitor who is ushered into Harold's living room, a room dominated by a 2-manual Wurlitzer style D console. To pro-

vide a theatrical atmosphere, Harold has improvised baby spotlights from No. 10 cans, complete with colored gelatine holders and connected to miniature electronic dimmers which Harold operates remotely to vary the intensity and hues of the console lighting beaming down from above. But we are ahead of our story.

On April 19, about 25 invited guests (all the small home can accommodate) were treated to a premiere played by Gaylord Carter, a veteran organist just returned from concertizing on such giants as the Ohio Theatre's 4/20 Robert Morton in Columbus. Here, Gaylord was faced with a 2/6 hybrid — with four ranks and a toy counter in working order.

Gaylord looked forward to the evening with that boyish enthusiasm which has sustained him through-

The Bradley home is music oriented. This set of decorative pipes is typical of the atmosphere the home fosters.





Gaylord opened the festivities with his Amos 'n Andy theme. He said his mother always told him to open with something he knows and that he had had seven years on-the-air practice on 'The Perfect Song.'

more than 50 years of entertaining on pipes. He was questioned about concertizing on such a tiny instrument, and replied, "An organist works with what he has available. I've cued movies on pit organs with perhaps two short ranks of pipes played from a manual mounted on a piano. So, working with few ranks is no novelty for me."

Before we comment on Gaylord's program, let's examine the instrument, and how it became what it

is. How did Harold Bradley get infected with the "organ bug?"

He caught it from the late Joe Koons, who has been described as a "one man ATOS chapter." Harold volunteered to assist in the enlargement of Joe's hybrid organ in the cycle shop, not far from the Bradley home. There he learned about the intricacies of magnets triggering pneumatics, winding, placement of ranks in chambers, pipe scales, relays, switches, key contacts — the works. Joe was such a good teacher that Harold developed a hankering to own an organ, one he could install in his home and still have room left to live in. He decided that if he cut his living room in two with a wall, one half could accommodate perhaps six ranks of pipes, plus the switches, tremis, windlines relays and chests required to operate them. The other half would be the listening area, outside the swell shutters. He read the advertisements in organ magazines, looking for a six-ranker. He found a few, but the pricetags went way beyond what he could pay.

Harold figured he could invest about \$1000.00 in the organ project, no more. A six-rank organ at one grand? Impossible, cried the skeptics. But they howled without considering the Bradley determination. Harold is soft spoken, which masks a strong will power.

A few years ago he started collecting organ parts, resigned to the fact that he would have to start nearly from scratch, but not quite. He asked friends who had pipe installations about leftovers. Many had parts they would never need and were glad to contribute to the idea of another pipe organ perking in southern California. One generous

contributor was Harold's friend and benefactor, Joe Koons. Another was Ron Mitchell, who had no plans for the Wurlitzer Style D console shell taking up space in his garage. It was just a shell — no manuals, no stop-keys on the horseshoe and no pedals. Joe Koons came through with a full pedalboard. Harold was on his way.

His collection of parts went on for several years. He found organ buffs with leftovers very generous. He managed to latch onto a Smith Tibia, a Robert Morton Salicional, a small-scale Estey Vox Humana with leath-ered shallots, Haskell and Skinner pipes enough for a Concert Flute, an Estey 16' Bourdon octave, an Estey 8' Open Diapason (the bottom octave is Moller) and, wonder of wonders, a genuine Wurlitzer Style D Trumpet. The Estey Vox is the only leath-ered Vox set in our experience, although leathering of Tuba shallots (for smoothness) was a common practice.

Harold put together his own toy counter using a donated Robert Morton trap action. The two manuals were given to Harold, and so was the blower — all items other organ buffs no longer needed.

When he had gathered enough parts for his planned 6-ranker, Harold's friends were most helpful. Assisting in the fabrication and installation were Roy Powlan, Ray Cox and John Scot, the latter a talented organist with a record to his credit.

There were the usual disruptions which occur when an organ takes over a residence. A partition bifurcated the living room and the left area became the chamber, the right side the listening area through a bank of swell shutters. We visited the Bradley home a week before the scheduled "preem." Every room we looked into was littered with organ parts, tools, building materials, test equipment, lighting equipment — all the litter so familiar to the brave ones who have had the courage to adopt a pipe organ. Harold had one distinct advantage over some fans with similar hopes and aspirations: He's a bachelor. (Wives have been known to disapprove of the litter involved in putting in a pipe organ, especially when the works may occupy what was once the living room or master bedroom!)

One item Harold had to construct from near "scratch" was a unifi-



John Scot obliged with a fast-moving 'Roller Coaster.'

During intermission, host Bradley (left) dishes out the refreshments.





Gaylord shows the audience the brass plate bearing his name — “in big letters.”

cation switchboard, using donated Aeolian switches. Another was a tremulant, that bouncing box of wood, leather, valves, adjusters and a pant that imparts the heartbeat, the soul of the theatre organ. He patterned his trem from one on the Joe Koons organ. It provides the proper undulations for a one-chamber installation, which must necessarily be a compromise because a Tibia and Salicional (on the same chest) require far different tremulant excursions under ideal conditions. In this case, the Tibia beat is cut down to meet the shallower requirements of the Diapason and Salicional. But Harold plans a separate Tibia trem, in time. For the moment, he's happy to hear the sound of pipes in his

living room. On to the show!

So, we have four ranks of pipes and a veteran organist who knows the score — in fact, all of them. Gaylord opened with a fanfare on the Trumpet, then told his audience, seated on folding chairs, about Harold's struggle to own a playing organ, as all guests were not in on the whole story. Gaylord's first tune was his familiar theme. “The Perfect Song.” The organ sounded good and it's a lasting tribute to Harold that he could adjust the various brands of pipes, which range from church sets to theatre ranks, to match a common wind pressure and still provide such a cohesive and integrated sound.

Gaylord got “the feel” of the organ during his opening theme, and ventured into middle-'20s film music, playing themes and cues from Victor Scherzinger's score for the Douglas Fairbanks Sr. starrer, *Robin Hood* (1923). The little organ bore up under the Crusades, Prince John's skulduggery, King Richard's (Wallace Beery) boisterousness, bushwackings in Sherwood Forest and the love scenes between Robin and Maid Marian.

After a few more musical adventures with past film masterpieces, Gaylord called an intermission. Not because he ran out of material (that'll be the day!) but because the blower needed a rest. One of Harold's problems is the blower motor; it's too small for the blower it's turning, but will work up to a point — after which it shuts itself off via a considerate circuit breaker. Guests would be indebted to that breaker a bit later.

Harold invades his chamber to pose behind his Style D Trumpet pipes.



After helpings of coffee or punch and a sampling of a wonderful cake which pictured a console in icing, Gaylord presented Harold with an award signed by a number of notables, congratulating Harold on his accomplishments. “Award of Merit for Pipe Organ Building and Restoration,” it read. In addition, Gaylord gave Harold a brass plate commemorating the occasion. Bradley was so pleased that he got his screwdriver and attached the shiny plate to the console backboard while the audience watched.

“Note that my name is on it — in big letters,” said Gaylord. It was. The small audience loved it all.

At one point Gaylord invited John Scot to play. John obliged with “Roller Coaster,” a tune that has enough ups and downs to test the mettle of any organ. The little “Style D” came through the ordeal nobly. So did Scot.

Then Gaylord came back with a soupy “Jeannine” and a violent “Hurry No. 2” which he uses for Keystone Kop chases. His closer was variations on “Oh Harold,” a tune forever linked to Harold Lloyd's mid-'20s film, *The Freshman*.

Harold Bradley was invited to play a tune for his audience. He played a ballad. The title escapes us, but Harold performed with nary a clinker. Then, Harold looked about for organists in his audience, and was about to introduce Stu Green (still remembered for his 1971 “Humiliation Concert”) — when it happened. The obliging breaker opened, theoretically because the blower motor was overheated, but we know better. That blessed breaker, it its electrical wisdom, just wanted to spare that wonderful audience and re-incarnated organ the indignity of a Stu Green attack.

The guests filed out past Harold at the door, “Good night Spud.” The late Joe Koons widow had been listening quietly. There was no designated Guest of Honor, but Spud sure qualified. “Goodnight, Peg.” Peg Green had been shooting photos. “Goodnight, Stu.” The latter just grumbled a reply, and added some dire mumblings concerning his opinion of disrespectful breakers.

When they were all gone, Harold Bradley stood in his doorway, watching the cars depart for their various destinations. He was beaming. □

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.

I'LL BE AROUND, David Lobban playing the 3/12 theatre organ in the Toronto Organ Grinder. WRC-400, \$6.50 postpaid from David Lobban, c/o Silver Knight Productions, The Organ Grinder, 1260 Hornbee Street, Vancouver, B.C. Canada.

David Lobban is a youthful import from Great Britain. He is largely self-taught and exhibits an uninhibited style all his own. He is also an organ technician who understands the strong points and weaknesses of transforming compressed air into listenable music. He was playing the composite theatre organ which was originally in a Milwaukee theatre, revamped and re-installed in the Toronto restaurant by the Junchen-Collins Organ Co. The sound is on the Wurlitzer side. Solo reeds are smooth and the ensemble attractive in full combinations. He has since been transferred to the Vancouver Organ Grinder.

This recording is obviously intended for consumption by the restaurant patron who wants an audio souvenir of his night out. As such it

succeeds very well, as David's humor and agility with the riffs and sound effects, so popular with the eatery visitors, are well handled. For the organ buff who expects a concert, it simply isn't, because David seems more interested in "wowing" the patrons with his flashy handling of the selections rather than simply creating music for the record buyer. Of course there is a market for this style of playing, but for the organ buff much is lost by just not being on the scene.

The tune list reflects the locale by including such frequent requests as "Feelings," "Spanish Eyes," "Star Wars" (excerpt) and the "Theme from Rocky." The rest of the selections provide a varied fare: "At the Console," "Yellow Bird," *Nadia's* Theme, "A Precious Little Thing Called Love," "Clair de lune," "Everything's in Rhythm in My Heart," "I'm in the Mood for Love," "I'll Be Around."

David seems most effective playing the upbeat and comedy numbers. We got a big grin on hearing his Kinura pedal during "Precious Little Thing." And his frenetic "Rocky" hits the mark, as does his Posthornery and Klaxon during "Everything's in Rhythm" which has also some swingband "rides" and a hint of "Nola." "I'm in the Mood" demonstrates the richness of the instrument's untrem'd brass reeds. However, Debussy takes a beating from David's many liberties during "Clair de Lune," perhaps the least satisfactory performance of the set. He is much more compelling with his "Quiet Village"-style arrangement of "Yellow Bird." The brief march from *Star Wars* brings fanfares spiked with cymbals and drums. David has lots of fun with his "Childrens' Medley," playing "Small World," "Popeye the Sailor," "Lone Ranger Theme" (with Klaxon, train whistle and siren yet!), "Mickey Mouse March" and other bright tunes which must gladden the hearts of his audiences at the Organ Grinder.

David isn't much concerned with phrasing at this point of his career, if this album is indicative, and no one seems to have informed him that "schmear glissandos" are a no-no on pipes (there are only a couple). Conversely, he obviously has a good ear and a natural sense of harmony and rhythm. All he needs is more ex-



David Lobban. As of September 15th he was promoted to the No. 1 spot at the Vancouver, BC, 'Organ Grinder.'

perience.

Miking is in close-up perspective which doesn't allow for much stereo separation (the word does not appear on record or jacket but we assume it isn't monaural). Jacket notes provide history of the instrument and the organist. The pressing is exceptionally smooth and free of flaws.

Despite the few criticisms listed, David Lobban's premiere album constitutes the best entertainment pipe presentation to come from eastern Canada in many a moon. He's a comer.

CHARLIE. Charlie Balogh at the Roaring '20s Wurlitzer. Ronson Records RT 103. Available from the Roaring '20s, 4515 28th Street S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49508. Price \$7.95 postpaid.

Charlie Balogh first came to the attention of ATOSers during the 1976 Convention. He gave a very creditable account of his musical ability on the War Memorial Moller in Trenton. He later served an apprenticeship with Bill Brown's "Organ Stop" pizzerias in Phoenix. He replaced Donna Parker at the Grand Rapids pasta house when she left.

Because this is a first recording for both organist and organ, perhaps some background on the instrument is also in order. The Wurlitzer was first heard in 1928 in Jersey City's Stanley Theatre. The original number of ranks is not given in the jacket notes, but Stanley theatres bought several 3/27s from Wurlitzer. It has now been enlarged to 33 ranks, and the additions have been well



Charlie Balogh. He plays a Posthorny Wurlibeast.
(Bruce Nolan Photo)

matched to the original tonal scheme. Rarely have we experienced such a lineup of organ building talent as are credited as assisting in this installation. Ron Walls, Dick Villemin, Ken Chrome, Allen Miller, Ron Mitchell, Dick Peterson, George Kirkwood and Lyn Larsen contributed their special talents to the excellence of the installation in various ways.

The recording has a flaw difficult to pinpoint, a small distortion. Keep in mind that it's a *small* distortion. A \$50.00 record player will probably ignore it, while on a good setup some high end distortion may be detected. But don't be discouraged from buying the record unless you are an audio freak.

We have come to the conclusion that an organist who plays in a pizzeria should make his record far away from his job location in order to escape the temptation (or pressure) to include the most requested pizza tunes. It is difficult to conceive what is proper for a record when the atmosphere is full of request numbers which rarely have the interest value in grooves that the enthusiasm of last night's pizza chompers may suggest. Thus we have "Pink Panther," "Battle Hymn of the Republic," "You Light Up My Life," "Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe," and "Star Wars" excerpts, all tunes which have been recorded many times and are played here often for "eye appeal."

Charlie starts with a rhythmic and brassy "Theme from Rocky" wherein continuous pedal cymbal, thudding drums and the Trompette en

Chamade add up to noisy good fun. "Panther" is in much the same class, but with more interest value. It isn't until "The Man I Love" that we learn Charlie is capable of subtlety and expression. "Battle Hymn" is the arrangement loaded with fanfares, so the free-standing Trompette gets another workout. But the "Hymn" also has contemplative moments, although brief ones.

It's back to the Trompette for "At the Copa," a repetitive pattern tune during which the traps and clackers nearly drown out the organ. "You Light Up My Life" is played with attractive registration and is nicely phrased. One of Charlie's best. *American Bandstand* fans will enjoy the program theme, a fast "Bandstand Boogie," soloing drums, cymbal and brass. Here they fit the '40s swingband style. "Atchison" is admittedly Charlie's "train tune," and he gives it the full choo-choo treatment with bells and escaping steam, which must surely thrill the living kapok out of junior while dad explains about steam engines between gulps of pickled canary tongue pizza. "Star Wars" is a perfect vehicle for the organ's brass section, and the space critters' bar room tune once more steals the show. Charlie's closer, and one which displays the beauty of the organ, is "Sing a Rainbow" which the jacket notes tell us was sung by Peggy Lee in the Jack Webb movie, *Pete Kelly's Blues*.

Despite some fine moments for the record listener, most of the music on this disc is aimed toward the folks at the tables. Without the visual support, we feel something is lost. So we recommend it to those who enjoy the pizza parlor atmosphere.

The jacket is a production in itself. It's an open-up-album type with a good cover photo of the console and on the back is Charlie's photo. Inside are more photos, a stop analysis, and notes about the music, organist and organ.

JUST FOR YOU. Candi Carley playing the San Gabriel Auditorium 3/16 Wurlitzer. MxRC 2002 (stereo) \$8.10 in USA postpaid from Minx Record Co., Box 737, Norwalk, Calif. 90650. (\$9.00 outside of USA)

Her first album, *Candi*, has been such a hit that Miss Carley was encouraged to embark on a second re-



Candi.

(Pegpic)

ording venture, this time on a different organ. The result is improvement on the technical side, better recording plus the natural auditorium sound which is so difficult to approximate with added echo when recording up close in a pizzeria. And Candi is more at ease on this record, more self-assured. She comes up with a variety program which spans the decades from the mid-'20s through 1977, although she lingers lovingly over a group of selections from Sigmund Romberg's 1924 operetta, *The Student Prince* for much of Side 2.

Other selections are: "Anything Goes," "A Sunday Kind of Love," "Gettin' Sentimental Over You," "Ebony Eyes," "Here's That Rainy Day," "I Can't Smile Without You," "Sweet Georgia Brown," "Taking a Chance on Love." Of course the six operetta tunes include: "Deep in My Heart," "Serenade." Not an over-recorded tune in the bunch.

As on her previous album, Candi adapts her style to the vintage of the music. Her '20s tunes are played in theatre organ style. The '30s and '40s songs get the swingband treatment while the '70s tunes are done in a gentle rock idiom which sometimes approaches frenzy. She knows exactly what sound and over-all effect she wants and how to get it. How does a blind organist become familiar with a strange instrument in the brief practice time before a recording? Candi has a way. Each stop-key on the console is marked with a Braille sticker. She has the organ at her fingertips in the literal sense. Another of Candi's methods is in getting able help. To do the taping, she hired Dick Simonton Jr. It was



Marie and Gordon Kibbee. (Bob Hill Photo)

his first TO recording, although he has done film recording for several years. He fared very well.

Another expert helping Candi was her teacher (pop arranging), veteran theatre organist Gordon Kibbee, who is listed on the jacket as Director. She couldn't get more experienced help. Gordon's wife, Marie, designed the record jacket, which boasts a lovely color cover photo of Candi at the 3/16 console. Jacket notes concentrate on the music, its history and registration. ATOS organ tech Harold Donze had the organ in top shape for the recording session.

The completed production is the result of many talents but Candi's musicality, skills and personality dominate, which is as it should be. This emerging artist's second album is well worth having.

BOB RALSTON — A THEATRE PIPE ORGAN CONCERT, played on the DTOC Senate Theater 4/34 Wurlitzer, Ranwood (stereo) No. RAN-8185. \$7.98 postpaid from Bob Ralston Records, Box 1220, Studio City, Calif. 91604. (Calif. residents add 48 cents sales tax)

This is Bob Ralston's 19th recording but his first on pipes. Time was when his boss, Lawrence Welk, was considering a four-rank pipe organ for Bob to play with the band and even checked out the Bob Carson studio Wurlitzer. Naught came of the plan so he settled for a souped-up Thomas. In the years since, Bob has made many records with the Thomas (some prior to that on Hammond), but he never got the yen for pipes out of his system.

Is Bob any good on pipes? One

can't judge from his TV stylings. And his performance certainly left something to be desired during his concert at the 1977 ATOS convention in Chicago, although part of that was due to a preset mixup. But here, Bob Ralston proves both his musicianship and devotion to the theatre organ beyond any lingering doubt. The music offered here is Bob at his best and that best is far more extensive than anything he has recorded previously. All he needed was a good set of pipes to release the plethora of musical ideas rampant in the Ralston psyche.

His choice of the Detroit Theater Organ Club's instrument was indeed a wise selection. The instrument is expertly maintained by Dave Brewer's technical crew, and the six-chamber installation is empathetic to recording.

Bob opens with an Italian medley which includes "Sorrento," "Mattinata," "Funiculi Funicula" and four other favorite folksongs played in contrasting arrangements, all ear-catching. Next it's a piano-dominated "You Light Up My Life" followed by an original, "Risen Son," which is presented in somewhat Buddy Cole-style. It's a beauty.

Side 1 closes with an early Americana medley which, outside of "Yankee Doodle," avoids the obviously overcooked military material usually presented in such potpourris. This one opens with a compelling presentation of that fine old pointer-method study "Long, Long Ago" but without pointers. "Love's Old Sweet Song" is there and so is "Home Sweet Home" (with birds!). Also heard are "The Band Played On," "Golden Slippers" and "Tavern in the Town." To these Bob applies pure theatre organ technique. His portamentos fit and are well executed.

Side 2 opens with a tune Bob dedicates to his mother "who believed in me from the beginning." "The World is Waiting for the Sunrise." The first chorus, with a brass solo lead, is pure schmaltz while the second is jazzed up with rhythm and piano embellishment. "Beautiful Dreamer" rates open harmony on the instrument's fine Tibia. The Stephen Foster mood continues with a soft shoe "Swanee River" while "Kentucky Home" enjoys a bit of barroom piano fun but it's mostly



Bob Ralston.

heavily sentimental. "Camptown Races" is played as horse race music. It's all tasteful and interestingly presented.

Lyn Larsen's tribute to the film comedian Stan Laurel, entitled "Stanley" is innocuous and appropriate. Wish Lyn would follow with one called "Ollie." It's not right to separate the team. The Wurlitzer makes like a concert organ briefly for Du Bois' "Sortie Toccata" which Bob races through in 2:05 minutes, and plays all the notes. This one is purely pyrotechnics. The Hymn, "How Great Thou Art," gets straight organ registration. Very homey. Bob's final tune is Welk's bubbly closing broadcast theme, with the expected champagne bottle pop and a spoken "goodnight" from Bob.

This music is easily the best work Bob Ralston has put in grooves. He simply needed the facility of excellent pipes to realize the full range of his playing potential. His phrasing and expression are tops. His registration, one of the areas where the Chicago Downer's Grove organ presets let him down, is right up there with the best. True, some of the titles are corny, but Bob has a following to satisfy which likes corn. Conversely, the distribution of this recording has brought him offers of concerts from areas, both local and overseas, never heard from previously.

Frank Laperriere's stereo recording is good. Bob wrote his own jacket notes which cover a wide range of information. He credits Lyn Larsen as Recording Consultant. He couldn't have selected a more seasoned contemporary pro as advisor.

Summary: meet entirely new, different and delightful facets of the Bob Ralston musical talent.

— THE PLUG-IN CORNER —

MUSICAL MOODS OF MARIA KUMAGAI at the Rodgers 260. No. SR 1004. \$6.75 postpaid from Sunrise Records, Box 559, Camarillo, Calif. 93010.

By now readers know that Maria Kumagai came from Tokyo in 1969 to learn to play the organ, both theatre and classical. Since her first pipe concert, only two years after her arrival, her career has spiralled upward with ever more concert engagements. This is her fourth record album but her first on this very special electronic organ.

For recordings, Maria has two loves (1) show tunes, (2) often obscure semi-classical selections. Not that the music of Amilcare Ponchielli, represented here by his "Dance of the Hours," nor Johann Strauss Jr., represented by "Voices of Spring," fit that second category, but who ever heard of "Fountain Reverie" (Fletcher) or "The Snow is Dancing (Debussy)? Mainly musicians or those with a wide musical horizon. We fear these dated numbers will not be much appreciated by the average record buyer, but they will certainly appreciate Maria's renditions of the five selections from *Sound of Music* and the three love songs from Jerome Kern's *Showboat*. Incidentally, the Fletcher and Debussy selections are exquisite pieces, played with great perception and nuance by Maria.

Another rarely heard but worthy selection is Robert Elmore's haunting "Pavanne." All are well performed by Maria, who has now mastered the use of pitched percussions for embellishment, also the portamento and the momentary crescendo "sting." All are used sparingly and tastefully. We question some of the harmony used during several of the show tunes, but Maria assures us that the chording heard is what she intended for her arrangements.

This is the first commercial release made on the Bob Power "style 260" Rodgers since electronics expert Lee Sundstrom worked over several of the voices, most notably the Tibia and Vox. Gone is the slightly metallic edge on the Tibia and the Vox — well listen to it as soloed on this record, after the three chimes on "Fountain Reverie" and again dur-



Maria Kumagai

ing "Pavanne." It's easily the most convincing electronic Vox since Conn's breakthrough many years ago. Conversely, there are moments during the show tunes when a sharp brass combination sounds unblending and harsh, but only briefly.

One other point of interest. The entire front of the jacket is devoted to a color blowup of the organ's horseshow and manuals. How close the Rodgers Co. came to recreating the Wurlitzer style 260 (14 ranks) console is illustrated clearly in the photo. Even the printing engraved on most stopkeys is readable.

Perhaps Maria is trying to cover too wide a range of music in her recordings, but for those with a taste for her sometimes offbeat tunelists, this is a gem. The little gal's performance continues to improve.

— THE CLASSIC CORNER —

ROBERT CUNDICK AT THE MORMON TABERNACLE ORGAN, Limited Edition — Direct-to-disc. Available through dealers or from Century Records, 6550 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, Calif. 90028. \$13.95 postpaid.

Many of today's theatre fans (including this reviewer) grew up during the golden age of live pipes on radio when the most clearly identified instrument in the U.S.A. was the organ played by Frank Asper from the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City. Through the veil of nostalgia and low fidelity one dimly remembers that it was a gorgeous sound on

the old 6-tube Atwater Kent. So, you ask, how does the Tabernacle organ sound now on the family stereo? Be advised that the organ has changed considerably. It is now — and has been since 1948 — an Aeolian-Skinner designed by G. Donald Harrison. Like most of the Boston-bred instruments, this one has superb Diapasons and fantastic Reeds which stay in tune. Even at full volume the tone is clear and crisp, bordering on the astringent. Every note from every pipe speaks distinctly: none of the fuzzy schmaltz of the old Tabernacle organ. This reviewer happens to be partial to installations where the music is not buried in reverberation and standing waves. For example, he much prefers Philharmonic Hall in New York to Carnegie Hall. If you're the Carnegie type you may find the Tabernacle organ lacking in color and excitement. For that matter, organist Robert Cundick is no more Frank Asper than he is Hector Olivera or Virgil Fox. His playing is decidedly non-theatrical. He orchestrates so subtly with his registrations that one hears only the music beautifully played. This is a first rate craftsman at the console.

Dr. Cundick opens his program with an original "Fanfare." It's a recession in the joyful tradition of the early 20th century. Perhaps while he was a resident organist in London, Cundick was influenced by the Gilbert and Sullivan mystique. His clear-the-sanctuary music has some of the gusto and bounce of *Pinafore*.

This reviewer found Louis Vierne's "Berceuse" to be the high point of the album. The warmth of the celeste ranks and the lovely slow-trem'd solo instruments are a perfect match for the French romantic tradition. Ironically, the melody line is so reminiscent of the Rodgers and Hart tune "There's A Small Hotel" that the theatre buff may need to be reminded that Vierne got there first — 1927 to be precise.

William Walond's "Voluntary in E Major" comes as close to trivia as any selection on the disc. It is impeccably played, mercifully short, and harmlessly forgettable. The Bach "Prelude and Fugue in E Minor" demonstrates that Robert Cundick can play the baroque master with admirable accuracy and plodding competence. Give him a B+ for effort, and give Johann Se-



Robert Cundick, Tabernacle Organist.

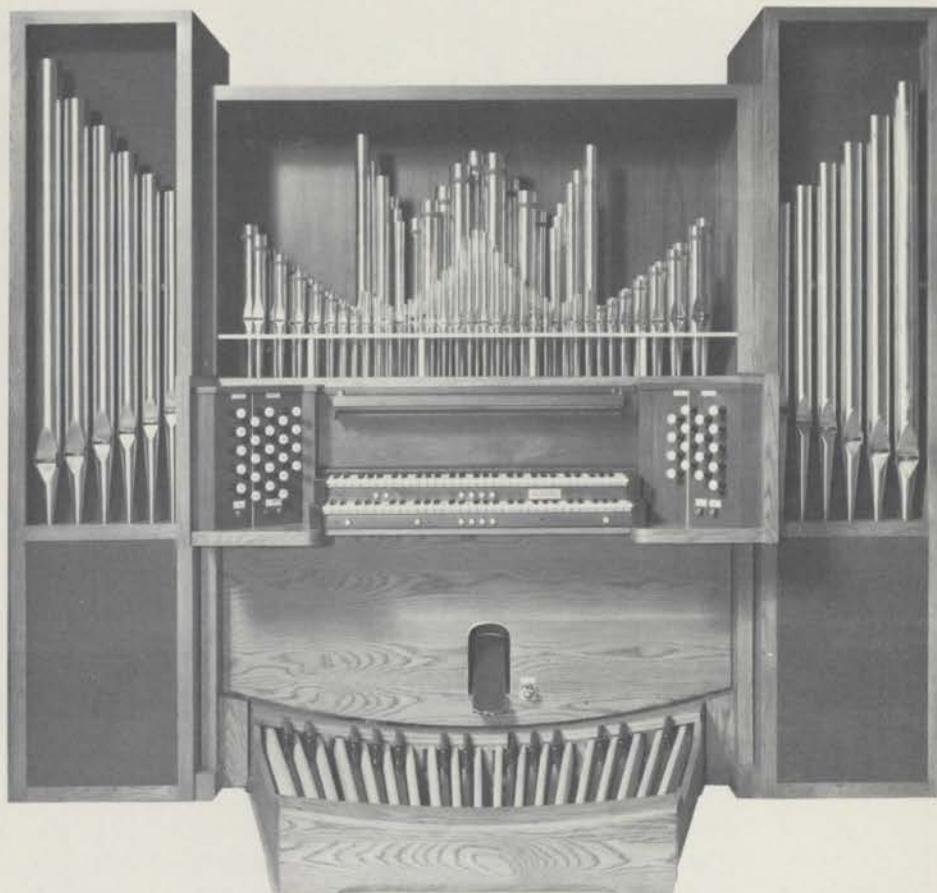
bastian a B- for one of his lesser works.

Handel's "Forest Music" which opens side two is jolly, pleasant listening with the flavor of Irish jigs and folk tunes. What follows is the "Claire de Lune" of Sigfrid Karg-Elert — not Debussy's. It is lovely and was written for organ. The soft 32' Contre Bourdon pedal notes at the end of this modern work will certainly test your hi-fi system, or your conductive hearing — whichever you want tested!

The Robert Schumann "Sketch in D Flat Major" is pleasantly melodic. Cundick exploits the dynamics of his instrument skillfully by alternating mere whispers of pipes with crisp chunks of tonal elegance. Cesar Frank's "Piece Heroique" comes the closest to theatre organ fare in the album. If one of our clan hasn't discovered that this is perfect "suspense-pursuit" music for a silent flic, here it is.

The jacket notes for this luxury album include a complete history of the organ, stop lists, pictures, and program notes. The record is one of the new "Stereo Direct to Disc" presentations. The advantages (other than preventing tricks with tapes) escape this reviewer. Clarity of the recording is excellent but with some minor surface noise on side two of the review pressing.

— Walter Beaupre □



Rodgers Organ Company has announced the introduction of a new organ series that combines authentic pipes with modern electronics. The Model 200 is self-contained and features pipes of 55% tin. The Model 205 (pictured above) features pipe extension towers, has pipes of 70% tin and can be installed in a room with an 8-foot ceiling. Both models contain a 4' Principal of 49 pipes and a 4' Gedeckflote of 49 pipes. There are four independent wide-range speaker systems for pedal, reeds, flutes, principals and mixtures. All electronic voices have "air sound" for added realism.



Yamaha's Senior Vice President, John McLaren (center), presents awards to the winners of the 1979 Yamaha National Electone Organ Festival, held in June at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. Pictured (L to R) are Ellen Doerrfeld, 12, from Lake in the Hills, Illinois, in the Youth I Division; Glenn Nakamura, 17, from Sepulveda, California, in the Youth II Division; Philip Keveren, 17, from Vale, Oregon, in the Senior I Division; and Mike Behymer, 28, from Evansville, Indiana, in the Senior II Division. Each division winner received a \$2,000 scholarship.

Konsole Kapets

by Shirley Hannum

Picture this. You've just come home from the music shop with several new books of organ arrangements. You're so excited! You sit down on the organ, open up the book (and find two more to keep it open since it likes to close all the time), and begin the "hunt-and-peck" system in following the suggested registration. "Oh," you think, "my organ doesn't have that one. And this is here at 16' but not at 8'; I guess I'd better use it."

After perhaps fifteen minutes of this, you think, "OK — now I'm ready," and in excited anticipation, you launch into the first chord. "Yuck! Why doesn't this organ ever sound right?" you ask, dismayed.

Really, it's not the fault of the organ, the arranger, or you. Published organ arrangements are usually general in their registration suggestions since there are so many different voicings per stop on every instrument, both pipe and electronic. And some are designed for one specific manufacturer over another.

But smile — there's hope! You can learn registration without depending on someone else's ideas. Registration, as well as styling, is individual — an extension of self. You need to experiment.

There are two major categories of registration — solo and ensemble. If you are playing a single-note melody in a ballad, try using an 8' mellow reed (use your ears to tell you, not necessarily what the tab says), combine it with a 4' or 2-2/3' Tibia or Flute to round it out, and play where written or an octave lower. Or try a 16' mellow reed with 4' and/or 2-2/3' Tibia-Flute. Use tremulant. If you have the option, put light or no tremulant on the reed, and more on the Flute-Tibia. The accompaniment must always complement and balance the "melody" manual. Use

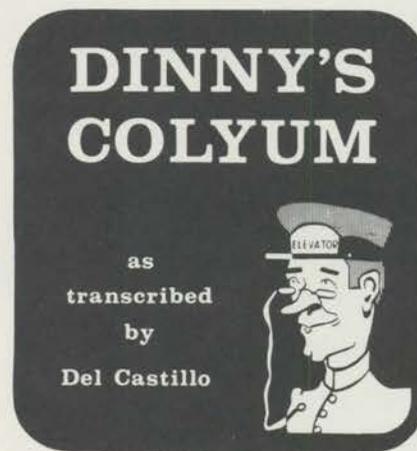
light strings, perhaps at 8' and 4', a 4' Flute and/or Tibia, and maybe a Diapason at 8'. Try it!

In ensemble playing (right hand melody in chords), use a good cross-section of tone. If playing in the Middle C range, never use any 16' stops — your playing will sound muddled. If playing up an octave, however, a 16', usually a Tibia, is called for or the music will sound screeching. Again, the accompaniment must balance the melody manual. A good rule of thumb is "don't duplicate." Whatever rank and pitch is in the right hand should not be used to accompany. On some smaller instruments, this is next to impossible. The point is to keep the accompaniment from sounding just like the right hand. One stop tastefully added or removed can make the difference. Also, the accompaniment is just that. It should support the melody, not override it.

Mutations are also seldom understood. These are the stops with fractions and are meant to be used sparingly. Mutations do not sound on the unison. For example, if you play a C, a 2-2/3' rank will sound a G an octave and a half higher. Imagine playing a C chord on beautiful lush, sobbing Tibias with lots of tremulant and hearing a G chord from out in

left field! No mutations with full chords, please.

Above all, use discretion in registration. The slam-bang, all-stops-out approach to registration is not recommended for professional sounds. Learn to listen to each stop on *your* instrument and use it accordingly. Never be afraid of experimenting. Tackle that organ, and have a ball! □



I got to thinkin the other day. They isnt so many times I get to thinkin so it is important to me when I find I am a-doin it. Anyways what I got to thinkin about is the way organs has changed since I was a boy. I guess the first time I ever herd a organ was when my folks sent me off to Sunday school and I herd the organ playin hims. It made a lot of noise but the lady playin the hims run all the notes together and I didnt like tryin to sing hims anyway. Well then when I got bigger I got a chancet to sing soprano in the quier in the Episcople Church in Boston and get paid for it which is the only time in my life I ever got paid for singin. And they was a Mr. Hyde who was the quiermaster and organist and he always wore dancin pumps when he played the organ. So sincet I had to lissen to the organ when I was singin I got to noticin that the big sounds he got out of it was really sumthin, and I guess that was the start of how I got to start likin the organ until my voice changed and they kicked me off the quier.

So by that time it was about 1905 and I begun goin to the movies and sometimes I would get to lissen to the piano player and the drummer fittin music to the movies and then along it come 1910 and they was beginnin

Editor's Note:

This is a new column being presented in answer to many requests from members for articles on how to play pipe or electronic organs including registration and technique.

It is recognized that more than one way is available to the player and this series by Shirley Hannum is not intended to be the final word on the subject.

Shirley is no stranger to ATOS members as she has concertized on both theatre pipe and electronic organs for ATOS and other groups throughout the country for a number of years.

Among her many credentials was her training by the late, great, Leonard MacClain. She also is young enough to have the modern approach and can offer some fresh ideas.

to have organs instead of pianos in the movie theaters. The organs wasn't for much they were more like the organs I heard in church and sometimes they would have a drummer too who would put in the noises that went with the pitcher. So then the next thing I knew it came to be 1915 and they were putting in organs that was called Wurlitzer Hope Jones Unit Orchestras that had a lot of the things the drummers use like base drums and snare drums and simbles and bells and thunder and horses hoofs and all like that there.

Pretty soon they were other organ makers imitating the Wurlitzer organs and they didn't sound no more like the old church organs than the Harmonium that was in my grandma's house that I had to pump the pedals on. They had a lot of stops with the names of instruments and then especially they had two stops called the Tibia and the Vox Humana which means the Human Voice and when the organ player put them two together for the love seems in the pitchers why it would make your toes curl up. So by that time I was really hooked on listening to the organ players in the big movie theaters because the organs they got bigger and bigger and they put them on elevators and the organ player would come up on the elevator and play a solo in the spotlight and of course I got a big kick out of that on account of by that time I was an elevator man myself. There were great days and I won't never forget the time I got to go down to New York and went to the Roxy Theater which was the most beautiful theater I ever seen and they had a big stage show with the Roxyettes all kicking at the same time and a great big orchestra with most 100 people in it and they come up on an elevator too and then they were not just one but three organ players who all played together for the organ solo and I ain't never forgot it and pretty soon they weren't no silent pitchers no more and no big orchestras and no organ players and they tore the Roxy Theater down and I went out and got drunk.

Well I have to admit the talkies was something else but just the same it was kind of sad that the organs were getting to be just junk so it was a good thing when the American Theater Organ Enthusiasts came along and the members start to buy up the

theater organs and put them in their homes and in garages and stores and small theaters and like that there. So the theater organ began to take on a new lease of life as you might say and now we are getting right back to where we started from fifty-sixty years ago and organ players are popular giving silent movie concerts and people get a big kick going to hear how they fit the music into the pitcher.

We even got organ players who make a living just taking those old silent pitchers out on tours. Gaylord Carter he is one who is now called Mr. Flyin' Fingers and he takes silent pitchers all over the country. And another one is Mr. Lee Erwin who has been going all over with a show he calls The Silent Clowns with pitchers by Harold Lloyd and Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton and Laurel & Hardy and like that there. And then there is Mr. Chauncey Haines who has been playing silent pitchers for the big colleges here around Los Angeles, and Mr. Bob Vaughan who plays them every week at the Avenue Theater in San Francisco, and Mr. Rod Skelding who is playing them every week at the Vagabond Theater in Los Angeles, and all the Pizza Parlors all over that is featuring Wurlitzer organs that come out of the theaters that wasn't using them no more, and theaters that is springing up all over that is installing the big organs that use to be in the big movie theaters, so it looks like the days of the big theater pipe organs is coming back and that makes me feel very good. □



BOOK REVIEW

by Lloyd E. Klos

THE RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL by Charles Francisco. (An Affectionate History of the World's Greatest Theatre.) E. P. Dutton, 2 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016. Price: \$19.95 until January 1, 1980. After that, \$24.95. New York residents add 4% sales tax.

What has been variously called "The Showplace of the Nation," "The World's Largest Theatre," and, other superlatives, the Radio City Music Hall is the title of a superlative 136-page, profusely-illustrated and well-researched book. Indeed, it is the finest theatre book since Ben Hall's *The Best Remaining Seats*, and should serve as the definitive work on this great theatre.

The entire history of the Music Hall is more than adequately chronicled in 15 chapters, and the content is so absorbing that any reader should find it difficult to put down.

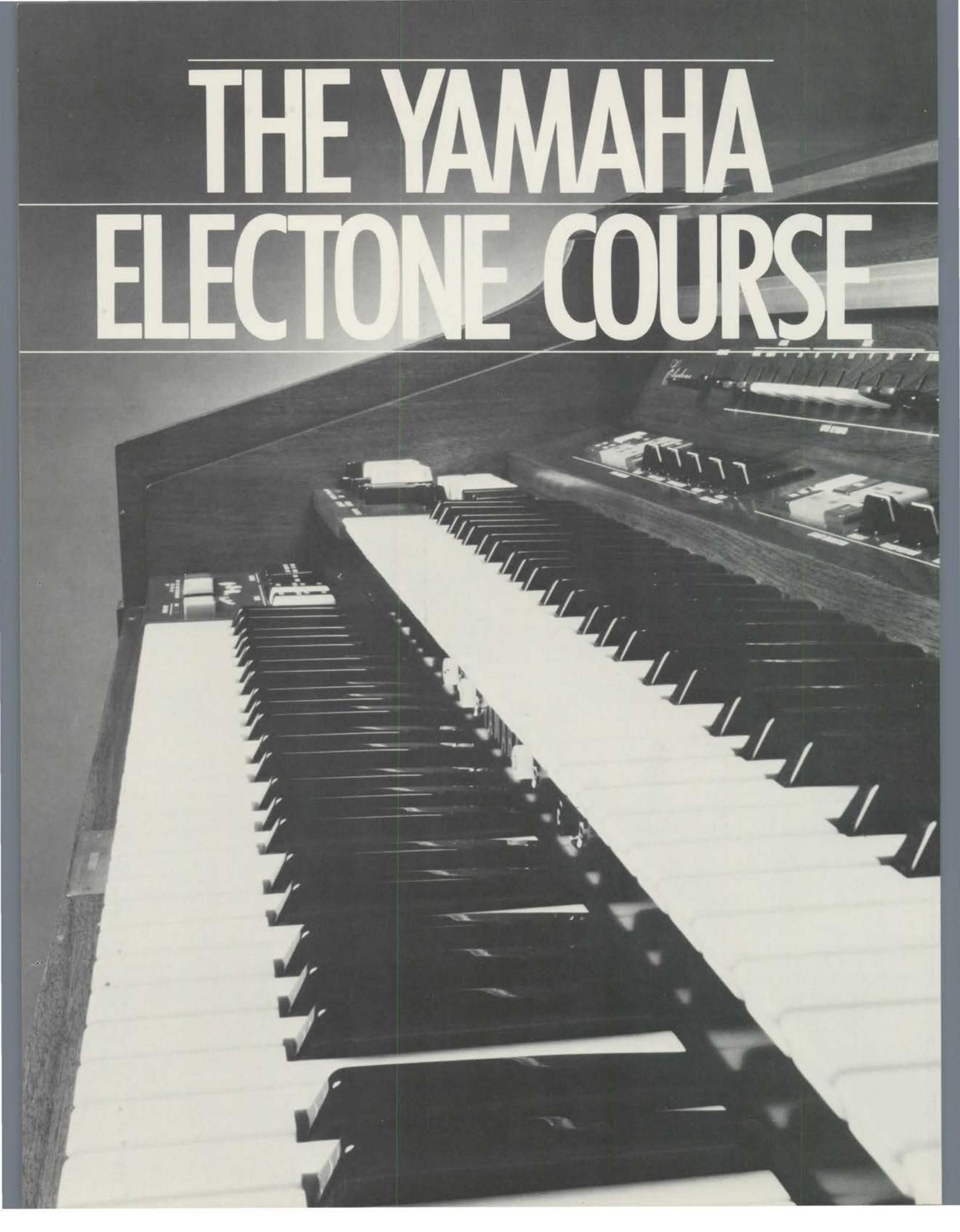
As S. L. Rothafel ("Roxy") was the underlying spark behind the project, his earlier life is reviewed; the several theatres he rescued from imminent collapse became confirmed successes. Covered completely is the design work of Donald Deskey who was so impregnated with the desire to succeed that he spent untold hours without pay to make this Art Deco creation his crowning achievement. Background on the Rockefellers' major role in the enterprise is reviewed.

The opening night disaster (too long a program) is described in one chapter, and others are devoted to the theatre's equipment and facilities (including several paragraphs on the 4/58 Wurlitzer), producer Leon Leonidoff, Rockette director Russell Markert, the Rockettes themselves, the conductors and musicians, corps de ballet, anecdotes, and the last few anxious years when the Hall was in danger of closing.

There is a complete list of all films (over 650) which have played there thru 1978. There are 169 pictures (100 in gorgeous color) and 13 reproductions of programs. A view of the 6th Avenue Elevated, which ran outside, a construction picture and one which shows the property before the turn of the century, are included.

For those who've been to the Radio City Music Hall, the book will be a supreme adventure in nostalgia as well as an education. For those who haven't walked into that sun-burst auditorium, the tome serves as a formal invitation to visit the World's Greatest Theatre. And to all lovers of the theatre pipe organ, it is a must for their bookshelves, being a complete work on one of the last strongholds of the unique musical instrument. □

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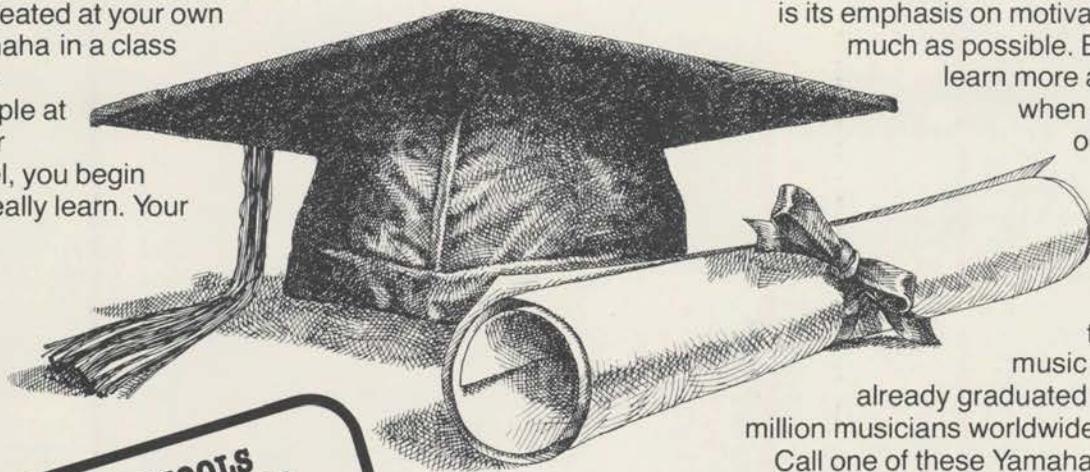
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NUGGETS
from the
GOLDEN DAYS

Prospected
by Lloyd E. Klos



This time, we feature organists who were popular in the areas where they played, rather than on a nationwide basis. References were *Motion Picture World (MPW)*, *Local Press (LP)*, *Around the Town (ATT)*, *Motion Picture Almanac (MPA)* and *Motion Picture Herald (MPH)*.

Oct. 3, 1925 (MPW) LEO TERRY, Chicago's Capitol Theatre organist, and singer Marjorie Pringle last week presented "Moonlight and Roses."

Feb. 13, 1927 (LP) R. WILSON ROSS was at the \$30,000 mammoth Marr & Colton orchestral organ in the Victoria Theatre in Rochester, N.Y. at last night's grand opening. He is heard daily at 2, 4, 7:15 and 9:15 p.m., featuring "Where Do You Work-A John?"

May 6, 1928 (*Detroit Sunday Times*) LEW BETTERLY, Capitol Theatre organist, plays before the microphone for a half hour on Wednesdays at 6 p.m. over Detroit's WGHP. Del Delbridge is the Capitol's orchestra leader.

Dec. 1928 (ATT) ARMIN J. FRANZ, solo organist at the Fox Theatre in Detroit, opened that beautiful theatre. He formerly filled a successful engagement at the Michigan Theatre as associate to Arthur Gutow.

Dec. 1928 (ATT) ERNEST HARES, "The Welsh Boy Organist," is featured soloist at Loew's State Theatre in St. Louis.

Dec. 1928 (ATT) The Bailey Theatre in Buffalo has launched an enterprise in the person of ART VOSTEEN, one of the youngest feature organists on the Shea circuit. He features novelties, and his solos are a delight to the patrons.

Dec. 1928 (ATT) From chief organist to musical director is quite a jump to fame, and ERNIE MILLS has achieved this triumph at the Strand Theatre in Syracuse. Besides playing the organ with remarkable technique, he directs the presentation band known as *Ernie Mills' Strand Debutantes*, an all-girl orchestra which has been very successful. He is kept busy with the booking of the acts and vaudeville features.

Dec. 1928 (ATT) JOSEPH STOVES, solo organist, is now featured at the Loew's State Theatre in Providence, R.I. Mr. Stoves opened this house and he is doing exceedingly well. Previously, he was with the Loew's organization for eight months, being featured at their Temple Theatre in Birmingham, Ala. His forte is solos.

Dec. 1928 (ATT) So completely engrossing is JOHN V. STANGO'S playing that he has been at the 69th Street

Theatre in Philadelphia for a period of five years. Mr. Stango does piano solos in conjunction with his organ solos, and features slides and novelties. He is a sure bet in the organ world and his ultimate success is assured.

Dec. 1928 (ATT) D.J. PATTERSON, associate organist at the Granada Theatre in South Bend, Ind., has shown a good record for the two years he's been there. He has played several of his own compositions, and features solos and novelties.

Dec. 1928 (ATT) With a talented ability to play the organ, PAUL TOMPKINS is making a hit in his first year at the Stanley Theatre in Baltimore. Previous to that, he played an engagement at Loew's Valencia Theatre in New York, as well as other Loew's houses in that city. His ingratiating charm will go a long way towards making a place for him in the field of super organists.

Dec. 1928 (ATT) A solo organist of the finest quality and one whom Milwaukee's downtown folk most enjoy, is LES HOADLEY who delights his patrons with operatic and classical selections. He is also a composer.

Dec. 1928 (ATT) In his third year at the Branford Theatre in Newark, N.J., JIM THOMAS is featured at the organ. Thomas writes his own organ solos and features community singing. He has the personality and magnetism which "makes 'em sing," and his solos are always eagerly looked for by Branford patrons. Thomas formerly played successful engagements with Keith's.

Sept. 1930 (MPA) JOSEPH L. BRITE is organist at the Homestake Opera House in Lead, S. Dakota. The place is operated by the Homestake Mining Co., operators of the world's largest gold mine at Lead.

Sept. 1930 (MPA) BILL COWDREY, who was organist at the Sherman Theatre in Chillicothe, Ohio July 1923 to June 1928, and was at the Smoot Theatre in Parkersburg, W. Va., from June 1928 to January 1929, is studying at Emil Velazco's theatre organ school in New York City.

Sept. 1930 (MPA) ARTHUR HAYS, since September 1, 1929, has been organist at Loew's Palace Theatre in Memphis, Tenn. He is featured in microphone-slide organ novelties, and he broadcasts each weekday morning over WMC.

Sept. 1930 (MPA) FRANK E. ROBERTS is organist for Warner Brothers theatres in Pittsburgh. He was musical director for Rowland and Cloch Theatres in Pittsburgh before his present engagement.

Feb. 1931 (*Local Press*) The silenced Marr & Colton organ in the Syracuse Avon neighborhood theatre will be heard again during the presentation of a special silent film, *The Legend of Jesse James*, with former Kallet Theatres' staffer, W. STUART GREEN at the console.

Oct. 24, 1931 (MPH) DANNY PARKER, in charge of organists and solos for RKO, has a darned helpful idea for music publishers which he will instigate shortly. His idea is to send to the publishers the names of any of their own songs used in the solos played by RKO organists.

Oct. 24, 1931 (MPH) BILLY MUTH, recently from the Worth Theatre in Ft. Worth, Texas, is in New York, awaiting a new assignment, and is the latest member of Harry Blair's Noon-Day Club.

Oct. 24, 1931 (MPH) WALTER ANDERSON has begun an engagement as organist at the RKO Madison Theatre in Brooklyn.

That's it for now. See you in December.

Jason and The Old Prospector □

Don't Let England Down!

See important information
on page 11 of this issue.

50-Year-Old MontClare Barton Begins New Life

by Bill Benedict

When the MontClare Theatre was built, Al Melgard played the September, 1929 premier at the ornate 3/10 Barton pipe organ. The organ was used until 1942 and then silenced until ex-CATOE member Wally Rathmann started repairs on the instrument in 1962. Since that time the organ has been used extensively. The organ has the distinction of being one of the Chicago organs to be heard at three ATOS National Conventions (1965-1969-1977).

The MontClare Theatre was the scene for many CATOE Christmas socials — always held at midnight. During the late 1960s, ex-CATOE member Barney King became crew chief of the instrument. During that time some changes in pipe work were accomplished. Early in the 1970s, the writer became crew chief, assisted by Gary and Kirk Bergmark, Mark Noller, Richard Sklenar, John Peters, Greg Simanski and Jim Taggart. During that period additional work was completed: painting of the console, blower repairs, replacing of original pipework, water leak repairs and general housekeeping of the instrument. The MontClare organ was always threatened with water problems because of a leaking roof and flooding in the blower room. It always managed to survive each attack of "mother nature" and continued to play for many CATOE sponsored events, as well as being heard during regular theatre operating hours for opening and intermission entertainment. The 36th Democratic Party Ward used the instrument for its Christmas party for many years.

When the theatre closed in late 1977, the instrument was closely guarded by the crew until early 1978, when management requested CATOE to turn in the keys. At that time, CATOE members were polled re-

garding the purchase of the organ. Members rejected the motion and the organ was later sold to Joe and Mike Bortz, operators of Sally's Stage.

In late June, 1979, Sally's Stage II opened in Lombard, Illinois, and the the MontClare Barton assumed a new and different role of entertainment, namely, music for "A Musical Eatery." With its original pipework, traps, and blower still intact, along with a new electronic relay, new blower rectifier and some additional console couplers, a new generation of listeners is amazed at the capability of this 50-year-old organ.

Rising from an eight-foot pit, the red and gold console is a focal point for the evening entertainment. On a Saturday night in August, organist Don Springer skillfully led the audience in a sing-along, special organ favorites, and accompanied vocal solos by Cindy Larson and bartender Larry Moss. The capacity dining room audience wildly acclaimed the many activities and were obviously having fun while dining. Upon leaving the restaurant, a long line of people were noticed waiting in the parking lot for their turn at the delights on the inside. Yes, the MontClare Barton is 50 years old — but by the looks of things at Sally's Stage II, the second 50 years is taking off like "gangbusters."

Organists who performed under CATOE sponsorship at the MontClare Theatre include (in alphabetical order) Leon Berry, Reggie Foort, John Grune, Jack Hadfield (ATOS-1969), Rex Koury, Al Melgard, Ashley Miller, John Muri, Hal Pearl, Ron Rhode (ATOS-1977), Larry Roou, Tom Sheen, Walt Strony, Tony Tahlman, Bob Van Camp (ATOS-1965), Pearl White, and of course the many CATOE members who played their "musical bits" during years of CATOE socials. □



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.

Charles Hayles' *Cinema Organ Magazine* (summer edition, '79) provides a picture of what the theatre organ scene in Germany was prior to World War 2. There was a smattering of Wurlitzers (circa 10) and more Welte's (over 20), but the mainstay in Germany's cinemas was built by the staid Walcker Organ Co. of Ludwigsburg and merchandised under the name "Oskalyd." These were straight organs with as many as 15 ranks, but with a difference. Like Link in the USA, the Oskalyd might have four or more tonalities within a rank. Thus a rank starting at CC as a Stopped Diapason might graduate to a Flute octave, then a Diapason, then a String in the top octave. Outside of perhaps a Saxophone and Vox Humana, the ranks were all "legit," although some installations had Piano, Xylophone and Glockenspiel, plus as many as 15 couplers. Action was electric. One interesting feature was the roller swell control, wherein the player had to roll a slow-moving, weighted drum with his foot to change volume. Yet, judging from

the frequency with which Oskalyds were found in German cinemas (there were more than fifty Oskalyd-equipped German theatres), Walcker must have had a sales force equal to Wurlitzer's in the USA. The German-built unified Welte was a much more practical theatre organ, but Oskalyds dominated. Wonder if the Oskalyds were recorded?



Mark up another very successful series of Bert Buhrman-played theatre organ concerts at the Missouri School of the Ozarks in July. "I was apprehensive about the gasoline mess," says Bert, "but we had THE BEST YEAR YET. Our audience is unbelievably loyal."



A number of inquiries were made to us about ATOSers who usually attend our conventions but who were missing at the '79 confab, for example Grant and Dottie Whitcomb, Eric Reeve, Reiny Delzer, Al Rositer, Dick Kline and Tiny James, to name a few former convention "fixtures." Tiny did come, but only to a business meeting for a couple of hours, as wife Ida has been ill. But the best excuse came from veteran ATOSer Clealan Blakely. Writing from his home in Bancroft, Ontario, Clealan informs us he had a bout with a brain tumor "the size of a lemon." His eyesight was getting fuzzy, then the lump appeared. With more than a little concern, Clealan entered a hospital and had it removed. We are most happy to report that the growth proved to be benign, and Clealan's eyesight is returning to normal.



Clealan Blakely. He had a good excuse. (Stufoto)



Lee Haggart in his natural habitat.

(Stufoto)

The patient reports one humorous aspect of the operation: "When I was released from the hospital it was with an all-encompassing head bandage. I marched out of the front door looking like the Sheik of Araby. All I needed to complete the picture was an oil well."



One organ we haven't heard much about recently is the Puget Sound Chapter's 9-rank composite (with Marr & Colton console) installed in the Haller Lake Club House north of Seattle. Jane McKee Johnson reports she played a concert on it recently for a local organ club. Jane reports a capacity attendance "and they sold a slew of my records. The organ has a warm, intimate sound and the ATOS crew had it in top shape for my concert."



Lee Haggart, who started his organ building career as an apprentice at the Van Nuys (Calif.) Robert Morton factory in the early '20s, is re-

turning to California after a sojourn in Twin Falls, Idaho, while he recuperated from a broken marriage and a serious illness. A wheel chair cripple when he left California, he will return driving his own vehicle. Lee, who did much of the architectural design work for Dick Loderhose's Seal Beach (Calif.) Bay Theatre installation, will settle in Porterville, Calif., "where there is plenty of pipe organ activity" (Dick Villemijn's organ shop is there). Lee's skills in pipe regulation and voicing should be a salable service. Welcome back, Lee Haggart.



The North Texas Chapter's *Keraulophone* reports that the group's Robert Morton installation project got a big boost when Mr. William K. Sullivan donated a substantial gift of cash and equipment totalling over \$23,000.



The Los Angeles Chapter is just as lucky. A work crew recently went to the Phoenix, Arizona, area to

bring back a 3/30 Wurlitzer from a closed restaurant. It belongs to Marion Cook, and she seems to be willing to donate it to the chapter if a home for it can be found in a year. It would not be the first time Ms. Cook has made donations to the chapter.



If the theatre pipe organ scene in New York City is a shadow of its former self, the electronic organ field isn't much better, according to veteran theatre organist, Jack Skelly. "Up to five years ago," he says, "every first-rate cocktail lounge had an organ. Now, piano bars have supplanted them."



ATOS National's Treasurer, Erwing Young, like many organ buffs, is also a railroad buff. Interested in trains all his life, it wasn't until his recent retirement as an airline pilot that he had the time to do something about it. Erwin has banded together with 6 like-minded retirees to restore and reopen the 17-mile railroad between Taneytown and Walkersville, Maryland. Dubbed the Maryland Midland Railroad, the spur's backers plan to haul freight for businesses which have indicated a preference for rail service. The seven have done much of the roadbed restoration preparation themselves. They have already pulled up 3 miles of track from an abandoned line for their line. The greatest obstacle to date has been the red tape involved in launching the project. The line would have been abandoned had they not intervened.

Director Young hasn't said anything about getting a steam engine yet, but we wouldn't be surprised.



Veteran theatre organist Randy Sauls may be the only later Hammond pumper who played "Marching Through Georgia" in a southern cocktail bar — and lived to tell about it; he had just been fired and decided to go out in a blaze of reverse rebel patriotism — but nothing happened. He's still very much alive, and wants us to know that he's writing articles and arrangements for two music mags, *Hurdy Gurdy* and *Sheet Music*, the latter offering several complete arrangements (not just chord symbols) with each issue featuring



Randy Sauls. This Reb gambled desperately.

tunes of proven interest value. Randy's instruction books drive home the point that learning music requires work and concentration; it isn't just fun, as so many current instructors insist.



Why is this guy smiling? Could it be because he's set to play 18 concerts on the superb 4/23 Kirk organ in Dunedin, Florida, an instrument he practically fathered twice (once after the church and organ were damaged by fire)? Or could it be be-

cause he will have played his 100th concert in the Kirk by December? No matter. When we saw this photo in the *St. Petersburg Times* we immediately wrote to the paper asking permission to run it (granted) because it's the only photo we've ever seen of Terry Charles with other than a glum or solemn expression on his handsome visage. Keep it up, Terry!



Ever helpful Bob Hill reports that Ben Hall's definitive book about the movie palace, *The Best Remaining Seats* is now available in a softback edition but has been retitled *The Golden Age of the Movie Palace*.



The Samuel L. Clemens Center for the Performing Arts (formerly the Elmira Theatre in Hope-Jonesville) has available a well written well-illustrated 17-page brochure covering the restoration of the theatre's 20-rank Marr & Colton organ through two floods and the ravages of air conditioner installers with a penchant for flattening pipework. Although the booklet declares no heroes, it's, in effect, a tribute to Dave Teeter, Bob Oppenheim and Lauren Peckham, who never gave



Terry Charles. His first happy photo.

(St. Petersburg Times Photo)



David Peckham. The Marr & Colton opened a new career.

up despite multiple disasters. Today the Center's now 22-rank organ plays from a reconditioned 4-manual Wurlitzer console and the whole instrument is in excellent shape. Resident organist is youthful David Peckham, a member of the reconstruction crew. The booklet is available for \$3.00 from the Clemens Center, Gray & State Streets, Elmira, N.Y.



Good news comes from Vancouver, BC where the authorities are to spend \$2.5 million to expand the lobby of the 2800-seat Orpheum. This theatre, which opened in 1927 as a vaudeville-movie house, was purchased by the city in 1975, renovated to the tune of \$3.2 million, and re-opened as a concert hall in 1977. The new work will begin in January 1980 and be finished six months later, but causing no interruption to the events scheduled. The Orpheum has a 3/13 Wurlitzer, and Puget Sounders are hopeful for a trip to Vancouver to savor the house and organ during the 1981 ATOS Convention.



Beehive Chapter's Clarence Briggs reports that the Pipes and Pizza Restaurant located in Salt Lake City, Utah, closed its doors on Saturday June 23, 1979. Cal Christensen lost his lease and the organ will have to be placed in storage unless a suitable location can be found. Beehive Chapter members on Sunday evening June 24, were treated to a final evening with the organ. All members present had the opportunity to demonstrate their talents at the informal

gathering. Leland Lay closed out the evening playing "The Song is Ended, But the Melody Lingers On," an appropriate selection under the circumstances.



A number of disappointed '79 ATOS conventioners want to know why Ann Leaf wasn't among the artists presented. She was on hand but one had to look for her. Originally the convention shapers had scheduled her to play Dick Loderhose's Bay Theatre monster. When it was too late to reschedule her for a major concert, it was realized the Seal Beach 4/44 wouldn't be ready. So Ann accepted a less visible assignment playing for home installation visitors at ATOS charter member Al Erhardt's home high on a cliff in the Eagle Rock area. The organ is a 3/15 Wurlitzer which first played as a style 235 in the Dome Theatre in Santa Monica.

Says Ann: "The Afterglow at the Erhardt home was a joy to me, musically, visually and socially. The large room with its picture window overlooking the valley is a perfect setting — and the whole house is a sounding board. Some of the 40 guests had been my fans from CBS days and requested tunes I had broadcast or recorded, which touch-

ed me very deeply."

Said Al Erhardt, "Her verve and style once again identified her as 'America's first lady of the organ'."

Of course, Ann's Afterglow performance was one of many played by various organists on home installations that day. We intend this description of one of them as a tribute to all who opened their homes to conventioners.



The Radio City Music Hall's Wurlitzer has acquired a new supporter, and surprisingly it is classical organist, Virgil Fox. Writing in a recent issue of *New York* magazine, Fox reviewed the recent happenings at the Hall and voiced his hopes for the organ: "The big news for me as a concert organist, is that the Wurlitzer is being refurbished. Leather is being renewed. A flaw in the swell shades, which had the organ playing at half its potential volume, has been corrected. Ronald Bishop has spent the past two years on refurbishing.

"I live in a world of classical music, so the Wurlitzer is a little out of my realm. However, I have played the Radio City organ, and it compares favorably with the most important organs in Leipzig, Paris and Canterbury . . . My big hope for the Music Hall is that the producers can



Ann Leaf at the Al Erhardt home Wurli console.

(Russpic)

be persuaded to include an organ solo on the program. After all, such a magnificent instrument should not begin its new life by making background music for 5,000 persons, changing seats or trotting off to the loo."



Mrs. Eulah Malone, organist in McLeansboro, Ill., has a longevity record of playing organ in a church which few persons can touch, 70 years. She has been playing and teaching piano and organ since her high school days, being graduated in 1912. Of interest to THEATRE ORGAN readers, however, is that Mrs. Malone is an ex-theatre organist. For seven years, she played for silent movies, six nights a week, 2½ to five hours a night. She also played for vaudeville, and sometimes when the lights went out, kept the audience calm and happy by continuing to play. We have contacted her for a story for this magazine.



Reader R. J. Weisenberger submits a 1929 advertisement in *Popular Mechanics* for Wurlitzer musical instruments other than organs. The ad traces the family back 200 years and seven generations to Hans Adam Wurlitzer, master violin maker, of the Saxon town of Schoeneck. Interesting, because many of us assume it all started with Rudolph Wurlitzer who moved his craft from Germany to the USA.

Incidentally, the last Wurlitzer with a deep interest in violins was Rembert, who had built up a priceless collection before his death in the '60s.



Sixty miles out on Cape Cod, Mass., may be the "eastern-most" Wurlitzer on the North American continent. We are indebted to June Garen, editor of the Connecticut Valley Chapter's *Diaphone* for a clue to a remarkable story which adds up to the unmistakable conclusion that the Cape Cod town of Truro has gone "theatre organ happy." It started when residents Bill Hastings and Joe Colliano were asked to stage a one-shot concert to raise money for the benefit of the Truro Historical Society to perhaps keep the building's roof from fall-

ing in. Bill and Joe were well equipped to stage a concert; they have the 2/10 Wurlitzer which once graced the Waterbury, Conn. Center Theatre (nee State) in their North Truro home. Their living room accommodates about 40 and at \$3.00 a head they were soon sold out. So, more night concerts were scheduled as well as some matinees.

Bill is the organist and he tailors his programs to his audiences, mostly vacationers, and many repeaters. The boys are "desperate with success" (to quote Dan Barton). They had no idea the organ concert bit would catch on to the extent that they are booked for a month ahead. But they are glad it did.



Tom Helms must be a young man in a hurry, if his recent activities and future plans are indicative. Gulf Coast Chapsec Dorothy Standley offers a partial list of Helms doings: (1) Scored *Phantom of the Opera* at Pensacola's Saenger Theatre, followed shortly by (2) a concert at



Tom Helms. What spare time? (Shown at Andre Hall Wurlitzer).

André Hall in Miami. Then (3) a concert tour in New York State and (4) Eastern Canada. Next (5) a trip to Europe to check out some classic organs. Back in Pensacola (6) he cued a performance of *Safety Last* on the Chapter's Morton. After attending the ATOS Convention (7)



Bill Hastings. His Cape Cod concerts raised bread.

Helms gave one more concert on the Pensacola Saenger Morton before the theatre closed for renovation. Then he donned his crew chief hat to supervise enlargement of the Morton (8) while the house was dark. By the time you read this Tom Helms will have accompanied the *Phantom* (9) for the Alabama Chapter (probably on the Alabama Theatre's excellent Wurlitzer) and CATOE is eyeing him for a possible Chicago concert. Wonder what he does in his spare time?



Bill Johnson, whose Concert Recording effort has resulted in the largest accumulation of available organ record releases anywhere, as well as numerous appliances designed to get more from an electronic organ, will admit that it happened, although somewhat reluctantly. But that was long ago, before Bill got his degree in electronics from USC.

As a lad he was intensely interested in audio and he loved to conduct experiments. While still in high school he became fascinated by the experiments of Nicholas Tesla, especially those dealing with extremely low frequencies. In one chapter of the Tesla book the famed engineer described the sensation of vibrating an entire room with a low frequency generator.

His young disciple decided to try that one out at home. He built a similar vibrator, a low frequency tone generator and two 60 watt amplifiers. He set up in the living room while no one was home — and that



Bill Johnson. His shake, rattle and roll brought down the chandelier.

proved fortunate. The budding scientist turned on his equipment and for a few moments enjoyed the sensation of the whole room around him shaking at a frequency of 32.4 cycles per second — at 120 watts! It was exhilarating, he recalls until the ceiling of the living room shook free of its moorings and crashed to the floor. In the adjoining dining room his mother's treasured chandelier, made like the one in the *Phantom of the Opera*, took a dive. Bill had some explaining to do when his mother returned a short time later.



In Great Britain, Clarence Atkinson figured he would never own a theatre organ, so he did the next best thing; he constructed 36"-wide model of the Blackpool Tower organ.

He was surprised at the interest his model generated in the two years since completing his first model. Photos were published in 9 newspapers, Clarence had 3 radio interviews and one of his models was seen on TV.

All that publicity started a string of orders. To date Atkinson has completed 6 console models and has five more being fabricated, one a Compton console with a "Jelly Mould" surround. Clarence says, "I felt that I may have helped in some small way to revive interest in these timeless instruments."



When Dr. and Mrs. Bebko left the Los Angeles Bonaventure Hotel following the ATOS Convention, they never dreamed that they'd be conversing aboard the home-bound plane with Colonel Harlan Sanders of fried chicken fame. "He is an avid chiropractic patient, tries to take a treatment weekly, and has set up a Canadian trust fund which provides \$33,000 in scholarships yearly for embryo chiropractors. At 89, he's as keen as a whip in his conversation."

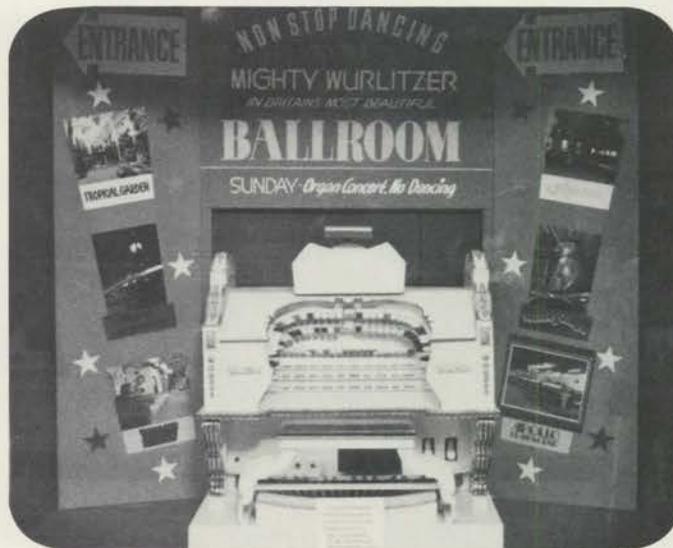


From Roswell, New Mexico, Jesse Reed offers a solution to a problem all organ program planners face from time to time — slides.

Here's a fairly inexpensive method of preparing your own song slides: Get dark green mimeograph stencils — legal or church bulletin size. Clean the type of your typewriter for clear results. Remove ribbon and cut



Clarence Atkinson's model console.



One of the Atkinson models in a Tower Blackpool display.

stencils in the usual manner, observe a 1 x 1½ slide proportion. Each stencil will provide four slides. Backlight the stencil by taping to a window on the north. (Some diffuser such as groundglass or slightly fogged film behind the glass helps. Ed.) Photograph with a good SLR camera — preferably one with a built-in light meter — using slide film. You'll find the resulting slides, white lettering on a dark green background, quite readable, at a cost of less than 25 cents per slide.



Organist Lew Williams reminds us that we can't win 'em all by sending in a clipping from a Baton Rouge newspaper announcing that efforts to save the 59-year-old, 1200-seat Paramount Theatre there have been halted because a citizens' committee trying to raise the necessary \$400,000 had been able to come up with only \$25,000. So the theatre will be razed to make room for a parking lot.

Nothing was said about disposition of the 2/6 Robert Morton so well restored by Donald May in the late '60s that the organ made a suitable recording instrument for Dolton McAlpin for two topnotch releases on the Concert label about a decade ago. But by this time it's safe to wager that the organ brokers have come and gone, probably with the Morton. □



Closing Chord



Richard C. Simonton passed away on August 22nd as the result of a heart attack. The *Los Angeles Times* reported his age as 64.

Except for professional organists, Dick was no doubt the most widely-known member of ATOS. He participated in the founding of the organization by leading the way through the maze of details necessary to place the group on a solid footing for growth.

The charter meeting was held at the Simonton residence in February of 1955 at which time Simonton became the first president of ATOS (then ATOE). Following his terms as president he served almost continuously on the ATOS National Board of Directors and was present at most official meetings. His attendance record and devotion to ATOS affairs was unmatched. His efforts were acknowledged in 1968 when ATOS bestowed on him the award of Honorary Member of the Year.

His home was always open for ATOS functions or for AGO get-togethers. To accommodate either group, Dick equipped one room with a 4/63 Aeolian-Skinner while a

downstairs theatre sported a 4/36 Wurlitzer.

Dick Simonton had many interests, including a passion for river steamboats. This led him to controlling interest in the *Delta Queen* during the late 1950s and, without a doubt, saved the concept of passenger travel via river boat from becoming just a nostalgic memory.

Simonton leaves his wife, Helena, two sons, Richard, Jr. and Robert; two daughters, Margaret and Mary, and one grandson.

There now exists in ATOS a vacancy that can never be filled.

Marie Patri Alverson was also known as Irma Heinze in the early days of theatre entertainment. Mrs. Alverson passed away on August 22nd in St. Louis, Mo.

Marie's talents covered a vast scope; piano, organ and conducting theatre orchestras. At the age of 17 or 18 she was the envy of many a musician when she was appointed conductor of the all male orchestra at the then famous Ascher's Lane Court Theatre, at Clark and Center Streets in Chicago. Many members of the orchestra were old enough to be her father. This was in 1918 when a \$100 a week salary was pretty good for male or female. She was the first female in Chicago to conduct a theatre orchestra.

The theatre had a small Kimball pipe organ and it was not long before she also was playing for the silent movies which made her an organist envied by other theatre organists, who would drop in to hear and see this young girl perform. In those days many pictures had to be scored by the organist, as few studios sent out music to accompany their silent films.

Original scores seemed to be her forte and she was asked to audition organists for other theatres. Many became well-known organists in the Chicago area.

She and her husband entered the field of vaudeville and were recognized as one of the top piano and vocal acts to tour the circuits. The

SEE WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT...

DON THOMPSON

Dear Don,

You were superb! We continue to hear from patrons of their pleasure in your concert. The organ spoke with authority and brilliance and so did you. We could hardly ask for more.

Sincerely yours,
Raymond C. Mesler, Managing Director
Embassy Theatre Foundation, Fort Wayne.

Before the evening was over, we heard Bach, Debussy, Elgar, Liszt, Strauss, Offenbach and Sibelius with, of course, the popular tunes in between. It's surprising how much music can be heard if you cut the "gab". The audience loved every bit of it and even after 2½ hours coaxed back the congenial Thompson for several encores.

... Fort Wayne News Sentinel.

He produced some of the most beautiful sounds yet heard from the Town Hall organ. His careful control of the organ, his interesting program material and his friendly personality combined to provide a concert which seemed to delight everyone.

... Yorkshire Post.

Now accepting inquiries for the 1981 concert tour. Still just a few vacancies for 1980. For concert information and availability contact:

PIPE ORGAN PRESENTATIONS,

112 Sumach Street, Toronto, Canada M5A 3J9 (416)368-9033

highlight of their career was playing the Palace Theatre in New York when they still featured what was known in those days as "two a day" shows.

Later, Marie was heard in various night clubs and dinner houses at the Hammond organ. She also was featured with the *Smoothies* on radio when they broadcast from St. Louis.

She leaves a son, "Skip" Alverson, a professor at Washington University in St. Louis, and a sister, Mrs. Florence Tessmer, of Needham, Mass.

Bud Taylor

Al Gullickson, one time representative and artist for the Barton Organ Company, died June 18th at a nursing home in Rosholt, Wisconsin. Mr. Gullickson was 72 years of age.

He was well-known throughout the Middle West playing in theatres in Michigan and Wisconsin. He opened the State Theatre in Kalamazoo as guest organist in 1927, playing the accompaniment to the silent movie *Frisco Sally Levy*. Mr. Gullickson was featured organist at the Capitol Theatre in Kalamazoo for several years, held over by popular demand. The Capitol was one of the first theatres to use a four poster lift.

After theatre organs were silenced, Mr. Gullickson became a well-known entertainer in the Milwaukee area at the Hammond organ and accordion.

Bud Taylor

Rolly Wray Finlay, a long standing member of the Aloha Chapter, died July 21, 1979, following an illness of several months.

For the past 17 years, Rolly had been the official organist for the Hawaii Islanders Baseball Team but she was not the usual team organist who would play spirited numbers at appropriate times during the games. She personalized her music to fit the situation at hand or the team member in action. Her fans looked forward to hearing what she would come up with each new season when managers or players would change, or what new tag song she would have for the returning players.

She was born Rolanda Victoria Tichy in London on January 8, 1910. Her Hungarian father and Italian mother were both music lovers and

NOTICE REGARDING 1980 RENEWALS

1980 membership renewals are due by December 31, 1979. Dues will be handled in the same manner as last year; renewal notices on a selective basis.

Renewal notices from ATOS Headquarters will go only to those 1979 members who **did not** pay 1979 dues through a chapter. Anyone not renewing through a chapter should send dues directly to:

ATOS Membership Office
P.O. Box 45
Falls Church, Virginia 22046

Please make a note of this change in the address of the membership office. Lee Prater will be taking over the duties formerly handled by Vi Thompson, who has retired.

National dues \$15.00
First Class Mailing \$6.50 additional

she was a child piano prodigy at a tender age.

She will be especially missed by the Aloha Chapter of the American

Theatre Organ Society where she displayed that her talents were equally as great on a pipe organ as they were on any electronic organ. □



Rolly Wray Finlay during her heyday as an entertainer in Honolulu, Hawaii. For 17 years she was official organist for the Hawaii Islanders baseball team.

CHICAGO THEATRE UPDATE

Many positive steps have recently taken place in the fight by preservationists to keep intact the Chicago Theatre and its 4/29 Wurlitzer organ. Two previously announced plans for redevelopment seem to have been shelved.

One of those plans had called for a 34-story office tower on the Chicago's site. No support was forthcoming for that plan as most agreed it was not in keeping with the commercial character of State Street. The second plan, which was to use the ground as the site for a new central public library, was aborted when it was announced that another site had been picked. This was the death knell to developer Arthur Rubloff's meat cleaver approach to redeveloping seven blocks of the North Loop.

Rubloff's grand plan seems to be dead, seemingly replaced by a more cautious tack being taken by the City of Chicago. No proposal seen so far is an "official" one sanctioned by the city but the local planning agency has announced that the sites of the Chicago, Michael Todd, and Cinestage theatres will be rezoned for theatrical use only. The Todd and Cinestage opened as the Harris and Selwyn theatres, two cozy legitimate houses. Rumor calls for a return to that use. Beyond that, the City of Chicago has said nothing about its plans, probably because a firm plan does not yet exist.

A keystone in any city plan will probably be the consultant study commissioned by ChicagoLandMarks, Inc., the nonprofit citizens group formed by local theatre organ enthusiasts to stimulate public participation in efforts to "recycle" the Chicago Theatre as an arts cen-

ter. That study, which is due about September 1st, is being done by Jared Shlaes and Co., a respected real estate consulting firm. It will answer a number of questions about the feasibility and cost of saving, restoring and operating the Chicago as a performing arts center. Members of the Shlaes organization have visited the Atlanta Fox and Ohio theatres as examples of successful preservation efforts.

Funding for the study went over the top during the recent Southern California ATOS convention, when a local gentleman there graciously donated \$1000, the largest individual gift to date. Some \$200 was also raised through the sale of *Continuous Performance*, a biography of A.J. Balaban, builder of the Chicago Theatre, copies of which were donated by his daughter. Ralph Beaudry of the Los Angeles Theatre Organ Society arranged for sale of the book at the convention record shop.

CLM has also received a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, to be used in funding the study. The grant was the largest awarded during the grant period, an indication of the importance placed on the Chicago as the first movie palace built, as such, in a downtown area.

The biggest news is that action by ChicagoLandMarks has resulted in the listing of the Chicago Theatre on the National Register of Historic Places. This list, compiled by the U.S. Department of Conservation on the recommendation of state advisors, is a listing of historically and architecturally significant structures and sites. Inclusion on the Register has a number of tax advantages, pre-



Active CATOE member Geraldine Anderson enlists the support of Bill Thomson in saving the Chicago Theatre, following his Crown Theatre show during the July ATOS convention.

(C. Albin Anderson Photo)

vents use of federal funds for demolition, and makes federal money available for restoration work. Chicagoans are hopeful that the listing of the Chicago Theatre in the National Register will carry heavy moral weight in the effort to secure landmark status for the building from the City of Chicago. This local designation is important as it prevents exterior changes or issuance of a demolition permit without tedious legal process. ATOS members who believe that the Chicago should be designated a city landmark may write the Hon. Jane Byrne, Chicago City Hall, 121 N. LaSalle St., Chicago, Ill. 60602 and ask the support of the new mayor in the designation process.

Other organ oriented fund raising events for ChicagoLandMarks included a "Preservation Pizza Party" during National Preservation Week in May. The organist at the pipe organ-equipped eatery, Perry Petta, donated his tips for the evening.

Tax exempt status has also been secured from the Internal Revenue Service. Donations to ChicagoLandMarks are now deductible from Federal income tax in the manner and to the extent provided by law.

Recent elections saw the return of all founding officers plus the addition to the Board of Directors of James Neis, an attorney with the old line Chicago firm of Winston and Strawn, as vice president, and Dr. Joseph Sonntag as membership chairman. □



the letters to the editors

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

Address:

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

Dear Mr. Thompson:

Bouquets to the Los Angeles-San Diego chapters for supplying us with one of the most enjoyable conventions we have attended.

We enjoyed everything, even the long wait at the station to board the Amtrak train for San Diego (although it would have been nicer not to wait that long).

There were no goof-ups; some inevitable last minute changes which everyone should expect. The changes were expedient and certainly no disappointment.

The banquet was great; lunch and dinner arranged by San Diego was fantastic.

Every concert was superb. The George Wright symposium was fantastic, appreciated even by non-playing members.

The business meeting was one of those rare experiences where minor differences were settled with tender loving care. The warmth and concern of each member for each other was obviously evident, except for one loud mouth in the balcony who shot off before any discussion had begun. Completely out of line, tactless, rude (and other superlatives escape me). Thank you, Mr. Presi-

dent, for giving it the notice it deserved. I don't care to know who it was, even!

Hotel accommodations were lovely, a little steep maybe, but isn't everything these days?

The prospect of attending next year in England is intoxicating. I know it will be difficult for many of us to finance such a trip, but we're sure going to sacrifice in order to go.

I do wish we could do one thing though, with all conventions. Get them out of the summer "heat" season. I know there are a few teachers and students who want to attend during the summer vacation time, but the truth is that is the most miserable weather everywhere in the "States" (and possibly in England?). I think most of us could easily arrange to attend in October, which to me is the perfect month. Weather is best — not usually much rain, no high humidity, no blistering sun and excessive temperature, accommodations are better, often less expensive, certainly less crowded and in times like these of excessive inflation, most desirable.

Perhaps the suggestion could be kicked around by the board of directors, maybe a poll taken of membership preference, or it might even be interesting to try it once.

I didn't mean to slight the bus (and train) service. The buses were there when they said they would be. Buses were dispatched as soon as filled, relieving panic, crowding, congestion, etc.

"A Great Convention."

Charles and Louise Harrison
Laguna Hills, Calif.

Dear Sir:

I wish to pay this tribute to the late Richard C. Simonton.

Not many people would take the time to make a long distance call to a person facing an operation in order to give them courage to face an operation. Mr. Simonton did that for me in 1977.

Hearing that I faced a total left hip replacement operation and was somewhat concerned about it, Mr. Simonton took the time out from his busy schedule to phone me and tell me about what was entailed in such an operation. Mr. Simonton had had this operation performed in England 10 years before by the famed Dr. Charnley, the originator of this type

replacement operation. An auto accident had caused Mr. Simonton's hip problem I understand. Mine was caused by Osteo-Arthritis (calcium deposits).

Mr. Simonton, after explaining the operation, told me, "I heard you were concerned about this operation and I felt I could ease your worries and relax you."

Believe me, I appreciated very much his thoughtfulness in taking the time to phone me for encouragement.

Sincerely,
Col. Harry J. Jenkins,
San Diego, Calif.

Letter to the Editor:

As a member and representative of the Connecticut Valley Chapter, I wish to express my thanks to the chairman and all the other committee members for their outstanding work in organizing this fabulous convention. It was a great success and the committee deserves a lot of credit.

Everyone was so pleasant and helpful. The bus drivers were very pleasant and friendly. One bus driver we had kept us all in an uproar with his humor and jokes.

I could go into detail for hours but I will end by saying I had a wonderful time and enjoyed every minute of it.

Sincerely,
Bessie Pupo,
Pittsfield, Mass.

Dear Sir:

Your excellent article concerning the fate of the Odeon, Manchester, (page 12, June/July 1979 issue) states that the 4/20 Wurlitzer Opus 2120 is the largest theatre organ from Wurlitzer to be installed in England.

If large is the term used for number of units, then the 4/21 Wurlitzer of Quentin MacLean fame, formerly installed at the Trocadero, London and now housed in the Edric Hall, Polytechnic of the South Bank, London, a stone's throw from its original home, must hold this honour.

The instrument, after many years of storage was once again heard in all its glory on the 28th of January, 1979, at a public concert played by William Davies.

Two further points of interest concerning the Odeon Wurlitzer. Without in any way wishing to detract from the magnificent work done by the dedicated members of

the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust, I feel that some acknowledgement should be given also to the generosity of the Rank Organization who operated the theatre and the King Edward Hospital Fund, London, who owned the building. Those two organizations jointly gave the organ free of charge to the L.T.O.T. who in turn donated it to the City of Manchester. The whole operation is a splendid example of cooperation between various parties and, as a member of the ATOS, I am pleased that we were able to help the work along by our Safari Fund in 1976.

One final comment. If I may add to your statement that the fourth chamber is completely open. This is quite correct but it houses only the Master Xylophone and the Marimba. While the Xylophone was always heard extremely clearly even on the famous '78s' on the Henry Croudson records released between 1936 and 1938, the Marimba was, to quote the official L.T.O.T. brochure of the 1977 Inaugural concert, "sadly buried behind the large wooden basses of the Solo Tibia and was almost inaudible."

"The Marimba/Harp is now being heard in all its beauty" in its new location.

Yours truly,
Erskine MacPherson,
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Mr. Klos:

I received your letter, announcing that I have been made a member of the Theatre Organists Hall of Fame, for which I am very flattered.

I apologize for waiting so long to answer your previous letter (asking for biographical information). However, I have been trying to get together material about the highlights of my life, and you will receive it in a short time.

Sincerely,
Dean Fossler,
Montrose, Calif.

Dear George:

I would like to thank all those concerned with the very successful Convention '79. I appreciate all the hard work that went into making this the ATOS meeting of all time.

I would particularly like to thank the transportation committees and the bus captains. Several of us attending had temporary walking problems and the bus captains were

very considerate in helping us onto buses, providing transportation at the Union Depot for the Amtrak boarding and assisting us to get aboard the Catalina boat before the crowd. This thoughtful help made it possible for several of us to meet the schedules.

It might be something for future committees, of ATOS meetings, to keep in mind that there will probably always be those in attendance who have difficulty in getting around.

Again my thanks for a grand time, and all the personal help extended to me.

Bob Longfield,
Sierra Chapter

Dear George:

Theatre Organ Conventions seem to have an impact more deeply engraved on the individual, than sometimes realized.

The fact that I had attended an AGO convention two weeks prior to the Los Angeles conclave, the return home on an hour late plane and that I stumbled in the door at home at 1:00 a.m., I suppose had something to do with it.

For some 30 seconds, consoles, organists, buses, lakes in the lobby and colors for directions flitted across my mind, I soon dropped off to what I hoped would be a long 12-hour sleep.

It didn't turn out that way. I found

myself registering at a mixed-up combination of classic-theatre convention.

The first thing I did was miss the last bus. So I started running. I wasn't sure if I was headed for Pasadena or San Gabriel, but I must have gone through Hollywood and the La Brae Tar Pits, as I arrived quite some time before the rest of the caravan.

Out of breath, I decided to go in the theatre and rest. What I encountered made me wonder if the wet bar had already been set up in waiting, or that I wished it had been, caused all this.

I found a beautiful blonde Wurlitzer console, contorted back in dismay with her Tibias sobbing, and the wood block crying "NO! NO!" Hovering over her was a menacing B-3 Hammond. Frantically running circles on the stage was a Leslie Speaker trying to find a place to plug in.

As nightmares are wont to do, at the impossible, improbability, I woke up.

Paul W. Haggard,
Oklahoma City, Okla.

P.S. — If nine months from now I read of a cute California Wurlitzer giving birth to a little tracker organ, so help me, I will never go to another convention, classical, theatre or otherwise. □

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Dick Schrum. Education enters the pizza emporium.

TEACHING YOUNG AMERICA

by Thelma R. Smith

They all come to hear the organ and the pizzas are running it a close second, when families and children get together at the Pizza and Pipes in Bellevue, Washington.

Dick Schrum, of the Puget Sound Chapter, Past President of ATOS and now a National Board member, is also a staff member of the Pizza and Pipes and takes much extra time and effort to entertain and educate everyone from teenagers to senior citizens.

He has literally been working day and night with groups who have asked to come and spend an afternoon and the demand for this type of knowledge about the pipe organ has been so great that reservations are suggested for these daytime groups. Local school districts have encouraged music teachers to make this a "special trip" and include it in their school work as a project. There are also special groups of Cub and Girl Scouts, Y.M.C.A., blind people, soccer groups, and even a Big Brother group got into the act. Usually there is a busload coming and going, with children coming

from other parts of the State of Washington for a session.

Dick Schrum, very patient and with his keen sense of humor, is a hit with everyone as he shows them the cut-off sections of pipes and explains in great detail, how this all combines to make an orchestral "great." Dick also has a great wealth of information about his musical selections, the program geared to the age group, so that it becomes a musical appreciation session also. Groups up to 300 people have been accommodated. Perhaps the restaurant should be renamed "Organ Musichall."

Yesterday's piano in the parlour was a luxury. Today a home organ is the start. These impressionable youngsters may be the "great pipe-organ artists of tomorrow." What better way to instill this inspiration to those who will have to carry on this great program of organ music when most of us are gone?

Students who come down with their teachers as a "class" are given credit for being able to understand the organ and its association to the music world. We need more organists in this country who are thus dedicated. They will find that children can be much more interested in organ music than they are in rock and roll and the disco scene, once the instrument has been explained to them.

Saturday nights at this great emporium are pretty hectic for owners Betty and Jack Laffaw, with parents and tiny tots waiting for Melodie Mouse, Maestro Mouse and Durque Duck to appear. Then it's into "The Mouseketeer Song" and everyone sings, as these characters enter the auditorium.

As soon as "Prelude and Fugue in D Minor" is played, the knowing children look around for the Phantom of the Opera, who complete with wicked mask and black cloak, dashes fugitively around the room and then disappears. Children are learning good music, the easy way, and remember it, too.

Old-time movies are played to a full house with great attention with laughs from the old-timers and giggles from the young ones. More than one child has asked, "Why don't they show these when I go to the movies?" The obvious answer is, "There aren't many movie houses

still available for accompaniment by the organ like it used to be." The pizza parlors have filled the void to some extent and the chapters are helping America know and appreciate the past.

Children stand in awe, as the thundering noise played by the organist becomes *Star Wars* or *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and at their request, too. Dancing puppets made by Ginny Whitting, keep time to the rhythm of the organists, through a device that only Bill Carson (the technician) and Ginny know. One week the puppets are dressed as Mexicans, but changes from chickens and bunnies at Easter to the Muppet characters is seasonal. An active bubble machine keeps them dancing and all of this is subtle background for a good education of basic music, with rhythm and organ for all. Children have expressed such comments as, "Wish I could play like you," "How can you play without music?," "How many hours do you practice a day?" and even "Someday, I want to play an organ like you." Who knows, we could have a whole new generation of organists... in time if everyone is concerned and helps.

This particular organ, is a 3/16 Wurlitzer, originally in the Academy of Music in New York City. It was purchased and installed here two years ago. While Dick Schrum usually graces the organ at this type of program, he alternates with Tom Cotner and Gregg Smith, who also alternate with the Seattle Pizza and Pipes. Drop by anytime at N.E. 8th, west of Freeway #405, in Bellevue just east of Seattle. □

ATOS CONVENTION
JULY 20 to 27, 1980
LONDON

BARTON ON THE AIR

In August, WGER-FM (Bay City, Mich.) began broadcasting a series of programs taped at the Temple Theatre in Saginaw, Mich., featuring the Golden-Voiced Barton organ. Organists from all over Michigan have donated their time and talent to preserve the sounds of this unique instrument in a varied program ranging from semi-classical to jazz.

Recording technician was Ken Wuepper of Saginaw. Using three mikes, one in front of each chamber and one about 15 feet back of stage apron to capture the reverb of the theatre, these stereo tapes are of superb quality. Talent coordinator for this series was Burt Castle.

Produced by a group called The Valley Center for the Performing Arts, copies of these tapes will be donated to the Saginaw County Historical Museum. This group is currently negotiating with the Shriners of Saginaw to have the theatre preserved as a center for the performing arts. □



CHAPTER NOTES

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Sept. 1st. for Oct./Nov.
Nov. 1st. for Dec./Jan.

CATOE

All the CATOE's attending the Southern California Convention have been singing praises ever since their return, and all extend sincere congratulations to the Los Angeles and San Diego chapters for their super efforts toward an excellent convention.

CATOE is planning a 1980 Regional for November 28, 29, 30, Thanksgiving weekend with headquarters at the Bismarck Hotel. The special rates of \$24 single and \$30 double will apply to the 27th, Thanksgiving Day, for conventioners. The schedule will cover interesting area organs and theatres, where possible, and a banquet will finalize the affair. Details will be announced soon.

The Wurlitzer Dekalb 5/65 organ was the center of interest for 457 CATOE's and guests on August 4th. David Ashby, of the Wurlitzer Company, gave a superior performance wherein he demonstrated the instrument's possibilities. His program was well-rounded and beautifully performed. All in attendance greatly appreciated the opportunity to see and hear this pipe installation.

There is nothing final to report, yet, concerning the Chicago Theatre as a landmark. At the '79 Convention, CATOE member Richard Sklenar was given a well-needed \$1,000 anonymous donation for the coffers of ChicagoLandMarks, Inc. This will greatly help to get the word around about the fate of the theatre.

CATOE's September social was at St. Paul's Lutheran Church on North Avenue. It is here that we now have permanent quarters for an office, storage and a meeting place when desired.

At the social, the church organ was available for open console; no soloist.

GEORGE WRIGHT In Concert

COMMENTS FROM SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS . . .

Scheduling George Wright in Rochester has always been cause for a grand rush for tickets. He never fails to attract people from hundreds, if not thousands of miles away. The drawing power of George Wright is unbelievable.

Rochester Theatre Organ Society

The George Wright Concert sold out in record time and he is a delight both on and off stage.

*Shirley Flowers, Director
Pittsburgh A.T.O.S.*

C.A.T.O.E. has sponsored many successful organ concerts but, in my opinion, none has topped the entertainment or financial success of George Wright's "Grand Finale" to the 1977 A.T.O.S. National Convention.

*Doug Christenson, Director
Chicago A.T.O.S.*

**For concert information and availability contact:
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(415) 457-0255**

This way the members had a fair amount of time for playing. Several discussions occurred concerning our chapter and some different movies were shown.

Refreshments were potluck as it seems our members like extensive variety. Beverages were furnished by the chapter.

ALMER BROSTROM

CENTRAL INDIANA

"Roll Out Those Lazy, Hazy, Crazy Days of Summer . . ." certainly describes what Central Indiana experienced in the month of July. Even so, the July 22nd meeting at the Hedback Theatre brought out 65 members and guests who braved the heat and humidity to enjoy our monthly meeting. The 2/10 Page organ sounded so refreshing that the weather was soon forgotten as we enjoyed the program from member Bob Davidson. We always appreciate so very much when members give us a program, and we especially appreciate Bob bringing his talent and ability forth after having let it lay somewhat dormant for some time. We hope he will continue to "get back into his music" so that we can have the pleasure of hearing him more often. As usual, the refreshment committee gave us a choice of so many goodies to enjoy while visiting and taking turns at open console.

After a record low temperature in the earlier part of the week, the heat and humidity returned in full force for the August 19 meeting. However, 81 members and guests were undaunted by the weather because they knew what they had in store when the meeting is at the home of Ed Morris. Ed is a most untiring and congenial host, and the meeting at his home is always a very special one.

After the dinner and business meeting, we were provided with an enjoyable program of music from Kurt Von Schakel and Larry Mac Pherson. The 2/9 combination Barton/Hilgreen-Lane theatre pipe organ which Ed has in his home never sounded better. It was a pleasure to hear this organ again and to have two of our special club members and performers play for us. The open console time was enjoyed by many of those attending and again verified what a privilege it is to have a pipe organ "at home." As though all of the above items afforded to us by Ed's hospitality were not enough, those who could no longer stand the heat and humidity were invited to take a dip in the beautiful swimming pool. A most sincere thank you goes to Ed and all who helped Ed make this truly a memorable CIC-ATOS meeting.

BARBARA J. ATKINSON

EASTERN MASS.

Formal meetings have a hiatus during the summer months, but activities do not stop. Kaarina and Tim Bjareby once again graciously hosted a field trip to their Ipswich home on July 8th with about 40 members and guests present. National convention accounted for several regulars among the missing this year.

Tim Holloran opened proceedings giving a brief description and demonstration of the fine Robert Morton, which has now grown to a 2/9. A very adaptable Clarinet rank on the solo manual, revoiced for higher pressure, has been added, also, a set of Chinese bells (spun saucer bells).

Our host, Tim, then took over from his partner commenting on and using the new additions to excellent advantage. He pointed out that in their professional rebuilding con-

tracts they don't like to reduce an organ, just add to and improve.

Mark Renwick and Dr. Jonathan Kleefeld followed, each with nicely arranged selections, mostly from the 20s and 30s era.

Carol Bray Moeller then had a lively organ interlude and others had repeat performances. A surprise by two guest "pro's" came when Maria Rossop, soprano, and Rosayne Taylor, pianist, blended well in change-of-pace contributions.

Tim's mother gave a most amusing description in strictly layman's terms, of the trials and tribulations of owning and housing a pipe organ. No apartment would do for them as a house was needed for the "beast." They drove up countless streets in many communities with Tim's eyes as much looking up at the electric wires (for 3 phase) as glancing at the pavement. Her vague knowledge of just what comprises a pipe organ was soon changed, when moving and installation time arrived. The console increased to hundreds of pipes, traps, percussions, blowers, reservoirs, relays, endless cables, wind trunks, etc., etc., and the basement, garage and living room were nearly filled with parts. Much lifting, sliding, pushing, pulling, twisting and grunting were required, but eventually the parts assumed order and a beautiful musical instrument occupied their home. She has learned to live with it and even to enjoy its music, but there were times when

Work on both our Babson Wur-litzer and that in Stoneham Town Hall has continued under the direction of our organ crew chief, Arthur Goggin, as our "pets" need constant attention to keep them living, breathing and "singing" on pitch.

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Bob Reilly, seen here at the Rahway Theatre Wurlitzer, processes photos for the Garden State Chapter.



U.S. Air Force Major Jack Moelmann played for the Garden State Chapter at the Suburbian.



Ginny Vanore at the 3/17 Wurlitzer at the Suburbian Restaurant.

GARDEN STATE

The 12th of August was a traditional GSTOS open console day — sunup to sundown! The schedule began at 9 a.m. at the Pascack Theatre in Westwood, N.J. An open house followed around noon at the home of Ethel Plenkens in Ringwood. Special thanks go to Ethel and her friends, Tina and Anna Mae Koudelka and

Anne Leider who had everything ready and waiting when the 24 hungry and wet GSTOS members and guests arrived. At one o'clock in the afternoon, it was on to the Suburbian Restaurant and the 3/17 Wurlitzer installed there. While 28 members signed in for the Pascack Theatre in the morning, an unofficial count at the Suburbian Restaurant showed

over 40 members who had braved the heavy rain again on a Sunday afternoon.

Some of the members who played that afternoon were U.S. Air Force Major Jack Moelmann, Quentin Schleckser, Leonard Lipman, Dave Nonnemacher from Pennsylvania, Ralph Ringstad, Jr., Ginny Vanore, Doris Lintner and Frank Cimmino. Many thanks to all who played for providing good listening music, individual registrations and unique arrangements.

September provides a fine banquet and evening of entertainment at our Officers Installation Dinner at the beautiful Casa Italiana with its great sounding 3/11 Wurlitzer. The 30th of September, was set aside for a get-together with the New York and Delaware Valley chapters at Surf City on Long Beach Island.

DON PLENKERS



Garden State members gathered at the Suburbian Restaurant in August.

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Our chapter chairman and crew chief, Tom Helms, just recently returned from a European trip to study classical organs, hardly had time to take off his hat when he waded into the organ work the chapter has undertaken — the enlarging of our 2/6 Robert Morton to a 4/21!

The Board of Directors voted this as primary work this year, during the restoration of the theatre. We completed a successful campaign to raise funds for this project.

We have purchased additional ranks, chests, regulators, etc. for our Robert Morton at the Saenger Theatre here in Pensacola, Florida, and are working like beavers to recondition and install our "new" parts. The work crew, headed by Tom, includes Walter Smith, Barclay D. Rhea, M.D., Bob Sidebottom and Curt Goldhill with assists from anyone we can snaggle into the work-

shop. This includes husbands and/or wives of members. The writer has refinished and relettered stop tabs and polished many pipes!

Shopping for organ parts was an interesting side trip recently when Tom Helms, Walter, and chief chapter helper David Dietrich visited McMinnville, Tenn., to bring back some of our organ purchases. A borrowed truck, with one broken water pump, spelled late, late hours on the road and 24 hour driving stints. Nothing daunts an organ buff!

We're preening ourselves on the success of our spur of the moment last minute reprieve concert early in September. The architects delayed the closing of the theatre — red tape, you know — so we hustled up a concert before the closing for restoration. This was a "freebee," but we did pass the hat for those who just had to help us! Tom was our artist

for this Sunday afternoon and he delighted the audience with his variety program of slides and music.

Now we will get back to work on enlarging "Lola" for the Grand Re-opening. Just think, a 4/21!!!!

DOROTHY STANDLEY

LOS ANGELES

With Convention '79 now history, Los Angeles is gearing up for a great fall-winter season of concerts and organ trips. We hope all 840 conventioners from around the world enjoyed their visit to sunny southern California and we do thank all those who wrote us cards and letters with their comments. We also hope someday soon you can all return, as there will soon be some "new" organs debuting on our scene!

• As a footnote, chapters planning National ATOS conventions in the future are welcome to write for any information or help they may need — we've tried to keep detailed records on all the good (and bad) things we did. Just contact our chapter chairman or secretary.

Also, any console artists planning trips to the West Coast in 1980-81 are urged to contact us as soon as possible to arrange concert dates in Los Angeles.

Our chapter has been saddened by the news of Dick Simonton's passing on August 22nd. His years of devotion to our chapter, and to the theatre organ movement around the world, are monumental. His participation will be sorely missed.

On August 26th, the Bay Area's Larry Vanucci gave the San Gabriel 3/16 Wurlitzer a worthy workout for chapter members. It was not a usual concert day: (1) Sandy Fleet was holding an open house in San Diego, to celebrate the installation of his Style D Wurlitzer, an event which



Hal Standley (left) and Tom Helms repair organ pipes. Enlarging a 2/6 to a 4/21 is quite an undertaking.

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'The Vanooch' at work.

(Stufoto)

drew some members to S.D. (2) the sadness of the chapter's loss in the death of founding member Dick Simonton was quite evident among those who gathered to hear Vanucci, and may have prompted others to stay home.

One of Larry's assets is that his auditioner never knows quite what to expect. Larry arrived on a 10 a.m. plane, after wiring his requested combination settings ahead. He had worked his regular job playing a plug-in at San Raphael Joe's in that town, until the wee hours the night before and he was admittedly tired.

None of this showed in his very professional presentations. His opener was a very Wallerish "Ain't Misbehavin'" with much of the humor of that unforgotten entertainer intact. He went through a false start with "Laughter in the Rain," forgetting the melody, stopping (with

"shave and a haircut") remembering the tune and doing a fine interpretation of it. Larry knows how to get his audience with him.

One type of tune Larry does well is the bluesy rhythm ballad as typified by "Harlem Nocturne" which he played low-down and dirty. It was gorgeous. Another of the same genre was "Sultry Serenade," into which Larry injected hints of "Flat-foot Floogie," never missing a floy-floy. It was downright filthy. Larry even slowed down the middle theme of "Roller Coaster" for a ballady treatment in semi blues style.

But there were beautifully orchestrated straight ballads, too, and a Crawfordy "Stars Are My Windows of Heaven," the latter in memory of Dick Simonton.

No Larry Vanucci concert would be complete without a Duke Ellington set and this time Larry included

"Mood Indigo," "Sophisticated Lady" and "Take the A Train," all superbly registered with emphasis on single stops or very small combinations, to bring out the many resources of the 3/16. Another Ellington-associated tune was "Chelsea Bridge," played for his friend, ex-Chapter Chairman Bob Power.

One tune title Larry announced baffled us — "Rose Schonmarin." But it came on as Fritz Kreisler's "Schön Rosmarin." Fatigue may have garbled some of Larry's announcements but not his music. His arrangement included solo violin passages, as the composer might have played them.

After a spirited "Dizzy Fingers," Larry played a closer which illustrates his ingenuity in the arranging field. Announced as "Lullaby of Bachland," it turned out to be that well-worn birdland tune treated to the kind of contrapuntal arrangement J.S. Bach might have applied to it. Larry coaxed some untrem'd straight organ registration from the Wurlitzer but his rendition was not without humor. At one point he wove a high-pitched Kinura-topped voice into the feathery counterpoint and it was fun to follow it through the formula'd intricacies, and easy, because who can lose a Kinura in any combination? During this selection Larry displayed a pedal technique which even an Olivera couldn't top.

Afterwards Larry met with his admirers in the lobby to overcome them with that Italian-American charm which has sustained him for more than 15 years at San Raphael Joe's ("I think of it as a permanent job") and he autographed his newest record album played on a 3/13 Robert Morton — "A very special Morton" says Larry.

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Dance organists on Motor City's private charter moonlight cruise this year were (L to R) Ken Saliba, Lionel LaMay and Tony O'Brien. *(Fred Page Photos)*



Claude and Emily Sheridan (top) and Ray and Suzanne O'Brien kick up their heels on Motor City's moonlight cruise. *(Fred Page Photo)*



Gil and Penny Francis enjoying the moonlight cruise. They also coordinated the chapter workshops held at the Redford Theatre this summer. *(Fred Page Photo)*

MOTOR CITY

Our annual picnic in July was again held at a private campground through the courtesy of Ron and Dee Werner. Although there were less than 50 people in attendance (many were still returning from the convention) those who attended enjoyed boating, swimming or open console at the Rodgers organ, supplied by Henry Hunt of Musical Heritage.

Some 554 members and friends attended our sixth annual private charter moonlight cruise on the excursion steamer Columbia in August. Dance organists for this year's moonlight were Lionel LaMay, Tony O'Brien and Ken Saliba, and they kept the ballroom floor hopping during the three-hour cruise. The Rodgers organ again this year was supplied by Musical Heritage in Royal Oak. Even though the air was a little cool (for August) people dressed accordingly and still enjoyed themselves on our trip into Lake St. Clair on the 77-year-old excursion boat, one of the last of its kind.

Four member workshops, coordinated by members Gil and Penny Francis, were held at the Redford Theatre in July and August. "Instructors" at these sessions were members John Lauter, Larry Gleason and Tony O'Brien. Using the

3/10 Barton, the series covered various organ techniques in pipe organ playing. Attendance at the sessions numbered close to a hundred.

The Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor has become a center for the performing arts, ending the anxious moments of wondering what would become of the 51-year-old, 1800-seat theatre. The Barton organ was donated to the new organization by Butterfield Theatres, former operators of the movie house. Second Sunday programs continue at the Michigan but can now be held in the afternoon, instead of in the morning.

Fourth Sundays are also continuing as a popular monthly event at the Royal Oak Theatre.

DON LOCKWOOD

NORTH TEXAS

The summer heat and excessive rains have not slowed the activities of the chapter to any great extent. Between the two places utilized as work centers on our Wonder Morton, a total of some 900 man-hours have been expended by the members participating. John Beckerich, project coordinator for the Wonder Morton rebuilding, delivered a fine

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lecture on the intricacies of the organ at the July meeting, detailing the various components involved, and discussing a lot of the craftsmanship necessary. John estimates a total project time to completely refurbish the organ at 4000 man-hours (or should I say person-hours, since there are as many women as men involved in the process?) That involves just the rebuilding and renovation of the instrument and says nothing about installation, since the final decision has yet to be made on where the former Loew's Jersey City Wonder Morton will finally be installed. Texas Hall, at the University of Texas in Arlington, is still the major consideration, but there are several problems of various kinds involved. These are acoustical, chamber space and location, availability to the membership and other items, not to mention political and legal matters. Fortunately there are those in the chapter who are well-versed in several of the special areas involved, so as the program develops, proper decisions should be reached.

Another item adding to the potential success of the Wonder Morton has been the receipt of several substantial gifts in the past few years. Mr. William H. Sullivan of Dallas was the most recent donor of a truly fine electronic organ, to be sold by the chapter to the highest bidder, and the proceeds applied to the Wonder Morton project. After deciding that physical problems would no longer permit him to play, he planned the donation as the best way that his instrument could further the theatre organ program in our area. We thank Mr. Sullivan for his fine contribution and gave him an Honorary Membership.

The chapter has also honored several of the members who have

been ardently working on the Wonder Morton by electing them to the elite circle of "The Knights and Ladies of the Organ Pipes." To be eligible for this elite circle, a member must put in X number of hours, appearing at many consecutive meetings of the work groups and performing assigned duties as required. Many of these sessions have been real family affairs, with children attending with their parents and grandparents. It's surprising how interested the youngsters can get after some explanation of the functioning of a pipe organ and a look and listen to some of the parts and pieces. And the craftsmanship is surprising, too. They have experience with sewing, leatherworking, model building, etc., and can turn out some pretty good jobs on such projects as cutting leather for bellows or valves, cleaning and sanding various components, and other such tasks. Several of the younger family members involved have made substantial work contributions to the Wonder Morton project. And at the same time we're projecting the theatre organ further into the future, with youth developing an interest which they can in turn pass on to further generations.

Although a lot of the members enjoy the work phases of our activities, *everybody* enjoys the "play" sessions, especially when someone like Lawrence Birdsong our member from Longview, Texas, presents a program on Jesse Crawford. After the business session at the August 26th meeting at John Beck Hall, Lawrence presented a truly fine program, interspersing beautifully played Crawford favorite numbers with an interesting commentary on Jesse Crawford's organ style and musical background. Larry kept the packed house interested with his clever com-

mentary on Jesse Crawford's techniques, records, anecdotes on his life, including Mr. Birdsong's personal meetings with Mr. Crawford.

The chapter also owes thanks to Sylvia and Gil Swift, who again hosted the meeting at John Beck Hall in a manner of which John would have been proud. We truly had a full house and several latecomers had trouble finding a place to stand. Every available seat was taken, as well as the standing room.

The business part of the meeting included a discussion of plans for caravan trips to other chapter meetings or to points of interest to the membership. Besides the problems created by gasoline shortages, (some of our members travel 250 or better mile round trips to our meetings) some of the other factors involved were discussed. One trip plan was cancelled when it was determined that if as many from our chapter as proposed showed up, the meeting site could not accommodate them along with the number expected from the immediate area. This emphasized an item for consideration in joint chapter meetings. Contact the host chapter and see if the meeting hall will accommodate all who might attend. The need for greater participation by all the membership in the Wonder Morton rebuilding program was also again emphasized. Available working space was an important consideration, and several meetings in each week, with fewer members present at each session was recommended as a better plan than one or two big sessions each week. We currently have 123 paid-up members, the largest membership in our history. Wouldn't it be a mess either at Organ World shops in Garland or Jim Peterson's shop in Fort Worth if they all showed up for the

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same work session? The entire project has to be fully coordinated so we can make maximum use of all available person-power.

JOE KOSKI

OREGON

Our July picnic, originally planned at Milt Kieffer's home, was rescheduled August 4th at his new Uncle Milt's Pizza Co. in Vancouver, Washington, across the Columbia River from Portland. This was a special preview held for our chapter prior to public opening, and featured staff organists Wendy Kieffer, Gerry Gregorius, Rob York and David Lee, rotating at the 3/18 Wurlitzer.

The console is out in front of the pipe chambers and is on a lift, most

unusual outside of a theatre. A marquee in front of the restaurant is in the form of a giant console, backed by many huge pipes. The entrance doors are in the place of the swell shoes. Our Organ Grinder restaurant in Portland also has a novel entrance: the open end of a colossal 128' Diaphone!

Having a second restaurant of this type in our metropolitan area will surely expose many new patrons to the sound of a theatre pipe organ and generate more enthusiasts.

Many thanks to Milt Kieffer and staff for fine music, free pizza and other refreshments. We wish him the best in this new enterprise.

On August 18th, the Organ Grinder 4/41 Wurlitzer was made available to us for a concert by Dan Bell-

omy, brought here from his post at the Denver Organ Grinder. While Dan's background is primarily as a touring artist for Hammond, his performance on pipes is truly sensational. He is a fantastic technician, playing difficult pieces with unbelievable speed and precision. He uses full combinations, with lots of brass and progressive harmony.

In addition to the concert, Dennis Hedberg, of the Organ Grinder management, gave us a demonstration and history of many of the unusual ranks in this organ. He also exhibited color slides introducing chapter members to the Denver Organ Grinder which is an addition to the Portland operation.

We advise anyone who can, to visit the Organ Grinder in Denver and hear Dan Bellomy at the 4/37 Wurlitzer. We do hope he will make a commercial recording there.

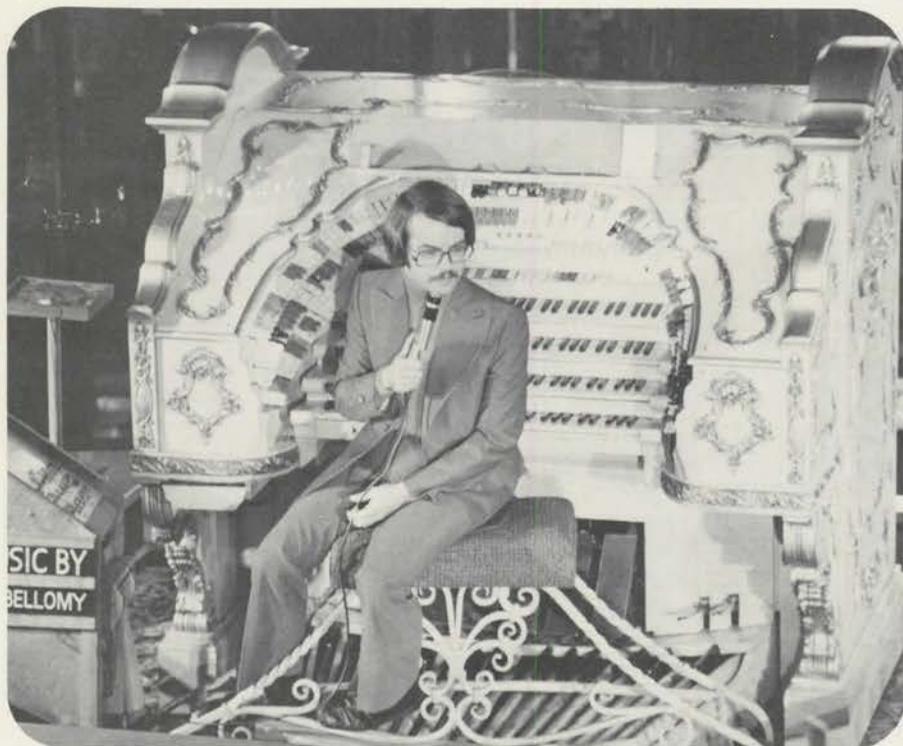
Our chapter is grateful to the Organ Grinder for providing us with this magnificent instrument for Dan's concert.

BUD ABEL

PUGET SOUND

Something different in the way of a pipe organ picnic drew members to the country home of Georgia and Bert Lobbereg in Issaquah, Washington. Our day dawned bright and sunny and beautiful. While over 200 members and guests sat with their picnic lunches under the shade trees, next to growing vegetables and lovely fruits and flowers, we were able to hear a melodious pipe organ as it softly filtered through the trees. Both professional organists and braver chapter members took turns at the two manual Wick's organ located in this unique home, for a solid eight hours.

According to our host, this is a 10-rank organ and a "hybrid variety"



Dan Bellomy journeyed from his post at the Denver Organ Grinder for this concert at the 4/41 Wurlitzer at the Organ Grinder in Portland. (Claude V. Neuffer Photo)

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(remembering that actually, there are few "thoroughbreds"), and it was taken from the old Beacon Hill Theatre in Seattle. Amid the blood, sweat and tears, of Bert and his loyal helpers, Don Myers and Gen Whitting, and a few others, it is what it is today, **MAGNIFICENT!!!!**

This organ is housed in what Bert calls "Early Lobberegt," and has a 30-ton rock fireplace of split granite, which he built himself. Bert tells us that it is lucky that he has an attic in his house. The reason, of course, being that the organ pipes are in the attic. The pipes follow the contour of the roof, with bass pipes following the ceiling line, and they only had to cut about 15 of the 700 pipes installed. The tone and sound is like a stereophonic blend, as guests sat everywhere in the overly-large, and comfortable living room, that was styled like out of a movie set. Also, Bert indicated that he would never

be able to move from his place. Five ranks have been added to this organ and the Glockenspiel and the Xylophone are from a superior Robert Morton organ. It has in addition, a full-sized bass drum (a rarity, that few organs can boast of). One of the amazing effects we noticed were from a canary, who sat in her cage beside the organ and sang her head off. She was French, and from 100 to 150 years old (an antique, you know), but she still sang, as long as the organist would direct her from the console. She was the windup variety, but few in the room knew she wasn't a live canary.

This stereophonic organ sound comes out at you through the huge living room that, like the rest of the house, has wagon wheel lamps that Bert made on his lathe.

As a companion to this magnificent organ is a large grand piano, a Duo-Art Steinway. They really came to

life when, as a finale to the afternoon, two of our professionals brought them together to the delight of the capacity audience which overflowed to the porches. Much credit is due to Program Chairman Mary Lou Becvar, Chairman Ken Gallwey, Katy Gallwey (chapter food hostess), and of course, the Lobberegts.

We were amazed to find that Bert has always been a collector, of sorts, and this hobby of building a museum to house antiques was what originally got him started in the pipe organ hobby. He collected some items 30 years ago, until the collection overflowed his museum and he started building this unique house.

Musically, you can see all sorts of musical instruments, from a coin operated music machine that plays 10 instruments at once to a 1919 Wurlitzer organ that used to play in Fairbanks, Alaska. This particular machine was a genuine "basketcase" because that is how it came, with keys melted and stuck together, parts missing and wood warped. It stands proudly now in this museum, working and admired, amid the large collection of phonographs, music boxes and nickelodeons. A player piano plays continuously. Household items of yesteryear, in restored condition, are in evidence everywhere. While this museum is usually only open by appointment, we walked around for hours.

One side of the museum contains completely restored automobiles of many years ago. A 1920 Sport Touring Pierce Arrow with over 400,000 miles on the odometer is a jewel. One of Bert's favorites is the perfectly-restored 1907 Great Arrow, for which he paid \$200. Today it looks like it came right off the showroom floor. Members of the Horseless Carriage Club, Georgia and Bert drove



Bert Lobberegt hosts the Puget Sound Chapter. His home is more than just a home.

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Australian members Bill Schumacher and Bob Gliddon visit the Puget Sound Chapter following the Southern California Convention.

it 10,000 miles on a trip coast to coast. With great pride, Bert said that "This old car was never in a hole, that it wouldn't pull me out of" . . . so he figures that when he dies, he wants to be buried in it. There is also a 1912 Abbott Daimler with a hand-built wooden body. He spotted a 1916 Pierce Arrow in Vermont, and carted it back to Issaquah in pieces. It weighed some 5,000 pounds and once belonged to Rudyard Kipling. Mannequins dressed in the style of the period of the cars, are sitting there very lifelike. This museum and the pipe organ really made our day.

As an added afterglow to the National Convention, Bill Schumacher, from Brooklyn, Australia, and Bob Gliddon, from Epping, Australia, headed up to the Pacific Northwest, seeing and playing installations as they came. Chapter members enjoyed an evening at the Seattle Pizza and Pipes when our guests entertained us with a few selections. Both indicated their plans to return for the National Convention in 1981.

THELMA R. SMITH

ROCKY MOUNTAIN

Our concert at the Denver Paramount Theatre was a success. We had a packed house. Bob Castle did a splendid job and the silent movie with Harry Langdon had 'em rollin' in the aisles. Thanks to everyone who made it possible.

Because we missed the last edition deadline, we'll have to bring everything up to date on the Aladdin 3/17 Wicks. We have a new crew working now — Charlie Herman, Guy Powell, Ken Tillotson, Ed Wielgot, George Warren, Bob Porter and Crew Chief Frank Gandy. With the addition of John Tibaldo, representing the Wicks Organ Company with J.R. Mitchell & Associates, we have really moved along. The console was completely gone over inside — key tension brought up, contacts checked and repaired as needed, loose networks taped and secured in back of the console and loose wires rung out and reconnected. Then we removed all of the pipework from the main chamber. We called on the ladies



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to assist in this project. Elinor Johnston headed the handing down and packing of pipes into boxes for storage backstage. The pipe racks were cleaned and stored. Our thanks to Charlotte Herman, Genevive Warren, Ginny Wielgot and Elinor for their help. You can unpack them and hand 'em back up real soon now.

The crew then vacuumed the whole chamber, wiped down and shellacked all of the woodwork and painted the concrete floor with a "stunning" gray deck enamel. After we change a few windlines and fix a few hissing leaks, we are ready to replace the pipes, wipe them down carefully to rid them of years of dust and get them tuned and voiced properly. The wind pressure will be checked and the tremos and regulators will be balanced, and last but not least, the switch stacks (relays) will be cleaned for dead notes. Several issues ago this writer complained about the placement of the combination action. Well, no more. John Tibaldo and crew hoisted it back up



Members help to pack pipes during the refurbishing of the chambers at the Aladdin. Now the future of the theatre is in doubt.



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8' onto its original shelf back of the orchestra pit. Much grunting and groaning was heard. Due to the steam and air conditioning pipes, we could not rig up a block & tackle. It was lifted by hand, pipes and 2 X 4's, bolted down securely and checked. A hole was then drilled through the 11-inch back wall for cables because the console is now over on the right side of the theatre and the cables were too short. As of this writing, it is all hooked up and working. We will treat the solo chamber the same as the main, except that when the pipes are out, the percussions will be removed and releathered.

We had visitors from London, England a couple of weeks ago. Mr. Ted Beckerleg and his sister Susan spent one whole Saturday with us. Ted plays real fine theatre organ. He played the Wicks, Dick Lewis' Marr & Colton, Fred Riser's almost-finished Wurlitzer and then we took them to the Organ Grinder for a grand finale.

The chapter had the annual picnic at Jack and Nancy Walden's place in Loveland, Colo., on August 19th. We had a good turnout of about 40 to 45 people. Our artist of the afternoon at the Kimball theatre organ in Jack's garage was Ms. Elsie Zetterman. She is a graduate of Nebraska University where she majored in organ, piano and voice, and a member of Sigma Alpha Iota, the national professional music sorority. She played a wide variety of music that was enjoyed by all. The 2/12 Kimball was in excellent shape thanks to Jack and his crew. Right after the picnic, we had open console and two inches of rain. Just right for "Cruising Down the River."

A bit of nerve-shaking news appeared recently in the *Denver Post* newspaper. Our Aladdin Theatre is up for sale, including the 3/17



Ted Beckerleg, and his sister, Susan, visiting from London, England, at the Aladdin 3/17 Wicks.

Wicks theatre pipe organ. To date we have not been able to contact the real estate people or Mann Theatres that hold the present lease. We will continue to work on the organ until we meet with these people. We would hate to loose the organ, as it is the only one of its kind still in its original state and playing.

FRANK R. GANDY

SOONER STATE

Tulsa's Sooner State Chapter meetings for July and August were so well-attended you'd never know it was summer vacation time! July found us at Joe Crutchfield's, where he has a Gulbranson Rialto (and a grand piano) and in August we met at Jim and Helen Reel's, where there's a Lowery TSO Lincolnwood.

Both meetings included much discussion of our still-homeless 3/10 Robert Morton (which is apparently none-the-worse for another Oklahoma summer in storage.) Phil Judkins, Bill Roberts and Lee Smith have become our active placement committee, with Bill contributing many hours of painstaking manipulation of his (carefully measured)

scale-drawing cut-outs onto blueprints; and Phil and Lee undertaking the herculean task of arranging appointments and then meeting with the persons responsible for the various buildings under consideration. We have reluctantly had to give up the possibility of placing it in Tulsa's City-County Vo-Tech High School — there simply is not room enough in the auditorium. We've stirred up enough interest in theatre pipe organ with them, however, that they've promised that plans for an auditorium at a new, second campus, further out, will have room for organ chambers. So now we're back to the drawing board and Bill's cut-outs, with other prospects very much alive.

We've added some new members to our ranks: the Jack Beindorfs and Bill Schimpff, and welcomed John and Charlene Roberts back into our group. John had some 8mm movies taken during two past organ crawl excursions, which he showed during our August meeting.

Reports of our several home installations are excellent. Hervey Barbour's 2/11 Kimball in Pryor is "mostly playing"; John Price's Hillgreen-Lane in Cleveland is nearly



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so. Bruce Wilson's 3/14 Kimball is "coming along" — he had to saw his pedal boardons in half to get them through the opening in his garage loft, but then he glued them together upstairs and they're fine! And work is finally being done on Bob and Betty Weddle's 2/4 Robert Morton. One chest is releathered and another has been taken apart. The two tremolos and the swell shade shutters have also been releathered. Our "Technical Sessions" weren't really discontinued for the summer — we've simply learned first hand how a Robert Morton chest is put together! Bill Roberts and Phil Judkins — our experts at pipe organ construction — are masterminding the Weddles project.

We'll have pipe organ music all over Northeastern Oklahoma before you know it!

DOROTHY SMITH

VALLEY OF THE SUN

If anyone you know returned from the ATOS National Convention wearing a green cactus on their name tag, it was just the Valley of the Sun Chapter's way of reminding everyone that we are hosting the convention in 1983.

We had a combined social and

business meeting at Organ Stop Pizza in Mesa on July 22nd. Members were brought up to date on chapter activities and a report was given on the L.A. convention. It was announced that Al Young had been appointed new vice chairman, to fill the vacancy left by Charles Creighton when he became chairman. Following the business portion of the meeting, there was open console at the restaurant's Wurlitzer.

Tuesday evening, August 7th, we were to have presented Lew Williams in an electronic organ concert to raise funds for our pipe organ restoration project. A few days prior to the concert, we learned that the or-



The Valley of the Sun Chapter's current restoration project, the 2/9 Wurlitzer at Phoenix College.

gan he was to use was not in good playing condition, so we had to obtain another organ. Lew, however, was not familiar with the style organ we were able to get, and preferred not to play the concert. Twenty-four hours before concert-time, we were faced with a cancellation.

When Ron Rhode heard that we might have to cancel, he offered to play the concert for us. Not only did he play both piano and organ, but brought along chums Lyn Larsen and Dave Lindsay, and four singers to add to the show. The three keyboard artists took turns playing solos and duets. One of the highlights of the evening came when Lyn Larsen sang a Groucho Marx oldie, "Lydia, the Tattooed Lady," accompanying himself at the piano! What could have been a very embarrassing situation for the chapter was instead one of the most enjoyable concerts we've had.

Our next social was a potluck held August 25th in the pines of Prescott. Member Richard Keith is installing a 2/12 Wurlitzer in his home there. Members also enjoyed open console at Keith's Lowrey and Conn organs and a piano.

We've been working hard all summer trying to get the 2/9 Wurlitzer at Phoenix College into good playing condition. With a little luck and



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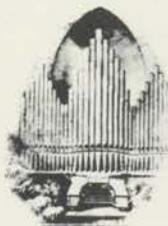
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a lot of chapter effort, we will have a dedication concert on the instrument before the end of the year.

MADELINE LIVOLSI

WOLVERINE

Lee Hohner's 3/10 Robert Morton beautifully compliments the spacious chamber, with ceiling heights up to 16 feet, from which it speaks into his parents' vaulted family room. Typical of the deluxe instruments, the massive and highly decorated console surrounds the organist. The lush ensemble of the beautifully blended ranks was obvious as Lee, as well as



Lee Hohner with his parents, Fred and Bethel, at the console of the 3/10 Robert Morton formerly in the Riviera Theatre in Detroit, Michigan.

(Ed Corey Photo)

several of the over 30 members and friends in attendance, put the Robert Morton through its paces.

Our many thanks to Bethel and Fred Hohner for allowing the Wolverine Chapter to invade their lovely home, and to Lee for allowing us the use of his fine instrument.

ED COREY

Vice chairman Don and Shirley Jenks hosted about 40 members and friends in August for our annual picnic. The Rodgers 33-E was, as usual, in top shape for the many who played it. Gentle breezes, fine music, good food and friends all add up to a fine Sunday afternoon. Thanks to Don and Shirley for their hospitality.

By the time this hits print Wolverine members Gary Montgomery and H.C. Scott along with Roger and Sue Mumbrue will have opened their new restaurant — The Organ Grinder's Pizza and Pipes. Just south of the famous Pontiac Silverdome at 2105 South Blvd. East, in Pontiac, it is a welcome addition for theatre organ fans in Michigan. Featured will be the 3/10 Barton from the Birmingham Theatre, Birmingham, Michigan which will be expanded to about 20 ranks.

Our chapter has a new secretary with the installation of Tom Remington to that office. Tom also as-



Don and Shirley Jenks at the console of their Rodgers 33E theatre organ. (Ed Corey Photo)

sumes the duties of editing our newsletter, *The Cipher*.

We recently felt the loss of one of our members. Carl Stringer, who was a member of many chapters and independent organ clubs, passed away suddenly August 25th. Our deepest heartfelt sympathy is extended to Coraline Stringer.

We are looking forward to an active fall lineup of gatherings and right into the infamous Michigan winter season, which will provide many surprises and exciting events in the theatre organ world as well as the weather.

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Wurlitzer 32' Diaphone. Call (209) 296-7087 or (215) 659-1717. Write: Jim Welch, P.O. Box 68, Pine Grove, California 95665.

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Rodgers Olympic 333 theatre organ (oak), two custom deluxe made column speakers, Glockenspiel, rhythm unit, like new. Two years old, value over \$30,000. Wayne Shepard, (213) 574-7820, Arcadia, California 91006.

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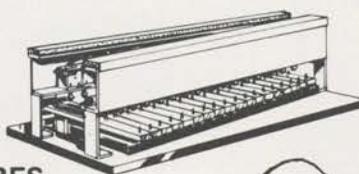
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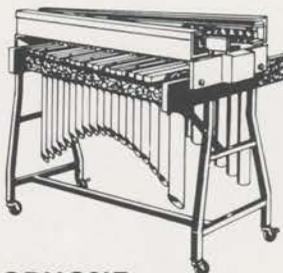
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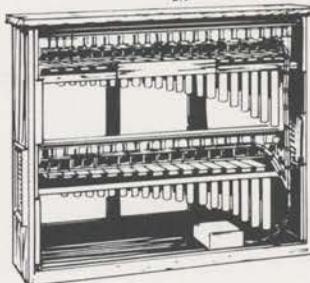
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