

# THEATRE ORGAN

May/June 1982

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**Journal of the American Theatre Organ Society**



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**Editorial Address**

THEATRE ORGAN  
3448 Cowper Court  
Palo Alto, California 94306  
Phone: (415) 494-1870

**Advertising Address**

ATOS Advertising  
1839 Weeg Way  
Park Ridge, Illinois 60068  
Phone: (312) 692-9399

**Membership Office**

ATOS Membership  
4455 LBJ Freeway, Suite 908  
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Phone: (214) 233-0863

**Back Issues and Binders**

1393 Don Carlos Court  
Chula Vista, California 92010

**ATOS Corporate Office**

ATOS  
1393 Don Carlos Court  
Chula Vista, California 92010

**Office of the President**

Lois F. Segur  
1930-301 Encinitas Road  
San Marcos, California 92069  
Phone: (714) 727-6534

**National Headquarters**

ATOS  
P.O. Box 43  
Olivenhain, California 92024  
Phone: (714) 727-6534

**National Officers**

Lois F. Segur, President  
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The console of the Detroit Fox Theatre's 4/36 Wurlitzer, which will be featured during the 1982 ATOS Convention. (See story starting on page 5.)

Photo courtesy of Friends of the Fox, Detroit.

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Judd Walton  
Oct. 1958 – July 1961

Tiny James  
July 1961 – July 1964

Carl Norvell  
July 1964 – July 1966

Dick Schrum  
July 1966 – July 1968

Al Mason  
July 1968 – July 1970

Stillman Rice  
July 1970 – July 1972

Erwin A. Young  
July 1972 – July 1974

Paul M. Abernethy  
July 1974 – July 1976

Ray F. Snitil  
July 1976 – July 1978

Preston M. Fleet  
July 1978 – Nov. 1978

Tommy Landrum  
Nov. 1978 – July 1980

Richard R. Haight  
July 1980 – June 1981

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1960 – Fanny Wurlitzer  
1961 – Mel Doner  
1962 – Leonard MacClain  
1963 – Eddie Dunstedter  
1964 – Reginald Foort  
1965 – Dan Barton  
1966 – W. "Tiny" James  
1967 – Erwin A. Young  
1968 – Richard C. Simonton  
1969 – Judd Walton  
1970 – Bill Lamb  
1971 – George and Vi Thompson  
1972 – Stu Green  
1973 – Al and Betty Mason  
1974 – Lloyd E. Klos  
1975 – Joe Patten  
1976 – Floyd and Doris Mumm  
1977 – Les and Edith Rawle  
1978 – Len Clarke  
1979 – J. B. Nethercutt  
1980 – Sidney Torch  
1981 – No selection made

## President's Message



*You have recently received two important documents — the Ballot for election of Directors, and a copy of the revised Bylaws. My sincere appreciation to these committees for fulfilling their assignments so well. I hope that you as members have exercised your right to vote and have complied with the required deadlines.*

*California Corporation Law for nonprofit public benefit corporations is very definite about the rights of the individual members. The revised Bylaws were written to comply in every detail with the law. As promised at the*

*Annual Meeting last year, your Board felt that the Bylaws should be voted upon by written ballots from each member. We hope you approve of our efforts. The results of these two important votes will be announced in the next issue of THEATRE ORGAN, and at the Annual Meeting in Detroit to be held on July 7 at 10:30 a.m. in the Westin Hotel.*

*We are a unique society — did you know? From a recent survey of many national organizations the majority have shown a loss of members this year, but ATOS membership has kept a steady pace with previous years, which proves that we are not just any old organization! The reason for our existence — our love of theatre organs — is a constant cause for growth and expansion. I continue to ask that each of you find one new member with whom you can share your enthusiasm.*

*How can we help but be enthusiastic after reading the last issue and seeing the magnificent organs in our upcoming Detroit Convention. As you read the program of events, I hope you will quickly send in your registration, if you haven't already done so. I am looking forward to seeing you and personally thanking you for the support you have given me this past year.*

*Sincerely,*

*Lois F. Segur*

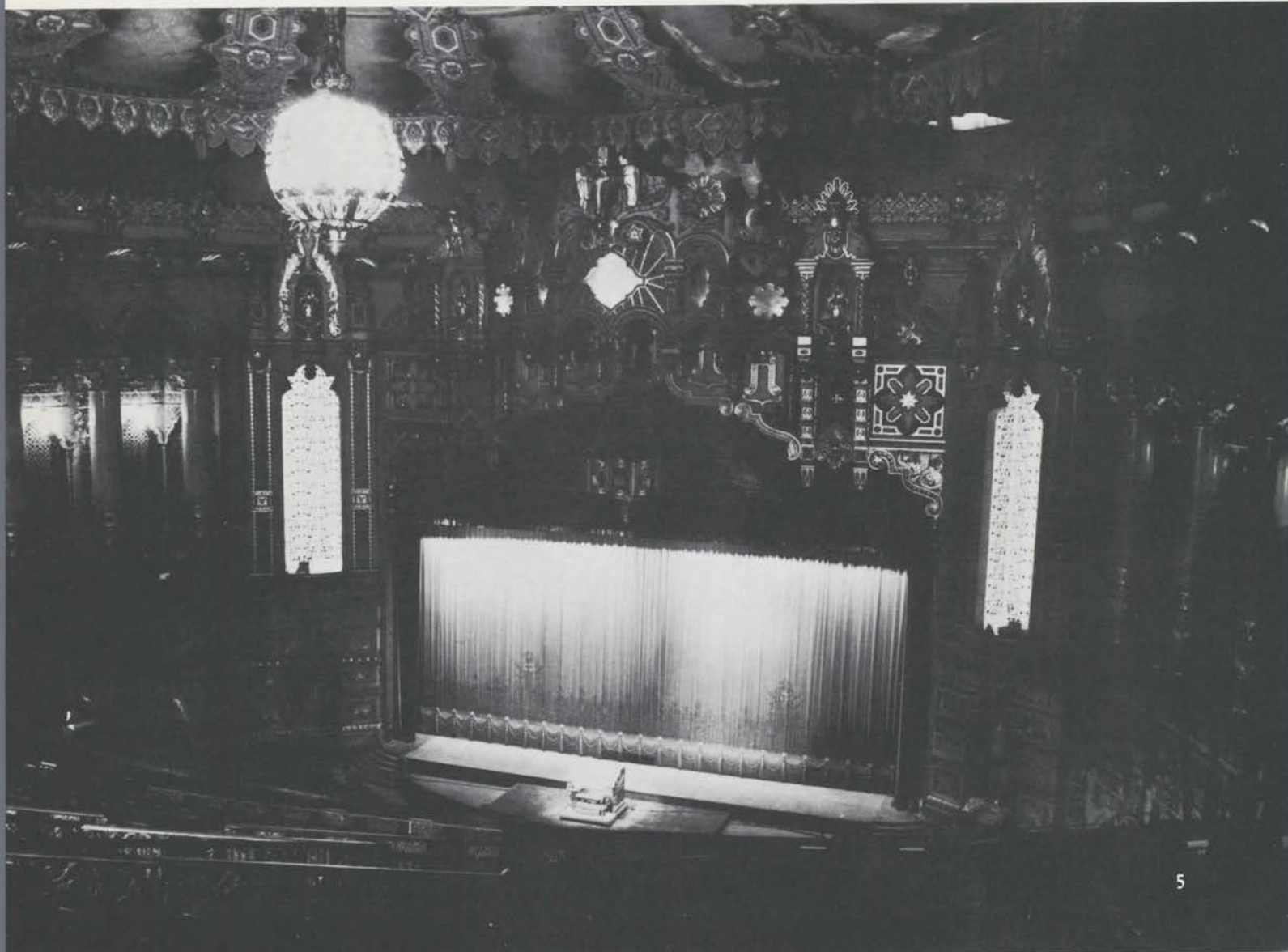
*Lois F. Segur*

*Your Visit to the . . .*

# FOX DETROIT

by Harold Bellamy

*(Alfred J. Buttler Photo)*



When you arrive in downtown Detroit, you are immediately aware that its street pattern is different than most cities. Rather than streets running at right angles to each other forming square blocks, there is a radial system of streets interconnecting a series of circular parks. Detroit's first theatre district was formed around one of these parks named Campus Martius, just a short dis-

tance north of the river, east of Woodward Avenue at Monroe. The district included Detroit's first movie theatre, the Casino, which opened on March 3, 1906. Others to follow were the Cinex, Star, Columbia and National, to name just a few of the dozen nickelodeon and movie houses which concentrated in this area. Only the National remains intact as a reminder of that era. Less intact, the

Star, Casino and Cinex are still identifiable in the facades of the "Monroe Block," a historical frontage. The Columbia also existed in the Monroe Block but was demolished and replaced in 1956 by a two-story commercial building. The Columbia is noteworthy because it was the most formidable of the movie houses in the district. Designed by C. Howard Crane, it had seating for over 1,000 people and had facilities for full stage presentations. Moreover, it featured a symphony orchestra to accompany silent films and presented Professor Anton Dailey at Detroit's first theatre organ, two years before New York had a similar instrument. The Columbia was the forerunner of another major phase of movie entertainment and in Detroit, the creation of a new theatre district.

Starting in 1917 with the construction of the Madison Theatre, this new district was located around Grand Circus Park several blocks north of the first district. This theatre district was to be very different and significant, as it ushered in the "movie palace" era in Detroit. These large movie palaces became the focus of an ornately decorative style of architecture wherein audiences of from 3000 to 5000 people could revel not only in the fantasy of the environment but in the elaborate presentations of orchestra, vaudeville, choreography, theatre organ and big-name entertainment in addition to the film presentation.

Responsible for the start of this new phenomenon were two individuals who were to become famous in this new, large-scale entertainment mode; John Kunsky, the entrepreneur (owner of the Casino) and C. Howard Crane, the architect (designer of the Columbia). Together, their efforts transformed the Grand Circus Park area so radically that it became locally known as "Kunsky Circle." In time, eight movie palaces graced the Grand Circus area, capable of accommodating more than 24,000 patrons. The largest of these was C. Howard Crane's mammoth Fox Theatre. The demand for theatres was so great that C. Howard Crane became responsible for the design of over fifty theatres in the city. At Grand Circus Park, he designed the Madison, Adams, Capitol (now Grand Circus), State (now Palms), United Artists and the Fox, all of

Lobby Grand Staircase. The windows on the upper level afford patrons a view of the Grand Lobby from the second balcony level. (Alfred J. Buttler Photo)



which are still in existence, although some operate on a sporadic basis. Added to the group was Percival Periera's Oriental Theatre (later Downtown) and George L. Rapp's Michigan Theatre. Unfortunately, the Oriental was destroyed and the Michigan, a true theatre gem, now exists as one of the most glamorous parking structures anywhere in the world. Of historical interest is the fact that the Michigan occupies the site of Henry Ford's early home and the tiny shop in which he built his first automobile in 1896.

Of the group of eight theatres, the only theatre organs to survive in their original setting are the two still located in the Fox Theatre. The fate of the others is varied and is generally believed to be as follows: the United Artists organ, a 3/17 Wurlitzer Model 260 Special, is now currently performing in a Detroit area pizza parlor, the Pied Piper Pizza and Pipes in the Universal Mall at Twelve Mile Road and Dequindre in Warren, Michigan; the Oriental, 2½/10 Wurlitzer, is believed to have been destroyed with the theatre; the Madison, a 3/34 Hillgreen-Lane, was split up for parts some of which remain; the Adams, a 3/28 Hillgreen-Lane, was split up for parts going to several parties; the Grand Circus, a 4/20 Publix No. 1 Wurlitzer, was first moved to a local skating rink, and after several ownerships much of it, including the console, is now located in the Paramount Theatre in Oakland, California; the Michigan, a 5/28 Wurlitzer, is now located in a private residence in Wisconsin (in a huge basement complete with lift); the Palms, a 4/20 Publix No. 1 Wurlitzer, is now located in the Oral Roberts University Chapel in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

In order to better relate our visit to the Fox and to assist in appreciating its position in the movie palace era, it may be of value to briefly refer to the four other major movie palaces which were built by William Fox and to describe their status along with the large theatre organs which were designed to perform in them. To compete with other marvels such as the Chicago Theatre and the Paramount and Roxy Theatres in New York, William Fox built his wonders in Atlanta, Brooklyn, San Francisco, St. Louis and Detroit. To compliment these major movie palaces, the

Rudolph Wurlitzer Company and M.P. Möller Inc. built the equally formidable pipe organs to provide the great sound to fill these Fox Theatres.

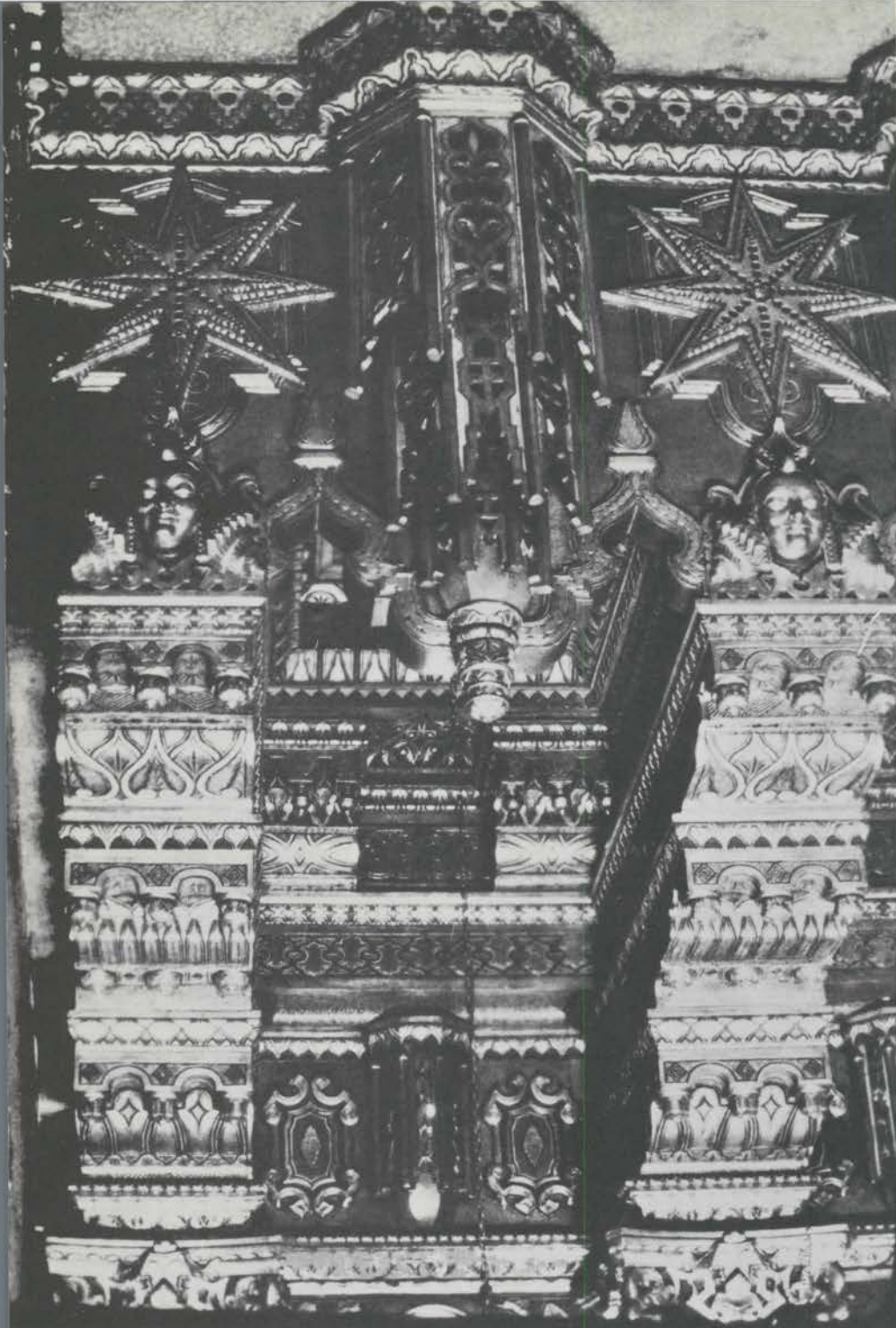
First, **the Atlanta Fox:** Last of the Foxes, it was designed by Marye, Alger Vinour and opened December 25, 1929. It has 4,504 seats. Rescued from demolition, the theatre is now operating viably as a music hall and

for special events. The organ is a 4/24 Moller and is used regularly in concert.

**The Brooklyn Fox:** Designed by C. Howard Crane and Kenneth Franzheim, it was opened August 31, 1928, and had 4,060 seats. The theatre has been demolished (demolition date not available). The organ was a 4/36 Wurlitzer-Fox Special. The organ was split up for parts and the

*(Alfred J. Buttler Photo)*





Intricate plasterwork of the Grand Lobby ceiling.

(William C. Frisk Photo)

console is now in the Cardinal Music Palace family restaurant in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

**The San Francisco Fox:** Designed by Thomas Lamb, it opened June 28, 1929, with 4,651 seats. After a farewell concert on February 16, 1963, with many celebrities in attendance, demolition of the Fox began on February 28 and was completed on August 12, 1963. Everett Nourse was the organist at the farewell. The organ, a 4/36 Wurlitzer-Fox Special, is now in a California residence.

**The St. Louis Fox:** Designed by C. Howard Crane, it is almost an exact replica of the Detroit Fox. It opened January 30, 1929, and had 5,035 seats. The theatre operated complete with theatre organ use before film presentations and closing intermission into the early 1970s when organ participation was dropped. The theatre continued with films until March 1, 1978, when it closed. The theatre has been purchased by the Pantheon Corporation and is currently undergoing a restoration for a

Fall 1982 opening. The organ is a 4/36 Wurlitzer-Fox Special which has been maintained and is played frequently.

Now for the fifth Fox palace, **the Detroit Fox!** Designed by C. Howard Crane, it opened on September 21, 1928. It has operated continuously since that time as a movie theatre with occasional special shows. In recent years, it was not able to sustain first-run movie presentations and its economic viability was therefore in jeopardy. The theatre, however, has been temporarily rescued from a closure and possible destruction. On the verge of tax foreclosure a few years ago, a reprieve was made possible through a re-purchase agreement.

The house has been recarpeted and the seats have been refurbished. In addition, much repair work has been done and maintenance is again a practice. Unfortunately, because of poor economic conditions and the generally negative position of the movie industry in large cities, the prospect for continuing with first-run features is not bright. The new owner is working hard at seeking a solution for continuing the use of the theatre. He has recognized the need and value of maintaining the organs and has permitted the programming of special shows and concerts in order to provide funds for that purpose. Prior to his involvement, the organ was, for the most part, only minimally maintained because of the lack of funds. The organs' restoration has been accomplished by a dedicated group who titled themselves "Friends of The Fox." Recently, the group has reorganized as "Downtown Theatre Enthusiasts." They are enduring the usual problems associated with organs, such as repairing the 50-hp blowers after a very heavy rain put them under six feet of water. This required slow baking to dry them out.

Let us now take a closer look at the Detroit Fox. This grand movie palace with its 5,042 seats is second only in size to New York's Radio City Music Hall. As already noted, the theatre and adjoining office building were designed by Detroit architect, C. Howard Crane and Associates. Except for minor details, the same design was utilized in the St. Louis Fox. As you approach the building, note the entrance doors framing the



ticket booth. Made of solid brass, cast bronze and marble, this ornate entrance is a hint of more to be found within. Passing through the doors, you find yourself in the outer lobby which serves as the transitional space into the Grand Lobby. Entry into the lobby is always an experience, for one is suddenly aware of being exposed to a fantasy environment framed by towering oxblood-colored pillars, topped with jeweled friezes and canopied by extruding buttresses capping the 80' x 125' lobby which is six stories high! Niches and shrines containing figures of Asiatic gods are featured here and throughout the theatre. Crane's firm designed and executed all of these interior plaster-work features and statues. Inner doors are solid mahogany, ebony finished with Art Deco-inspired stenciling and fittings. Decorative moldings are not stock items from a supply catalogue. Casting of the ornamentation took place right on the site.

Looking ahead from this massive lobby the grand staircase looms, guarded by two huge lions at the foot of the ballustrades. The staircase reaches up to the inner lobby and to the balconies which overlook the grand lobby. In one of these balconies to the left is the lobby organ, a 3/12 Moller. This organ was used to entertain patrons as they entered or left the theatre or while waiting for the house to empty after a performance. This organ may be played from the console or automatically by the "Artiste" system which uses perforated paper rolls, capable of duplicating the music of famous organists. The instrument speaks from chambers located on the two floors above the console. As we pass into the inner lobby we may go either to the left to the ladies' powder room, or to the right to the men's smoking room. In either direction, we pass through a two-story "court" with a mirrored ceiling on the mezzanine level reflecting and highlighting the ornate ballustrades, stencil work and ornamental figureheads. Extending from the lobby area are the concourses connecting with the inner staircases which provide access to the loges and balcony. Throughout the promenades and lobbies, you will continue to be amused and entertained by the variety of artistry depicted in plaster, marble, brass,



The 3/12 Moller lobby organ.

(William C. Frisk Photo)

wood and stone. Look for the Samurai warriors, elephants, lions, peacocks, dolphins, dancing maidens, camels, sorcerers, monkeys, dragons, goddesses, eagles and more.

Now let us enter the main auditorium. This huge space, especially when viewed for the first time, is an overwhelming experience. The reason for awe is its immense size — measuring over 100 feet in height, 175 feet in width and 200 feet in length. Huge red scagliola columns, 4½ feet in diameter and 35 feet high, are the main elements framing this cavernous space. Suspended above these colonnaded walls is a draped, jeweled and tasseled tentlike ceiling, supported by spears and opening to a starry blue sky. Hanging from that sky is a large stained and leaded globe-shaped chandelier over 13 feet in diameter. The proscenium is massive. The ornate organ grilles on each side of the stage and the huge decorative overhang above, capped by a crowned elephant, only serve to put the almost-80-foot-wide stage into

perspective. Behind the main drape is a full complement of curtains and backdrops necessary for major entertainment extravaganzas. Wrapped around the stage are seven floors of dressing rooms, carpentry and tailor shops, a screening and rehearsal room, a broadcast studio and a music library, interconnected by elevators. Elevators, lined in real leather, also serve the loge and balcony areas. Stage and organ lifts and "band cars" which allow lateral movement provide an added dimension to the imagery and fantasy of presentation. Hearing sound before one visually identifies the source tends to conjure a mystical experience. When the organ lift rises in the Fox, it reveals a huge gold-toned console with gold decorative trim across its top and side panels. As a 4/36 Wurlitzer-Fox Special, it is one of five nearly identical instruments created by the company for the largest Fox theatres in the country, with the prototype installed in the New York Paramount Theatre. The De-

(Alfred J. Buttler Photo)



troit Fox Wurlitzer is completely original. It is powered by twin 50-hp Spencer blowers located in a room in the lower of two basements. It fills seven chambers, plus rooms for the blowers and relay. The foundation, main and diaphone chambers are to the left of the proscenium. The orchestral, solo and two percussion chambers are to the right. Distributed among all of the chambers are two Marimbas, two sets of Cathedral Chimes, three Xylophones, two Chrysoglotts, Piano, tuned Sleigh Bells, Glockenspiel, tuned Tympanis and many drums, traps and effects. The pipework includes three Diapasons, three Flutes, three Tibia Clausa ranks, four Vox Humana ranks, eight sets of strings, Dulciana, Quintadena, Kinura, Krumet, Musette, Saxophone, Clarinet, Orchestral Oboe, Oboe Horn, French Horn, Tuba Mirabilis, Trumpets, Tuba Horn, two Brass and an English Post Horn. Eleven ranks are extended to 16' pitch and the Diaphonic Diapason is extended even further to 32' pitch. These lowest twelve pipes are housed in a special room. Four of the major ranks are voiced on 25 inches of wind along with the 32-foot Diaphones. To the right of the stage is a slave console which has access to the same relay and, therefore, the total organ.

Only a few recordings have been made on this fine instrument. The first (about 1955) by Reginald Foort is still available and includes selections from the Fox and the Mosque in Richmond, Virginia. Two other recordings, Ed Gress in about 1959 and Raymond Shelly in about 1961, are out of print and copies are very difficult to locate. Three concerts were performed by John Muri, two in 1967 and one on May 23, 1971. A recording of this latter concert is still available and represents the last commercial effort on this instrument. John Muri notes that an exact roster of the organists who played at the Fox is not available but that Armand "Jack" Franz played for many years, finishing his last engagement in 1939. Don Miller is known to have played in the mid-thirties. Merle Clark came from the Toledo Paramount for a short time before leaving for California. Tom Montgomery and "Wild Bill" Holleman have also played for short periods extending into the sixties.

The organ was featured during the 1967 ATOS convention but was not available for the 1974 convention program. However, an impromptu session did take place during that convention. At 1:00 a.m., after the theatre was emptied of its patrons, Don Baker took control of the console and was followed by many others until it was time for breakfast. Later in 1975, Bill Holleman played a concert on the Moller lobby organ. Because of the large number of people who showed up for this event on a stormy Sunday morning, a concert on the Wurlitzer was in order. This took place in December, 1976, when Fr. Jim Miller played a program which attracted a large audience. This was followed by a concert in May of 1977 with Gary Reseigh presiding. In November, 1978, another even larger presentation took place. This time it was Dennis James doing his score for the classic film *Wings*. Another highlight of that day was the personal appearance of Buddy Rogers, one of the stars of the film. The most recent concert at the Fox was presented on Sunday, October 11, 1981. For the first time in recent years, the concert

was staged on a Sunday afternoon rather than a Sunday morning. This concert was billed as a "Three Organist Extravaganza" featuring Dennis Minear, Fr. Jim Miller and John Steele, all organists at the Theatre Organ Pizza and Pipes in Pontiac, Michigan. Nearly 3000 attended this event, which lasted over 3½ hours!

Concerts such as this have been very important to those of us who are interested in theatres and theatre organs. For, in addition to viewing the theatre, we can hear the big sound of the pipes within the original huge space designed for them. Although you will not be privileged to experience the opening night festivities with three hours of entertainment consisting of 32 dancers, a 60-piece orchestra and 50-voice choir, the Movietone appearance of George Bernard Shaw and a first-class movie *Street Angel* featuring Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrell, you will be able to imagine the grandeur of the night during some of the passages as played by our own artists during our convention in the same elegance that existed in 1928. SEE YOU AT THE DETROIT FOX! □

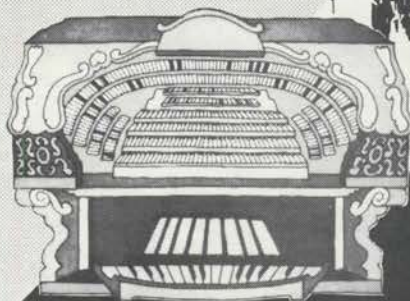
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# The Virginia Cox Story

by  
Roger G. Angell  
and  
Richard C. Harger

Virginia Cox at the Moller Organ in the Philadelphia Metropolitan Opera House. Circa 1937.



Virginia Cox, later Virginia Smith and Virginia Kahapea, passed away August 18, 1981 in Honolulu. She had played at numerous theatres throughout the country in her varied life, and spent the last forty years in Hawaii.

Born in Conneaut, Ohio in 1898, Virginia's first contact with music was in kindergarten. She came home and picked out on the piano the songs she had learned on the first day of school. Her grandmother thought she should start music lessons, so, though not yet six years old, she began two lessons a week from Donna Ward. Lessons continued until she was 16, the last two years in classical piano. She perhaps was dreaming of a concert someday.

When she was 17 she was playing at the local motion picture houses, the Theatorium and La Grand. At the former, she played a piano and accompanied a violinist; the second theatre had a photoplayer and later a Bartola. She had not taken any formal training on the organ, but had learned to play at her church by sneaking in (at age 11) with a friend, who pumped the bellows while she played. The church later got an electric-blown organ but locked the console, so she was out of luck.

Her grandmother died as Virginia was to go to college, so instead, in 1916, she started playing professionally. She joined the Musicians' Union in Ashdivilla, 14 miles from her home town. Two years later she went to San Francisco. As Virginia tells it, "After I put my transfer in to the union I went to a building where they had about six organs on one floor for practice purposes. I was practicing up on some things there and someone heard me and asked if I would go to Porterville and play. The man who had been playing there had been working on his car, and somehow or other, gasoline had burned his hands quite badly. I spent about ten months in Porterville; this was at the Monache Theatre, and it was my first exposure to a Robert-Morton." At the Monache, a six- or seven-hundred-seat house, she played spotlight solos on the two-manual Morton. "From there I went home; my family had driven out to spend the winter but changed their minds and went back for Thanksgiving and I went back with them. I didn't get back to California for a

couple of years."

While in Cleveland, Ohio, she played her first Hope-Jones Wurlitzer, perhaps in the Strand Theatre, she recalls. "It was a big thrill." She also played at an unusual theatre at Euclid Avenue and Prospect Street: "It had two entrances; one was at a lower level than the other. If you bought a ticket from one entrance you could see the picture at that theatre, then walk into the next level and see that picture for nothing." She then went to the 105th Street Theatre for a year and a half, to the Mall Theatre, and others.

After two years in Ohio, she returned to California in 1922, to Los Angeles this time. She worked at the Mission Theatre, owned by Max Sennet. It was a beautiful theatre, done in a Spanish style, with a Robert-Morton. C. Sharpe Minor played there, and Virginia played on Sundays. He gave her many pointers, and she imitated him and also substituted for him for six weeks. Once, while playing, she looked up and saw Max Sennet in the wings watching her. "Of course, I was pretty nervous," she admitted.

In 1923 she worked at the Superba Theatre in downtown Los Angeles. It had maybe a thousand seats and was owned by Universal Pictures and they showed their own pictures there. Also, she knew the organist at the Pantages and worked there now and then as well. Her pay at the Superba was, as always, above scale, and she lived at the Hollywood Hotel. She could pick the jobs she wanted, and moved around to get better ones.

Her next move was to the 2200-seat Raymond Theatre (later renamed the Crown) in Pasadena. It was a stock theatre, with a 20-piece orchestra and a 3/11 Style 235 Wurlitzer. Everyone dressed in evening clothes; she wore evening gowns (paid for by herself), and the orchestra leader wore tails. She would play a number, then the orchestra would play, then both together. Many great actors played stock at the Raymond, and many were guests. Bernice Berwin, J. Anthony Smythe, and Harold Peary were part of the stock company, the King-Smith Players.

Virginia was there for about a year and a half, and married the leading man, Norman Field. Then they went

to San Francisco, where he played at George Eby's Fulton Theatre. She played at the T & D Theatre in Oakland for a while, then the Casino, St. Francis, and, in 1927, the Pantages. A year and a half later it was sold to the Orpheum circuit, but she stayed on for a total of nearly five years.

"When I went to the Orpheum, Don George was there. He was playing top shift and I was playing the second shift. After I had been there several months he went to the Islands (Hawaii) and I took top shift. I played top shift usually, but there were a couple of times when Rodney Pantages brought in a couple of his organ friends. They would play about a month and then I would go back to my regular shift."

Virginia also played piano for vaudeville acts, and sometimes played piano in orchestras. She remembers that there were about equal numbers of male and female organists then.

Virginia's second marriage was in about 1930 to violinist and orchestra leader Vinton La Fererra. They lived on Telegraph Hill in a home on, naturally, La Fererra Terrace. At her

home, Virginia made many rhythm instruments for her husband, and watched Coit Tower and both bridges being built.

She played at the Golden Gate, Imperial, and Warfield theatres for short engagements — fill-ins. She did a radio program in Oakland, sponsored by the Oakland Tribune, playing a Harmonium with an orchestra. Rodney Pantages later gave her the Harmonium.

While playing at the Warfield, around 1935, she also played background music for "Count Renaldo," a radio program her husband did. He came up with story ideas, and Virginia and a writer edited them. She remembers rushing from the Warfield to catch a small air ferry to Oakland for the broadcast.

"I played Hammonds from the first time they came out to the West coast. In 1937, while on vacation in Los Angeles, I noticed in a paper that they were having a formal opening for the Hammond at a local music company. I spoke to Lee Haggart of Hammond; he said he was taking the organ to San Francisco the following

week — the symphony wanted to try it out for one note in one piece. I was invited to be backstage at the San Francisco Opera House on the following Tuesday. When the organ was delivered, Lee asked me if I would like to play it. So I played the first note on the first Hammond in San Francisco."

In 1935 and 1940 Virginia travelled all over the United States. In 1937 she played the huge Moller at the Philadelphia Metropolitan Opera House (also known as Stanley's Metropolitan Theatre) for about a month. "It had about six manuals and a 64' stop in the pedal. I felt like a midget. I would lift my hands as high as I could just to put the tablets down. Rows and rows of them. It shook the whole building and it was beautiful. That was the biggest organ I ever played." Actually, the organ had only four manuals, but Virginia was very small and the console towered over her. And it did bristle with tablets, 421 of them. She composed "The Goddess of Liberty" on that organ, and wrote a lot of music during that time. The opera house

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was later destroyed in a fire.

She played on and off from 1940 to 1942, when she was divorced. In early 1943 she married Milton Walter "Pete" Smith. He worked for Pan American Airlines, and they wanted to transfer him to Hawaii. "This was during the war and Pan Am was under the Navy. The Navy rule prohibited families from coming over (to Hawaii). He would have had to come over alone and he wouldn't go; he kept resisting them.

"Finally one morning we heard an Army officer on the radio trying to recruit people to work in G-2 Intelligence at Fort Shafter in Honolulu, so I said, facetiously, 'Well, maybe I'll go to Hawaii on my own and work for the Army.' After my husband left for work, I presented myself to this officer in the Federal Building and told him, because he asked, why I wanted to go to Hawaii. When he asked what I could do I told

him I was a professional musician. He asked if I had any office experience and I said no. He said, 'Well, if you can pass the civil service examination I will send you over.' So I took the examination and was told I had passed by the skin of my teeth. So I went home — I belonged to the Army: they had to know my whereabouts 24 hours a day."

Two months later, in 1944, she was on the *Permanente*, an old cement ship, which took ten days to make the crossing. She arrived a month ahead of her husband; when he finally arrived he wanted to know why she hadn't found them a home. He started looking himself and realized how hard they were to find. It was two months before they got their apartment on Kaiulani Avenue in Waikiki.

Virginia was working at Fort Shafter on top secret things — she couldn't tell her husband about her

work. She was on temporary civil service and they wanted her to become permanent, but she didn't want it. She went to the Princess Theatre and introduced herself to the organist, Earle Bond. Then she saw Mr. Mitchell, the manager, and asked if they needed anybody. They did. Don George had just left for California, so Virginia and Earle alternated. When Earle left Virginia continued, staying almost two years. She even substituted for Edwin Sawtelle at the Waikiki Theatre for two and a half months. "Sawtelle never let anyone touch the organ at the Waikiki. When Gaylord Carter came through during the war he asked if he could play after the show and he was refused." Both theatres had 4/16 Robert-Mortons, built in 1921. The Waikiki organ had been originally installed in the Hawaii Theatre downtown, and was moved in the late thirties.

At the end of the war, and while playing at the Princess, Virginia had a radio program on KGMB for a year and a half, seven days a week, thirty minutes a night, at midnight. At 11:30 every evening a taxi took her to the studio. She played requests on a Hammond and received a lot of mail, especially from Australia and New Zealand. She was offered a job as a cocktail organist at Gibson's Bar on Hotel Street. "I hesitated about accepting the offer as I had never done that kind of work. At Gibson's I used a Hammond and played there for almost five years. A sailor came in one night and asked, 'Can I buy you a drink?' I said, 'No, I don't drink.' 'Well, you looked like you did,' was his reply. I got such a kick out of that I've never forgotten it." Gibson's was quite a change for Virginia. "If I didn't get at least a dozen proposals, it was a bad week."

After Gibson's, it was Officer's Clubs, NCO Clubs, Air Force Clubs, Ciro's Restaurant, the Tradewinds, the Zebra Room, and three assignments at the Pearl City Tavern. She was asked to go to Australia and Minneapolis to open theatres, but she refused. From 1955 to 1960 she played at Kawaiahao Church. Also, with her Hammond and Lowrey Festival, she played fashion shows, weddings, funerals, conventions, and the CIRCUS!

"Playing the circus was the highlight of my career. There was an

Virginia Cox at the Robert-Morton Organ in the Princess Theatre, Honolulu, Circa 1944.



eight-piece band and the organist made it sound twice that big because it was loud and fast. I once played for a Japanese circus. They had 52 performers, and not one of them could speak a word of English. We played three weeks at the Civic Auditorium and then took it over to Maui and the Big Island (Hawaii). I never enjoyed anything as much before in my life.

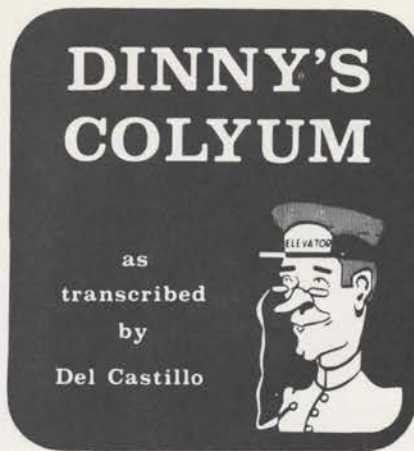
"One afternoon I came in between shows with the conductor, a very remarkable, handsome young man, very powerfully built. He was the manager of the show and he did a trapeze act also. They built a huge apparatus on Fort Street near King, and had him do part of his act to draw the people. After the show was over I took him driving and he wanted to drive so I took him up into a residential section. I found out later from the interpreters that it had been the first time he had ever driven a car. I guess he had watched often enough to learn how to turn the wheel. It was the dream of his life to drive a car, and he did. And he did all right, too."

In 1946 she and her husband adopted a three-week-old baby boy and named him Peter. Pete Smith later passed away and in 1962 Virginia married her son's real father, Joe Kahapea.

"I have forgotten a number of places. It was a colorful time and I enjoyed every minute of it. I retired as an organist when I had my two accidents; one on my hand and then my legs. That put me on the shelf."

But even "on the shelf," Virginia didn't quit; she exercised her hand until she had regained full use of it, although her doctor had said it couldn't be done. She played whenever she got the chance, and in 1973 was the Cameo Artist representing the Aloha (Hawaii) Chapter at the National ATOS Convention in Portland, Oregon.

She moved to the Big Island of Hawaii, near the tourist town of Kona, where she was rather out of touch with civilization, and with few of the modern conveniences that we take to be necessities. But she loved the beauty of the area, the fresh air, the closeness to nature. She occasionally visited Honolulu and played the organs she once knew and still loved. The song had not gone out of her heart. □



Mr. Harry Jenkins, who is a organ player I knowed from way back when I was a-runnin the elyvater at Mr. Walter Jacobs Publishin Company in Boston, has rit me with his shirt tale on fire on acct. he saw a notice about a organ concert that said that The Theatre Pipe Organ is not a Relict of the Silent Film but One of the Most Versatile Instruments Devised by man. Well that dint sound like no insult to me but Mr. Jenkins he dint like to hear the theater organ called a Relick. Mr. Jenkins he went on to say that down his way they is some people who dont want to have silent movies in organ concerts. He thinks most people do want it but they is some who dont.

Well, that sounds reasonable to me. Just like they is some Republick-ans and some Democrats or some Baptists and some Catholicks and like that there. You cant always expect that everybody is a-go-in to think the same way. As for me I am on Mr. Jenkins side. Seems to me every time I hear a organ player play for the silent movies he gets a great hand at the end even when the movie is a stinker. And beleave me some of them old movies is awful corny. But even the corny ones I get a kick out of when the Western hero takes off lick-ity split after the villin and the organ player cuts loose with Hi Ho Silver and like that there. And I am also a sucker for the sentimental ones when the organ player comes on with some sob musick on the Tibia and the Vox Humana and I aint ashamed to say that sometimes I get a good cry out of it, just like I get a good belly laff when Charlie Chaplin or Buster Keaton they fall down and the organ goes Gr-r-r-oomph.

I have to admit that all the organ players who are fittin musick to the

silent movies aint always up to it. They is some who jest kind of dribble along like they are gettin paid by the note and they think it is a sin not to have some musick a-go-in all the time. And I always get kind of irritated when they is a dog bark or a shot or a train wistle and the organ player dont give out with the bark or the shot or the wistle the first time you see it. I spose maybe it is too much to expect that the player had a chancet to see the movie enough times to know jest when them things was goin to happen, but after all aint that what he is gettin paid for? How long do you think a timpany player would last if he dint get in the first bang on the timpany where it was suppose to be. I will tell you how long he would last. He would last only to the first time the conductor got him in the anty room.

Now that I got steamed up on the subjeck it seems to me that they is more young organ players in concerts who dont know how to play for them the way the old timers like Oliver Wallace and Lew White and Emil Velazco and fellers like that did when I use to listen way back in the 20s when I first begun to go to the movies. When you went into them big movie palaces in the middle of a movie and you hear them great big rich sounds comin out of that big Wurlitzer you knew you was in for a musical treat even if the movie wasnt much good. And them organists, the best ones I mean in Noo York and Chicago and Detroit and Los Angeles, they knew how to use musick to goose up the movie. Why wouldnt they? They been doin it every day foe years, and by the time a movie got to the last day they had all them cues down so pat you could even tell what was comin if you had your eyes shut. Yup, them was the Good Old Days. □

**Convention Note:** Recording artists, authors and others who would like to have records, tapes, sheet music or books on sale at the Convention Store during the 1982 ATOS Convention in Detroit are asked to write to: Gil Francis, ATOS Convention Store, 37819 Howell, Livonia, Michigan 48154, or phone (313) 464-1314, for consignment information.

## 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  
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**Q.** Recently, we took over the service contract on a large Wurlitzer theatre organ and immediately had problems. We found about one in five screw inserts in bungs loosened so that we could not torque the bung screws effectively. I have serviced a number of Wurlitzers, including church models, and have never come across a problem of this nature. Can you advise as to why this would happen and what is the easiest method to correct it?

**A.** There are two probable causes for this problem: The most likely would be carelessness on the part of the previous service people. They probably used electric screwdrivers and drove the screws in until they stopped the driver. The ferrule would then pull down and strip out. The second cause could be the screw itself binding in the bung hole, because of expansion and contraction of the bung material. Any time the screw is allowed to bind there will be undue friction between the screw and the ferrule. The bung holes should be reamed another 1/16" in diameter, beginning with the centermost holes,

so that *all* screws can be started by using your fingers. You should check hole alignment by shining a flashlight up the bung hole to see that the hole aligns with the ferrule reasonably well.

If your ferrules have stripped out, you had best order oversize ferrules and screw them into the stripped holes. As oversize ferrules (inserts) are supplied with a smaller diameter screw, you may wish to re-thread the ferrule for a course thread to match Wurlitzer's to maintain the same size of screws throughout the organ. (Order oversize inserts from Arndt Organ Supply, Ankeny, Iowa.)

**Q.** On our Wurlitzer I found that a block of wood which is screwed to the shade and serves as a bearing for the shade rod has ripped out. There is not room for a screwdriver in that position. What is the easiest way to repair it?

**A.** You will have to remove the entire shade to repair the jack cleat to which you refer. You should plug the holes with a 1/8" dowel and glue. After it has set, you can punch new pilot holes and remount the jack cleat. This job is time-consuming, so plan accordingly.

**Q.** We are in the process of recovering the motors on Wurlitzer shade pneumatics with polyon. What do you think of this method?

**A.** Unless you want to do it all over again in five years, I would advise against it. Use instead percussion leather (like the original) or heavy rubber motor cloth.

**Q.** We have a few wooden diaphones in a theatre organ (Robert-Morton) which have become a little slow. What procedure would you recommend to (1) lift the resonators out (two of us can't lift out the bottom five), and (2) correct the slow speech?

**A.** As for lifting out heavy resonators, I recommend the following: Install a 2"-diameter pipe near the ceiling of the chamber over the resonators and about 4" out from the wall, like a giant towel rack. The pipe can be mounted by making brackets out of 2" dimension lumber. Then purchase a small block and tackle and

hang it from the pipe on a piece of chain or polypropylene rope so that the tail hangs out far enough to be fastened. As you move from pipe to pipe, you can slide the block and tackle along, tying down the rigging so that the tackle will be high enough to raise the resonator *without* allowing the resonators to slip out of the rack. You will need 5/16"-diameter screweyes installed at the top of each resonator to hook on the block and tackle.

To check for slow speech, look at the face of the beater valve for particles of dirt or corrosion. Second, inspect the closing action of the valve by pushing it shut with your thumb and trying to slip a piece of paper all around it. If paper will go into one side but not the other, then obviously the valve is bent. You can correct this by loosening the nut clamp and shimming the beater-shaft clamp with paper shims until it is no longer possible to insert paper under the closed beater valve. Another cause for slow speech could be a leaking resonator. Are there water stains on the ceiling above the pipes? If so, look for open glue joints. Then look for a leaking resonator gasket, the leather ring glued to the generator block to receive the resonator toe. If this leaks, replace it. When a pipe is playing, you will hear a buzz from the toe which indicates a leaking gasket.

Lastly, make sure the action is quick in the chest itself. If it is sluggish, you may have a dirty magnet, a binding primary or a leaking secondary pneumatic. □

## NOTE!

Dear Readers,

I look forward to the Questions and Answers Technical Session with you amateur organ builders at the Detroit Convention. The session will be held at the Westin Hotel, beginning at 4:00 p.m. on Monday, July 5.

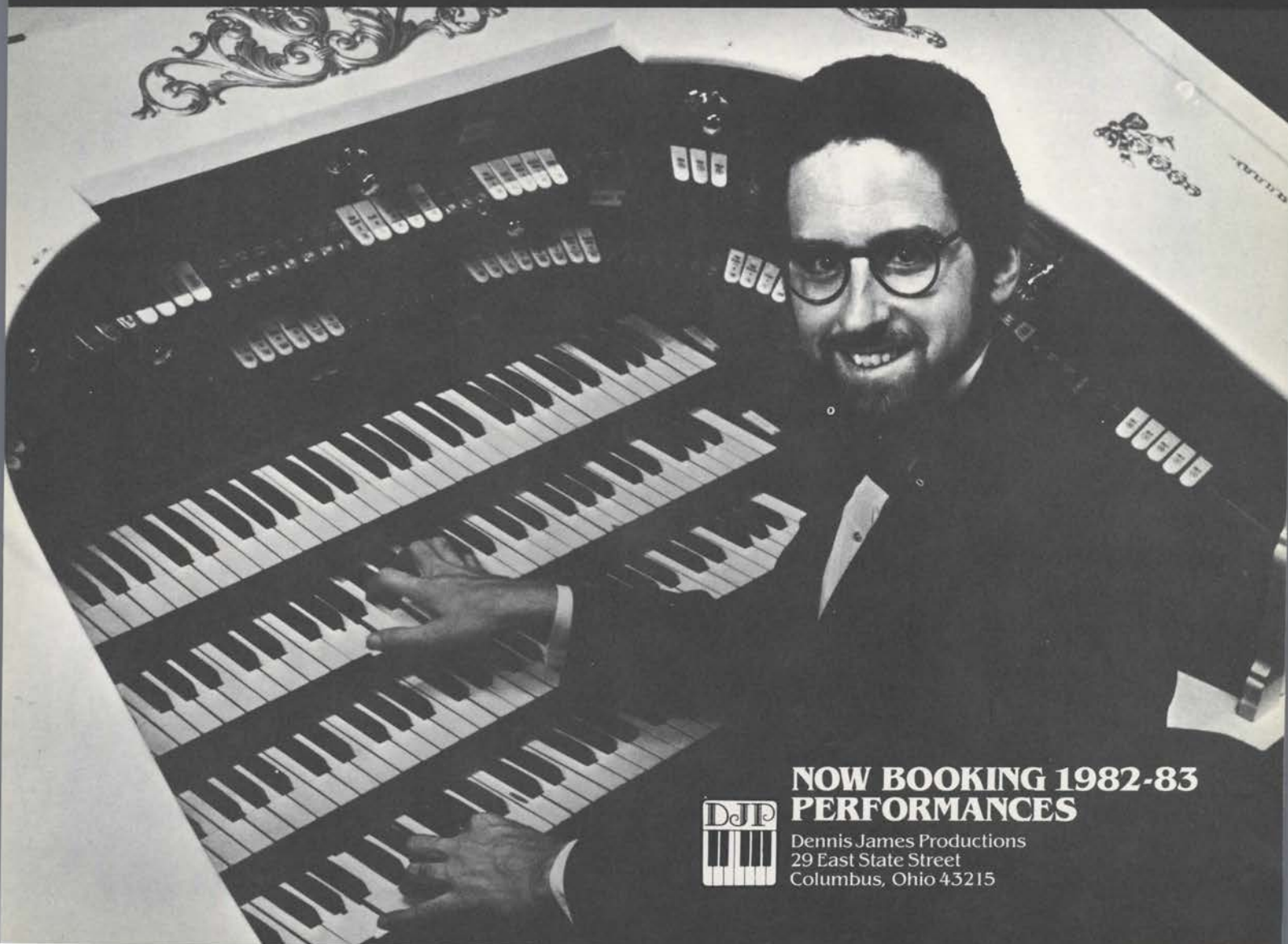
LANCE JOHNSON



1981-1982

# DENNIS JAMES CONCERTS AND SILENT FILM SHOWS

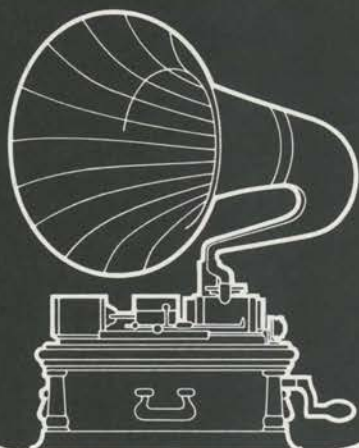
September	25	I.U. Auditorium, Bloomington, Indiana	9-21	Kennedy Center Opera House, Washington, D.C.	
	26	Civic Theatre, Akron, Ohio	25	Elco Theatre, Elkhart, Indiana	
October	1-4	Ocean State Theatre, Providence, Rhode Island	27	I.U. Auditorium, Bloomington, Indiana	
	8	Coronado Theatre, Rockford, Illinois	28	Chicago Theatre, Chicago, Illinois	
	11	Riverside Theatre, Milwaukee, Wisconsin	March	7	American Film Institute, Washington, D.C.
	15-18	Radio City Music Hall, New York City		15-17	O'Keefe Center, Toronto, Canada
	23-25	San Francisco Opera House, California		20	Ohio Theatre, Columbus, Ohio
	29	Michigan Theatre, Ann Arbor, Michigan	April	3	Fox Theatre, Atlanta, Georgia
	30	I.U. Auditorium, Bloomington, Indiana		4	Clemens Center, Elmira, New York
	31	Ohio Theatre, Columbus, Ohio		8-10	Music Hall, Houston, Texas
November	3-8	Ford Auditorium, Detroit, Michigan		16, 17	Waukesha Film Festival, Wisconsin
	10-15	Metropolitan Theatre, Boston, Massachusetts		19	I.U. Auditorium, Bloomington, Indiana
	18-22	Performing Arts Center, Miami, Florida		24	Redford Theatre, Detroit, Michigan
	26, 27	Church of the Redeemer, Kingston, Canada		28	Conservatory of Music, Cincinnati, Ohio
December	1	Keyboard Concerts, Laguna Hills, California	May	1	Temple Theatre, Saginaw, Michigan
	3-6	Paramount Theatre, Oakland, California		7, 8	Waikiki Bowl, Honolulu, Hawaii
	18	Pascack Theatre, Westwood, New Jersey		13	Coronado Theatre, Rockford, Illinois
	23	Ohio Theatre, Columbus, Ohio		16	Trinity Church, Chillicothe, Ohio
	26-31	Shrine Auditorium, Los Angeles, California		26-29	Ottawa, Canada
January	6-10	San Francisco Opera House, California	June	13	Regal Edmonton, London, England
	16	Radio City Music Hall, New York City		15-18	Opera House, Seattle, Washington
February	6	Bethesda Theatre, Maryland		19-21	Kichenor, Canada
	7	Ohio Theatre, Columbus, Ohio	July	4-7	Paramount Theatre, Vancouver, Canada
				9	Fox Theatre, Detroit, Michigan



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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.*

**CINCINNATI FATS.** Richard Hyman playing the Emery Theatre Wurlitzer. OVC-ATOS LP 101 (stereo). \$9.95 plus \$1.00 shipping (Ohioans add 55 cents tax) from OVC Records, Emery Theatre, 1112 Walnut Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45210.

This recording is long overdue. For many years this reviewer has been attempting to interest major organists in recreating those distinctive Waller stylings. The interest was there but, like Jesse Crawford's work, they found the Waller approach deceptively simple. It was left to the innovative Ohio Valley Chapter of ATOS and organist Richard Hyman to take El Toro by his weaponry.

We have been aware of Dick Hyman for many years as a skilled jazz musician. To the best of our knowledge his previous organ recordings have been made on electronics. We never thought of him as a theatre organist. Yet, Fats Waller was also basically a jazz musician who didn't

neglect the electric organ either. Hyman's innate musicianship has enabled him to take full advantage of the facilities of the 3/23 Emery Wurlitzer. That same musical instinct has also caused a great deal of restraint in recreating the Waller registration. Remember that Waller's pipe records were played on the 3-deck Estey church organ in Victor's Camden studio or on a 2/8 Compton in England. Those facilities may have limited his registration but not his musical values. Even when he broadcast the 4/21 Wurlitzer in the N.Y. Times Square Paramount studio over CBS in the late '30s, his registration was conservative; he rarely used a percussion. He seemed to be most interested in ways to add interest to tunes through variations plus his trademark fillers and riffs. Registration seemed to be of secondary importance.

Probably his best recorded pipe organ work was played on the Camden studio Estey. It was a typical Diapason-heavy church organ (Fats called it "the God box") with some strings and flutes on the Swell which were more useful for popular music.

It demanded an ability such as Waller's to adapt his free-form jazz to such limited facilities.

There are very few organists who can play jazz on pipes with the proper panache; Waller was one of the few, even with the handicap of a slow-speaking array of church pipes. Our first experience was his 1927 Victor label "Sugar" with "I Ain't Got Nobody" on the flip side. It became a favorite on first hearing and remains one. There's something about Fats' music which is universal in its appeal, all the better when he plays it on an organ. But he makes his mark even when he gravel-voices such forgettable material as "Your Feet's Too Big."

Let's look at some of the Waller organ style characteristics. His jazz style might be described as "jingling." On the manuals he has a light, often staccato touch. His pedal is usually heavy and his foot seems to linger on each root and fourth or fifth. We don't recall hearing him play tricky or chromatic pedal passages. The bass was a part of the rhythm department, same as when he played piano. His playing sounds



Thomas "Fats" Waller.

(Photo copied by Lodder Photography, Cincinnati)

effortless, but it's not that simple when one tries to analyze and recreate it. Waller was skilled in ballad stylings too, and this album does not neglect them. We lost Waller in 1943 at the age of 39. He was still growing as a musician/composer. One can't help but speculate about the musical goodies we would have enjoyed had Waller lived to the present. So much for history.

In recreating Waller on organ, Dick Hyman faced several problems. One he solved easily; two of the selections are recreations of organ records made by Waller on the studio Estey in 1927. With that wonderful 23-rank Wurlitzer's facilities available, an array of voices Fats never had for recording, should Hyman embellish the original with more lush voices than Fats' registration? Happily for the perhaps small body of purists who remember, Hyman sticks rather closely to the original

spare Waller registration.

All of the music presented is Waller's work. Some is adapted from piano solos while others are organ renditions of Waller songs played by his instrumental group. Here Hyman "magic carpets" his imagination to provide registration of which Waller would approve but which also takes advantage of the rich sounds available on the Emery Wurlitzer. In the jacket notes Hyman states that he hopes Fats would approve his forays into other stylistically related areas. We have no doubt that Waller would be delighted because Hyman has concentrated on recreating the Waller sound rather than inserting Hyman. Not once does Hyman get out of character. He is recreating Waller to the best of his ability. Many have tried to capture the Waller musical charisma, but we have yet to hear anyone come as close as Dick Hy-

man. It's like hearing Fats playing. Let's examine the selections individually.

"Messin' Around with the Blues" recreates Fats' 1927 recording made on the Estey church organ in Victor's Camden studio. While Dick Hyman has kept registration mostly to what Waller had available on the Estey, the tonal richness of the Emery Wurlitzer brightens the picture. The music is bouncy Waller, not the least bluesy.

"Jitterbug Waltz" is one of Fats' few ventures into 3/4 tempo. Originally a piano solo, Hyman adapted it for organ voices with empathy.

"Honeysuckle Rose" comes through as the jazz classic it has become since Fats penned it in 1929. Hyman includes Waller variations and those happy little fillers that characterize Waller's music. Hyman likes re-iterating bells and the Emery's piano.

The first run through of "Ain't Misbehavin'" is in expressive *tempo rubato*, then the bouncy rhythm sets in for a chorus. Next an expressive verse and again a jumping chorus, quite different from the previous one. Waller's pedal bass emphasis is present. It's 5 minutes and 27 seconds well spent.

"Viper's Drag" is a mostly fast novelty tune with allusions to both "St. Louis Blues" and Grieg's "Hall of the Mountain King," themes which Fats worked into his larger picture with easy larceny. Hyman uses the Emery's Posthorn in this one. Even when Fats broadcast from Jesse Crawford's N.Y. Paramount Theatre studio we don't recall his ever using that voice, although it was available on the 4/21 Wurlitzer. Yet, Hyman complements the Waller music with it. He uses a typical Waller heavy pedal bass to balance it.

"Yacht Club Swing" is typical of what Waller was doing with his group in the late '30s. Hyman uses the excellent piano, plus swingy riffs from the organ's brass complement.

"What Did I Do to be So Black and Blue" (1929) comes close to being played as a ballad. As the jacket note writer points out, it projects an unusually serious sentiment about being black in a popular song of that period. Good registration.

Like "Messin' Around," "Hog Maw Stomp" is as exact a recreation



Dick Hyman.

(Photo copied by Lodder Photography, Cincinnati)

of Waller's 1927 Estey record as Dick Hyman can make it. We are happy to report that the result is very close to hearing Fats', spare registration included. It's bouncy Waller jazz played in a happy style. We got out our ancient Victor blackseals of both tunes for comparison. Very favorable, thank you.

"I've Got a Feeling I'm Falling" was one of Waller's biggest hits. The best known record was by Jesse Crawford who crammed a jazz orchestra of sorts into the N.Y. Paramount organ studio and "ooh-hoo'd" a set pattern on the Tibia while the band carried the tune. It was all in strict tempo. The Hyman arrangement is much more introspective and expressive, and the Waller spirit is always present.

The Emery Wurlitzer's piano is heard throughout "Bond Street," part of Fats' *London Suite* (1938). It was originally played on a Compton organ.

"Squeeze Me" dates back to 1923, a piano solo. Again it's serious Waller, with the rhythm somewhat subdued to accommodate expression. Nice phrasing and instrumentation.

The closer is a sprightly and typical Waller exposition of "Keepin' Out of Mischief Now," played in the rollicking style for which the organist is best remembered. Again the piano is heard to advantage.

The production is first class throughout. Stereo recording captures the Emery Wurlitzer's big sound. The review pressing was smooth and pop-free.

The back of the jacket bears notes about the music, Waller, the organ and Dick Hyman. Best of all is a two page insert by organ aficionado John G. Strader dealing with Waller's early '30s sojourn at radio station WLW, Cincinnati, where along with Herschel Lueke, Gene Perazzo, Arthur Chandler and later Lee Erwin, he played the unforgettable *Moon River* nightly dream music broadcast. The jacket-size insert, with photos of Fats, was designed by another well-established musical name — Heidi James Petach. The organ was in fine condition for the recording and maintenance crew chief, Ev. Pratt, Jr., deserves much credit.

This album is highly recommended. □



Dave Vincent and David Martin hang glass crystal pendants.

# The Redford Theatre's Chandeliers

by Harold Bellamy

In the January/February issue of THEATRE ORGAN, an article by George Winters of Motor City titled "Chapter Owned" described the overall operation of the Redford Theatre. George also made reference to the continuing restoration of the theatre to its original oriental motif. This effort, in the hands of our volunteers, is a slow explorative process, as little of the original decor is documented. It is necessary to strip paint or remove building material to establish what once existed. There are years of work left, so the effort will still be in progress when the ATOS conventioners converge on Detroit.

The large amount of restoration was necessitated by prejudicial attitudes prevalent during World War

II. Apparently the management of the theatre, reacting to anti-Oriental sentiment, chose to eliminate as much of the oriental decor as possible. All of the surfaces decorated with colorful patterns were painted over with solid colors; the outer lobby walls were paneled and the ceiling covered with acoustical tile; the partition separating the inner lobby from the auditorium was encased with Formica sheeting; heavy drapes covered the ornamental grille work on the organ chambers and all of the oriental light fixtures were replaced with modern lighting. This last item is the subject of this article. By a stroke of good fortune, we were able to replace the two inner lobby clusters of cylindrical light tubes which could be described as Danish mod-



Dave Vincent attaches the support chain to the fixture. The time has finally arrived when it may be nudged off the scaffold.

ern, with two classical chandeliers of oriental design.

The restoration effort and the decorative charm of the Redford Theatre has therefore been substantially enhanced by the addition of these two beautiful chandeliers. After fifteen months of restoration work, they now hang in place. The Redford volunteers responsible for this effort are as pleased as are the theatre patrons who take pleasure in following the overall progress of the theatre's restoration.

Finding these chandeliers was a very fortunate occurrence. Credit goes to Melinda Grenier, a Detroit Free Press reporter, who discovered them while undertaking research for an article about Detroit's theatre palaces. She became aware of the fact that a portion of the Oriental Theatre (later Downtown Theatre) still

remained as a part of an adjoining hotel structure. It was general knowledge that the theatre had been destroyed and that a parking lot existed in its place. What Melinda discovered, however, was that the original theatre lobby still existed, closed off from the hotel. The facade of the hotel completely covered any vestige of the former lobby entrance. In later interviews about Detroit's movie palaces, she divulged her find to a Motor City board member who recognized the historical and design value of the fixtures. Several members subsequently obtained access to the room and determined that although the chandeliers were seriously vandalized, it was worth pursuing the possibility of obtaining possession of them. The owners were contacted and they indicated they had no plans to use the fixtures and would therefore happily donate them to Motor City Theatre Organ Society.

It was an exciting occasion when on a cold day in November, 1980, a group of eager theatre organ enthusiasts entered the dark, heatless lobby to detach the fixtures. Considerable debris and carnage added to the dismal surroundings of a once luxurious lobby. The glass panes of the chandeliers had been shattered. Only fragments of glass were left to yield their original decorative character. Only a small number of the original 88 lights which graced the framework of the fixture remained. The glass crystal ornamentation suffered a similar fate. Still eager, the group completed the detaching task and transported them to the Redford Theatre. Months passed while the cleaning process was undertaken. Gallons of cleaning solution were consumed followed by the painting process. Concurrently, electrical circuits were tested, velvet drops and



Sans glass, velvet drops and chain covers — but there it is!

chain covers were replaced. Bulbs and ornamental glass crystals were ordered and preparations for the hanging of the chandeliers were completed. Finally, during this past Christmas holiday, we were able to hang the two restored chandeliers.

At the time of this writing, only one major task remains before the project is totally complete. New glass panes, six in each fixture, must be formed and decorated. It will not be an easy task. Each pane is angular and beveled. A form has already been made, ready for one of our talented members to use in creating the pane. So when you arrive at the Redford Theatre during the July 1982 convention, pause and observe our chandelier project with our assurances that, although arduous, the effort was also laced with fun and satisfaction. □

## TECHNICAL SESSION AT DETROIT CONVENTION

Lance Johnson, author of the THEATRE ORGAN column "Questions and Answers on the Technical Side," will be Quizmaster for the Technical Session at the Detroit Convention. The session will be held at the Westin Hotel on Monday, July 5, at 4:00 p.m. Bring your questions and get answers.

**QUESTIONS  
AND  
ANSWERS  
ON THE  
TECHNICAL  
SIDE**

by Lance Johnson

# Strings — An Important Exception to the General Rule

by R.J. Weisenberger

Gambas and other strings are similar to other flue pipes in their basic operating characteristics, but with one important exception. Their use of a harmonic bridge, also known as a "beard," allows these pipes to remain in their fundamental mode of operation at up to double normal operating pressures. This not only allows such pipes to speak with increased harmonic development and added crispness without overblowing, but also raises the dynamic capability by 6 db (a four to one increase in power) over pipes using ears, but no harmonic bridge.

It has been said that strings are the weakest ranks on most theatre organs, because enough care was never taken in their voicing. On instruments using pressures in excess of 10" it is a *physical impossibility* to design a small-scale string to speak with the power of a Tibia or Diapason. It is *not* caused by poor voicing. On instruments designed for pressures of 10" or less, it is possible to design all but the smallest scales of strings to stand out as a strong solo voice.

For example, using an 8' C pipe only 2½" in diameter and with the mouth cut up 2", it is possible to obtain an output of 108 db at three feet if properly voiced on 10" pressure. This output can be maintained to the upper octaves by halving the diameters of such a rank every 21st pipe, and by halving the cut-ups every 13th pipe (on bearded pipes). The cut-ups of non-bearded pipes (with ears) should be increased 40% over that predicted for the bearded pipes farther down in the rank, while the top octave pipes (without ears) should have their cut-ups increased 80% beyond that predicted by halving on the 13th. The point at which such changes should occur in the rank can pretty well follow tradition. A rank so designed will have all the tonal color of more conservatively-designed string ranks, plus the added

advantage of being able to be heard in all but the largest ensembles.

To prove my point, a 37-scale pipe of this rank can be approximated by following the sketch and using these dimensions:

Working length — 12.5"

Diameter — 1/2"

Cut-up — 1/4"

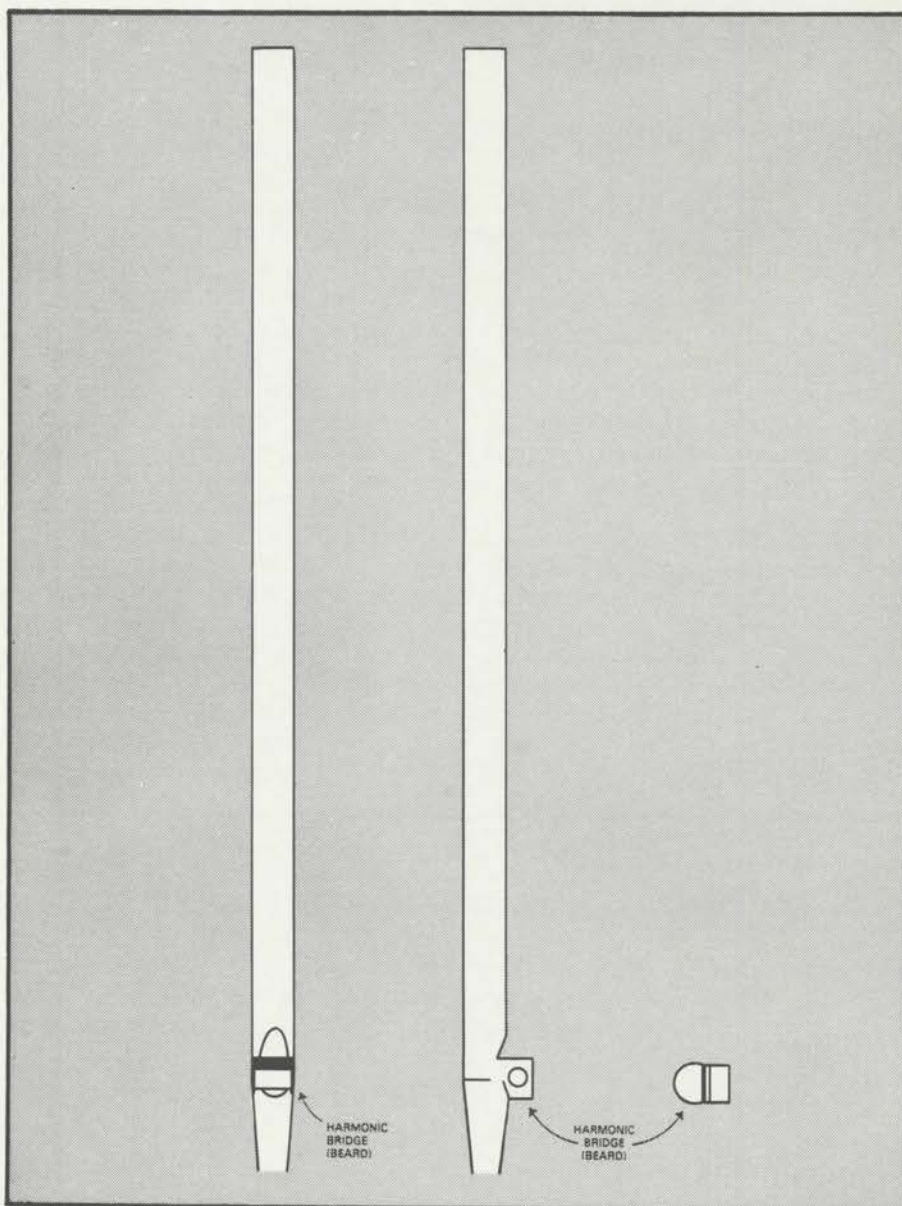
Toe hole — 1/2" minimum

Air slit (flue) — 1/32" minimum

To voice this pipe, first get it to clearly speak its octave without the harmonic bridge on 10" pressure. Once this is accomplished, place a 1/4" dowel or piece of tubing between the ears, as shown, until the pipe clearly speaks its fundamental.

Those who attempt this project will find this pipe to be quite loud and crisp, much more so than most existing string ranks of similar scale. Also, those who own test equipment will be able to verify that this pipe will speak at approximately 520 Hz (high C) and within a few dbs of that predicted, if properly voiced.

*Readers may send questions to Mr. Weisenberger in care of THEATRE ORGAN. Mail should be addressed to 3448 Cowper Court, Palo Alto, California 94306. Enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope. □*



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# BILL GAGE

## Theatre Organist of Two Eras

by Lloyd E. Klos

There are still a healthy number of theatre organists whose careers have bridged from the silent movie days to the renaissance movement of this great instrument. During a visit to Rochester in October, 1973, one of these performers, Bill Gage, spent several hours with the writer to review highlights of his career.

William M. Gage was born in 1910 in New York City. As is the case with many musicians, he inherited his love for music. His father was a concert and church organist, and his mother taught piano and voice. Bill's musical education was gained solely from his parents.

"Dad represented Connecticut at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis in 1904 and gave a con-

cert on the organ there. It was installed later in Wanamaker's store in Philadelphia, forming the nucleus of the enlarged instrument now played daily.

"He also played a concert on the Hope-Jones organ in the Ocean Grove, New Jersey, Auditorium in 1915 for a Methodist meeting. I was to play it years later, using its Flag stop when playing 'Battle Hymn of the Republic.' The resulting blast was a real crowd-pleaser!"

Montclair, New Jersey, was the locale for much of Bill's early career as an organist. He first played for the Unity Church in a series of "reel sermons," movies with a message. When he was about twelve, he became a friend of Alvin Sloan of the

family well known in General Motors history. Alvin had rigged a makeshift theatre in his garage where he showed movies. A nearby pump organ was played by Bill to provide the accompaniment.

His first paying job was as a substitute organist at the 1336-seat Claridge Theatre in Montclair, playing a 2/10 Wurlitzer with piano. This was followed by another sub position in Upper Montclair at the 975-seat Bellevue Theatre, which had a 3-manual Austin.

Bill's first full-time job was at the Park Theatre in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, on a 4/18 Marr & Colton. He was about 17 and the future looked bright indeed. His second full-time position was in a Washington, New Jersey, theatre on a 2/4 Robert-Morton equipped with a player. Bill played for the vaudeville acts on a six-day week, which included Saturday matinees. He owned a 1924 Chevrolet which he employed to drive the acrobats, midgets and other vaudeville personnel to Newark. Washington was a sleepy town of 4400 then, but bustling Newark was ten times larger!

With the end of the silents and the decreased use of organs in theatres, Bill was at a fork in the road of life. With encouragement from his aunt and uncle who took a great interest in him, he attended the RCA Institute in New York. Following successful completion of the course, he did service work for a while, establishing many contacts in New York in the

Bill Gage at the Brooklyn Fox console.

(Walter Froehlich Photo)





radio business.

In 1935, CBS in New York needed musically-trained maintenance men for audio work on musical shows. Bill Gage qualified, and he was installed on such programs as *Saturday Night Serenade* for Pet Milk, with Jessica Dragonette, Gustave Haenschen and Warren Sweeney; *Philip Morris Playhouse* with Ray Bloch and 'Johnny'; and *Court of Missing Heirs* where Bill met Rosa Rio, organist for the show.

In 1936, while working the Meadowbrook Dance Hall show, which was a remote pickup from New Jersey, a crisis arose. The wires broke somewhere, and to compound the problem, the standby pianist in the Madison Avenue studio decided to leave. What to do? Announcer Ken Roberts was desperate. "Can anybody play?" he pleaded. One musician offered to play hymns! Great!

Bill volunteered, playing piano for 18 minutes over 125 stations, coast to coast and using no music. "That's how the network learned I could play piano." Shortly after, he was advanced to the respected post of audio mixer.

The period from 1935 to 1943 was a great one for Bill as he met some of the famous organists of the time. "Fred Feibel was a superb theatre organist. I had gone to hear him at the Paramount Studio in 1934, and he showed me some things about registration on that beautiful instrument. He later did a duo-console show with Johnny Winters on the great Wurlitzer in the theatre downstairs. I remember Jesse Crawford's performing there in solo work. Another was Egon Putz.

"These organists came to CBS as staff players, but Fred Feibel became tied up with radio shows and dropped his regular programs, unfortunately. Ann Leaf continued for years afterward. Johnny Hereford, Elsie Thompson, Charles Paul, Lew White, Arlo Hulst, Bert Buhrman, John Gart and Billy Nalle were some of the organists with whom I was privileged to work and hear their styles, which was most educational. They used Lew White's little Kimball over in the Seventh Avenue studio where Rosa Rio did so many of her dramatic backings. Fred Helmes of the Paramount kept the organ in repair.

"I did a wonderful jazz show called



Control room of CBS Playhouse No. 2 Theatre on 45th Street, New York, about 1940. Bill Gage at left and Chick Martini at right. (CBS Photo)

*Saturday Night Swing Club* with emcees Paul Douglas and Ted Husing. Since I love good jazz, this show with all the greats was a natural. Art Tatum was especially good. Another program for which I worked audio was *Major Bowes and His Family*, which featured the stars of the Capitol Theatre — Charles Magnante, Jan Peerce, Imogene Coca, etc.

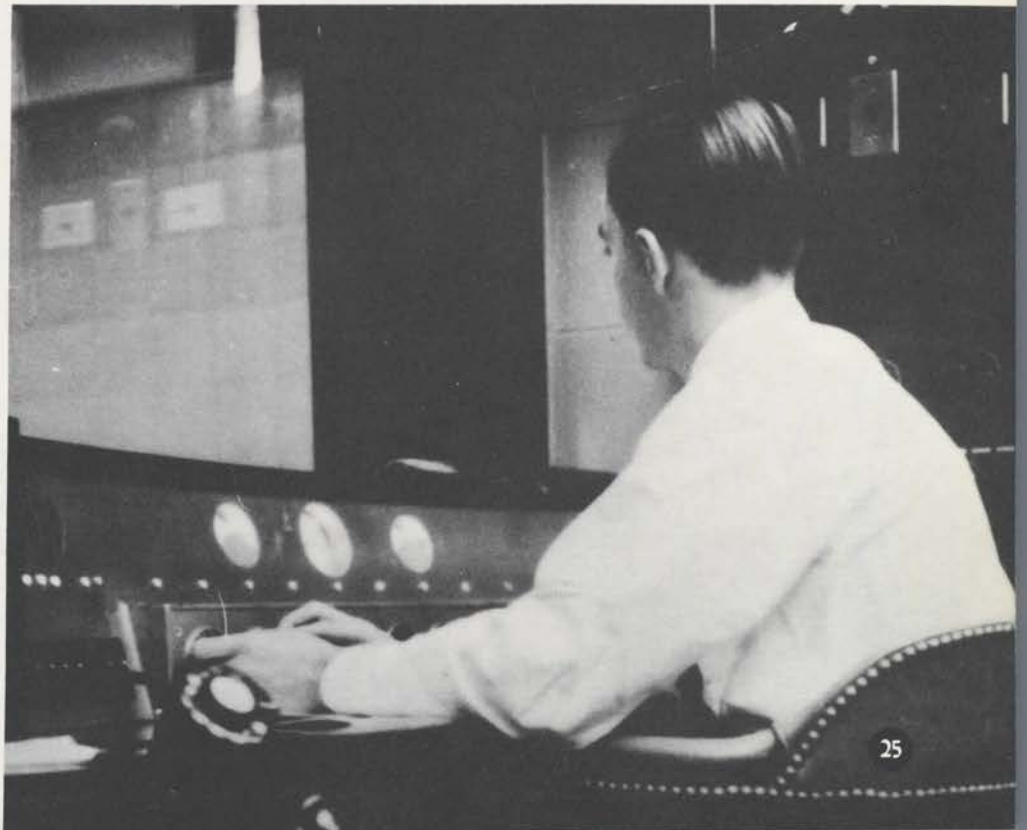
"I missed doing *War of the Worlds* on Orson Welles' Mercury Theatre

show in October, 1938, by one week, thank goodness! The studios were bedlam afterwards, and police cordons were all over 485 Madison Avenue. I was told that when the Martians were supposed to have landed in New Jersey, some Princeton professors actually drove out to find them!"

When World War II came, Bill Gage eventually got into specialized work. From 1943 to 1945, he worked

Bill Gage at the console in CBS Studio One at 485 Madison Avenue, New York, in 1938.

(John Deitz Photo)





Bill Gage at the 3/11 Wurlitzer console in the Casa Italiana, where he was house organist for ten years.  
(Photo taken in May, 1977.)

in Boston in Harvard's Radio Research Laboratories. From 1945 to 1947, he toiled for CBS in general engineering work, creating new audio techniques for the network. In 1947 and 1948, he was employed by Columbia Records in recording and maintenance. This gave him wonderful experience, learning about the new high-fidelity recordings (he knew Emory Cook), which gave him the background necessary for establishing his own recording studio later.

This period saw Bill becoming associated in the infant medium of television on the *Toast of the Town* show with Ed Sullivan, doing audio and camera work. He also did *The Fred Waring Show* when it was sponsored by General Electric in 1951. "It was a wonderful treat to do audio control with this marvelous group. There were 16 microphones which had to be controlled, the show fed into the mixer, and sent out over the air. I also did the Perry Como show and remote assignments at Yankee Stadium, Ebbets Field and the Polo Grounds. Hockey games and dog shows were covered from Madison Square Garden."

About 1952 Bill established his own "Community Recording Service" in Montclair, New Jersey. "Working for myself, I was able to control my hours and have evenings and weekends for myself. I did my own recording, editing and master-

taping. Glee clubs, musical shows, etc., were my specialties during the ten years of the business."

Bill managed to do a couple of network shows early in the sixties, *Love of Life* and *Secret Storm*, which used the talents of organists Charles Paul and Rosa Rio. The last network show he did was *The Guiding Light*, and it was also Bert Buhrman's last before he headed west. Arlo Hulst, followed by John Gart and Billy

The Casa Italiana seats 1000 and has a ballroom floor plus a kitchen to serve 500. It was formerly the Stanley Theatre.  
(Bill Gage Photo)



Nalle, replaced him.

Bill left CBS for good in 1965 on the early retirement plan. The previous fall, he had attended the farewell concert at the New York Paramount and he joined the New York ATOS Chapter then — his interest in the theatre organ was rekindled. He was elected chairman of the chapter in 1966, and since then made a point to play as many of the organs remaining in theatres (and elsewhere) as possible.

At the ATOS Regional Convention at Richmond in 1966, he played the Mosque Wurlitzer. In 1967, representing the New York Chapter, he played the Fox at the Detroit convention. He played the old Waldorf-Astoria Hotel organ now in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, and performed a concert on the newer Waldorf-Astoria Moller at Montclair, New Jersey, State Teachers' College. He performed piano-organ duets and played concerts for Dairyland, Central Ohio and Motor City Chapters of ATOS.

In 1967 he became associated with the Stanley Theatre in Vailsburg, New Jersey, a suburb of Newark, through his friend, organ technician Walter Froehlich. He did many shows there on the Wurlitzer before the theatre was taken over by Seton Hall University as a Center for Italian Culture. "Through the gracious-

ness of Rev. Monella, I continued to play there (now named Casa Italiana) and to do classical programs on the chapel organ.

"At the Casa, which has a variety of presentations, there was a rock concert a while ago. The finale was an ear-splitting racket, and the so-called leader threw zillions of feathers at the audience, covering organ console, stage, seats, etc. During my intermission stint, the pedal division acted strangely. Walter Froehlich checked it and found that feathers had gotten into pedalboard contacts. What a mess!"

The Casa Italiana organ was a 3/11 Wurlitzer with Trumpet added. It was to be replaced by the 4/28 Wurlitzer from the Fabian Theatre in Paterson, New Jersey.

In November, 1970, Bill Gage played the final concert at the Brooklyn Fox. Thanks to Walter Froehlich, who served as appraiser and removal contractor, the marquee proclaimed his name "at the Mighty Wurlitzer." The New York Times ran an extensive article on the demise of the Fox, and the ABC Network did a featurette on it. Mentioning Bill, the ABC said: "Bill Gage has a library of mono and stereo recordings of practically all his playing, carefully edited for reference. Many of the best theatre organs still playing have been visited, and their thrilling sounds have been captured with portable recorders."

"Rosa Rio was soloist at the Brooklyn Fox in the thirties. There were lots of pink and blue roses painted on the console, which came out of the pit and rose to a dizzy height, even rocking gently. The pipes were installed in several chambers in this high-ceilinged theatre. Incidentally, the organ, especially designed for the Fox, was a 4/36, NOT a 4/37 as others have maintained. Walter Froehlich is the authority for this, having checked the instrument carefully.

"When Rosa finished her tenure at the Fox, she left behind a box of music in her dressing room, containing many period pieces of a wide range of moods which I have memorized and recorded. I see Rosa occasionally — a wonderful person. The organ was removed from the theatre and shipped to Philadelphia."

Bill Gage had a most interesting life, theatre-organwise. In addition

to his music, radio and recording activities, he was an excellent photographer (including underwater) and was a ham radio operator. But, his main interest was that in which he began his career — as a theatre organist. He was available for concerts, and manifested the desire he expressed when joining ATOS in 1964 — to play every remaining theatre organ, from Austin to Wurlitzer.

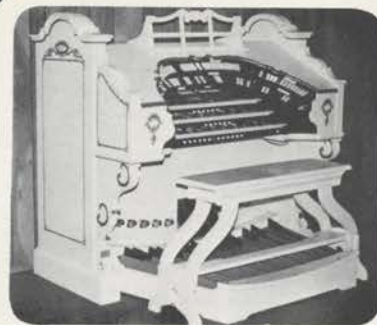
His philosophy on the renaissance of the theatre organ was this: "The novelty factor in the eyes of the young people and the nostalgia factor in the eyes of the older folks, when combined are of great benefit to the cause. It is live entertainment — no editing, no re-runs, nothing is censored.

"The audience has much to enjoy, provided the organ is in top condition and the organist possesses showmanship and technique. Orchestration is most important, and the balance of sound a great factor. The pipe organ is the grand-daddy of electronic instruments. Though many of the former are being played in pizza parlors, the fact remains that these instruments are being saved, at least!

"In my experience, tonality of instruments is most important. Wurlitzer, Robert-Morton, Marr & Colton and some Kimballs and Bartons have good tonality, with Wurlitzer being the best balanced of them all. Jesse Crawford recognized this and used it to his great advantage.

"It's a big thrill to play a monster organ, *but* you have to work out your arrangements beforehand, or you're lost. The sense of power at the console while making that huge sound is very exciting. But if you haven't prepared yourself or learned stop placement, it can be a case of sinking in a hurry!

"The orchestral organ is such a wonderful medium of expression if you want variety. It is basically a wonderful way to create music, using the vast facilities offered. It is really a super orchestra, and can do things no orchestra can do. It's up to the player to bring out all those truly unique tones and blends which can be made to create really heavenly music. The richness and power of the stops combine to make a rare listening experience. Let's keep those theatre organs playing!" Bill Gage died in March, 1979. □



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# NUGGETS

from the  
**GOLDEN DAYS**

Prospected  
by Lloyd E. Klos



Detroit, which is hosting its third ATOS Convention this year, was a good theatre organ town back in the great days, too, as this collection of nuggets will prove. References were *Metronome (Met.)* and *Motion Picture Herald (MPH)*.

*July 1, 1927 (Met.)* In 1909 in a small town in Iowa, F. DONALD MILLER, at the age of 12, began his career in motion-picture playing. It was in a theatre where three reels comprised the show, two shows a night, with matinee on Saturday. Don played the piano nights and went to school in the daytime. He started at a salary of \$3 a week and at the end of his first year, was raised to \$7. By this time, a "trap drummer" had been added to this one-man orchestra. It all sounds funny now, but it was a beginning.

As time went on, the two, three, four, and five-reel features were introduced, and Don's musicianship improved accordingly. From the very first, the art of improvisation was foreseen, and every opportunity was seized in this line. He also took up organ study with the hope that the theatre would soon install a unit orchestra. This did occur later.

Don received his early musical instruction from his mother, she being a very fine pianist. His father and sister were also very musical, and this environment helped to stimulate his interest. A separate music room at home afforded plenty of atmosphere for study, and often Don practiced long into the night, improvising melodies and groping for the harmony which has now come into our modern American compositions. You might say Don's harmony is "futuristic," but it has always registered strong with his audiences. To be a thorough theatre organist, he says, "one must be well acquainted with all branches of music, dance, jazz, religious, and foremost of all, he must have a natural talent for improvisation, and understand the construction of the classics."

Other sidelines were taken up by Don, such as court reporter, automobile salesman and the study of law. He sold his music library at one time, thinking he was not cut out as a musician, but in spite of this, he was drawn back into music, stronger than ever.

Don Miller has played in theatres throughout the country. Before coming to the State Theatre in Detroit in July 1926, he was at the new \$5 million Hollywood Beach Hotel in Hollywood-By-The-Sea, Florida, where he gave daily organ recitals. In Detroit, his organ solos have gained in popularity, and one of the leading newspapers recently acclaimed him as "Detroit's most popular organist." His solos are comprised of classics and popular numbers, and a great vein of originality runs through all of them. Some people have said his success has been due to his magnetic personality; others say because of his technical skill. But, it's a combination of both.

Surely, the future holds nothing but the best for this

talented young organist. "And may the gods be with him."

*October 24, 1931 (MPH)* JACK FRANZ, at Detroit's Fox Theatre, plays "Seasonal Songs" and the way the crowd joins in, the singing is great. Franz is as smooth an organist as ever fingered a console key, slipping gently from one melody to the next without a pause. "Guilty" is the first number, followed by "Me," "Dream a Little Dream" and "Just One More Chance." As a change, the next slides offer a chorus of "Two Hearts in 3/4 Time" in German. Even that didn't stump the customers, who joined in with a vim which showed many had more than a casual acquaintance with the foreign tongue.

*November 28, 1931 (MPH)* ROBERT G. CLARKE, at Detroit's Hollywood, just to prove to the home-town folk that this city is famous for something more than autos, puts over an original specialty called "Detroit's Tin Pan Alley." Using a scrim drop in front of the speakers, and a hidden announcer, the piece opens with a few words about Seymour Simons, who turned out "Honey" and "Waiting For a Call From You." Words for both songs are thrown onto the screen and the audience tests its lung power. Then follow "Nothing to Do But Love," by Gerald Marks; "With You on My Mind," by Buddy Fields; "Ninety-nine Out of a Hundred" by Al Lewis; and for a windup, Dick Whiting's "Till We Meet Again." The local angle seems to get 'em.

*June 18, 1932 (MPH)* LEW BETTERLY, at Detroit's RKO Downtown, appears to be finally settling with some ease into his surroundings here. The solo "A Lecture on Applause," is undoubtedly his best performance since his first appearance here over a month ago. Heretofore, there has been more evidence of his ability in incidental playing between screen units than in his actual solos. He has probably been making too great a conscious effort to please. The week's program includes a number of hand-appeal slides, such as a beer stein and a symbol of prosperity. The lyric numbers are "Dream Sweetheart," "Paradise" (with whistling lines), "By the Fireside" and "Somebody Loves You." The last proves a good choice for a strong finish. Betterly's first program on opening day included a tongue-twister composed of an alliteration of M's. In his second show, he substituted a sibilant tongue-twister which drew decidedly better response. Altogether a splendid reception from a sparse house.

*August 27, 1932 (MPH)* MERLE CLARK, at Detroit's Michigan Theatre, has experienced a determination to teach this audience community singing. He does not believe that the idea can be conveyed with any enthusiasm, merely through slides. Consequently, his solos are characterized by generous use of the mike. He opens this week by telling the audience that he is challenging their wits with a musical crossword puzzle, and asks for a 3-letter word, meaning "wordless vocalizing." The answer is "hum" and the song accompanying it is "I'm Hummin' to Myself." The stunt is followed with "My Silent Love," "Down By the Old Mill Stream" (with a rebus lyric), "One Hour With You" and "In My Hideaway." Clark, in a very good voice, sings "It Was So Beautiful."

Detroit is one of our favorite cities. We attended our first convention there in 1967, and were greatly honored by receipt of ATOS Honorary Membership in 1974. So long, sourdoughs!

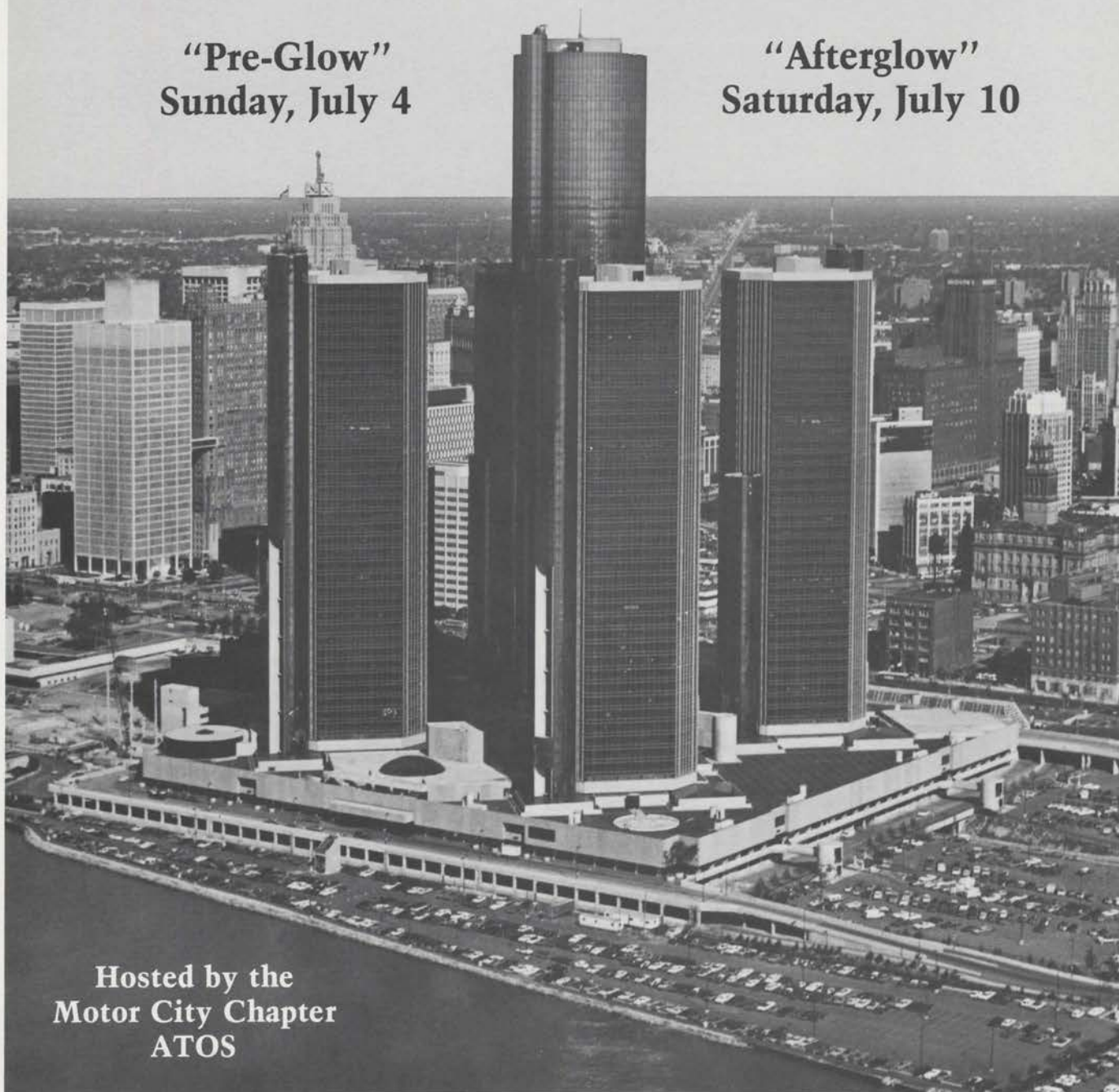
Jason & The Old Prospector

**The 27th National Convention**  
OF THE  
**American Theatre Organ Society**  
Detroit, Michigan  
July — 1982



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Sunday, July 4

**"Afterglow"**  
Saturday, July 10



Hosted by the  
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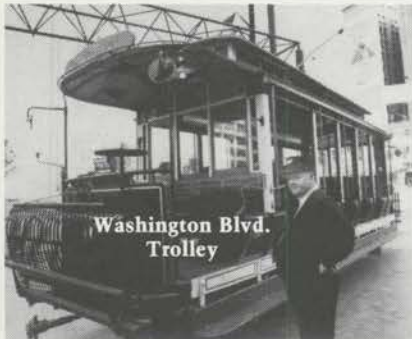
Punch and Judy Theatre



Westin Hotel, Renaissance Center



Pied Piper Pizza Peddler



Washington Blvd. Trolley



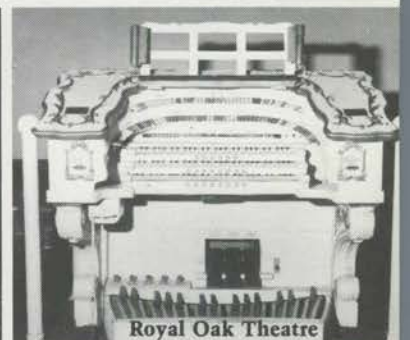
Senate Theater



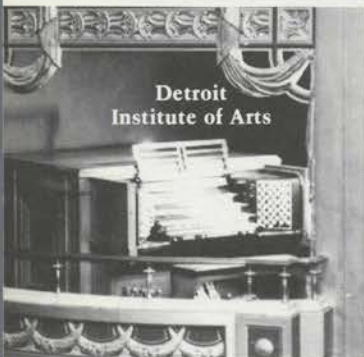
Henry Ford Museum



Fox Theatre



Royal Oak Theatre



Detroit Institute of Arts



Michigan Theatre



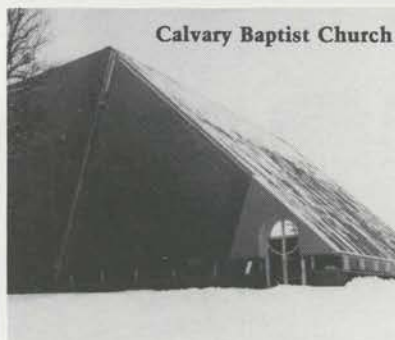
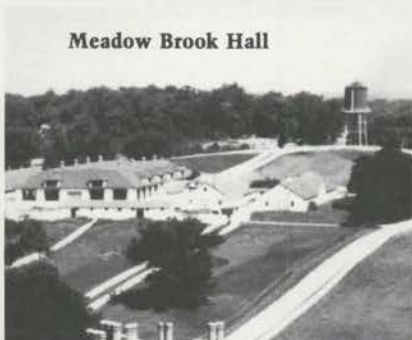
Theater Organ Pipes & Pizza



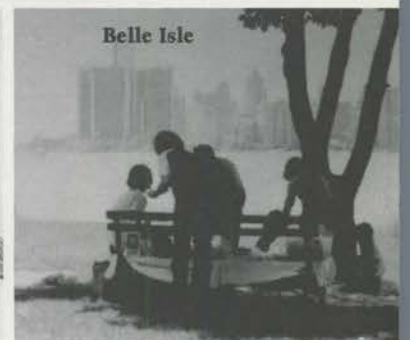
Macomb Theatre



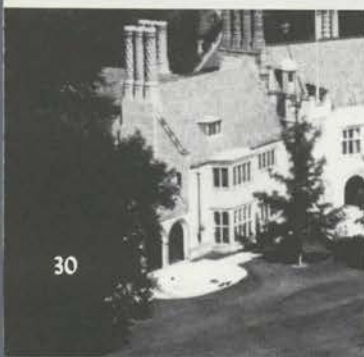
Meadow Brook Hall



Calvary Baptist Church



Belle Isle



S.S. Columbia



# ATOS '82 Schedule of Events

## July 4 • Sunday

- 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. Registration.  
 2:30 p.m. Busses depart for DTOC.  
 3:00 p.m.  
 Pre-Glow Concert at the Detroit Theater Organ Club's Senate Theater with Don Baker. Busses return to Westin Hotel at 5:00 p.m.  
 8:00 p.m.  
 No-host cocktail party. Louis Behm at the piano.

## July 5 • Monday

- 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. Registration.  
 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.  
 Busses depart for Punch and Judy Theatre — 10:00 a.m. concert by Lowell Ayars. Busses depart for the Senate Theater for a 10:00 a.m. concert by Lyn Larsen.  
 11:30 a.m.  
 Busses depart theatres for the Pied Piper Pizza Peddler, Theater Organ Pipes and Pizza or Calvary Baptist Church (not a classical concert).\*\*  
 12:00 Noon  
 Lunch at pizza parlor and church. Lots of music-making (organists Lance Luce, Karl Cole, Pierre Fracalanza, Ron Rhode, John Steele, Dan Semer). \*  
 By 4:00 p.m. Busses return to Westin Hotel.  
 4:00 p.m. Chapter representatives meeting.  
 4:00 p.m. Seminar by Lance Johnson at the Westin.  
 7:00 p.m.  
 Busses depart for the Redford Theatre, home of host chapter, Motor City Theatre Organ Society, for an 8:00 p.m. concert by Rex Koury. Cameo appearances.  
 11:00 p.m. Busses arrive back at hotel.

## July 6 • Tuesday

- 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.  
 Busses depart for Punch and Judy Theatre — 10:00 a.m. concert by Lowell Ayars. Busses depart for the Senate Theater for a 10:00 a.m. concert by Lyn Larsen.  
 11:30 a.m.  
 Busses leave theatres; box lunch on picturesque Belle Isle.\*  
 1:00 p.m.  
 Busses depart for Macomb Theatre, home tours, Detroit Zoo, Stroh Brewery, and hotel.  
 2:00 p.m.  
 Concert at Macomb Theatre. Organist Carl Creager.  
 By 6:00 p.m. All busses return to Westin Hotel.  
 7:45 p.m. Busses begin shuttle to boat dock.  
 8:30 p.m. - 12:30 a.m.  
 A private charter moonlight cruise on the Detroit River and Lake St. Clair on the historic excursion steamer *Columbia*. Continuous organ music for dancing in the ballroom. Cash bar on board.  
 12:30 a.m. Shuttle busses back to the Westin Hotel.

## July 7 • Wednesday

- 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Brunch at the Westin.\*  
 10:30 a.m.  
 Annual Meeting immediately following brunch.

- 1:30 p.m.  
 Busses depart for the Detroit Institute of Arts Auditorium.  
 2:00 p.m.  
 Concert at the Institute by Ty Woodward at the console of the 4-manual Casavant.  
 3:30 p.m.  
 Busses depart from the Detroit Institute of Arts for the Pied Piper Pizza Peddler, Calvary Baptist Church or Theater Organ Pipes and Pizza.\*  
 5:45 p.m. Busses depart for the Royal Oak Theatre.  
 7:00 p.m.  
 Concert by Fr. Jim Miller at the Royal Oak Theatre.  
 9:00 p.m. Busses return to the Westin Hotel.

## July 8 • Thursday

- 9:00 a.m. Busses begin shuttle to the Fox Theatre.  
 10:00 a.m.  
 Concert at the Fox Theatre. Organist Kay McAbee.  
 11:30 a.m.  
 Busses depart for Theater Organ Pipes and Pizza, Calvary Baptist Church, or Pied Piper Pizza Peddler. Busses return to the Westin by 4:00 p.m.\*  
 6:30 p.m. No-host cocktail party at the Westin. Rodney Davis at the piano.  
 7:30 p.m.  
 Annual banquet with prime rib dinner, entertainment.

## July 9 • Friday

- 8:30 a.m.  
 Busses depart for Ann Arbor.  
 9:30 a.m.  
 Concert by Charlie Balogh at the Michigan Theatre.  
 11:00 a.m.  
 Busses leave Ann Arbor for a trip to world-famous Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan. There will be time for meals and tours. Two concerts will be presented in the theatre, with Jerry Nagano at the console of the custom Rodgers organ.  
 5:00 p.m.  
 Busses depart for return trip to the Westin Hotel.  
 7:00 p.m. Shuttle busses to the Fox Theatre begin.  
 8:00 p.m.  
 Silent film *Robin Hood* at the Fox Theatre. An orchestra will accompany the film along with Dennis James at the organ.  
 11:30 p.m.  
 Busses return to the Westin Hotel.

## July 10 • Saturday

- 10:00 a.m.  
 Concert at the Redford Theatre by Gary Reseigh.  
 4:00 p.m.  
 Busses depart for the festive Afterglow at fabulous Meadow Brook Hall.  
 5:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.  
 Gourmet dinner, tours and concert with John Steele.  
 9:30 p.m. Busses arrive back at the Westin Hotel.

\*Convention registration fee includes brunch and box lunch. There will be a \$3.00 charge for lunch at the pizza parlors and Calvary Baptist Church.

\*\*You will have an opportunity to visit one of these on Monday, another on Wednesday and the third on Thursday.

# Reservation Information

**Convention Registration** may be accomplished by completing the form on the inside of the "wrapper" from this issue of *Theatre Organ* magazine. Please fill out the form completely and legibly; it will be used to prepare your personalized convention package and name badge.

Convention registration is open only to current members of ATOS. You must indicate whether you wish to take part in any of the three additional events planned: the Pre-Glow, the Banquet, and the Afterglow. You must also indicate your choice of events on Tuesday — between home tours, the Macomb Theatre, Stroh's Brewery (first 100 to register), or The Detroit Zoo. Indicate second choice. The cost breakdown for ATOS '82 is as follows:

## Convention Registration

(includes all transportation to regularly scheduled events, tickets to all shows, personalized Convention materials, and more) ..... \$108.50

"Pre-Glow" (includes transportation to and from DTOC and concert) ..... 6.50

Banquet (your complete cost for this gala event, including Prime Rib dinner and entertainment) ..... 25.00

"Afterglow" (includes transportation, admission to Meadow Brook Hall, dinner, and concert) ..... 21.50

## MCTOS — Convention Account

Checks should be made payable to "MCTOS Convention Account" or you may charge your Registration on MasterCard/VISA. Send the Registration Form, along with your check, to: ATOS '82 c/o Mrs. Dorothy Van Steenkiste  
9270 Reeck Rd.  
Allen Park, Michigan 48101

An acknowledgement of your Registration will be sent to you. Registrations received after June 15th may not receive acknowledgement. Questions about Convention registration may be addressed to Dorothy Van Steenkiste at the above address, or by calling (313) 383-0133.

## Hotel Registration

If you're coming from out of town (even if you're not!), you won't want to miss all the camaraderie, socializing and **fun** that will take place at the Westin Hotel in Renaissance Center — our ATOS '82 headquarters. To make your hotel reservations, use the form located on the inside of the mailing cover from this issue of *Theatre Organ*. You **must** make hotel reservations and register for Convention separately; simply doing one does not take care of the other! Hotel registration will be handled by the Westin Hotel, and questions must be addressed to them. Cut-off date for hotel registration at the special ATOS rate is June 10. Special ATOS '82 convention room rates are as follows:

Single .....	\$48.00	Please send the hotel Reservation Form to:	Westin Hotel
Double .....	58.00		Reservations Dept. AT 7
Triple .....	68.00		Renaissance Center
			Detroit, Michigan 48242
			(313) 568-8200

## Airline Rates

If you plan to fly into Detroit for ATOS '82, take advantage of special low rates which have been obtained through the cooperation of American Airlines. To get these special ATOS low rates, call toll free between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., local time, Monday-Friday and give them our "star" number, 5807.

**800-433-1790 (in Texas call 800-792-1160)**

American Airlines travel specialists will help you make all necessary travel arrangements. All pertinent information about our Convention is stored in their computer. Your reservations will be confirmed through American's Meeting Services Desk. Tickets will be issued by Plymouth Travel Consultants, Inc., Plymouth Michigan. Even if American Airlines does not serve your city, American will take care of making all proper connections. **Making reservations through American Airlines will help underwrite the cost of the Convention. One more way that ATOS '82 in Detroit will be the best Convention ever!**

## Tape Recording

We doubt if there is a more talented group of amateur "tape recorders" than ATOS! BUT it can be a real irritation to others attending concerts. So we seriously discourage tape recording at all concerts. Tape recording is **absolutely forbidden** at DTOC (The Senate Theater).

We know that many will want a record on tape of the thrilling concerts you will be attending, so arrangements have been made for professional taping at each concert. This will be done with suitable equipment, properly placed, and with full artists' releases. After the Convention, duplicate tapes will be made available to all conventioners at a moderate cost. So sit back, forget about recording, and enjoy the concert!

If you still insist on recording, you **must** abide by the following rules:

- Only C-90 cassettes
- Hand-held microphones, below the sightlines of the audience
- No AC power available
- Recorders must be turned on at beginning of concert and not turned off until end
- Absolutely no recording of any kind at DTOC (The Senate Theater)

**Flash photographs and movie cameras** are strictly prohibited during all concerts. No exceptions!

**Any additional Convention information may be obtained by calling Mrs. Marjorie Muethel (313) 772-3517**

Photos: MDCVB, Steven Skinner, Alfred J. Buttler, Bill Blancett.



# PIPES & Personalities

## 5/21 Wurlitzer to be Installed in Rhode Island

For 14 years, Byron Carlson painstakingly restored the 5/21 Wurlitzer which had been originally installed in Chicago's Marbro Theatre, one of three 5-manual organs Wurlitzer built. Purchased from the theatre in 1959, Carlson made the instrument a focal point in his St. Paul, Minnesota, home. With wife, Lillian, the enthusiast is to move to California, and offered the organ for sale at \$85,000. The successful buyer was the Ocean State Performing Arts Center in Providence, Rhode Island, and in January an eight-man crew dismantled the instrument and loaded it into two vans for its journey eastward. Shipping and installation will cost another \$30,000.

Providence is contributing \$50,000 in community-development money. A fund drive will, it is hoped, defray the remaining cost. The Wurlitzer is being installed in the former Loew's Providence Theatre, which had a 4-manual Robert-Morton. Maurice Cook, the Jovial Console Master, once had a stint there. Subsequently damaged in the hurricane of 1954, the Morton is in a private home. The Wurlitzer console is already (March 31) on the original elevator, blower and relays in place. Chambers have been re-plastered and re-painted. Plans call for the organ's playing this May, with a Halloween show to include a running of *Phantom of the Opera* in October.

LLOYDE. KLOS

\* \* \*

## Sigmund Krumgold Dies; Information Wanted for Biography

Two years ago, the Old Prospector contacted the great organ accompanist of silent films at the New York

Paramount, Sigmund Krumgold, in an effort to induce him to reveal facts of his musical career for a feature in THEATRE ORGAN. A note from SK said he'd try to get some facts together, as soon as he felt better. Time passed, and due to illness in Lloyd's family, he was not in a position to follow up on the request until recently. He was chagrined to learn that Krumgold passed away on April 11, 1981. There has been some material collected, principally from his sister, but not enough for a major feature. Anyone out there who can contribute? Does anyone remember seeing SK at the Paramount? Also, at least one picture will be needed to accompany the article. Write to: Lloyd E. Klos, 104 Long Acre Road, Rochester, New York 14621.

\* \* \*

## Byrd Theatre Sold

The last "movie palace" left in Richmond, Virginia, the Byrd Theatre, was sold on February 26, 1982, by the heirs of the original owners. Walter J. Coulter and Charles Somma had jointly owned the theatre since it was built in 1928. The new owners, Samuel P. and Irma B. Warren, plan for it to continue as a movie house. The theatre has been designated a Virginia Historic Landmark. It has been operated since 1937 by Neighborhood Theaters, Inc.

MILES J. RUDISILL, JR.

\* \* \*

## Los Angeles Chapter Sponsors First Organ Concert Series at Pasadena

Following four highly successful individual concerts on the 5/28 Moller theatre organ donated to the Pasadena Civic Auditorium by Mr. J.B. Nethercutt of San Sylmar, the LATOS Board of Directors has programmed the first series of concerts on the large Moller by three superstars of the organ world.

Gaylord Carter will inaugurate the series on Saturday, September 25 at 8:30 p.m., celebrating his sixtieth anniversary in show business with his Flicker Fingers presentation, *60 Years of Chasing*, composed especially for this series. He will also accompany the silent film *For Heavens Sake*, starring Harold Lloyd, an

hour-long comedy not seen by western audiences in recent years.

On Sunday, January 23 at 2:30 p.m., Dennis James will also accompany a silent film using a similar "chase" style to Carter's. Dennis recently appeared at West Coast consoles before capacity audiences viewing the silent film *Napoleon*.

Argentine-born Hector Olivera will display his mastery of the keyboards in his appearance Sunday, May 8, 1983, at 2:30 p.m. Frequently featured at national conventions, Hector will present a varied program ranging from Bach to rock.

All seating is reserved at Pasadena for the three concerts, ranging in price from \$25 loge, \$22 orchestra, \$20 balcony to \$14 main floor rear. Early purchasers of the series of three concerts will receive a bonus admission to an Invitational Performance by Lyn Larsen on the San Sylmar 4/35 Wurlitzer on Saturday, June 12, 1982, at 6:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. Individual admission to Pasadena concerts is \$8.50, with discounts available to groups of twenty or more. Inquiries should be directed to the Pasadena Box Office at 300 East Green Street, Pasadena, California 91101. Phone (213) 449-7360, or Chargeline for Mastercharge and Visa (213) 688-7380.

TOM NORMAN

\* \* \*

## Warren Lubich Plays Six Concerts in England

In October of 1981 Warren Lubich returned to England for a six-concert tour, starting in London with the 4/21 ex-Trocadero Wurlitzer located in Edric Hall of the South Bank Polytechnic. This was a presentation by the Cinema Organ Society of England. Next on the concert list was a private studio near Leicester, owned by Alan and Veronica Trott, which houses a 3/11 Compton. The third stop was the Paramount Studio in Bolton containing a 3/10 Compton and a 4/11 Compton (ex-Liverpool Paramount), both of which can be played from the 4-manual console. This is where Warren made his English concert debut in 1980 just prior to the ATOS Convention.

The fourth program was in Blackpool for the Blackpool Keyboard Club, using an electronic instrument. It was just at the close of the

holiday (vacation) season and the annual "Illuminations" were all displayed along the Promenade, producing their delightful nighttime array of colorful scenes depicting everything from *Star Wars* to the cow jumping over the moon. Unfortunately, hurricane-force winds and rain from the Irish Sea were raising havoc with many of these large structures.

A return to London and a couple of days of sightseeing were next before concert number five on a 3/9 Christie with grand piano in the Garden Studio of Tony and Margaret Manning in Farnborough. The sixth and final concert was on the newly remanufactured and reinstalled 3/10 Wurlitzer in the concert hall in Worthing. Warren reports that it is a first class installation, complete with organ lift and a private dressing room for the organist in which tea and biscuits were provided (in silver service) during intermission — just one of the many expressions of British hospitality.

\* \* \*

### Schröder Plays Wurlitzer at South Africa High School

Eric Schröder, ATOS member in Knysna, South Africa, played the 3/13 Wurlitzer organ in Wouter Kritzinger Hall of Knysna High School for an annual fund raising event on March 12. As Eric said, "Not that I play that well, it is just that most everyone else plays so badly, and at least I know where all the gadgets are on the console."

His familiarity with the instrument comes from the fact that he and friend Raymond Allen own the organ. They installed it in the high school in 1979, where it is on free

loan until 1985, at which time a new agreement will be worked out. The organ was built for the Metro Theatre in Durban in 1933.

Schröder and Allen also owned the 4/17 Wurlitzer from the 20th Century Cinema in Johannesburg, but sold it last year to a "swinging" church in Johannesburg. In the church the pipes are located in front of the congregation in a circular glass elevated chamber, with percussions displayed on a wall a la pizza parlor.

The two men will attend the '82 ATOS Convention in Detroit in July, and then tour the Pacific coast visiting organ installations.

\* \* \*

### 1982-83 Concert Series at The Kirk of Dunedin

In its fifteenth annual organ concert series The Kirk of Dunedin will again feature Terry Charles, curator of the organ, as soloist in five of the programs. Bene Hammel, Ashley Miller and George Wright will each play one program.

Terry Charles will lead off on October 14 and 15, 1982, with *S'Wonderful! It's My Fair Lady*. On November 11, 12 and 13 Bene Hammel, "a dazzling classical concertizer," will be the artist. Charles returns for *Christmas Fantasy* on December 2, 3, 4, 13, 14, 16 and 17, and *Latin Fiesta for Pipe Organ* on January 13, 14 and 15, 1983.

On February 10, 11 and 12, Ashley Miller will be the artist. Terry Charles will offer *A Sound of a Great Amen* on March 10, 11 and 12. George Wright returns to The Kirk on April 14, 15 and 16. The perennial favorite program *Requestfully Yours* will end the series on May 12

and 13, with Terry Charles again at the console.

Charles will again be the artist for the special summer concert *America the Beautiful*, on July 14, 1983 (not a part of the 1982-83 series).

Because of the great demand for tickets to The Kirk concerts, reservations should be made well in advance. Ticket information is available by calling (813) 733-9305 Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. ET.

\* \* \*

### Organ Program Marks 20th Anniversary

April 20 marked the twentieth anniversary of the origin of perhaps the longest-running radio program, dedicated to the pipe organ, in the United States. This is *The Organ Loft*, a show of recordings and news pertaining to the King of Instruments, classical and theatre. It is heard on WLFH, Little Falls, New York, every Sunday afternoon. Impresario of this feature is Donald P. Robinson, who originated it and has produced it during its entire history. The Sundays in April were devoted to highlighting the best of *The Organ Loft* through the years. ATOS joins the myriad of fans to wish the program and its mentor another twenty years of success.

LLOYD E. KLOS

\* \* \*

### First Organ Pops Series at Oakland Paramount

George Wright returns on November 13, 1982, to open a three-concert Pops Series on the 4/27 Wurlitzer in the Paramount Theatre of the Arts, Oakland, California.

Eric Schröder at the console in Knysna High School.



Eric Schröder and Raymond Allen beside their 3/13 Wurlitzer console in Knysna High School.



The second concert in the series, on March 5, 1983, will feature John Seng. Both the Wright and Seng concerts will be on Saturdays at 8:30 p.m.

Bob Ralston will close the Paramount Organ Pops Series on Mother's Day, May 8, 1983, at 2 p.m.

Subscribers to the new series receive three concerts for the price of two. Subscriptions, on sale now, range from \$21.00 to \$11.00. Single tickets, not available until the fall, will be \$10.50 to \$5.50. Subscribers will be able to purchase, at a substantial discount, a recording of the George Wright premiere concert on the Paramount Wurlitzer and an illustrated book about the theatre. More information can be obtained by calling (415) 465-6400.

\* \* \*

### Ohio Theatre, Cleveland, Being Restored

Workmen are hustling to meet a completion date of June 1 in the restoration of the Ohio Theatre, a major part of Cleveland's Playhouse Square. When completed the theatre will be the permanent home of the Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival and the Cleveland Ballet. The contractors have brought in skilled old-timers to repair and re-create the intricate plaster work on the ceilings and walls.

In addition to the Ohio Theatre, the Playhouse Square Foundation has included the State and Palace Theatres in its long range restoration plan. The Foundation is conducting weekend daytime tours of the theatres.

PAULETTE M. SZUHAY

\* \* \*

### Vestal Press to Publish Junchen Book

According to Harvey Roehl of *The Vestal Press*, his firm has entered into an agreement with David Junchen to publish a book on "The Care and Feeding of Theatre Pipe Organs."

To quote from the tentative Preface of the book, "There has long been a need for a technical 'how to' book about pipe organs. Dozens of books have been written about organs, and many of them are excellent sources of information on the

romance, history, operation, and manufacture of the 'king of instruments.' But many practical problems of a technical nature have not been adequately addressed, and it is to this end that this book is dedicated."

Again, from the tentative Table of Contents:

- Chap. 1. The Mighty Wurlitzer
  - Chap. 2. The major theatre organ builders: Barton; Kimball; Marr & Colton; Moller; Robert-Morton
  - Chap. 3. The other theatre organ builders
  - Chap. 4. Wind supply; blowers; wind lines; reservoirs
  - Chap. 5. Tremulants
  - Chap. 6. Controls: consoles; relays; player mechanisms
  - Chap. 7. Mechanicals: chests; percussions; swell shades
  - Chap. 8. Pipework
  - Chap. 9. Contemporary suppliers (currently building organ parts)
  - Chap. 10. What a performer expects
- Glossary

Dave would very much like to have suggestions as to what should be included in the book, and they may be sent directly to him at 280 East Del Mar Boulevard, Suite 311, Pasadena, California 91101.

\* \* \*

### "Showplace of the South" Changes Format

For over 54 years the Alabama Theatre in Birmingham was a movie theatre. The 2500-seat house opened December 26, 1927. It was (and is) equipped with a 4/20 Wurlitzer (Crawford Special), Opus 1783.

After a long struggle to keep the downtown theatre operating as a regular movie house, the owners have been forced into a change in operations. Since re-opening after a

brief closure in January, the theatre has been rented for special events and meetings. The owners plan to continue maintenance on the organ and use it for concerts.

Relations between Alabama Chapter and the theatre management are very good. The chapter has been asked to continue its work on the organ, and will be permitted to hold chapter meetings there, as well as renting the theatre for major public concerts.

For more information about the Alabama and its Wurlitzer, see THEATRE ORGAN for December 1973.

LARRY DONALDSON

\* \* \*

### Selecting Music for the Silents

Mrs. Dolph Goebel, whose late husband's biography appeared in the November/December issue, tells us of watching the program *Hollywood Entertainment* on WOR Channel 9, New York, in January. As she was about to switch it off, a discussion began on how theatre organists chose their music to accompany the silents. The authority on this occupation was none other than Hall of Famer, Gaylord Carter. He explained how he and the late Chauncey Haines selected the perfect scores. "Needless to say," said Mrs. Goebel, "it held my interest as it brought back what Dolph explained to me a long time ago. He'd seldom use the score which was sent along with the picture, as he'd incorporate his own ideas and expressions which he felt were perfect for the scenes in the picture. He wanted the audience to enjoy the pictures, and that's what it was all about." Incidentally, Gaylord is observing his sixtieth year as a movie accompanist. Congratulations from all of us of the ATOS!

LLOYD E. KLOS

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presents

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HECTOR OLIVERA

Pasadena Civic Auditorium

SUNDAY, MAY 8th,'83-2:30 P.M.

Balcony-\$20.00



## Letters to the Editors

Letters concerning all aspects of the theatre organ hobby are welcome. Unless clearly marked "not for publication" letters may be published in whole or in part.

Address:  
Editor, THEATRE ORGAN  
3448 Cowper Court  
Palo Alto, CA 94306

Opinions expressed in this column are those of the correspondents, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editors or the policies of ATOS or THEATRE ORGAN magazine.

Dear Mr. Gilbert:

I found the "President's Message" in the March/April magazine very interesting. Why is ATOS not better known?

Are you aware that during the past three years there have been several TV specials and one motion picture in which theatre organs should have been used, but were not even mentioned? Several months ago a TV special about old-time radio presented still-living stars, the big bands, comedy sketches, news, soap operas and memorials to deceased stars, but there was not one mention of either organs or organists, despite the fact that they were the mainstay of radio broadcasting for many years. During the "Ann Margret Special" from Radio City Music Hall, everything in the theatre — backstage, mechanical equipment, lighting, Rockettes, operating personnel, former stars, and orchestra were presented — but again there was not a mention of the theatre organ. A TV film a couple of years back was based on the history of the silent movie and used pianos and orchestras, but no theatre organs. Just a few weeks ago there was a special from Radio City Music Hall and this time we were privileged to hear the organ for about eight bars of "Tocata and Fugue" before it was drowned out by the orchestra. There was even a quick shot of the console and organist, but if you blinked you missed it. The organist was not listed when the credits were run at the conclusion of the program.

How can we expect to have recognition for theatre organs when they are not included where they belong

and when no protest is made? Surely we are a large enough organization that we can protest these omissions. Perhaps we even have the talent to write an acceptable "special" about theatre organs. There have been many shows about big bands, vaudeville and musical stars. Why not one about theatre organs and organists past and present?

As do many special interest groups, perhaps we should have a representative who would make it his job to be aware of planned TV shows and movies and serve as liaison between ATOS and the producers of shows where theatre organs should be used. We'll never gain recognition without exposure.

BOB LONGFIELD

Dear Lloyd:

The death of my friend, Jay Quinby, as reported in the November/December THEATRE ORGAN, brought back many fond memories, since we were once neighbors in Summit, New Jersey.

One afternoon Jay called me, obviously quite excited. "Bill, c'mon over. I have a new rank in the organ!" I went over and began a search for it on the stop rail. "Start playing," Jay commanded. I did, and then he flipped a switch. The result sounded like a diesel locomotive coming through the room! Jay had tuned a series of fire alarm horns, activated by Freon gas. A complete scale, about an octave, but each note was enough to make the most respectable Post Horns blush with shame!

Jay was not without humor. He

had acquired the stately Skinner four-manual draw-knob console from Christ Church Cathedral in Boston. This he hooked into the Moller-U.S.-Wurlitzer, but re-engraved the knobs with rather risqué titles such as 32' Contra-septiv or 8' Keepsem from Vloppin.

Once Jay called M. P. Moller to "build me the biggest Tibia ever!" Moller obliged by building the largest ever seen. At one point on the scale, it's a perfect cube!

Jay once built a harpsichord. "Never again," he muttered when the ticklish job was done. He was scheduled to leave for Cincinnati in the morning for the annual race of the stern-wheelers "Delta Queen" and "The Belle of Louisville." It was three in the morning, and after putting the finishing touches to the instrument, he bolted upstairs to awaken sleeping wife, Margaret. "C'mon down and try the harpsichord," he pleaded.

Best of all, I remember the quiet evenings when, after a bash on the pipe organ, we'd congregate in a corner of the massive living room to enjoy the ethereal music as played by Margaret on her beautiful Lyon & Healey harp. Jay was happy and proud as his wife wove the beautiful patterns of music.

No one ever visited the Quinby home who was not asked to the basement where a beautiful large-scale model train layout was set up. Jay built its every part, and it was run by a real locomotive control which he had acquired from the New Haven Railroad when he was on its Board of Directors. There was a variety of trainmen's caps, etc., which one was induced to wear to enter into the spirit of the occasion.

Being a neighbor and knowing Jay Quinby, was a privilege I will always cherish.

Bill Floyd,  
Richmond, Virginia

Dear Sir:

Despite the AGO being in existence many years more than the ATOS, it has been a continuing study in paucity of spirit, lack of focus and the generally inconsequential regarding the welfare of the classical organ nationally. This is a warning to us in the theatre organ field, because the ATOS so far has let twenty-five years

pass doing so little better as not to warrant a good argument. What has been accomplished has been done almost entirely by a few chapters, rather than as the result of any guidance and impetus from the national level. It has taken a quarter century to do what could have been done in ten years maximum if strong leadership and professional standards had been honored from its inception. Now, always there should be room for all people and activities at what is called the "hobby" level. Such make their contributions and can be a sort of "spawning ground" for reaching those whose interest is just beginning. However, all of that never has brought ATOS to its chief reason for being, its Why. Pseudo-pious declarations and breastbeatings long since have come to fall on deaf ears because they stand revealed as hollow. What is needed from the national level is what can inspire, challenge and motivate chapters to put the *public welfare* of Theatre Organ first, first before any and all matters which otherwise may concern any individual chapter. Specifically, what is needed from the national level is *leadership* setting examples in *integrity* and *quality*. This means integrity in every policy and dealing; this means quality in everything planned and in the terms done. There is a veritable syndrome in the ATOS about quantity and it has been the bane of everything from content of the national magazine to the planning of convention events. Quantity has utterly *no* meaning *or* value in itself. Any meaning and value it may have will come in direct proportion to the amount of its *quality*. LEADERSHIP, INTEGRITY, QUALITY: those are the essentials. Because they were ignored or compromised countless times in past years, everything finally became shortcircuited. Theatre organ was left out in the cold like Cinderella . . . or . . . more like Little Eva stranded on the ice flow!

The national magazine is the prime focus of unity and chief means of communication. No more important need demands attention than its being organized and published on the basis of standards known universally as *professional*. For all the activities in non-professional terms proper to private occasions, the national leadership and the national

magazine should honor *professional standards*. Such standards, *alone*, in every human endeavor, provide a basis for strength, quality and longevity. What *must* be understood and put into practice is the truth that *only* professional standards provide assurance of the theatre organ having any future. The national magazine reaches every member and the example it sets in content and presentation can be, should be, must be a thrust of leadership and challenge. Coupled with this must be national board working policies which equally will challenge and inspire chapters always to put into public view only what is FIRST CLASS in instrument, in programming, in performance and in promotion. Even if only one public event is presented annually by a group, that can accomplish wonders, *providing* it honors professional standards on both sides of the footlights. The public does know and has access to all that is First Class from all other sources of

music. The years are long gone when it could be fooled about this. Strong leadership is needed to open the eyes of chapter officials to this reality, because mediocre to poor presentations of theatre organ in public are deadly to its future. There are countless tragic examples of this filling the history of the ATOS.

There is still much ignorance because there is still much isolation. Information, guidance, challenge and professional standards in the magazine's every section and in every national policy are *mandatory* if the chapters in turn ever are to start fulfilling their potential. There is no question of chronic need; the only question is, will there be enough bravery and determination to make the next twenty-five years count? How can we even *dare* to "mess around" with any motive less than seeing to it that the theatre organ is returned to the mainstream of American musical life?!

BILLY NALLE □

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## Closing Chord

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Long-time Connecticut Valley Chapter member, **John F. Starr**, died on January 3 at the age of 65, and will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

John Starr was a theatre pipe organ buff who realized a dream, his own theatre pipe organ museum which he called "The Crystal Palace." It was located in West Goshen. Housed in a building which John himself built, the museum contained 206 theatre seats and carpet from the Paramount Theatre in New Haven. The crystal chandeliers from which it took its name were from the Allyn Theatre in Hartford. CVTOS member Paul Taylor frequently lent a hand with some facets of the project.

The Crystal Palace boasted a 3/13 Wurlitzer, two pianos, a 70-year-old Aeolian Orchestrall, and an Everett Orgatron, all collected and installed by the owner in his spare time over a period of four years.

The organ could best be described as a Starr, Serial No. 1. Like the building in which it was housed, the organ was a resounding tribute to

John's inspiration — and perspiration. The console was from the Capitol Theatre in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The organ in the main chamber came from the Melrose Theatre in the Bronx, New York, and the solo organ from the Garde Theatre, New London, Connecticut. Other parts came from such diverse locales as

### **Magazine problems?**

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ATOS Corporate Headquarters  
1393 Don Carlos Court  
Chula Vista, California 92010

Boston, Providence, Buffalo, North Tonawanda and various other points east and west. It included a Piano, Marimba, Harp, Xylophone, Chryso-glott, Glockenspiel, sleigh bells, saucer bells, Swiss bells, orchestra bells, two sets of chimes, drums, car horns, cymbals and many other sounds. Allen Miller advised him on such technical phases of the organ as voicing and tonal balance.

A Connecticut Valley Chapter meeting on November 10, 1973, marked the official opening of "The Crystal Palace," and was only the first of many chapter meetings held in these ideal surroundings. On Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons the Palace featured organ music and a silent movie. Unfortunately, the energy crunch and skyrocketing costs forced John Starr to close "The Crystal Palace" in 1976 and offer its contents for sale. He donated his extensive and precious store of silent films to the Connecticut Valley Chapter library.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Thomaston Opera House Historical Commission, 52 Main Street, Thomaston, Connecticut 06787.

JUNE L. GAREN

Five years ago, Patty Barnes worked for Dick Simonton, managing his organ tours of England. During her travels with the group in Britain she met organist **Rod Skelding** and a romance developed. Patty returned to the states with the group, but the romance continued by mail and by trans-Atlantic phone calls. Rod came to the United States, specifically to Los Angeles where Patty was. They were married in the Simonton home.

Patty started a travel agency and Rod became a salesman for a Los Angeles organ store. For a time Rod was active in the Los Angeles chapter of ATOS, then he concentrated on his work, which rewarded him with the assistant managership of the most prestigious music store on Los Angeles' fabled Wilshire Boulevard.

On March 22, Rod locked up the store a little before 8:00 p.m., then apparently walked to his vehicle in the nearby parking lot. What happened then is not clear, but it was later determined that attempts had been made to jimmy a car door. Evi-



Rod Skelding.

dently, Rod surprised the criminal, who turned vicious. Rod was shot and with waning strength made his way to Wilshire Boulevard, where he collapsed and died, just before police arrived.

A memorial meeting was held at the home of his long-time friend, Ralph Sargent, and Candi Carley played "Memories of You" for Rod at her concert a few days later.

Rod was born in the north of England. He began lessons on the piano at the age of five, turning to the organ at 14. During his career as an organist in England he played at the famous Tower Ballroom and broadcast on Radio Manchester.

The photo of Rod was taken by Ashley Miller in September of 1978 at Radio City Music Hall. Rod and Patty had waited until the theatre cleared at 1:00 a.m. for him to have a chance to play the Wurlitzer.

A member of Nor-Cal Chapter has written of pleasant memories of Rod as a "one-man welcoming committee" upon the arrival in Manchester of the "Organ Safari '76" tour group.

One of the super great minds and musicians of the first era of theatre organ departed this life in late March and we all are much the poorer. The man and musician was **Dick Hull**, a Denver resident for several years.

We should envy those who had oc-

casion to hear him make music, beginning in Rochester, New York in his theatre years. They tell me, and I believe them, that his accomplishments were born of superb playing and extraordinary musical sensitivity. He recorded only little, including one album at The Three Coins restaurant in Denver. For some friends, he made a tape recording on a four-rank Morton theatre organ in that area. Never in this life would most people ever believe how much music in how much variety he managed while improvising on that "little bity." It was a stunning revelation of the man and what he could do in creating a great musical tapestry with only minimal means.

That Dick retired from public playing in the mid-sixties means that many of today's players, as well as many listeners, never heard him and have no faint notion of his being a musical giant. That is the highest irony, given all the untold stories of how much he contributed in music and example.

When "The Saints Go Marchin' In," and you see Helen and Jesse Crawford, Eddie Dunstedter, Buddy Cole, Quentin Maclean and Sidney Torch leading the procession, look again and you'll see Dick Hull.

BILLY NALLE

**Helen Ankner (Kondolf)**, one of the best-known theatre and radio or-

ganists in Rochester, New York, died on March 28, 1982.

A native of Montour Falls, New York, her early education was in Elmira schools, and she served as organist in Elmira's Majestic Theatre. She enrolled in the Eastman School of Music in 1927, and, in time began to accompany the silents in the Eastman Theatre. She became staff organist and pianist at WHAM in 1928, subbed at the RKO Palace in 1932, and for several months was at the Century Theatre. For four years after her marriage, she taught piano at the Richter School in Philadelphia. Returning to Rochester, she was associated with WHAM until live musicians were dropped from the staff.

For a number of years she taught organ and piano, was a church musician, and on staff at Nazareth College. Besides her husband, William O., Mrs. Kondolf is survived by her daughter, Connie, nine grandchildren, and one brother.

LLOYD E. KLOS

**Donald "Kirk" Collins**, 50, died April 2, 1982, a victim of multiple sclerosis. He was associated with J. C. Deagan, Inc., and the Wicks Organ Company in the 1950s. From 1960 to 1975 he was general manager of Martinetti's Restaurant in Crystal Lake, Illinois, in which he installed and played a 2/8 Wicks theatre organ. From 1975 to 1980 he was co-owner of Junchen-Collins Organ Corp., Woodstock, Illinois, specializing in the restoration of theatre organs for commercial use. He was a member of the American Institute of Organbuilders, and is survived by two children.

DAVID L. JUNCHEN

**George R. Stitzer, Sr.**, 72, manager of the Byrd Theatre in Richmond, Virginia, was killed in an apparent robbery attempt just after midnight on April 4, 1982. He was driving to a nearby bank to make the nightly deposit when he was shot. It is believed that several men were involved in the crime.

Mr. Stitzer began his theatre career as chief doorman when the Byrd opened on Christmas Eve, 1928. He was a 17-year-old high school student at the time. In 1937 he became

assistant manager, and succeeded to the manager's post in 1971. In his 53 years at the Byrd he rarely missed a day at the theatre. He considered the Byrd as something special, and tried to make it so. He was a great organ buff, and was happy that the Wurlitzer was used often.

George Stitzer was a quiet man, a true gentleman, with a positive outlook on everything about him. He encouraged everyone and always saw the bright side. Everyone liked him

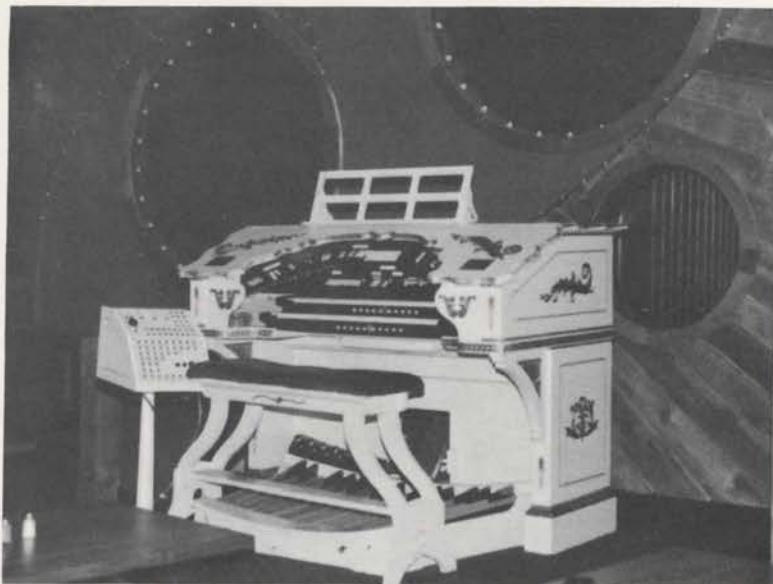
for his friendly manner and cheerfulness.

He is survived by his wife, Edith E. Stitzer, and a son, George R. Stitzer, Jr.

TOMMY LANDRUM/MILES RUDISILL

**Stillman Rice**, president of ATOS from 1970 to 1972, died at his home in North Haven, Connecticut, on Thursday evening, March 29, 1982. A "Closing Chord" will appear in the next issue. □

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**(KTOS) — Kingston, Ontario**

Since our successful opening last fall, as reported in the Nov./Dec. THEATRE ORGAN, we have added two double concerts by celebrity artists to the KTOS record. Every one was sold out in advance, giving the impression we must be doing something right. In November, Dennis James brightened the scene with energetic concerts on two successive

Dennis James, right, tries out the projection equipment before his November concert at the Church of the Redeemer in Kingston, Ontario, with assistance from Norm Hughes and George Raynes. (Frank Pratt Photo)



nights. His "Roaring Twenties" theme included Laurel & Hardy in *Big Business*, which kept the 3/21 Kimball's sound-effect buttons busy between laughs. After his masterful treatment of Bach's "Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor," there were no doubts about the Kimball's suitability for classical organ repertoire, and it seemed right at home in its ecclesiastical surroundings in the Church of the Redeemer. While in town, Dennis taped a 20-minute segment for the syndicated national radio show *Sunday, Sunday*, part music and part interview.

In mid-January, a very relaxed Kay McAbee from Chicago played two fine concerts, ranging from a schmaltzy *Showboat* medley to his noted Chicago-style "Tea for Two," full of spectacular razzle-dazzle. Each of our artists has been amazed by the local response to sing-along slides, but it sounds great every time. Walt Strony has been booked for our series closer in April, and Tom Gnaster will open the 1982-83 series in September.

The enthusiasm built up in Kingston by our concerts has been a bit overwhelming. Our daily paper has given each concert a good advance buildup (the first filled an entire page) and a rave review. Local FM radio has also been very kind to us. It



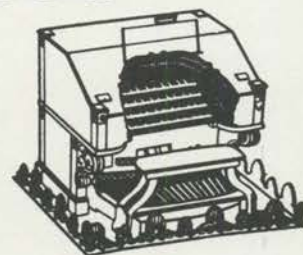
Kay McAbee's "Chicago-style" playing was a big hit on the Kingston Kimball. (Frank Pratt Photo)

doesn't hurt to have a local business underwrite our newspaper advertising and accommodation for artists, either!

Despite some tag-end jobs still underway in the chambers, we are finally getting around to social nights for members.

FRANK PRATT

**RTOS**



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**Rochester Theatre Organ Society (RTOS) — Rochester, New York**

RTOS is experiencing its most ambitious season since it began in 1964. Kicking off the club's eighteenth concert season, English organist Ernest Broadbent royally entertained 1614 people at the Auditorium Theatre in September. He was followed by Rex Koury's third RTOS appearance, his best yet, in October with an audience of 1136 in the Auditorium. Came Halloween at the Eisenhart Auditorium, 299 saw Irv Toner accompany *Phantom of the Opera* on



the 3/8 Wurlitzer. That performance featured the unscheduled antics of a live bat which flew about, dive-bombing several attendees and sending several women shrieking from the scene!

In November occurred the fourth visit of Lawrence Welk's organist, Bob Ralston, who drew 3259 for two concerts at the Auditorium. The second show attracted a large number of senior citizens, many arriving in a half-dozen buses, two from Toronto.

Resuming the concert series in December, pizza organist Donna Parker made her initial RTOS appearance before 901 with a thoroughly enjoyable program. Frank Cimmino, organist at the Suburban Restaurant in Wanaque, New Jersey, (hit by fire last August but being rebuilt) was a first-time performer in January, delighting 1362 people with some lively music, light banter and an expansive personality. Given a spot in the second half was a youngster, Ralph Ringstad, from whom more will be heard in the future. He was excellent in duets with Frank, and in solo work.

Besides the above programs, three crews of RTOS personnel are engaged in restoration or maintenance work on three instruments. One crew has been working since last summer to restore the 4/70 Aeolian in the George Eastman House of Photography. A second has been working to refurbish and reinstall the 4/22 Wurlitzer's upright piano in the Auditorium Theatre, while a third group completes projects on and maintains the Eisenhart Auditorium's Wurlitzer. A busy time is being had by all RTOS workers!

LLOYD E. KLOS

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**(ROEC) — Richmond, Virginia**

As this item goes to press, Richmond's Virginia Center for the Performing Arts (ex-Loew's Theatre) has raised over \$5 million to completely restore the house. It will need \$1 million more. The atmospheric features are being retained — almost. Sound engineers have cut a ten-foot square opening in the ceiling through which a speaker rig can be lowered. The pit is being enlarged so that the two-section hydraulic lift can accommodate a 65-person orchestra. A "scissor" lift will raise and lower the organ console.

The Wurlitzer organ, donated by the Surf City, New Jersey, Hotel, needs much work before it can play for the public. A Tibia, Kinura and four other ranks were either mangled or missing. The chests will be completely re-leathered. The console combinations, in terrible condition, will have a new Peterson relay-coupler system, installed by Phil Klann. Acquired locally are a second Tibia, French Horn, French Trumpet and solo string.

Incidentally, if anyone wishes to make a tax-deductible donation to the Center, the address of the Virginia Center for the Performing Arts is 600 East Grace Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

The January meeting of the ROEC was held in Bethlehem Lutheran Church. The occasion was a concert by Earl Miller on a Bartholomey organ. The church has ordered a \$200,000 tracker for the gallery, and considered removing the schmaltzy-romantic Bartholomey as soon as the new instrument is installed. The Organ Historical Society, however, convinced the powers-that-be that two organs, each representing a different type of musical approach, would be a decided asset, so apparently the old organ will remain.

Earl Miller performs in a Danville, Virginia, church and hails from Montana, where he grew up playing a Robert-Morton theatre organ. His specialty is performing the great

transcriptions of overtures, and he explained that this musical form was used when no orchestra or band was available in small towns. Long-hairs in the past frowned on transcriptions.

BILL FLOYD

**Empire State**

*theatre and musical instrument museum  
Syracuse, New York*

**(ESTMIM) — Syracuse, New York**

Our most recent project was to dismantle and move a 2/9 tracker organ, which was donated to us by the Geddes United Church of Christ. It was built in Syracuse in 1902 for \$1300 by the W. J. Staub Co. One of its pipes is marked "August 9, 1898." Some of our members helped with the dismantling and moving of the organ to the New York State Fairgrounds. We couldn't reinstall it in the Art & Home Center, the home of our museum and Wurlitzer, because the tracker was too high for the ceilings. Therefore, the Fair management chose the Pioneer Museum Building, and Arnold Briggs and Ron Stevens installed it there. Mini concerts were played on it every two hours during the 1981 New York State Fair.

We recently did a short sequence on the TV program, *Bud's Journal*. John Mazzae played for a silent comedy, doing his usual fine job. He was also interviewed about theatre pipe organs and playing silent movies.

Our December program was played by Utica's Tim Schramm. Though he has a good musical background and has played pipe organs before, this was Tim's first concert on a theatre instrument. It was a great program and any group which books this young man will be very pleased.

The State Fair administration closed the Art & Home Center during January, cancelling our monthly concert, but the series was scheduled to resume in February.

Like most groups, we have a few very faithful members who show up week after week to volunteer their services. Carl Shea is one of these, having done a superb job for six years in booking artists. He has volunteered to continue his duties in 1982 and has been engaging some good talent for this period.

CHARLES E. RICH □



## CHAPTER NOTES

Edited by Grace E. McGinnis

### BEEHIVE

The Salt Lake City area Beehive Chapter held its first meeting of the year in the nationally famous Organ Loft. Owner Larry Bray graciously offered the Loft's facilities for a Sunday morning brunch on January 31. Chapter Secretary Wayne Russell went right to the heart by way of the stomach by preparing a superb brunch. A brief business meeting was held with Chairman Clarence E. Briggs presiding. He reported on general chapter activities, and that Lowell Boberg would assume responsibility for chapter publicity to ATOS and to other media devoted to theatre organ. Harry Weirauch gave a report on the chapter's greatest undertaking, the restoration of the organ in the Capitol Theatre, now a part of the city and county's Civic Center Complex. He reported that 4697 man hours had been donated by ATOS members to the project up to January 31. He also stated that the project is now in the home stretch with completion only weeks away.

After the meeting, open console was enjoyed with many members playing at the huge console, some for the first time. The chapter expressed great appreciation to Larry Bray for his generosity, to Chairman Briggs for arranging the meeting, and to Secretary Russell for the brunch.

LOWELL J. BOBERG

### CEDAR RAPIDS

Spring finds the CRATOS chapter busily involved in a number of activities. We rebounded from a slow start in January when we were hampered by a severe weather cancellation at Kirkwood Community College, site of the chapter's Style E Wurlitzer ballroom installation. Our new members were greeted at an unusual

February social consisting of a Wurlitzer-accompanied slide "voyage" to warmer climates, presented by Kirkwood liaison Mike Vancoura. The program was a warm-up for a videotaped appearance of our fall artist, Ashley Miller. Many members had not seen Ashley's local TV interview, and the replay also served to demonstrate the school's modern video system as a medium for theatre organ.

Our member organists are regular participants in community affairs at two of our local theatres; Howard Burton presents concerts for senior citizen groups at the Garden Theatre in Marion, and George Baldwin plays for many community productions at the Paramount in Cedar Rapids.

Our March social kicked off the season with a guest appearance by Joe Roost at the Cedar Rapids Paramount 3/11 Wurlitzer. A fine musician, hailing from Keokuk, Iowa, Joe's good humor and sprightly pedalwork made this one of our best socials ever. It was also the prelude to CRATOS's charter bus trip to the DeKalb, Illinois, site of the Mightiest Wurlitzer, which took place March 21 with an early morning departure from the Paramount Theatre.

Bus conversation centered around members' expectations for the spring season, the opening of the CRATOS library in the Paramount Theatre, the May 8 appearance of concert

### A SPECIAL MESSAGE TO CHAPTER CORRESPONDENTS

Let us know what's happening in YOUR chapter. Our goal is to make this section as interesting and useful as possible for all of our readers. Here is how YOU can help:

- DO** remember you have an international audience;  
pay attention to deadlines—we have to meet them, too;  
check the spelling of artists' names;  
tell us about theatre organs in your area, public and private;  
tell us about theatre restorations in your area;  
tell us about your community involvement, new artists, scholarships, promotional programs involving your chapter;  
tell us about coming events and how visitors to your area may obtain tickets;  
tell us who is playing what organs and where;  
include photos whenever possible; and  
send your chapter bulletins to the editor—they are very helpful.
- DON'T** include the program each of your artists plays—mention, perhaps, an outstanding arrangement;  
include news that is only of interest to your local chapter, or gossip, menus or other trivia.

**SEND** news, photos and chapter bulletins to:  
Editor, THEATRE ORGAN  
3448 Cowper Court, Palo Alto, CA 94306

All copy for Chapter Notes is to be typewritten, double-spaced, on 8½ x 11 white paper, with 1½" margins all around. Photos should be black and white for best reproduction. Type each photo caption on a separate sheet and attach to the photo.

### DEADLINES

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

favorite Hector Olivera at the Cedar Rapids Paramount, and the approaching completion of the CRATOS Barton in the Englert, Iowa, City Theatre.

The miles passed quickly and soon our members arrived at Wurlitzer Hall where the assembled audience was greeted by an amicable and talented Bill Milligan, who ably demonstrated the awesome resources of the instrument. Aware of the CRATOS entourage, he interjected some observations especially for theatre organ buffs. Having played a substantial role in the building of the organ, he was well qualified to showcase such stops as the Cor Anglais and Diapason Celeste. Bill's clever cueing of a Laurel and Hardy silent was a surprise treat in a well-planned variety presentation. Unaccustomed to the spectacle of brass trumpets and saxes, CRATOS members relished the sight one more time before boarding the bus.

After a stop for a delightful smorgasbord dinner, the CRATOS bus rolled into a midwest sunset. Trip organizer Leonard Santon thanked driver Paul Werning and gave the mike to Chairman Al Erickson for announcements. CRATOS' plans include an April meeting at the lush Cedar Rapids Iowa Theatre, home of the beautiful 3/14 Barton boasting a black velvet and rhinestone console. Also in store is a joint meeting with CRATOS and the AGO at the Paramount. CRATOS member Jo Zacheis, also Dean of the River Valley AGO chapter, coordinated this meeting to give AGO members exposure to a fine Wurlitzer and to promote camaraderie in pipes.

As CRATOS members reached their destination under the Paramount marquee, the feeling was that although one adventure had ended, many more had just begun.

### CENTRAL FLORIDA

Forty members and two guests were present at our February Valentine's Day meeting at Central Music in Clearwater. A progress report was given on the Tampa Theatre Wurlitzer installation. The theatre was leased for three weeks, so work was not able to be done; however, several percussions were set up, and it was announced that the relays had ar-



Leaving bus upon arrival at Wurlitzer Hall.

(Paul Montague Photo)



On bus enroute to DeKalb with trip coordinator Leonard Santon standing.

(Paul Montague Photo)



Viewing pipes in glass-windowed chamber at Wurlitzer Hall.

(Paul Montague Photo)

rived. The relay committee was then organized to begin work. Following the business meeting, members were treated to a short concert by Dave Ashby, a staff organist at Central Music, who is also the designer and builder of the largest Wurlitzer theatre organ in DeKalb, Illinois. Dave's fine program on the electronic Wurlitzer included pop tunes and a medley from *The Sound of Music*.

In March, we again met at Central Music which is large enough to accommodate our growing membership, and we appreciate being allowed to meet there. The Tampa Theatre installation is progressing nicely; the reservoirs are set, and the rewiring needs to be started in the main chest. Within the next few weeks it will be ready to start setting in pipes. We hope to move the console shortly.

Members were entertained this month by Marlon Scott, another staff organist at Central Music. Marlon's program ranged from "Sentimental Journey," with a train effect, to a variety of big band tunes, after which he switched to the Rodgers 810 and played two classical numbers. He concluded with a few Irish songs and a sing-along, making this a very enjoyable afternoon.

SANDRA SHOOK

### CENTRAL INDIANA

A happy Valentine's Day was spent with the Central Indiana Chapter meeting at Zion Evangelical Church of Christ, Indianapolis. Following the business meeting, Dr. Mallory Bransford was in charge of our program which opened with a young organist, Brian Holland, followed by Mary Drake and Linda Clark. All of these organists, who are chapter members, did themselves proud. Dr. Bransford then presented a program which included the hymn played at the royal English wedding.

Another chapter member organist, Dick Harold, performed during the intermission of a student stage production at the Manual High School. This was also a Valentine's Day event.

With Manual High School in mind, the March chapter meeting was held March 22, in the auditorium of the high school. After a short business meeting, we were delighted

with a presentation on the school's Louisville Uniphone by Jonas Nordwall. Mr. Nordwall gave an excellent performance although he was late getting into Indianapolis because his luggage was lost on arrival and he had to file a claim for it. He had never seen or touched the organ before show time, but with all this behind him, he really put on a show. Jonas resides in Portland, Oregon, and plays at the Organ Grinder restaurant there. He was in Indianapo-

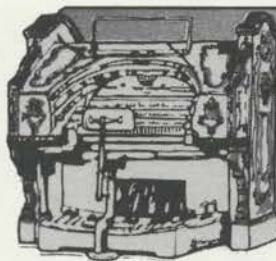
lis to play at the Paramount Music Palace for two nights, March 23 and 24, and graciously played for the Central Indiana Chapter as well.

Jonas opened his program with "Back Home Again in Indiana," which brought a great response from the Hoosier group, and he followed with a variety of selections which were enthusiastically received, especially his closing, "Bridge on the River Kwai." He is a stranger to this part of the country, but I am sure we

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all look forward to his return at any time.

Central Indiana Chapter historians are still in the process of compiling this work. As usual, the group that is working on this is really reaping the benefits of digging into the archives to find the tidbits that will be of interest to the older members who will remember, and the newer members who want to know how it all came about.

MARY LOU HARRELL

## CENTRAL OHIO

The February meeting of COTOS was held at the Upper Arlington home of Bob and Betsy Richard. COTOS member Jay Pontius was the featured artist on the Richards' Conn 651 with pipe speakers. Money-making projects which would provide funds for the continuing restoration of the chapter's Wurlitzer at Worthington High School were the main topic of discussion during the business meeting.

March brought the first signs of spring and a flurry of organ activities available to COTOS members. Williams Music of Columbus hosted a program featuring Dennis Monte on March 10, for all organ enthusiasts. The silent movie classic, *Don Juan*, accompanied by the Columbus Symphony Orchestra and Dennis James at the Ohio Theatre's Robert-Morton theatre organ, was a March 20 presentation of the Columbus Association for the Performing Arts as an extra program added to the regular schedule of theatre organ concerts. A personal appearance by Myrna Loy, one of the stars of the picture, was a great thrill after the exciting screening of this famous picture. For the classically minded, the organ dedication at the Broad Street Methodist Church gave another opportunity to hear a great organ played by William P. Haller on March 21.

The March meeting of COTOS found about twenty-five members at the home of Ed and Joann Lougher. The guest performer for the afternoon was COTOS member Larry Smith playing a lovely Studio II Baldwin with Leslie speaker. Larry, who boasts a background of playing with dance bands in the 1940s, was well prepared to present a winning program of popular tunes. The re-

port from the organ crew told of continuing progress on the rebuilding of the combination action and the elimination of another dead note when an undetected clog of dead birds was removed from a pipe. Discussion of encouraging student participation in the organ project and fund-raising were the main topics of business. The organ crew welcomes the help of the newest and youngest crew member, Ollie Williams, Jr., an eight-year-old with small hands that can prove to be very useful in small places where adults can't function easily.

BOB AND PATTI CLARK

## CONNECTICUT VALLEY

We had fine concerts by Lew Williams at the Thomaston Opera House on January 30 and 31, our first concert event this year. Lew was with us last year and, having enjoyed his classical and theatre organ music then, we knew we were in for another treat this year and we were not disappointed. The concert was an auspicious first of our 1982 schedule.

February 13, our first chapter meeting of the year took place, most appropriately, at the Thomaston Opera House as the occasion marked the birthday of our twenty-first year. After the first business session, conducted by new Chairman Paul Plainer, Allen Miller gave us an excellent demonstrated talk on organ registration using the Marr & Colton which he and others have spent many hours building, modifying and maintaining.

Following Allen's well-received presentation, the birthday aspect of the occasion was observed with the

help of a giant cake made in the shape of an organ. This painstaking effort was accomplished by members of our group and duly admired, then consumed, by all present.

On March 27 and 28 the Thomaston Opera House welcomed Walt Strony for our second concert event of the year. Walt is an accomplished organist. He entertained us with a carefully-planned program that included some pieces seldom heard on an organ, as well as some readily-recognized numbers. The audience obviously approved of this artist.

Our next concerts at the Thomaston Opera House will be by Jonas Nordwall on May 22 and 23. Tickets and information are available from Concert Tickets, P.O. Box 426, Seymour, CT 06483. All are welcome.

W. F. POWERS

## DAIRYLAND

On February 21, Mr. John Muri played the dedication concert of the McNeill Memorial Wurlitzer in the Racine Theatre Guild Playhouse. The organ, originally a 2/5, was formerly in the Capitol Theatre in Racine. Mr. Lowell McNeill, then owner of the Capitol, donated the Wurlitzer to the Theatre Guild when his theatre was "twinned." The Theatre Guild was at that time planning a new building, and the design was modified to include the organ. DTOS installed it, adding two more ranks and a solid-state relay. The console was stripped of its white paint and restored to its original wood finish which is more compatible with the theatre decor. DTOS board member Rick Johnson was in



John Muri and Mrs. Lowell McNeill at the dedication of the McNeill Memorial Wurlitzer.

charge of the installation and spent much time and effort on the project aided by other chapter members.

Mr. Muri, who also played the final concert in the Capitol Theatre, was enthusiastically received by a capacity audience. The organ was officially dedicated to the memory of Lowell McNeill, who unfortunately passed away before the project was completed. Mrs. McNeill was present and accepted a brass plaque which will be mounted on the console.

Our March social was held at the Organ Piper Restaurant, with owner Gary Sette at the organ. Members of the Menoharmonie Barbershop Chorus were invited to join us. Several other barbershop quartets added to the musical entertainment. The combination of good music and good food made this one of our most enjoyable socials.

April 25 is the date of our next show, "Down by The Riverside." Co-sponsored by DTOS and the Menoharmonie Barbershop Chorus of Menomonee Falls, the program will feature Rex Koury at the 3/13 Mighty Wurlitzer, and the award-winning quartet, Tin Pan Allies, as well as the chorus. Our last joint concert was very well attended, and we hope to sell out the Riverside Theatre this time.

CARRIE NELSON

### EASTERN MASS.

Our first Babson meeting for 1982 was on February 27, one month late, with Ol' Man Winter calling the tune in January. President Bill Carpenter announced that our Fall Concert artist will be Dennis James on October 23 and 24. Program Chairman Tim Bjareby in introducing our guest artist, Bob Wambolt, stated that he began on piano, graduated to organ and regularly plays skating rinks in addition to being organist/choir-master at Brighton's St. Anthony's Church.

Bob opened with "How Great Thou Art" and closed with "The Paramount News March." In between was a good mix of old standards, waltzes and tango-style numbers. Several of his choir members were also present to add their encouragement. As part of a busy open console session Tim and Dr. Jonathan Kleefield jointly contributed an



Clark Wilson was a recent concert artist at the Eastern Massachusetts Wurlitzer.

amusing and tuneful "Alley Cat" as they nudged each other from the bench, missing ne'er a note. This spontaneous "act" was worth the price of admission by itself!

A month later our "clan" again gathered around our Wurlitzer. Treasurer Dave Marden proposed a group discount policy for public concerts, and an amended version was adopted.

In presenting our evening's artist, Milt Kimmel, Tim remarked that his old friend had a great sense of humor. Milt then stated that music has two parts, sound and silence, and with that both elected the latter and walked out, but returned just as quickly! Milt's console opener was "Roman Guitar" and some fine oldies, showtunes, waltzes and polkas followed. It was an interesting combination of the versatile Kimmel, first on organ, then saxophone, then on the Steinway grand with Tim alternating between organ and piano, mostly in duets. Their concert ended on an energetic Latin note including a head-spinning "Tico Tico" solo by Bjareby on the Wurlitzer.

The ever-popular open console and home-made refreshments shared the evening's final billing of soul and body sustenance. We did not starve!

STANLEY C. GARNISS

### GARDEN STATE

A different type of membership meeting for most GTOSers was held on November 28 at the home of George Pasquaye in Wallington.

Within its walls is a 2/9 Wurlitzer with roll-player and phantom third manual. This organ was originally in the Bates Theatre, Attleborough, Massachusetts. George is a professional organ builder currently associated with the Peragallo Organ Company. A registration workshop was given by Ashley Miller, a member of the National Board of Directors and long-time organist at Radio City Music Hall. Topics of discussion included: stops and their usage, the accompaniment, some do's and don'ts, and expression.

On December 6, Larry Ferrari and the Mercer County Chorale were featured along with the 3/16 Moller at the Trenton War Memorial. Larry is a well-known organist on Channel 6, Philadelphia; he opened with the beautiful "Christmas Fantasy," by Leroy Anderson, then the Chorale performed alone and then with Mr. Ferrari. The audience, not to be left out, joined in for a Christmas sing-along.

On December 18, the Garden State Theatre Organ Society unveiled, for the first time in concert, the precious 2/8 Wurlitzer in Westwood's newly restored Pascack Theatre. The featured artist was Dennis James who, after a brief concert, accompanied two silent films, Charlie Chaplin's *The Gold Rush*, and the famous *Big Business*, with Laurel and Hardy. As usual, Dennis' accompaniment was excellent. No expense has been spared in the restoration of this theatre and the crew members, headed by Roy Frenzke, have done an excellent job of restoration on the organ which is used for movie intermissions every Friday and Saturday evening.

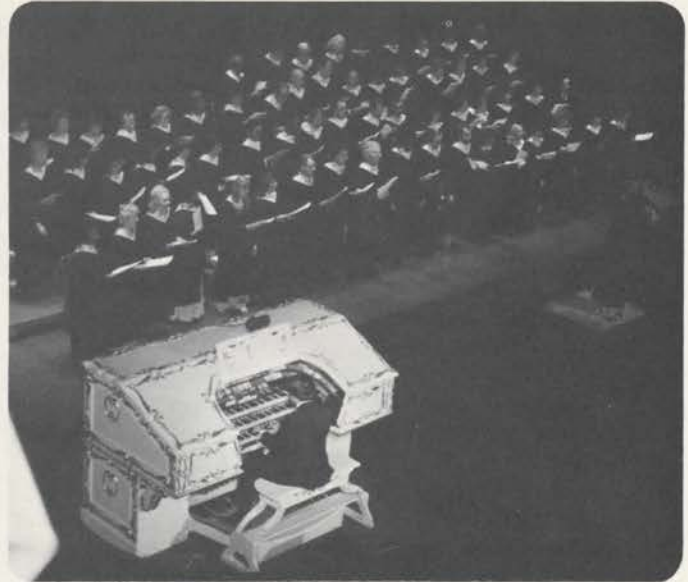
The inauguration of New Jersey Governor Thomas H. Kean was held January 19, at the Trenton War Memorial. Featured was Robert McDonald at the 3/16 Moller. Mr. McDonald is currently Musical Director at Newark's Sacred Heart Cathedral. The program was aired on Public Broadcasting Stations and included many shots of the artist at the console.

Those in attendance at the Trenton War Memorial on February 14 were in for an extraordinary event when Eddie Weaver took command of the 3/16 Moller. Program chairman Mike Cipolletti introduced Weaver as the "most congenial or-



Eddie Weaver at the 3/16 Moller — Trenton War Memorial.

(Plenkertfoto)



Larry Ferrari and the Mercer County Chorale.

(Reillyfoto)

ganist" that he had ever met, and Eddie had no difficulty sharing that same quality with us. Eddie boasts of having the longest tenure as a theatre organist, having studied with Helen and Jesse Crawford while resident organist at the New Haven Paramount. He is currently engaged at the Byrd Theatre in Richmond. It was a soup-to-nuts type of concert with every conceivable style of music and technique displayed. After a pedal solo, with percussion to pedal, Eddie announced that pedal work is good for his health as it keeps his feet going.

February 27, Lt. Col. Jack Moelmann, USAF, invited GSTOSers for a meeting and open console at his electronic "Wonder House." After a variety of refreshments enjoyed to the music of open console, a business meeting was held. Leonard Lipman announced the nomination, and acceptance by the screening committee, of Jack Moelmann for National Director. Then it was Jack at the console assisted by Rita Rodgers,

Barbara Spitalnick, and Ron Lee Savin, of Friendly Ice Cream commercial fame, at the microphones. Next, Jack displayed his animals and accompanied a comedic assortment of silent films. Then it was more "jamming" until the wee hours.

The Trenton Memorial Concert Series presented Jonas Nordwall at the 3/16 Moller on March 28. It was the first time for Jonas at Trenton, and his dynamic stylings and wide range of musical choices delighted everyone in attendance. Jonas received music degrees from the University of Portland, and is a freelance organ consultant as well as senior staff organist at Portland's Organ Grinder restaurant. After the concert, a very successful potluck supper was held on stage with dinner music on the 3/16 Moller. Jonas joined us for dinner, and it was a treat for the membership to have more time to chat with the artist.

This date will be remembered by Dr. Peter Panos, past Chairman, who was presented with a gleaming

pipe trophy for his dedication to GSTOS during his two years in office.

ED BAYKOWSKI

## GULF COAST

We held our election of officers in December when Chairman Tom Helms was home for Christmas. Progress was reported on the construction of the Wonder Morton taking shape under the skillful hands of Dr. Rhea. Walter Smith announced that he would be returning to the ivy halls and studying again for a further degree.

Our Saenger Theatre here is doing a landslide business. All this is most pleasing, as everyone asks about the organ and its re-installation date. We like this kind of interest.

The wife of a local physician donated all proceeds from the sale of her cookbook to the chapter for use in the organ restoration. The response was good and generated more interest for the organ. We had quite a display in the lobby of the theatre,

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thanks to Dr. Rhea and his midnight oil magic marker, showing the various stages and phases of the organ construction.

When Chairman Helms finishes his studies at TCU, we hope to go full steam ahead with our project. Until then, we have to listen with our hearts instead of our ears.

DOROTHY STANDLEY

## LAND O' LAKES

In spite of the snowy, cold, wintry day, many of our chapter members turned out to attend a concert at Cicero's in Leisure Lane, Edina, with Karl Eilers at the 3/15 Barton on January 31. His selections were varied and interesting, and his version of "Night Train" provided the vehicle for some jazzy registrations. After the concert, members lingered to socialize and to have dinner. We always appreciate the hospitality offered by Dick and Bonnie Shelley, proprietors of Cicero's.

On February 21 our program chairman, Mike Erie, tried something new for our chapter. He promoted a "Membership Showcase," where our own members participated at the Powderhorn Park Baptist Church in Minneapolis, playing on their beautiful 3/13 Robert-Morton theatre pipe organ. We heard Tom Neadle, Don Taft, Dick Hosier, Bernard Mullaney, Lonnie Roach, John Zetterstrom, Mike Erie, and Alice Rabus in a duet with Verna Mae Wilson at the piano. Members were pleasantly surprised at all the talent displayed by those who performed. We believe that by playing in our small home-organ groups, shy organists are gaining confidence, and another "Membership Showcase" will be organized in the future.

Barbara Danielson of Schmitt Music Centers invited LOL members

to a concert at Schmitt's in Minneapolis, with Scott Nelson from St. Joseph, Missouri, at the Kimball. His enthusiasm was contagious, and his program thoroughly enjoyed.

Our March 28 concert featured Lonnie Roach, one of our chapter members, at Bodine's Store and Warehouse in Minnetonka, on a Rodgers Marquis. His selections included many tunes from the '30s, and his delightful presentation was enthusiastically received. It was a very cloudy afternoon, but more than sixty members attended. We are looking forward to exciting events in April and May with a long winter behind us.

VERNA MAE WILSON

## LOS ANGELES

Following Rex Koury's tremendous ovation in January at San Gabriel, Los Angeles went on to celebrate the rededication, in February, of the 3/13 Wurlitzer Style 240 in the Orpheum Theatre in downtown Los Angeles. It is the only theatre in Southern California in which its original theatre pipe organ, and its



John Ledwon at the 3/13 Wurlitzer, Orpheum Theatre, Los Angeles. (Zimfoto)

decor, are intact.

John Ledwon brought new life to this worthy instrument with a splendid program of popular and modern numbers, broken in two places by a pair of sets of fast-moving and tune-ful dance/choral selections by a most capable "Newbury Park Song and Dance Company." Their work was accompanied by Ledwon at the piano. John concluded his program by playing several selections that were part of the opening night's musicale on April 8, 1928.

Much credit is owed to the dedicated crew who worked over three years, usually Saturday mornings, to restore this fine instrument to its present admirable condition. Our group looks forward to using it often for future concerts, as the Metropolitan Theatres management is highly pleased with its superb condition, and are planning to give it more use.

One disadvantage was noted: lacking a console lift, this console remains deep in the orchestra pit, with only the top of the organist's head visible to over 90% of the audience. This will no doubt be corrected when an appropriate lift is obtained.

In March, two lovely ladies of the glimmering console, Candi Carley and Ann Leaf, rode the elevator from the San Gabriel Civic Auditorium pit up to acclamation by a capacity crowd. First visible was a large, colorful spray of spring flowers rising into the spotlight atop the white console bearing the talented blind artist, Candi Carley, to another triumph before an admiring audience.

This beautiful young woman demonstrated an almost fantastic familiarity with every stop and control on the 3-manual keydesk, which she cannot see, and her playing was



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positive and confident through the most complex pieces, be they show tunes, jazz, rock or the classics.

Candi was joined midway through her program by the renowned Ann Leaf, Mighty Mite of the Organ, who played four solo selections at the console, then took over the grand piano on stage for several sparkling duets with Candi at the Wurlitzer. It is hoped that we may have more of these piano-organ duos at future concerts.

LATOS has a new look on the masthead of our newsletter, designed by the award-winning Ann Mattman of Fullerton. Featuring a white five-manual Wurlitzer console drawing with photo of the current artist, the cover scene is capped by a dominating proscenium arch complete with archangels blowing trumpets and draping curtains spotlighting the console.

The new Board of Directors has signed a contract to install the donated Burton Barton theatre organ in the Wilshire Ebell Performing Arts Theatre in the prominent Wilshire district near the Wiltern Theatre.

The first organ concert series ever sponsored by the chapter was unveiled by Program Director Tom

Norman, substituting for Chairman Frank Babbitt who is recovering from a heart attack, at the meeting following Candi's concert. Featuring solo concerts at the 5/28 Moller in Pasadena's elegant Civic Auditorium, the series will star Gaylord Carter and his *60 Years of Chasing* silent comedy film on September 25. Rosemary Bailey, named "Jazz Artist of the Year" by *Keyboard World*, will perform January 23. On May 8, Mother's Day, Hector Olivera will complete the season with his dazzling technique. A bonus concert is being offered the early purchasers of season tickets — Lyn Larsen at San Sylmar's 4/35 Wurlitzer on June 12.

TOM NORMAN/CHUCK ZIMMERMAN

### MOTOR CITY

In a departure from our usual concert fare we presented the 21st Century Steel Band of Trinidad at the Redford Theatre in February. Steel drum instruments were originally fashioned from the empty oil drums left behind by the United States in Trinidad after World War II. A ball-peen hammer is used to section each drumhead into a complex pattern of "playing areas." Each instrument is capable of producing tones ranging



Gregg Smith was the artist at the Barton console in the Royal Oak Theatre for Motor City's Fourth Sunday program there in January. (Fred Page Photo)

from one to two octaves. The audience was enthralled with the performance, which included the "Poet and Peasant Overture" and the "Hallelujah Chorus."

The first recording of the Redford Theatre's 3/10 Barton is now available; it features six chapter members, all of whom have played overtures and intermissions at the theatre. Heard on the record are Greg Bellamy, Jim Boutell, Lionel LaMay, John Lauter, Tony O'Brien, and Ed Walsh. Proceeds from the sales of the record, which has already been aired on Detroit's top-rated AM station, will go to the "Buy the Redford" fund.

Our latest series of workshops for members, coordinated by Gil and Penny Francis, have evoked continued interest with their variety of subject matter. John Lauter led off in September with an introduction to the Barton theatre pipe organ. In Oc-



Ann Leaf at the piano and Candi Carley at the organ, San Gabriel Civic Auditorium.

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(L to R) Bob Mills, responsible for organ restoration at the Punch, artist Barry Rindhage and Fr. Dana Schultz, master of ceremonies, at the First Sunday concert at the Punch and Judy Theatre in March.  
(Fred Page Photo)



Steve Stephani played for the monthly Motor City program at the Royal Oak Theatre in February.  
(Fred Page Photo)

tober, Bob Nagy demonstrated basic pipe organ theory and technique; and the subject of Lou Behm's seminar in November was the playing of Christmas music. For January, Sigmund Ross ably demonstrated how the organ is used to create various moods in the accompaniment of silent films. Tony O'Brien's topic for the February workshop was the use of console controls and pedals. Workshops planned for March and April will feature Steve Stephani and a discussion on chord building, and Norm Keating with a seminar on playing without printed music.

Jo Phillips has been appointed to the Board of Directors to fill the unexpired term of her husband, Hank Phillips. Hank, who passed away in January, was very active in show planning, group ticket sales, and in promoting our chapter activities wherever he could.

Gregg Smith was the artist for our Fourth Sunday program at the Royal Oak Theatre in January. Steve

Stephani appeared at the Royal Oak's 3/16 Barton for our February event there.

Our February artist at the Punch and Judy Theatre was John Lauter. In March, our First Sunday series at the Punch featured Barry Rindhage at the 2/7 Wurlitzer, with member Fr. Dana Schultz as master of ceremonies.

Greg Bellamy was the featured artist in February, at our monthly concert at the Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor. Appearing at the 3/16 Barton in the Michigan Theatre in March was Greg Yassick.

DON LOCKWOOD

### NEW YORK

March became a vintage month for the New York chapter, two Wurlitzers, two engaging artists, and two diverse styles of playing gave warmth to this wintery month. First was Rob Calcaterra, head organist at Radio City Music Hall, who gave us a powerful and well-prepared recital at

the Carnegie Hall Cinema. From his opening, "On a Wonderful Day Like Today," to a jazzy "Georgia Brown," to the full sounds of Bach, a precise and exacting technique seemed to take him effortlessly in and out of a variety of styles. Calcaterra played with finesse, freshness and dash; this was definitely not a disappointing visit with the Mighty Wurlitzer.

Our second artist, Andy Kasparian, interprets melodies in a contemporary manner with great style, but still retains some of the more tasteful aspects of former stylists. Listening to music played in this manner at our March 21 concert evoked a happy-sad mood, happy hearing the theatre organ sound this good and current, and sad realizing that this, the last Wurlitzer on Broadway, is no longer a reigning monarch awaited by daily movie audiences.

For our gathering, this 4/19 Wurlitzer was still holding court, royally filling the Beacon Theatre with Kas-

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parian's pleasing arrangements. Along with many standards, Andy included his trademark grouping of lively Latin American dances. As the pipes were sounding out his encore, "Tomorrow," from *Annie*, the old Wurlitzer sound seemed to unfold me and say, "Don't feel sad. I'll be around for a long, long time."

MARLIN SWING

## NOR-CAL

Nor-Cal Chapter met February 21 at the Capn's Galley Pizza and Pipes in Redwood City. Jerry Nagano, resident organist of the Pasadena Civic Auditorium, was our concert artist. Jerry studied theatre organ with Gordon Kibbee and Tom Hazelton, and silent film accompaniment with Gaylord Carter. He has appeared in Las Vegas with Liberace, played for the ATOS 1979 convention in Los Angeles, and will be featured at the 1982 Detroit ATOS conclave.

Nagano's musical program was a well-balanced selection to suit all musical tastes. He has perfect tempo and a unique style utilizing progressive key changes, clean melody lines, and artistic embellishments.



Jerry Nagano played for Nor-Cal at Pizza & Pipes in Redwood City February 21. (Rudy Frey Photo)



Frank Olsen, "Dean of Canadian Theatre Organists," on the bench at Redwood City's 4/23 Wurlitzer for Nor-Cal concert March 14. (Rudy Frey Photo)

During the intermission, 1983 ATOS Convention Chairman Dan Lovett introduced committee chairpersons for the convention to be held in San Francisco July 2-7, 1983. This promises to be one of the truly significant meetings in the history of ATOS.

March 14, we met again at Redwood City to hear Frank Olsen play the 4/23 Wurlitzer. Chapter Chairman Rudy Frey gave some inspiring words and asked for some input from the membership for the 1983 convention. Program Chairman Ray Taylor then introduced our concert artist, Frank Olsen, an Englishman with a Norwegian name who left Scotland to settle in Canada and play theatre organ concerts in the United States.

Most of what Frank played was familiar music including many of theatre organ's old chestnuts and "War Horses" from the days when he was one of Scotland's best-loved cinema organists, often playing up to twelve shows daily in three Glasgow cinemas. He holds six degrees in music and operated the Olsen School of Music in Glasgow for many years

before emigrating to Canada. Frank is truly the "Dean of Canadian Theatre Organists," and has several phonograph records and tapes to his credit. Nor-Cal hopes we won't have to wait too long to hear this master organist again.

ED MULLINS

## NORTH TEXAS

Our annual meeting turned out to be one of the best we've known. The bright spring-like weather cooperated fully, and a majority of our members were on hand at the lovely residence of Jan and Dick Nichols in Richardson. There was room for everyone, and Bob McGillivray opened the meeting promptly. This meeting is devoted to giving the annual financial report and a review of the activities of the past year. New business was discussed and Bob stressed the importance of each member completing the questionnaire sent out by the National. He touched on the upcoming convention in Detroit, and emphasized the fact that this convention would be very special since Detroit still has some fine organs.

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The only father-daughter team in the ATOS? Pizza owner "Uncle Milt" and his daughter Wendy, the head organist at Uncle Milt's Pizza Parlor in Vancouver, Washington. Wendy was the featured artist for the Oregon Chapter's February meeting. (Claude Neuffer Photo)



Jerry and Mickie Gaylord, hosts for the Oregon Chapter's cheese and wine tasting party. (Claude Neuffer Photo)

Denece Powell came up with an outstanding program which featured three of our members. Irving Light opened the program with several beautiful selections which were well received by the membership. Dr. Ted Thompson followed with a complete change of pace, opening with a movie theme since we are theatre organ buffs, and, as usual, he played a delightful program. Jack Riley completed the trio, and he chose a wide variety of tunes to delight us, some sweet and low, others that had us in a toe-tapping mood. Jack has been playing for Dallas audiences for a long time, and he certainly knows how to please everyone. Refreshments were served and a jam session

followed which kept the members lingering.

LORENA McKEE

### OREGON

On Sunday morning, February 28, we crossed the Columbia River to Vancouver, Washington, to hear the 3/18 Wurlitzer in Uncle Milt's Pipe Organ Pizza. The entrance to this restaurant is in the form of an enormous console backed by huge pipes with the front doors in place of swell shoes. Inside, the console is centered between the two chambers and is on a lift. This instrument has an unusually fine balance and blend of voices.

Our artist, Wendy Kieffer, is lead

staff organist at Uncle Milt's. Her program opened with an elaborate "New York, New York," and included a sprightly 1929 number, "Singing in the Bathtub." It is impressive how this diminutive girl can tame this roaring giant and put it through its paces with such precision and artistry. After the concert it was open console with no shortage of players; Paul Potter, Richard Parks, Don Ledford, Robert Shafter, and Jack Coxon of the Organ Grinder in Portland were among those who entertained us. Several members stayed on to enjoy Uncle Milt's excellent pizza.

Our chapter includes members in Washington, Idaho, California, and





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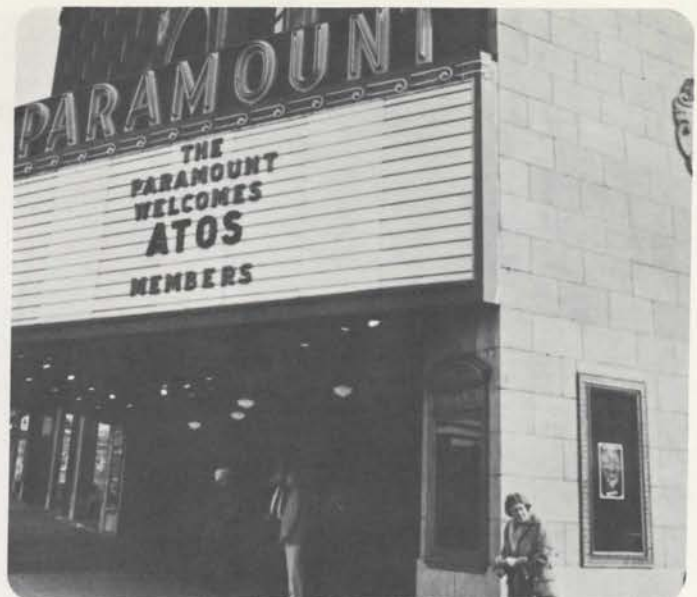
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Logo featured on T-shirts available to Puget Sound Chapter members.

(Ken Gallwey Photo)



Puget Sound Chapter members were welcomed by the sign on the Paramount marquee for their February meeting.

(Ken Gallwey Photo)

a very welcome Patrick Shotton in England. Some folks traveled all the way from southern Oregon for this meeting. Thanks to Uncle Milt and to Wendy Kieffer for the fine organ and music.

On March 27, we returned to the beautiful country home of Nickie and Jerry Gaylord in the hills south-east of Portland. It is not the easiest place in the world to find, and we suspect that some members headed for the original meeting of September, 1980, may still be out there looking for the place. This gathering was for a wine and cheese tasting party combined with open console. The Gaylords 2/7 "Heinz 57" has a most complete and compatible blend of stops.

The organ speaks directly into a large recreation room. The original Wicks console has been replaced by a beautiful compact one built for it by Oregon Chapter charter member Bob Rickett. Bob was the original owner of the organ after it was re-

moved from the Granada Theatre in LaGrande, Oregon. Because of complete unification and excellent voicing, this instrument is a joy to play.

Our self-generated program was enthusiastically played by our own members. Performers included Bob Rickett, Bob Burke, Joe Gray, Ken Keyser, and a super professional from the Portland Organ Grinder, Paul Quarino, who was most generous with his talent. The large assortment of wines and cheeses, the fine music, and the beautiful countryside made this a delightful respite from the usual concert format. We are grateful to Nickie and Jerry Gaylord for again sharing their wonderful home and organ with us.

BUD ABEL

### PUGET SOUND

Jonas Nordwall of Portland, Oregon, played a concert for chapter members and guests at the Paramount Theatre for the January meet-

ing. Jonas, as always, provided us with excellent entertainment. Chapter Chairman Jack Becvar paid tribute to members Don Myers, Gennie Whitting and Mike Wallace, who maintain the organ and work with the theatre management in exchange for the use of the organ. T-shirts were on sale in the lobby to raise money for the theatre organ restoration and maintenance fund. The logo on the front of them is patterned after the theatre restoration publicity of "We're bringing back the Paramount for you." The T-shirts read, "We're bringing back the Paramount Pipe Organ for you, ATOS." Gennie Whitting came up with the idea of the shirts as a money-raiser for the organ fund.

Our March meeting was held at the Haller Lake Club using our own chapter organ, a Marr & Colton console with a seven-rank Wurlitzer. After a potluck dinner, Andy Crow presented a fine program beginning

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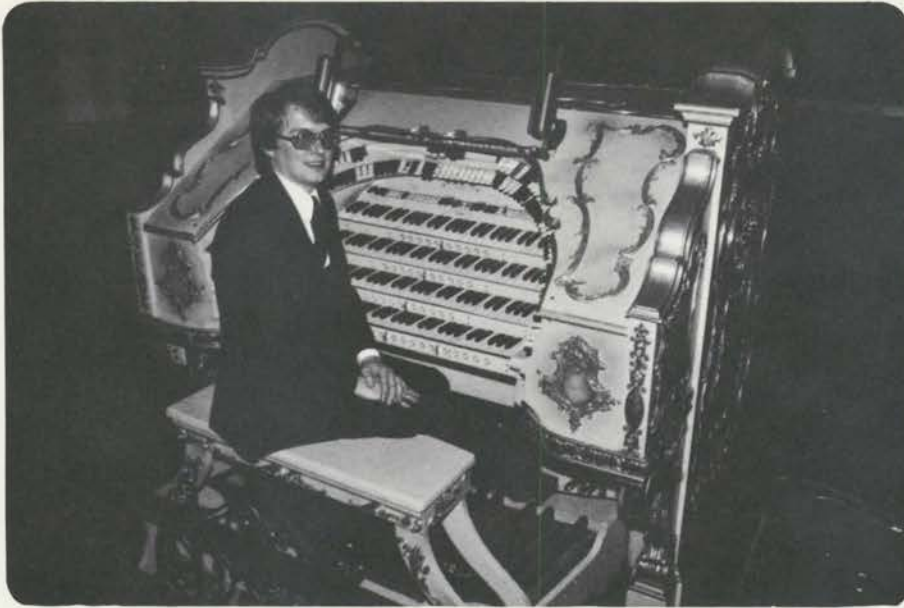
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Jonas Nordwall at the console of the Paramount 4/20 Wurlitzer for Puget Sound Chapter January meeting. (Ken Gallwey Photo)

with "Sing Hallelujah." He followed with a variety of selections including Handel, Bach, and new music. The program concluded with a full-length silent movie with Andy providing appropriate pipe organ background. At the business meeting the group decided to purchase a re-worked Kimball Harp to add to the chapter organ. Puget Sound Chapter is looking forward to a trip to the Mt. Baker Theatre in Bellingham for our April meeting.

CHRISTINE PRIDE

### RED RIVER

Our twelve 1928 Robert-Morton Major Diaphones are now installed at the Fargo Theatre as of the first weekend in March. The pipes are backstage next to the rope gallery, as there was not enough room in either chamber. With this, and some previous additions to our equipment, we found it necessary to add a second blower.

The Syracuse Hotel in Syracuse, New York, was the headquarters for a regional meeting of cinephiles called Cinefest II, March 26-28. Some 200 people enjoyed movies and movie memorabilia for two and a half days. The emphasis was on silent film, particularly the silent films starring Colleen Moore who was present. Our association with Miss Moore dates back to April, 1981, when she appeared on the stage of the Fargo Theatre, the star of our silent movie night. Lance Johnson, Dave Knudtson, and Ted Larson attended from our chapter and made an important contribution to the cinefest. The only existing print of Miss Moore's film, *Twinkle Toes*, was located and an organ score provided on the Fargo Theatre Wurlitzer for this film's revival before an enthusiastic audience. The contribution also included a tribute to Colleen Moore, a filmed documentary of her career, made here in Fargo.

April 22 is the date for our fifteenth silent movie night at the Fargo Theatre. Our guest artist will be charter member Harvey Gustafson. In the 1960s Harvey was one of our performers when our concert location was Bud's Roller Rink in Moorhead, Minnesota, and the organ was a 3/7 Barton. Later in the 1960s he moved to the Minneapolis area where he teaches organ at McPhail Center, University of Minnesota, is head organist at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in St. Paul, and is organist at Hafner's Dinner Club in St. Paul.

SONIA CARLSON

### ROCKY MOUNTAIN

"The Aladdin Theatre, one of Denver's oldest and most beautiful movie palaces, will be turned into a musical theatre in the next few months." This was the surprising news we read in the *Denver Post* on March 12. The article goes on, "Robert Morise, an officer of the Aladdin Theatre Co., a corporation representing Denver-area businessmen and investors, said Thursday that negotiations for a lease with owners of the building at East Colfax Avenue and Race Street and with Mann Theatres (which previously held the lease) have been completed."

Organ crew chief Frank Gandy and crew member Charlie Herman met with Mr. Morise and talked about the future of the Wicks 3/12 pipe organ. We played the organ for him, letting him hear the beautiful Strings, Celestes, Vox, and the two Tibias, not to mention the toy counter and percussions. He was overwhelmed with the sounds and thoroughly enjoyed going through the chambers and seeing how it worked. Speaking for the Aladdin Theatre Co., Mr. Morise said that he

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was delighted with the prospect of having their own pipe organ in the theatre to use with, during and after performances, and probably for special entertainment spots.

The theatre will undergo a carpeting, cleaning and painting job with new dressing rooms to be built backstage. A "thrust" stage will be added to provide versatility and make it possible to book other kinds of shows or acts. The Aladdin Theatre Company will take possession April 1, and will start renovation immediately. Their opening show, May 7, will be *Man of LaMancha*.

We had a visitor from Garden State Chapter on March 20, Don Plenkers from Eatontown, New Jersey, who came in and saw our theatre, crawled the organ, played it, and recorded it for a couple of hours. The only teeth-grinding fault we had was the 8' Tubas that need complete reworking as a couple of them were slightly out of tune due to broken wedges and reeds not placed properly to hold the right pitch. We had a grand visit with Don and hope he will return another time.

FRANK R. GANDY

## SAN DIEGO

The San Diego Chapter was pleasantly surprised on March 19 to receive a call from the famed British organist, Frank Olsen, saying he was in San Diego while on a U.S. tour and would enjoy the opportunity to play our Wurlitzer.

The wheels had to turn quickly and another place found for a concert, because of the upgrading and enlargement of our chapter's 2/13, soon to be 3/14, Wurlitzer. Through the gracious offer of Dr. and Mrs. John Dapolito, a concert was set for March 21 on the 3/19 Wurlitzer in their Mount Helix hillside home.



Frank Olsen at the console of the Dapolito Wurlitzer.

Mr. Olsen entertained approximately sixty organ enthusiasts with his musical forte, and his rare and jolly humor. After the concert, the group was afforded an opportunity to chat with the artist and express their appreciation.

An exceptional evening was enjoyed by all and the artist bid us fond adieu; then retired to the home of Robert Brooks, his host for the evening.

CONNIE REARDON

## SIERRA

On February 7, more than one hundred members and friends lined picnic tables at Arden Pizza & Pipes for a members' cameo concert. Seven of Sierra's organ-playing members each took a turn of ten to fifteen minutes at the Wurlitzer in a kind of rehearsed open console session. Everybody turned in a respectable job considering that most of them aren't professionals. Members playing were: Sue Lang, Herb Dunkley, Dave Moreno, Jim Brown, Scott Reiger, Randy Warwick, and Fred

Dajas who matched some exotic, modern harmonies with fine registrations in the Cole vein that had everybody wanting more. Thanks to Bob Breuer, owner of the Pizza & Pipes, for allowing everyone a couple of hours practice time to gain familiarity with the big 4/20.

March 7 was the "shakedown cruise" for Sierra's transplanted and enlarged 2/11 Wurlitzer Style E. "Last minute" was the term to describe this program. The organ's first tuning was completed about starting time for the program which meant tuner and organist for the day, Dave Moreno, had to run home and change while emcee Jim Hodges stalled. Fortunately, it had been decided that this would be an informal get-together because the Wurlitzer was having fits getting used to its new home and protested with a wide assortment of ciphers and dead notes. But Dave Moreno and cipher-chaser Dale Mendenhall took advantage of the situation to create some impromptu vaudeville comedy as Dave commented and played to Dale's running back and forth between the two stage-level chambers. All in all, everybody had fun, and the organ does sound great in its new home, which is a WPA-built auditorium-meeting hall with a rustic charm that fits the little suburban hamlet of Fair Oaks. Acoustics are excellent, live and bright without being harsh nor with too much echo.

## WESTERN RESERVE

Western Reserve Chapter's first meeting under newly-elected Chairman Robert Moran was held at Lukas Music store. Bill Taber, a well-known performer and organ instructor, entertained the group with selections on the Hammond Ele-

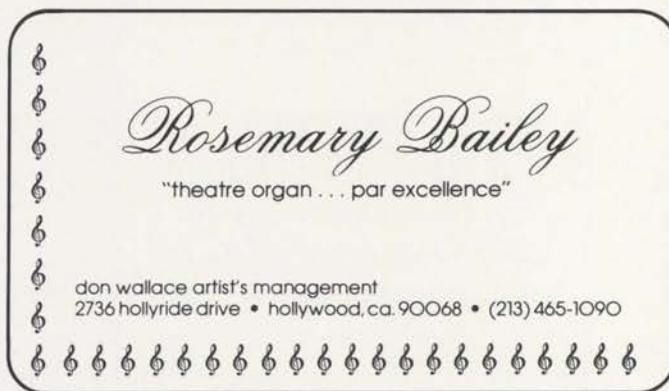


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gante. Having a professional theatre organist perform on this organ really brings out its best. Bill always likes to include one of his young students in his program, and his guest organist this time was sixteen-year old Cindy Maurer who played her own arrangement of a medley which included "Help Me, Rhonda," and "Watermelon Man." George Lukas concluded the program by demonstrating the features of the Elegante. Open console followed the business meeting.

Our February meeting was held at the historic First Methodist Church where we were treated to a concert by the church organist, Richard Fetter, on the Casavant organ which has twelve stops from a George M. Ryder organ built in the 1870s.

Loyal WRTOS members spent Saturday evening, February 27, at the Grays' Armory Annual Concert. The artist for the evening was Karl Cole. Karl introduced us to Gertrude, his ventriloquist-doll singer who sang "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," and "All of Me," perched on Karl's shoulder.

The first day of spring found us gathered at the luxurious Wade Park Manor for a concert by member John Lane on the 1950 2/3 Moller organ in the ballroom. The organ

had been recently tuned by several chapter members and sounded delightful. Following open console we had the opportunity to see a Kimball player organ which is in need of restoration and could be a future project for the chapter.

JIM SHEPHERD

### WOLVERINE

On February 21, our meeting was graciously hosted by chapter members Gary Montgomery and H.C. Scott at their Theatre Organ Pizza and Pipes in Pontiac. One of their fine staff organists, Pierre Fracalanza, provided us with an excellent concert prior to the opening of the restaurant. In addition to playing old standards, his selections varied from Chopin to Barry Manilow and Billy Joel, all played beautifully in Pierre's own refreshing and tasteful style. As an added highlight, Pierre treated us to a lovely vocal, "Shadow of Your Smile," to his own accompaniment.

Pierre has been playing piano and organ since the age of three, and at seventeen, he attended the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, to study voice. Although he has entertained on the piano in several Detroit area restaurants, he is a relative newcomer to the theatre pipe

organ scene, and what a talent this young musician has. Pierre's future as a fine theatre organist seems very promising.

Instead of a regular chapter meeting in March, the Wolverines were invited to a private party at the Detroit Theatre Organ Club, sponsored by DTOC and Wolverine Chapter member Lois Page. Members of Motor City Chapter, DTOC, and a Canadian group known as the Keyboard Kutups, were also invited to this concert-party.

Once again, we were privileged to listen to a delightful concert by Pierre Fracalanza, this time on the fine 4/34 Wurlitzer in the Senate Theatre owned by DTOC. The audience was very appreciative of Pierre's vocal talents in his performance of "I Wish You Love," with lyrics in both English and French, as he accompanied himself on DTOC's particularly fine Wurlitzer grand piano.


Following the concert, everyone had the opportunity to visit and to partake of refreshments, then a number of guests played during open console. We certainly appreciate the hospitality of our DTOC hosts, Lois and Fred Page, who provided us with a most pleasant afternoon.

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