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December 1979/January 1980

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## features . . .

- 5 Inside Hector Olivera (Conclusion) . . . . . Stu Green
- 10 Dr. Landon Presents His Hybrid . . . . . Lloyd E. Klos
- 12 Make Way for Tomorrow . . . . . John Muri
- 13 Oklahoma City's Kilgen . . . . . Paul Haggard
- 14 The Best of Both Worlds . . . . . William G. Schneider
- 16 Lowell Ayars, the Singing Organist . . . . . Lloyd E. Klos
- 30 Vox Popper Crowned King at Music Festival
- 31 Betty Mason — A Decade of Service

## technical . . .

- 26 The Acoustical Consultant . . . . . R. J. Weisenberger
- 29 Questions and Answers . . . . . Lance Johnson

## departments . . .

- 4 President's Message
- 11 Konsole Kapers
- 20 Dinny's Colyum
- 21 Music Review
- 22 For the Records
- 25 Book Review
- 28 Nuggets from the Golden Days
- 32 Vox Pops
- 37 Letters to the Editors
- 38 Closing Chords
- 39 Chapter Notes
- 56 Classified Ads

## Cover Photo

This Kilgen organ was originally installed in the studios of radio station WKY in Oklahoma City. Now in that city's civic center, it is the home organ for the Oklahoma Chapter. See page 13.

Cover Photo by Floyd Duffy  
Official City Photographer



## PAST PRESIDENTS

- Richard Simonton  
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- Judd Walton  
Oct. 1958 – July 1961
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July 1961 – July 1964
- Carl Norvell  
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- Richard Schrum  
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July 1974 – July 1976
- Ray F. Snitil  
July 1976 – July 1978
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July 1978 – Nov. 1978

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- 1972 – Stu Green
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- 1976 – Floyd and Doris Mumm
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- 1978 – Len Clarke
- 1979 – J.B. Nethercutt

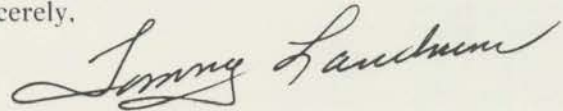
## President's Message

Thanks to the many members who have responded to our "Are You Going To London" notice in the October issue. Many questions regarding cost, length of convention, travel plans, etc., have been asked but the final answer to most of these depends on the support that is indicated by the letters from ATOS members.

We plan to have most of the answers in time for publication in the February/March 1980 issue of THEATRE ORGAN. Hopefully this will provide the information that many of you have requested from National Headquarters in your reply. Please keep those cards and letters coming.

Our London Chapter has some of the most dedicated members in our entire organization and we know from past experience that they will put all stops down to give us a great show.

Sincerely,



Tommy Landrum  
President



*Holiday Greetings*

from the officers of the  
American Theatre Organ Society  
and the staff of  
Theatre Organ Magazine



# INSIDE HECTOR OLIVERA

by Stu Green

Photos courtesy of  
Walt Molt Management



## Conclusion

*In the first installment we learned of Hector's early life as a classical music prodigy in his native Argentina, also of the poverty which surrounded the Olivera family. He came to the USA, hoping for better opportunities in New York. He became choir director in a Baptist church and met his future wife, Lucy. But, despite the many church jobs, pay was still low. We left him just as he was about to discover something that would change his life — the theatre organ.*

When Hector had been in the USA a short time he heard about the theatre organ, an instrument dedicated to popular entertainment, but where he came from organs were intended for church use, or for the performance of music written by great classical composers. As a vehicle on which to perform such earthy ditties as "Alley Cat," somehow the organ didn't seem right, despite his one session at the Byrd theatre.

Yet, when Hector had taken in a performance at Radio City Music Hall back in New York, the organ was always in a featured spot, and the quite different tremulated sonorities were somehow attractive to the classically trained youth.

ATOSers first became aware of Hector during the 1972 national convention, based in Washington, D.C., an event generally regarded as one of

the club's better-planned conclaves. But despite the ill-chosen headquarters hotel, there were few complaints about the scheduled events. One involved a bus trip to nearby Frederick, Maryland, where the reconditioned 2/8 Wurliizer in the Tivoli Theatre beckoned. The scheduled artist was Ray Brubacher. Unknown to the arriving conventioners, the organ had experienced a blower disaster just before convention time. To get the organ in shape in time for the scheduled concert, Brubacher had indulged in around the clock repair work. He met the deadline in good time but the all night sessions had left him exhausted. In his opinion he was in no shape to play a concert. But Ray had discovered a rather gaunt young man who held much promise. After playing one selection to get the concert moving, Ray introduced his stand-in, a totally unknown quantity to most 1972 conventioners. After Ray Brubacher's introduction, he left the console to be replaced by a frail youth with sharply chiselled features. It was Hector's first experience with a pop-oriented audience, and he was nervous.

What followed is history. Few people who witnessed Hector's concert that day are likely to forget it. Hector put the 2/8 through a rather gruelling test, playing both popular and classical selections, the latter



Hector at the Tivoli Wurli in Frederick, Maryland, his first public concert on a theatre organ.

usually with somewhat prominent pedal parts, a feature which was destined to become an Olivera trademark. He was his own MC and listeners could not tell whether he was doing a Desi Arnaz accent on purpose or was faking it for effect. No matter, Hector left an indelible impression. It was the start of his career as a performer on the theatre organ, a calling which now parallels his classical concerts, and has become as remunerative.

In his association with Walt Molt, Hector's fortunes changed drastically. Finally, he was being paid in terms commensurate with the quality of his music. He started to study theatre organ stylings by listening to records made by major popular pipe organists. He fell in love, especially, with the stylings of the late Buddy Cole, one of the few organists he tends to imitate, consciously or otherwise.

Hector and Lucy.



For bachelor Molt, it has taken him out of the candy distributing business; he now devotes full time promoting the concert career of Hector Olivera. No more \$8.00 engagements; Hector's fees now rarely fall below four figures, says Walt. And Hector now manages to tip the scales at 112 pounds.

It didn't all happen at once. One big boost for Hector was an engagement at Pittsburgh's Heinz Hall, the former Loew's Penn Theatre, now a performing arts center. The organ in the Penn was long gone so Hector's concert was played on the Rodgers Touring Organ, a one-of-a-kind electronic. It was a classical concert sponsored by the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra Association. Hector played selections by Bach, Brahms, Guilmont, Liszt and Cesar Franck. He even offered his own

The Olivera concert dates are now about equally divided between straight and theatre organ concerts. Here, he relives a part of his early youth, playing a tracker Moller in Allison Park, Penn.



A contemplative artist, Hector studies his music in depth and gives much thought to his performance of it.

1953 "Toccata," written when he was seven. That was in December, 1973, and it earned the organist the kind of stature needed for a career in the classical field. In 1977, he played a concert on the famous Beckerath organ in Pittsburgh's St. Paul's Cathedral.

He was described in *National Review* as arriving in jeans and a sloppy T-shirt. The reporter's impression pictured him as physically slight, even emaciated. Hector soon discarded the informal wear and got into his musical outfit — white trousers, white shirt (with blue ruffles), white jacket and slick-soled white shoes. The burden of the program consisted of music by Liszt and Bach, but the encore deserves special mention. It was presented as an improvisation, in which the organist is expected to play variations on a few notes handed to him on paper, and with no preparation time.

The tune for embellishment selected by St. Paul's music director, Paul Koch, was the Alka-Seltzer commercial ditty — "plop, plop, fizz, fizz." It didn't phase Hector in the least. He improvised on the simple tune for over 10 minutes, raising it from inanity to concert level. When he was finished, his audience burst into cheers and applause. So much for his classical standing. But what about his aspirations to play theatre style?

As we mentioned earlier, Hector

has been touched by the Muse. What others achieve by much application and hard work is often accomplished instantaneously by this gifted organist.

His list of engagements for theatre organ concerts now reads like a roster of existing theatre organ installations — the Redford Theatre Barton in Detroit; the Civic Center Kilgen in Oklahoma City; the Coronado Theatre Barton in Rockford, Illinois; the DTOC Wurlitzer in Detroit; the RTOS organ in Rochester's Auditorium Theatre; the Eastern Massachusetts ATOS Chapter's Babson College Wurlitzer, the Paramount Theatre Wurlitzer in Cedar Rapids, Iowa; the "Queen Mother" in Wichita's Century II Civic Center; the Akron Civic Theatre's Wurlitzer; the Wilmington Dickinson High School Kimball, to name a few. He has also invaded Great Britain and Australia. It's always the same story; after one concert they want him back as soon as possible, says manager Molt.

What qualities in the Hector Olivera makeup causes audiences to become so enthusiastic? We have examined many reviews and they have a certain sameness. Typical is "Organist Olivera Brings Down the House," which headed an *Atlanta Times* 1978 review covering Hector's last minute substitution for ailing Virgil Fox at an Atlanta Fox Theatre Symphony Concert.



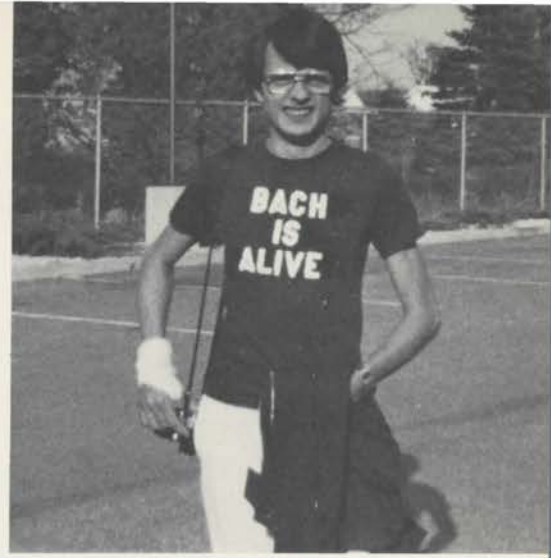
Recent photo of Suzette and her brother, 'Hec-J.' Will they follow dad's musical path?

Perhaps VOX CATOE, Chicago ATOS chapter's newsletter, summed up Hector's drawing power in the fewest words: "He has the theatre organ technique of George Wright . . . the classical technique of E. Power Biggs . . . the warmth and

stage presence of Gaylord Carter." Considering that many of these accomplishments have evolved since 1972, there is much to be said for Hector's adaptability. In stage terms, he's a "quick study."

The going has become much easier since 1972, when Hector dismantled his trailer-encased four-rank pipe organ and moved to Pittsburgh. In 1974, he purchased a large turn-of-the-century home in Manor, Pa., near Pittsburgh, and on August 20, 1976, Hector became a citizen of the United States. With Walt Molt's deft business acumen, Hector and Lucy no longer have to worry about money. With approximately 100 engagements a year (including "sea safari" cruises aboard ship for an electronic organ manufacturer), Hector's future seems assured. He now owns the big home in Manor, and that's where he lives (when not "on the road") with wife Lucy, mother Rosa, daughter Suzette and son Hector James, or "Hec-J" as he has been dubbed.

Being a deeply religious person, Hector converted his basement recreation room into a chapel, a room which must have reflected his Roman Catholic upbringing (he now



Hector has learned the value of advertising.

attends Presbyterian services), but soon the desire for a pipe organ overtook him. Hector bought used parts and some new pipe organ components from Moller. He constructed his own console, tearing it down twice to enlarge it to accommodate the growing number of ranks of pipework. Originally the chapel housed the complete organ. However, now Hector has installed a seventeen-hundred pound console in the living room and the entire chapel has become pipe chambers. At the time this was written the organ was a mix of classical and theatrical voices, 4 manuals and 47 ranks of pipes, soon to go to 51. Those who have heard it insist it's a "dream organ."

How did Hector Olivera learn the craft of organ construction? By trial and error, explains his manager, even to the very intricate process of voicing pipes.

"Hector ruined more pipes trying to learn about voicing techniques, but he finally got it all together." The organist is also an inveterate reader of technical material. With a

Hector acquaints daughter Suzette with what makes the sounds at a very early age. (Engle Associates Photo)



During a 'Save the Fox' effort, he was visited by veteran Hammondizer Lenny Dee. Hector makes a point of establishing good relations with contemporaries. Millie Alexander loves him dearly.





His posted slogans can foment no arguments.

basement full of choice pipework, Hector has also built a recording studio and assembled a console to accommodate six, soon to become eight, synthesizers he has acquired. This, plus the 4/47 console and the electronic organ-complex he uses for an occasional club date (when time allows), along with another plug-in in the den, makes for a rather full house of music. What does he do in his spare time? He builds harpsichords. But we won't go into that at this time, other than to state that there's a partly finished large grand in the Olivera bedroom. It's fortunate that Lucy is an understanding woman!

One of his favorite projects was keeping the wrecking ball away from the now-safe Fox Theatre. This later concert was performed shortly after the 1978 Atlanta ATOS Convention. Hector subbed for Virgil Fox on short notice.



Hector has a great interest in electronically-generated sounds. Here, he has stacked several synthesizer manuals for a sorta console effect in his home recording studio in Manor, Pennsylvania. (John Tyner Photo)

Does Hector have any regrets? Yes, one, at least — his "Flight of the Bumblebee" pedal solo which has become so popular with the more vociferous element in his audiences. When he first started playing concerts he didn't know what US audiences expected, although he was aware that the Americans (North, that is) would tolerate more informality than others. He has long treated

the pedalboard as another manual, and with his facility he can manage it. Yet, Hector would be the first to admit that "Bumblebee" comes off best, from the musical viewpoint, when performed on the manuals (it was originally a flute solo). But once he had performed it as a pedal solo "sight gag," the less sophisticated members of his audiences howled with glee. The more musically in-

Hector holds court with his Atlanta audience. The huge Fox console provides an impressive backdrop.





clined people deplored the performance of a below-the-belt *Bombus Americanorum* as a sort of vaudeville trick, unworthy of a concert artist — even though others have performed equally silly sight gags, such as deadpan Edwin Lemare's performance of the piccolo embellishment of "The Stars and Stripes Forever" on the pedals, way back in 1915!

Yet, Hector is aware that his pedal "Bumblebee" has divided his audiences. He hopes to phase it out. He did not perform it at his ATOS Convention concert on the Spreckels organ in San Diego's Balboa Park, and he learned that his audience, as a whole, never missed it. Having initiated the "Bumblebee" sight gag is his one major regret. He sincerely hopes future audiences will not demand it of him.



Hector at the Rochester Theater Organ Society console in the Auditorium Theatre. He has come a long way since his trial concert on the 2-manual Tivoli organ (page 5). His future is most certainly involved with theatre organ, despite "Bumblebee" diversions. (Harold Photo)

One well-known organist, after examining the Olivera string of successes, asked rather impatiently, "Doesn't that guy have even one flop to his credit?" We put the question to Hector. He thought for a moment, searching his memory. Then that beaming smile which has charmed so many concertgoers lighted his face.

In accents still reminiscent of Jose Jimenez, he replied.

"Si, I have known one enormous failure — my job as a mail sorter when I first arrived from Argentina. I didn't know much English and I'm certain I misdirected a lot of the firm's mail. For that I am very sorry."

Then the smile broadens, "But the company is still in business!"

There can be no doubt; Hector Olivera is a unique phenomenon. □

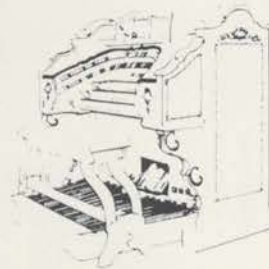


The four-deck console Hector built in his Manor home. He has rebuilt it several times to accommodate the continual addition of pipe ranks. On the side, he builds harpsichords. (John Tyner Photo)

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# DR. LANDON PRESENTS HIS HYBRID

by Lloyd E. Klos



Dr. Landon at the console, which was originally in the Tilyou Theatre in Brooklyn.

*(Landon Collection)*

The main chamber (left) of the Landon organ houses an English Diapason, Violin d' Orchestra, Violin Celeste, Flute, Vox Humana, Clarinet and Diaphone. At the (right) the solo chamber. Includes the Tibia, Gamba, Gamba Celeste and Tuba.

*(Landon Collection)*



On the evenings of September 25 and 26, 1978, over 100 invited guests gathered at the Lexington, Kentucky, home of well-known organist and historian-writer Dr. John W. Landon. The object of their interest was the opening of a 3/11 hybrid theatre organ, played by the master, Hall of Fame organist, John T. Muri.

The background of the main components of this instrument is a story in itself. Essentially the organ is a Wurlitzer-Uniphone. The console is from the 3/10 Wurlitzer which had been installed in the Tilyou Theatre in Brooklyn in early 1926.

Though some pipework is of Wurlitzer origin, and the Tibia is signed by Anton Gottfried, much of it is from a Louisville Uniphone organ, built by the Louisville Pipe Organ Co., and installed in that city's Labor Temple in 1927. The building served as a labor meeting hall and theatre, with the organ being used to accompany silent films. Following advent of the talkies, the instrument was unused, eventually to be sold to the United Hebrew Congregation in Terre Haute, Ind., and installed in their synagogue in the mid thirties.

In 1965 organ enthusiast Tom Ferree, of Indianapolis, arrived on the scene in the nick of time. It was a matter of days before the organ was slated to be sold by the synagogue to a junk dealer. Ferree purchased, enlarged and refurbished it, and installed it in the Rivoli Theatre in Indianapolis.

From 1966 until the theatre's closing nine years later, the Rivoli became one of the best-known installations on the theatre organ circuit, with well-known artists performing there.

With the Rivoli's closing, the Uniphone was put into storage. Ferree,



# Konsole Kapets

by Shirley Hannum Keiter

All organists go through stages of development in a quest for new plateaus in musical growth. One of these stages is our seemingly endless fascination with the percussions. But like anything else in musicianship, the percussions should be used tastefully.

There are two categories of percussions — untuned and tuned. Let's deal with one at a time.

The trap section includes all drums (bass, snare, tom-tom, timpani, etc.), tambourine, castanets, wood block, all cymbals, and other untuned percussions. Although these are used rarely in orchestral work, the drums are the rhythmic mainstay of the marching band. The

tambourine and castanets, of course, add to the flavor of Latin melodies.

Tuned percussion includes chimes, harp, celesta (more commonly called, chrysoglott), marimba, piano, glockenspiel, orchestra bells, etc. Each one is quite different from the next, and each also varies greatly from pipe to electronic organ. In applying all of this to theatre-organ playing, we need to approach the subject from the standpoint of an orchestra or band.

In a march, for example, you might want to add bass drum and cymbal on the pedal, snare drum in the accompaniment, and orchestra bells to a full ensemble registration with right-hand chords. To create added interest and excitement, just use the drums *et al* on the final chorus. Be sure to use a pedal-chord-pedal-chord alternate accompaniment. Use the tambourine and castanets much the same way — use a Latin rhythm in accompaniment and pedal and use these traps sparingly. Of course, there are also many novelty effects that call for percussion (wood block on Anderson's "Typewriter Song" or single-stroke xylophone on "Satan Takes a Holiday," for example), which consti-

tutes the most and best use of these gingerbread stops. The celesta and harp are perhaps the most useful. They can be combined with other stops in the accompaniment, or used in an arpeggio at the end of a ballad. The chimes, of course, are quite useful in hymns and Christmas carols with single-note melodies.

Some electronic organs have keyed percussion which acts in the same way as the trap section of the theatre pipe organ. But the rhythm unit is something common only to electronic instruments (so far, anyway). There are only two rules to follow in using an "automated" sideman — choose a rhythm complementary to the music (make especially sure to use a 4/4 rhythm with a song in that meter, and any waltz only in 3/4 time), and be sure you and it agree on the tempo (it's 1-2-3-4 and yours must be the same). One of the criticisms of the automatic "beat box" is its cold, unfeeling adherence to the beat; the player has no real opportunity for variety. But try changing the rhythm on the bridge of a song (fox trot to swing; rumba to bossa; waltz to swing waltz; etc.); or remove it for a time; or start without it and add it later. Not all music is fit for this use, but some comes alive if the unit is used with discretion.

If your electronic organ is not blessed with tuned percussion, you can construct a few with a tibia or flute and sustain. To make a marimba, use 8' and "jiggle" the chord to simulate the mallets. Use the same registration to create an orchestral harp sound by rolling the chord from the left hand through the right. To create a celesta, use 4'; music box, 4' and 2' to add extra sparkle. The chimes are perhaps the most difficult to duplicate. Again, use 8'. To make a middle C pitched chime, start with the E above middle C and the next C in the left hand. Continue with the next higher G and C in the right hand. Play them all at once. The formula for any key is 3-1, 5-1 of the scale.

In closing, if the percussions are used throughout the song, that's all your listeners will hear eventually. The tonal capacities of the organ consist of the speaking stops, of course, and the percussions should only be used as icing on the cake — tastefully. Have fun making merry music over this holiday season. □

meanwhile, had founded the Heaston Pipe Organ Co. in Indianapolis. Desiring a theatre pipe organ for his home, Dr. Landon contacted Ferree, bought the Uniphone, and installation began in August, 1976.

The organ contains 718 pipes. Installed in two chambers on the first level of Dr. Landon's home, the instrument speaks into a music room in which are located the console, and a 1920-style Pianista upright player piano, playable from the organ console. Two organ roll-playing mechanisms are to be installed which will permit the playing of Skinner and Aeolian rolls.

One feature of the Landon instrument is a two-rank Celeste (labeled Gamba and Gamba Celeste), from an E.M. Skinner residence organ. This rank provides a soft, ethereal quality, necessary when an organ, formerly in a large auditorium, is moved into a smaller area.

When the organ was declared ready to be heard by the outside world, John Muri, a personal friend of the owner, was contacted for the

dedicatory recitals. The first evening's audience included members of the Bluegrass Chapter of ATOS (which Dr. Landon helped organize), and the Lexington Chapter, AGO. The second evening's performance was played for Dr. Landon's personal friends, neighbors, and his colleagues from the University of Kentucky.

Mr. Muri included a broad spectrum in his program: from Dubois' "Toccata" to selections from *My Fair Lady*. Albeit a program of numbers to please every musical taste. The artist was urged to play several encores by his appreciative listeners.

Dr. Landon acknowledges superb installation work by the crew which included Tom Ferree, Carlton Smith and Lewis Hodson. Finishing work and final tuning were done by Hodson. The Landon instrument is one of two theatre organs to be installed in the Lexington area by Heaston Pipe Organs. The other, in Oscar Wilson's suburban home is the Wurlitzer once housed in Lexington's Kentucky Theatre. □

# MAKE WAY FOR TOMORROW

by John Muri

Year after year at this season we return to Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* and re-live with Scrooge his visions of Christmas Past, Christmas Present, and Christmas Future. Since there will probably be no ghost of Marley to bring us visions this year, we shall have to create them for ourselves.

Ah, those Christmases Past in the silent movie days! Crowded theatres, afternoon shows for thousands of children, long hours of work for organists, vaudeville shows in addition to films, backstages bustling with actors, stagehands, and musicians — it was great fun. Outside, the bright marquees lit up thousands of Main Streets across the country, bringing out crowds of people who didn't fear the streets at night. People went to theatres in droves by mass transportation, mainly streetcars. Parking was no problem, since few people needed to drive. Our past was of short duration, lasting only from about 1918 through 1928 — ten years. A few dozen organists were able to hold on until about 1933. The ten years were happy ones. Some of the organs were magnificent; the organists who played them were envied, but many of the instruments were merely adequate. Many were cheap, small, and badly voiced, but all of them provided jobs and some public recognition. Radio was attracting people to programs like Jack Benny's, but it didn't seem to hurt theatre business. Organists had convenient mobility between jobs, but by 1930 sound-films had lowered the lights everywhere, and organists were looking for whatever work they could get.

As one might expect, Christmas Present is a different scene from that of 1928. Few veteran organists are

in evidence, and a whole new generation of young players is beating at the doors, hoping to make a career in theatre organ, or at least to make some extra money. Concert opportunities are few, and silent movie shows repeating old comedies are no longer the novelty they were in 1963. In one large Ohio community, a conspicuous percentage of the potential audience has become selective enough to stay away from organ shows featuring movies. Organ shows have been going on for the past sixteen years with little change in format. The organs have been removed from the theatres (many of the theatres are gone, too) to be re-installed in homes, churches, and pizza establishments. You have to travel far to hear a great theatre organ, and it's a rare radio or TV station that broadcasts organ music. The most troublesome element is audience willingness (or lack of it) to attend theatres. Reasonably or unreasonably, thousands of former theatre-goers refuse to go "downtown" where the big organs used to be located and where a few remain. Ours is a fearful society, and we are engaged in a preservational struggle.

There still exists a large young audience for live theatre, evidenced in the huge attendance at rock concerts. The rock crowd has been moving into more and more elaborate presentations in the old style, using newer technology. Amateur and summer theatres seem to have been doing well. Night clubs use stage

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

shows adapted to the limitations of their stages and the taste of their audiences. If one needs other evidence, one may look for a sample at the recent overflow Sunday-night audiences for the film series *The Silent Clowns* at the Detroit Institute of Arts.

What can we say about Christmas Future? Prediction is old wives' business; even doctors' prognostications go sour. You can be safe only when predicting the obvious. We shall restrict ourselves here to a few surmises and some recommendations. With current systems of recording and filming in rapid evolution, we get some hints about the nature of tomorrow's movie. Older films are now released on video-tape for home use, and we shall have those films on video-discs soon. It is quite likely that new theatre films will be issued in a similar format, either on tape, disc, or film for large-scale projection, but the relative bulk of film and the simplicity of disc-tape systems suggest that we may be shortly seeing new ways of presenting motion pictures in theatres.

Those of us contemplating the manufacture of pipe organ recordings should give serious attention to the digital method of production, which is now over the horizon. Direct recording has the disadvantage of requiring complete performance of an LP side without interruption, and it is expensive to produce. Digital is more flexible, allowing for stops and corrections.

We could use a fresh supply of good silent movies that haven't been run too often. An approach to the film companies and the copyright holders (particularly Paramount and Metro-UA) will be required, using the only appeal they understand: money. We will need to show that profits can be made if superlative entertainment in silent film shows can be made traditional. So far as organists are concerned, we must keep in mind that only first-rate accompaniment work will keep customers coming. Failing this, there doesn't seem to be much future in trying to sell exclusively silent movie shows. There isn't enough good available material. For novelty, we might try double features, one in regular sound and the other one silent. One can start the evening's show with the sound film (say, an old

Marx Brothers comedy) and follow it with a silent mystery thriller, etc. with organ accompaniment. The evening might close with a re-run of the sound movie. Such a schedule permits keeping the box office open for stragglers two or three hours longer than is customary if only a single evening show is given. Organ solos may be played before or after the silent film — preferably before; certainly not afterward. ATOS chapters operating on nonprofit status need to make certain that they are operating within IRS specifications.

We may use a couple of other devices: (1) run vaudeville with the organ presentation. The acts should be of high quality; local amateur efforts should be extra good. Magicians, ventriloquists, acrobats, animal acts, escape artists, etc. are acceptable. Singers need to be carefully screened. Most of them are mediocre, if not worse. Comedy musicians are usually very good. Musicians' and stagehands' union locals cause trouble in some towns if you try to put on vaudeville; so appraisal of the union situation is necessary before committing a chapter to vaudeville. If an organist plays for the acts, make sure he can read music at sight and transpose. Actors often bring difficult hand-written music that they want played exactly as written — in a different key. (2) Run matinees, particularly on Sundays and holidays. People are less likely to want to come out evenings after a long work-day. New Years (December 31) afternoon is an excellent time; so is the Sunday after Christmas. Few people are at work; most are waiting for the evening's parties.

With the steady destruction of theatre buildings, we may increasingly need to turn to pizza restaurants, churches, or electronic organs. With the present competition and technical expertise in the electronics field, it may become advantageous for us to use more of the current product. Great-sounding electronics are expensive, but they will probably become less costly in quantity production. No matter what happens, 1980 will be a different year electronically, theatrically, and organistically. As Clement Moore said in *The Night Before Christmas*: "Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night." And as Tiny Tim said, "God bless us every one." □

# OKLAHOMA CITY'S KILGEN

by Paul Haggard

The Kilgen organ console featured on our cover was originally installed in the studios of WKY Radio, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

None other than Jesse Crawford played the dedication and for open house the first week of opening festivities. Crawford did no broadcasts, but played every day for local audiences.

After the opening Ken Wright started broadcasting the instrument and held the position until it was removed to the Civic Center about 1949.

Some famous organists who played the Kilgen were Edna Sellers, Venida Jones, and Milton Slosser. No doubt there are other big names but record keeping was rather sketchy.

After being installed at the Civic Center Music Hall, use declined un-

til it wasn't heard at all and then nearly forgotten.


The Civic Center facility was redesigned, reducing the original seating from six thousand to about thirty-two hundred. During this reconstruction the organ received some damage but it was not serious.

In 1976 a successful drive for public contributions made it possible to restore the Kilgen to its former glory and Hector Olivera played the rededication concert, in 1977.

The instrument is now used for most events and is the home organ for the Oklahoma City Chapter of ATOS.

The chapter has offices, a library, and a shop in the building for maintenance and the projected improvements and additions to the organ.

It is in good hands, the future is bright for another once-neglected theatre organ. □



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*Rochester Theater Organ Society*

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*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.*

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# The Best of Both Worlds

as told by  
William G. Schneider

On September 15th this year, a musical event which stirred the concert world was presented in a theatre organ concert series. Wurlitzer Pops in Wichita, Kansas, began its eighth season with a concert played jointly by the famous musicians Peter Nero and Billy Nalle. The setting was Exhibition Hall in Century II Center. Nero was at the Steinway concert grand and Nalle was at the Wichita Wurlitzer. Performing with them were the two men of Nero's trio, Mike Barnett on bass and Dale Cook on percussion. A quotation from the senior music critic of the Wichita

*Eagle*, Don Granger, sets the scene:

"It can be done after all. Peter Nero and Billy Nalle combined the music of a full blown theatre organ with grand piano, electric bass and rhythm Saturday night. The results, which could have been dreadful, were marvelously entertaining. The combination was magnificent! It isn't easy to decide which of the two principals should receive more credit."

Never had Nero in his career performed with a theatre organist and he and his manager believe this concert was the first in the professional world to have been played by a major piano soloist and trio in combination with a theatre organ. They admitted

having no idea of what to expect in advance and had come in a state of mind tinged with some apprehension. Just one evening could be allotted to rehearsal due to Nero's commitments. Despite equal standing in their respective fields, Nalle and Nero never had met and had only two telephone conversations for pre-rehearsal planning. Billy was sent skeleton chord sheets for the Duke Ellington pieces he and Nero had decided to program for the final third of the concert. Facing such a situation with many unknown factors, many musicians would have been anxious and nervous. From being a musician during my college days, I know that it says a great deal about the talents and experience of both

Rehearsal time in Wichita with Dale Cook, percussion, Mike Barnett, bass, Peter Nero at the Steinway with Billy Nalle at the Wurlitzer.





Peter Nero and Billy Nalle after their second encore during their Century II concert in Wichita in September. This was the first such instrumental combination in the pro concert world, and opened the 79-80 series.

men, that in just a few moments they were playing together as though they had been doing so for years. Each supported the other, each improvised around and with the other. Both major instruments were heard in solo sections, with each also trading the role of accompanying with the other. The bass and rhythm men were featured at appropriate times and integrated their work in a tasteful, solid manner, which, like the work of the principals, was "pro" all the way. There was an excitement that built to a point which brought the audience to its feet in a roar. Two encores were demanded and these also were taken from the music of the great Ellington, the second ending the evening with "I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart." Well, that extraordinary night *never* will go out of *my* heart!

What fascinated me during the rehearsal the previous evening were the surprises, even some happy shocks, which Nero and his men were getting from the famous Wurlitzer. When there was a rehearsal break, they gathered around the console of the organ. That scene could have been captioned "Three Cats With Curiosity." Billy explained the console functions and they were popeyed. He gave them two interesting thoughts

that never had occurred to me, that the theatre pipe organ was the world's original synthesizer and also the original stereo because, in most theatres, its pipe chambers were divided in locations on both sides of the stage area. Nero shook his head in amazement at the lightning response and at the beauty and clarity of the organ's tone. Later, he was heard to tell his manager that *now* he understood why this particular theatre organ was so famous worldwide for its tonal quality. He said that its ability to be a full orchestra one minute and a single solo instrument the next he would not have believed but for hearing it himself. He seemed delighted that it could provide such a clear, beautiful blend as well as exciting contrasts. During one number with the trio, Billy added some of the organ's percussion to that being played by Cook. It "stopped the party cold" as all three stopped playing to look up at the organ chambers in disbelief. They laughed, they loved it and the results were repeated Saturday evening. During the concert, when all four musicians "went for broke," it went far beyond what words can describe. During rehearsal conversations and from the stage concert night, Nero made it clear that he felt Nalle was a

"magnificent musician" and could play in terms that "give me a kick." Billy's pleasure from his three companions was equally plain and the way they made music together . . . well . . . to paraphrase a famous song title, "I could have *sat* there all night!"

The concert was divided into three periods separated by two intermissions. First was Billy and the Wurlitzer in concert versions of five great popular pieces which ranged from the deeply touching to the sizzling. The second period was by Nero playing alone and with his men in music which ran a wide gamut from the popular field. Then came the final third as already covered, which never will be forgotten by anyone fortunate enough to be present. The box office manager told me there were groups from the four surrounding states. Two couples from Oklahoma sat at the table with me and it's been a long time since I've seen people react with such excitement to a concert. One of these had heard the organ in New York and kept telling their friends that "it never sounded as glorious as *this!*"

This was the first concert of the 1979-80 Wichita Theatre Organ-sponsored series. In March, 1980, Lyn Larsen will come to provide a program of concert numbers and his original accompaniment to the film *The Phantom of the Opera*. The series closes with a May concert by the Argentine-born organist Hector Olivera.

In November, 1980, Nero will move from Los Angeles to Philadelphia. He has been engaged to form the Philadelphia Pops Orchestra, which will be Philadelphia's answer to the Boston Pops. Most members of the Philadelphia Pops will come from the great Philadelphia Orchestra and so the famous old Academy of Music will be hearing some new sounds! Though the venerable hall has no theatre organ, no one should be surprised if Nero and the Pops import a large electronic theatre organ and engage Nalle for a program similar to the one done here in Wichita. Given the great success of their first collaboration, proper Philadelphians would be treated to a sensation. Now . . . also . . . what if we could get the Philadelphia Pops to come pay a visit to a certain Wurlitzer . . . ? □

# LOWELL AYARS

## ***THE SINGING ORGANIST***

by Lloyd E. Klos

During the first big era of the theatre pipe organ, there were a number of organists who gained an added measure of fame because of their ability to sing as they played. One was Julia Dawn, "The Golden-Voiced Songbird." Another was Milton Charles who employed his vocal talent during a long stay in the sumptuous Mastbaum Theatre in Philadelphia. There was also Symphonic Hawley and Russ Thayer. A fifth, who is still pleasing audiences on today's circuit, was Lowell Ayars.

Lowell C. Ayars was born in Bridgeton, New Jersey, on March 21, 1915. As with most good artists, his love of music was inherited. His mother's side of the family was very talented; all his uncles, save one, played various musical instruments, and his father sang, though he had no formal training. Lowell's mother was a competent pianist.

When he was five, Lowell began piano lessons, and six weeks later, performed in his first program which consisted of playing an ascending and descending scale. At seven, his piano instruction became full time.

Organ lessons began at the age of 13, and after a year of study Lowell was named assistant organist at a church in Bridgeton. His first full time paid position began in 1932, at the same church, but as chief organist.

In 1932, he entered the Zeckner-Hahn Musical Academy (now the Philadelphia Musical Academy),

"The Singing Organist" during his October, 1975 program in Rochester's Auditorium Theatre. Originally scheduled for the previous April, a huge snowstorm in Rochester nullified the earlier concert, the first cancellation in RTOS history.

*(Dick Harold Photo)*





the only private music school which granted a degree if one's academic work were done outside. Two years later he began studies at Clarke Conservatory, where he eventually joined the faculty as an assistant teacher.

In 1932, his career as a theatre organist began at the 1350-seat Criterion Theatre in Bridgeton. The house had a 2/5 theatre organ whose name never achieved the stature of a Wurlitzer or Marr & Colton. It was a United States, and strangely did not have a Tibia. The ranks were Salicional, Concert Flute, Horn Diapason, Vox Humana and Kinura. A toy counter was included. United States organs were built in Crumlynn, Pa.

There were still some silent pictures shown in 1932, and Lowell took some theatre organ lessons from Fred Spencer, organist at the Criterion, and he was allowed to play parts of the pictures.

Beginning in 1935, Lowell played the 1550-seat Stanley Theatre in Bridgeton, using a 3/7 Kimball. Since Fred Spencer could not play Thursdays and Saturdays because of other commitments, Lowell accompanied the vaudeville acts. One group he especially remembers was Singer's Midgets. They brought along their own orchestra, and played such things as "The 1812 Overture." It was great experience for Lowell, and he was engaged in this activity from 1936 to 1939. He also put his rich baritone voice to work, singing with his playing during spotlight solos and sing-alongs.

Another theatre in which he served was the 1100-seat Broadway in Pitman, N.J. The house had a 3/8 Kimball (still does), and besides serving as first organist, he played piano in the nine-piece orchestra. Frank Bunting, a second organist, was employed for Saturday evenings and the two would perform piano-organ duets, with Lowell at the piano and providing vocal support as well. The use of the orchestra was eliminated because of problems in booking vaudeville acts, and Lowell performed organ spotlight solos for the better part of a year. Then, the organ was used on a very limited basis — only for prologues of major movies such as *The Sound of Music*.

His first venture into broadcasting was in 1936 over WHAT, using the 3/17 Kimball in Philadelphia's Up-



Lowell at the 3/7 Kimball in Bridgeton's Stanley Theatre, about 1938. The organ was installed in 1927. He accompanied vaudeville, did solo spots (with singing), sing-alongs and broadcasts. (Ayars Collection)



Fliers were given to patrons at Bridgeton's Stanley Theatre about 1938, inviting them to write in their requests, "and Lowell Ayars will gladly oblige." (Ayars Collection)

town Theatre. Performing two or three programs a week, he wound up the series with 100 to his credit. During this time, Lowell studied theatre organ technique from Leonard MacClain. The organ used for lessons was the 3/17 Wurlitzer in Philadelphia's 3300-seat Tower Theatre, and he studied under Melody Mac from 1936 to 1939.

About 1940, using his Hammond at home, he broadcast over WSNJ. He had served the station as musical director, without pay, from 1937 to 1939, and as program director with pay from 1939 to 1941. His first show with organ music was from 8:15 to 8:30 a.m. He was employed by Seabrook Farms and sponsored by the Ritter Processing Co., an unusual arrangement. Lowell did his own announcing which was entirely ad lib — no scripts.

A busy man, this fellow, Lowell Ayars! And a smart one! Seeing that the days of the theatre organ for movies or broadcasting were num-

bered, he felt that training in another field was imperative.

He first took a correspondence course from Trinity College of London which would prepare him for a singing career.

Studying solo singing, teaching and form, he received his diploma in 1939. The written work was sent in a sealed envelope to London for grading, while a traveling examiner came to the United States for the singing exam. Vocal renditions had to be sung in three languages, and Lowell chose English, German and Italian. His resulting associate degree is the equivalent of a two-year degree in the United States.

He also attended the University of Pennsylvania where he studied for the teaching profession with music as his major. He received his bachelor's degree in 1951 and his masters in 1953. Classical organ he studied with Edward Shippen Barnes and voice under Marguerite Barr.

As if his theatre, radio and school work weren't enough, this console artist found time to be a church organist and choir director as well. Up to 1939, he was with the Central Methodist Church in Salem, N.J.; in 1943 when gasoline got scarce, he accepted a post in Bridgeton at the West Presbyterian Church at one-third the salary of his former

Lowell did spot announcing for Seabrook Farms in 1943.  
(Ayars Collection)



▲ In 1942, Lowell was broadcasting from his home over WSNJ, using his Hammond. The sheet music on the rack is Noel Coward's "I'll See You Again." He has been seeing audiences again and again ever since.  
(Ayars Collection)

position. The next job was at Christ Lutheran for five years, and then back to West Presbyterian which had become First Presbyterian after a merger. He is still there!

With theatre positions passe (except for very special programs in connection with movie premieres), Lowell Ayars entered the teaching profession in 1951, and for three years, taught English, mechanical drawing, woodworking and metalworking at Bridgeton High School.

In 1955, he entered the Vineland, N.J., high school system where he taught general music, chorus, glee club, orchestra and band. From 1961 on, he taught vocal music exclusively.



and from 1973 to 1975 was certified as an English teacher as well.

Lowell has had considerable experience playing state fairs, dating back to 1941. He once toured five fairs in Pennsylvania using a sound truck, owned by George Schulmerch (of electronic chime fame), pulling a Hammond-equipped trailer. The previous organist, Art Hinett, had other commitments, so Lowell did the honors. While at Allentown, Lowell met famed Fort Wayne Embassy Theatre organist Buddy Nolan, who was playing the Traylor Hotel. In 1975, Lowell was official organist of the New York State Fair in Syracuse.

When asked for some amusing anecdotes of his career Lowell willingly obliged. "When I was broadcasting over WHAT from Philadelphia's Uptown Theatre, a friendly mouse ran up the console and peered around the music rack at me. I thought it rather cute. But not the alternate organist! She spied the rodent one day, let out a sudden scream, vaulted from the console, and there was a long period of silence. The theatre people found her at home, resolving never to play in that theatre again! I doubt if she ever set foot in the place!

"Another time during my vaudeville accompaniment days, a ballet dancer, dressed in a tennis outfit, handed me her music. It was Chopin's "Waltz in C# Minor," and in-



Lowell Ayars is capable of playing the big pipe organs as well as the small ones. He played the Atlantic City Convention Hall 7/455 Midmer-Losh at a Delaware Valley Chapter meeting in November 1963. (Ayars Collection)

stead of being in the customary key, it was in D Minor. I asked her if it were all right for me to play it in the original key, and she replied that she 'could never possibly dance it in any other key'! I ignored that and played it in the original key, and she complimented me on the best rendition she had ever heard.

"In order to play Woodside Park in Philadelphia and the Steel Pier in Atlantic City, vaudeville acts had to play three Saturday performances at the Broadway Theatre in Pitman,

N.J. The booker, a friend of the Pitman's owner, was Eddie Sherman. As a result, I had the opportunity to see many famous acts perform. I remember Aunt Jemima, played by Tess Gardell; *The O'Connor Family*, including Donald; Eddie Peabody, the Banjo King; Roy Smeck and Professor Lamberti. I played the orchestra piano for many of the acts.

"Once, while playing the Rahway (N.J.) Theatre, one could hear voices over the public address system which were definitely not those of anyone in the house. The mystery was solved when someone discovered a police car, parked in back of the theatre. Its radio frequency was affecting our PA! Ben Hall was MC that evening and it provided much humorous comment.

"When doing broadcasts from home, I always posted a sign on the front door to warn anyone not to ring the doorbell. One day, the postman didn't see the sign and rang the bell. I told the audience: 'The postman only rings twice, so there will be 15 seconds silence while I answer the door.' " Lowell has an excellent sense of humor, a refreshing adjunct to his concert proclivities.

So, life for our versatile musician has not been only hard work; it has had its light moments as well.

Lowell Ayars is one of the charter members of the American Theatre Organ Society, and has been featured artist at six ATOS Conven-

Keeping his theatre organ technique sharp is easy for Lowell Ayars. He purchased this 2/8 Wurlitzer, originally in the Fox Theatre, Appleton, Wisconsin, for his Bridgeton, N.J., home in 1960. (Ayars Collection)





Lowell at the 2/5 Wurlitzer console in Grosse Pointe Farms' Punch & Judy Theatre, during his concert there for the 1974 ATOS Convention in Detroit. It was Lowell's sixth convention concert appearance. (Bill Lamb Photo)

tions, and a cameo performer at others.

Behind every successful man, there is invariably a lady love, and in this case, it is Lowell's charming wife, Reba. They were childhood friends and it took a goodly number of years before they realized that it was love! Each has loyally stood through thick and thin, adversity and triumph, with the other — the supreme test of all good marriages.

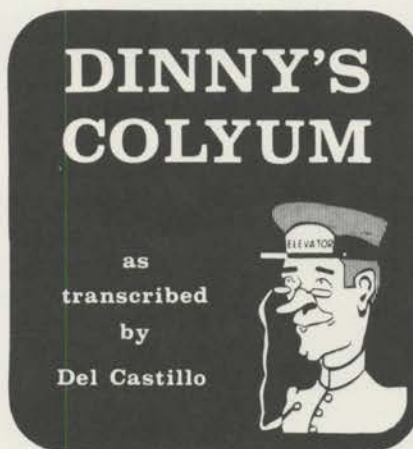
One reason Lowell keeps his theatre organ technique sharp is his home installation. In 1960 he purchased the 2/8 Wurlitzer which was originally installed, in 1929, in the Fox Theatre in Appleton, Wis. (Opus 2070). When he is called upon to concertize for any of the organ clubs or ATOS chapters in the country, he is ready, no matter what size the instrument.

From the writer's personal experience, we can truthfully recommend a Lowell Ayars concert to any one. His technique is sharp. He programs very carefully, and wisely selects numbers he knows will appeal to his audience. Most invariably, he performs music of the truly great American composers: Romberg, Herbert, Gershwin, Yeomans, McDowell and Schwartz. Too often, these composers are ignored by many on the circuit.

Before bringing our interview with Lowell Ayars to an end, we asked him for his personal feeling on the ATOS, the theatre pipe organ renaiss-

sance, and what must be done to keep the theatre organ a part of the cultural life of our country. His refreshing remarks are worth noting:

"I believe we must keep as many organs in theatres as possible — perhaps through such organizations as the Society for Historic Preservation which has been able to save quite a few public auditoria. We must also realize that there is no such thing as just one style of theatre organ playing. Let us try to appreciate the new and treasure the old. Take young people to as many theatre organ events as possible. They won't all become fans, but some will!" □



Last month I got to goin on about the theayter organs and how they stop usin them when the talkeys come in and now they has been moved to the piazza parlors where they sound louder than ever but its great to be hearin them again. Well, so then I got to thinkin back some more which is quite a strain on my thinker on account it goes back fifty years like and my memory aint as good as it use to be. So I got to rememberin how way back in the 20s I guess it was me and mr. jacobs made a deal for me to take time off from runnin the elevator and rite a colyum which we called The Elevater Shaft on account I run the elevater in mr. jacobs buildin in Boston.

Well that was a lot of fun and I got to chinnin with some of the other elevator men in some of the other bildins and we would get together and go down to Mike's bar on washinton st. and chew the fat and drink some beer and get to know each other better. So one day one of the fellers says why dont we kind of start

a club like and meet regular oncet a month somewheres so I took it up with mr. jacobs and he says why sure Dinny if you want you can meet in the conferents room and use the coffee machine. So we done that and they elect me secetary on account I rite so good and we begun to have picnics like when the wether got good and Gus Sweeney who was the president and Angelo Pietro who was the treasurer and me would get together and buy the food and the drinks and make all the arrangements as you might say and we would go out to places like Norumbega Park and Revere Beach and like that there and have a good time.

Well this went on for a couple of years and it got to be kinda hard to find new places to go to and sometimes we got tired of totin all that food and bottels to where we was goin because it seemed like we had to do it all ourselves. And then some of the other guys they begun to grumble because they dint like some of the places we picked out and we would say all rite you find us some places and that would generly shut them up. But they was a couple of guys from the elevaters in the big 8 storey bildins down town who was never satisfied seemed like and they begun to make cracks like what do you guys get out of it we pay \$5 a year to be in The Elevater Mans Club and how do we know how much you spend for these here picnics. So that made Gus and Angelo and me kind of mad after all the work we was doin that nobody else wanted to do and so we made up a letter and we sent it to all the guys and we told em off good on how we was doin all the work and sure maybe we made some mistakes but nobody is perfect and when we try to find out who is doin all the crabbin why nobody seems to know who it is and we are gettin kind of sick of havin mud thrown at us when we are doin the best we can.

Well I guess clubs is like that. I hear some of the fellers that run the little organ clubs here in L.A. they say that seems like jest a few of them is rollin up there sleefts because nobody else wants to do it and then the other people in the club they is criticks all of a sudden and say the club is run by a click. So I guess it boils down to you cant please all of the people all of the time. □

# Music Review

by Walter J. Beaupre, Ph.D.

**Earl McCandless, MEDLEY FOR AMERICANS, Dave Coleman Music, Inc., P.O. Box 230, Montesano, Washington 98563 (\$2.50 in music stores or from the publisher).**

Fortunately in the U.S.A. one can express honest reservations in spite of the showbiz addage about not knocking the Flag and Motherhood. Less fortunate, perhaps, is the cynical reaction of instant suspicion whenever the Flag is waved in entertainment circles. For example, if you saw the title in a music store *Medley for Americans* and a blurb on the cover announcing "an arrangement for All Organs of our most cherished National Melodies" you might suspect that the musical contents would be as square as a tibia resonator and avoid it like the plague. In this case you'd be making a serious mistake.

The Earl McCandless *Medley for Americans* is first rate music beautifully arranged. Five tunes are included and each is a "piece of cake" to play. "America, The Beautiful" introduces the refrain in C with a smooth modulation into F for the chorus. Harmonies are open, simple, and yet feel fresh and new under the fingers. You'll like the modulation into the key of G for "My Country, Tis of Thee." You'll also like the arrangement — well nigh perfect! With only a scosh of tricky maneuvering you'll find yourself safely in B flat for a snappy chorus of "Columbia, The Gem of the Ocean." Then an effective modulation back to C for "Battle Hymn of the Republic." If there are better arrangements of this grapes-of-wrath classic, there certainly is no more satisfying organ treatment of the finale, "Star Spangled Banner." It's so good that you'll forget our National Anthem can only be sung by the likes of Yma Sumac.

The suggested registrations for tabs and drawbars are not very imaginative, and McCandless has a habit of switching willy-nilly from Italian to English tempo instructions

(i.e., "Allegretto" — "With spirited dignity"). Page turning is awkward for "Columbia, The Gem," but don't let these minor flaws keep you away from an otherwise fine work. For the home organist with very modest playing skills *Medley for Americans* is a real find. Incidentally, it's solid enough musically to please the more advanced player also.

**Earl McCandless, POP TUNES OF THE REVOLUTION, same publisher (\$2.75 in music stores or from Dave Coleman Music).**

If anything, *Pop Tunes of the Revolution* turned out to be an even nicer surprise, probably because a few of the tunes were "new" to this reviewer. Breathes there an organist with ear so tin — that he doesn't know "Yankee Doodle," "Drink to me Only," "Jolly Good Fellow," and "Auld Lang Syne"? Ah yes, but can you whistle "Chester" or "Heart of Oak"? You'll want to after playing these captivating arrangements for organ by Earl McCandless. The harmonies are definitely 20th Century and reminiscent of those fabulous Dave Coleman arrangements of pop tunes for organ a few years back.

The first tune "Chester" has also been arranged for organ by Lee Erwin (*Salute to the Silents*, E.B. Marks). Which one should you chose, the Erwin or the McCandless? It's a draw! Both are equally simple to play, neither imitates the other, and both are lovely.

Now who would think that "Yankee Doodle" could hold any surprises! It definitely does and it's great fun. This reviewer's favorite in the medley is "Johnny has Gone for a Soldier." The home organist will have to work a bit harder on this one, but it is well worth the effort. "Heart of Oak" offers a martial change of pace. Then the Coleman influence is back for a tasty treatment of "Drink to Me Only." "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow" and "Auld Lang Syne"

round out the goodies. If you've been looking for the definitive organ version of the New Year's Eve classic, this is it. The second chorus has a gentle beat.

Page turning points are awkward more often than not, registration helps for the theatre organist are minimal, and McCandless still can't make up his mind with which language to describe tempo changes, but *Pop Tunes of the Revolution* is another must. The level of playing difficulty varies a little from tune to tune. Those who have been playing for a while should have no trouble.

**Earl McCandless, STEPHEN FOSTER MEDLEY: NO. 3, same publisher (\$2.50 at music stores or from Dave Coleman Music).**

Can we make it three in a row for Earl McCandless? Sorry, the *Stephen Foster Medley* just doesn't have it for this reviewer. "Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming" gets a transfusion of harmonic ideas that don't jell. It's still a tiresome bore. "Nelly Bly" works quite well as a snappy two-step. "Laura Lee" is best forgotten as a damsel in harmonic distress. "Are we Coming, Father Abraham" is a simple and catchy march, and "Jeanie With the Light Brown Hair" becomes a pleasant modern arrangement that sounds like any number of other treatments available in music stores. Stephen Foster fans will probably want to own a copy of the McCandless *Medley*. Non-buffs should probably sample instead some of the other excellent offerings in the Dave Coleman catalogue. For instance, the luscious George Wright "While We're Young" is still one of the best buys anywhere, and this reviewer has had great fun with Dave Coleman's *Romantic Classics*. Oh yes, and whatever happened to those superb Coleman arrangements of "Laura," "I'm in the Mood for Love" etc. that once appeared in folios? Are they still in print? They should be. Elegant, elegant stuff! □

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## 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 (post-paid price, ordering address,) if applicable, and a black and white photo of the artist which need not be returned.*

**AN EARFUL OF NOSTALGIA, Robinson Cleaver at the Compton and Wurlitzer organs. NLM 104. \$8.00 seairmail or \$11.00 airmail from N.T.O.T. Records, 137 Towngate, Ossett, West Yorkshire WFS OPN, England. U.S. checks and postal money orders accepted; make them out to Theatre Organ Club.**



'Robbie' Cleaver circa 1960. His re-issued 78's evoke some happy nostalgia.

This album celebrates the 40th year of Britain's Theatre Organ Club, easily the most long-lived organization of its type. The Northern Theatre Trust and the TOC joined efforts to co-produce the album which reproduces Parlophone recordings made by organist Robinson Cleaver between 1937 and 1941, probably his most active and productive period. The TOC started life as Cleaver's fan club and later expanded its horizons to serve the entire hobby and its practitioners. Cleaver still serves as TOC president and the club's No. 1 fan. Except for a few early 10" LP Deccas, Cleaver's music never got wide distribution in the USA, so be prepared for a nostalgic treat. So much for background.

The music heard here is dubbed from 78 rpm monaurals. The quality varies but most of the cuts are very good. The originals were borrowed from collectors all over England and the miracle is that so many listenable 78 rpm pressings could be located after 40 years.

The album features three organs, all 8-rankers; the Compton in the Regal Cinema, Bexley Heath (permanently KO'd by the Luftwaffe in WW II); the EMI Studio Compton in London, and the Wurlitzer in the Granada Welling Theatre (the only one of the three still perking in its original installation). All are recorded in close-up perspective and no artificial reverb has been added in the transfer to LP. Don't hesitate because the instruments are 8-rankers. There is a difference between the often assembly line 8-voice organs installed in US theatres when the rush was on and the more carefully finished organs put in English cinemas in the '30s. On this disc one is not aware that the playing is being done on relatively small organs. Of course, that is partly due to the artistry of the player.

The selections: "Ca C'est Paris," "Boo Hoo," "Little Old Lady of Poverty Row," "Red White and Blue," "Frasquita Serenade" (Friml), "Polly," "Dinah," "Nola," "Dainty Miss" (Barnes), "Annabelle Lee," "Somebody Stole My Gal," "Knave of Diamonds," "Shadow Serenade" (with violin enhancement), "The Toy Trumpet," "Bugle Call Rag," "Let's Break the Good News" (with dance band and girl vocalist); "An Earful of Music," "Fall in and Follow Me,"

"Temptation Rag," "Ship Ahoy" (the four preceding tunes played with TOC studio audience, with banter by Cleaver and community singing); "Bridal Waltz" (Gade), "Invitation to the Waltz" (organ-piano duet), "Czardas" (Monti), "Andantino" (Lemare), "Canadian Capers," "Dance of the Hours" (Ponchielli).

One may wonder how two sides can hold so many selections, and these are not abbreviated cuts. We timed one side to just over 26 minutes (17 to 19 is more usual) and we can only conclude that the 78 transfers permitted some thinner LP grooves. Yet there seems to be no lack of bass, often the results of "squeezing." There is occasional distortion, which may be simply original record wear. But technically, the cuts made by various technicians so long ago, blend well.

This record also provides an opportunity to compare Compton and Wurlitzer organs, so many things being equal. The Comptons provide a bright sound well adapted to the rhythm tunes, while the more lush Wurlitzer is used by Cleaver for most of the standard classics (the final four tunes listed are played on the Wurlitzer, the rest on the two Comptons). Of course, all the organs heard here have the usual percussions, which Cleaver uses tastefully.

Now to Robinson Cleaver. We have been wanting to review some of his recordings for a long time, and this is the one worth waiting for, a compendium of his best work. There are more recent Cleaver records but too many of them reveal evidence of electronic organ influences, musical devices and playing practices which may be okay on a B-3 but cause raised eyebrows among pipe fans. Not so on this album. It's all pure theatre organ.

The meticulous attention to detail, the crispness of attack, the deadly accuracy of the technique, the amazing amount of registration variety, the basic drive, and the overall musicality of the Cleaver approach wipes away the 40 years since the originals were miked. Cleaver's ballads have just the correct amount of schmaltz while his classics are mostly by the book, but with TO registration. True, to present day listeners some of the pop playing may sound a bit ricky-tick and corny, but it didn't at the time it was

recorded; Robinson Cleaver was then the toast of British cinemas and it's a privilege to relive some of the grand moments with him.

The album is attractively packaged and includes a 12-page brochure with a Cleaver discography, 18 photos of the organist (2 with wife Molly), notes about the selections and a history of the Theatre Organ Club. Good show, TOC!

**HERE'S BUBBLES! Marilyn "Bubbles" Libbin playing the Emery Theatre 3/23 composite Wurlitzer. Available from Emery Theatre, 1112 Walnut Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45210. Postpaid price not stated.**

Marilyn Libbin is a new recording entity to us. The organ is the pride and joy of the Ohio Valley Chapter of ATOS, and well it should be. It's a beauty in grooves. Basically a style 260 Wurlitzer (when in Cincinnati's Albee Theatre), it has been built up to 23 ranks, and the new ones blend, thanks to the technical expertise of ATOSers Ev. Pratt, Dick Kersting and their able crews. This is the second record release, the first having been played by an eastern practitioner.

The tunelist avoids the hackneyed. Selections are: "Applause," "Cabaret," "Maple Leaf Rag," "Falling in Love with Love," "Mary," "Over There," "Give My Regards to Broadway," "Harrigan," "Yankee Doodle Dandy," "It's a Grand Old Flag," "Bewitched," "I'll Build a Stairway to Paradise," "I Believe in Music," "Syncopated Clock," "San Francisco," "Till There Was You," "Queen Rag" (on Tibia'd "calli-ope"), "Alabama Bound," "Georgia Cakewalk," "Alexander's Ragtime Band," "Are You From Dixie?," plus three movie or newsreel intros: 20th Century Fox fanfare (with Cinemascope extension), Movietone News theme and Paramount on Parade (listed in wrong order on the jacket).

The jacket notes supply our only clue to Ms. Libbin's musical background. She hails from Fort Thomas, Kentucky and studied piano as a little girl. She put in two years classical study in Cincinnati's College Conservatory of Music. The notes say she has accompanied silent films at the Emery for the past two years

for weekend revivals sponsored by the chapter.

But how does she do on the rather ambitious list of selections heard on this album? The answer — not bad. Not bad at all. For a comparative newcomer to the TO field she has picked up quite a few useful tricks. She goes through the old timers with an easy familiarity for one who has not studied with a well-schooled pro.



Marilyn Libbin. The Emery Theatre's manager dubbed her 'Bubbles' and it stuck.

One problem is the transference of the personal charm, which the jacket notes project, to musical realities. The microphone has a tendency to ignore the feminine magnetism which the jacket notes attempt to establish. It's all reduced to what the microphone hears, and that end is quite revealing. For example, it's evident that Ms. Libbin isn't very experienced as a theatre organist, else she would not commit the unforgivable "no-no" of "Schmear glissandos" on pipes, a dead giveaway of her electronic organ background. She diminishes her opener ("Applause") with a full manual "wipe." More are heard during her other selections, all with the same repugnance. This flaw takes the edge off some quite fair playing in the '40s intermission style.

Disregarding the big flaw, arrangements are simple but well performed. She doesn't do much key changing within selections, nor even between selections. But one never worries, either, now she will get out of this or that musical cul-de-sac, simply because Ms. Libbin doesn't work her harmonizations into musical dead ends. There is lots of registration variety. The playing is en-

joyable if not spectacular. We must regard Ms. Libbin as a "comer" in need of some expert instruction in proper theatre styling.

As for recording technical quality, there is an attempt to squeeze too many minutes of recording into the grooves of a 12-inch disc. This, plus over modulation in recording level on the review pressing, makes for considerable distortion on the inner cuts.

The jacket photo reveals the face of a very lovely and vivacious woman, and the jacket notes are tailored to enhance her considerable talents. This recording will serve as a sample of her first grooving effort.

**ON THE MARCH! Del Castillo playing the LA Wiltern Theatre 4/28 Kimball organ. CR-0175. \$7.50 postpaid from Castle Services, 2008 Preuss Rd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90034.**

This is a very precious album, not only for the considerable musical values, but for several sentimental reasons we'll get into presently. The title, *On the March*, is actually a misnomer; there's only one selection, Sousa's "Semper Fidelis," a rousing closer, that lives up to the album title in the traditional sense. It's actually a Del Castillo concert, with eleven well-chosen selections, some of them even fitting the descriptive title "march." Del has chosen his titles from opera, circus music, the classics, silent movie music, music composed for English crownings plus his original march honoring the '76 bicentennial and his majestic "Wiltern Fanfare" which introduced all ATOS organ concerts at the famed theatre while Del was the chapter's program chairman.

In fact, he opens with the brief fanfare, then joins the circus for a rousing "Entry of the Gladiators" during which he has some fun with the Trio, playing it in the style of a slightly zonked calliapist. Humor has always been a Del Castillo forte. But next comes a sobering "Phantom Brigade" during which the soldiers return from the war as they had promised their wives and sweethearts, but they return as ghosts, parading in formation before the living, while the unanswered question, "why did you send us to die?" per-



Del Castillo and the Kimball. He gave the venerable organ its final workout in grooves in the LA Wiltern Theatre. (Stufoto)

vades the atmosphere. Then comes Franz Schubert's "March Militaire," one of the misnamed "presto" concert pieces entirely lacking in military qualities. Del makes the most of a good piece many of us played as piano students, but don't believe it is easy.

Abe Holtzman's "The Whip" was used by silent film accompanists for horse race and chase scenes, and is better described as a gallop rather than a march. Del's original "Bi-Centennial March" illustrates his skill as an arranger. It is comprised of bits and pieces of recognizable US folk tunes such as "American Patrol," "Marching Thru Georgia" (there go sales in the South!), "The President's March," "Yankee Doodle," "Dixie" (here they come back) and "America" played up-tempo and given a Sousa style treble obbligato. It's a study in phrase patchworking, with the final result coming out as interesting music.

Del couldn't resist that always good seller, "Pomp and Circumstance No. 1" (Elgar), which includes a hymn to the "Land of Hope and Glory" but also heard is "P. and C. No. 2," an equally thrilling coronation march. Here Del turns off the tremors and plays the big Kimball as a concert organ, and it serves well. Two additional concert pieces from the classics are Poldini's "March Mignonne" and Halvorsen's "Entry of the Boyars," both performed with

the boyish enthusiasm of a brilliant student who has prepared his lesson well. The closer is the aforementioned rip-snortin' "Semper Fidelis." This guy's in his mid-80's? In our recollection he never performed better on a recording.

Bill Johnson's recording is good. This is a difficult organ to record; it tends to sound "tubby" on records, but that quality has been minimized here. The jacket notes are a production apart. Ross Farmer's notes about the organ are informative (he was the organ's "Keeper" for several years). But it's Del's notes about his adventures as a "doughboy" bandmaster in the 1917-1918 conflict with the "Boche," a war to end war and to make the world safe for democracy, as President Wilson put it, which stand out. Del's experience in entering the army, getting into the band with a horn he couldn't play, his promotion from cymbal player to bandmaster and to 2nd Lieutenant prior to shipment overseas to join "the big parade," parallels the naive trust of many an American youth swept into that conflict, full of idealism but with no idea as to what war with the seasoned Central Powers really meant. The jacket, with its sepia 1918 photos of a youthful Del and his 302nd Field Artillery Band, are loaded with the nostalgia of those innocent days when all we had to do to form a perfect world was to whip

the Kaiser. Del, you struck an empathetic chord, and that's only a part of the remarkable musical career Del Castillo chalked up in the years since his Fort Devens adventure. Of course, these notes are not relative to the music on this record but they certainly are relative to Del Castillo, and he is indeed unique.

As many readers know, the organ heard here is in jeopardy. By the time these notes are published it is very likely the Kimball will be in storage, or perhaps in Hollywood's Pantages Theatre. It's disposition was unsettled when we went to press. So this will be the final recording of it. It couldn't have been played by a more representative nor skilled organist.

**MUSIC FROM 'STAR WARS' played by John Rose at the 4/140 Austin organ in the Cathedral of St. Joseph, Hartford, Conn. Delos No. DEL/F 25450 (stereo). Available in record stores. \$8.98 postpaid from Delos Records Inc., 855 Via de la Paz, Pacific Palisades, Calif. 90272.**

This John Williams score made quite a splash among movie fans, especially in view of the fact that it was part of a smash film. It is a romantic score in the tradition of such great film composers as Max Steiner and Erich Korngold, and we just



Now in his mid-20s, John Rose has made his mark as a classical organ recitalist.



don't get many scores of their qualities anymore.

The concept of recording the score on a straight organ was the idea of Delos Records' Michael Nemo, who searched out and located both organist John Rose and the Cathedral of St. Joseph Austin. It's an ambitious project. Mr. Rose states in the jacket notes:

"The pipe organ as we know it today is essentially an orchestral instrument possessing an enormous variety of tonal capacities which can be mixed or used in counterpoint with each other, just as an orchestra performs." Quite true, but although he is apparently not aware of it, Mr. Rose is describing the potentialities of the theatre organ, rather than the straight organ heard on this album. An organ suitable for the performance of Bach, Guilmant, Franck, Reger or Karg-Elert isn't necessarily the best choice for romantic film music, and this fact is never more evident than during "Princess Leia's Theme." Admittedly, the Fisher girl played the part deadpan, with little emotion showing, but that's all the more reason to add some schmaltz in the score, as the orchestral score did. But in this reincarnation, the sexless Diapasons and untrem'd Flutes match Carrie's dullsville portrayal perfectly, and that's a shame.

Does the music rate a performance covering two sides of an LP? Is the interest value high enough to rate such a lengthy exposition? The answer is a resounding *Yes*. The best recourse we have is to compare Mr. Rose's performance with the soundtrack recording played by the London Symphony Orchestra. This covers four sides and there isn't a dull moment in the hearing.

The organ transcription is therefore necessarily shorter and some cues are omitted, but no important ones. This, like many romantic film scores, consists of a few main themes. From this basic material are drawn the variations orchestrated to fit the many scenes. In this score the main themes are the opening title music, "Princess Leia," the "Cantina," and the "Throne Room" (closing).

A very difficult chore fell to adapter/arranger Robert Edward Smith. For example he had to get along without the tympani and gongs which are so much a part of the orchestral version.

He had plenty of brass for the title music fanfares, but fared less well trying to make the quieter expository material interesting. In one instance, according to the jacket notes, the Williams music was abandoned completely in favor of new material (apparently composed by Smith). The resulting "Last Battle" is one of the record's weak spots, with little audible to suggest a battle.

The cues played are: Main Title, "The Desert" and "Robot Auction," the "Princess Appears," "Inner City," "Cantina Band," "Mouse Robot," "Blasting Off," and "Ben's Death" and "TIE Fighter Attack," "Princess Leia's Theme," "The Last Battle," "The Throne Room," "End Title."

One portion which comes off rather well is the Cantina music, the scene in the space bar where we meet some unearthly critters. It's an indestructible little bit of corn which on this organ comes out somewhat like calliope music. But there are long stretches of very low level sound which are just plain dull, as there isn't sufficient volume or registration variety to sustain interest.

Speaking of sound levels, this recording is one of the most honest recordings we've heard. Apparently, once recording peaks were set, there were no further volume adjustments. At face value, this seems like an ideal situation. Yet, it results in overlong stretches of levels so low the pressing's surface noise competes with the music.

Mr. Rose does very well playing material not suited to his instrument, although one has the feeling he would be more comfortable playing more traditional fare. Yet we must give him credit for breaking away from the beaten path. We hope he will discover the orchestral organ should he have the opportunity to record theatrical music in the future.

Jacket notes are by producer

**CORRECTION.** In the October/November issue we listed the postpaid price of *Musical Moods of Maria Kumagai* as \$6.75. It should have been \$8.00. Our apologies.

Michael Nemo, by John Rose and by Tony Thomas, a veteran of many film score record jackets. The technical problems of overcoming reverb in the 5 million cubic-foot cathedral have been dealt with successfully, and even in the mighty climaxes (some with 32' pedal voices) there is remarkably little distortion.

This album we will recommend as a courageous experiment which has some satisfying moments for the film score enthusiast.

*Several albums have been received without the required merchandising information (postpaid price, where to send the mail order) nor the requested black and white photo. There isn't much point in running a review unless we can put seller and prospective buyer in contact, so be sure to include ordering information when submitting records for review.* □



## BOOK REVIEW

by Lloyd E. Klos

**PRESENTING THE WURLITZER REPRODUCING RESIDENCE ORGAN. Reprint of original catalogue. Eight pages. Vestal Press, Box 97, Vestal, N.Y. \$3.50 (New York State residents add 7% Sales Tax).**

Once again, Harvey Roehl's organization has provided a reprint of a catalogue which should appeal to collectors of pipe organ memorabilia. The original was provided by the Australian Division of the Theatre Organ Society.

The booklet contains specifications of models R-J 11, R-J 12, R 13, R 14, RJ 4, RJ 8, RJ 10 and R 16, with pictures of five consoles. The date of the catalogue is not given, but the picture of a waterfall-type console indicates it is close to the thirties.

W. A. Crowle, Ltd. is listed as the Australian representative of Wurlitzer, with head office in Sydney. □

## THE ACOUSTICAL CONSULTANT

# Dynamic Capabilities of Familiar Ranks

by R. J. Weisenberger

As those familiar with pipe organs know, the larger scales of pipes are ultimately capable of higher acoustical output, but the question is "How much more?"

One also may be aware that larger scales can be made softer while smaller scales can be made louder, to narrow the dynamic gap between various tonal colors. The question again is "How much modification in pipe design is needed to accomplish this?"

Yet another case is building pipes of a similar tonality, but of various dynamic ranges. Many builders may think this is almost an impossibility,

for to maintain a similar tonality, the pipe scaling must remain identical. If the pressure were simply lowered to achieve a change in dynamics, this would also lower the harmonic development in the pipework, thus also mellowing the tone.

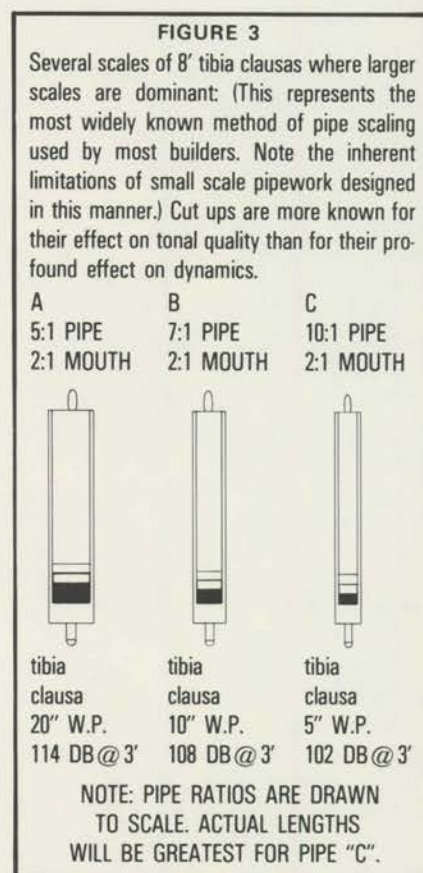
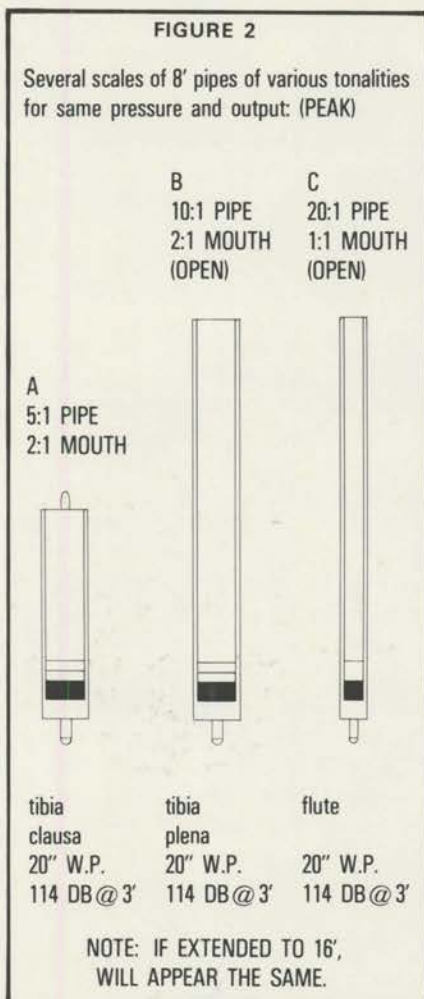
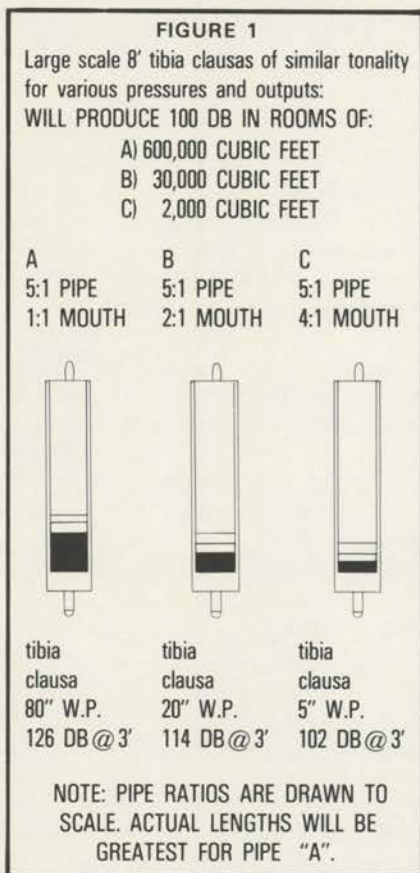
Those familiar with pipes know that raising the cut up will lower harmonic development, and lowering the cut up will do the opposite. Repeated tests have shown that there is a good reason for this, but an un-

expected advantage, little known to many organ builders, also results from such a change.

Basically the cut up will establish the output capability of the pipe; low cut ups lower the output capability while high cut ups raise it. Pipes operating far below the point of overblowing will naturally exhibit less harmonic development than pipes operating near their limits. Organ builders of 50 years ago apparently realized this.

Tests have shown that the output capability is related to the cut up as a 4th power function, and to the operating pressure as a 2nd power function, **when using a given flue**. Basically this means that the point at which a pipe will reach a given degree of harmonic development and output can now, for the first time, be calculated. Thus, pipes with high cut ups *are* capable of the same degree of harmonic development as those with low cut ups, **given the proper increase in pressure**, while also providing an **exponential** increase in output.

If pipe organs are to be built to fill today's stadiums, coliseums and convention centers with similar levels as attained in theatres, such



technical knowledge is essential. Such knowledge can also be used to design organs for small installations, so that the pipework is capable of filling a room with a loud sound when needed, but yet not pose a serious hazard to hearing.

Included with this article are scaled drawings of actual proven designs, their operating pressures, and their relative outputs. You will note the vastly unused dynamics most pipe scales have yet to offer.

During this century, fields such as aeronautics, electronics, medicine, etc. have made tremendous strides due to scientific research.

There is no longer a reason that the field of organ building be limited to the knowledge gained through only its past achievements.

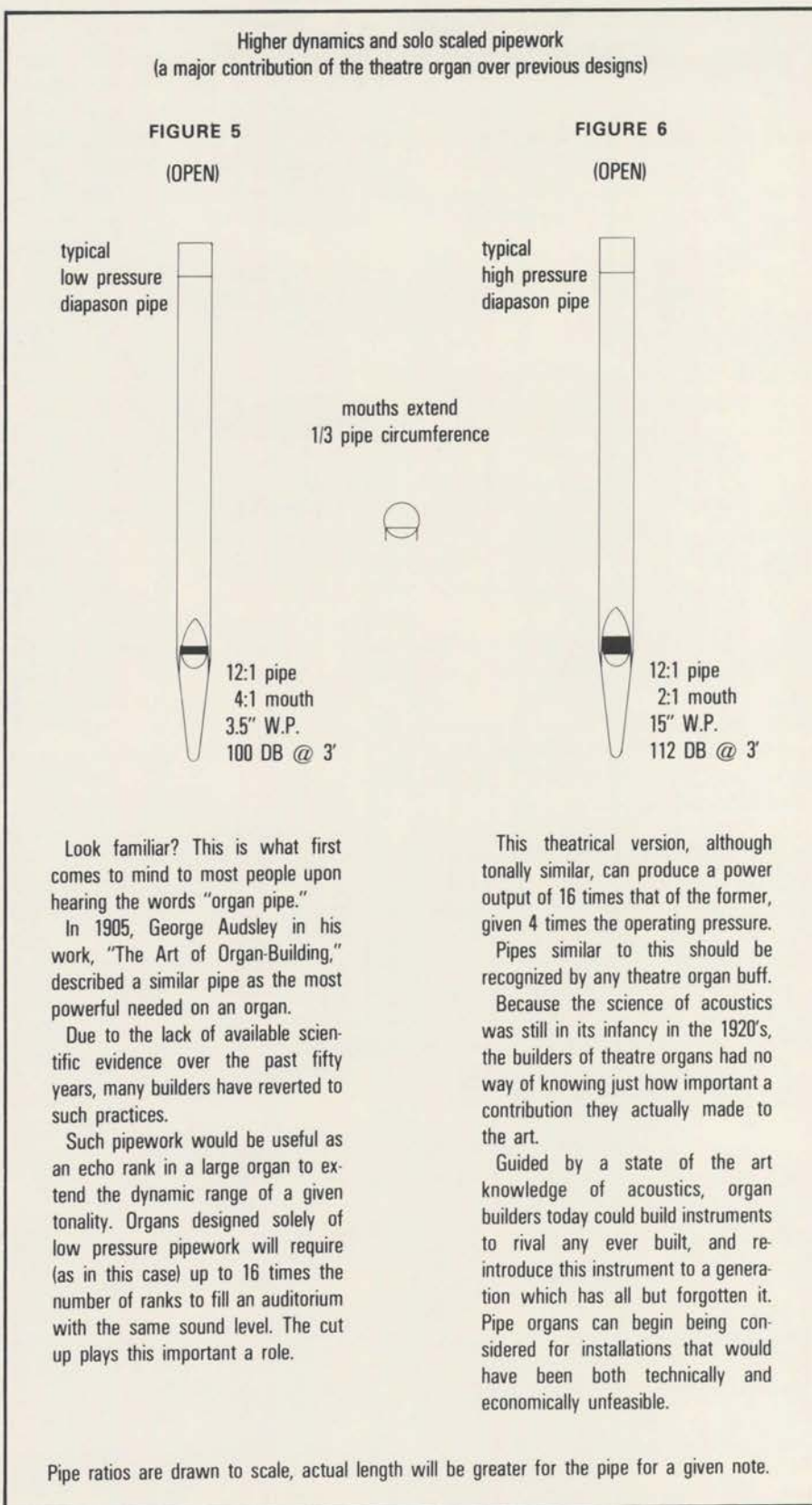
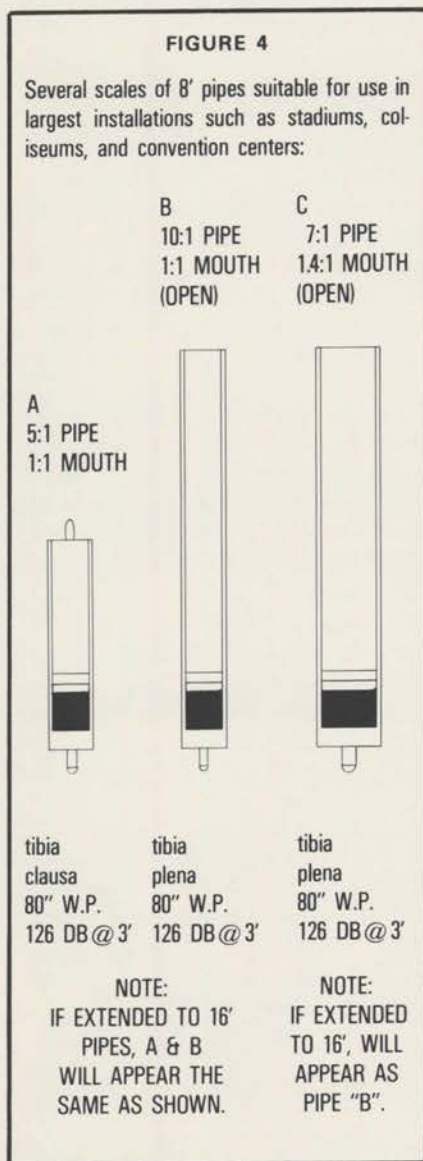
Organ building could again become a live and well profession if we really want it to be; if it should be-

come a forgotten art to future generations, we'll have only ourselves to blame.

My next article will look at the directional characteristics of various ranks, and the factors that make pipe-produced sound unique.

Note: Detailed technical information and graphs compiled from actual test results (concerning this article) are available on request.

For further reading: *We've Got Problems* by John Muri (THEATRE ORGAN, May '77) □



**NUGGETS**  
from the  
**GOLDEN DAYS**

Prospected  
by Lloyd E. Klos



With the Christmas season here, Jason and I deliver you some choice nuggets involving the big names in the great era of the theatre organ. References were *Motion Picture World (MPW)*, *Around the Town (ATT)*, *Exhibitors' Herald World (EHW)*, and *Motion Picture Almanac (MPA)*.

*Sept. 12, 1925 (MPW)* For his solo presentation this week, ALBERT HAY MALOTTE is playing Elgar's "Pomp & Circumstance" at the Uptown Theatre in Chicago.

*May 6, 1928 (Detroit Sunday Times)* ARTHUR GUTOW, organist of the Michigan Theatre, is sailing for a short vacation abroad. He has been heard each Wednesday over WJR, Detroit, from 11:45 p.m. to 12:15 a.m. Gutow will return to his radio hearers in a few weeks.

*Dec. 1928 (ATT)* MAURICE COOK, "The Jovial Console Master", is making a popular hit as solo organist at Loew's State Theatre in Syracuse. Although this is but his first year at this house, he is featuring spotlight solos and has built quite a following. Previous to this engagement, he was with the Finkelstein and Rubens circuit for three years. His vital personality helped him gain much headway.

*Dec. 1928 (ATT)* With an engagement of seven years to his credit, BILLY KLAISS has built up a tremendous following at the Stanley Theatre in Philadelphia where he is the organ soloist.

*Dec. 1928 (ATT)* A varied list of virtues can be added to ROBERT J. BERENTSEN's triumph. A very thorough musician and teacher of organ at his studio in the Eastman School of Music in Rochester; broadcasts over WHAM; and the much desired opportunity to open the Capitol Theatre in New York, are all factors which have helped Berentsen to achieve his spectacular success. He was featured at some of the largest houses in New York, and has been connected with the Eastman organization for six years. His delightful personality and optimism have helped him to gain his remarkable height in the world of organists.

*Dec. 1928 (ATT)* JOHN GART is being featured at the organ at Loew's Metropolitan Theatre in Brooklyn, N.Y. This is his second year at this house, having been with the Loew's organization four years. He also teaches organ at his own studio.

*Dec. 1928 (ATT)* EDDIE DUNSTEDTER, featured organist at the Minnesota Theatre in Minneapolis, has many Brunswick recordings to his credit.

*Dec. 1928 (ATT)* In his second year at Loew's Century Theatre in Baltimore, HAROLD RAMSAY is meeting with great success. He has written several new numbers which will be released shortly. Formerly at the Rivoli Theatre in New York four years, and one year at Shea's Buffalo, he has a tremendous following and is very well

liked as a result of his fine personality.

*Mar. 16, 1929 (EHW)* BERNIE COWHAM at the RKO Theatre in Flushing, Long Island, played an organ solo called "Isn't Nature Grand?" Bernie used special slides which explained why nature is grand, and a request for the audience to sing. Everyone complied with Cowham's request and sang "The Sun Is At My Window", "Where the Shy Little Violets Grow", and "A Precious Little Thing Called Love". Jimmy Flynn of Remick's sang a chorus alone and one with the audience which were received very well. Bernie, through his pleasing manner and fine playing, has become very popular at this house and also at the Madison Theatre in Brooklyn with which he alternates each week.

*March 16, 1929 (EHW)* HENRY B. MURTAGH at the Brooklyn Paramount, offered an original solo called "Follow the Leader". His numbers were "My Blackbirds Are Bluebirds Now", "Once In a Lifetime", "I Faw Down an' Go Boom" and "Let Me Call You Sweetheart". Intermingled with the numbers, Murtagh used some clever slides which told the story. As usual, his reception was big.

*March 1929 (Roxy News)* The Roxy Theatre in New York City has as its feature picture this week *Strong Boy* with Victor McLaglen, Leatrice Joy and Robert Ryan. Organists are LEW WHITE, DR. C. A. J. PARMENTIER and GEORGE EPSTEIN.

*Sept. 1930 (MPA)* RAMON BERRY, guest organist for the Lynch Circuit in Chicago, has also appeared in concert in Sioux Falls, Fargo and St. Paul. He is instructor at the Ball Theatre Organ School in Chicago.

*Sept. 1930 (MPA)* EDMUND C. FITCH is featured organist at Melbourne, Australia's Regent Theatre.

*Sept. 1930 (MPA)* EMIL VELAZCO, organist and composer, is broadcasting over the Columbia Network thru WOR from his own studios at 1658 Broadway in New York. He is a recording artist, using his own name for Columbia recordings and a nom-de-plume for O'Keh and Harmony discs.

*Sept. 1930 (MPA)* HENRI A. KEATES, Balaban & Katz' solo organist, is "The Man Who Put Community Singing on the Map". Born in Liverpool, England, he had vaudeville experience, playing several instruments including violin, cello, French horn, piano and organ. He has been a theatre organist for 22 years. "playing deluxe houses in every state of the Union".

*May 1936 (Syracuse U. "Daily Orange")* A silent film classic, *The Covered Wagon*, starring Lois Wilson, will be presented by the Drama Dept. of Syracuse University over the weekend at the Civic Theatre. Fine Arts Junior, W. STUART GREEN will supply the music score on an electric organ which is supposedly manufactured by a clock maker.

*GOLD DUST: 3/26* AMBROSE LARSEN, Terminal in Chicago... *4/27* TOM GRIERSON, Rochester's Riviera... *12/28* BOBBY DEMMING, Shea's Kensington, Buffalo; JACK WOODBURN, Windsor and HARRY ZIMMERMAN, Belmont in Chicago; WALTER WILD, New York's Hippodrome; ELLIS BUTLER, Gary, Indiana's Tivoli... *9/34* EDDIE BUTLER, Omaha's Orpheum.

That should do it until we dig you later.

Jason & The Old Prospector □

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE TECHNICAL SIDE

by Lance Johnson

Do you have any questions?

Send them direct to:

**QUIZMASTER  
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**LANCE JOHNSON**  
Box 1228  
Fargo, ND 58102

**Q.** I have an old Major Flute from a 1920 Holtkamp which I would like to make into a Tibia Clausa. Is this possible for my residence hybrid theatre organ of seven ranks? I want to use it on six inches wind. Do I have to leather the upper lips?

**A.** Yes, it certainly is. This has been done quite successfully by several organ people. If you will send me the inside scale of the C's, I will try to adjust the scaling to be suitable for your small residence organ. It will be necessary to raise the cut-ups especially in the bass end and gradually leaving them lower in the high trebles. Your biggest job will be making your stoppers. It would not be necessary to apply leather to the upper lips.

**Q.** I have a three manual Wurlitzer with a run problem that I cannot trouble shoot. The low A# pedal plays B at the same time. But if I play B, it does not play the A#. I figured that if the two were shorted in the wiring, then B would also play

**A#.** I checked all junction boards and switches but all seems fine. What can I do next?

**A.** It sounds to me that your contact plate is rubbing the adjacent B as it travels downward.

**Q.** I have added a Posthorn to my residence organ which I would like to operate on static pressure slightly higher than the rest of my pipework. Is it possible to just run the chest off the high pressure air supply?

**A.** No I would not recommend that procedure. First of all, the pressure in the chest will quiver with sudden demands from other heavy pipework. Secondly, there will be a noticeable tremulant effect from the closest tremulant that will bleed back into your Posthorn. I would suggest putting it on it's own regulator or even a Wurlitzer equalizer just to cut the pressure back for even supply. This will cancel ambient tremulation and pressure quivers. The Posthorn pressure must be what

### *It's Dues Time*

See Page 42  
of the Oct./Nov. Issue  
for details on how to  
pay your dues for 1980.

***Don't Miss an Issue!***

it was voiced at. Check the CC pipes for a voicer's pressure marking.

**Q.** I find that I am away much of the time and when I return to play my theatre organ, I have so many dead notes. After I have played it some, most dead notes will be eliminated. What could be the cause?

**A.** There is nothing more troublesome to contacts than house dust. It is even worse than theatre dust because it is the same dust that forms balls under your bed. You will have to devise some type of dust covers for your contacts or just have more trouble. Also keep non-silicone spray for contacts handy. □

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King Stu the First exhibits his suffering 'Oscar.'

# Vox Popper Crowned King At Music Festival

The September stanza of the annual Home Organ Festival at Asilomar, Calif., established a new gimmick this year — the election of a King and Queen. A ballot was issued to each registrant and they were counted on the final day and the winners "crowned" in an elaborate tongue-in-cheek ceremony between concerts. This year the royal titles were won by two ATOSers; Florence Lehtinen was the elected Queen and Stu Green was King. Stu is known to readers for his many stories and articles in this and other publications.

The ceremony, held between musical events in the concert hall, was conducted by veteran radio organist Porter Heaps. As "Prime Minister,"

the bewigged and robed Heaps announced the winners and asked them to come to the stage to the sound of a mighty paean of cathedral music played by Dick Bailey. The ceremony was played for laughs which counterpointed the dead seriousness of the new monarchs. They had been taken by surprise. Crowns "fit for a King" were lowered onto the royal noggins as majestic fanfares echoed through the rafters. Andy Bonacci, as a bumbling page, got the most laughs. It was probably the first time in history a king and queen were elected by popular vote.

The new monarchs were provided with sceptres and Oscar-like statuettes of an Olympic-style athlete holding a laurel wreath to an ap-

parently aching hernia. Both Stu and Flo wondered "why me?" A clue was provided on the printed ballot which urged festivaleers to "vote for your favorite character."

Later the King and Queen were paraded about the park grounds on a lorry fitted with simple "thrones." Flo was very queenly but Stu "knighted" his subjects, both male and female.

Stu wore his crown right up to bed time, when wife Peg pried it off his head. "Gosh, that crown felt good" said Stu.

It wasn't the first such honor for Stu. He was selected as ATOS' 1972 "Man of the Year," but that didn't involve a crown. □

## Betty Mason — A Decade of Service.

With the publication of this issue, Betty Mason retires as publisher of THEATRE ORGAN, ending an eleven-year association with our magazine.

Betty's involvement with our publication began back in 1969, when her husband, the late Al Mason, was in his first year of office as National President of ATOS.

Production problems in Seattle called for a change and Al and Betty Mason readily accepted the challenge of producing our magazine. Betty was also ATOS National Secretary, a job which, at that time, always accompanied the office of President.

During the remainder of Al's term as president, Al and Betty Mason continued to produce the magazine with the assistance of Don Lockwood, who had been named publications director when the magazine moved to Livonia in 1969.

In July 1970, following his term as National ATOS President, Al Mason was appointed publisher of THEATRE ORGAN, a position which he held until his sudden death following the 1974 convention.

Upon his death, Betty agreed to become publisher of the magazine, and her name first appeared on the masthead of the publication she had already been involved with for over five years.

During her eleven-year tenure with our magazine, Betty has seen her share of publication problems. However, with her passion for meeting or beating deadlines, she has made sure that THEATRE ORGAN was mailed as close as possible to the scheduled mailing date during the past decade.

A lot of changes have taken place in THEATRE ORGAN since the days when the "dummies" for an issue were spread out on endless tables in the Masons' living room where Betty, Al and Don decided on the placement of type, photos, headlines and ads.

The magazine has nearly doubled in size and our four-color covers would not have been possible in



Betty Mason.

1969, but because of increases in dues and in membership we can now enjoy this luxury.

Our method of typesetting has gone from "hot type" to computerized "phototypesetting" allowing for more innovative layouts since Floyd Mumm, of Pica Studio, was given the job of designing and typesetting THEATRE ORGAN. However, there was still the responsibility of proofing, coordinating all material for publication and the big job of mailing.

In 1973 Betty shared, with Al, the title of Honorary Member of the Year. Behind that award were countless hours of work and dedication to ATOS of which few people were aware. And the dedication for Betty didn't stop there, it went on and was to increase in years to follow.

Last year Betty Mason was re-elected to her second term on the National Board of Directors. She will continue her dedication to ATOS while taking a well-deserved rest from the many hours she has devoted to the magazine over the past eleven years.

The officers, the publication staff and the entire membership thank you, Betty, for a job well done.

Floyd Mumm, who has worked with Betty since 1971, will take over the position of publisher. Floyd and his wife Doris were named Honorary Members of ATOS in 1976 because of the extra effort they put forth to make each issue just a little bit better. □

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*Some in Short Supply*

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### ATOS

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# VOX POPS



Conducted by Stu Green

Readers are encouraged to submit interesting sidelights on the organ hobby (exclusive of chapter news items) material they believe will be of general interest about local organ activities and installations and the people who work at the hobby. We know "there's VOX POPS in them there chapters" and it only requires a 10¢ postcard to get it to VOX POPS Editor, Box 3564, Granada Hills, California 91344. If the contributor can afford a 15¢ stamp, please include a contrasty black and white photo which need not be returned.

In the little community of Arcade, N.Y. the local chapter of the Business & Professional Women's Club on September 24 sponsored a lecture by L. Curt Mangel, guiding genius of the restoration of Shea's Buffalo Theatre. Using colored slides, Curt covered the entire history of the theatre, from its opening to today's refurbishing. Structural repairs, restabilation of the stage, Grand Hall, lobby staircase, chandeliers etc., were shown. He reported that the 4/28 Wurlitzer should be ready for its re-dedication in the spring of 1980. The instrument, once advertised as "the largest Wurlitzer between New York and Chicago," will once again be the status symbol of a magnificently maintained house as it was in 1926 when Lloyd Del Castillo played it those opening weeks. Wouldn't it be poetic justice to have him re-dedicate it!



A release from George Wright's booking manager, John Nelson, informs us that Wright has nearly

completed collecting parts for his planned studio organ with the acquisition of the entire Solo division from the style 216 Wurlitzer formerly in the Los Angeles Westlake Theatre, a 1926 installation. In addition he has the Main division pipe-work from the 1924 Wurlitzer installation in the Omaha Elks' Lodge, plus a replica of a Wurlitzer Brass Sax, 13 ranks so far. All releathering has been completed and parts are stored in Los Angeles awaiting a probable January installation starting date.

Involved in the preparatory work were Abbott & Sieker, the Chrome Organ Co., Junchen-Collins Organ Corp. and Villemain Organs.



Elbert Dawson writes that the Des Moines Paramount went out with a "BOOM" on October 14 last. A chain of dynamite blasts brought the 11-story building down in a few seconds.



The program chairman who has shelled out many shekels for newspaper ads plugging public organ concerts may turn a bit green at the rare but very fortunate alliance between the South Florida Theatre Organ Society and the *Miami Herald*. The club has access to Gusman Hall (originally the Miami Olympia Theatre) with its original style 260 Wurlitzer. How to pull in an audience?

The club made a co-sponsorship deal with the *Herald*: the chapter pays for hall rental, organist's fees, house crew and taxes, and the profits go for organ maintenance. The *Herald* promotes the public shows via its



Walter Strony helped the cat chase the canary in Miami (photo made before the contact lenses were installed).

The Miami Herald and the South Florida Theater Organ Society present

the classic escapist horror-comedy silent film

## THE CAT AND THE CANARY

with the young concert organ master  
**Walter Strony**  
at the keys of the mighty Wurlitzer pipe organ

wide circulation — at no cost to the club. With newspaper advertising usually being the largest item on the bill, the arrangement with the *Herald* leaves lots of bread for organ maintenance and improvement. The newspaper charges the ads to its promotional budget.

Club member G.W. Gerhart informs us that the first show in April 1978, starring a Gaylord Carter "Flickerfingers" show, sold out the house's 1800 seats. This year, a two-column ad the length of the page trumpeted the club-newspaper sponsorship of a Halloween show starring Walter Strony cueing the vintage silent chiller, *The Cat and the Canary*, complete with a sketch of a haunted house and a tear-off ticket order form. This cooperative effort is an idea available to any organ club which will do the groundwork.



Jack Skelly, having some free time from his organists duties at Playland Casino in Westchester, N.Y., visited Radio City Music Hall during September. "It was a marvelously entertaining program, and was held over an extra month, ending September 26. The next feature, "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," had admission boosted to \$12.50. The two or-



ganists, Chad Weirick and Lance Luce, play 15 minutes before and at intervals during the show. They play very well, but if one could offer constructive criticism, it was too loud — practically full organ. Could it be, that in gearing the Music Hall shows to satisfy not only adults, but also the rock-oriented kids, the new policy includes upping the decibel count to please the latter group?



You may receive this in time to catch one of Terry Charles six Christmas concerts at the Kirk of Dunedin, Dunedin, Florida. A press release from the Kirk states that Terry is the most popular organist to appear in the series since they started in 1968 (that apparently includes the concerts played on their 4/23 Wurlitzer by such *prominenti* as Helen Dell, Ann Leaf, Billy Nalle and George Wright, Ed). Terry's "Christmas Fantasy" was set for presentations on Dec. 6, 7, 8, 17, 18 and 19. We established that Terry could smile in a recent column. We never had any doubts about his playing ability. The fact that he packs 'em in year after year is evidence enough.



We received a postcard from traveler John Ledwon, who went on a world-girdling vacation following his chairing of the 1979 ATOS convention. John wrote that he had played Japan's only Wurlitzer, the one in



He'd been there before. John Ledwon entertaining Mitsukoshi department store shoppers in 1965. Japan's only theatre organ is still perking in 1979.

Tokyo's Mitsukoshi department store. He added that it sounds good but needs a major overhaul.

Something in the association of John's name with that instrument struck some *deja vu* chords in our memory so we shuffled through our carton of "used" photos. Sure enough there was a photo of a boyish John playing the same Wurlitzer for Japanese shoppers — in 1965.



Bill Wright's musical activities seem to be increasing since we ran the veteran film cueer's biography a few issues back. Shortly after "The Wrong Wright" hit print he got a rather urgent phone call from a TV producer who insisted that Bill show up at the Pasadena Crown Theatre in 30 minutes — attired in a tuxedo. The house had been rented for shooting a segment of the *Incredible Hulk*, and when the crew arrived and discovered the organ intact, the producer decided it would be just the thing to accompany the magic act to be videotaped. So they needed an organist who knew the instrument.

Bill moved fast — in the direction of a costume rental service — and made it in the prescribed time. Then he sat around while the cast rehearsed. Finally came the magic show and Bill fitted music to it easily. The producer was pleased and Bill was happy with the generous fee.

The episode was aired on the CBS Network in prime time on October



Bill Wright. Lots of magic but the big green beast was nowhere in sight. (Stufoto)

26. There was the Wurlitzer music cueing the magician's tricks — and Bill? He explains, "If you didn't blink, maybe you saw me."

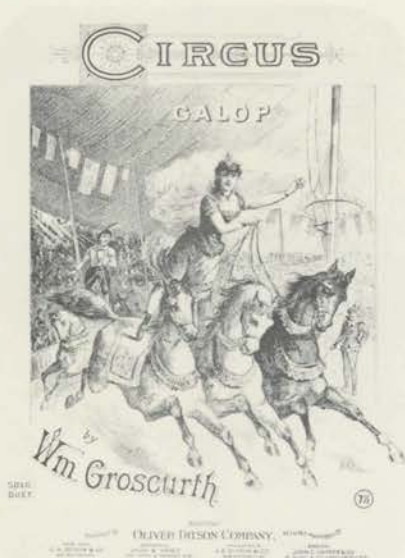


Dr. John Landon, organist, minister, teacher and author, can well add the title of "traveler" to his credits. In September, he embarked on a 2½-month trip to England. He was to give an updated version of his Jesse Crawford slide-sound presentation for the London Chapter, ATOS. Another program, based on radio items from his collection, entitled "Theatre Organists on Radio in the United States," was scheduled for the Cinema Organ Society of which John has long been a member. "Of course, I won't be adverse to trying out a few English theatre organs if the occasions present themselves," he said before departure.

On August 20th, Landon participated in a celebration marking the 50th anniversary of the 1700-seat Paramount Theatre in Anderson, Indiana, entertaining at the restored 3/7 Page organ with a sing-along as well as a solo presentation. The feature film was *The Cocoanuts* starring the Marx Brothers, the film which opened the Eberson-style house in 1929.



Both Warren Clark and Bill Reeves call our attention to the excellent article by Charles P. Fox, authority on circuses, entitled



"Circus Musical Instruments" in the *International Musician* for October, '79.

One item of special interest concerned the old-time circus parade calliope of 50-some whistles blown by live steam and heard as far as 5 miles. The article mentions that the calliapist had to have the strength in his fingers of the circus strong man, but neglects to note that the calliapist was often showered with hot ashes and flaming embers from the roaring fire under the boiler as he played. This live steam often shook the whistles loose, and at the end of the parade the calliapist usually had to apply the monkey wrench he always carried to do the needed re-tuning job.

Another item described Ringling's 1903 organ parade wagon, 25 feet long and 10 feet high, containing a Kilgen pipe organ powered by a Stanley Steamer auto engine providing enough air to make it about as deafening as the calliope, but which, similarly, had to be re-tuned at the end of every parade because the rough roads would pop most of the pipes out of their chest holes in transit. We ran a detailed story about this Kilgen several years ago. It had 9 manual ranks and three pedal ranks. Development of the calliope obsoleted it.

Col. Harry Jenkins proved that dramatic silent movies can be as engrossing as comedies during a San Diego chapter showing of the 1926 version of rarely screened "Beau

Geste," starring Ronald Colman, Ralph Forbes and Noah Berry Sr. on September 29th at the Wurlitzer-equipped California Theatre. Harry was especially desirous of screening "Beau Geste," not only because he cued it during its initial release in the '20s but also because he still had the sheet music he played for the first showing in a New England theatre, and he considers it a good film and score. There had been some discussion relative to showing a film with an unhappy ending, so Harry wanted to prove his point.

The project nearly got wiped when the rented film failed to arrive from the one source in New York and Harry was frantic trying to line up a substitute. But UPS made a last minute delivery and saved the day.

A representative crowd of ATOS-ers showed up for the screening and they were soon engrossed in the drama. Harry observed;

"I noticed a quietness in the audience. Several times I glanced over my shoulder at the people: in the semi-darkness I could see close attention on the faces. Were it not for the organ tones, one could hear a pin drop — the same as during the 1927 showing I accompanied. A very dramatic film with a sad ending, but a great one."



Ah, that every artist had a promotion department as strong as Harry Koenig's. All he had to do was to marry Cathy and she became his untiring press agent. And Harry is good material for exploitation. He first came to our attention a few years after a bout with cancer — and he beat the man in the black coat,



Harry Jenkins. A good movie makes for a good show.

thus giving hope to other cancer victims. The fight against death changed Harry's life; he was not satisfied merely to best the disease, he went on the offensive. He cut several sides on the piano and merchandised them so that the profits went to cancer research. More recently he has turned to the theatre organ, and we have chronicled his doings. Cathy is always there with just the right words. His latest was a "biggie," a concert played on the Detroit Senate Theatre's excellent 4/34 Wurlitzer for the DTOC. That he pleased his audience was apparent in Betty Heffer's review in the *DTOC News* and in the "thank you" letter from Program Chairman Mac McLaughlin. That Cathy never misses a chance to plug the most



Harry at the DTOC 4/34 Wurlitzer. (Cathypic)

important guy in her life — which is lots better than becoming a voluntary “Wurlitzer Widow.”



The late Dessa Byrd's music lives on in the piano and electronic organ records taped from her radio broadcasts of the '60s. Tim Needler informs us that the Central Indiana chapter of ATOS, with the assistance of Dessa's sister, Virginia, is merchandising the records to build a fund to assist talented but needy music students. The two records are “Piano Melodies by Dessa Byrd” and “Dessa Byrd Plays Organ and Piano Melodies Old and New.” We have heard both records and the playing is first rate. Dessa was well known in Indiana as a theatre organist through the silent era, and was elected to the ATOS Hall of Fame a few months before her death. The Chapter saw a way to both perpetuate her name and to advance musical education with the establishment of The Dessa Byrd Memorial Scholarship Fund.

The one side devoted to organ is played on a 1960's Allen. It's amazing how much like a theatre organ Dessa's registration sounds. It's a worthwhile project and the music is good. Purchasing information will be found in an advertisement elsewhere in this issue.



Bill Taber of Western Reserve Chapter has found a way to preserve images of both theatre organ sound and its practitioners. He simply videotapes events such as seminars and lectures relative to the hobby. His first was a color taping of Lowell Ayars' '76 ATOS Convention seminar, wherein Ayars plays a few tunes, expounds about his career and what he believes the future holds for THEATRE ORGAN plus an in-depth interview. Total running time: 1 hour, 10 minutes. It's a novel way to preserve a microcosm of organ information or a portrait of an organist for future reference. Those interested may write to Bill Taber, 3911 Oakes Rd., Brecksville, Ohio, 44141.



Apparently Andy Kasparian got the former Panama City Hilton Hotel Wurlitzer perking in its new



home, the El Solano Room of the Panama City Hotel Continental. Last we heard from Andy's promo dept. he had arrived to find a lot of installation and finishing work ahead of him earlier this year. Now we received a newspaper clipping from Rodney J. Spiros who works near the scene of activity. It's a quarter-page box ad extolling the attraction now in operation. Originally a 3/27 in the Atlantic City Warner's Theatre, it has been pumped up to a 3/32 in the El Solano locale.



Elbert Dawson reports that George Wright returned to his own Grant High School in Sacramento, Calif. for a concert on October 7. His program on the School's pipes was mostly tunes he played while a student there. He reminisced about the many theatres in Sacramento with organs, which he played in his high school days. All of these organs and most of the theatres are gone now. A number of George's local relatives were in attendance including his 89 year-old aunt Blanche, who ably walked to the 4-deck console to talk and receive a kiss. Many others were recognized, including a group from George's birthplace of Orland, California. The youngest in attendance was the two-month-old Musselman baby. When he gave a slight whimper George lulled him with “Rock-a-bye Baby” on the Chrysoglott. Midway through the program George was surprised by a television news cameraman with equipment and lights. The clip was used on the air that evening and it showed George's surprised look very graphically. The television people called it an “unusual concert” and the organ a “nice piece of machinery.”



After the usual three-month summer hiatus, RTOS opened its 16th concert season on September 20. The 1350 attendees at Rochester's Auditorium Theatre were not



Lowell Ayars. There's more than one way to get on the boob tube.



Bill Langford. 'A topnotch entertainer.'

disappointed, because Ye Olde Pizza Joynt artist, Bill Langford, provided an evening of light entertainment, interspersed with timely jokes. Westerner Bill specializes in the type of music which makes folks happy and he had them in his corner throughout the evening, especially when playing medleys of old-time tunes which showed his fast digital dexterity. Toward the end of the program, he had fun with his mechanical monkey, Kokomo. Though it worked during the afternoon rehearsal, the beast refused to function. Bill finally had to give up on the ape. Shortly after laying it down its electric motor started to function, the artist retrieved it and, placing it on the music rack, proceeded to play to the accompaniment of the monkey's banging cymbals. The crowd thundered its approval and Bill was honored with a standing ovation at the end. Just the right program to kick off RTOS' nine-concert season.



When Pittsford, N.Y.'s John Roblin takes a trip, he has two things uppermost in mind: railroad equipment and theatre organs. In early September, John and wife, Fanny, were off to Alaska. Stopping at Vancouver, B.C., the couple visited the Organ Grinder and saw the Wurlitzer - Hinners there. They stopped at the Orpheum Theatre but could not gain admittance to see the 3/13 Wurlitzer. The couple heard the 2/8 Kimball in Juneau's State Office Building and were impressed by the installation, completely enclosed in glass, behind the console.

But the big surprise was in Fair-

banks. John's quick eye caught a name "Steak and Pipes" in front of a restaurant. Inside was a 3/8 Robert Morton in a state of augmentation, although it is used every day. One of the employees said that the organ had come from a local theatre, and because the console showed the wear of 50 years or so, it will be replaced by a Wurlitzer key desk which was being readied in the basement. Numerous ranks of pipes now in the cellar will be added. Railroad equipment? "It was interesting, too," says John, who saw rolling stock on the Alaska RR and Whitehorse and Yukon lines.



Eddie Baker.

It is a rare occasion when a two-hour program on radio or television is devoted exclusively to the theatre organ. However, on August 31, Lloyd Klos appeared on the program *Speak Easy*, aired on Rochester's WPXN. The show, hosted by Toby Gold, has the largest audience of any talk show in the area, and The Old Prospector covered the entire spectrum of the theatre organ. Interspersed were lively selections from records by Eddie Baker, Del Castillo, Reginald Dixon, Tiny James, Gaylord Carter, Lowell Ayars, Helen Dell, Dennis James, Ashley Miller, Bill Floyd and Don Baker. The last third of the show was devoted to questions phoned in by the audience. "The object of my appearance," says Lloyd, "was to coincide with RTOS' fall membership campaign. Response was very good."



Organ-oriented bus trips have become quite popular with organ clubs in several areas of the country. No more so than in Rochester, where RTOS ran its fifth such venture, a



Ron Curtis. They liked him in Rochester but the weather was awful.

fall-foliage excursion on October 13. Organized again by Tom Lockwood, the 121 members (largest group yet), were transported by three Greyhound cruisers to Letchworth Park, the Corning Glass Center, Watkins Glen Park and finally to Syracuse. There they swelled the crowd to almost standing room capacity to hear the British artist, Ron Curtis.

When Ron appeared in Rochester in 1977, he drew a sparse audience due to abominable weather, and this was one way the group could show Ron they like him. Ron was in great form and much of his fastpaced program showed the bouncy style so typical of the British theatre organists such as Reginald Dixon and Sidney Torch. The Fairgrounds (ex-RKO Keith's) 3/11 Wurlitzer speaks out very well in the Mills Building, and had there been no chairs in the auditorium, there would surely have been dancing. Ron had been on a several-week holiday in the Colonies, subbing for Don Thompson at the Organ Grinder Pizza in Toronto while the latter vacationed in Hawaii.



Bob Longfield of Carmichael, Cal. is a theatre buff, and recently while researching Sacramento houses on microfilmed newspapers, he came across an item which told of a fire destroying the 1800-seat National Theatre in Marysville, Cal. in June 1922: "Organist Harry J. Probat, despite crackling flames, stayed at the organ console until every patron had safely left the theatre." Bob would love to know about Probat and what happened to him. □



## the letters to the editors

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

### Address:

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

Dear Mr. Thompson,

The London Chapter was filled with great sadness when we heard the news of the passing of Richard Simonton. Words cannot just express the loss to family, friends, and the organ world.

He was, we know, hurt by the expressions of the few, who tried to destroy all the enthusiasm and good fellowship that existed in the ATOS over the years.

Anyone who came in contact with him immediately felt that here was a man who would go to great lengths to further the cause of the organ scene, and loved meeting people, whatever their station in life.

Surely, now is the time to continue with an extra effort, to preserve all that Richard tried to do, for the future generations. So we say to all ATOS chapters, we have all lost a good friend so lets remember him by carrying on his dreams for a great future for the theatre organ.

We shall never forget the smile he gave us when he heard, "London for 1980". We shall miss you Dick.

From all the Members  
of the London and  
South of England Chapter.

Dear Mr. Thompson:

I am enclosing a newspaper article dated September 21, 1979 from La Republic, Panama City, Rep of Pan. regarding the installation of the 3/28 Wurlitzer in El Sotana Club (Basement) of El Continental Hotel.

Andy Kasparian who assisted in the installation of this project and is the resident organist asked me to send this to you so that his many friends in the U.S. will be informed of what he has been doing the last few months. Andy will be remembered as having played the Lansdowne Theatre Organ for the 1976 National Convention and several Pizza Parlor Organs on the West Coast in Seattle and the Bay Area as well as in St. Louis, and on his own Hammond X66 in the Delaware Valley and New Jersey resort areas.

According to the Panamanians, Panama is more than just a Canal. The organ, they say, is Panama's number one attraction — after the Canal.

A free-style translation of the news article is also enclosed for those who cannot read Spanish. Not having had Spanish in high school, I've had to get help from several sources, none of whom could agree on a uniform interpretation. However, I am sure it gives everyone a good idea about the article.

Andy says Bienvenidos El Sotana.

Yours truly,  
Leo A. Bolbecker

### The Latest From Panama

translated  
by Leo A. Bolbecker

The Hotel Continental, the principal, and most important of the Riande hotel chain of Panamanian hotels, celebrated, in September, an outstanding event that has had a social and commercial impact on the elite in Panama City as a major international tourist attraction. The giant Wurlitzer from the Stanley Warner Theatre was dazzling by its size, but, above all, for its incredible beauty of rich tones. In effect this superb instrument has 275 stops, from a whisper to a thunderous full organ. It has 2,200 pipes of various sizes ranging from five inches to 16

feet. There are 4,000 electromagnets and 8,000 pneumatics. It is one of the two largest organs in the world ever built by Wurlitzer with a 3-manual keyboard.

Mr. Riande, whose enthusiasm is projected in each idea until the end, was determined to rescue this unforgettable marvelous instrument and, by 1977, this jewel was acquired for Hotel Continental. The process of rebuilding the Wurlitzer was begun and it is like a new installation in El Sotano (which in Spanish means the basement) where, without a doubt, one can now enjoy the major tourist attraction offered in Panama.

Andy Kasparian, the famous organist who was brought direct from Broadway, has been contracted by Mr. Riande to play this organ. His music will delight those in attendance in El Sotano.

Congratulations once again to Mr. Riande for this beautiful project that has contributed so much to highlight this tourist attraction of our great city.

Dear Editor:

Your recent issue carries the news that "Its England for our 25th Annual ATOS Convention."

Don't you mean "Britain" or "The United Kingdom?" There are *three* other *very proud* countries in Britain: Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. They are *not* England.

Britons would rather you did not stress this sore point. May I point out also, there are organs in *all* four countries. The largest theatre organ being in the Playhouse Theatre, in Edinburgh, a 3/39 Hilsdon.

Sincerely,  
James C. Donald — "Briton"  
Colonia, New Jersey

*(Your facts are indeed correct. However, our 1980 convention activities will take place in and around London, and not in any of the other countries you mention. The convention will be held in England. — Editor)*

Dear George:

Regarding the article on page 37 of the recent THEATRE ORGAN, I have an "Autograph-Marsh" record #4010 played by Milton

Charles at the Tivoli Theatre, Chicago. No date.

"Most Of All I Want Your Love"  
"Our Yesterdays"

I also have two Milton Charles records, "Paramount" label bearing the date May 25, 1923. Name of organ not given. They sound, to me, as though they may be electric recording, but I'm no authority. #4006 — "Let Me Call You Sweetheart", "Mighty Like A Rose", #4005 — "I Never Knew", and "Carry Me Back to Old Virginy".

Does anyone have any information about the "Paramount" records. Wonder if Milton Charles would remember?

Sincerely,  
Bob Longfield  
Carmichael, California

Dear George:

When George Wright was awarded the title of "Theatre Organist of the Year" at the ATOS convention in Los Angeles last July, it was much like seeing a decade-old bill being stamped "PAID." There most certainly will never be another George Wright, the man who has, in a sense, written the updated book on "How to Play the Theatre Organ." And that "book" has been widely read, as evidenced by the scores of organists who have borrowed from him so liberally. In fact, with the exception of Jesse Crawford, George Wright is the only theatre organist who has been imitated to any significant extent. I couldn't begin to count the number of times I've heard the echo of that cheery reed combination from "The Lady is a Tramp" (from *Showtime*) performed on a pizza organ, or on an up-and-comer's debut album.

To say that any number of organists can re-create many of Wright's more memorable (and complex) arrangements is completely beside the point. I recall a conversation from some time back during which a woman began to bubble over about an organist in his early 20s who "can play George Wright's stuff perfectly . . . right down to the last note." Well, he more than likely can. And he's not alone, which brings us to the meat of an important matter: Whether it's a work of art or a musical performance, the people who duplicate the original are really just

Hope to see you in  
**LONDON**  
July 20-27, 1980  
ATOS National Convention

skilled copyists. They have originated nothing. And they are sometimes crowned with that often-misused term "genius." True genius lies in the ability to create something new . . . something that happens to be extremely good. And that ability is something George Wright no doubt possessed before even he knew it. More than once, I have heard him state to an audience that, in effect, his playing ability is little more than the result of dedicated practice. But just for a moment, consider all of those who started just as young and practiced just as long and hard, but wound up being "good," rather than "great" musicians.

Another area in which Mr. Wright excels is that of taste: not only in knowing what pieces to select, but how to treat them. I remember seeing "Boogie" on the tune list of his first HI-FI release before the seal had been broken and wondering how anyone could play something like that on a pipe organ without it sounding "clumsy." But boy, did it cook! And he has done wonders with some of the better contemporary material. In October of 1978, he played a "Homecoming" concert at the Wurlitzer at the Sacramento high school he attended. One of the songs he played that day was David Gates' "If," a pretty song to begin with. But the Wright treatment was incredibly beautiful. He played one verse using only the Chrysoglott. With the rest of the organ silent, the use of this soft voice was most effective in drawing attention to the gorgeous melody. Many in the audience were visibly moved. It is this more sensitive, subtle side that he seems to be showing more of these days, and it has generated some magic moments. But the sly humor of the past hasn't died, and it still surfaces now and then, drawing irrepressible grins, snickers and occasional guffaws from listeners. And, as always, he knows the appropriate place to use it, and precisely when to stop.

There are many first-rate organists today, several of them dubbed

"whiz kids." Some of these musicians may play as fast and cleanly as George Wright. But aside from his talent for innovation, what sets him apart from all the rest is beyond measuring on a scale or verbal description. Whatever that something is, it wasn't learned. It's inherent. He was simply *born* to play the theatre organ.

George Wright is an intelligent man. I'm sure he could have made a good high school teacher, had he applied himself to that end. He probably could have been a successful salesman. But if he had chosen to pursue anything other than music, it would have been an enormous waste of talent.

As an unwavering George Wright fan since the age of ten, I am thrilled to see him get this kind of recognition.

Sincerely,  
Ron Musselman  
Fresno, California □

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## Closing Chord

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**Thomas S. Hobson**, beloved member of the Central Ohio Theatre Organ Society, died September 12, 1979. Born December 29, 1911, Tom's musical instruction consisted of only a few violin lessons. His natural aptitude for music, however, led to a proficiency in not only violin, but voice and piano as well. After his first exposure to a theatre organ, in Marion, Ohio's Palace Theatre, his affinity for the organ was established. He acquired a Baldwin electronic organ, which he learned to play with professional proficiency.

His unique playing skill highlighted many C.O.T.O.S. meetings. He was equally at home at the "big organ" in the Ohio Theatre (Columbus) as he was on electronic organs.

His working contribution and dedication to Central Ohio's three-manual Wurlitzer in Worthington, Ohio, will be missed.

At the encouragement of his wife, Erma, he had developed a resurgence of interest in the violin, and in duet with her, played at church and at social gatherings. □



## CHAPTER NOTES

**Let us know what's  
happening in YOUR Chapter!**

**Send Photos and News to:**

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

**Deadlines**

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

### CENTRAL INDIANA

On September 9th, 52 guests and members met at Vincennes University in Vincennes, Indiana. Richard Ertel, who is with the Music Department at the University, gave us a brilliant program and demonstration of the 3/13 Wurlitzer pipe organ at the university. The organ sounded excellent in their auditorium. Many enjoyed the open console. While Vincennes is somewhat off the beaten path for those of us in central Indiana, it was most certainly worth the time and effort to attend this meeting.

On October 6th and 7th a busload of 46 CIC-ATOS members enjoyed a very special weekend trip to the Cincinnati/Dayton area. On Saturday evening we attended a concert by Ann Leaf at the Wurlitzer pipe organ in the Emery Theatre in Cincinnati. This program, which included a Laurel and Hardy film, was enjoyed by everyone. The dedication and hard work done by the members of the Ohio Valley Chapter in the restoration of this theatre certainly is most exemplary of the meaning of ATOS, and they are to be highly commended!

On Sunday morning (back at the

Emery Theatre), Tote Pratt — who has overseen the installation and maintenance of the Wurlitzer Style 260 three-manual (now 23-rank) organ — gave a thorough and most interesting explanation of the organ. Hubert Shearin shared the spotlight with Mr. Pratt, enlightening the visitors on details of both the organ and the theatre. A tour of the theatre, the organ chambers and the projection booth was provided the visitors. Open console followed.

Lunch was at the Shady Nook Restaurant, near Oxford, Ohio, where Dennis Werkmeister, who recently purchased the restaurant and organ, greeted the travelers and described the three-manual Wurlitzer organ. This is the WLW (Cincinnati) "Moon River" organ. It has 30 ranks, and the console was one that Helen Crawford played at the Chicago Theatre. Kurt Von Schakel provided the group with an enjoyable program.

The group then went to the Werkmeister's home in New Lebanon, Ohio, to see and hear their two-manual 20-rank Wurlitzer organ. The console is a two-manual, a very early Hope-Jones. Dennis intends to add a three-manual Moller console this winter. Open console provided a chance to further appreciate the organ.

Our next stop was at the home of the John Gogles in Dayton, Ohio. Here, we enjoyed the home installation of a Kimball (1926 vintage) three-manual 11-rank pipe organ. The organ originally was installed in the Capitol Theatre in Hazelton, Pa. The Gogles purchased it from a private owner in Philadelphia. A delightful program was presented by Elton Wellmeir, Jr., of the Ohio Valley Chapter. Open console was enjoyed here, also.

The last stop on our CIC-ATOS organ "safari" was a visit to Mr. & Mrs. Fred Rieger in Waynesville, Ohio. We were privileged to see and hear a most unusual, and unique organ installation. Mr. Rieger told of the intriguing history of the organ. The organ is comprised of parts from 16 organs. These parts include a Moller chest, pipes from an old Moller tracker organ, with some pipes being made by a German in 1896, pipes from a Skinner organ from a Chicago church, a console from an Estey player residence organ, plus some 400 player rolls from his family in addition to another 180 rolls that came with the console. The installation in this very special building is a theatre-pipe-organ-lover's dream come true. In addition to the organ, there is a Baldwin grand piano, a movie screen, sound and taping equipment, plus a TV screen in the console for viewing while playing for movies. Open console provided entertainment with duets at the piano and organ.

On October 14th, members and guests enjoyed meeting at the home of Bob and Patsy Davidson, who have a beautiful 4520 Wurlitzer theatre styled electronic organ. Open console was enjoyed by many after our host gave us a short, but most enjoyable program.

BARBARA J. ATKINSON

### CENTRAL OHIO

COTOS met at the Worthington High School auditorium on August 31st to see first hand the progress of the 3/16 Wurlitzer installation. We were elated to find that the major chore of windline installation was behind us and we could now concentrate on circuit testing and wiring of the chests in the right chamber and repair of some pneumatics. The ten horsepower blower proves capable of delivering more than enough pressure to operate our most remote ranks; the regulator adjustment we'll leave in the capable hands of Willard Ebner.

The Chapter was treated to a remarkable slide-talk presentation by Lowell Rielly, a lecturer-author, whose various travels throughout the cathedrals and churches of the world are beautifully portrayed in his pictures. From the bamboo pipes of an organ in the Philippines, we moved

to Spain and the Cathedral Salamonica — thence to Granada, Germany and France. In each country, the recorded music from selected churches accompanied angle shots of the pipes and console from which it originated. From Rotterdam in the Netherlands where we saw horizontal reeds, we returned to the spectacular Wanamaker 6/451 organ in Philadelphia. Our deep appreciation to Lowell for the privilege of seeing his latest church organ cavalcade.

We were saddened by the loss of our beloved Tom Hobson, September 12th. His active participation in the Wurlitzer project, his organ keyboard talent and violin renditions will be sorely missed.

JOHN R. POLSLEY

September was marked by the beginning of the new season for the Ohio Theatre's Theatre Organ Concert Series. Sunday, September 30th, saw Dennis James giving a matinee performance at the 4/20 Robert Morton. This was Dennis' premier performance in full concert at his home theatre and the audience showed appreciation for his skills with a standing ovation.

The September meeting of the chapter was primarily concerned with the election of new board members. The newly-elected members are David Love, Ed Lougher and Karen Boerger. (A later board meeting chose Dr. John Polsley as chairman, Ed Lougher as vice chairman, Bob Shaw as secretary and David Love as treasurer.) The meeting was well-attended by 31 members and friends on September 28th and was hosted by David Love. The presence of three electronic organs and a 105-year-old piano provided entertainment from the talented hands of Ruth Shaw and other members.

The October meeting was held on Sunday, October 21st, at the country home of Ralph and Leona Charles in Somerset, Ohio. A large gathering of members and guests enjoyed a concert by Kenny Winland at the 4/20 Robert Morton rebuilt by Ralph in the large family room of the Charles' home. This fine instrument came from a long extinct theatre in Columbus. Kenny's program was followed by open console, providing a large variety of talent. An impromptu trio of piano, organ and calliope was especially entertaining. Jack Allen, a guest from Western Reserve, participated in open console and entertained the gathering at the Robert Morton. Several people later ventured to the barn loft where Ralph is currently rebuilding a 3/10 hybrid theatre organ. This instrument is slated for completion next summer.

BOB AND PATTI CLARK

### CONNECTICUT VALLEY

This year, again, our August meeting was at the home of Stillman and Claire Rice in North Haven, CT. Weather was very warm and humid, but at the Rice residence, with its expansive grounds, such weather does not make one uncomfortable. We had a fine afternoon playing the great Allen digital electronic organ and getting ready for outdoor cooking of the evening meal, for which Stillman had provided several "cookeries" complete with charcoal. What a way to meet!

Promptly after dinner, President Norm Ray guided us expeditiously through the business portion of our meeting so that our guest artist for the evening, Harold de La Chappelle, could have ample time for his program.

Harold is a professional musician. He plays the organ at restaurants, clubs, and special occasions. He took the opportunity this evening, at our meeting, to play some selections not usually requested or played at restaurants and clubs. He began with a fine group of Gershwin selections which included "Some Day He'll Come Along," "Of Thee I Sing," along with others. Space here does not allow detailing the full program, but these should be mentioned: "Kashmiri Song," "The Way We Were," "In a Monastery Garden," and "Londonderry Aire."

Our thanks go to the Rices and to Harold de La Chappelle for a grand time.

In September, on the 8th to be exact, a good number of chapter members, as well as some from the Southeast New England and New York chapters, enjoyed the exceptional hospitality of Bill Hastings and Joe Colliano at No. Truro on Cape Cod where the fine Wurlitzer from the State Theatre in Waterbury, CT., now resides. It was a great get-together with much fine music by some able players as well as socializing, dining, etc. We are most grateful to Bill and Joe.

Also in September we heard Rex Koury at the Thomaston Opera House organ. Rex has played for us before and he returned because we liked his performance very much, indeed. His latest appearance reinforced our enthusiasm for his playing.

Our October meeting was held at the Thomaston Opera House where open console is always a special feature. At Thomaston the business portion of the meeting was the first item on the agenda after which open console was the order of the day until five o'clock. At that hour our

## MOVING?



Send your change  
of address  
to . . .

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



*Holiday  
Greetings*

**South East Texas Chapter**



featured artist was none other than Everett Bassett, venerable member, worker, tuner and organist. Ev is always willing to play for us, although he likes to be recalcitrant until invitations have been extended to others. Given decent notice, Ev always puts some thought on what would constitute an interesting program and this time was no exception. Ev played a nice variety of old, recent, musical comedy, etc. in his own arrangements for a good hour and that concluded the scheduled agenda.

Also in October we heard Jim Benzmilller in concert at Thomaston on the 20th and 21st. This was Jim's first appearance at Thomaston and his reception assured his return in the future. Our concert committee does very well by us!

As the year draws to its close we will conclude it very well, indeed, with a concert at Thomaston by Ron Rhode on December 8th and 9th and, finally, our annual Christmas party. Information about, and tickets for the Ron Rhode concert are available from Concert Tickets, Box 426, Seymour, CT 06483.

WALLACE F. POWERS

## DAIRYLAND

Our fall concert was held on Tuesday, October 9th, at the Avalon. It was a repeat performance by Rex Koury, who drew well his first time here in an afternoon and evening concert set. A good crowd turned out to hear the "Gunsmoke Man" air his talents at the Mighty Wurlitzer.

His concert started out with two medleys; one featuring golden-oldies and the other, popular show music. Rex also accompanied several slides of paintings he had done. Both the music and the art were very well done.

The most outstanding part of his concert was the "Gunsmoke Suite," that Rex had composed for the organ. The music was new and performed with perfection.

Stating that there was a shortage of silent movies these days, Rex accompanied a silent picture of his own making. It was a satire on what a typical day in the life of Rex Koury is like at his ranch in Reno.

All things considered, the concert was well worth the price of admission. The only fault anyone could find with the concert was that the theatre management seems very unwilling to provide any white house lights before or after the concerts, or during intermission. People have been complaining that they can't read our programs and rightly so. Without a flashlight, candle, or other light providing device, reading our souvenir programs is impossible. It seems ridiculous to pass out programs people can't read in the theatre.

A new Pipe Organ Pizza has opened in Milwaukee. It is located on Capitol Drive and is a branch of DeLuca's P.O.P. on Oklahoma Ave.

Dairyland member Perry Petta is the staff organist. This young man is very talented and Milwaukee is lucky to have such a musician playing in his own home town.

Our September social was held at the home of Jim Peterson. Jim has a fine 3-manual Moller in his home, and it is still growing. Entertainment was provided by Perry Petta.

Plans to install a small Wurlitzer in the Strand Theatre never materialized. Over the summer months, the theatre building was hit by a rash of almost weekly fires. In September, it was demolished. Hopefully, downtown redevelopment will at least replace it with something other than a

parking lot.

Only a block away, the Towne Theatre and Hotel is soon slated for demolition. The hotel was declared unsafe recently when a piece of the building fell eight floors to the sidewalk.

The Riverside is still doing business and is guaranteed until 1981, when its lease runs out. After then, its future is uncertain.

The Racine Guild project received a shot in the arm recently when Rick Johnson was hired by the board to install a new switching system in the 2/7 Wurlitzer. The system, which is costing a great deal, was described as needed in order to improve the concert capabilities of the instrument.

The Kimball Organ Club of Milwaukee, composed of past and current members of D.T.O.S., is busy trying to install the 3/32 Center Kimball in the Oriental Theatre. Already a city landmark, the Oriental would be a great place for pipe organ concerts in Milwaukee.

WILLIAM CAMPBELL

## EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

Another opening on September 29th, another show at Stoneham Town Hall as our first fall meeting convened. After reports were read, President Royal Schweiger announced that the board of directors had voted Donald Phipps and Stu Hinchliffe as lifetime members of EMCATOS. Our club's home at Babson has been extended another 10 years after successful negotiations with college authorities.

Dick Linder, nominating committee chairman, read the names of our 1980 officers and board members. The incumbent president and treasurer are unchanged, but Timothy

### Season's Greetings

from

Southern Arizona Chapter



### Yuletide Salutations



Floyd & Doris Mumm

Holloran is new vice president and secretary is Gerald Parsons. Directors are David Marden, Tim Bjareby and Dick Johnson with alternates (1 year) George Brunzell and Richard Smith. Elbert Drazy is to serve on the organ committee.

Paul Chavanne spoke of a German organ enthusiast group visiting our area this summer desiring to hear a theatre organ. With neither our organ nor the Stoneham Wurlitzer being available, Rosalie and Pat Fucci kindly opened their home for them. Bob Legon presided at the 4/20 Robert Morton, even to playing a Laurel and Hardy silent accompaniment.

The Stoneham console platform has been completed by Pat with the addition of screws for elevating. This moveable platform is a most worthy new feature for concert presentations.

Program chairman Tim Holloran requested volunteers for the numerous duties needed for the success of the two fall concerts by Ron Rhode, Nov. 16th and 17th. He then introduced our other Tim, Bjareby by name, as artist of the evening.

Tim can always be counted upon for a well prepared, out-of-the-rut, listenable presentation and this mini-concert was no exception. From his opening "Sound of Music," "Caravan" with much double pedaling, "Beyond the Sea" with the beautiful Celeste rank prominent to his clever "Old MacDonald had a Farm" encore (with Purcell's "Trumpet Tune" woven in!), it was a joy. The prolonged applause was a stamp of well-done approval.

There followed a goodly number of regulars and guests for over two hours of open console, fellowship and refreshments before lights out.

Royal again conducted our Octo-

### LONDON will be Fun in '80!

ber 20th gathering at Babson. He announced that the board had given a \$500.00 organ scholarship to the Boston Conservatory of Music in keeping with one of the purposes of the club. This is to be designated as the EMCATOS Scholarship Fund, administered by the college, and was awarded to Douglas Forbes.

"Phantom of the Opera" was screened at Babson on Halloween with Bob Legon at the console and the membership invited.

Program Chairman Holloran, after giving more concert details, presented Bob as our evening's guest artist. If there is one word to describe this gentleman it would have to be indefatigable in his promotion of the Theatre Organ cause. Some time ago he played the Old Orchard Beach (Maine) Wurlitzer in a program titled "A Tribute to the Casino Ballroom" (of that town). He again presented the same arrangements for our enjoyment starting with the organ used as a carousel replete with bells, drums, cymbals, then as a jazz orchestra, a la Tower Ballroom, Blackpool, England. The big band era, pre and post World War II, was well represented with such numbers as "I'm Beginning to See the Light," "Moonlight Serenade," etc. — all reminiscent of the Casino Ballroom. Bob's well-received program closed with an encore of "Parade of the Wooden Soldiers."

The console bench was its usual focal point as many kept the pipes whistling, even with Babson security guard, Charles Bouin, vocalizing as Tim Bjareby nicely accompanied him with some of the good oldies. Time to take the homeward trek came all too soon!

STANLEY C. GARNISS

### GULF COAST

First, you take all the chapter members you can round up, plus friends and all hanger-arounders handy; then take two or three gallons of paint, then two or three more, then two or three more. Repeat this two or three more times and you have the amount of paint necessary to paint one organ chamber!

When the Saenger Theatre here in Pensacola was built in 1925, economics dictated that the organ be contained — or confined — to one chamber. Fortunately the second chamber was left in the plans, albeit empty. It contained one 1925 vintage light bulb all these years! In 1979 when the architects completed their plans for the restoration we found we needed to start from scratch with the 1925 construction plans.

Our number one honorary member, David Dietrich, an architect by profession, drew the plans necessary for us to start work in the "new" chamber. His plans include the placing of the chests, regulators, etc.

Getting the chamber ready with the above-mentioned painting was almost the first step. The very first step was scaling the heights necessary to reach the access door to the left (second) chamber. The next step was vacuuming the umpteen inches of dirt accumulated in 55 years from the empty chamber.

The work crew, headed by Tom Helms with much assistance from Walter Smith, Curt Goldhill, Bob Sidebottom, B. D. Rhea, M.D., who rigged the block and tackle system, and our chief honorary member David Dietrich, hauled parts up to the readied chamber.

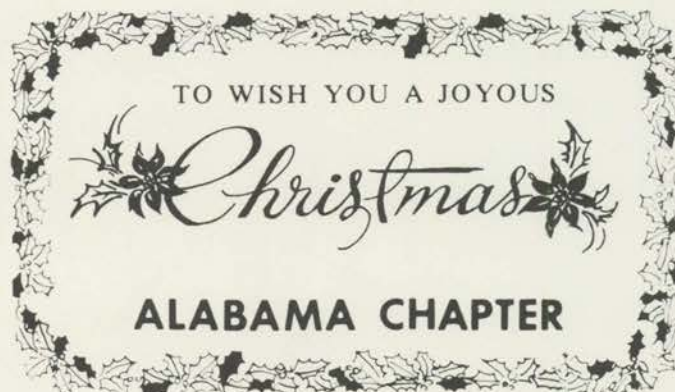
In the restoration we will have a lift installed for our Robert Morton. This we sorely need since the console does sit rather low in the orchestra

Season's Greetings To All

Al Sacker

— THEATRE ORGAN CONCERTS —  
Currently 29th Year at the Jefferson Theatre

Contact: Al Sacker, Jefferson Theatre  
345 Fannin Street, P.O. Box 3925  
Beaumont, Texas 77704





Lonnie Roach at the 2/9 Kilgen at Red Wing.



(Edwin Hirschhoff Photo) Tony Tahlman plays "Goldie," Claude Newman's 3/18 Wurlitzer.

(Edwin Hirschhoff Photo)

pit now.

Our chapter has been asked many times to provide organ music for civic organizations and as background music for many theatrical performances, prior to closing the theatre.

Here we shine, for we did love to show off our organ. Now that the organ is silent during restoration, the chapter is busy working on the enlargement in various shops and/or kitchens. Our Saenger will be a performing arts center.

We have been extremely fortunate that a local business women's sorority, Beta Sigma Phi, has undertaken the partial support of our organ restoration as one of their enterprises for the coming year. How lucky can we get? Many thanks go to them for this help.

Dr. Rhea, our chief mentor, continues to help the chapter in so many ways; not only to offer his home for meetings but to let us use his superbly-equipped workshop.

At our last board meeting we voted to purchase the planned new ranks for "Lola," our Robert Morton. Hence all the hustle and

bustle acquiring and installing our "new" parts and getting their "new" home ready.

The chapter has work crews scheduled for restoration work and the social crews have plans for socializing.

The architects were a little late in closing the theatre for restoration so we took advantage of the reprieve and held a freebee concert one Sunday afternoon. Tom Helms gave an audience-pleasing concert. He quipped with the crowd that although they got in free, it would cost them to get out! We passed the hat and did quite well. Plus 17 people asked for membership blanks.

If you haven't seen or heard the Alabama Chapter slide presentation of their theatre and organ history you are missing one of the most significant ideas to hit ATOS-land. Splendidly written and superbly narrated, it is spine-tingling in its nostalgia. See it! Our chapter showed it at our last concert and we were thrilled to the "marrow of our bones." We plan a similar show to present to local civic organizations to acquaint more people with our

work and hopefully to generate more funds for the organ enlargement. The dreams of our 2/6 turning into a 4/21 are slowly coming to fruition.

We were delighted to have Mr. and Mrs. Leon Barry from Chicago as guests recently. They were revisiting childhood places and our Saenger Theatre and Robert Morton were on their list.

DOROTHY STANDLEY

## LAND O' LAKES

It was one of the most active summers in the memories of most LOL members. While appropriately theatre organ activity was the chapter's preoccupation, other activities kept members and the board busy while one event brought a measure of excitement. A two-page feature article in the June 17th issue of the St. Paul *Pioneer Press* covering the activities of ATOS and the LOL Chapter was a fine publicity windfall. It was an in-depth piece, featuring large photos of Chairma'm Marge Sheppard and Paul Bowen, and Claude Newman with Goldie, his 3/18 Wurlitzer at Cedarhurst. Gareth Heibert, who wrote the

## SEASON'S GREETINGS

from  
WESTERN  
RESERVE  
Cleveland, Ohio



from  
Connecticut Valley Chapter





Paul Lagergren at the Matson's concert barn in Spring Valley, Minnesota. The organ is a 2/8 Wurlitzer. (Edwin Hirschhoff Photo)



Rob Calcaterra during his concert at Carlson's 5/21 Wurlitzer. (Edwin Hirschhoff Photo)

article, showed fine appreciation for the ATOS purposes and goals, as illustrated by the following excerpt from the article: "The altars of their worship are huge, gilt ornamented and trimmed theatre pipe organs, with multiple ranks, pouring forth sounds of shimmering strings, trumpeting brass, glockenspiel-chimes, train whistles and fire gongs for good measure.

"The litany of the cult is the sweeping orchestra of music funneling out through the pipes. They have heroes out of the era of the grand palace showhouses — Lou Breeze, Eddie Dunstedter, Leonard Leigh, Norm Gray, Bob Page and the still vivacious Ramona Gerhard Sutton.

"They gather in their shrines each month . . ."

For 23 members and associates, the '79 ATOS Convention was their highlight of the year, and they came back singing the praises of the LATOS Chapter for producing a beautifully-planned, expertly-run affair. The purposes of ATOS and its vitality have probably never before been better illustrated than at this convention.

Since the last report to THEATRE ORGAN Magazine, the chapter has enjoyed several fine concerts.

May 6th, Paul Lagergren played the 2/8 Wurlitzer at the Matson's concert barn in Spring Valley, Minn.

June 24th, Byron and Lillian Carlson again hosted the chapter, with Rob Calcaterra playing their 5/21 Wurlitzer.

On August 19th, veteran artist Tony Tahlman was featured at Claude Newman's 3/18 Wurlitzer at Cedarhurst, with Ron McAllister playing solo and second parts on the French Horn.

On September 23rd, Lonnie Roach played a concert at the stunning little 2/9 Kilgen in Red Wing. Hosts for this concert were Bill Sweasy and Bob Benolkin.

It is interesting and encouraging to note that of the four artists who played for the chapter this summer, three are of the new generation of theatre organists now emerging and who will be counted on to sustain the theatre organ tradition. Tony Tahlman, on the other hand, is a seasoned veteran, having played at the Elm Roller Rink in Elmhurst, Ill., in 1956

— 23 years ago. More recently Tony has been holding forth at Cicero's (Pizza) in the St. Paul and Minneapolis suburbs, as organ master.

EDWIN C. HIRSCHHOFF

## LONDON AND SOUTH OF ENGLAND

As we complete a busy and absorbing 1979 programme, excitement and anticipation at the prospect of staging the 25th Convention in London in July, 1980 are already motivating the chapter towards the beginning of what promises to be a highlight year in Anglo-American theatre organ relationships.

Having stemmed directly from the highly-successful 200-strong 'Safari' of 1976, and now well used to meeting the interests and the needs of Stateside visitors, we can also draw on an expanding reservoir of conventioning in the US itself.

The more than 40 delegates who proudly represented our chapter in Los Angeles are still regaling us with their indelible memories and souvenirs. They also felt especially honoured to have several top US console

HOLIDAY GREETINGS FROM

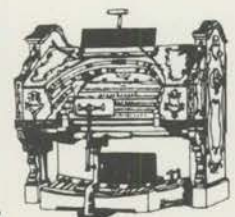
# CATOE

HEALTH AND HAPPINESS IN 1980

REGIONAL 1980 — NOVEMBER 28, 29, 30.

## Seasons Greetings

PUGET SOUND  
CHAPTER



See You All In Seattle In 1981!

stars enroll with us during their most welcome concertising in England.

Ashley Miller, Dennis James, Maria Kumagai and Gaylord Carter have been our principal 'in-theatre' stars during the year at the Gaumont State, Kilburn in Northwest London.

Meanwhile, our exceptionally successful series of 'At Home' Club Nights (last Friday in each month) have continued at our favourite 3/19 Wurlitzer in the ever-open home of widely-respected members Edith and Les Rawle.

An unexpected treat has been a most memorable evening at Wurlitzer Lodge with the phenomenal Hector Olivera (now a much-admired member) relaxing prior to his arduous electronic organ trade tour in the UK.

Invariably including overseas visitors in town, these gatherings have usually been opened by our dedicated protege and rising young star Pauline Dixon, now completing her busy reign as our first 'Young Theatre Organist of the Year.' Winning several concert dates at well-known theatre and home organ venues, Pauline is to appear at the five-manual seventeen-rank illuminated 'Compton' in the prestigious Odeon Leicester Square in the heart of London's 'West End' early in the New Year.

With our second competition imminent at the time of writing, we certainly look forward to discovering another such promising youngster from the large number of intensely keen entrants.

Once again the venue is to be the Gaumont State where organ restoration work continues to maintain this fine instrument in characteristic voice. This notably includes repainting the distinctive console and fully cleaning the chambers after more



Maria Kumagai with some of the "London Chapter" stewards.



A line-up of artists who presented a concert tribute to "Robin Richmond." (L to R) George Blackmore, Charles Sutton, Molly Forbes, Louis Mordosh, Bobby Pagan, John Madin and on top of the console, Bill Davies.

than 40 years of continuous operation.

Occasional meetings have also been held at our second home base at the vintage Compton in St. Marys

Roman Catholic Church at Hornchurch in Southwest Essex, presided over by well-known chapter members Father Gerard Kerr and our chairman, George Harrison.

HOLIDAY GREETINGS

members of J.A.T.O.E.

and the Rialto Theatre Joliet, Ill.



Season's Greetings to all our ATOS Friends

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All-in-all, therefore, the year 1979 has been every bit as enjoyable as its two predecessors and we are exceptionally proud to have been chosen to host the significant 1980 convention so soon after our inauguration. We certainly look forward to making it one big family reunion of our ever-widening circle of transatlantic theatre organ fraternity. We will do our best to make it a memorable event.

## LOS ANGELES

October 11th was a sad day in Los Angeles for, after many months of rumors about the possible demise of the Wiltern Theatre, the chapter presented its "Grande Finale" program on the magnificent Kimball pipe organ. Featured at the console were Ann Leaf and Gaylord Carter. Miss Leaf, with the late Richard Simonton and Don Wallace, our first chapter chairman, had been responsible for initiating the restoration of the instrument in 1962 when it was presented by her and Gaylord (and a number of notable organists) at the 8th National ATOS convention. A crowd of 1,700 gathered for the finale and roundly applauded chapter chairman Mike Ohman's opening announcement that LATOS had been requested by Pacific Theatres, owner of the Kimball, to remove the organ to storage for subsequent reinstallation at the Pan-tages Theatre on Hollywood Boulevard.

Miss Leaf's first half of the program was a concert presentation of a wide range of music from symphonic and opera transcriptions to the hauntingly beautiful "Evergreen" and the rhythmic "Take Five." She demonstrated once again her musicianship and complete control of one of the largest and most

beautiful theatre organs.

Following intermission, Gaylord brought up the console with "The Perfect Song" and launched into a medley of nautical tunes as an overture to Buster Keaton's great silent comedy, *The Navigator*. The laughter frequently drowned out the organ! A fantastic evening once again demonstrating that in the hands of two master musicians, theatre pipe organs can entertain and delight an audience in the 70s as well as they did in the 20s.

Work on removal of the organ has not been started at the time this is written as there are still groups active in trying to save the Wiltern (and the Franklin Life Building) and the permit for demolition has been delayed until Spring, 1980.

RALPH BEAUDRY

## MOTOR CITY

The Redford Theatre was alive with "The Sounds of the 20s" on September 14th as an enthusiastic audience enjoyed Fr. Jim Miller (a Ukrainian Orthodox priest, and chapter member) from Fenton who was joined by the New McKinney's Cotton Pickers, a local group famed for their interpretation of Dixieland and traditional jazz music. Vocalist Dave Wilborn, a member of the original Cotton Pickers ensemble, made the evening especially memorable.

There has been a growing difference of philosophy within the chapter concerning the degree to which we should become a major business entity as opposed to a hobby club. Up to this point, the purchase and operation of the Redford Theatre has necessitated the chapter becoming more business oriented. A special membership meeting was held in September at which time the major-

ity of those present voted to remove the six board members who were in favor of separating the Redford complex from the chapter. Six new board members were appointed to complete the nine-member board, and David Lau was elected as chairman.

On Saturday, October 6th, members journeyed, via chartered bus, to the Roaring Twenties restaurant in Grand Rapids, for another chance to hear the four-manual Wurlitzer there. Enroute, the group stopped by the Michigan Theatre in Lansing, Mich., for the regular First Saturday program sponsored by the Wolverine Chapter. The trip was planned and well-executed by Fred Page.

Lowell Ayars appeared at the Redford Theatre for a matinee on October 12th and a repeat performance the following evening. Also on the same bill with Lowell was a local entertainer, comedian and ventriloquist, Eddie Jaye. As usual, Lowell turned in a superb performance, with his beautiful baritone voice delighting the audience, many of whom are not accustomed to hearing organists who can sing as well as they can play.

At their last meeting, the Ann Arbor city council voted to purchase the Michigan Theatre as a performing arts auditorium for the community. The drive to save this 1928 movie palace was started primarily by the Motor City Chapter due to our interest in saving the 3/13 Barton pipe organ in its original setting. The purchase by the city insures the fulfillment of an arrangement with Butterfield Theatres (former owners) that includes purchase of the interior fixtures in return for the donation of the pipe organ to the newly-formed group, the Michigan Community Theatre Corporation.

Season's  
Greetings

TO ALL OUR  
ATOS FRIENDS

Jason and the Old Prospector



Christmas  
Greetings

LAND OF LINCOLN CHAPTER



Tom Cotner plays for the Oregon Chapter at the home of Bob and Laura Burke in Portland.

(Claude V. Neuffer Photo)

Artists at the Second Sunday programs at the Michigan Theatre Barton in September and October were Scott Smith and Fred Fahrner. The Fourth Sunday programs are also continuing at the Royal Oak Theatre with Lionel LaMay and Steve Stephani appearing in September and October.

The biweekly movie series continues at the Redford with SRO audiences whenever a particularly popular film classic is scheduled.

DON LOCKWOOD

## OREGON

On September 30th we had a fine turnout to hear the popular Northwest organist Tom Cotner at Bob Burke's 3/12 Wurlitzer. This gem of an organ originated as a 3/8 in the Craterian Theatre in Medford, Oregon. From there Bob moved it to

his home in Portland, adding four ranks including a Post Horn, plus a piano. The chamber is located in the basement and sounds clearly through a big floor grate into the large and beautiful living room. It is a most successful installation in an existing home.

Tom Cotner began classical study of the organ at an early age and later became interested in theatre pipes. Although much too young to have accompanied silents, he has given concerts in many of the largest theatres in the Midwest. He has been featured at ATOS conventions in Chicago and Atlanta. Tom is currently on the staff at Pizza and Pipes in Bellevue and Seattle, and is a specialist in classic organ design with Associated Organ Builders in Auburn, Washington.

Tom's classical background is at once apparent in his theatre organ

work. He uses the entire pedalboard, with both feet much of the time. This footwork could be a concert alone. Also outstanding is his extensive and artistic use of the piano. Tom's program included patriotic numbers, Gershwin and Victor Herbert medlies, and the classic Widor Toccata.

We congratulate Tom Cotner for his outstanding program and thank Bob and Laura Burke for their gracious hospitality.

BUD ABEL

## PIEDMONT

The chapter met September 9th at the home of Dr. and Ms. Paul Abernethy in Burlington, N.C. Twenty-four members and guests were present for a delightful afternoon.

A silent film was accompanied by Dr. D. E. MacDonald, of Charlotte, at the 2/8 Robert Morton. Dr. Abernethy then played several numbers and demonstrated the piano which is playable from the console. After refreshments were served, it was open console.

Dr. Abernethy's special guest was Allyn Baum, who is preparing a feature story on doctors and theatre organs for *Medical Economics* magazine.

The 3/12 Wurlitzer in the Elon College gymnasium is progressing nicely and a Brass Trumpet has been added. A full time staff organist is being sought for the many activities in the gymnasium.

The Carolina Theatre, in downtown Winston-Salem, N.C., has been acquired by the North Carolina School of the Arts. Plans for renovation include the installation of a theatre pipe organ.

JIM THACKSTON

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**POTOMAC VALLEY**

The September meeting of the chapter was again at the Weinberg Center for the Performing Arts in Frederick, Maryland. The little red Wurlitzer (2/8) was in excellent condition for Eddie Weaver's fun performance. Eddie, who is the master of the big Wurlitzer at the Byrd Theatre in Richmond, Virginia, kept the 450 people in the audience thoroughly entertained for the afternoon. His band parade, including a Philadelphia mummies string band, was very realistic, and showed the artistry of Mr. Weaver. He also played a three-tune medley (all at the same time) which further demonstrated his mastery of the keyboards. The afternoon was capped by a very funny Laurel and Hardy silent film which Eddie accompanied expertly.

This instrument is the same one that Hector Olivera played when he was introduced at ATOS at the 1972 convention. The console has since

been in a flood which floated it up on the stage on its back. Only the pedal-board was lost. Another was supplied by chapter member Dick Kline, and through the efforts of Ray Brubacher, George Johnson, Bruce Ricker, Ken Lacapria and others the console was saved. The whole organ is in beautiful condition, and has once again become the responsibility of the Potomac Valley Chapter to maintain.

Following the lead of our national organization, a copy of the financial statement of PVC is printed in *The Static Regulator* and voting in future elections will be held by secret envelope ballot rather than post cards, and the result tabulated by an independent organization.

RICHARD R. NAIGHT

**PUGET SOUND**

Chapter members had a busy fall beginning with the September meeting at Haller Lake Club House where the chapter organ is located. An auction netted the chapter some "ducats" for the reconditioning and cleaning of the organ, and for rebuilding the regulators. Up for bid were plants, records, music and a potpourri of other articles. Some members bravely approached the console for the first time, a sure sign that they are absorbing the efforts and talents of others.

At our September meeting appreciation plaques were presented to Betty and Jack Laffaw, and Betty's brother, Bill Breuer, for so graciously and generously having made their Pizza and Pipe establishments at Greenwood and Bellevue available to us. Without their interest and help we would be hard put to continue our activities.

Many of our members were able



Lee Erwin at an electronic at the 45th St. Guild Theatre where he played for *The Silent Clowns*.


to hear Lee Erwin during his three-week engagement at the 45th St. Guild Theatre. While it was not a pipe organ, his playing was to be applauded. This production was called "The Silent Clowns" and contains some of the best-known silent movies of Chaplin, Keaton, Langdon and Lloyd. Lee played to a full house each performance. One evening after he had completed his program, Lee was invited, by Dick Schrum, to Bellevue Pizza and Pipes, where he played an impromptu concert.

Our October meeting, at Greenwood Pizza and Pipes, was a concert given by Dave Hooper, staff organist at the Cap'n's Galley in Campbell, California, where he performs at the Buddy Cole organ. Dave studied under Richard Purvis in San Francisco, and in May, 1979, received his bachelor of music degree from San Jose State, where he majored in organ. The concert that followed his opening number, Cole Porter's "Another Opening, Another Show," put us in the proper mood. To show versatility, the next composer he brought forth was Bach and his



Eddie Weaver at the Weinberg Center's 2/8 Wurlitzer, in Frederick, Maryland.

(Harold Richman Photo)



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Dave Hooper at the Greenwood Pizza and Pipes.

"Little Fugue in G Minor." Dave then played some dance music, "The Continental" and "The Buddy Cole Waltz," composed by Richard Purvis in England during World War II, and one of Buddy Cole's favorites. We hope that Dave will return soon.

Halloween was an ideal time at Greenwood Pizza and Pipes, in Seattle, for Dick Schrum to accompany Lon Chaney silent film *The Phantom of the Opera* and Harold Lloyd's delightful *Haunted Spooks*. Dick did a superb job.

Tom Cotner also helped the public enjoy Halloween to its fullest with appropriate themes for *Nosferatu*, a 90-minute masterpiece and a forerunner of scary movies, it was filmed in Europe in 1922 and starred Max Schreck.

We are sorry to report that Tom Cotner, who was on the staff of our two pizza emporiums, is heading for San Francisco to go into the service

end of the music business, dealing with both pianos and organs. What is our sad loss, is the gain for those in the Bay Area.

The Puget Sound Chapter, wishes you the joys of the Christmas holidays. With music in your hearts, may you have a most wonderful new year,

THELMA R. SMITH

### RED RIVER

On November 1st, we highlighted our program with another special performance by Hildegard Kraus — our area's best-known and best-loved organist. We also had a "trip through the organ," due to numerous requests to do this again. It's been a few years since we've done this feature and we prepared a new series of slides for the presentation.

Following the always-popular sing-along, *The General*, with the hilarious Buster Keaton, was featured. The original score was pro-

vided by Lance Johnson at the mighty Wurlitzer. Preceding the program, Lloyd Collins entertained the patrons at our lobby grand piano.

After this event, plans were made for our 15th anniversary, which is in March. Occasional organ maintenance and our work on restoring the stage will continue through the winter with hopes of using the stage in some way for our spring show.

SONIA CARLSON

### ROCKY MOUNTAIN

Through the combined efforts of Dennis Hedberg, of the Denver Organ Grinder Restaurant, Jonas Nordwall and the writer, Jonas was presented in a spectacular concert at the Organ Grinder on Saturday morning, August 25th. We sold tickets by mail and at the door and the place was packed. After a few opening words from the management and our program director, Guy Powell, Jonas Nordwall made his appearance amid thunderous applause.

Jonas' program was all theatre organ music from the past done in artistic splendor and moods that sent your imagination soaring back to when you were a kid at the movies.

The Aladdin Theatre in Denver is up for sale. The chapter board of directors have been contacting the real estate people, and the present owners, to try to release it to someone who will keep it in the theatre mode. Everyone so far has been very interested in the old Wicks theatre pipe organ still playable in the Aladdin. Our crew has been working on it every Saturday morning before matinee time and it is coming along very well. The swell side is completed except for tuning. The solo side will be more of a job as we have to remove all of the percussions for re-leathering.

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Jonas Nordwall at the Denver Organ Grinder in August. The Wurlitzer is the Portland Paramount Publix No. 1. (Rudolph Frey Photo)

Fred Riser's 2/6 Wurlitzer is moving along slowly. We have the main side playing. The percussions are all playing on both sides. The solo side still needs some debugging. Right now we are in the process of installing tremms under the chambers; three on the solo side for Tibia, Vox and Tuba, and one large trem for the main side will cover Diapason, Flute, String and Celeste.

Work has started on the chapter's 2/6 Wurlitzer in Aurora, Colo. where we have nice storage space and work rooms. Bill Arthur heads the work crew and has quite a large one due to all the releathering, valve work, cleaning, etc.

Our November social gathering was held at Denver's Lowrey Air Force Base Officer's Club. A delightful dinner was enjoyed along with a real live dance band and good old 1940 style "close dancing" — can ya "dig" that stuff, you crazy disco dancers? We sure did. There wasn't

even an organ within ear shot the whole evening. We had a great time. Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night.

FRANK R. GANDY

### SAN DIEGO

The renewed popularity of the silent screen was again proven at our chapter's recent showing of the 1926 classic *Beau Geste* starring Ronald Coleman, which was ably accompanied on our 2/13 Wurlitzer in the California Theatre by Col. Harry Jenkins. He also treated the audience to a crazy comedy starring Laurel & Hardy. Col. Jenkins' experience in accompanying silent films dates back to 1916, before his career in the U.S. Air Force as bandmaster.

Over 100 loyal ATOSers drove to North San Diego County at the end of the summer for our chapter's Annual Potluck at the lovely new home of Sandy Fleet, high on a hill

in San Luis Rey Downs. Among this large group were guests from the Los Angeles Chapter, including John Ledwon, chairman of the recent national convention. Chairman Tim Kreifels made a special presentation to member Lois Segur for her long and dedicated work as San Diego Day Chairman of the convention. The award was an actual working Wurlitzer-replica train whistle with the dedication engraved on an attached plate. Lois couldn't muster up enough wind-power to do a very good job of blowing it, but she did try! A resolution by the board of directors was then read to Lois, naming her an "Honorary Life Member of the San Diego Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society." She joins two other Honorary Life Members, Gaylord Carter and Sandy Fleet. After a gourmet feast prepared by all members, amateur as well as professional organists eagerly awaited their turn to play the mighty Wurlitzer which Sandy has installed in his home. It was a memorable day for all.

TIM KREIFELS

### SIERRA

Fifteen members of the chapter "took wing" for Los Angeles and had a fabulous time at the July ATOS whing-ding. Wow — what a theatre organ party that was!

The long, hot Sacramento summer brought the usual hiatus to Sierra activities, except for our always enjoyable picnic at the Jim Welch home where it's cool in the foothills among the pine trees, and there is always an abundance of good music and delicious food. The Welchs have been our picnic hosts for many years and the annual trip is eagerly looked forward to.

Our fall activities began early



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with the opening of the three-week run of Cal-Expo in late August. This year, due to a cutback in funds, the fair did not hire a professional organist, so the daily sessions were played by several of our "professional" members. As usual, the response from the thousands of fairgoers who attended our concerts was very enthusiastic.

In early September, we held our first garage sale, at the home of John and Cindy Carleton. The public came, spent money, and we added substantially to our organ fund. We are planning another for May.

A scheduled "crawl" to the homes of three of our members was held on September 16th, but unfortunately it was a very hot day and the turnout was quite disappointing to all of us and especially to the Mendenhalls, Savages and Whitneys who had spent long hours getting their pets in good voice.

Our second George Wright concert was held at the Grant Union High School 4/21 Wurlitzer, in October. George was again in high good humor and a member of the audience was heard to comment, "He could be as good a comedian as he is an organist." There's nothing one can say about George Wright that hasn't already been said a hundred

times. He's just plain fantastic!

Open console, and a short business meeting to nominate new board members, was held October 21st at the Golden Bear Theatre.

We were all saddened by the passing of Richard Simonton whom many of us knew as a friend and all of us knew as a great theatre organ enthusiast.

KEYZANPEDALS

### SOONER STATE

Pryor, Oklahoma, where we held our September meeting, is about an hour's drive northeast from Tulsa. We weren't sure whether to expect a good turnout, or not! However, we now know to never underestimate the Sooner State Chapter; Hervey and Janice Barbour's somewhat-small home was filled to overflowing!

Hervey has installed his 2/11 Kimball in part of his garage, with the pipes speaking through openings in the wall into the living room. The console sits between the living room and dining room. We think he's set a couple of records: one for the shortest time between removal and reinstallation in playing condition (the organ came out of the auditorium of Oklahoma City University only last February); and another for squeezing eleven ranks in the small-

est space! A full-length feature story about the installation, complete with picture, written by Juanita Cherry, had appeared in the Pryor *Daily Times* just the day before our meeting.

Needless to say, our meeting was a tremendous success. Bruce Johnson presented a delightful program of selections designed to show off the various tonal possibilities of the instrument. Afterwards we enjoyed music from many of our playing members; we hadn't heard Lyle Thurman for a long time. We even had a selection from Hervey's young daughter Stephanie — by the time she's big enough for her feet to reach the pedals she'll be an "old pro"! Among the several guests present we acquired another new member, Tom Seaton and his wife, Mary.

October found us, courtesy of Shields' Music Company, in their showroom to hear the new Baldwin Pro 222. Long-time organist, teacher, and salesman Les Owens told us about the instrument, and then played a program to demonstrate many of its unique features — all the way from a brass choir through "phantom fingers" to a wow-wow jazz trombone. Afterwards we adjourned to Joe Crutchfield's for a business session and refresh-



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ments. Bob and Betty Weddle assisted Joe with host duties.

With much scraping off of old leather and glue, and careful replacement of pouches with new leather, the Weddle's four-rank Robert Morton is steadily being restored. When it appeared that many of the pouch springs were damaged and not repairable, Bill Roberts told us not to worry, they were listed in a catalog he had down at his piano store . . . "Of course," he added, "it's dated 1939!" However, Bob Busby put together a jig, and Bill and Bob have wound enough springs "by hand" to do the job . . . and the restoration is proceeding.

DOROTHY SMITH

### SOUTH EAST TEXAS

To initiate a series of "Sunday in the Park" events sponsored by the Parks and Recreation Department of Orange, Texas, the South East Texas Chapter presented a concert of organ music in the gazebo at the Community Center there. Former theatre organists Al Sacker and Ruby Holleman Monroe, as well as Betsy Hines and Thelma Debes, performed before an audience enjoying the outdoor surroundings.



Betsy Burleson Hines (top left), Ruby Holleman Monroe (top right) and Chairman Al Sacker (bottom), longtime organist at the Jefferson Theatre, Beaumont, play a Hammond B-3 organ at a "Sunday in the Park" concert presented by the chapter in the gazebo of Martin Thomen Community Center under the sponsorship of the Parks and Recreation Department of Orange, Texas. (I.M. Williamson Photo)

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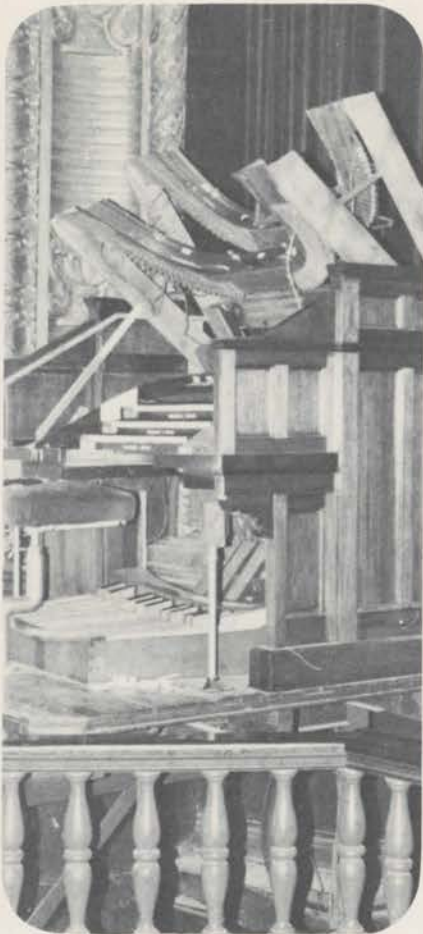
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Console of the 3/8 Robert Morton in the Jefferson Theatre, Beaumont, Texas, is open to check wiring. Exterior has been refinished in the original mahogany. (I.M. Williamson Photo)

Work continues on reconditioning the 3/8 Robert Morton in the Jefferson Theatre in Beaumont.

The chapter has designated Wanda Bagley as representative to the Music Education department at Lamar University, in Beaumont.

The *Eyes of Texas* TV program on channels 2 and 12 presented a segment featuring Ruby Holleman Monroe, formerly organist at the Liberty and Jefferson theatres in Beaumont and elsewhere, reminiscing in her home and playing her Allen organ.

IRA M. WILLIAMSON

### SOUTHERN ARIZONA

Our September meeting was held at the home of Lois Seamands. Meetings are held on the first Sunday of February, April, September, and November with our Christmas party during the month of December.

After the short business meeting, we all had a chance to see and admire the painting done by our secretary Louise Townsend. The painting is being given, by Louise, at a drawing to be held at the Christmas party with the proceeds going into our pipe organ fund. This talented lady is a member of one of the local

### LONDON will be Fun in '80!

artists' associations here in Tucson and is an organist who performs on a regular basis on a "nursing home circuit." This latter effort is in great demand. There are very few organists doing this here in Tucson and all performances are really appreciated.

Our program for the day was given by our own David Wickerham, one of our younger members. During the program David played several numbers at Lois' grand piano in memory of two of our members who passed away this summer, Larry Seamands and Al Begany. David's talent seems to improve each and every time we get to hear him. This past summer several of our members attended the convention in Los Angeles and San Diego, but David didn't get to go as he was filling in as the staff organist at Bill Brown's Organ Stop Pizza in Phoenix because Walter Strony was playing in Los Angeles at the convention. After the program there was socializing and open console at the Conn 650.

BOB HIGH

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both the restoration of our Marr and Colton and in the raising of the money needed for this restoration. The cost is staggering because of damage done during the storage of this magnificent instrument for many years. With membership teamwork, we are gradually creeping toward our goal.

The first weekend in June found the membership happily taking part in the Old West End Festival. This annual affair is held in one of Toledo's magnificent historical neighborhoods where three members own two of these homes. We had open house at both homes. One has the old Eastwood Theatre pipe organ installed in it, the other had an electronic organ furnished by one of the music stores. Twelve members of TATOS played at both homes during this two-day event. We also had a yard sale, TV raffle, and sold refreshments. We closed with a membership potluck. This was most rewarding.

In September, we kicked off the fall fund raising with a concert on September 15th. This was sponsored by Mr. Music Stores and featured Johnny Kemm at the Lowrey. His concert lasted well over 2½ hours with his variety in selections pleasing everyone present. Truly a superb concert!!!

We close '79 with the dream that in the very near future we can invite you all to the dedication of our Marr and Colton.

ANN MOXLEY

### VALLEY OF THE SUN

"After having been silent for many, many months, I can not keep quiet any longer. My chambers are waiting to be opened and let out my new voices. My wires, thousands in number, are carrying a new surge of energy. My new windlines carry a



Crew chief Bill Carr and organist Ron Rhode congratulate each other on a job well done.

fresh breath to my long silent pipes. My tibias trem with a romantic, melancholy sound that has not been heard for a long while. From my smallest to largest pipe, from my relay to my chests to my console — all of me feels new and once again alive!"

Once again the Phoenix College, 2/9 Wurlitzer, Style 210 was heard by the public. Sponsored by the college music department and the Valley of the Sun Chapter, the organ dedication concert was held Friday, September 28th. The featured artist for the evening was Ron Rhode, who in the past has done much to help the efforts of the chapter. Ron reflected the feelings of many VOTS members with his opening number, "On A Wonderful Day Like Today." For the many people who put uncountable hours into the restoration of the organ, it was indeed a day to remember. Rhode played a varied program, finishing with Romberg's "Will You Remember?". The song was a challenge — to the audience, because there's no program without the audience — and to the chapter, because the organ is playing, but the work is not finished.

Our October 26th chapter meeting was also held at Phoenix College. A rather informal gathering, we were brought up to date on the outcome of



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Sixteen-year-old Tony O'Brien at the console of the 3/16 Wurlitzer in the Calvary Baptist Church in Detroit, Michigan. (Ed Corey Photo)



Mary Inghram at the console of the 3/20 theatre organ in the Organ Grinder's Pizza and Pipes in Pontiac, Michigan. (Ed Corey Photo)

our recent concerts and tempted with programs yet to come. The nominating committee presented a list of nominees to be considered for the November elections, then the evening concluded with open console at the Wurlitzer.

MADELINE LI VOLSI

### WOLVERINE

It was a beautiful bright sunny Sunday afternoon as the Wolverines joined over 100 members of the Calvary Baptist Church in Detroit on September 16th to hear young Tony O'Brien play their 3/16 Wurlitzer which has been very skillfully re-

stored and installed by Bill Hays of Rochester, Michigan. Tony's program included everything from the Beatles to Bach. The varied selections included a nice sampling of show tunes such as "Tomorrow" from *Annie* and "Send In The Clowns" from *A Little Night Music*. One interesting "high-point" was a set of improvisations on J.S. Bach's "Prelude In 'C' Major." It was obvious by their reaction that the audience was having a good time, as was Tony, who lavished many praises on this fine Wurlitzer installation.

On Sunday, October 21st, Wolverine members and friends gathered at the Organ Grinder's Pizza and Pipes

on the outskirts of Pontiac to hear veteran Detroit theatre organist Mary Inghram play the 3/20 pipe organ installed there. Mary's program featured songs from several periods and styles and included a fine French medley. The nucleus of the instrument is a 3/10 Barton which was originally installed in the Birmingham Theatre. Wolverines Gary Montgomery, H.C. Scott and Roger Mumbroe purchased the building which was originally a Ponderosa Steak House, and have converted it into a "Pasta Palace" which has been well accepted, as their many customers can attest to.

ED COREY □



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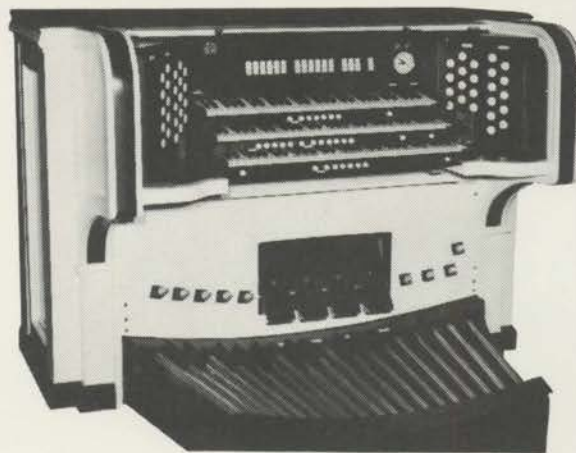
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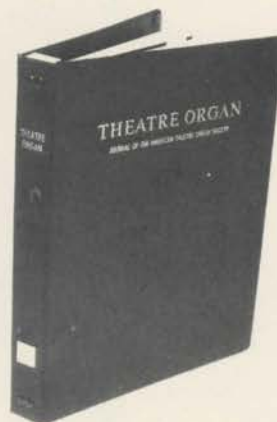
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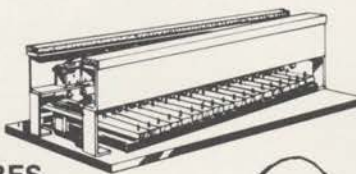
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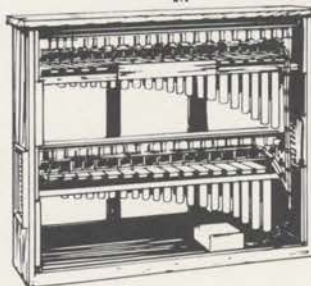
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