

THEATRE ORGAN

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Reginald Dixon . . . 1904-1985

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Reginald Dixon at the console of the Wurlitzer
at Granada Kingston-on-Thames.
See article on page five.

John Sharp photo

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American Theatre Organ Society



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As outgoing ATOS President, this will be my final message to you. I shall be leaving the office with many happy memories and a greater-than-ever admiration and respect for all the fine people who make up our Society. Certainly you have been kind to me — a fact that has made the job all the more rewarding and pleasurable.

I am ever grateful to the other officers and members of our National Board who have aided and supported me so capably during my tenure. And, although they are not officially Board members, I extend my thanks to Bob Gilbert, who does a fine job of editing THEATRE ORGAN and for his dedication, and to our Executive Director, Doug Fisk, whose talents and experience have been extremely valuable.

I feel that we have accomplished much during the past two years. When I assumed office there were increasing problems with the recording of memberships and complaints from members not receiving their copies of THEATRE ORGAN. Through the efforts of Doug Fisk, Dale Mendenhall and Vern Bickel these problems have been all but eliminated. Our NATIONAL ARCHIVES have continued to grow under the direction of Mr. Bickel, to the extent that additional space will very soon be a necessity. We are very grateful, too, to the generous members who have made contributions of money and material to the Archives. This year sees the first YOUNG ARTISTS AWARD COMPETITION, which seems to be off to a fine start and which promises to be a long-term program to help and encourage young organists. This has been an undertaking of which I am particularly proud. My personal gratitude to Thelma Barclay and her Young Artists Competition Committee, and to Director Jack Moelmann for his valuable contribution of time, effort and

material to the project. This year, SEVEN NEW CHAPTERS are receiving Chapter Charters, reflecting, I sincerely believe, an unprecedented renewed interest in our Society and in theatre organ and its music and activities. Action is being taken to completely clarify the BEN HALL MEMORIAL WURLITZER situation and to provide for its future maintenance and, perhaps even more importantly, to insure its proper use as a benefit to our members.

Space does not allow me the opportunity to touch on the several other affirmative subjects I would like to tell you about. Sufficient to say that I will be leaving office with the genuine feeling that the American Theatre Organ Society is alive and well, that the relationship with, and service to, our many chapters and members improves all the time and, while we can't exactly be termed "rich," our Society is FINANCIALLY STABLE AND SOUND.

If I suffer any disappointment at all, it is that our national membership has not grown to the extent I had hoped. Obviously, this is a situation I can't blame on our administration, as the enrolling of new members falls more realistically to our chapters. National's growth depends largely on you, our individual members. However, as a result of our current membership drive with its exciting AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND PRIZE COMPETITION, it is quite possible that our national membership can reach very close to an all time high by the end of this calendar year. I trust that you will all make every effort toward this end.

So long for now. I am looking forward to seeing you in Chicago!

Sincerely,

Rex Koury, President



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

How quickly a year passes! Yes, ATOS has had an Executive Director for a year now. Highlights of the year for me include: a) the transfer of all membership records to ATOS' own computer; b) staying on top of information requests that come in an indescribable variety from both chapters and individuals; c) learning the sources to tap to get information to answer them; d) visiting several chapters and thus gaining a good understanding of chapter operations; e) preparing a 1985 budget which led to a critical examination of all expenditures necessary to bring ATOS into the black; and f) working toward an increased membership.

For this office to be of greater service to chapters and to work toward a national headquarters where the archives would be available to those who wished to use them requires increased income to ATOS. More members are the most immediate source. Increased membership means spreading the cost of THEATRE ORGAN, where about 80% of the dues income is spent, over a wider base. The addition of 1000 members would drop the Journal cost to about 70% of dues — really quite dramatic. So, whether the membership contest appeals to you or not, go get a new member. It really does help!

From a personal standpoint, I have enjoyed the year and am enthusiastic about the potential of ATOS. It *will* reach its goals.

Sincerely,

Douglas C. Fisk



AN INTERVIEW WITH REGINALD DIXON

On the occasion of his 80th birthday, a few months before his death.

Transcribed by Don Thompson

INTERVIEWER: I believe you first visited Blackpool Tower in 1912, when you were seven years old.

REGINALD DIXON: Oh yes, I remember that! I remember going on the sands with my sister. My younger sister wasn't born yet (that was the year afterwards). We used to watch the Punch and Judy show on the sands every day there. Yes, that was where I used to hear the roundabouts in those days as we went, when the sea receded. That was when I heard "I Do Like To Be Beside the Seaside," all those years ago. We went into the Tower, like a lot of people, on a very wet day and it was very, very crowded. I remember some of the machines where you put a penny in the slot. Some of them were still there when I went all those years later. They were so intriguing. (These automatic instruments — orchestrions, phonolist violinas and the like — were STILL there a couple of generations later. *DT*)

I always wanted to be a concert pianist. I used to struggle very, very hard rehearsing. I used to do six hours a day of "practice," as we called it, on the piano when I was in Sheffield. I must have driven people mad, playing scales for two hours. I'd be about nine

years old then. Then I had a period when I wasn't too well and I gave up for a while, then started again — I think I would be about 11. I had another teacher and then I took it quite seriously, and I was teaching music when I was about 13. I took some letters [a diploma] at a college which I shall not name, which now don't mean very much, and I started to teach. I always think it was money by false pretences! I was keen on the piano, I still love it, my listening is the piano, piano concertos, I enjoy it somehow. There's something about it — there are so many ways you can attack a piano. I used to think that, anyhow, but I was never intended to be a concert pianist, as we all realize now. I sometimes think your life is governed for you. But I did enjoy those early days and I worked very hard. Then, of course, I went to Sheffield University for a while, studying harmony and counterpoint. I should have taken the Master of Music exam, but unfortunately we landed right in the middle of a slump, a "recession" as it's known now, and I had to go to work in a cinema.

I: Your father, of course, in Sheffield, would have expected you to go

and work in a steelworks I suppose, to be a steelworker.

RD: He was a steel file cutter. When I say that to people ("What did your father do?") they look rather blank at me. I've seen him take an ordinary file without any teeth in it, and with a hammer and chisel make a perfect file. Of course, eventually the machines took over and that type of work became redundant. But he had little shops around Sheffield where he employed women to cut files.

I: What made you want to be a concert pianist; what sparked you off?

RD: I can always remember, when I was five years old, crying to my mother because I wanted to play my piece on the piano, and she used to lock the piano because she said I would damage it. But eventually she gave way. What it must have sounded like I don't know! It must have been terrible! I've always loved music. But in those days, you know, you had nothing else; we'd no radio, no television.

Stocksbridge Palace was where I started. I remember my audition. I played two of Debussy's Arabesques on the piano, and the manager (a grand fellow, a little cockney) came down, went through a trap door in the

orchestra pit and as he came out he said "You'll do, mate!" and that was how I got the job. I used to go by motor bike out to Stocksbridge.

I: I understand you were inventive in those days and you added sound effects.

RD: Oh yes, I took the bottom on the piano out and when there were bangs coming on the screen I used to put the loud pedal down and kick the strings and do all sorts of things like that. The piano didn't like it very much and eventually suffered. They bought a new piano on the night I left!

I: And then you went on to a second cinema in Chesterfield, I think?

RD: Yes, I went to Chesterfield and I used to deputise for the musical director, who was rather an invalid. That gave me good experience. I used to go down to the Wicker cinema for two hours. There was a big pile of music on the piano. I had to read that, follow a violinist, and every time there was a tap with the bow — "next number" — that had to be read and played to silent films. That was an education absolutely and an experience. It was an entire job on its own and it was essential that you read and could at the same time look up at the picture and not lose your place in the music. In later years I got quite a big library together, there was special music written for it. I got rid of it eventually because it wasn't very good. Later, when I went to Healey Palace in Sheffield, we had a good orchestra and we used to play some very, very good music. As they used to say, we used to "fit the picture." But in those days they had big trade shows with full orchestras. I remember playing for the film *The Four Men of the Apocalypse*. And *Intolerance*, that was another very big film, you probably remember mention of that. I played for the trade shows. The trade show, as you know, was for the exhibitors, and they used to go there to see for the booking of the film.

I: You were playing the organ then, weren't you, at Birley Carr United Methodist Church? That was the first organ you played, wasn't it?

RD: I learned to play in Cemetery Road Congregational Church, which has gone now. I had another music teacher who taught me to play. I had only nine months' lessons on the organ, but I worked very hard.

I: You were only 13 when you were playing the organ there?

RD: Yes, just 13.

I: But I think you saw the talking coming in and were starting to think about other things.

RD: Oh yes, yes. Often I didn't get home till one o'clock in the morning. You see, in those days we had an operator who, as we used to say in Sheffield, loved his "bevvy," he liked his drop of "biddy," and in those days there was no control over the speed of a machine. These days it has got to be so many frames per second in order to keep in with the speed of the sound. By the end of the night I think he must have been leaning on the machine. It went slower and slower and slower and we'd be coming out of the cinema at one o'clock in the morning! Fortunately, where I lived there was a tram depot and I used to catch the last tram. Next morning I was down at the Regent Cinema rehearsing on the Wurlitzer at eight o'clock, in order to get onto the organ.

I: That was the first Wurlitzer you played, wasn't it?

RD: That was the first Wurlitzer I played, yes, yes.

I: But I think you moved down to Birmingham for your first job on a Wurlitzer?

RD: My first job was at the West End Cinema in Birmingham. That would be about 19 . . . was it 27? 28? . . . 28, yes, because I went up to Preston in 1929 and got married.

I: And that again was to take your first job in Blackpool?

RD: I had an audition in 1930, yes. It was a very wild February day, we came on the Promenade, and I was frightened to death because I was out of a job then. I was told afterwards there were quite a number of entrants for it, but I didn't know, I thought I was the only one. I'd had a chance to go before, but my mother thought Blackpool was too wicked for me! They were Methodists, you know, very narrow people.

I: The organ you were playing there, it was for dancing, wasn't it? It wasn't for the cinema anymore. What did that mean to you?

RD: They asked me if I'd played for dancing (Mr. Jepson, our musical ad-



Reginald Dixon

(Thompson collection)

visor). I said, "Oh yes." I'd played for *one* dance, at the Cutlers' Hall in Sheffield. I'd been sent home halfway through! There again, I'd had no experience of playing for dancing, but I was desperate! So I got the metronome going. The very first night, the pianist said to me, "What was that?"

I said, "It was a Quickstep."
He said, "You're telling me!"

The musical advisor, Jepson, said to me, "HAVE you played for dancing?"

I said, "Oh yes."

He said to me, "If you don't make a success of it, you'll go, and the **** organ as well!"

And of course, there was no amplification, and when you'd get a crowded ballroom you couldn't hear the organ at the end of the ballroom, so in '33 or '34 we started to make a suggestion for another organ.

I: You, of course, then got a new one, with three manuals, and grand piano, xylophone, and . . .

RD: Yes, and I'm responsible for that specification. I say that, whether they shoot me for it or not, but I wanted to have those biting reeds for dance work. Now, of course, they've got marvellous amplification and they can make it fill the place, can't they, without distortion? Things are so much easier than they were in the days gone by. I keep quoting what there wasn't in those days, but it's perfectly

true. It was pretty hard work. You'd no microphones to speak to the people! And I never had a heavy voice, a big voice.

Before the war, I never got home when the season started! I'd be there in the morning and the afternoon, and then they decided to introduce me playing in the ballet, the Children's Ballet, which a lot of the older people will remember. So there were two shows in the summer, with the ballet, 2:30 and (or was it 3:30? It doesn't really matter.) and 7 o'clock at one time, the times varied. Then we had two sessions and late dances, too. We had all the bands like Joe Loss, Ken Mackintosh, Jack Hylton, Ambrose. They used to do a week at the Palace in the Varieties, then come across and play for a late dance, and I was in for the interval again! They used to bring me a nice steak and chips at teatime!

I: How much were you getting a week for this then?

RD: Well, I started off in the winter-time at six pounds a week, and in the summer, nine pounds a week!

I: Well, of course, even before the war, in the mid-1930s you were already broadcasting, weren't you?

RD: Yes, one August before the war I did eight broadcasts in one week, and they were all live! In those days, you see, you hadn't the recordings, they were live, and they were sent out to places like Canada. I often wonder if anybody ever heard them! We did get occasional letters. Sometimes these were 3 o'clock and 4 o'clock in the morning. Then later I started with Radio Luxemburg. I did three nights a month starting at midnight. They wouldn't close the ballroom till 4 o'clock in the morning. I remember struggling with the melody from "Rhapsody in Blue," the middle part you know. I had to announce at the end of it and I kept stumbling over the announcement. And of course, there again, you know, they were wax records, you hadn't tape. I had just done a successful one, and leaning back, I heard a slow handclap up on the balcony! It was one of my keen fans, the fireman! He thought he was giving me a bit of applause. I said, "I could kill you! You just ruined my record." I had to go through the whole lot again after that.

I: As well as the broadcasting, there

were records you started to make in the '30s too, weren't there?

RD: Yes, yes.

I: And you were selling millions. These were 78s, of course. What was your favorite?

RD: Well, I don't . . . do you know, I can't really remember.

I: "Tiger Rag" was one I think that had a big sale.

RD: That was the highest selling record (in about 1934 I think it was) in the country, wasn't it, that "Tiger Rag?" I used to listen to the dance bands and I must have copied what they did. Of course, "Tiger Rag" was a favorite amongst all the bands.

I consider my technique was because I had rehearsed so much on the piano and done all types of scale practice. Minor scales, major scales, double thirds, all that, which gave me a good technique. You see, now take the modern electronic organ. Your hands don't get strong playing one of those because there's no resistance in them is there? On a Wurlitzer you've got the time lag to fight, too. One fellow once said to me, "Do you realize that your feet are in front of your hands?" I said, "No, I don't realize it, but I know why, 'cause it takes longer for the sound to go through that big pipe than it does through the shorter ones." Which is true, isn't it? You see, you've got to wait until the wind travels round. It can probably

be only a fraction of a second, but it's there. So therefore, your feet have got to be in front and the lower the longer it takes. That comes automatically.

Yes, I consider that playing the piano, practicing on the piano, was responsible for my technique on the organ. I'm afraid I couldn't do it now.

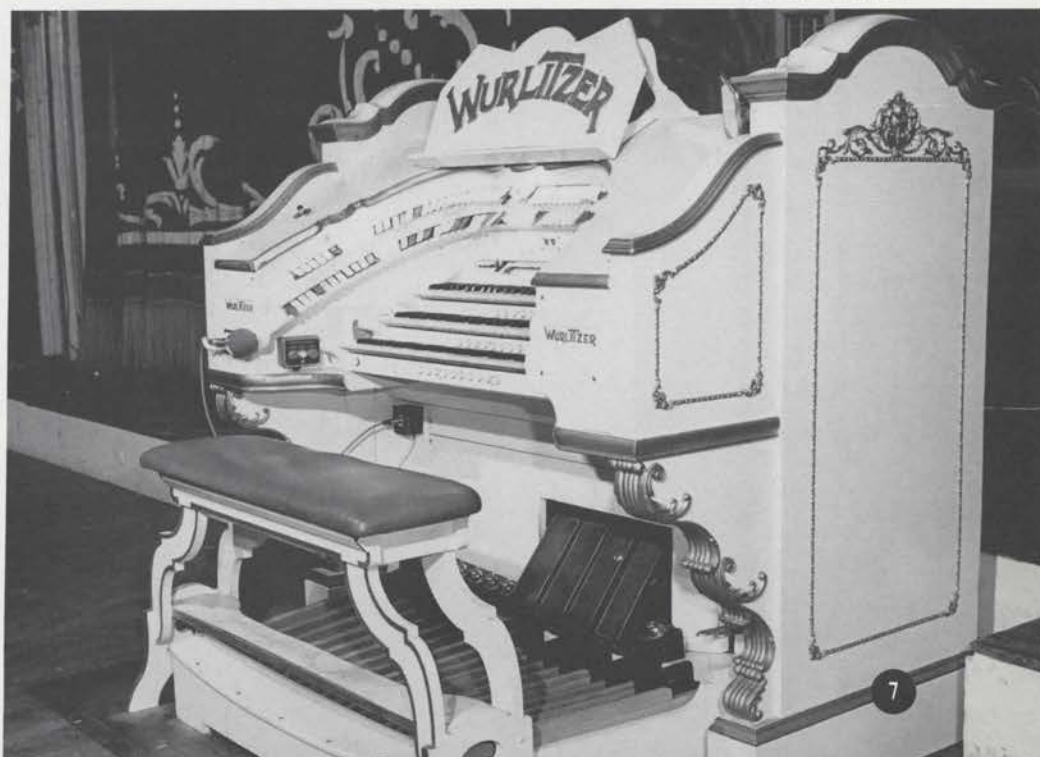
I: The war years. You went into the R.A.F., I think. Went in as an Aircraftman and came out as a Squadron Leader?

RD: Acting Squadron Leader, yes. What happened, I tried to join up quietly, going to Gloucester, as a radio operator, but someone found out and sent me to Uxbridge as a musician. I had a five-piece band eventually, arriving at Northolt, with 90% Polish personnel. Very brave men, too. I've always had very great admiration for the Polish people. It was, as you know, just after the Battle of Britain when I joined up, and we used to try to play Chopin; they loved Chopin. There was a Polish Sergeant Pilot there. I was Acting Sergeant at that time, in the Sergeant's Mess, and he always used to ask me to play "Poeme" by Fibisch.

I felt it wasn't a war, it wasn't what I joined up for. So I went in for a commission and eventually got one. They put me into movement control, which was connected with RTOs and Air Ministry movements. In fact, I went on all the D-Day exercises and finally finished up at Air Ministry

Console of the "Dancing Queen," the 3/14 Wurlitzer Opus 2187 in the famous Tower Ballroom Blackpool, England. Designed by Reginald Dixon, it was opened by him April 10, 1935, and played by him until he retired in 1970.

(John Sharp photo)



when they were preparing for the invasion of Japan. Then they dropped the atom bomb there and eventually I was demobbed. I don't want to go into a lot of details over the war, but I felt I was a small cog in a very important job, that's all, and I look back and felt that I did something worthwhile. I used to occasionally go up to Bangor (where the BBC theatre organ was housed) on my leave and do a broadcast. I remember on one exercise I was at Old Sarum where they were all congregating for the invasion, and I heard an organ as I went past the Nissen huts. It was Charlie Smart doing a broadcast that I should have done! I was "somewhere in England" and nobody knew where I was. That was prior to D-Day. Looking back, I wouldn't have missed that now, but there were times I used to worry, wondering if I ever would get back to playing.

I: In spite of all that, you became a national broadcasting figure in the really big days of radio just after the war.

RD: Yes, it was hard work. I felt it was hard work to come back again somehow, because, in five years another generation had sprung up, see? I mean now, after 14 years away from Blackpool, a number of people say "Who's Reginald Dixon?" Which is true. People say, "Oh, people will remember YOU forever." No, it doesn't happen, does it?

The morning broadcasts . . . it astounded me that, you know. Ten o'clock in the morning. They were coming in at 9 o'clock and the ballroom would be packed with people! It was really remarkable. I couldn't understand it . . . just for half an hour's broadcast! One of the things which they loved was to sing. I remember the producer saying, "Try to get them singing." I said "Try! I can't stop them!" They'd sing anything. So that was the idea of the last five minutes being a sing-along. And if it wasn't in I'd get letters complaining about it.

I: You were awarded the MBE, but one of the big honors was to be allowed to switch on Blackpool Illuminations in 1956.

RD: Yes, it was a wonderful year.

I: You were such a tremendously glamorous figure then. I think, to cope with the fans, you had photo-

graphs made that tore off like postage stamps, perforated like postage stamps.

RD: Oh, yes, mmm. A firm in Dundee did them for me. They had glue on the back and they used to stick them on the corner of the autograph book page, inside. Yes. I'd almost forgotten about those! I had some of them at one time, but they've disappeared like other things.

I: You were judging the beauty contests, of course.

RD: Yes, yes. You make a few friends there and I always think a lot of enemies, too! I remember walking past, and there was a girl from Sheffield. It was a terrific walk round that stadium — like walking to the scaffold I thought sometimes. As I was walking past the Sheffield girl (she didn't get a prize), a voice said "Th'art not a very good picker, Reggie!"

I: 1969 was your Ruby Wedding, and retirement too, after 40 years at the Tower.

RD: Actually, it was '70, I thought.

I: 1970 you actually finished?

RD: Yes, '69 was the starting of it. In many ways I didn't want to leave, but I just felt that the strain was beginning to prove too much. You see, I started in May, I used to supposedly have a day off, but the last two years I did a BBC program with Vince Hill on my day off, and then I did two series with Moira Anderson, and that was supposedly my day off. I used to get home at half past five! My wife would have a lovely meal for me, but that was my day off. Then there was the weekend, and of course, as you know, I did three shows on Sundays. I didn't play as much as I did before the war because I couldn't. So then I realized that possibly I could move around a bit. I was able to go over to Holland with my Dutch friends.

I played the very first electronic organ in 1934, in the cellar in the Plaza, Stockport. It was a sack of potatoes, supposedly! It had been brought over against an embargo. The man that told me has gone now so it won't really matter. That was the first Hammond. They called it a Lafleur, in those days, to differentiate between the church and the cinema. The Hammond was the church model, and the same model was the Lafleur because some people would say, "We don't

want a cinema organ in our church." Now, of course, you more or less have to play a computer, haven't you? I could get on any Wurlitzer or a Compton and within a short while produce some sounds — a few settings here and there — but I could hesitate with an electronic organ because they are not the same, they are not alike, are they? They're all different, they all have different positions for this, that and the other. I think they've been a good thing because they do produce some brilliant young organists, don't they? You might say, "Well, YOU haven't got an electronic organ." I haven't for the simple reason that they keep improving them! I think there's a bit of Yorkshire still left in me; I won't get one till they get the ultimate. But it's probably going to be too late then.

I was looking the other day, and I could see the Tower. Whenever we used to drive back home when we'd been away during our holiday, I used to say to my wife, "There's the office! Back again tomorrow!" I still regard it as "the office," although it's now 14 years since I left there. Actually, there's a certain amount of luck in life. Well, call it luck, if you like, maybe I'm wrong there. As I said before, I sometimes think your life is planned out for you. I have regrets, but I've got a lot of very happy memories, VERY happy memories. □

CLOSING CHORD

"The flag on Blackpool Tower is flying at half-mast today." Thus the BBC announced to the world on its Overseas Service on May 9 that the world's most popular theatre pipe organist, **Reginald Dixon**, had passed from the scene. Popular as many other organists were, in the UK and USA, none were truly beloved of the general public as was Dixon. Genuinely a household name in the UK, Holland and throughout the British Commonwealth, he will be mourned by countless people to whom his name was synonymous with organ music; in fact, many of them could probably not name another organist. Millions danced to his music in the famed Tower Ballroom over the 40 years of his residency there and countless others listened to his many broadcasts or bought his recordings. At one



Reginald Dixon

time he was broadcasting on the BBC up to eight half-hour programs a week (what a wealth of material he must have covered) and he remains the world's most prolific recording organist.

He was born in Sheffield, Yorkshire, in 1904 and took piano lessons quite early in life. He taught himself to play the organ at Birley Carr Methodist Church in his home town, but his first job was as a pianist for the silent movies in an industrial town in England's midlands. While appearing at Preston he met Vera, his future wife, and popped the question to her while sitting in the balcony of the Tower Ballroom, long before he had any thoughts of playing there.

While at the Preston theatre he heard that the Tower company was looking for an organist to play for dancing, and even though he had no experience in this kind of playing, he applied. To his surprise he was appointed and commenced his duties in 1930. By 1932 he was already recording and broadcasting with some regularity, and by 1934 it was decided to replace the 2/10 Wurlitzer with an instrument more suited to Reg's ability and fame, so the 3/13 Wurlitzer was installed, which became world famous as Dixon captured the hearts of the English with his infectious rhythm playing.

His white suit, two-tone shoes and pencil-slim moustache were copied by countless young men of the day. In a much publicized newspaper poll he supplanted Gracie Fields as England's most popular entertainer. At the peak of his popularity in 1939 he volunteered for the RAF and was ab-

sent from Blackpool until 1945, during which time "Squadron Leader Dixon and his melody sextet" entertained the troops from "somewhere in England" until he put his foot down and insisted on active service.

In 1945 he returned to Blackpool, nervously wondering if his public would still want him. He need not have worried. His popularity was as great as before, so much so that Queen Elizabeth awarded him the M.B.E. He continued broadcasting, recording and playing for dancing until his retirement from the Tower in 1970. His final performance was broadcast in its entirety on the BBC and at its conclusion he received a 20-minute standing ovation, with many people openly weeping. It was described in the press as "the end of an era."

Dixon continued playing, however, and toured England giving concerts wherever there were pipe organs, or

touring his own electronic organ. The BBC installed a 3/13 Wurlitzer (formerly in the Empress Ballroom, Blackpool, whose nucleus was the original Tower 2/10) in the Playhouse Theatre, Manchester, so that he could continue to broadcast regularly. His final concert performance took place in the City Hall of his home town in 1978 and he then returned to his bungalow on the outskirts of Blackpool.

He will be fondly remembered, not only for his music and recordings, but also for the profound effect he had on the lives of quite a few young musicians, many of whom became professional organists solely as a result of his example and inspiration. He always had time to reply to fan letters or spend time with his fans, and continued to correspond with the writer and offer encouragement right up to this year. He leaves a void which can never be filled.

DON THOMPSON □

KEYBOARD TECHNIQUES



by Cheryl Seppala



COUNTER MELODY

After you have become acquainted with the vast variety of rhythm patterns available to complement your favorite melodies, you may wish to add a left-hand counter-melody to further enhance your arrangement.

Let us simply define a left-hand counter-melody as holding down any note of a chord while playing a rhythmic accompaniment around it. A counter-melody improves the sound of a rhythmic accompaniment by eliminating the choppy, monotonous effect, while adding pretty harmony.

The first step in learning to play a

counter-melody is to develop the ability to sustain one finger while tapping the other fingers around it. We will call this finger independence. As a preparatory independence exercise, play a four-note chord with the left hand in this manner: Press the lowest note of the chord down firmly, then tap the remaining keys in the chord lightly and staccato. If you are performing this correctly, the counter-melody note predominates the others. Repeat this procedure using the top note of the chord as the counter-melody. Finally, try this exercise using one

of the middle notes of the chord as the counter-melody. Sustaining a middle note while tapping around it is a very difficult technique, but can certainly be mastered with some careful practice.

Once your fingers have developed the ability to sustain any note as a counter-melody, you then must learn to select which note will sound the best to use. Many times there will be more than one good choice — trust your ear to decide what is most pleasing. The following ideas will help you get started in selecting a pretty counter-melody.

1. Select a note out of the chord that sounds best against the melody. Often it sounds good to select a counter-melody note the distance of a third or a sixth away from the melody.
2. Do not duplicate the melody as the counter-melody. This does not create harmony.
3. Try to form a direction or line to the counter-melody by keeping it moving in the same direction for

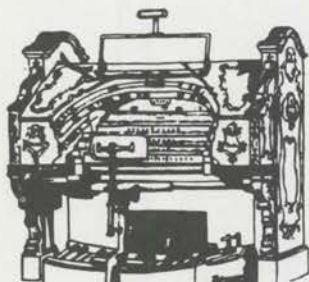
**WIN
AUSTRALIA
NEW ZEALAND
TOUR**



New members are the key to the future of ATOS! Do you want an expense-paid trip for two to Australia and New Zealand? See page 11 for the details on how you can get one through participation in the ATOS-sponsored Membership Contest. This interesting, unusual tour is described below.

4. Try to use the "distinctive" note in a chord as the counter-melody. For example, if the chords are F to F minor to C, select A (the third of the F chord) to Ab (the "distinctive" note that moved, in this case the minor) to G (the fifth of the C chord, and the note that completes the simple chromatic pattern of A-Ab-G).

A beautiful counter-melody can make an otherwise amateurish, boring, choppy piece into a flowing, interesting and well-studied arrangement. It is one more technique you can develop to make your playing more professional. There are many reference books and theatre organ arrangements available for more in-depth study of this subject. It is a skill well worth the effort to develop. □



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MEMBERSHIP CONTEST

ATOS MEMBERSHIP CONTEST WITH BIG WINNERS!

Did you say I have a chance to win a trip costing over \$6000? Hard to believe — BUT TRUE! By securing new members for ATOS two lucky couples will make the Australia-New Zealand tour next February-March with virtually all expenses fully paid.

TWO WAYS YOU CAN WIN!

There are two ways to win. One is to sign up more new members than anyone else in ATOS. The second method is to secure just five (5) new members. Your name will then be part of a drawing made up of those who have gotten their five. From that group a winner will be selected. Think about it. When did you have a chance to win a prize of that value for such little effort and with such favorable odds?

**WIN
AUSTRALIA
NEW ZEALAND
TOUR**

STARTS NOW!

The contest is now underway and ends December 31. The rules and an advertisement describing the trip are below. One important point — **be sure your name as sponsor accompanies the new member application.** With some thought you can name five good prospects. Get them in! Get in the drawing!

ATOS MEMBERSHIP CONTEST RULES

TWO GRAND PRIZES

Each prize is for two people. It is the full cash payment required of couples making the Australia-New Zealand tour. Based on two per room. Must accompany the tour group.

See Patterson Travel Ad on page 10

Prize 1: The person securing the most new members during the contest period. A tie will be decided by a coin flip.

Prize 2: The other winner will be based on a drawing from the names of everyone who secured five (5) new members during the contest period. A person's name will be placed in the drawing for each multiple of five (5) new members secured. The winner of Prize 1 will not be in the drawing.

TIME OF CONTEST

This contest began June 10, 1985 and closes with new memberships postmarked not later than December 31, 1985. They must be received not later than January 6, 1986. Winners will be notified on January 8, 1986.

RULES

- 1) All persons holding membership in ATOS on May 1, 1985 eligible to participate. In memberships held as "Mr. & Mrs." either, but not both, may participate.
- 2) Every new member application must be accompanied by the name of the sponsor when received at the ATOS office. NO EXCEPTIONS.
- 3) Any person who has not been a member of ATOS during 1985 is eligible to be counted as a new member. The December 31, 1984 roster of ATOS is the guide.
- 4) If a person who has paid for the trip is a winner they shall receive a full refund.

RECORDS

The ATOS Executive Director shall keep all contest records. Members will be notified when the records show five new members have been secured. No other information regarding numbers shall be released. All records will be verified by the Treasurer. Neither the Treasurer nor the Executive Director is eligible to participate in the contest.

Contest is based on 50 paying persons on the trip. With a lower number the drawing prize will take precedence.

You may use the Membership Application Form on page 55 or a facsimile.

THE CURTIS SESQUICENTENNIAL ORGAN

Photos © 1984 W. Owen Lampe, Jr.

Four manuals and 162 ranks. Quite an organ! No, it's not a theatre organ like those in which we are primarily interested, but it is a beautiful orchestral organ with tonal percussions; one which is threatened by the forces of "progress."

The instrument is Austin Organ Company's Opus 1416 (1926), installed in Irvine Auditorium of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. It was originally built at a cost of \$150,000 for the Sesquicentennial Exposition, held in Philadelphia

to mark the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Austin built and installed the organ in just six months!

The Exposition was not a financial success and closed in November 1926. About a year later Cyrus H. K. Curtis, founder of the Curtis Publishing Company, was persuaded to buy the organ from the city and donate it to the University. The purchase price was a small fraction of its original cost.

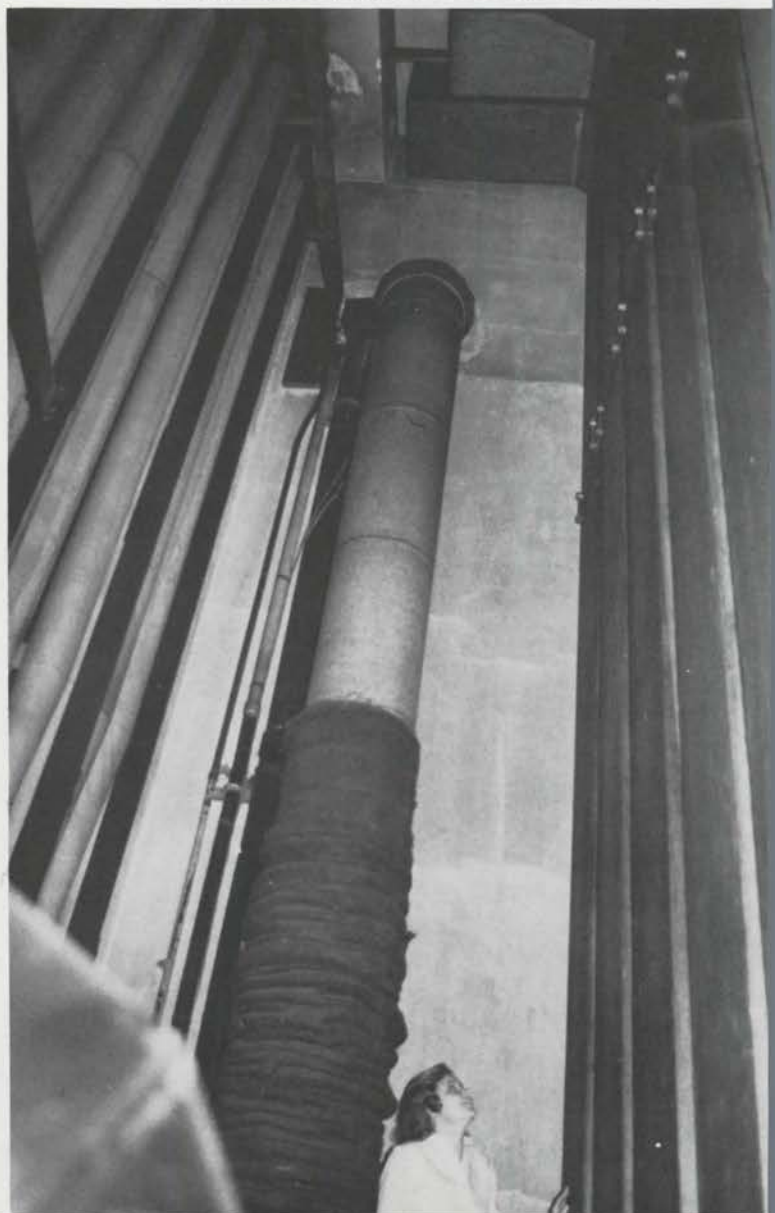
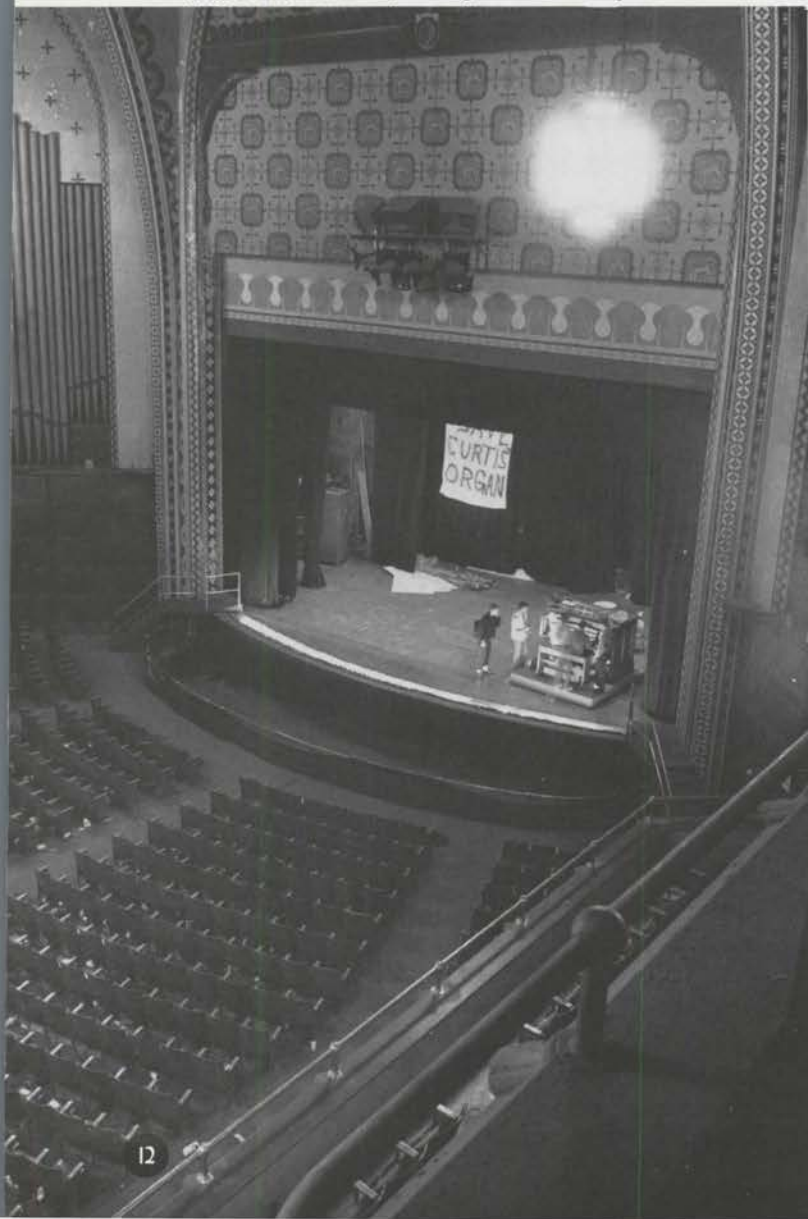
At that time the Irvine Auditorium,

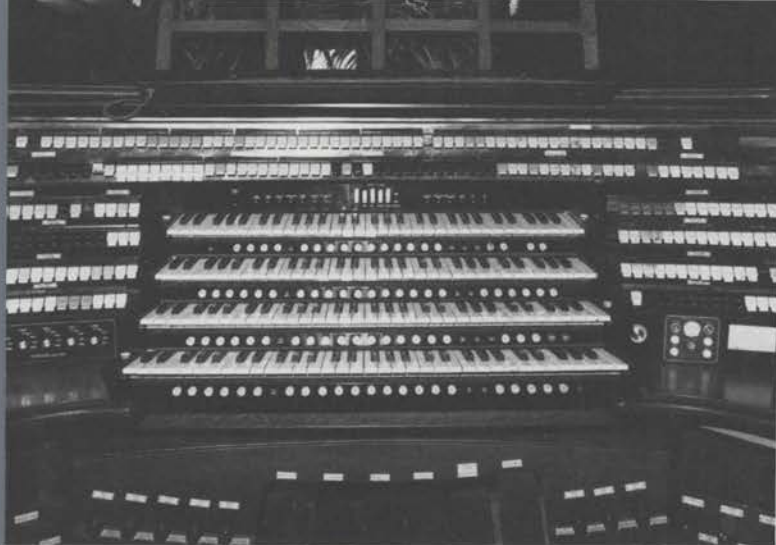
designed by the firm of Horace Trumbauer (who also designed the Keswick Theatre in Glenside, Pennsylvania), was under construction and could be modified to accommodate the organ. The dedication of the building was delayed almost four years because of the modifications and the installation of the instrument.

The entire instrument was located on one side of the Main Exposition Hall at the Exposition, which largely accounted for the very short installation time there. But Irvine Auditori-

View of Irvine Auditorium, with organ console on stage.

32' Double Open Diapason. Low C pipe weighs 1100 pounds.





Console of the Curtis Organ at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.



Austin Universal Windchest for the Great and Swell divisions.

um was designed to house an organ of moderate size in chambers on either side of the stage, and thus it was necessary to locate most of the Curtis organ elsewhere in the building. Upper galleries on the sides of the auditorium, originally intended for seating, were converted to house the organ, with only the larger pedal pipes located in the original chambers. The console was placed in the orchestra pit.

Apparently, maintenance of the organ was minimal during its first 30 years in Irvine, necessitating a major overhaul in the mid-1950s. Funds were provided by Mary Curtis Zimbalist, daughter of the donor, and the work was done in 1958-59 by Brantly Duddy and coworkers for Austin Organs. Maintenance was again neglected and the organ was unplayable by the early 1970s.

The Curtis Organ Restoration Society was founded in the 1970s as a student activity to assist the University in restoring and maintaining the organ. The Society is now composed of administrators, alumni, faculty, students, professional organbuilders and concerned friends of the instrument. Funds were raised to pay for professional rebuilding of the console. Volunteer help has been re-leathering the organ (an earlier restoration used Perflex, which has had to be replaced), and it is now almost fully restored to its original tonal and functional state.

Tonally, the Curtis organ is typical of large concert organs built in this country in the 1920s, and it is one of the few to survive intact. It bridges the gap between the classical organ and the theatre organ. Like most organs of its type, it is made up largely of ranks of 8' pitch, with little unification or borrowing in the manual divi-

sions. Each manual division has a complete 16'-8'-4' reed chorus of independent ranks, and several orchestral stops (strings, imitative flutes, reeds, etc.). The Great, Choir and Swell divisions have independent 4' and mutation ranks. Especially interesting is the String division, containing 26 independent ranks — 20 of 8' pitch (three 16' extensions for the pedal), three of 4' pitch and a three-rank mixture — which can be played on any manual and is enclosed in its own chamber.

A 40-hp Spencer blower provides wind at 7" and 10" to the instrument, with an additional 2-hp Spencer boosting the 10" wind of the Solo division to 20" for the Tuba Magna 8'-4' rank. All of the organ, except those pipes in the original chambers, is winded from Austin Universal Windchests. The chests are enormous, measuring approximately 35 x 20 x 7 feet! (For a recent fundraiser, a cocktail party was held inside a chest!)

When the console was rebuilt in the '70s a number of features were provided which were not in its original design. Included among these are many functions controlled by 45 toe studs, five expression pedals which can be assigned to any division except the Great (unenclosed), a Great-to-Choir transfer reversible by which the functions of the Great and Choir manuals can be interchanged, and the Auditorium's Schulmerich carillon can now be played from the console. The rebuilt console was mounted on a movable platform on the stage, with sufficient new cable (supplied by Bell Telephone) to permit moving it to any part of the stage.

In September 1984 plans were announced by the University to gut the

interior of Irvine Auditorium and reconstruct it at a cost of \$10 million to provide a small recital hall, offices and rehearsal and practice rooms for the Music Department. This would mean scrapping the organ!

The Curtis Organ Restoration Society immediately sought expressions of support for its efforts to save the organ and building, as well as contribution of funds. The Organ Historical Society, the Theatre Historical Society, the American Guild of Organists and the Delaware Valley Chapter of ATOS have given support and encouragement. Pledges of substantial funds have been received, which must be matched by the Restoration Society. As a result, the University Provost has said that the University would restore both the auditorium and the organ if the Society can raise \$1 million.

Persons wishing to contribute, or to express support, may address: Kevin Douglas Chun, President, Curtis Organ Restoration Society, 2031 Locust Street, Suite 1502, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103.

Later this year a symposium on orchestral organs is to be held in Irvine Auditorium. This will include several workshops, a Benefactors Dinner served in one of the windchests to donors of \$100 or more, and close with a theatre organ concert and vaudeville show featuring Don Kinnier at the console. Thomas Murray of Yale University will be making a recording of the organ in the near future.

Information for this article was obtained in part from an article by Benjamin R. Epstein in the May, 1982 issue of *The Diapason*, and is used by permission. □

Specification of the CURTIS SESQUICENTENNIAL ORGAN

Irvine Auditorium, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

Austin Organ Company, Opus 1416 (1926), 162 Ranks, 10,731 Pipes,

<p>GREAT (Unenclosed)</p> <p>16' Violone Dolce 8' First Diapason 8' Second Diapason 8' Viola Da Gamba 4' Principal 2-2/3' Octave Quint 2' Fifteenth IV Mixture (12, 15, 17, 19)</p> <p>(Enclosed)</p> <p>16' Bourdon (ext.) 8' Third Diapason 8' Fourth Diapason 8' Fifth Diapason 8' Flauto Major 8' Bourdon 8' Doppie Flute 8' Clarabella 8' Harmonic Flute 8' Violoncello 8' Gemshorn 5-1/3' Quint 4' Octave 4' Hohl Flute 4' Harmonic Flute V Mixture (19, 22, 24, 26, 29) 16' Double Trumpet 8' Tuba Magna (Solo) 8' Trumpet 8' French Trumpet 8' French Horn 4' Clarion Tremolo 8' Harp 8' Chimes (Solo) 8' Marimba Harp (Solo) Great to Great: 16', 4' Great Unison Off Swell to Great: 16', 8', 4', 2' Choir to Great: 16', 8', 5-1/3', 4' Solo to Great: 8', 4' String Div. to Great: 8'</p> <p>SWELL (Enclosed)</p> <p>16' Bourdon 16' Gemshorn 8' Open Diapason 8' Diapason Phoson 8' Horn Diapason 8' Geigen Principal 8' Rohr Flute 8' Melodia 8' Flute Celeste II 8' Viola Da Gamba 8' Viole D'Orchestre 8' Viole Celeste III 8' Salicional 8' Voix Celeste 4' Principal 4' Travers Flute 4' Flute D'Amour 4' Violina 2-2/3' Twelfth 2' Flautina 2' Fifteenth 1-3/5' Seventeenth 1-1/7' Twenty-First 1' Twenty-Second V Mixture (Collective: draws 12th, 15th, 17th, 21st, 22nd) IV Mixture (19, 22, 26, 29) 16' Contra Fagotto* 16' Vox Humana (1-rk. ext.) 8' French Trumpet* 8' Cornopean 8' Corno D'Amour 8' Oboe 8' Vox Humana II 4' Clarion* 4' Vox Humana (1-rk. ext.) Tremolo Swell to Swell: 16', 4' Swell Unison Off Choir to Swell: 16', 8', 4' Solo to Swell: 16', 8', 4' String Div. to Swell: 8'</p>	<p>CHOIR (Enclosed)</p> <p>16' Contra Gamba 16' Double Dulciana (ext.) 8' Open Diapason 8' Geigen Principal 8' Stopped Diapason 8' Quintadena 8' Concert Flute 8' Flute Celeste 8' Chimney Flute 8' Gemshorn 8' Gemshorn Celeste 8' Viole D'Orchestre 8' Viole Celeste 8' Dulciana 4' Principal 4' Flute D'Amour 4' Dolce (ext.) 2-2/3' Twelfth 2' Super Octave 2' Flageolet 2' Dulcet (ext.) 1-3/5' Seventeenth 1' Dulcinet (ext.) III Mixture (Collective: draws 12th, Sup. Oct., 17th) 16' Baryton 16' Trombone 16' Bass Clarinet 16' Cor Anglais (ext.) 8' Tromba 8' Orchestral Horn 8' Cor Anglais 8' Clarinet 8' Orchestral Oboe 8' Vox Humana 4' Tromba Clarion Tremolo 8' Harp (Great) 4' Harp (Great) 8' Chimes (Solo) Choir to Choir: 16', 4' Choir Unison Off Great to Choir: 8' Swell to Choir: 16', 8', 4', 2' Solo to Choir: 16', 8', 4' String Div. to Choir: 8'</p> <p>TROMBONE CHORUS (Enclosed)</p> <p>16' Trombone 8' First Tromba 8' Second Tromba 4' First Clarion 4' Second Clarion</p> <p>SOLO (Enclosed)</p> <p>8' Grand Diapason 8' Flauto Major 8' Gedeckt 8' Concert Flute (Choir) 8' Gross Gamba 8' Gamba Celeste 4' Flute Ouverte 4' Flute D'Amour (Choir) 2' Concert Piccolo 16' Tuba Profunda 8' Tuba Magna 8' Harmonic Tuba 8' French Bugle 8' Hunting Horn 8' French Horn (Great) 8' Bell Clarinet 8' Clarinet (Choir) 8' Cor Anglais (Choir) 8' Orchestral Oboe (Choir) 4' Tuba Clarion Tremolo Chimes 8' Harp (Great) 4' Xylophone 4' Carillons 4' Glockenspiel 8' Marimba Harp Schulmerich Carillon Solo to Solo: 16', 4' Solo Unison Off Great to Solo: 8' Choir to Solo: 8' Swell to Solo: 8' String Div. to Solo: 8'</p>	<p>PEDAL</p> <p>64' Resultant (from 16' 2nd Diap. and 16' 2nd Bourd.) 32' Double Principal (ext.) 32' Contra Violone (ext.) 32' Contra Bourdon (ext.) 16' Diaphone 16' First Diapason 16' Second Diapason 16' Metal Diapason 16' Violone 16' Gamba (Choir) 16' First Bourdon 16' Second Bourdon 16' Dulciana (Choir) 16' Lieblich Gedeckt (Swell) 16' String Celeste IV 16' (from String Div. & Choir) 10-2/3' Gross Quinte (ext. 2nd Bourd.) 8' Octave (ext. 2nd Diap.) 8' Principal (ext. Met. Diap.) 8' Gross Flote (ext. 1st Diap.) 8' Flauto Dolce (Swell) 8' String Celeste III (String Div.) 8' Violoncello Celeste (Solo) 8' Dulciana (Choir) 5-1/3' 5-1/3' Twelfth (ext. 2nd Bourd.) 4' Octave Flute (ext. 2nd Diap.) V Mixture (12, 15, 17, 19, 22) 32' Contra Bombarde (ext.) 16' Bombarde 16' Trombone 16' Trombone (Trmb. Chrs.) 16' Contra Fagotto (Swell) 16' Bass Clarinet (Choir) 16' Tuba Profunda (ext. Solo Tuba Magna) 8' Tuba Magna (Solo) 8' Tromba (ext. Trombone) 4' Tuba Clarion (ext. Solo Tuba Magna) 4' Clarion (ext. Trombone) Pedal to Pedal: 10-2/3', 8' Great to Pedal: 8', 4' Swell to Pedal: 8', 4', 2' Choir to Pedal: 8', 5-1/3', 4' Solo to Pedal: 8', 4'</p>	<p>STRING (Enclosed)</p> <p>8' Viole V 8' Celeste V 8' Viole III 8' Celeste III 8' Viole II 8' Celeste II 4' Viole III III String Mixture (12, 15, 17) Tremolo String Organ (Collective: draws all String Div. stops)</p> <p>REVERSIBLES</p> <p>Pistons and Studs: Choir to Great 8' Swell to Great 8' Solo to Great 8' Great to Pedal 8' Choir to Pedal 8' Swell to Pedal 8' Solo to Pedal 8' Reeds Off 16' Manual Stop Off 16' Couplers Off Tutti I Tutti II Zimbelstern</p> <p>Pistons Only: Choir to Swell 8' Swell to Choir 8' Solo to Choir 8' Great to Solo 8' Choir to Solo 8' String to Solo 8' Crescendo Pedal I Crescendo Pedal II Solo Off Cresc. Pedal Glockenspiel Reiteration Choir/Great Transfer Master Swell General Cancel (2)</p> <p>Studs Only: 32' Double Principal 32' Contra Violone 32' Contra Bourdon 32' Contra Bombarde</p>																											
<p>CONSOLE FEATURES</p> <p>20 General Pistons (16 duplicated by toe studs) 10 Divisional Pistons for Great, Choir, Swell, Solo and Pedal. Pedal pistons are duplicated by toe studs. 3 General Coupler Pistons</p> <p>OTHER</p> <p>Divisional Cancel Bars Div. Cancel Bars Defeat Expression Pedal Selector Dials</p>																														
<table border="0" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Division</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Location</th> <th style="text-align: right;">Wind Pressure</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Great (all)</td> <td>West Upper Gallery</td> <td style="text-align: right;">7"</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Swell</td> <td>West Upper Gallery</td> <td style="text-align: right;">7"</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Choir</td> <td>East Upper Gallery</td> <td style="text-align: right;">7"</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Trombone Chorus</td> <td>East Upper Gallery</td> <td style="text-align: right;">10"</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Solo</td> <td>East Upper Gallery</td> <td style="text-align: right;">10"</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tuba Magna</td> <td>—</td> <td style="text-align: right;">20"</td> </tr> <tr> <td>String</td> <td>East Upper Gallery</td> <td style="text-align: right;">7"</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pedal</td> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">Divided between left and right Pedal chambers.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Division	Location	Wind Pressure	Great (all)	West Upper Gallery	7"	Swell	West Upper Gallery	7"	Choir	East Upper Gallery	7"	Trombone Chorus	East Upper Gallery	10"	Solo	East Upper Gallery	10"	Tuba Magna	—	20"	String	East Upper Gallery	7"	Pedal	Divided between left and right Pedal chambers.	
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<p>* Replaced during 1958-59 restoration.</p>																														

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HOW TO TUNE AN ORGAN

by Dan Barton, Organbuilder

The first consideration is temperature. An organ should stand for 24 hours with the temperature at the same level it will be when the organ is being played. If installed in an auditorium where the temperature is allowed to drop in cold weather, the organ lofts should be equipped with electric heaters with thermostatic controls to maintain a steady temperature. Heat raises the organ pitch and cold lowers the pitch. The pitch does not change to the same degree throughout the organ. The wood pipes make little change while the metal pipes make severe changes, and not all metal pipes change the same. It will be readily understood that to listen to an organ tuned at one temperature and played at another can be a trifle dismal.

The first step in tuning is to set a temperament, but some explanation is necessary before we start. A chromatic scale of one octave consists of 12 semitones — C, C#, D, D#, E, F, F#, G, G#, A, A# and B, each semitone increasing in vibrations per second as we go up the scale. If the low C vibrates at 1000 times per second and is tuned in unison with the next higher C, the higher C will be vibrating exactly twice as fast or 2000 times per second, and the two pipes sounded together will sound like one pipe. The fifth, or G, when tuned in unison with C will vibrate one and a half times as fast as C or 1500 times per second, and when sounded with C will also sound like one pipe. These figures of 1000, 1500 and 2000 are used only as an example. The actual rate of vibrations per second will depend on whether the organ is tuned to International Pitch, American Standard Pitch, or somewhere in between.

If we divide the 12 semitones exactly equally into the octave we would have a pure scale, but if we add the next higher C at the same rate of divi-

sion the C will not be in unison with the lower C. Our modern keyboard or octave is thus shown to be imperfect. To learn exactly why, you would have to read a history of modern music, but suffice it to say that the imperfect scale was adopted in the 14th century and is now in universal use throughout the world.

To correct this peculiarity and allow the two C tones to be in unison, it is necessary to slightly modify each interval of the pure scale. Each semitone is flattened. This process of flattening the semitones is called tempering, hence the word "temperament." When the process is complete we have a tempered scale instead of a pure scale.

To determine exactly how much to flatten each semitone, we make use of a phenomenon that occurs in certain intervals when two tones are sounded together that are not in exact tune or unison. There is a conflict of sound waves created which produces a wave, pulsation or beat. If C and G are tuned in unison they sound like one pipe, but if G is either sharp or flat of the C, this beat becomes apparent to the ear. You hear a "yow — yow — yow" that is the beat, and it only occurs when the pipes are not in unison.

There are several methods used to set a temperament. One method uses two full octaves, one an octave and a half and another a single octave. I will explain the one octave method, as it is used by many professional organ tuners.

The equipment is a tuning fork for standard pitch C at 523.3 cps (A = 440 cps), a narrow blade chisel or screwdriver and someone to hold the keys while you work in the organ loft. Use an 8' string stop for the temperament. Start with middle C, the third C from the bottom of the keyboard. Tune this C in unison with the tuning fork. Hold this C and the fifth above, which is G. If there is no beat the pipes are in unison. If there is a beat, tap the scroll, which is the roll of metal at the bottom of the slot near the top of the pipe, with your tool until the G is in unison with C. Now you flat the G until you hear a slow beat, about one beat per second to three beats in five seconds. Practice and experience will tell you exactly how much to flat. To ascertain whether a pipe is flat or sharp hold the edge of your tuning chisel across the bottom of the slot directly on top of the scroll. This lessens the slot opening and is the same as rolling the scroll upward. If the beat increases, the pipe is flat. If the beat decreases, the pipe is sharp. Do not touch a metal pipe with your hands. The heat from your hand will raise the pitch of the pipe and destroy your tuning efforts.

The following explanation shows how to set a temperament. You flat each semitone as explained in the previous paragraph.

Each tone is numbered to make the rotation easier to understand. The low C is the third C from the bottom of the keyboard.

C - C# - D - D# - E - F - F# - G - G# - A - A# - B - C
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10 - 11 - 12 - 13

Tune the low C with tuning fork.

Tune G to C — No. 8 to 1.

Tune D to G — No. 3 to 8.

Tune A to D — No. 10 to 3.

Tune E to A — No. 5 to 10.

Tune B to E — No. 12 to 5.

Tune F# to B — No. 7 to 12.

Tune C# to F# — No. 2 to 7.

Tune G# to C# — No. 9 to 2.

Tune D# to G# — No. 4 to 9.

Tune A# to D# — No. 11 to 4.

Tune F to A# — No. 6 to 11.

Tune C to F — No. 13 to 6.

This article is reprinted from
Posthorn, April 1962.

Now you test — are the two C's in unison? Chances are good that they are not. It takes a pretty keen organ tuner to hit a temperament the first time through. If the higher C is flat to the low C you have flatted the semitones too much. If the upper C is sharp you have not flatted the semitones enough. Start over again, increasing or decreasing the flattening in accordance with what the unison test of the two C's has shown. It may be necessary to go over the tempering several times to secure a good unison of the two C's. You are not through when you secure the unison. You may have flatted one semitone too much and another not enough. These will average out to give a correct unison, but the temperament will be off. Go through once more to make sure the beats are the same for all the semitones.

Tune the string pipes in octaves with the temperament octave in exact unison. Continue throughout the organ always in unison, except the Celeste stop, which is tuned slightly sharp. On pedal stops tune in unison the 16' register in octaves with the 8' register of the pedal stop. Take time to make sure the temperament is correct. If you have errors in the temperament you will distribute these errors throughout the entire organ.

Tune all stops to the String, never tune Flute to String, then Flute to Tibia, then Tibia to Tuba. If you made an error in tuning, this method will usually multiply the error. Tune every stop to the String and if there is an error it will be in only one rank of pipes.

If the organ is in two lofts, set a temperament in each loft. Never attempt to tune from one loft to the other.

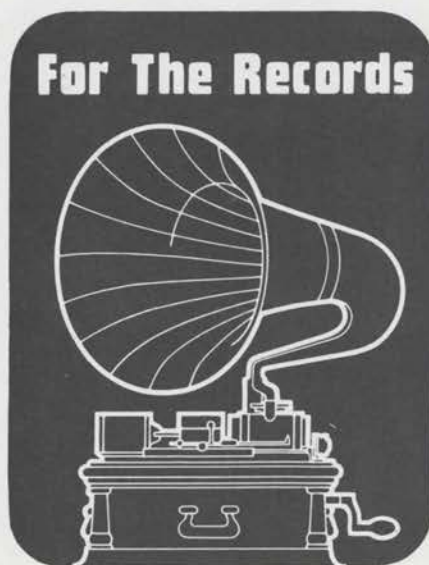
Never blow into a reed pipe or on the reed after the boot has been removed. The moisture from your breath will corrode the reed.

Flue pipes — Strings or Open Diapasons — are tuned by rolling the metal which has been cut from the slot. Some pipe makers cut off the roll of metal and use a metal cylinder fitted over the pipe that can be moved up or down to shorten or lengthen the slot. Open wood pipes of large scale have a wooden slide. Open wood pipes of small scale have a metal flap on the top of the pipe that can be moved up or down like a trap door to change the pitch. Some small-scale

wood pipes have a slot with a roll tuner. Stopped wood pipes are tuned by moving the stopper up or down.

Reed pipes have a tuning wire which rests on the reed and is moved up or down to shorten or lengthen the part of the reed which vibrates to produce the tone. Some reed pipes have slots at the top of the pipes and some have a slide or collar at the top of the pipe. These are not used for tuning, but to regulate the power of the pipe.

No musical talent or ability is used in tuning. A fellow who has a tin ear and cannot whistle a tune or sing a simple song can become an expert organ tuner. It is simply training the ear to recognize the beat. □



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AN AMERICAN IN PARIS. John Seng playing three theatre pipe organs in concert. Available at \$8.95 post-paid from Pipe Organ Presentations, Box 20704, Castro Valley, California 94546.

John Seng is a perfectionist, whether playing neatly arranged standards, or, as displayed here, music usually played by a symphony orchestra. John is versatile. His talents range

from playing in restaurants to ensemble keyboard work in such large and small screen films as *Magnum PI*, the new *Buck Rogers*, *Superman* and *The Empire Strikes Back*. He also pursues a now-and-then concert career (as time allows), plus a continuing association with a major builder of electronic keyboard instruments.

We have always admired the recordings of John Seng, starting with his initial "Beyond the Blue Horizon," and there is absolutely no truth to the oft-repeated story he told over the years that his mother took over a paper route to pay for its processing. It became something of a private joke with his fans. Trouble is, John has not recorded often enough. Most of his previous discs are no longer available. His ability deserves wider exposure. There are not too many organists whose talents range from standards to symphonic music.

This recording provides ample proof. First, the pops, although titles listed here are not in playing order.

"On A Clear Day" is beautifully phrased and registered. John starts one chorus on a mellow set of Tibias, much more fluid than ones usually associated with Seng. He likes his Tibias sharp and articulate. There is a wide degree of expressiveness here, and interesting rhythm changes.

"Big Bells and Little Bells" is a rhythmic novelty tune on the "Holiday for Strings" pattern. The old "shave and a haircut" device marks many phrase endings. Lots of "little bells" (Glockenspiel, etc.) but we're still waiting for the "big bells." Nary a bong nor peal.

There are echoes of Crawford in John's conception of "The Song Is Ended," but no imitation. Again, expert phrasing comes into play, with many registration changes.

For "Flight of the Bumble Bee" John uses a high-pitched melody combination against accompaniment on mellow brass, a novel concept.

"Cuban Cutie" is reminiscent of those "the natives are whooping it up tonight" exotic tunes of the '50s, when the "Sacre du Sauvage" music, exploited then by the Martin Denny instrumental quartet, was in vogue. George Wright joined the band wagon with a "Quiet Village" sync'd with erotic bird calls. Enough time has passed for a review of the genre. Emphasis is on an engaging rhythmic pattern which persists throughout, even

where there are rests. The attractive melody is exploited on many changes of registration. One untrem'd combo sounds for all the world like a tone-wheel Hammond! The selection ends on one booming pedal note.

"Flapperette" is a fast-action novelty of the "Nola" type. It is performed on an organ with a wealth of tonal percussions which John plays "up front" with such fast precision that it sounds mechanically "speeded up." It isn't.

"People" is that soulful tune which, during its initial popularity, was the bane of too many radio stations with over plugging. In retrospect, and divorced from Barbra, it's not a bad ballad. John Seng squeezes every last ounce of sentiment from its measures with expert handling of expression and orchestration. Hearing it again played by Seng can't help but remind us of the long ago concert he played on the big Robert-Morton in the San Francisco Orpheum — the night the bench had been raised on blocks to accommodate the long-legged player. If our memory is accurate, during the climactic "Pee-pul" the blocks gave way and the bench fell a few inches, enough to rattle the organist. But he never let on. It was only later that he admitted to us a moment of terror.

"Honky Tonk Train" has long been a Seng favorite, even before he started adding musical lustre to cooked pasta. Yes, it's authentic pizza parlor "corn" and its obviousness is far beneath the subtle John Seng we have known for 20 years. Trouble is — he likes it. So here it is, complete with boogie-woogie rhythm, train whistles and manual-slapping "choo-choos." We can only observe that he has never done it with more audience-grabbing precision. We must also admit that the insistent rhythm is infectious, darn it! And pipe that Guy Lombardo ending!

Now to the real "meat" of this recording — two extraordinary selections for theatre organ presentation. Eleven minutes and 35 seconds of Ravel's "La Valse" and nearly 17 minutes of "An American in Paris."

One can easily visualize Gene Kelly dancing his fascinating quasi-ballet steps during the latter, a spirited and faithful rendition of one of George Gershwin's symphonic immortals. Seng's skill in split-second combina-



John Seng

tion changes is little short of amazing. He presents the tone picture on a rich variety of instrumentation which often comes very close to orchestral versions. Music critic Oscar Levant once stated that all music depicting moving city traffic was patterned after the opening segment, with or without the continental auto horns. And there's a bluesy-blues section which hits the depths of human despair. Our favorite theme is the one which melodically resembles the old pop, "A Sunday Kind of Love." Seng must have analyzed several orchestral recordings in order to formulate the fine orchestral coloring he offers. It was pioneer work; to the best of our knowledge, it's the first effort to transcribe this Gershwin orchestral work for theatre organ presentation. The end result should satisfy the most finicky critic. And John plays it all; no cuts.

The closer is a thrilling presentation of "La Valse." There are various ways to satirize a piece of music or its style. One is to lace it with auto horns, cow bells, slide-whistle schmears, etc., to amuse the listener as Spike

Jones did. The subtle Maurice Ravel took another route. He genuinely disliked Strauss waltzes with their steady "boom trap trap" accompaniments. But to burlesque them he wrote a piece far more complex than anything attempted by Strauss, and often with more ear-pleasing themes. In brief, it's a thing of beauty in many places, yet Ravel never lets the listener forget he's having some outrageous fun with the Viennese waltz style. He's especially brutal with the rhythm when he seems to allow the "trap-trap" afterbeats to overtake and pass the "boom." He works in short phrases and his climaxes usually sound like trouble in the orchestra. In brief, it's something like the distortion of viewing a work of art as reflected by gently rippling water.

It was not easy to adapt "La Valse" for theatre organ presentation. It required a musician with Seng's imagination and skills to make it come off properly. We have compared it with several orchestral versions and the end result is a solid plus, but leaving us wondering where John found enough fingers and feet to cram in all the counter melodies, not to mention frequent registration changes. The contrasting simultaneous rhythms are tricky. As all the music on this disc was recorded during live concerts, there could be no resorting to the on-and-off of multiple track taping.

This many-hued treatment of "La Valse" has great dynamics and very satisfying instrumentation throughout.

This recording represents the first effort of a new tack taken by Don Thompson's Pipe Organ Presentations, the management and recordings of several notable organists. It's a good starter. While roughly 24 minutes have been pressed on either side of the disc, the sound quality of the inner cuts hasn't seemed to have suffered (18 to 20 minutes is more usual). The surfaces are smooth and perfectly centered.

These cuts were all made during John's concerts over the past few years and that runs the risk of audience noise. Not to worry. There is no

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applause audible. If one listens closely he might note a couple of coughs but such noise is never intrusive. Jacket notes by John and tape editor Don Thompson are informative and intelligently written. There is a recent photo of John at a four-decker, but no hints regarding the identity of the three instruments heard. They sound like large installations and well maintained. We understand that information about them is enclosed in the package sent to purchasers.

Don't miss this one; it's one of John Seng's best to date.

ALLEN MILLS PLAYS PROCTOR'S. Record or cassette available from Proctor's Theatre, 432 State Street, Schenectady, New York 12305. \$13.00 postpaid.

All that glitters is definitely "Goldie" in this recording by Allen Mills out of Proctor's Theatre. "Goldie" is the Golub 3/18 Wurlitzer originally (1931) in the Paramount Theatre, Aurora, Illinois. The present organ transplant is a resounding success. Even the jacket photo of Proctor's auditorium deserves honorable mention.

"Goldie" is blessed with very responsive percussions which Allen uses to season the rousing opener, "I Ain't Down Yet," a Meredith Willson march for *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*. The repetitiveness of this simple ditty is nicely camouflaged under deft registrations and key changes. Although the Harp accompaniment for the first chorus of "Memory" seems halting and incomplete, Mills quickly woos us with a great Vox and Strings ensemble. The piano is in tune but rather lifeless. The untremmed Trumpet is great. A quiet Glock finish for this oft-played hit from *Cats* suggests that Allen has listened to the original cast album of the show.

"My Buddy" is perfect theatre organ sound. Sweet, lush Tibias and Strings are just what the doctor ordered. An authoritative final chorus with Crawford rolls ends with a modest Glock statement. "Cecilia" bounces gracefully in silken ranks sequined with tuned percussions, Kinura and untremmed Trumpet. A very stylish Mills-designed ensemble!

"Only a Rose" is suitably Frimly in most pleasant meanderings... "down by the old Mills' dream."



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(Sorry, couldn't resist!) There's a brief, lovely Tuba solo, some Oboe-plus-Tibia magic, and the reiterating Kettle Drum adds a skillful touch of drama and portent. Allen builds to a climax worthy of Jeanette and Nelson.

Side II begins with "Washington Post March." Snare drums and reeds dominate (as they should!) with Glock accents. The Tibia Fife has its shrill moments. Again, Allen Mills shows us how percussions should be used in theatre organ playing. Returning twice to the seldom heard verse saves "They Say It's Wonderful" from being just another pretty Irving Berlin song. It's tremmed to the hilt. The reviewer found the chord changes a might weak and prosaic, but the tune happens to be a personal favorite.

The Klaxon horn, Bird Whistles, Fire Gong — and whatever else is on the toe studs — gives Mills an excuse

to have fun with "Good News." The big chromatic finish falters just before it hits the top. Who knows? Perhaps British organist Len Rawle, the master of this virtuoso flourish, has put the hex on anyone else who tries it. Seriously, Mills has his own potent supply of keyboard witchcraft. He does justice to all the melodies in "Gold and Silver," a Franz Lehar waltz. In the midst of all this musical "loot" a reiterating percussion may well signify a "gangland holdup." A clever heist — what with Jesse Crawford bank-rolls all over the place!

"My Romance" is boldly sentimental rather than the usual plaintive rendering. We get to hear "Goldie's" untremmed Clarinet briefly. The Rodgers and Hart tune has a "love conquers all" slam-bang finale.

In this album Allen Mills' playing is Olympic Gold quality by any standard, and "Goldie" is a magnificent Wurlitzer installation in a theatre. But transmitting all of this wonderful music to vinyl grooves may have posed some technical problems. The reviewer heard the organ as through heavy gauze layers. Cranking up the volume added considerable recording noise. This may have been true only for the review pressing, but be forewarned in case your copy has the same characteristics.

WALTER J. BEAUPRE



Allen Mills

IN HOLIDAY MOOD, Brian Sharp, Grosvenor Records, Birmingham, England (available from The Organ Literature Foundation, 45 Norfolk Road, Braintree, Massachusetts 02184; \$9.00 plus \$1.50 postage per order).

The jacket notes coyly inform us that "For this LP Brian Sharp has

collected his bucket and spade and set off for the seaside!" Add to that itinerant one tuned kitchen sink, and we're right on target. Seriously, the only things about this remarkable album which could be taken to task are the jacket notes — and perhaps the front cover poolside photo which features a foreground insert of Brian along with what appears to be a happily drowning child of ten. Holiday mood? Bah! Humbug!

True, Brian Sharp has assembled quite an array of keyboard instruments for this recording at the Sanford Park Resort, Dorset, England. These instruments include a Christie theatre organ, electronic Technics Pro 90 and Technics E 66, Kawai Grand piano, an assorted collection of synthesizers, and "live" percussions. Honest injun!

The sober fact of the matter is that Brian has what it takes to make this melange work wonderfully well. He's a first rate musician, a superb arranger, and has the technical skills to put the bits and pieces together. The end result is most enjoyable. Those whose ears are tuned to theatre pipes only should note that the Christie is featured (never exclusively) in "Comedians Gallop," "Stardust," "Glamorous Night," "Radetsky March" and "The Lost Chord." Incidentally, Brian's arrangement of Michel Parri's "Stardust" (Hoagie claims he only wrote the tune!) is as creative and original as you'll ever hear. "Glamorous Night" has a lovely piano/Christie duet along with a host of other orchestral effects. It's a rhapsodic mood piece on the order of "Dream of Olwen."

This reviewer particularly liked "Root Beer Rag" and "Sweet Georgia Brown" on Side I. Mr. Sharp has an uncanny ear for lifting the most authentic sounding orchestral instruments from the various electronics and combining them skillfully into exciting performances. Be warned that in "Can Can" and "Tickled Pink" he resorts to the Alvin-and-the-Chipmunks style of electronic cuteness which is a bit much — but good fun. Who knows which transistors produced the convincing flute Brian uses for his impressive jazz solo in "Moving South," but it's worth buying the record just to hear that elegant bit. Then he turns a trumpet solo in "Georgia" which is equally impressive. "Sabre Dance" is a stunning

tour de force and almost — but not quite — as good as the definitive theatre organ recording by Dennis James. Of course Dennis was "lazy" and played it with only two hands and an equal complement of feet, while Brian's is a dubbed-over recording. The kettle drum touches at the climax of "The Lost Chord" suggest Revere Ware, but that's being picky. The Christie, when Brian chooses to feature it, is just fine.

Over-dubbing and editing of theatre organ performances to enhance listening enjoyment is not new. Even George Wright did this at one point in his recording career. Brian's elegant mixing of pipes and transistors may help to break down prejudices on both sides. The reviewer has purchased — and enjoyed — many theatre pipe organ albums which couldn't hold a candle to *In Holiday Mood* for sheer musicianship. So, as long as you know what you're getting, give it a try!

WALTER J. BEAUPRE

WELCOME! Nicholas Martin at Turner's Musical Merry-Go-Round. Grosvenor Records, Birmingham, England. No. 1161 available from The Organ Literature Foundation, 45 Norfolk Road, Braintree, Massachusetts 02184. \$9.00 plus \$1.50 postage per order.

The youthful Nicholas Martin is a favorite with readers of organ club publications in England. An earlier release was voted "Best Theatre Organ Album of 1983." The current LP exploits the Wurlitzer installed in the Northampton entertainment center. It's a reasonable guess that such an album would be a popular memento of a pleasant afternoon or evening among the mechanical marvels of a bygone era. The very nice packaging job includes a panoramic view of Turner's along with lists of pipes and percussions. Curiously, the piano heard frequently on the record is not mentioned — and it's in tune!

Martin's 26 selections provide a good mix of old friends ("As Time Goes By," "Fascinating Rhythm," "You Light Up My Life") and welcome strangers ("Willkommen," Theme from "Thorn Birds," "Sleepy Shores"). He plays with gusto and accuracy; high energy usually takes precedence over subtle shadings. Martin does to "Tara's Theme" what

General William Tecumseh Sherman's troops did to Atlanta. Black-pool stylings dominate up-tempo tunes. A Glockenspiel is featured in "Loveliest Night of the Year." "Loch Lomond" opens predictably with bagpipes. This reviewer liked "How Can You Buy Killarney" as a lovely substitute for the usual Irish ballads. Martin "goes for the gusto" in his version of Ellington's "Sophisticated Lady." The shrill registration is ear splitting at times, and there are holes in the harmonic progressions of the tune's difficult bridge.

The album cover proclaims "Dambusters March" as the highlight of Nicholas Martin's performance. It begins with an eerie air-raid warning which is suddenly interrupted by the jolly march. Then, for artistic reasons known only to Mr. Martin, we hear a series of what sound like semi-tractor-trailer trucks rumbling through the performance. "The Dam Busters" is a wildly popular U.K. favorite. It's safe to say that every theatre organ in England is a veritable "Dam site" at one time or another. And, frankly, the performance this reviewer heard by David Redfern last April during his "Young Theatre Organist of the Year" stint at the Granada Harrow was a "Dam site" more exciting than the one on this record.

"RAF March Past" was stirring — if raucous — with a good big finish. For "Thorn Birds" we hear the Wurlitzer's Clarinet, Oboe and English Horn. If you have forgotten the theme from the TV mini-series, don't feel guilty. It's well played by Martin but easy to mislay. In spite of the shrill registrations, the reviewer liked "Break My Stride," a quickstep which rolls with the punches. The old Andrews Sisters hit "Bei Mir Bist Du Schön" was almost unrecognizable, and just goes to prove that it doesn't necessarily mean "that you're grand!" Nicholas Martin redeems himself with a fine arrangement of "You Light Up My Life." He uses tasteful chromatic embellishments, and the performance has a lilt and lift. A playful "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" takes some of the sting out of that dreadful movie version of Ian Fleming's charming children's book.

Nicholas Martin's album will be welcome among those who prefer organ music with a carousel flavor. Other tastes may want to pass on this one.

WALTER J. BEAUPRE □

PIPES & Personalities

Oakland Paramount Announces 1985-86 Season

After three seasons of sell-outs, the Paramount Organ Pops Series has been expanded to four concerts, and the Mothers' Day afternoon program has been dropped in favor of all 8:00 p.m. Saturday night affairs.

George Wright will open the season on November 16, 1985. On January 25, 1986, Gaylord Carter will return to accompany silent film comedies of Harold Lloyd and Buster Keaton. Billy Nalle makes his first appearance at the Paramount on March 15. Closing the series on May 31 will be organist Lyn Larsen with Jack Bethards and the Royal Society Jazz Orchestra.

Ticket information can be obtained from the Box Office, Paramount Theatre of the Arts, 2025 Broadway, Oakland, California 94612, or by phone at 415/465-6400.

Music Theatre of Wichita, a professional stage production company, celebrated its coming season with a gala party in Century II Center, Saturday, May 25 this year. The purpose was to promote information on and ticket sales to the five coming productions: *The Wizard of Oz*; *Carnival*; *The Most Happy Fella*; *Promises, Promises* and *Hello Dolly!*. Billy Nalle was engaged to present five solo periods during the course of the afternoon, each one devoted to the music of one of the five musicals. Television coverage and audience response indicated that this type of party promotion was a resounding success.

Bob Maes, Kansas City (Kansas) organ/theatre buff, has purchased the former Uptown Theatre (Chicago) Style 285 4/28 Wurlitzer from Tommy Stark, and the former New York City Picadilly Theatre/Warner Hollywood Theatre 4/28 Marr & Colton. The latter instrument, donated to Los Angeles Theatre Organ Society, was scheduled to be installed in Pasadena Civic Auditorium until J. B. Nethercutt offered to donate and erect the famed five-manual Foort Möller.

LATOS subsequently gave the Marr & Colton to Valley of the Sun Chapter ATOS in Phoenix. The group was unable to find a suitable home for the organ and decided to let Maes have it.

In partnership with Bill Brown, former operator of the Organ Stop pizza parlors in Phoenix and Mesa, Maes also purchased the organ parts offered by Dennis Hedberg in Portland. This package included the Style 260 Wurlitzer from B. F. Keith's Memorial Theatre, Boston. (The theatre was also known as the Savoy, and is now Sara Caldwell's Opera House.)

Much of this purchase was sold to Rudy Frey and Dick Taylor in San Francisco. Taylor bought a 32' Diaphone to add to his Castro Theatre Wurlitzer.

The Organ Grinder

May 21 marked a memorable event at the Portland Organ Grinder when Dennis and Judy Hedberg and their son, Jay, hosted a champagne and pizza party in celebration of their recent acquisition of the restaurant. The festive mood in the nearly full dining rooms was enhanced by music from the 4/44 Wurlitzer played by Andy Crow, Dan Bellomy, Jonas Nordwall, Russ Chilson and Paul Quarino. There was a special significance to this occasion for all those who look upon the Organ Grinder as the Mecca of Northwest organ lovers and who are elated that it is now in the capable hands of the man who installed and thoroughly understands its magnificent music machine.

The organ has, in fact, been the focus of Dennis' long association with the company which built the Organ Grinders in both Portland and Denver. At the 1966 ATOS National Convention in Portland, Dennis was cited for his excellent maintenance of the 3/13 Wurlitzer in the Oriental Theatre, the Publix #1 in the Paramount Theatre and the then 4/33 in the Vollum residence, all convention concert venues. Dennis subsequently acquired the Oriental Wurlitzer and, by the 1973 Convention, was installing it in the still unfinished Portland Organ Grinder. Conventioneers were, however, treated to concerts by Jonas Nordwall and Lyn Larsen in a "preview" of what was to come.

What-was-to-come was the console from the 4/26 Wurlitzer in the Metropolitan Theatre in Boston and additional pipes to bring it to its present 44 ranks. The company also purchased the 3/20 Keith's Memorial Wurlitzer from Boston, the Portland Paramount's Publix #1 and the former Portland Liberty Theatre's Wurlitzer from the Granada Organ Loft Club in Seattle. By 1978 the Organ Grinder was ready to create another restaurant, and Denver was the chosen site. Dennis used the Publix #1 as the nucleus of the new installation, and when the restaurant opened in 1979, the 4/37 there became a "must-



Dennis and Jay Hedberg, new owners of the Portland Organ Grinder. (Claude Neuffer photo)

hear" for all organ buffs traveling cross-country.

The adverse economic trend of the 1980s affected the pizza business to such an extent that the Denver Organ Grinder was sold, and Oregon organ devotees began to worry about the fate of their favorite 4/44. It was, therefore, with a genuinely delighted sense of optimism that they received the news that Dennis Hedberg had assumed ownership of the Portland Organ Grinder and that the voice of the Mighty Wurlitzer will continue to be heard on 82nd Avenue.

GRACE E. MCGINNIS

San Antonio Pipe Organ Society is currently searching for a suitable instrument as a replacement for the 3/24 Möller pipe organ that was destroyed when a severe fire levelled the Municipal Auditorium several years ago. City officials have indicated to the Society that if a suitable organ can be found and donated to the City of San Antonio, Texas, the city would help to pay shipping cost as well as installation and tuning costs.

The Möller was used on a regular basis for popular music as well as for classical organ recitals. An instrument of similar design would make it possible once again to present all types of organ programs.

A bond issue has provided funds to rebuild and refurbish the auditorium. However, there was not enough money to purchase an organ to replace the one lost in the fire. P. Myron Iverson, society treasurer, has announced that the donation of an organ would be classified as a bona fide tax-deductible gift. He also noted the organ would be maintained and used regu-

larly, and its beauty of sight and sound would be enjoyed by tens of thousands of people in the years to come. Replacement of the organ would also open another venue for concert artists in the theatre organ field.

The society offices are located at 134 West Agarita, San Antonio, Texas 78212, and the telephone number is 512/734-6746.

A Great Night at the Ballarat Memorial Theatre

As a feature of the 1985 Ballarat Begonia Festival on March 14, 1985, an enthusiastic audience which nearly filled the theatre was treated to a night of choral music by six junior choirs, interspersed with selections played by Tony Fenelon at the Compton theatre organ.

It was a very hot night, but the audience of some 500 children and about the same number of adults maintained interest throughout the evening. At the end of each segment by a choir, Tony brought the Compton up to stage level and played music for the children, and waltzes, marches and musical comedy tunes for everybody. The finale featured the combined choirs accompanied by the organ.

The Royal South Street Society, owners of the Memorial Theatre (opened in 1875 as an opera house), and the Ballarat Theatre Organ Society, which owns the

Compton organ, have collaborated successfully on a number of presentations featuring the organ. These have drawn the interest of the general public, as well as organ buffs.

For years, veteran organist Jack Skelly played the Aeolian-Skinner which graces the Westchester (New York) County Center. The place was closed down some time ago and Jack was out of a job. In the November election, a proposition for enlarging and modernizing the building appeared on the voting machines. Though the cost was estimated at about \$50 million, the proposal passed. Plans are to remove the organ, which has been in the Center for 55 years, and replace it with an electronic. The work is slated for completion in 1986.

Barbara Sellers, who will play the Wurlitzer in the WGN studios (also played by both her parents, ATOS Hall of Fame members Preston and Edna Sellers) during the ATOS National Convention in Chicago in August, is continuing her full time graduate studies at the Chicago Musical College division of Roosevelt University. Following a visit to UCLA last August, she has decided to do her Master's thesis

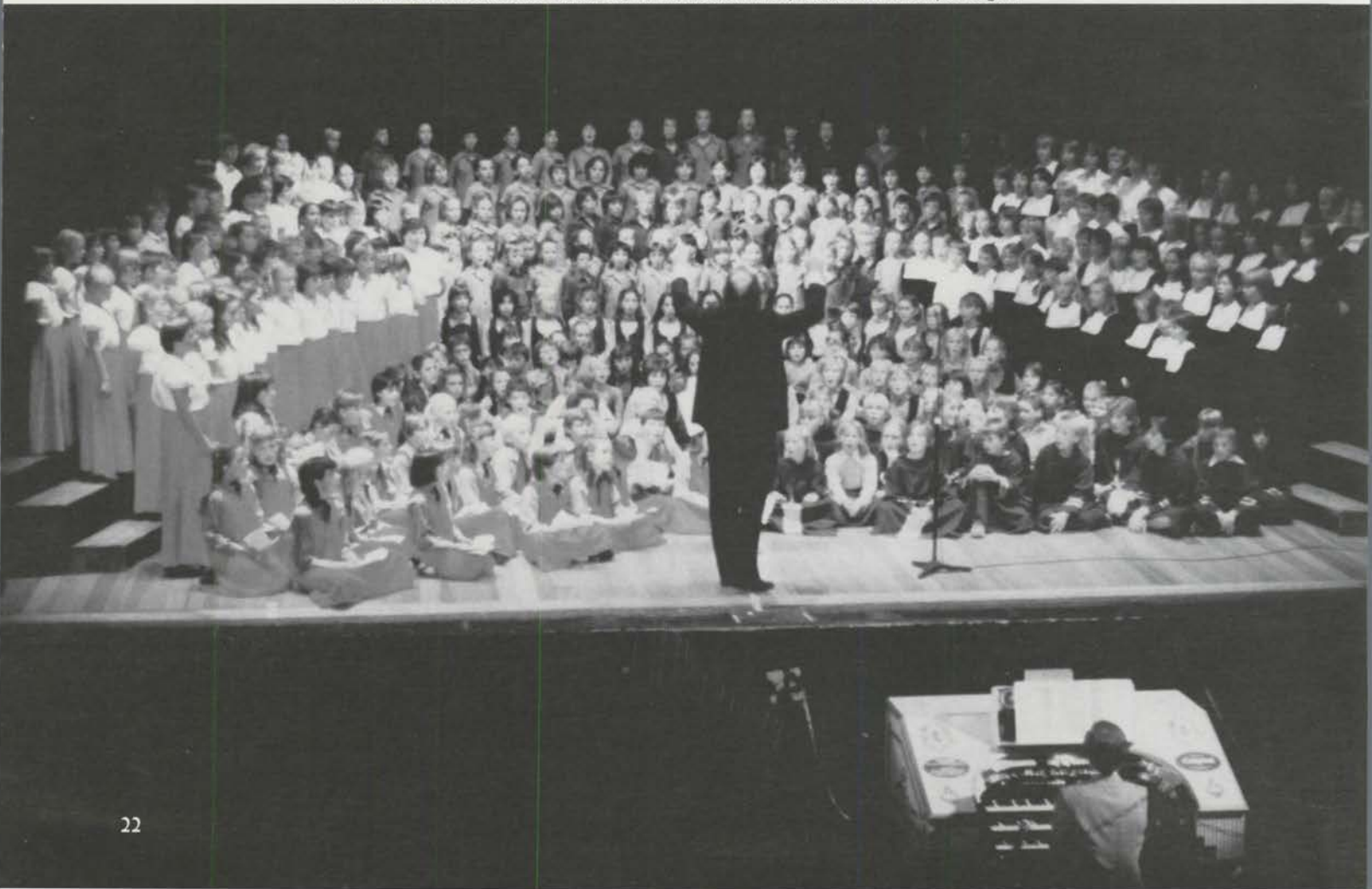
on film scoring, something she was able to do herself when she accompanied *Wings* at the restored Music Box Theatre in Chicago. In doing research, Barbara discovered the existence of The Society for the Preservation of Film Music. This group publishes a newsletter and journal, and has started an archive. Its interests include scores for silent films. The Society may be reached at 10850 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 770, Los Angeles, California 90024.

The two organs in the Atlantic City Convention Center received considerable publicity in these pages about 25 years ago, when enthusiasts of the Garden State Chapter ATOS held meetings there with noted buff Senator Emerson Richards in attendance. In recent years, use of the instruments has declined.

According to Howard Persina, executive director of the Atlantic City Convention Center Authority, "the organs are not played on a regular, scheduled basis. They are used only during conventions and special events when requested by show managers or promoters. We do not have a permanent staff organist, but we employ one when needed.

"The (7/455) Midmer-Losh is not being fully restored (in answer to rumors), but our staff technician, Dennis McGurk, works daily on maintaining and repair of the instrument. As for the (4/42) Kimball

Combined youth choirs at the Ballarat Begonia Festival, with Tony Fenelon at the Compton organ.





Cleaning is a continuous process for the Wurlitzer, and willing students are always available for the work. Here (behind the console) Mike Brooks and Paul Girouard, seniors at Berlin High School, assist eighth-grader Scott Gallant, teacher Nancy Joy and student Randy Grondin. Randy took the responsibility for replacing the backrail pneumatics, and Scott did most of those on the console. Mike and Paul have been instrumental in training the younger students to be organ "technicians." Jim Martin is justifiably proud of this Wurlitzer and of the work his students have done to restore it to concert condition.



Former Berlin Middle School students (L to R) Dave Laroche and Corey Fortier, now in high school, return to help teacher Jim Martin locate some dead notes on the Vox Humana of the school's 2/10 Style H Special Wurlitzer. These two boys also helped drill and dowel all of the stripped screw holes in the sideboards of the tuned percussions. Jim's restoration project has been an integral part of the school's activities since 1981 (THEATRE ORGAN, May/June 1984).

in the ballroom, this is under constant maintenance and repair. Presently (February) it is out of service, due to renovation of the ballroom. When this work is completed, we expect the Kimball to be used more frequently."

Ludwig Industries Donates Drums to Shea's Wurlitzer

According to Maureen Wilks of Shea's Buffalo Theater, Ludwig Industries, manufacturers of percussion instruments, has donated \$600 worth of equipment toward the renovation of Shea's Wurlitzer pipe organ.

William F. Ludwig, Jr., President of Ludwig Industries, donated two 40" bass drum heads and accompanying equipment for their installation, bringing the organ one stop closer to its complete refurbishment, which was begun in the mid-1970s. Installation work was donated by local music shop owner Art Kubera.

Also recently donated was a set of sleighbells, by Rudolph Frey, a former Buffalonian now living in California. Remaining to be replaced are several cymbals, one smaller drum, and a grand piano.

Ever since 1972, Bert Buhrman has presented annual concerts on the School of the Ozarks' 3/15 Wurlitzer at Point Lookout, Missouri. Proceeds were for the benefit of the school's scholarship fund, and the Jones Auditorium was generally sold out considerably in advance of the events. This year, the new president of the college felt that it was too much trouble for the school to give Bert the cooperation and people necessary for promoting and putting on the shows. Therefore, no concerts

in 1985 and possibly in the future. "It has caused a lot of bad feeling from people who have been contacting me," says Bert. "They wanted to arrange their vacations to coincide with the events. I don't want to make too many waves, but at the same time, I feel our loyal supporters should know the reason why the 'no show' sign was hung this year."

The last mention in these pages of the 3/27 Wurlitzer which graced the El Bombarde Lounge of the Panama City Hilton Hotel was in June 1974, following its removal. It took our peripatetic organist, Doc Bebko, to discover where it is enjoying a new life, while he was on a tour of

Colombia and Panama. The ex-Atlantic City Warner Theatre's organ was purchased in 1977 by hotel chain owner and organ buff, Ildefonso Rionde Pena, and after an expenditure of over \$500,000, was installed in the Continental Hotel, across the street from the Panama Hilton.

Doc inquired about the organ and found the Continental's doorman most sympathetic. "He contacted the right 'open sesame' for us, and there, in the most elaborate setting imaginable, the El Sotano Lounge ('nightclub' is the better word), the console is the centerpiece with glass-enclosed chambers for viewing, and a piano which is near the dance floor, controlled from the console.

"The installation took one year and is

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maintained by Bernie Kirkwood. Current organist is Chacho De La Rosa. The Panamanian favorite is Pablo Herrera, who played there a year. The southernmost Wurlitzer is worth any buff's time to see and hear. It is Panama's biggest tourist attraction, even though the Canal is nearby. I played the instrument and I can attest that it is a great-sounding organ."

The force of public action in 1980 prevented the swinging of the wrecking ball

The Rodgers Glasgow 740B organ. The Essex 605 and 640 models are similar in appearance, but with a single row of stops, no toe studs and one expression pedal.

against Los Angeles' Wilshire Theatre. The monument to Art Deco is undergoing rehabilitation, and it is anticipated that the 53-year old landmark at Wilshire Boulevard and Western Avenue will reopen in 1985 as a performing arts center.

The project had several strikes against it. Local banks refused financing, and the developer had to go to Chicago for it. The 12-story office tower on the property was renovated first, and the building is almost fully leased. In June 1984, work on the theatre began, at an estimated \$4 million. The effects of vandalism were serious throughout, necessitating top-to-bottom refurbishing. The original 2756 seats will be replaced with 2400 new seats. New building codes, adopted through the years, have to be observed, but progress is continuing and the owners are a determined lot. Now, if a pipe organ could be found to replace the original Kimball . . . Or perhaps that instrument could be re-installed.

New Rodgers Models Announced

In recent months, the Essex Series 605 and 640 and the Glasgow 740B two-manual organs have been announced by Rodgers Organ Company. The Essex models are in the \$6500 to \$10,000 price range, intended for smaller church and home in-

stallations, while the Glasgow is in the \$15,000 to \$20,000 classical organ category.

The new instruments feature individual note pitch generation, microprocessor control systems, programmable combination actions, microprocessor self-diagnostics and total elimination of stop control contacts through the use of "Hall Effect" technology.

The Glasgow 740B model offers, in addition, separate microprocessor controlled individual note pitch generation for celeste voices, a full reed chorus with the addition of a Festival Trumpet and Oboe in the Swell division, and a 32' Contre Bourdon and 16' Contre Trompette in the complete Pedal division. The instrument's 40 speaking voices are heard through a three-channel, 300-watt speaker system. Rodgers' LED stop tablet system used in the Glasgow is totally silent when actuated by the combination action. Two other notable features of the Glasgow are the microprocessor Continuo and Solo Couplers, which allow a less experienced player to create proper pedal bass and/or solo melody along with an accompaniment from a single organ keyboard.

Included with Rodgers organs this year is a copy of Sonos Music's "Artists' Performance Collection, Volume One." The book includes 15 organ compositions in the classical vein, written by noted concert artists who own, or concertize with, Rodgers instruments. It is the first book in the *Rodgers Organ Company Library of Music*, a joint effort with Sonos Music Resources. It is available from Rodgers dealers and music stores at \$12.95, or directly from Rodgers Organ Company, 1300 NE 25th Avenue, Hillsboro, Oregon 97124, at \$12.95 plus \$1.00 for postage and handling.

A very interesting 24-page full color booklet, "The Rodgers Pipe Heritage," has recently been received by THEATRE ORGAN. It describes and pictures the facilities and people in the company responsible for Rodgers' growth in pipe organs.

Lee Erwin a Hit at Chaminade

On April 12 and 13, at 8:24 p.m. "on the dot," the Nassau Mid-Island Chapter of the S.P.E.B.S.Q.A. presented "New York . . . it's a wonderful town!" at Chaminade High School, Mineola, Long Island, New York. The barbershop quartet variety show had a unique touch — Lee Erwin at the Chaminade 3/15 Morton-Austin theatre organ.

ATOS member Bob Atkins reports that the 1200-seat auditorium was packed both nights, and the audience went wild over Lee's sing-alongs. Bob says the organ performed and sounded terrific, and is getting plenty of use. An article with photos on the organ is promised. □



Brings out the best!

"One of the 1984 highlights in Boise, Idaho was the Bob Ralston Show. Our Robert Morton Theatre Pipe Organ is relatively small, but Mr. Ralston's performance made it sound ten times larger. It was a pleasure to have Bob in Boise. The 'fans' want him to return."

**Douglas Lemmon, Chairman,
Egyptian Theatre Organ Society.**

A repeat performer!

"Our organ program got off to a great start with Bob as our first guest of the new season (Sept. 30, 1984). I was also impressed with the long, long line of people waiting to shake Bob Ralston's hand and thank him for a wonderful afternoon at Proctor's. Bob's a real showman and it will be our pleasure to have him back at Proctor's in the near future."

**Dennis Madden, Executive Director,
Proctor's, Schenectady, New York.**

A real money-maker!

"The size of the audiences at the Thomaston Opera House for Bob Ralston's 4th year here (on Dec. 1 & 2, 1984) showed us that Bob maintains his following from his Lawrence Welk TV fame and continues to please his fans. This year — as always — The Bob Ralston Show was a real money-maker!"

**Allen Miller, President,
Connecticut Valley Theatre Organ Society.**



Boosts attendance!

"Having Bob Ralston heading our 1984 Christmas program helped our attendance immeasurably. Our entire congregation was joyous with Bob's outstanding talent and professionalism. We've already booked him for our 1985 Easter program."

**Rev. John Hjellum, Pastor, Whittwood
Baptist Church, Whittier, California.**

The very best!

"Bob Ralston's performance was most memorable and entertaining . . . excellent registration . . . by far the most exciting program of the (1984 ATOS) Convention and thus a fitting conclusion."

**Grant I. Whitcomb,
Theatre Organ Magazine, Sep/Oct '84**

A winner!

"We are eagerly looking forward to the 10th Annual Bob Ralston Show on Feb. 9 & 10, 1985. I announced this to our audiences in December of 1984 and received a good number of 'Oohs and Ahs' as well as a round of applause each time."

**E.O. Matlock, President,
Organ Club of Central Florida.**

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BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF THEATRE ORGANISTS

by Dr. John W. Landon

BECK, FRED

Theatre organist in the Chicago area. Beck rented a studio complete with a pipe organ in the Wurlitzer Building in Chicago. He used it not only for teaching but also supplied his services to Radio Station WJJD, Mooseheart, Illinois, whenever required. WJJD was in the process of installing an organ in their own studios and so their contract with Beck included not only his services as organist but the organ in his rented studio. At different times he rented three different locations to supply WJJD with the programs they desired.

BECK, OTTO F.

Theatre organist in the Washington, D.C., area during most of his professional life. Was organist of the Rialto Theatre in New York City in 1922. In 1925 he joined the staff of the Tivoli Theatre in Washington, D.C. Also played the Auditorium Theatre in Washington that year. In 1927 he played the Rialto Theatre in Washington in January, but spent most of his time as organist of the Tivoli Theatre. He continued at the Tivoli Theatre until the early 1930s. He had a midnight radio broadcast over NBC from that theatre.

BECK, R. E.

Organist of Grauman's Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood, California, in 1925.

BECKER, REINE E.

Theatre organist in the Los Angeles area. Was Vice President of the Los Angeles Society of Theatre Organists in 1923. Organist of the Ravenna Theatre in Los Angeles in 1925.

BECKETT, HAROLD

Organist of Loew's Premier The-

atre in New York City in 1927. Organist of the Roxy Theatre, New York City, in the 1940s, including the post-World War II years.

BEEBE, CHESTER H.

Organist of Loew's Bijou Theatre in New York City in 1927. In September of 1927, he became an instructor at the Wurlitzer Organ School in New York City.

BEHREND, NETTIE

Organist of the Lark Theatre in Brazil, Indiana, in 1928.

BELLOMY, DAN

Bellomy is a native of Houston, Texas, where he began playing the organ at age eight. He began his professional career at age eleven.

Bellomy has been active in radio and television work for a number of years, having made his television debut at the age of eleven. In later years he has made solo appearances and has served as writer and musical director of several shows. He was the first resident organist at the Wurlitzer of the Casa Manana Theatre in Fort Worth, Texas.

In addition to playing concerts within the United States, Bellomy has performed in such places as Australia, Europe, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. He has served as record reviewer for *Keyboard World* and *The Console* magazines. He has five albums to his credit, including "Power Pipes," which was recorded on the Wurlitzer located in the Organ Grinder Restaurant, Portland, Oregon.

Bellomy currently makes his home in the Portland, Oregon, area where he teaches in addition to being a staff organist at the Organ Grinder Restaurant.

BENDER, BURTON J.

Born February 2, 1903, in Whitehouse, Ohio. He studied piano for seven years with Flo Rakestraw and later with Will Hamilton, a piano teacher from Maumee, Ohio. He studied organ with Leon Idoine, and practiced the organ at the United Brethren Church on Cherry Street in Toledo, Ohio. From 1925 to 1928 he was organist at the Palace Theatre in Toledo, and from 1928 to 1929 at the Rivoli Theatre in Toledo. During these years, he also played at the Loew's Valentine Theatre, the Pantheon Theatre and the Vita Temple Theatre. The advent of sound films put him out of employment for a while, but soon he was playing at the Press Club nightly on the Hammond organ. In more recent years he played at Ann's Restaurant in Whitehouse, Ohio. □

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NUGGETS
from the
GOLDEN DAYS

Prospected
by Lloyd E. Klos



Let's see where some of the organists were broadcasting in the great days. Reference was *Local Press (LP)*.

March 15, 1923 WOC, Davenport, Iowa, is airing a 7 p.m. organ concert, featuring JOHN W. CASTRO.

March 24, 1923 Dr. CHARLES HEINROTH is featured on the Carnegie Music Hall organ over KDKA, Pittsburgh, this evening.

April 15, 1923 WEAJ in New York is presenting G. H. FEDERERIN, organist of the First Presbyterian Church in Montclair, New Jersey, in a recital from the Skinner Organ Co. Auditorium this evening for one hour, beginning at nine.

July 6, 1923 WJZ, New York, is presenting J. T. NOE in a concert, using the Wanamaker organ, the newest and largest in the city, at 8 p.m. (Six days later, ALEXANDER RUSSELL, concert director of Wanamaker's, presented another recital over WJZ on that instrument.)

February 11, 1924 KDKA, Pittsburgh, is presenting an organ recital this evening from the Ritz Theatre. HOWARD R. WEBB is the artist.

May 8, 1924 WHAM, Rochester, will present an organ program tonight from the studio in the Eastman Theatre, with JOHN F. HAMMOND at the console.

January 7, 1925 WCCO, Minneapolis-St. Paul, will present HUGO PHILLER GOODWIN, Municipal Organist of St. Paul, in an evening recital.

November 4, 1925 WHAD, Milwaukee, presents EDMUND FITCH in an organ concert this evening.

December 9, 1925 A midnight organ recital, given by LEO TERRY of the Capitol Theatre in Chicago, is a new feature of WOK. Mr. Terry is known as a musician of exceptional talent, and numerous letters, complimenting him upon his performances, have been received from radio fans since the hookup of WOK with the Capitol last week.

October 2, 1926 One of the outstanding features of the weekly broadcasts from the Capitol Theatre in Springfield, Massachusetts, by Westinghouse Station WJZ, is the period allotted to the organ recitals by RENE DAGENAIS, who has been heard since the broadcasts were inaugurated from this pickup point.

The problem of broadcasting organ music with any degree of success, is one which has given broadcasting engineers a great deal of food for thought. In this particular instance, however, due in a large extent to the interest of Mr. Dagenais, the engineers of WJZ have succeeded in producing organ sound of exceptional quality. Mr. Dagenais, upon learning of the intention to use the Capitol Theatre instrument, volunteered his services in the experimental work.

The organ is a three-manual Austin of 30 stops. Through many years of motion picture work, this musician has attained an almost unlimited repertoire of standard concert and late popular numbers which permit him to cue the pictures with the minutest detail.

Mr. Dagenais at 12 was singing in the chorus of the Church of the Precious Blood in Holyoke, Massachusetts. Under the pseudonym of Bobby Burns, he began his career in theatres as soloist for illustrated songs. He states that one of the most disconcerting experiences of those days was the necessity for procuring a permit from the mayors of towns in his circuit, because of his being under age. At the time his voice began to change, and unwilling to give up his contact with music, he began serious study of piano under circumstances which only an indomitable spirit could overcome. Much of his knowledge of piano was gained from his first theatre position at the time when theatres used only piano and drums as an orchestra. This was at the old Palace in Holyoke, a movie house no longer existent.

October 19, 1926 WBZ, Springfield, Massachusetts, is presenting ARTHUR CLIFTON from the Estey Organ Studio in Boston, starting at 6:15 p.m.

October 28, 1926 WGY, Schenectady, New York, will present organist STEPHEN E. BOISCLAIRE from the Mark Ritz Theatre in Albany at 10:30 p.m.

January 27, 1927 WLS, Chicago, will feature RALPH WALDO EMERSON and ELSIE MAY LOOK in "Organ Sketches" tonight at 11:30. (Two nights later, AL MELGARD began a recital at 7:10 on the same station.)

February 19, 1927 Alternating at the Eastman Theatre's 4/155 Austin organ over WHAM, Rochester, are ROBERT BERENTSEN, HAROLD OSBORN SMITH and BEATRICE RYAN.

May 31, 1927 Chicago's BASEL CRISTOL is the Tivoli Theatre's featured organist, and is heard almost every afternoon over WCBN, directly from the theatre.

December 10, 1928 WOC, Davenport, Iowa, is featuring organist AL CARNEY, while WSUI in Iowa City has been presenting programs from the Pastime Theatre.

August 6, 1929 Over the CBS Network tonight from New York, will be presented "JESSE CRAWFORD and His Bag of Tricks."

GOLD DUST: More broadcasting organists included: 1/25 ARTHUR BLAKELY, over KHJ, Los Angeles; LLOYD DEL CASTILLO, WEEI, Boston; ERWIN SWINDELL, WOC, Davenport, Iowa; RALPH WALDO EMERSON, WLS, Chicago; L. CARLOS MEIER, WHO, Des Moines; HARRY O. NICHOLS, WMC, Memphis; THEODORE IRWIN, KPO, San Francisco; DWIGHT BROWN, WFFA, Dallas . . . 2/25 VINCENT PERRY, WEAR, Cleveland . . . 3/25 CLEMENT BARKER, KLX, Oakland; EDWIN ARTHUR KRAFT, WTAM, Cleveland . . . 4/25 Dr. SHELDON, WSB, Atlanta; MARY VOGT, WOO, Philadelphia . . . 8/25 ARTHUR HAYS, WOAW, Omaha . . . 10/25 CLARENCE BAWDEN, WOO, Philadelphia . . . 11/25 LOUIS CULP, Hot Springs; CHANDLER GOLDTHWAITE & GUY FILKINS, WAHG, Richmond Hill, New York; JOSEPH BEEBE, WTIC, Hartford; WILLIAM METCALF, WTAM, Cleveland . . . 12/25 ELMER TIDMARSH, WGY, Schenectady; ARTHUR CURTAIN, WBZ, Springfield; ARTHUR BROOK, WPS, Atlantic City . . . 1/26 LAWRENCE REID, KTHS, Hot Springs; KARL BONAWITZ, WPG, Atlantic City; GORDON NEVIN, WAHG, Richmond Hill, New York . . . 2/26 FREDERICK WEAVER, WBAL, Baltimore.

That should do it for now. So long, sourdoughs!

Jason & the Old Prospector □

Closing Chord

Jack C. Coxon of Portland, Oregon, passed away on April 20 following a heart attack; he was 63 years old. Jack, who loved playing theatre organ as much as his fans loved him, had played the closing shift at the Organ Grinder the night before he was stricken.



Jack Coxon

(Claude Neuffer photo)

Jack was, for 20 years, a telegrapher and dispatcher for the Southern Pacific Railroad, and, for the past 14 years, worked as a technical illustrator for the A-Dec Company in Newburg. During his entire adult life, however, his first love was the organ, and when he lived in Coos Bay (1962-1971), he was heard regularly on the Egyptian Theatre's 4/18 Wurlitzer and on his Hammond X77 at the Chandler Hotel's Sky Room. For a number of years he accompanied the Astoria Clowns on the calliope when they performed at the Rhododendron Festival in Florence. When he moved to the Portland area in 1971, he played his Hammond in many area night-clubs and, in 1973, joined the staff at the Portland Organ Grinder. In 1983, he added Uncle Milt's Pipe Organ Pizza in Vancouver, Washington, to his schedule and, as a result, could be heard in one place or the other almost every night.

Jack had a large and loyal following and was as greatly loved for his wonderful sense of humor as he was for his music. He had an unlimited repertoire of railroad stories and songs and unfailingly evoked smiles or laughter from his fans each time he made his way up to the organ. The oth-

er staff organists at the Organ Grinder appreciated the fact that Jack was as close as a phone call and was always willing to come in and cover if we couldn't meet a shift. He was well-liked by all who knew him, and he will be missed.

Jack is survived by his wife, Adabelle, four children and six grandchildren.

PAUL QUARINO □

Note: See page 9 for the special Closing Chord of Reginald Dixon.

Harry Koenig lost his battle with cancer on April 9, but he will be remembered for the happiness he brought to people with his music. He was a talented pianist and organist. He was also a warm, life-loving, people-loving human being.

Harry was born in Danzig, Germany, in 1909 and came to this country when he was 14 years of age. His musical career started at age 17 when he became a professional organist accompanying silent films in theatres. He was also a concert pianist and leader of an orchestra that performed at hotel weddings. Later he established himself as an insurance consultant.

When he became a member of ATOS in 1973 his interest in theatre pipe organ was revived and he performed for various chapters around the country and as far away as New Zealand.

In 1969 he had his first bout with cancer and doctors gave him three to six months. However, Harry was able to make a satisfactory recovery after he offered himself for experimental surgery. He then put his musical talent to work for cancer research and produced two stereo recordings of some of his piano and organ arrangements. These records are being distributed



Harry Koenig

world-wide to people who make contributions to the Koenig Cancer Research Foundation. All of the proceeds from his records and his concerts are turned over to qualified cancer research centers.

Characteristically, Harry willed his body to medical science in order that someone else might benefit from his experience. A memorial service was held on Sunday, April 21, at the Sauganash Community Church in Chicago. Members of CATOE and LOLTOS were among friends who attended.

Harry knew he had a second chance and he used it wisely. He brought happiness to many people with his music. We like to think that now he is playing for the Angels in Heaven.

CATHERINE KOENIG □

Questions and Answers on the Technical Side

by Lance Johnson



We are sorry to report that Lance Johnson has decided to discontinue his "Questions and Answers" column. He will, however, continue to answer readers' questions by telephone. He can be reached at 701/237-0477 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central Time Monday through Friday, or in the evening from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. at 218/287-2671.

Troubleshooting Guide Quiz Question

You turn on the organ and, as the air is filling the chests, a cipher occurs. After the reservoirs have filled, the cipher stops. What are two probable causes?

Answer on page 55. □

CINEMA ORGAN NEWS FROM BRITAIN



by
Ian
Dalglish



The stuff of which legends are made.

Hello again. My word, 1985 is certainly out to be *the* anniversary year.

One of our oldest seaside resorts is Margate in Kent. The most famous cinema being the Dreamland, part of a 24-acre theme park started in Victoria times. The old silent days cinema with its straight organ was pulled down in 1934 to make way for a typical super cinema of 2050 seats equipped with a 4/19 Compton which curiously incorporated 13 ranks from the Noterman straight organ of the silent days. Compton gave it a new console and the patent Solo Cello unit, a real string bowed mechanically, amplified and played from the console (fairly common at this period), and one of the greatest grand piano attachments you could imagine. Apart from being played from the console in the usual way, it could be made to play itself via a roll player, leaving the organist free to do his own thing with the pipes.

The brilliant young organist chosen to become resident at this prestigious cinema was Lewis Gerard, who was lured away from the vast ABC

circuit's Ritz cinema in Leeds, Yorkshire. Friday, 22 March 1935 saw the great opening of Dreamland Cinema and Garbo decorated the screen in *The Painted Veil*. In no time, Lewis Gerard became a stellar attraction at the powerful Compton with its typically British illuminated console of rainbow style, complete with its "flame effect" created by revolving glass mirrored drums inside the main glass pillars. The theatre shut for a period when the war came, like all cinemas and theatres in the U.K.

Gerard went in 1938 to another chain of theatres, but happily returned to Dreamland immediately after the war ended. He left for Canada playing the new Minshall organ and eventually became a leading concert demonstrator organist and consultant for Baldwin in your country, where he has lived ever since. A long time resident of Santa Barbara, California, he often has popped back to see relations and have a private tootle on his old Dreamland organ.

One cannot speak of the Dreamland Margate without thinking of Gerard, so it was with the very great-

est of pleasure that the legendary pair should rise once more on 24 March 1985, 50 years after the opening. How many organs can boast that? How many organs are still in situ after 50 years? Not many.

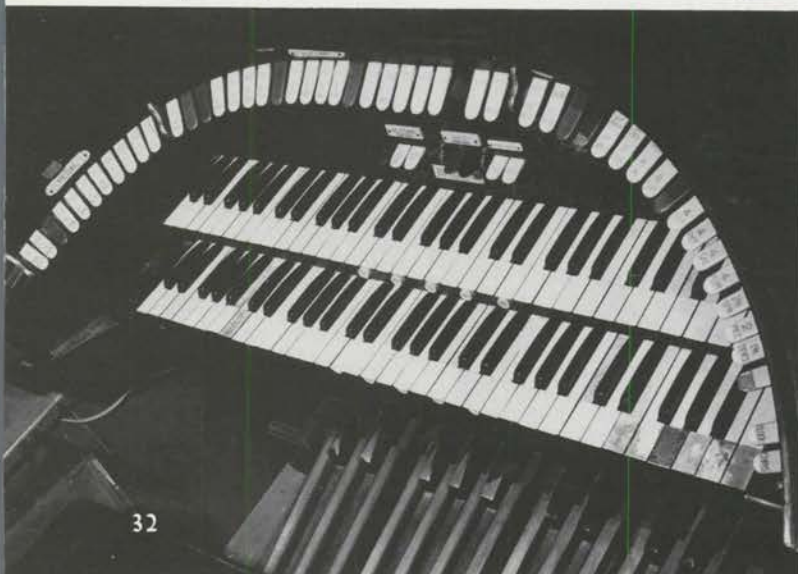
Sadly, the theatre has changed to a Bingo hall now, but the organ is kept in playing order by members of the Medway Theatre Organ Trust, who hold four concerts a year by top name organists who are assured of a big reception and one of the best attended venues in the U.K. It's the only theatre organ for many miles around this part of bustling southeastern England.

"Jerry" Gerard, as he is known in your country, recalled memories to the packed audience. A great many remembered his organ solos and broadcasts. He recalled how they were trying out the console lift just before the cinema opened, when a cable snapped and the huge console dropped suddenly to the bottom of the pit. He held on for dear life. The chairman of the Dreamland, the aristocratic J. H. Iles, peered over the pit and said, "Are you in distress, Mr. Gerard?" Jerry said his reply was unprintable! He played at the 50th anniversary the same medley of tunes that he played in 1935, and that's real nostalgia for you.

A great character and a great player, a pro. He has made over 700 TV appearances in the USA and Canada and played in all 50 states, but it has amazed me that Jerry has never, to my knowledge, played any theatre organ concerts in the USA. He may be better known for his work with Baldwin and now with the Allen company. He comes from a distinguished family of organ builders in the U.K. Yes,

Opus 999, a 2/6 Wurlitzer at Rye, Sussex, England, grammar school. The 60th anniversary of its original installation was celebrated in April. (John Sharp photo)

Lewis "Jerry" Gerard at the 50th anniversary concert of the Dreamland Cinema Margate, Kent, England, 4/19 Compton-Noterman organ. (John Sharp photo)





The truly legendary Reginald Dixon M.B.E. seated at the Wurlitzer in the Tower Ballroom, Blackpool. (Dalgliesh collection)

happily, some legends do live on.

A grammar school hall in the picturesque mediaeval town of Rye in East Sussex may not seem a place to celebrate a 60th anniversary, but it was on 21 April when Trevor Bolshaw and Michael Wooldridge played a splendid concert on Wurlitzer Opus 999, a 2/6 Style D, unique over here for being the second Wurlitzer to be opened in Britain. This was on 6 April 1925, so, like Dreamland, was virtually to the day again. Its original home was the suburban Tottenham Palace in north London, a converted music hall or variety theatre. Jack Courtenay, a pioneer name, opened several of the early Wurlitzers over here. His brother was Alex Taylor, also a well-known organist. Both played in your country.

In 1957, Mr. May, the music master of Rye Grammar School, bought the organ for the hall then being built complete with stage. The chamber was built at the back of the balcony where the projection box would be in a cinema. The console is placed with its horseshoe facing the wall at the left side of the balcony, possibly to stop pupils being too interested in the organist. However, the seats are turned around to face the rear of the hall for occasional theatre organ concerts on this little gem with all its silent era

charm so different from the typical six-ranker of the talkie era, the golden era over here. Somehow, through the years the traps were not thought to be important in a school. Opinions on that subject have changed, I'm happy to say, so now they are searching for drums and cymbals to go with the chimes and a newly acquired glock, Nigel Spooner, the chemistry and physics master, told me proudly.

Another Wurlitzer, without doubt the most famous worldwide, is also celebrating her birthday. Opus 2187, "The Dancing Queen" herself, the venerable 3/14 and grand piano of the Tower Ballroom Blackpool.

Opened by her designer, the legendary Reginald Dixon, on 10 April 1935 as a 3/13 with the console sliding forward on rails on the bandshell, the organ's fame was assured. No organ has been heard by so many. More records made and sold than any other — several million-sellers, thousands of broadcasts since its opening, more money spent on its upkeep and known to millions who are not remotely interested in organs, it has become a part of show biz lore in Europe.

After Dixon retired Ernest Broadbent took his place; a superb player, but ill health forced his retirement from the organ and concert touring scene. A new change of policy has meant bringing in a team of younger players to handle the incredible daily schedule of this historic organ.

Dancing is continuous in the fabulous ornate ballroom from 10:30 a.m. till 10:30 p.m. every day except Sundays. The blower is cooled off by having a Technics organ playing for about 30 minutes at a time throughout the day, then the console rises on its fast lift to lure the dancers onto the magnificent sprung floor.

Since the fire of 1956, when the French-style console got roasted and the tabs buckled in the heat as the floor caught fire, the console was mounted on a lift with sliding trap door cover. Its grand piano stands alongside the raised console and fascinates the public as its keys go plunking up and down in the rather unkind manner in which Wurlitzers seem to treat their piano attachments!

After the war, Mr. Dixon had the upright piano removed and the grand piano from the Opera House theatre Blackpool wired in its place. He also had the pipemaking firm of Rodgers

in Leeds make and fit a Solo String rank in place of the Vox Humana, and a Tuba Mirabilis rank made and fitted. After the fire, soot was removed and the console rebuilt, and he had the Gamba and Tuba Mirabilis from the Opera House Blackpool Wurlitzer switched in place of the English-built Solo String and Tuba Mirabilis, which went into the Opera House where they remain, so it's all Wurlitzer. A £67,000 overhaul took place recently, but it has been maintained every year since it was built. It does earn its keep, you can't deny that.

Everyone here was saddened to learn that Reginald Dixon died on Thursday, 9 May, aged 80. He had been in poor health for a couple of years, and was unable to attend the gala 80th birthday concert arranged for him at the Tower Ballroom earlier this year.

Ena Baga was wartime chief organist at the Tower whilst Reg was in the airforce, and now the great Ena Baga is to return again after 40 years for a special concert May 12.

Chief organist today is the hugely popular Phil Kelsall, born in 1956. He

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landed a record contract with EMI, no less, and they put out an LP every year nationwide. European sales, BBC broadcasts and winter concert tours have brought the organ world to Phil's feet. His latest LP is in strict tempo. Titled "Party Dance Night at the Tower," it contains 16 different tempo medleys of tunes like tangos, fox-trots, quicksteps, even the Agadoo, a new dance.

Dance-type strict tempo records are the "in thing" this year in the big-time theatre organ scene. In Northampton, young ex-Tower organist Nicholas Martin's latest LP offering is "Dance Time at the Merry-Go-Round," recorded on the fabulous 3/19 BAL 4 Wurlitzer of the Merry-Go-Round, a superb organ museum in Northampton in the midlands of England. The organ came from the old Paramount theatre Newcastle-on-Tyne originally, via a stint in an auto showroom where it was played for concerts. Jesse Crawford said it was the best Wurlitzer he played when on tour over here for Paramount's British circuit. It remains so, in the opinion of many.

One of the older members of the Tower Blackpool team is Arnold Loxam. He has just issued his finest LP on Grosvenor Records label called "At Home," a recording which gets away from the dance tempo and exploits often better the tone colours of the Tower organ. He leaves the sometimes overworked Tierces and Quint stops of the Tower organ alone, and we enjoy a fresher sound from this most English of British Wurlitzers.

Mention must be made of Arnold Loxam's previous LP, also recently out on the Kinura label, made on the famous AVRO Radio station four-manual 19-rank organ in Hilversum, Holland. Dutch builder Standaart started the organ in 1935 but went bankrupt and Compton was brought in from the U.K. to finish the job. Standaart had built the console and ordered the reeds from Gottfried in the USA, something they always did. According to legend, Compton provided 15 ranks of pipes. Jacket notes on an LP by Dutch organist Bernard Drukker said it was mostly Compton, but now we are told it does not contain any Compton pipework! It does not have the strident sound of the later Standaarts (six came over to Britain in the 1930s), and AVRO Radio has always stated that it is a Comp-

ton. For a famous broadcasting organ it remains a mystery.

All in all, it's a bumper year for Arnold Loxam, and anniversaries and organ playing keeps you young, we read. It must, as veteran console star of the Gaumont-British chain's heyday is Bobby Pagan, who celebrated his 80th birthday with a concert at the splendid Worthing, Sussex, Assembly Hall Wurlitzer 3/10 in a joint concert with your talented Rob Calcaterra, who is highly popular over here. There was a "This Is Your Life" segment.

A lady called "Big Bertha" brought gasps from an audience recently when I presented a tribute to Paramount for the Cinema Organ So-

ciety in London. I showed off all their British circuit houses (now Odeon controlled) and several famous USA Paramounts, like Oakland, New York, Portland, Seattle, Aurora, Toledo, Denver, Birmingham (Big Bertha's home) and my favourite Brooklyn Paramount. Rudy Frey and others helped me locate some lovely slides.

London cinema buffs were recently sampling the delights of Paris cinemas, all organless these days, including the Paramount Paris. Its 2/10 Wurlitzer is now in a private house.

That's all for now. Time to press the down button. Keep those Voxes chuffing merrily.

IAN DALGLIESH □

BOOK REVIEW

Encore for A Worthy Performer, by Daniel M. Costigan. Published by Rahway Landmarks, Box 755-D, Rahway, New Jersey 07065. \$3.95 per copy (postpaid).

This story of the Rahway Theatre graphically reminds us that each old movie house in this country has its own history and serves to keep us in touch with a time when the pace of life was less hectic and movies were still a kind of magic. A group of concerned individuals has organized Rahway Landmarks which is dedicated to the restoration and preservation of the Rahway Theatre and its 2/7 Style E-X Wurlitzer Opus 1923, and *Encore* was published to help finance this project. Author Daniel M. Costigan states in his introductory notes that this book is intended as a "kind of tapestry of interesting facts in the life and times of a local institution." And it is.

Although Rahway, New Jersey, is not an American megalopolis, there were three opera houses there before 1900, and competition for the first movie theatres was intense during the 1920s. In 1928, when the Rahway opened, it appeared to be the winner of the "great race." Costigan tells us that the \$20,000 Wurlitzer was its real attraction, and that the "unique acoustics of the hall made the relatively small Rahway organ sound enormous."

Hard times during the '30s found theatre owners and managers devel-

oping some rather creative promotions to draw patrons, and the Rahway was no exception. In 1933, the theatre's management staged an elaborate wedding on the Rahway stage complete with "organist, vocalists and ushers from the staff." The honored couple celebrated their 51st anniversary in 1984.

The life of the Rahway during the war years and the troubled economic times that followed parallels that of hundreds of great old American theatres, but this story is special because of the determination of the Rahway citizens not to let this landmark theatre and its Wurlitzer die.

In 1967, when I was performing in New Jersey, Bob Balfour took me to see the theatre and invited me to play the organ. I was impressed with the way the sound filled the auditorium, and I agree with their claim that it is the "biggest little Wurlitzer." It feels good to know that another theatre and its organ will be preserved for future generations.

Costigan's narrative is quite readable, and the only flaw I find in the book is the poor reproduction of some of the illustrations. *Encore for A Worthy Performer* is not just an "encore;" it is, hopefully, a preview of a new life for the Rahway Theatre and its "biggest little Wurlitzer." To that end, I would recommend the book to theatre and organ lovers.

PAUL QUARINO □

ATOS Committee Reports

NOMINATING COMMITTEE Final Report 1985

The 1985 Nominating Committee was composed of Dale Mendenhall, Chairman; Thelma Barclay, Betty Darling and Margaret Ann Foy.

There is good news and bad news in this final report. First, the good news: The total cost of the election this year was \$838.86. This compares to an average cost of \$2058 for the past three elections. The new procedures worked very well and all deadlines directed by the bylaws were met. We now have a permanent record in the Journal of all candidates who ran for office this year. Members can refer to the Journal each year at election time to see who ran for director the previous years.

Now, the bad news: Only 743 ballots were returned this year out of 4702 inserted in the Journal sent to U.S. and Canada members and 210 airmailed overseas. This is a 15% return. The new procedures were fully explained in the Nov/Dec THEATRE ORGAN and a notation was at the top of page 28 of the candidate's resumé page in the March/April issue this year, stating that the ballot was enclosed. One could not miss the ballot if you checked the information about the election or the National Convention.

Recommendation:

Because of the tremendous cost savings, we recommend that this procedure be con-

tinued. Next year a reminder should be part of the President's message to the members and small reminders of the ballots being inserted should be included throughout the entire March/April issue of THEATRE ORGAN, as we do to remind members about the National Convention.

Congratulations:

The Nominating Committee congratulates Mike Ohman for his suggestion on the procedures that saved ATOS a great deal of money. The National Board of Directors always welcomes any suggestion that can reduce our operating costs in order that more funds can become available for new projects.

COSTS FOR THE ELECTION:

No. 10 overseas envelopes	\$ 4.20
Postage overseas	92.86
5000 Remit envelopes (ballots)	345.00
Typesetting	25.00
UPS	76.50
Tax	22.20
Resumé sheet for overseas	63.60
Stuff ballots in Journal	40.00
Art Work	85.00
Photos	84.50

TOTAL COST \$838.96

RESULTS OF THE ELECTION:

Ballots mailed in the Journal	
for US and Canada	4700
Ballots mailed overseas	210
Ballots requested from Doug Fisk	2

TOTAL BALLOTS 4912

Ballots returned from	
US and Canada	700
Overseas ballots returned	43
Total ballots received	743
Ballots disqualified	
(voted for more than 3)	1

TOTAL BALLOTS COUNTED . . . 742

RESULTS

1. Lois Segur	389
2. Tom B'hend	317
3. Dr. John Landon	298
4. Allen Miller	286
5. Warren Dale Mendenhall	153
6. Thelma Barclay	140
7. Paul Quarino	131
8. Alden Stockebrand	131
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Dale Mendenhall, Chairman

Letters to the Editors

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.

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

Dear Editor:

I have been asked by the National Association of Civilian Conservation Corps Alumni to obtain the assistance of ATOS members in locating a former CCC enrollee who played the big Austin pipe organ in Balboa Park, San Diego, on the afternoon of June 19, 1936, for a special CCC Day during the Southern California Exposition.

The CCC enrollee was **Wilfred Culver**, and if he can be located, it is the desire of Chapter 55 of NACCCA to have him once more play that organ for a special CCC Day at Balboa Park.

If any member has information about Wilfred Culver and his present address, please contact Col. Harry J. Jenkins, 7876 Camino Huerta, San Diego, California 92122.

I hope we can locate this man if he is still living, and hope that he may still be playing the organ.

Sincerely,
Harry J. Jenkins
San Diego, California

Dear Record Reviewer:

It is unfortunate that all the fine recordings you review are not always obtainable in disc form. Some are for sale only as cassettes. It is highly possible that having discs pressed is too expensive. In that case, probably nothing can be done.

However, buying a pre-recorded cassette is always a gamble. Too many companies produce poor quality tapes which are worthless. The tapes stretch, break or wrinkle, and some brands lose their sound in from one to two years, even a couple of major brands.

It is true that if you have time you can splice a broken tape, but you will lose some of the music. Worse, if the music

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**ATOS
Membership
P.O. Box 420490
Sacramento, Calif.
95842**

comes and goes after a period of time, all you can do is throw it away.

When I am able to get a disc recording of some artist I can make my own tapes with a top quality product, and if by chance it too goes bad I can make another. I am leery of spending up to \$12 for a tape recording that may be chewed up in a house or car tape deck. In cases like this, I must either buy another copy or forget the whole thing.

Sincerely,
Harold B. Schneider
Seattle, Washington

Dear Sir:

Here is a rather interesting sequel to my letter in the January/February 1985 issue of THEATRE ORGAN regarding the future of theatre organ.

Here in New England we have seen two completely different attitudes during this winter.

I. Two chapters of this organization were offered a *free* 2/10 Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ and they didn't know what to do with it! Do you believe what you are reading in 1985, the 30th year of ATOS? I don't want to.

I wasn't at the first meeting in which this instrument's availability was announced, but I was at the second and I couldn't believe my ears. "Where are we going to put it?" "What are we going to do with it?" "Who's going to pay for it being installed?" was what I heard. The *who* is apparently everyone *else* except the groups discussing the matter.

Not one suggestion was made that it should be installed in a location where those of us who are less fortunate *might* be able to get to a theatre pipe organ to learn, teach and practice without having to go through some of the red tape, late theatre hours, elitism, high fees, etc. I couldn't afford it myself, but together with the group I could help in the form of teaching, seminars, mini-concerts, maintenance and what monies I could afford.

In our area we work as hard as anyone on the organs and then we are shut away almost forever from the very instrument we helped to put together. Perhaps it is this kind of discouragement that has led to what you have just read. I hope it never happens to you.

II. The complete contrast to all of this is in Berlin, New Hampshire. Mr. James Martin signed on about 15 more kids this year, all less than 15 years of age. They completely rewinded the main chamber so the pedal 16' stops would be off-tremolo. The wind lines are so well done that not one single leak can be heard anywhere in the chamber.

We had our annual Christmas program on December 19, and we taped a ten-minute demo complete with the history, silent movie, sing-along and current music for public TV of Durham, New Hampshire. It

was seen in three repeat programs on "Crossroads of New Hampshire" throughout northern New England. We also did a band and theatre organ selection with the Berlin High School Band. More programs are planned in 1985.

Lastly, I will begin instruction directly on the ex-Albert Theatre pipe organ with a number of students and adults.

The point I am making is that here in Berlin there is *no* theatre organ chapter or club per se. There is, instead, the most wonderful community spirit (unspoiled by TV), and a sense of the future of our favorite subject in mind, so that all of these events are actually possible.

Compare this to some chapters of this organization, whose motto is "To preserve the theatre pipe organ and to *further* the understanding of the instrument through an *exchange of information*." Which is, in plain English, *TEACHING!*

I know I will be criticized for writing this letter. But I'm not going to watch this subject die because of those who just don't care about it anymore.

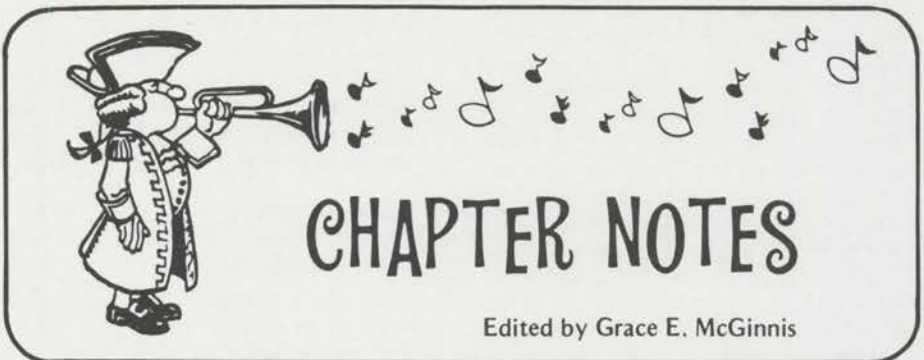
I sincerely suggest that we establish a series of teaching instruments across the country, ones that are easy to get to, and then we'll not only have a way to teach on

such an organ but we will be saving instruments, and making use of theatre organs that can no longer play in their original theatres, and which will no longer sit in warehouses where they go to waste while a whole generation misses out on their sound.

Also, let's get after the media which denies us access to the airwaves one way or another. As Roxy once said, "The public doesn't know what it wants. It just wants to be entertained. Don't give 'em what they want, give them something better." Our music has just as much right as any other music to be on TV and radio, by law, I might add. How do they, the media, really know what the public wants? How can we show it to the public if we can't ever get the sound into young people's ears on an everyday basis, not just at concert time?

I wish I could be happier writing this, but I'm doing this in defense of our favorite subject. I hope someone out there will understand what I'm saying and motivate our people into action. The money is no good without motivation. Congratulations to Motor City and CATOE for saving the Redford and Chicago Theatres. *There* is motivation, if I ever saw it!

Robert Legon,
Malden, Massachusetts □



CEDAR RAPIDS AREA

Iowa

319/362-9815 or 319/363-9769

Our April 14 meeting was held at the Howard Burton residence in Marion. Many members welcomed the opportunity for relaxation there, and enthusiasm was such that Howard's two consoles, pipe and electronic, were often occupied simultaneously. Newcomers were given the customary tour of the two-manual Geneva's chamber as well as a showing of a Chaplin silent. Howard's generosity was much in evidence and included his donation of an AGO-standard pedalboard to the community theatre where the chapter meets in May.

Tom Hazleton's Cedar Rapids Paramount concert appearance in May represented a kind of benchmark in our recent history. Reminiscent of the times when popcorn was king and standing-room-only was the rule, the concert was the first

since the "theatre days" before the Paramount became a performing arts center. The club's concert promotion efforts have always been ably executed and successful, and two recent developments have contributed greatly to the cause. First, local radio personality Jerry Carr gave the concert much "talk-time" on local radio station WMT. In addition, Jerry had important duties as master of ceremonies for the show. Second, a new development greeted our patrons as they entered the Paramount's palatial lobby. A new, informative, annotative program, compiled by Paul Montague, is now in print and features an extensive history plus photographs of the installation.

The location of our Style E Wurlitzer is not often scheduled for revival programming, but in May there was a notable exception. The first Big Band Dance was held in the Kirkwood College Iowa Hall Ballroom as a benefit for the KCC Music Scholarship Fund. This appearance of the



3/12 Wurlitzer in the Tampa Theatre.

(Ed Szucs photo)

popular Jazz Ensemble featured the "real" music of Ellington, Goodman and Miller. A top-flight social event, it followed the popularity of local AM Big Band airplay along with KCKK's own FM vintage jazz format.

MICHAEL VANCURA

Our next project is the Polk Theatre in Lakeland, Florida. Although slightly larger, the Polk is the sister to the Tampa Theatre, but has never had an organ. However, there are two large chambers that could hold an organ of impressive size. Restoration of this theatre is well underway, but lack of funds has put plans for an organ in the distant future. A donation of

an organ would be greatly appreciated. Any person with information which will help us obtain an organ for the Polk Theatre, please write to Bill Couch, 1505 E. Private Drive, Lakeland, Florida 33803.

BILL COUCH



**CENTRAL
INDIANA
CHAPTER**

**Indianapolis
317/255-8056
or 317/786-2160**

President Tess Moses called the April 14 meeting to order at the Pipe Dream Restaurant in Kokomo. Our hosts were members Jack and Carrie Elleman. When the meeting was adjourned, everyone proceeded upstairs to hear Rob Richards play the organ. His sparkling personality and excellent playing were evident in his fantastic program which included "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue" and music from *Showboat*. While Rob played, those who didn't get there early enough to partake of the new menu, did so. It was an enjoyable afternoon.

Neil Jensen, from the other side of the world, gave a concert on April 12 at the Hedback Theatre in Indianapolis. Neil, a talented organist, gave a fine performance which was well-received by the audience

**CENTRAL
FLORIDA
THEATRE
ORGAN
SOCIETY**



Tampa

813/685-8707 or 813/734-5721

We finally did it! The Tampa Theatre Wurlitzer has spoken! It was a struggle, with all the usual obstacles, but well worth it. Years of toil have rewarded us with an organ of which anyone would be proud. During the first day of rough-tuning, we discovered why organists who played this organ in this theatre years ago have said this was the best-sounding theatre organ in Florida. The acoustics of the theatre give the original eight ranks a brilliant sound, and now, with 12 ranks, the sound has created excitement for a theatre organ that we haven't felt in a long time. Sandra Shook was on hand to make the first recording, and, even though the rough-tuning was quite evident, this tape is one we will cherish. After we fix some stubborn dead notes and do more tuning, we will be ready for open console. The traps are back in their original places and are ready to be wired. The last project will be to wire the presets, and then we will be ready for concerts.

CHAPTER CORRESPONDENTS PLEASE NOTE



GRACE E. MCGINNIS.

To help ease the burden on the editorial staff of THEATRE ORGAN, please observe the following:

Type all copy, double-spaced, on letter-size (8½" x 11") white paper, leaving 1¼" margins on top, bottom and both sides. Do not use erasable paper. Please include your name, address and telephone number.

Type photo captions on Scotch (3M) Post-it Note sheets (#654 - 3" x 3" or #655 - 3" x 5") and attach to **back** of photo. DO NOT use any kind of tape or rubber cement to attach captions to photos, and DO NOT attach photos to sheets of paper.

DEADLINES

November 15 for January/February

January 15 for March/April

March 15 for May/June

May 15 for July/August

July 15 for September/October

September 15 for November/December

Send Chapter Notes and photos to:

Grace E. McGinnis, Associate Editor
4633 SE Brookside Drive, #58
Milwaukie, Oregon 97222

and included "My Funny Valentine," "I'm Always Chasing Rainbows" and "Root Beer Rag."

On May 5 President Moses called the meeting to order after which Brian Holland played a concert of popular songs which included "Oh, By Jingo," "New York, New York" and "Original Rag." Open console was then in order.

WAYNE R. PIPHER

CENTRAL OHIO Columbus

513/652-1775 or 614/882-4085

It was open house at Capital University's Campus Center on April 28 to hear Larry Krueger's newly installed 2/12 Wurlitzer. After a short business meeting, led by President Mark Williams, Larry filled us in on the organ's history and relocation. Larry, in addition to being our vice-president, is Assistant Dean of Campus Life at Capital University. He introduced the featured artist for this auspicious occasion, Bill Taber. Bill hails from Cleveland where he is employed as a music teacher by the Lucus Music Company.

For one hour, we thrilled to Bill's renditions of vintage, pop and contemporary tunes which ably demonstrated his versatility as well as the tonal qualities of this superb instrument. Included in his program were a sing-along and a silent Laurel and Hardy comedy, *Big Business*. There followed open console with a procession of members and guests performing for our musical entertainment. We were delighted to welcome back an old friend, organist Henry Garcia, who, we are pleased to say, is now a member.

The organ, originally installed in the Commodore Theatre in Cleveland, is a Wurlitzer Style 190 built in 1927, which eventually came to the attention of a friend of Bill Taber who found it in a



COTOS Vice President Larry Krueger at his 2/12 console. (John Polsley photo)

Special to Chapter Correspondents . . .

Kudos to all of you who are getting your copy in on time, neatly typed and with your pictures correctly labeled. You are making our work a pleasure!

We have another condition now that needs your attention. The ATOS Board of Directors has stipulated a limit on the number of pages for each issue of THEATRE ORGAN, and we are soliciting your cooperation in meeting the new requirements. Here is what you can do:

1. Please send copy for each issue, rather than a once-a-year summary. One or two typed pages would be excellent.
2. Keep in mind that this journal will be read 20 years from now, and your news is of historical significance. Avoid items of limited local interest, and make your descriptions as clean and precise as possible.
3. Omit lists of songs from programs unless something is outstanding.
4. Omit material that pertains to chapter business (minutes of meetings, lists of officers, etc.).
5. Omit all material that you would not find interesting in the year 2000.

And please understand that if your copy is edited more severely than you like, the reason may be spatial rather than topical. We appreciate your contributions and look forward to some exceptional material from all of you!

GRACE E. MCGINNIS □

Cleveland church, unused and bedecked with furniture. Bill purchased the organ, but simultaneously acquired another more suited to his needs so he sold it to Larry Krueger. Its installation at Capital University began some ten months ago when Larry, with very little outside assistance, accomplished the Herculean task of chamber construction, blower and windline installation, swell shade mounting, chest wiring, tuning and voicing, all in time for its premiere performance. It features a Piano, Chrysoglott, Glockenspiel and Xylophone percussions, a toy counter and recent additions of a Post Horn and Krummet. Situated in the Cabaret Room of the Campus Center, the console sits in front of

a black partition separating the listening area from the chambers. Located high in either side of the partition are paired vertical swell shades, while in the middle are a toy counter and percussion inset. The audience can catch a glimpse of some well-restored table chests and offset pipes through two sets of windows located at eye level. There is a promise of more to come, for sitting at the sideline is a three-manual Möller console destined to replace the present two-manual keydesk. At Larry's work pace, that won't take long.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon, and our special thanks go to our vice-president who worked arduously to make this an eventful occasion.

JOHN R. POLSLEY



Chicago Area

Theatre Organ Enthusiasts

312/470-0743 or 312/627-3245

A recent message from Chairman Jim Shaffer states the fortunate position we are in regarding theatre pipe organs. Truly, there are many in playable condition because of the many dedicated theatre organ enthusiasts who are willing and able to do the necessary work. The results of their efforts will be shared with you as you attend the '85 Convention.

We natives do get to see and hear some of the installations. Most of them are in auditoriums or theatres, but a few are privately owned. This is the case with Mr. and Mrs. Jasper Sanfilippo who graciously opened their beautiful suburban home to us on March 31. The weatherman was in a bad mood, but that didn't deter the more



Krueger's Capital University organ installation, right chamber. (John Polsley photo)

than 150 organ buffs who attended this special social. Bill Tandy did the console honors with a program of great diversity. Open console and refreshments were interspersed by viewing and hearing the Sanfilippo's collection of antique mechanical nickelodeons and music machines. We are all grateful for this rare opportunity to view this unique installation.

The bus trip to Columbus, Ohio, was a delightful outing. Dennis James was a generous host, and *The Thief of Bagdad*, accompanied by the Columbus Symphony Orchestra, was excellent. It provided a glimpse of what former movie entertainment was. 'Tis sad that present generations are missing this type of fare. This trip was a joint venture of five groups of organ buffs, CATOE, Joliet, Rockford, Nutones (Chicago South) and Windy City. The enroute lunch stop was at the Paramount Music Palace in Indianapolis, Indiana, with Donna Parker accompanying the pizza chompers. Dennis James presented the Ohio Theatre tour and slide presentation as well as information to the open console players. We were grateful to Patti Patterson and Greg Simanski who provided rolls and coffee, and to Len Clarke who brought theatre organ tapes for the bus stereo, all combining to make this a super bus trip.

On April 19 we presented Kay McAbee at the Arcada Theatre in St. Charles using their 3/16 Geneva theatre organ. On stage, Al Morgan appeared with his excellent piano presentation and duo back-up. It was a tremendous show and well-received, in fact, sold out! We would like more of this!

Mundelein was the location, and teenager Reid Spears was the soloist for our recent social and business meeting. Reid presented a great program, and he will be featured during the '85 Convention using the Mundelein 4/25 Wurlitzer/Gottfried theatre organ.

Sadness descended upon all of us with the passing of Harry Koenig in April. We certainly will miss this cheerful musician and friend. Details appear elsewhere in this issue.

ALMER BROSTROM



Milwaukee
414/463-2365
or 414/771-8522

The Riverside Theatre was the location of our February concert, the first at the theatre since the completion of its renovation in November 1984. The artist of the day was Tom Hazleton in his first concert appearance for us. Tom was very impressed with the condition of the theatre and the organ. The quality fit the top-notch entertainment theme being presented by the management of the Riverside.



Read about the ATOS-sponsored Tour to Australia and New Zealand on page 10 of this issue. Then check the New Member Contest on page 11 so that you can get in on this trip with your expenses paid.



Gary Hanson and Clark Wilson spent some 400 hours rebuilding the stop list and doing other needed repairs. Prior to this, the Great stop list was mostly a collection of 8' stops. With the addition of another relay, the range of the organ has been expanded to include a number of 16' stops, previously non-existent mutations on the Tibia and Octave and Sub-octave couplers. The addition of a Post Horn has spiced up the stop list even more.

The March social was held at the home of Harvey Kuhlman in Menomonee Falls on March 29. Harvey has a marvelous 3/16 Wicks equipped with glass swell shades and a grand piano. Gary Hanson played a mini-concert followed by a short silent comedy. Members took turns at open console, and treats were provided by the Palate Pleaser Restaurant.

Work on the new console for the Avalon Theatre should be completed by fall of this year. Rick Johnson has almost completed the console wiring for the Z-tronics relay. The console is being painted antique ivory with gold trim.

On May 5 we went to Barrington Hills, Illinois, to the home of the Sanfilippos. They have an impeccably installed 4/28 Wurlitzer in a home that is a musical museum of reproducing machines ranging from band organs to a double violin player. The organ has a digital recording device which allows artists to have their playing reproduced for playback at a later date. A busload of enthusiasts was treated to a wonderful afternoon of music.

BILL CAMPBELL



Babson College, Wellesley
617/662-7055

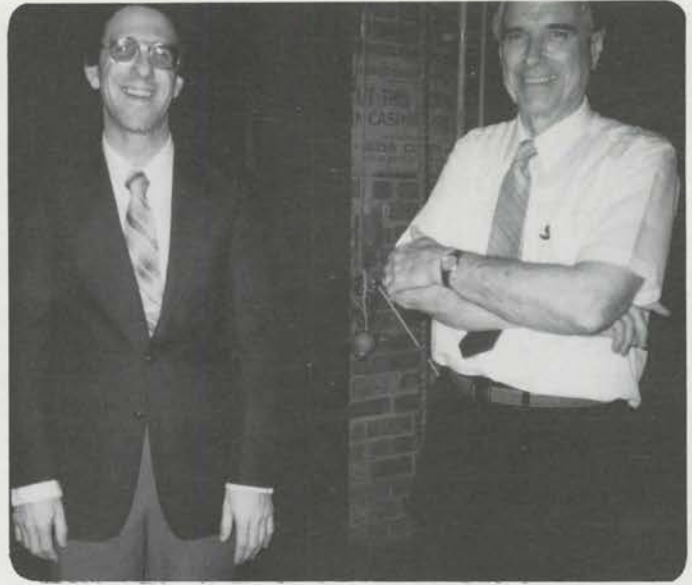
Our first March concert at Babson featured none other than Hector Olivera. Before a well-filled house, this "human dynamo" put our Wurlitzer to the test as few others have done. With hands and feet flying and frequent registration changes, plus his vivid imagination, there is nothing static in an Olivera concert. My notes say "electrifying — defies description," and what more can be said? No one can top his brilliant technique, musical knowledge, fertile imagination and infectious console personality. From a natural Latin tune, "Oye Negra," to the longest "Trolley Song" ride we've ever experienced, Hector and our organ really had a workout! There were a few quiet, reflective pieces such as Bach's "Sheep May Safely Graze," and a Charlie Chaplin silent, *Behind the Screen*, with a loose accompaniment by Hector. A long, standing "O" brought Mr. Olivera back for yet another "Flight of the Bumble Bee." The difficult, our artist makes seem easy, and it is amazing to watch his manual and pedal dexterity. Programming is another matter, and this one did not contain enough true TO selections which the public expects. Too many melanges woven back and forth, while ingenious, make one desire some straightforward tunes.

The following afternoon a more sedate program of easy listenin' Moon River-type tunes was well-played by veteran organist Lee Erwin on our 235. Lee has a long history of TO and broadcasting experience and is recognized as one of the country's best accompanists to the silent screen. Lee's was the expected, informal, true theatre organ concert that this writer used to hear at midnight on the 500,000-watt Crosley radio station, WLW, in Cincinnati. Lee's 45-second opener, "But Not For Me," was timed for the console lift to reach its full height. His program included some Hoagy Carmichael, Gershwin and selections from *Oklahoma*. Solid, rich, harmonious are some adjectives which describe Erwin's playing. His enjoyable interpretations brought such applause that "The Original Rag," a great "Embraceable You" and an upbeat "Somebody Loves You" medley encore resulted. What a weekend of contrasting talents, neither to be easily forgotten!

Our April 20 Babson meeting had member Len Winter scheduled to play; however, he was hospitalized three days before, and Program Chairman Gordon Creamer announced that not one, but three, performers were to substitute. Bob Legon led off with a blackboard-on-easel next to the console with which he gave a brief lesson on song composition as he



L to R, Michael Cipolletti, President, Mrs. Ludmila French, Bill Smith, crew chief, and Eddie Weaver, artist at the memorial concert for Robert Fichter. On the table are some of Mr. Fichter's memorabilia.



Organist Dick Smith, on left, and Bill Smith, crew chief of Trenton War Memorial.

jokingly called the "class to order," then played five tunes in demonstration. Carolyn Wilcox followed with three well-worked-out selections. Guest Burt Atwood from Palo Alto, California, a Nor-Cal member, then mounted the bench. After three numbers, he stepped down, but was called back for more as his broad and vigorous style exploited the organ's resources.

STANLEY C. GARNISS



**GARDEN STATE
THEATRE ORGAN
SOCIETY, INC.**

**New Jersey
317/786-2160
or 317/255-8056**

On March 10 we presented a Memorial Concert in honor of Robert Fichter at the Trenton War Memorial. The featured artist was "Mr. Music," Eddie Weaver, who charmed the audience during the first half of his program. Following intermission, Mrs. Ludmila French, daughter of Mr. Fichter, gave a beautiful, stirring description of her father who "fell hopelessly in love with theatre pipe organs," and whose favorite organist was Jesse Crawford, his close friend and organ teacher. Bob attended many of the concerts at Trenton, and his presence will be missed by all who knew him. He left a generous legacy to our chapter with the intention of supporting concert programs. After the concert by Eddie Weaver, Mrs. French and her brother, Robert Fichter, displayed on the stage their father's theatre organ memorabilia which included pictures, books and memories of Jesse Crawford. This was fol-

lowed by open console and a picnic supper with members and guests providing their own refreshments.

On April 14 the last of a five-concert series presented Dick Smith in a return engagement on the 3/16 Möller in the Trenton War Memorial. Dick is an energetic organist with a pleasing repertoire, and the applause he received was a warm return welcome for him. After the program, there was the usual picnic on the stage and open console which lasted until the time reminded everyone to drift homeward. Monday was a workday.

A special meeting was held in April at the John Harms Englewood Plaza Theatre in Englewood. When this theatre opened in November, 1926, it had 2000 seats, a \$50,000 Welte-Mignon pipe organ and a "late Victorian luxury interior that predated the art-deco of the 1930s." Through the years it remained a working movie house owned first by the Reade chain; in the 1940s, the Skouras chain; then, in 1967, by United Artists until it closed in 1973. The pipe organ was removed and its present location is unknown. In 1976, a culturally active group, under the leadership of outstanding area impresario John Harms, brought the theatre back to life. It is now owned by a non-profit corporation which operates a regional art center. As money from successful concerts and donations was acquired, new lighting, beautiful new red seats and general improvements were made. Disaster struck when the plaster walls began falling down, but the interior has since been completely renovated. Though more improvements are needed, the interior is now extremely attractive and the acoustics are crisp and clear.

At this meeting, members were given a tour of the theatre, including the projection booth and the empty pipe chambers with swell shades still in place. All were im-

pressed, and a discussion followed with Alan Kirk, executive director, exploring the possibility of installing a theatre pipe organ. A committee was chosen to sound out the membership and prepare a formal presentation to the John Harms Board of Directors.

JINNY VANORE



**Land O' Lakes Chapter
AMERICAN THEATRE
ORGAN SOCIETY
LO'LTOS
St. Paul-Minneapolis**

715/262-5086 or 612/771-1771

(Note: Apologies to Bob Scholer for inadvertently omitting his name from the list of crew members who renovated the 2/4 Robert-Morton, and to Maury Lidholm for misspelling his name, in the March/April issue. G.M.)

Rob Calcaterra had a very successful stay at the Phipps Center for the Performing Arts in Hudson, Wisconsin, starting with seminars and concerts on March 14 and 15 with four different groups of 200 students each from Hudson participating. Rob played Friday evening to an almost full house, complete with a sing-along and a Harold Lloyd silent film. Arma Neff, 96-year-young violinist and chapter member, made a cameo appearance and received two standing ovations. Her witty rapport with Rob stole the show! Comments were heard that this was the best show yet at Phipps. On March 16 Rob continued his workshop with approximately 20 persons.

The Organaires, small organ home group, met at the home of Bill and Jean Lundquist in Lake Elmo on March 21. Bill has recently installed a Wurlitzer pipe or-

gan in his home and, with a Conn, a small electronic Wurlitzer and a piano, there was plenty of music. Bill, Joe Vaes and Mike Erie at the organs and Verna Mae at the piano, all together, played the last two tunes of the evening.

April 13 found members and guests strolling through the new Diamond Jim's Mall in Mendota with owners Allan and Mary Steffes, chapter members, hosting an open house. There are several gift shops branching out from an old-time hotel lobby with the "Mighty Mite" 2/4 Robert-Morton, recently renovated by a LO'LTOS crew, located in a prominent spot on the balcony. Organists Tom Neadle, Don Johnson, John Zetterstrom, Alice Rabus and Mike Erie took turns at the organ so there was continuous music all afternoon. Curious visitors asked many questions about the organ.

Phipps Center sponsored a SHOWCASE on April 14 which included, among the performers, our own Tom Neadle at the Wurlitzer playing two numbers. Tom was selected from a group of contestants in a recent audition and was thrilled to be part of the SHOWCASE.

The Organaires met at Verna Mae's home on April 18 and, as usual, piano and organ duets were played as well as each member taking a turn at the Kimball Stardust.

On April 21 Ron Brownell from Minneapolis, in organ sales at Schmitt Music Centers for many years and tuning pianos at the present, was our guest artist at the console of the Wurlitzer at Phipps Center. Familiar tunes and requests were enjoyed by all. On this same day, boxes of records and organ and piano music were hauled to Phipps by members for our first ongoing music sale. A record player was brought in

to furnish background music of the oldies, and sales were brisk.

On May 10 a group of us traveled to Milwaukee to attend the Lyn Larsen concert at the Riverside Theatre where Dairyland Chairman Fred Wolfgram had arranged for tickets for us at the box office. The Riverside Theatre has been renovated and refurbished to perfection, and it was a joy to see and hear Lyn Larsen at the 3/14 235 Special Wurlitzer. The next morning, Fred and his wife, Carol, opened the theatre for us, and we had an opportunity to play the "biggie" with Fred giving us a tour of the Solo chambers and the dressing rooms. He told us that when *Sugar Babies* was playing there recently, Mickey Rooney suddenly ran across the stage, sat down at the organ and played! How we wish we had a theatre and organ of our very own!

VERNA MAE WILSON



LOS ANGELES
THEATRE ORGAN
SOCIETY

California
818/792-7084

Hector Olivera was our headliner at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium's five-manual Möller on April 19. In this return engagement, he once again demonstrated why he is one of the world's top organists and the Möller one of the world's best theatre organs!

Many noted that the 28-rank organ sounded brighter and fuller than ever — and for good reason! The organ is now winded by two blowers! The original high-speed Spencer supplies all the wind for the

Solo chamber while the new blower handles just the Main chamber. The city of Pasadena continues to upgrade the organ with the expert work being handled by Dave Junchen and Steve Adams, who originally installed the instrument.

Artists for our fall season will be Ramona Gerhard at San Gabriel on September 21, Keith Chapman at Pasadena on October 26, and Cheryl and Wayne Sepala at San Gabriel on November 16.

Work continues on our Wurlitzer being installed in an auditorium-like warehouse in La Mirada, just east of downtown Los Angeles. We hope to have our first program on the 3/27 organ as part of our annual Christmas Party and Membership Meeting.

RALPH BEAUDRY



Detroit
313/537-1133

Our Young Artists' Concert at the Redford Theatre on March 2 was a break in tradition from our usual one-artist format for a public organ program and featured Peter Hansen, John Lauter, Rick Cucchi and Tony O'Brien at the 3/10 Barton. Ranging in age from 16 to 26, the four young men provided a variety of styles and selections that had the enthusiastic audience on its feet at the end of the program.

Peter, 16, is from Toronto where he has been playing at the Organ Grinder for the last two years. John has been featured at all four instruments maintained by the chapter and is currently playing at Theater Organ Pizza & Pipes in Pontiac. Rick is a student in organ performance at Oakland University, has played for our Fourth Sunday Series and has been heard at the Pied Piper Pizza Peddler and Theater Organ Pizza & Pipes. Tony is an organ major at Wayne State University, is frequently heard at the Redford Barton and other chapter organs, and has played with the Detroit Concert Band and for silent films at the Henry Ford Museum at Greenfield Village.

Chapter organists who played overture and intermission music for our biweekly movies series at the Redford in January and February were Evelyn Markey, Stan Zimmerman, Rick Cucchi, John Lauter and Tony O'Brien.

Don Jenks made a return visit to the Royal Oak Theatre's Barton as the Fourth Sunday artist in January. Active in Wolverine Chapter and the Detroit Theater Organ Club, Don is a former owner of the Barton organ from the Birmingham Theatre now installed in Theater Organ Pizza & Pipes.

Filling in for ailing Emory Robbins at our Fourth Sunday concert at the Royal



Hector Olivera at the BBC/Foort Moller console in the Pasadena Civic Auditorium.

(Zimfoto)



Peter Hansen, Tony O'Brien, Rick Cucchi and John Lauter performed at Motor City's Young Artists' Concert. (Fred Page photo)



Lowell Ayars discusses his April 13 program at the Redford Theatre with stage manager David Martin. (Bill Vogel photo)

Oak was Herb Head, whose program contained a sprinkling of the circus music for which he is so well known. So adept is Herb at circus tunes, he is asked to play the calliope in the annual circus parade in Baraboo, Wisconsin.

Lowell Ayars appeared in concert at the Redford's 3/10 Barton before an enthusiastic audience on April 13. In addition to traditional theatre organ favorites, Lowell displayed his resonant baritone voice and accompanied the Laurel and Hardy silent *Should Married Men Go Home?*

We had six participants in our first Young Theatre Organists Competition at the Redford on May 5. Colleen Feldpausch, a tenth grade student from Farmington Hills, won the Junior Division, and Melissa Ambrose, a freshman at Oakland University, took top honors in the Intermediate Division. Melissa was chosen the grand winner, and a tape of her performance will be submitted to National for judging. Other contestants were Nordine Castine, Michael Oliver and Carl Lee Schneider in the Junior Division, and Jennifer Candea in the Intermediate Division. The two winners each received \$50, and the grand winner \$100. Organ pendant necklaces were given to all the girls and MCTOS belt buckles to the boys as gifts from the chapter. A reception to honor all the contestants was held in the inner lobby after the program. Chaired by Dorothy Van Steenkiste, committee members were Virginia Duerr, Gil and Penny Francis and

Peggy Grimshaw. Judges for the event were Gus Borman, Nancy Brookshire, Dan Dembicki, Henry Hunt and John Steele.

Member Gloria Sunman won first place in the Hobbyist Division of the local Yamaha competition and will travel to Rockford, Illinois, for the regional competition.

A Club Day is held at the Redford one Sunday afternoon each month and gives members a chance to socialize and play the Barton. Each Club Day is preceded by an hour-long workshop. Steve Stephani conducted a workshop on open harmony techniques on March 3, and John Lauter illustrated organ registration at the session on March 31.



L to R, front row, contestants Colleen Feldpausch, Norine Castine, Melissa Ambrose and Jennifer Candea, and judge Henry Hunt. L to R, back row, judge Nancy Brookshire, contestants Michael Oliver and Carl Lee Schneider, and judges Dan Dembicki, John Steele and August H. Borman. (Bill Vogel photo)



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We knew that our showing of the 3½-hour *Ben Hur* at the Redford on April 5 would be a long one, but we hadn't planned on a 15½-hour intermission. A power outage shortly after the start of intermission put the entire theatre in darkness, and the remaining three reels of the 70mm epic, including the famous chariot race, were shown the following afternoon. Credit goes to chapter members and audience alike (many with penlights) for the safe, orderly evacuation of over 1200 patrons.

A fairly small group gathered at the Redford to celebrate the 300th birthday of J. S. Bach, complete with cake and the singing of "Happy Birthday." Don Lockwood suggested that it might be fitting to rename the box office in honor of the great composer, and a hastily made sign was placed above the ticket window designating it "Bach's Office."

Chapter organists who played overture and intermission music for our biweekly movie series at the Redford in March and April were Grace Joslin, Stan Zimmerman, Tony O'Brien and Don Haller.

Barry Rindhage, who was the last staff organist at the Temple Theatre in Saginaw, was the featured artist for the Fourth Sunday program at the 3/16 Barton at the Royal Oak Theatre on March 24.

Coming events include Ashley Miller at the Redford on September 14, Tom Wibbels at the Redford on October 12, Fr. Jim Miller at the Royal Oak on November 9 and Walt Strony and the Concordia Handbell Choir at the Redford on December 7.

For more information, write Motor City Theatre Organ Society, 17360 Lahser Road, Detroit, Michigan 48219, or call 313/537-1133.

DON LOCKWOOD

MOUNTAIN STATE West Virginia

As of April we have our 2/7 Style E Wurlitzer plus Clarinet in storage in Charleston, West Virginia, not far from its destined home in the Capitol Theatre! The

theatre itself is under intense renovation with hopes of opening in late August. It is doubtful that it will open with the Wurlitzer installed, but every effort will be made to have live organ music of some nature. It is estimated that we will need about \$25,000 to make some needed repairs and get the Wurlitzer installed. The chambers will have to be extended upward seven feet, as the original organ was junked about 1950 and the roofline flattened. We are also planning on installing solid-state combination and relay. We do need extra shutters (5 x 5's). One set came with the organ and Potomac Valley donated another. Our shutter openings are 10 x 5, so we will need two sets on each chamber.

It was really exciting, and hard work, loading the organ in Florida, then driving to West Virginia. The best part of the trip was the wonderful Christian fellowship we enjoyed with each other and with the donors of the organ. Even though we were of different denominations, we all have the same goal, to serve the Lord first. He has blessed us greatly in bringing this project together, and with His strength and guidance we will do our best to get it installed.

A more detailed article will follow soon. Thanks for your support and help in getting Mountain State Chapter off and running.

DAVE FORTNER, JR.

NEW YORK THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY New York 201/573-9567 or 201/473-0559

We took advantage of the Yankees being out of town on April 27 and called upon Yankee Stadium organist Eddie Layton to perform in concert on the 4/31 Möller at the New York Military Academy in Cornwall-on-Hudson. The organ is an original 1928 Möller installation, and the Academy, located in the scenic Hudson Highlands just above West Point, provided a beautiful setting on a perfect spring day for our activities. Members had an opportunity to play at open console in the afternoon.

Although Eddie Layton is most often



Middletown Paramount crew chief Bob Seeley helps to place solo chest of NYTOS 2/10 Wurlitzer in its chamber.



Eddie Layton at the New York Military Academy 4/31 Möller.

heard at the Hammond, having been a featured touring artist with that company for many years, he proved to be very much at home on the mighty Möller even though, as he quipped, "it doesn't have draw-

RON RHODE

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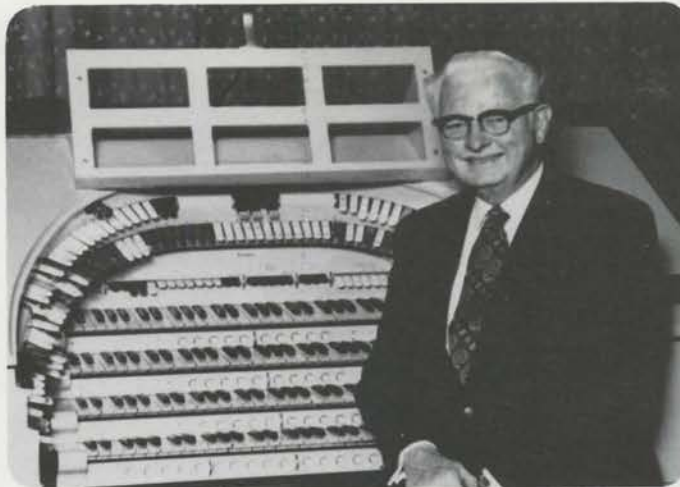
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Larry Vannucci at the 2/6 Robert-Morton at Century 21 Theatre (nee Marina). This is the only original installation in the S.F. Bay Area. (Ed Mullins photo)



Bob Vaughn cued Erich von Stroheim's *Greed* and two other Stroheim silents during the week of March 17 at San Francisco's Castro Theatre. (David Gadd photo)

bars." Eddie's eight years of study under Jesse Crawford became especially evident in the intricate harmonies and counter-melodies that he wove through his arrangements. Opening with a rousing "S Wonderful" and a medley of New York songs, Eddie managed to show off nearly every voice of the versatile Möller. He also tested the audience's knowledge of old-time radio themes, and they achieved a perfect score. He joked that George "The Boss" Steinbrenner was threatening to trade him for a power-hitting, left-handed organist if he didn't brush up his "Take Me Out to the Ball Game," and he asked the audience to sing along while he worked on the music. We happily obliged, even without the hot dogs and beer. In all, Eddie Layton and the NYMA Möller provided an excellent performance for the large, enthusiastic audience.

Work continues on our 2/10 Wurlitzer installation in the Middletown, New York, Paramount Theatre which will have its grand opening as a performing arts center on September 21 with a performance by jazz trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie. Crew chief Bob Seeley plans to have the Wurlitzer playing by that time or soon thereafter, and local enthusiasm for the project bodes well for theatre organ in the mid-Hudson region and for us.

TOM STEHLE



**ATOS
NOR-CAL
Theatre Organ Society**

**San Francisco Bay Area
415/846-3496 or 415/524-7452**

Larry Vannucci played a concert for us on March 17 at San Francisco's Cinema 21. Their 2/6 Robert-Morton is the last remaining original installation in any Bay Area theatre and "Vanooch" is its master. Larry, a talented musician and a natural comedian, brought out the best from this instrument. He played in the "Spirit of the Lost Weekend." Opening with "Bill Bailey," he mentioned that, as it was St. Patrick's Day, he would play "Melancholy Baby." He dedicated "Come Rain or Come Shine" to the late Bill Thomson.

During intermission, Chairman Lowell Wendell led a discussion concerning the acquisition of our own theatre pipe organ. A letter was mailed to all members notifying them of a special meeting on April 21 to vote on the proposal. We all had an enjoyable time at Larry Vannucci's concert.

Kurt von Schakel played the 4/23 Wurlitzer at Redwood City Capn's Galley Pizza & Pipes on April 21. The Hoosier is an accomplished pianist and organist. He

opened with a rousing "I've Got Rhythm" and played several upbeat tunes including "Ten Cents a Dance" and "Back Bay Shuffle." C. S. Lang's "Tuba Tune" was played untremmed, demonstrating von Schakel's serious side. He has been organist/choir director at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Indianapolis for 13 years.

At a special business meeting during intermission, the board of directors was authorized to purchase a chapter organ when a suitable instrument can be found.

Kurt began piano lessons with William Eltzroth at age nine and played with the Indianapolis Symphony in 1974 at age 14. He made his debut at Carnegie Hall in 1975. After intermission he was back on the bench with "Topsy," followed by a medley from Leroy Anderson's *Goldilocks*. Other classical pieces were included, and his closing number was "Hora Staccato." Kurt thanked Phil Freeman for his efforts to bring the Wurlitzer up to concert condition. A Big Band rendition of "Take the A Train" was von Schakel's encore before open console. We are grateful to Kurt for sharing his tremendous musical talent with us, and we all look forward to hearing him again. He was "von-derful!"

The Oakland Paramount Organ Pops Series Mother's Day concert featured Nor-Cal'er Jim Roseveare at the console of

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Hoosier Kurt von Schakel at the Capn's Galley 4/23 Wurlitzer. (Rudy Frey photo)



Peter Mintun, left, and Jim Roseveare relaxing in the Oakland Paramount Green Room after successful Mother's Day piano/organ concert. Jim also played a concert for an AGO on-stage banquet at the Paramount on May 13. (Ed Mullins photo)

the 4/27 Wurlitzer and Peter Mintun at a Chickering concert grand piano. Their duets included "Zing, Went the Strings of My Heart" and a tribute to Irving Berlin. Jim played Jesse Crawford's arrangement of "Call Me Darling" and such favorites as "Two Cigarettes in the Dark" and "Spring Will Be A Little Late This Year." Peter's finger dexterity was displayed in his "Kitten on the Keys" and Fats Waller's "A Handful of Keys." For an encore, they played "The Cop on the Beat, the Man in the Moon and Me." Both artists are perfectionists, and the piano and organ were balanced beautifully. It was an afternoon of musical enjoyment and delight.

Roseveare is house organist at the Paramount. Peter Mintun, a local celebrity, is pianist at the posh L'Etoile Restaurant in the Huntington Hotel on San Francisco's Nob Hill which is a rendezvous for celebrities, and Peter is an expert in playing the tunes of the twenties and thirties.

The following night, Jim Roseveare played for the American Guild of Organists' banquet that was held on the stage of the Oakland Paramount. He played a completely different program for this event. Jim has a penchant for Jesse Crawford arrangements and is the "musical encyclopedia" of tunes of the twenties and thirties as well.

ED MULLINS



Moon River still flows! and it flowed again on April 26 in Cincinnati where it was conceived in October 1930, and where it flowed for 42 years. For the third time, our chapter re-created this memorable radio program which was heard worldwide when WLW operated at 500,000 watts and was truly "The Nation's Station." Fortunately, we still have some of the original performers with us to produce this show.

Cincinnatians filled Emery Theatre to hear our Wurlitzer sound the "Caprice Viennois" theme while Cecil Hale mellifluously articulated the words, "Moon River, a lazy stream of dreams where vain desires forget themselves in the loveliness of sleep . . ." The ageless voice of Ruby Wright again sang the songs we heard back then. We even had the last announcer for Moon River, Bill Myers, as the master of ceremonies. The man at the Wurlitzer was Gene Wilson, formerly of WLW-TV and

now a staff organist at Emery.

Before the actual Moon River re-creation, there was a stage show consisting of the Elaine Eckstine Dancers, singer Marian Spelman and organ solos by Gene Wilson. Gene mastered the smooth, Moon River organ style and was lauded for his proficiency and versatility during his two-hours of soloing and accompanying the dancers, singers and poetry. Every sound during the revisit to Moon River was so rife with nostalgia that one could feel it. It was part of our lives for so many years. Welling tears of joy were in many eyes as the Moon River theme sounded for the finale, and Cecil Hale intoned, "Float on, drift on, Moon River — to the sea."

Our "Black Beauty," as Bob Ralston dubbed our ebony-finished console, performed mightily during the entire evening. The organ crew did their work well and were able to enjoy the fruits of their labors as they delighted in the fact that the multitude of magnets and pneumatics behaved flawlessly. Emery's new Krumet rank has been playing for two months and is a great asset to the organ. It has a bite that adds to the organ's registration capability. We are now busy getting a 4' Harmonic Flute ready for installation bringing the Emery Wurlitzer to 28 ranks. The pipes, chests and tremas have all been donated. Because space on our three-manual console is limited, we will use the new rank in place of the 4' Flute which is merely an extension of the

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For Moon River fans, the following organists played this show during the 42 years it was on the air: Arthur Chandler, Jr., Lee Erwin, Burt Farber, Pat Gillick, Johanna Gross, Esther Hanlon, Gladys (Hap) Lee, Bert Little, Herschel Luecke, Ruth Lyons, Gene Parrazo and Fats Waller.

Lee Erwin recorded an album on our organ in the Moon River style, sans voice and poetry. This album, "Moon River Revisited," is still on sale at \$9.95 plus \$1.00 mailing charge (Ohio residents add 55¢ tax). Make checks payable to OVC-ATOS, 1112 Walnut Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45210.

Remember the Emery organ can be

heard weekends when we show movies of the Golden Era. Call 513/271-2741 for a recorded message giving show times, dates and movie titles. We also invite you to come and play our Black Beauty. If that's what you want, call Chairman Jim Teague at 513/681-8108.

BILL AHLERT

OREGON Portland

503/639-9543 or 503/771-8098

By way of a St. Patrick's Day celebration, we were invited to an open house at the home of Gerry Gregorius. With a large turnout and the grand piano and three-manual Conn in almost constant use, it was a most enjoyable afternoon.



Gerry Gregorius entertains at open house for Oregon Chapter members. (Claude Neuffer photo)

Members brought the edibles and Gerry provided the coffee. Of special interest was the progress of a five-rank Wurlitzer being installed in what will be a studio in the basement of the house. Thanks to Gerry Gregorius for his hospitality and a wonderful time.

On April 13 we had a rare opportunity to hear Kurt von Schakel at the giant 4/44 Wurlitzer in the Portland Organ Grinder. A Saturday morning session was required because the restaurant is open to the public in the afternoon. Kurt is a remarkable musician, brilliant in classical or theatre organ as well as concert piano. His program made full use of the vast resources of this enormous instrument; for example, he used a Widor "Toccata" for a few bars as an introduction and created dramatic effects with mass Strings and Voxes and a soft 32' pedal. Also included was a George Wright-type "Crazy Rondo," played with incredible speed and precision. When this organ is played for pizza music, it is not always possible to discern its many soft, ethereal voices, exotic Reeds and subtle shadings which are available for a concert, so it was a great experience to hear them so artistically used. Thanks to Kurt von



An old vaudeville maxim said "Always leave them wanting more." Kurt von Schakel did just that.

(Claude Neuffer photo)

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— Scott Cantrell, *Times-Union*, Schenectady, New York

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BUD ABEL



PINE TREE

**Old Orchard Beach, Maine
207/967-2452 or 207/846-5756**

On March 9 our regular meeting turned out to be a special program in the Portland City Hall Auditorium, a silent movie with organ accompaniment. The 1920 movie was *The Mark of Zorro* with Douglas Fairbanks, Sr. Dennis James, resident organist at the Ohio Theatre in Columbus, Ohio, provided the background music (score by Gaylord Carter) at the Auditorium's marvelous Austin, known as the Kotschmar Organ.

Through the generosity of the late Cyrus H. K. Curtis, the Philadelphia publisher, the citizens of Portland, Maine, possess one of the great organs of the world. Mr. Curtis presented this organ to his native city in memory of his friend, Hermann Kotschmar, a German immigrant.

Our April meeting was held at Loranger



Dorothy Bromage, editor of *The Pine Piper*, in front of the Kotschmar Austin console in the Portland (Maine) City Hall Auditorium.

Junior High School in Old Orchard Beach. During the business meeting, discussion was led by President Bob Johnson on the formalizing of the agreement with the town of Old Orchard Beach regarding

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Pauline Dixon accepts applause following Seattle Paramount Theatre concert.

(Diane Whipple photo)



David Stratkauskas at open console at the Seattle Paramount organ.

(Diane Whipple photo)



Travis Wise at open console session at the Seattle Paramount.

(Diane Whipple photo)

maintenance by the chapter of the Wurlitzer organ in the Loranger gym/auditorium. Organists playing during open console were Bob Johnson, Bob Legon and Dorothy Bromage.

DOROTHY BROMAGE

PUGET SOUND

Seattle

206/852-2011 or 206/631-1669

Twenty-three-year-old Pauline Dixon of Hayes, Middlesex, England, played a concert at the Seattle Paramount in April, choosing a variety of styles suited to the theatre organ to present both old and new

tunes. Although the influence of British organists is evident in her renditions, her choices of American composers and her interest in American artists proves to be her strongest inspiration. One might also suspect, after hearing her catchy and sizzling arrangement of "The Trolley Song," that she has even frequented pizza parlors while in the States! Also highly entertaining was "Swinging Shepherd Blues." Although fast-moving tunes seem to be her forte, "Cry Me A River" was especially beautiful. Modern harmonies and rhythms were tastefully woven into her arrangements, a reminder that there are many new avenues to be explored by young, aspiring, professional organists.

During a wine and cheese reception in

the lobby and an open console session, inspiration combined with coincidence to bring forward three very young men, each of whom contributed to the pleasure of the afternoon. Travis Wise, a serious organ student of Lillian Houston, enjoyed his eagerly awaited opportunity to play the Paramount organ, much to the delight of those who have followed his steady musical progress into his early teens. An organist new to most everyone, David Stratkauskas of Langley, B.C., also showed great promise as a future professional musician. A student of Jill Last of Delta, B.C., David was brought by his father. A dedicated employee of the Paramount, Mike Chervenoc, provided colored lighting during the concert, but also has con-

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tributed in countless other ways. Mike, in his early twenties, gives hours of his time to quietly repair and restore various items in the theatre and has recently begun assisting the organ crew. Mike loves the theatre and wholeheartedly supports the chapter in its ongoing restoration project. He generously donated his wages for the day to the organ fund.

Just hours before the concert, a major task was completed, that of moving the contents of the Main chamber back to their 1928 location in order to allow the sound to project more effectively into the auditorium. This involved carrying chests, windlines, tremulants, cables, etc., up a fire exit ladder and connecting them as well as correcting a few unexpected problems. Crew chief Don Meyers was assisted by Jack Becvar, Mike Chervenoc, Bill Exner, Dan Raven, Mike Wallace, Bob White and John Woodruff. These people also give willingly of their own time and often their own funds, and the chapter has now launched a fund-raising effort toward the goal of having the organ pay its own way.

DIANE WHIPPLE

QCCATOS
Quad Cities Chapter
American Theatre Organ Society



On May 5 we presented Bob Ralston to the Quad-Cities in a performance that can only be described as spectacular. The show was held at the Capitol Theatre in Davenport, Iowa, on the 3/12 Wicks theatre pipe organ which is in its original setting. Mr. Ralston promised us the best show we ever had — and he certainly kept his word! With 1462 people in attendance, we had the largest crowd at any show since our beginning in 1981. I cannot say enough good things about Mr. Ralston, as he came in

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early to help us with television publicity and appeared on two local television stations to boost sales. We are looking forward to a return engagement with this great entertainer.

After a hard week of rehearsals and organ repair, the club had a potluck-pitch-in at President Joan McFadden's house on May 3 to get to know our artist better. About twenty people came to spend a few hours with our guest celebrity. After supper, we gathered around the McFadden's Hammond to listen to Mr. Ralston play a few selections, and then it was open console with time for everyone to play.

We present two pipe organ shows each year on the first weekends of May and October as fund-raising events, and we hold monthly meetings to further the love and understanding of the theatre pipe organ and its music.

The River City Theatre Organ Society Omaha, Nebraska

402/292-7799 or 402/572-1040

March was a busy month. On March 24 we met at the home of Bob and Penny Markworth and saw, heard and played their beautiful 3/14 Kimball theatre pipe organ. Bob started the program with a slide presentation on the organ and its original theatre, the Leona in Pennsylvania. He also showed the painstaking work that went into installing the organ in his Omaha home. Our guest was Mr. Terry Forsburg, the city official in charge of Omaha's Orpheum Theatre which houses its original 3/13 Wurlitzer. We pledged our support to the city by agreeing to play

the organ when needed, and he, in turn, offered the theatre for a couple of our meetings. This offer we will certainly accept. Jack Moelmann played a mini-concert followed by a sing-along with slides, and then he accompanied the movie, *The Daredevil*, starring Ben Turpin. Open console followed with Bob and Laura Markworth, Tom Jeffrey, Virginia May, Walt Orton, Lois Thomsen, Dick Zdan, Jim Boston and Peter Marsh giving the Kimball a workout.

On March 31, the day after a big snow storm, we went to the Bellevue Little Theatre (formerly the Roxy Theatre) in Bellevue, Nebraska, where George Rice was our host. He is responsible for the installation of a 2/5 Wurlitzer and for maintaining the Orpheum organ. Open console entertainers were Ann and Howard Gabelman, Irene Hutch, Dick Zdan, Lillian White, Verne Kelso, Bob Markworth, Shirley Kanka and Peter Marsh. The program began with George Rice presenting the history of the theatre and the organ and followed with a slide presentation showing pictures of the past ATOS Convention in Chicago. He was very persuasive in getting our members to attend this year's convention in Chicago. Jack Moelmann then played a few selections. Donna Van Riper joined Jack in a organ/piano duet of selections by Leroy Anderson. This time we had the sing-along on the giant screen, and Jack accompanied the silent movie, *Golf*. This was a first for our newly formed group, to hear the theatre pipe organ in a theatre and see the movie and sing-along on a big screen. We are hoping our next meeting will be in the Omaha Orpheum Theatre with their 3/13 Wurlitzer.

JACK MOELMANN

ROCKY MOUNTAIN Denver, Colorado

303/797-2232 or 303/233-4716

On March 31 we met at the home of Fred and Evelyn Riser to try a new idea for our monthly program. Prior to the date of the meeting, members were informed that there would be a structured open console session and were invited to prepare a number or two for presentation to the member-

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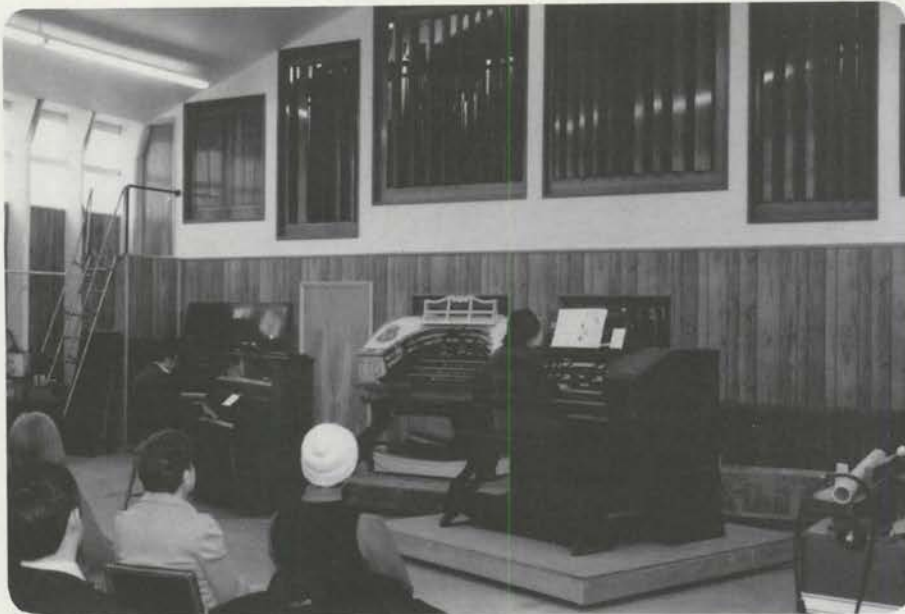


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Scene in the music building at the home of Fred and Evelyn Riser, with Dick Kroeckel at the piano and Patti Simon at the organ. (Ed Zollman photo)

ship. Approximately 12 members prepared solos which they played for the members and guests. A variety of styles and arrangements were heard, and the membership enjoyed the new idea. We now hope to present an open console program once a year consisting of members preparing and playing for the other members. It encourages those who desire to try their hands to prepare their numbers prior to the meeting and provides an opportunity to be heard and encouraged by our fellow members.

On April 21 we combined with Pikes Peak Chapter for a trip to Fort Collins where the program was at Colorado State University on the 3/19 in Lory Student Center. Following a potluck lunch at the home of Bob and Barbara Cavarra, the members and guests went to the University where Kevin Utter presented the program. Kevin, who will soon graduate with a degree in organ performance, opened his program with a rousing "National Emblem March." He also included a beautifully played "Moonglow" and a medley

of spring tunes. Kevin, who is blind, will pursue his Masters Degree following graduation, and we hope the ATOS will hear more from this talented young man.

The best news we have to share is that the Organ Grinder Restaurant reopened on April 20 with new owners and new recipes and a great deal of enthusiasm for its success. The organists are Patti Simon, Ed Benoit and Keith Kendall. The beautiful 4/37 Wurlitzer plays again!

PATTI SIMON

SIERRA

Sacramento

916/726-5132 or 916/332-2837

The Sacramento Valley Live Steamers Club joined us on February 3 for "Railroad Day at Fair Oaks" which combined a display of actual steam-powered "miniature" trains and railroad-theme silent films with the dean of Northern California movie organists, Bob Vaughn, at the 2/11 Wurlitzer. Railroad steam-engine enthusiasts and theatre organ enthusiasts have a common thread in their respective fascination with monstrous steam or wind-breathing machines, and there was an active exchange of hobbies that was interesting to members of both clubs.

On March 10 the Roseville Theatre's management group and Sierra jointly presented Bob Vaughn accompanying *Camille*, starring Rudolph Valentino. Bob played an Allen 4500 loaned by J. Nelson Organ Company. We are in the process of evaluating this last remaining Sacramento-

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This is not an optical illusion. That is a full size upright piano only about two feet behind the caboose. Railroad Day at Fair Oaks featured a display of trains from the Sacramento Valley Live Steamers Club. (Lou Rahlin photo)



"Engineer" Bob Vaughn at the console after accompanying a bevy of steam engines across the silent screen. (Lou Rahlin photo)

area 1920s house, still with chambers, as a possible site for installation of a second chapter organ.

On April 7 Don Croom entertained a surprisingly large crowd on our Fair Oaks 2/11 Wurlitzer. Don was organist at Fresno Pizza & Pipes for seven years before deciding to totally change direction and go into computer sales. Northern California theatre organ enthusiasts bemoan the fact that there apparently isn't the satisfaction or monetary reward to keep an organist of Don's caliber at the console.

May 5 was our Theatre Organ Talent Showcase at the Fair Oaks Wurlitzer featuring four teenage organists each playing

a 15- to 20-minute concert. The four were Sam Haymart, 16, of nearby Roseville; Jason Poteet, 14, of Lodi; Arthur Ellis, 16, from San Mateo; and, from 100 miles to the north, Stacy Piontek, 16, of Orland. Tapes made earlier were submitted to a panel of judges who chose Jason Poteet to be entered in the National Young Organist Competition. The judges were Diane Foster, a prominent local teacher; Stu Boyer who, in his 13th year at Arden Pizza & Pipes, probably holds the title for Sacramento's longest theatre organ gig; Gary Konas, a fine theatre organist currently writing a biography of Frank Loesser; and two men who were professional theatre or-

ganists in the '30s and '40s, Bud Taylor and Tiny James.

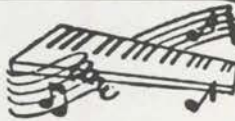
All four young organists performed admirably. For Sam Haymart and Stacy Piontek it was the first time either had ever played a theatre pipe organ. Arthur Ellis displayed very promising compositional talent by including in his program his own "Waltzin' Around." It was a most satisfying afternoon to realize that, at least, we have four more young people who may now have a lasting interest in playing the theatre organ. Each of the four received a \$200 honorarium from the chapter's Clyde Derby Memorial Fund. The competition and show were produced and direct-



Jason Poteet, Stacy Piontek, Arthur Ellis and Sam Haymart, competitors in Sierra Chapter's Young Organist Competition. Jason Poteet was the winner. (Lou Rahlin photo)

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Our March meeting, which was delightful, was held at the home of Vic Thomas. After a short business meeting, Vic's Conn 652 was open to anyone who wanted to play. We heard from Phil Judkins, Lynda Burns, Dick Van Dera, Gary Schaum, Bill Schimpff and Dorothy Smith.

Dick Van Dera presented a program for our April meeting on the 4/14 Robert-Morton in Tulsa's Assembly of God Church. With the help of resident-expert Betty Weddle, your reporter *did* get the names of all his selections written down! He played many old-time standards such as "Tea for Two," "Baby Face" and "Jada Jada Jing Jing Jing" (that's what Betty said it was!). We especially enjoyed playing "Name That Tune" during his college-fight-song medley. Dick's program always includes "Chopsticks," and he didn't disappoint us. A lovely touch was "What A Friend We Have in Jesus" and "How Great Thou Art," dedicated to his mother who recently passed away. At open console we heard from Phil Judkins, Hervey Barbour (this had to be a first!), long-time member Sam Collier (we hadn't seen him in ages — he and his wife, Ruth, have moved back to Oklahoma) and Dorothy Smith. And then, after everyone had left, Dorothy, at the organ, and Dick, at the grand piano, made that church re-sound with some favorite hymns.

May 8 was a milestone in the installation of our Robert-Morton at Tulsa's Vo-Tech High School. The school electricians had mounted our electrical switches and relays to the wall and connected the blower motor. After Phil Judkins and Vic Thomas had checked the wiring with a voltmeter, they threw the main switch . . . and our big blower came to life! The sound of wind rushing into the chambers was welcome indeed! It had been seven years! There were a few minor leaks in the windlines, but

there were *no ciphers!* A few of the notes were manually tripped and every one worked. The sound in the auditorium was fabulous!

Hervey Barbour has finished his job of laying out the console requirements for the multiplex relay, and the material is now on order. It will cost a little more than we originally thought, but we should have more flexibility in playing the organ as well as for adding more ranks if we decide to do so later. Since Hervey is the only one who knows how to do it, plans are to move the console to his home in Pryor where he can do the wiring. Some crew members will journey to Pryor to help as they can. Meanwhile, we are about to begin wiring in the chambers. We're getting there!

DOROTHY SMITH



TOLEDO Area Theatre Organ SOCIETY, INC.

Ohio

419/381-6730 or 419/666-4858

We have been busy lately! In March we met at a church to hear an excellent classical concert on their Schantz pipe organ. April brought us to Defiance, Ohio, and a spectacular meeting and program at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Larry Evritt. Larry is the proud owner of a 3/18 mostly-Wurlitzer. Well-known concert artist member Tom Wibbels made the most of this fine theatre organ by playing an enjoyable program. A superb lunch was served by our hospitality staff, and, as an added treat, four new members joined! Now, that's what we call a perfect day.

Work continues at an accelerated pace on our installation at Toledo's Ohio Theatre. We are planning to have the Marr & Colton playable for our May meeting.

Lots to do in our area — the dedication of the Wurlitzer in the Mansfield, Ohio, Renaissance Theatre; a program at the Kalamazoo, Michigan, State Theatre on their 3/12 Barton, and a bus trip to the Ohio Theatre in Columbus, Ohio, to hear Dennis James at the 4/21 Robert-Morton.

American Theatre Organ Society



VALLEY
OF THE
SUN
CHAPTER

Phoenix

602/972-6223 or 602/278-9107

We are very fortunate this year to have Walter Strony as our program chairman. He searched high and low to find us a fitting artist to start the year, and the result was an excellent program featuring himself and tenor Don Morgan at the Phoenix Organ Stop restaurant on January 13. He didn't have to look far for these two super talents!

On February 10 we had the opportunity to listen to an organist who many of us had not heard before. David Junchen presented a most interesting program on the Wurlitzer at the Valley of the Sun Religious Science Center. David is better known for his work behind the console than for his performances in front. His opening number, Cole Porter's "Another Openin', Another Show," was followed by several other show tunes. We really enjoyed this fine program.

The March meeting was held on St. Patrick's Day at the home of Chairman Ray Danford. He and his wife, Ione, welcomed about 40 members and guests for an afternoon of music on their 2/8 Wurlitzer, a player piano and an electronic organ. There was no featured organist that day, just several people enjoying open console and yummy snacks provided by our hosts.

Chris Gorsuch of San Diego was a surprise artist at our April 14 meeting at the Mesa Organ Stop restaurant. Chris played a variety of numbers, including a medley from *Porgy and Bess* and some Mozart.

Currently, we are all very excited about our plans for a regional convention to be held in Phoenix over the Thanksgiving weekend. More about that in the next issue.

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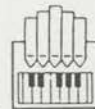
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May we introduce . . . PETE SCHWEITZER



Pete Schweitzer and teacher Bill Blunk at the console of the Organ Grinder Wurlitzer.

(Claude Neuffer photo)

A 1985 graduate of Marshall High School in Portland, Oregon, Pete Schweitzer first performed in public when he was 11 years old and sat on the bench beside organist Bill Blunk who let him play "Charge" for the Portland hockey fans. Since that time, Pete has studied organ with Bill and is now heard at Uncle Milt's Pipe Organ Pizza Company in Vancouver, Washington, at the Portland Organ Grinder and at the Portland Winterhawks' hockey games and Beaver baseball games. He will enter Mt. Hood Community College this fall with a scholarship in vocal music.

Pete's first musical instrument, at age 7, was the accordion, but when he was 11 he "discovered" a Hammond M3 in his local Boys Club and convinced his parents that he *had* to own it. Pete credits his interest in theatre organ to Bill Blunk who owns a 5/24 Marr & Colton on which he was encouraged to practice until he was ready to play fill-in numbers on the Custom Rodgers at the Coliseum. Bill recalls that Pete's only comment after playing his first solo at a game was, "My legs turned to Jello!" Bill, who is a charter member of ATOS, is understandably proud of his young protégé who, he says, "is a determined and persistent young man."

Music has been the focus of Pete's high school career. He played the baritone and the tuba in the band and was a member of both the Madrigal and Concert Choirs. In addition, he has spent most of his spare time and vacation time working on and playing organs. He tells us that the two organists he most admires are George Wright and Jonas Nordwall, that he spent the summer of '82 helping Jonas work on the organ at First United Methodist Church and that Jonas, in turn, let him play the huge 4/44 Wurlitzer at the Organ Grinder. The summer of '83 was spent traveling cross-country with Bill Blunk and visiting the Wicks Organ Company, the pizza parlors in Indianapolis and the Denver Organ Grinder. Pete currently tunes and maintains a small Wurlitzer in the Cathedral of the Pines in Milwaukie, Oregon. He plans to continue in this field through college and to one day be a high school band teacher.

When asked what he liked most about playing theatre organ, Pete's reply was, "It's almost like an orchestra — like you're the director and you have a 200-piece orchestra."

Pete lives with his parents at 2609 SE 80th Street, Portland, Oregon 97206.

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from page 31

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