



# THEATRE ORGAN

July/August 1986

ISSN 0040-5531





The Rocky Mountain Chapter, in cooperation with the Pikes Peak Chapter  
cordially invite you to attend the



ROCKY MOUNTAIN  
**REGIONAL**  
OCTOBER 10-13, 1986

To be headquartered in the beautiful, modern Marriott City Center Hotel,  
located in the heart of downtown Denver, Colorado.

*Feature events will include:*

*Jim Riggs at the 4/20 Wurlitzer in the Denver Paramount Theatre, Denver's last remaining downtown movie palace.*

*Paul Quarino at the 3/20 Mostly Wurlitzer, Mount St. Francis Convent "The Mundelein of the West."*

*Joe Galema at the 3/79 Möller, Cadet Chapel, United States Air Force Academy.*

*Jonas Nordwall at the 4/37 Wurlitzer in the Denver Organ Grinder Pizza Parlor.*

*Keith Chapman at the 4/82 Roosevelt Organ (1888), Trinity United Methodist, Denver's Historic Downtown Church.*

*Patti Simon at the 3/19 John Brown Cook Memorial Wurlitzer, Lory Center, Colorado State University.*

*And in a Grand Finale,*

*Lyn Larsen and Ron Rhode, together at the Twin Consoles of the Denver Paramount.*

Registration also includes luncheon in Colorado Springs, lunch at Colorado State University  
and Gala Reception following the Lyn Larsen, Ron Rhode concert.

Plus Optional Attractions

*Friday Night Jam Session at the Organ Grinder Pizza Parlor  
and*

*Afterglow Home Organ Crawl, Monday, October 13.*

Guests may choose one of the following tours:

**Tour No. 1**

Riser Residence,  
3/20 Wurlitzer  
Williams Residence,  
3/10 Wurlitzer and  
Belshaw Residence,  
3/22 Wurlitzer

**Tour No. 2**

Riser Residence,  
3/20 Wurlitzer  
Arthur Residence,  
2/10 Wurlitzer and  
Belshaw Residence,  
3/22 Wurlitzer

**Tour No. 3**

Kremer Residence,  
4/28 Hybrid  
Williams Residence,  
3/10 Wurlitzer and  
Belshaw Residence,  
3/22 Wurlitzer

**Tour No. 4**

Kremer Residence,  
4/28 Hybrid  
Arthur Residence,  
2/10 Wurlitzer and  
Belshaw Residence,  
3/22 Wurlitzer

Registration begins 2:00 p.m. Friday, October 10, 1986.

Activities begin 7:00 p.m. Friday, October 10 and continue through 11:00 p.m. Sunday, October 12.

Afterglow activities begin 9:00 a.m., Monday, October 13 and continue through 2:00 p.m. that day

Registration Fees

\$85.00 Convention registration includes 2 lunches and reception

\$7.00 Jam Session includes transportation and snack

\$22.00 Afterglow includes transportation.

Rocky Mountain Regional — Robert M. Castle, Registrar, Post Office Box 39834, Denver, Colorado 80239



NOTE: See back of mailing cover for registration form.

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Manchester's Free Trade Hall, with its Wurlitzer.  
See article beginning on page five.

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# American Theatre Organ Society

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



It is with deep regret that I announce that Bob Gilbert is retiring as the editor of THEATRE ORGAN, a position he has held since July 1981. This will be his last issue. Bob has done a superb job over the years, devoting countless hours of his time in this volunteer position. Certainly the

quality of our THEATRE ORGAN Journal attests to his professionalism and dedication to not only preserving the theatre organ but getting the message to the world. He has been criticized on some occasions, but haven't we all? He just continues, and his years as our editor will not be forgotten. He is turning the typewriter, dictionary, pen and pencil over to Grace McGinnis, who has volunteered to be the new editor. Grace has been associate editor and co-editor for some time, so is prepared, willing and certainly able to carry on the Journal's tradition. Bob, we will miss seeing your name on the masthead, but we know that you will be around assisting where needed. We certainly welcome Grace McGinnis.

We also say "well done" and offer our best wishes and thanks to Lowell Ayars and Ashley Miller, who have completed their terms as directors, and to Father Jim Miller who has found it necessary to leave the board. Each has contributed much in his own way to the work of the board, and to the spreading of the "gospel" of the theatre organ.

We offer our congratulations to the three successful candidates for director: Allen Miller, who was re-elected; John Ledwon, who returns to the board after an absence; and Catherine Koenig, newly elected. We know that each will make valuable contributions to the operation of ATOS.

I want to thank all of the young people who entered the Young Organist Competition, and all of the chapters that sponsored these young artists. There is a lot of talent growing out there. The judges did a superb job for us and we look to them to help out in the future. Also, a "thank you" to those who helped out with the Board of Directors election. We had many superb people running for the board this year. Unfortunately, not all can win. We are, however, indeed fortunate to have people in our organization willing to devote time to ATOS. We hope to see them run again next year.

I mentioned in a previous message that I was being transferred to St. Louis in July. Well, the budget constraints we live with today have delayed all of that until September 30, and that's fine with me.

Sincerely,

Jack Moelmann



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Attending an ATOS National Convention does wonders for my morale when looking at the future of this Society. Handling the individual membership problems that occur in any association of this size can reach the point where it seems nothing is going right. The problems overwhelm the solutions in one's mind. But the upbeat attitude, the obvious enjoyment of those attending, and the "well done" heard from so many leads one to quickly realize that the problems affect only a few, and enthusiasm for the future of ATOS is the dominant attitude among ATOS

members. So I am now ready to make next year the best one yet!

Membership numbers look good. July 1 of this year showed an increase of 16% over two years ago. In numbers, that means an increase of 673. The source of new members has been checked and for most months about 40% have first joined a chapter. The other 60% come from answers to letters of inquiry about some activity of ATOS, an enthusiastic word of encouragement from a friend, a mention on a radio program featuring theatre organ, special national mailings and other unidentifiable sources. An important point is that *you* can be instrumental in adding a member if you devote just a little time and effort to it.

Out of the increased membership and prudent handling of funds, we now have more money to devote to new ATOS projects than has been available for many years. This leads to the challenge of determining which projects will best help to preserve the theatre organ. But if we ease up on continuing to add new members the projects will not get far. So that means keep the new ones coming!

Sincerely,

Douglas C. Fisk

## EDITOR'S MESSAGE



As you have read in the President's Message on this page, this is my last issue as editor. I submitted my resignation in March, to be effective with completion of the July/August issue.

The state of my health, the need to complete some projects which have been "on hold" for five years or more, the need to do some long-neglected work on our home, and my desire to get back to my workshop before I become unable to enjoy it, have made it imperative that I take this step.

The position of editor of THEATRE ORGAN has been an enjoyable one for me. It has afforded me many opportunities for personal enrichment, and I have been richly blessed with many new and wonderful friendships, for which I shall be ever grateful.

I have tried to build upon the fine work of my predecessors to make THEATRE ORGAN even more interesting and informative, a journal in which each member can take pride. Whatever has been achieved is due in no small part to the devotion and care of Floyd and Doris Mumm and their staff at Pica Studio, the very capable work of Scott Publications, and, of course, to the generous efforts of the editorial staff, columnists and contributors, without whom nothing could have been done.

For the privilege of serving ATOS, I offer my thanks to each of you.

Sincerely,

Bob Gilbert





# HANDS ACROSS THE SEA

The Story of England's Most American Wurlitzer

by John Potter, with  
contributions from Eric Penney

All photographs, unless otherwise stated,  
by John Cooper or Eric Penney.

"A lovely organ in a magnificent hall," "You know, it will take a long time for me to come down from the clouds — what a beautiful instrument, totally sexy!" "I love this beautiful instrument very, very much," "A sound beyond imagination," "I wish all theatre organs could sound in halls like this one," "The organ is superb and one of the finest I have ever played," "The organ is even better than I remembered from 1978 and even then it was world class," "I'm honoured to have been invited to perform on this divine medium," "Fantabuloso!"

These are extracts from the Organ Visitor's Book at Manchester's Free Trade Hall. Even if in visitor's books you never offend your hosts, surely "they" can't all be wrong! Who are "they"? I will not embarrass anyone by divulging who wrote what, but if I tell you that the words came from the pens of Walt Strony, Rob Calcaterra, Lyn Larsen, Lewis Gerrard, Carlo Curley, Maria Kumagai, Dennis James, Ashley Miller and Hector Olivera, you will begin to realise why Opus 2120, born in North Tonawanda in 1930, fathered by Jesse Crawford as a Publix No. 1, has retained her American connections. If I go on to say that Jesse Crawford made a six-day personal appearance in June of 1933, that the console bears a plaque to the effect that members of the 1976 Safari to England contributed funds that paid for the restoration of the Trumpet and Saxophone ranks, and that the late Dick Simonton, in his capacity as a Vice President of The Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust, attended the re-opening concert in 1977, you will, I hope, understand why we feel that we have a special affinity with our many friends in the States.

So what's so special about this Wurlitzer?

For Americans, 20-rank-plus jobs were not uncommon, but we only received three in England — the Trocadero, Elephant and Castle, London (4/21); the Empire, Leicester Square, London (4/20); and the Paramount in Manchester (4/20). The Paramounts in Leeds and Newcastle came close with 3/19s, but overall our "mighties" were not so mighty and most of us thrilled to 16 ranks or less, much less in some cases! The sound of a big Wurlitzer in a big theatre is the most magic sound in the theatre organ world, and the Paramount Manchester was always reckoned to be one of the best installations in this respect outside the States. That we have been able to not only retain, but enhance this sound in making a transplant, and to have transplanted the instrument into an auditorium as big as the original theatre is an achievement that cannot be said of any other transplants in England. This is one of the reasons Opus 2120 is special.

Let's start at the beginning! At 7:00 p.m. on October 6, 1930, the 3000 seats in the new Paramount in Manchester were filling with an audience that was doubtless trying to forget that on the same day the gigantic R101 airship had crashed in France. Their thoughts would, temporarily at least, be diverted at 7:45 p.m. by the spectacle of Mr. C. Drewett Smart at the Paramount organ, the Paramount Orchestra directed by Mr. Lionel Falkman, and the original Plaza Tiller Girls with dancers Gaston and Andre, all of whom preceded Maurice Chevalier and Jeanette MacDonald in the film *The Love Parade*. The following day the press noted that Mr. Smart "performed some amazing feats of wizardry on the great organ said to be the largest in Europe."

From then on, the Wurlitzer remained in constant use for 43 years, up to the day that the blower was turned off prior to removal. There have been 14 resident organists, one of whom, Henry Croudson, made 21 recordings (78 rpm) released between 1936 and 1938. The organ has been broadcast by 24 organists and it has been featured solo on television three times. For 21 years until the theatre closed for re-development, Ronnie Wood was house organist.

During these 43 years in the theatre, the organ was cleaned and overhauled on only one occasion, in 1947, when the then resident organist, Charles Saxby, altered the specification by removing the Solo Vox Humana and replacing it with an English-made Post Horn, at the same time re-engraving all the stop tabs. No other work, apart from regular (and latterly irregular) tuning, was carried out until The Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust came into being in 1968.

Who, and what, is The Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust? A Trust in England is usually registered as a charity and as such, when its aims have been accepted by the government agency, is entitled to certain tax benefits. Prior to 1968, rumours had abounded about the imminent conversion of the Paramount, by now renamed the Odeon, into a modern multi-cinema complex. Equally, rumours about potential purchasers of the organ were frequent. So a band of local buffs decided the time had come for action to make certain that this famous Wurlitzer that had already entertained the Manchester public for so many years, stayed in the city. A meeting was held, a committee formed, and The Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust was born.

It was obvious from the start that if the



project was to have any chance of success, the first essential would be money. At the instigation of Mr. Brian Bint, then General Manager of the Paramount/Odeon (and who, continuing our American connection, is now resident in Florida), the Trust commenced a six-year series of Sunday morning organ concerts presenting many well-known organists from Britain and sometimes from abroad. There were some special highlights in the series, such as in 1969 when Reginald Dixon made his first appearance for many years away from the Tower Ballroom, when the theatre was filled, and in 1971 at the age of 78, Reginald Foort's return to Manchester. This must have held many memories for him, as two blocks from the Paramount is the Palace Theatre where he gave his first public performance on his travelling Möller organ, now in the Pasadena Civic Auditorium. Silent film and stage presentations were also produced and the Wurlitzer was busier than ever!

The biggest leap forward financially was the Trust's decision to make LP recordings, as none had been produced of this organ since the Henry Croudson 78s mentioned earlier. Since then the Trust has produced and sold worldwide 20 albums recorded on either the 4/20 Wurlitzer in its original and new homes, or on the other instruments owned or cared for by the Trust.

Mention of these other instruments prompts me to digress to say that the Trust subsequently went on to buy the 4/14 Wurlitzer from the Gaumont in Manchester (still in storage awaiting a new home), the dual console 3/8 Christie from the Pyramid/Odeon in Sale now installed and in concert use in the

Blue Coat School, Oldham, Manchester, and took on the responsibility for the restoration of a unique Willis/Davies orchestral organ with grand piano attachment and Aeolian Duo-Art roll player in Tatton Park, Knutsford, a local stately home.

However, back to the Paramount organ and our search for new premises. After all, a theatre organ of this size is not something you can put in the corner of a living room! A tentative approach was made to the City Authorities in Manchester as the civic hall, known as the Free Trade Hall, was organless. Well, not quite. Before the Blitz the hall had possessed a fine four-manual concert organ, but this, with the whole interior of the hall was destroyed on the night of December 22, 1940, by a well-aimed German bomb. After the war a new auditorium was built within the facade of the old building which had survived the bomb, and space for a new pipe organ was provided in the roof of the building. But these were the days of the latest thing in organ building, the pipeless organ, and the roof space remained vacant. Instead of a new classical pipe organ, a comprehensive Compton electronic organ was installed, but although its paper specification was impressive, its sound wasn't and it never gave complete satisfaction. This was over 30 years ago when the electronic organ was in its infancy. With John Compton's reputation as an organ builder and inventor, I am quite certain that the Free Trade Hall organ would have been improved over the years, had he lived. As it was, by 1971 the City Council was faced with spending a large sum of money to put this organ right without any guarantee that it would be any

better, and the Trust's tentative enquiry as to whether there was a chance of installing the Wurlitzer in the Free Trade Hall received a positive response.

Having obtained provisional agreement, preliminary surveys were carried out in the theatre and the hall and it was found that the organ could be installed. This was fine, except that after years of rumour the Paramount/Odeon was still open! But there's rarely smoke without fire, and by 1973 we knew that our chance was coming when the redevelopment plans for the theatre were announced. What the Trust didn't expect was a most generous act by Rank Leisure Services, who ran the theatre, in arranging with the freeholders of the building, who actually owned the organ, for it to be donated to the Trust. The Trust, in turn, donated it to the City. On July 8, 1973, eight organists who had been associated with the Paramount appeared in a Farewell Concert (an LP album of this event is in preparation for release this year) and after "Auld Lang Syne" the console sank down and the blower was switched off. When the theatre finally closed its doors 19 days later, a great deal of dismantling had already taken place.

Up to this date the Technical Crew of the Trust had been hard at work while the theatre was still open, tagging all cable runs to chests, looms, switch stacks, etc. All terminations of the main cable to the relays were marked and all trunking defined with white paint codes. A detailed plan of the layout of each chamber, a schematic drawing of the wiring in the Relay Room, and a detailed photographic survey of all parts of the chambers were made by

Aerial view of Manchester City Centre, taken in 1986. This shows how close the organ has remained to its old home.

(Airviews [M/er] Ltd. photo)

- GAUMONT —————  
(4/14 Wurlitzer, removed)
- PARAMOUNT —————
- TOWN HALL —————  
(5 manual Cavallé-Coll, 77 stops)
- THEATRE ROYAL —————  
(3/10 Compton, removed)
- FREE TRADE HALL —————
- The new G-MEX EXHIBITION HALL, —————  
opened in 1986, converted from  
the old Manchester Central Station.

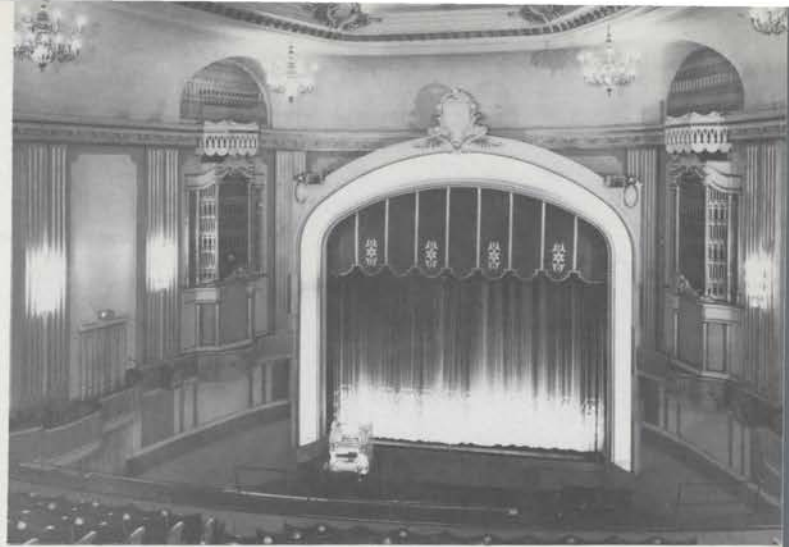






Exterior of the Paramount, Manchester, circa 1932.

(Photo courtesy of Manchester Public Libraries)



The Odeon (Paramount) as it appeared just prior to closure.

(Mack of Manchester Ltd. photo)

draughtsmen and electrical members of the crew. This work, in fact, had been completed some time before the closure, and while negotiations over the organ went on it seemed to the Technical Crew that things were standing still. But, of course, the many problems which would arise (and there *were* many!) were discussed over and over again, possible solutions being suggested, accepted and discarded, *ad infinitum!*

What were these problems? The 20 ranks were situated in two chambers on either side of the proscenium arch, the Main on the left and the Solo on the right. Above the Main chamber were the Relay Room and an open chamber containing the master xylophone and piano. The latter rooms were reached through the Main chamber by a small trap-door and a cat ladder, and the floor of the Relay Room was no less than 60 feet up from the stalls. It was obvious that the piano, master xylophone, key-relays and switch stacks would have to be brought out and down through the front grille, as would the windchests, reservoirs and resonators from the Main chamber below. On the Solo side matters were a little easier, as access to the chamber was by a normal concrete staircase by the dressing rooms.

As soon as the theatre closed a start was made on disconnecting the main cable at the relay union board, for it was felt that the sooner the console could be removed the better, before the dreaded pneumatic drills came through the front door. The cable was 140 feet in length and weighed 420 pounds. While engaged in cutting out bricks to enlarge the hole through which the cable passed, we felt something cylindrical embedded beneath the protecting box-shaped metal conduit and we eventually disinterred a half-empty bottle of whisky. Was the closure of the hole the last act in the installation of the organ 43 years before and did the men responsible celebrate with a "drop"? We like to think so!

Meanwhile, the orchestra rail in front of the console was demolished and the console eased off onto a trolley, and skated up the stalls area which had already been cleared of seats, out into the lobby and the street. Here its arrival in a busy mid-afternoon caused considerable interest among passers-by who

included a representative of the law. The whole operation of getting the weighty console onto an open truck was carried out with frequent, gratuitous advice from a score of passing "experts." The temptation to reply in a forthright manner when the going got difficult was only just overcome, resisted because the law was insisting that we not block the sidewalk any longer! With the console gone, it was now possible to attack the reinforced plaster grilles, starting with the one in front of the Main chamber fronted by a huge canopy. The removal was done with a little science and a great deal of brute force, and great chunks of rococo plasterwork were sent thundering earthwards. We detected a certain amount of glee from our younger members as this operation took place! The piano came down first, using a block and tackle we had mounted on a specially built steel beam attached to the theatre's structure. It had been decided to add the piano to the 4/14 Wurlitzer in the Gaumont, on the opposite side of the street a few yards away, which had lost its own piano some years before. Mounting the piano on a

trolley, the party set off down the road, only to be informed by the law who had arrived again that it was possible they might be charged with driving a piano the wrong way down a one-way street!

With the grilles demolished the contents of the chambers rapidly came down, but it should be noted that, having brought them down to stage level, all parts had then to be lifted eight feet out through the stage door, as the street levels were higher at the back of the theatre. The largest and heaviest single part of the installation was the bigger of the two windchests in the Main chamber. This carried seven ranks and anyone who has had anything to do with a Wurlitzer will appreciate the problem this monster posed. One member was heard to mutter "Once this b\_\_\_\_\_ is out of the theatre we'll have to change our name to The Lancastrian Theatre Organ Truss!" By this time the drills were roaring away, the atmosphere was full of dust, and so it was with sighs of relief that the last boxes and bags of screws and the ground frame were removed from the theatre on August 14, 1973, 24 days after the closure of the doors to the public.

Arrangements had been made for the organ, apart from the console, to be stored in the basement of Manchester's superb Victorian Town Hall where, two floors up, a five-manual Cavallé-Coll concert organ is situated. Here, the parts were destined to lie for several years while work commenced on the new site for this worthy instrument. The console was housed at a local firm of organ builders, Messrs. Jardine and Co., an equally worthy temporary resting place, for Jardines had been sub-contractors for Robert Hope-Jones' early organs and no doubt Robert himself had been inside the building where now, 80 years after his first organ at St. John's Church, Birkenhead, was completed, one of his ultimate creations awaited renovation. Here is another reason why Opus 2120 is a "special" and it should also be noted that Manchester is only 30 miles from the birthplace of Robert Hope-Jones at Hooton Grange near Chester, and The Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust actually possesses pipe-work from the St. John's, Birkenhead, organ built in 1892.

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ON THE MIGHTY WURLITZER  
With DIANA CLARE  
("My Private Affair").

HAVE YOU SENT YOUR PHOTOGRAPH  
FOR THE PARAMOUNT FILM STAR CONTEST?

Theatre advertisement for June 10, 1933. Courtesy of The Manchester Evening News.





Henry Croudson at the Paramount Wurlitzer.

A relocation of the magnitude of a 4/20 Wurlitzer in a well-used public hall involves a great deal of advance planning before work actually starts, and this is mainly how we were occupied during many months to come. The Trust had to have meetings with many city officials to settle details of structural and electrical work, and to define how the many heavy parts of the organ would be lifted into the Free Trade Hall. The new chamber area spanned the width of the hall and was 32 feet wide, 16 feet deep and 20 feet high, with additional areas at either side on a higher level. The centre section had to be divided in two, which would become the Main and Solo chambers, with the master xylophone and the marimba harp (now to be unenclosed) situated on the left side raised area and the relays and a new enclosed percussion chamber on the right side raised area (facing stage). Behind the proposed chambers was an ideal room for the blower and another room that

made an excellent workshop.

The first things that catch the eye on entering the Free Trade Hall are the three massive baffles above the stage. The one at the rear is actually under the organ chamber, with the front two projecting out below the swell shutters. These baffles are very substantial and there was no difficulty in locating the Wurlitzer upright piano on a special platform on top of these.

While the building work was underway, plans were also in preparation for the removal of the roof light over the blower room in order to facilitate the lifting in by crane of the heavy sections of the organ. On Monday, March 18, 1974, a monster crane arrived which effectively blocked the street for most of the day and lead to further minor confrontations with the law. A 120-foot jib was needed to raise the items high enough. The first thing to go up was the first item out at the Paramount, the much travelled upright piano, which this time

was driven the right way up the one-way street, after we had disconnected it from the Gaumont Wurlitzer. All the other heavy bits and pieces followed, some of them occasioning much interest. One lady, seeing a 14-foot section of 16" trunking ascending, wanted to know if we were installing new central heating.

Clever readers will realise that you can spell Hall as "haul," and this part of the project came to be known as "The Tale of The 79 Steps." Financial restrictions meant that the crane was on site for the minimum length of time possible, so all the bits and pieces that could be taken to the chambers via the stairs went up that way, hence the 79 steps, this being the precise number (engraved on all our hearts) from the street level to organ chamber. Seventy-nine may not be a great number, but it most certainly SEEMS a lot when one is hauling something heavy and/or awkwardly shaped, as most organ parts seem to be!

The Free Trade Hall is the home of the world famous Hallé Orchestra and is in constant use. As all labour was voluntary and took place at weekends, progress was slow, as anything noisy could not be undertaken when rehearsals were in progress. The new chambers were not finished and decorated until mid-January 1975. However, before then, on December 27, 1974, the console arrived and the major task of getting it into the Hall and then up to its new position 16 feet up in the side circle began. Once again, Manchester's traffic was interrupted by the positioning of a monster mobile crane at the front of the hall. Three forklift trucks were required to handle the job. The smallest one was used to assist in the assembly of the two big ones and when they were ready, we began. The crane driver did a superb job in lifting the console and then, projecting the jib at sidewalk level, lifting it through the arcade that runs in front of the lobby and actually placing it just inside the lobby doors!

Meanwhile, the first forklift truck had lifted the second onto the stage. It then returned for the console and raised this six feet onto the forks of the second truck, which then undertook the hair-raising task of turning through

The console emerges into the lobby.



The console goes onto the lorry — just! An operation which brought much advice from passers-by and a minor confrontation with the Law!







Front of the Main chamber after removal completed, showing steel beam attached to the theatre structure for the necessary block and tackle.

180 degrees, moving ten feet towards the side circle, then lifting the console 17 feet so as to clear the edge of the console area. Members of the Technical Crew swear that they went grey in minutes as the console swayed from left to right when the lift was at its maximum! One member, Eric Halsall, went even greyer, as he volunteered to wriggle under the console and connect the flexible wind trunk before it was lowered onto the platform. But at last it was in place and the Crew left to resume their Christmas activities.

Anyone walking about in the passages near the 79 steps on the evening of December 23 could have been excused for thinking that Mr. S. Claus had been partaking of the Christmas spirit a little early and had arrived down the wrong chimney on the wrong night in consequence! In fact, we had roped in (excuse the pun) a member of a caving club to descend the four-foot square service shaft that runs from

Resonator of the 16' Diaphone about to be lowered into the chamber area through the roof of the Free Trade Hall. Tower of the Town Hall is in the background.



top to bottom of the hall, to secure brackets for the main cable, and five days later the same member returned to fit the cable into the brackets, it having by then been placed in position by the sheer physical effort of hauling it up the shaft to the new relay room. Although this sounds like a horrible job, it was in no way as hard as the reconnection of the cable which ran from the relay to the Solo chamber via the roof in the Paramount, for it was necessary to cut through this with a hacksaw in order to remove it. This cable, only half the size of the main cable, with just over 1000 wires, presented one of the biggest problems of the whole installation, for every wire had to be traced from obscure markings in the relay room to the actual windchests in the chamber.

It had been the intention to install the traps in an "open" chamber, but subsequent thinking on this led to a flying visit to North London to procure two complete sets of swell shutters, the only remaining parts of a 2/8 Wurlitzer left in the cinema concerned. One set of these was fitted to the new percussion chamber in the Free Trade Hall, where they were provided with a switch on the short key rail to place them either under the control of the Solo swell pedal, or hold the shutters in the open position. This arrangement has worked very successfully on the new installation.

At last, at the end of March 1975, work commenced on laying the ground frame in the Main chamber and we felt that the project had really begun.

The installation of the larger off-note chests and the bass pipes of the Diaphone and Bourdon ranks was then undertaken while there was still room for maneuvering. Wind regulators were cleaned and checked, screwed down into position and their springs fitted. Then came the task of placing the two main windchests in this chamber. Much to our relief, once these were in position and their associated wiring run back through the Solo chamber and up into the Relay Room, the cable was found to be just long enough to reach the relay stacks.

There then commenced what was perhaps the most awkward and time-consuming part of the rebuild — the trunking-up of the wind supply to the various chests and tremulants. Because these items were almost all in a different relationship to each other from that in the Paramount, the multiplicity of various diameters of metal trunking had to be cut, shortened or extended, and in some cases replaced completely. In the latter case, much use was made of high quality PVC rigid piping and bends normally used in the building trade. When much later it was the turn of the Solo chamber to be trunked-up, matters were even more difficult, as the original layout had the two main windchests set up double-decker fashion, with a four-rank chest on top of a six-rank, whereas they now had to be placed at the same level, one behind the other. Not one original piece of trunking could be re-used, and the same applied to the wooden building frame, which had to be redesigned from scratch.

All this activity was accompanied by an-



Interior demolition (August 1973) as the theatre is converted for multiple screen operation.



Almost there! Lifting the console to its position at circle level in the Free Trade Hall.

We made it! Console is held above its final location while the flexible wind trunk is connected.







Eric Penney releathering the six-rank chest from the Solo chamber.



Unravelling the "knitting" under the Main chamber chests!



Eric Halsall at work on the relay stacks. He completed the entire work almost single-handed.

Solo chamber completed, showing the Brass Trumpet and Saxophone ranks cleaned and restored by courtesy of many friends in the U.S.A.



The blower, a British-made "Discus" unit, is switched on for the first time, an event which was recorded.

Completed Main chamber. Note the very useful substitute wind trunking in the top right corner.



other important section of the rebuild — the reassembly and wiring of the relays. Month after month of careful, patient work was carried out almost single-handedly by Eric Halsall, who then went on to spend weeks more in tracing and identifying the 1080 wires of the Relay-to-Solo cable which had been cut during removal. Parallel with this, work was being carried out in the Blower Room, wiring up the 15-hp motor and all the associated control gear, plus the Transformer/Rectifier which supplies the DC action current.

And so, ever so slowly it seemed, the whole complex musical giant took shape. There were one or two days that remain fixed in the memory, such as the first time we started the blower and could hardly hear the few bass pipes that were playable for the banshee shrieking of all the wind leaks. And a memorable one when, with the wind leaks sealed, the first two ranks of cleaned and restored pipes were planted and suddenly we were







Exterior of the Free Trade Hall, with queues forming for the opening concert, September 11, 1977.

aware that we had an organ again.

Finally, on July 8, 1977, by a remarkable coincidence four years to the day after the Farewell Concert in the Paramount/Odeon, we heard again that glorious thrilling all-enveloping sound, as the organ was demonstrated to the City Authorities who had had the faith in us to accomplish such a difficult task. Without their support and help from time to time, we may well have given up. But all of us present on that day, as Nigel Ogden played

classical and theatre music, felt that it had been worth all the blood (we had a few casualties), sweat (gallons of it), tears (well, almost at times) and man-hours (8000 of them) just to hear those golden voices once more.

The Free Trade Hall project is, without doubt, one of the most prestigious of its kind in Europe, if not in the world, and is an installation that has proved a magnet to all who enjoy the organ as a means of entertainment. The organ is in use on an average of an hour a

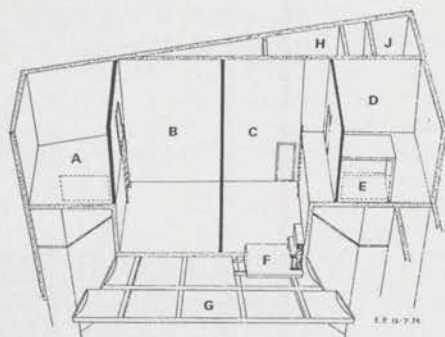
day for all kinds of purposes, and is heard regularly on the BBC as well as on recordings. Our latest LP, titled "Rawle At The Hall" and featuring the well-known artist, Len Rawle, is now available from our Treasurer, Mr. Val Drinkall at 4 High Elm Road, Hale Barns, Altrincham, Cheshire, England, priced at \$12.00 by airmail, International Money Orders or dollar notes gratefully accepted. We now have in the Solo chamber our own Hall of Fame, started when the Crew asked a visiting organist to autograph a shutter motor when it was out for repair. This is now a tradition we'd like to maintain, if circumstances allow us to remove a motor, get it signed and return it.

To end this account, when on September 11, 1977, a full house heard the organ officially re-enter public life in the presence of The Lord Mayor of Manchester, the late Dick Simonton, Sir William Downward, the Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester, and the Chairman of the Council and many other VIPs, with a message from Her Majesty the Queen, we in The Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust were, and are, proud to have been associated with the preservation of Opus 2120, England's most American Wurlitzer.

The Trust welcomes all visitors and the organ can be played by prior arrangement by writing to the Secretary, David Alldred, "Tolcarne," 13 Gibb Lane, Mellor, Stockport, Cheshire, England SK6 5LZ.

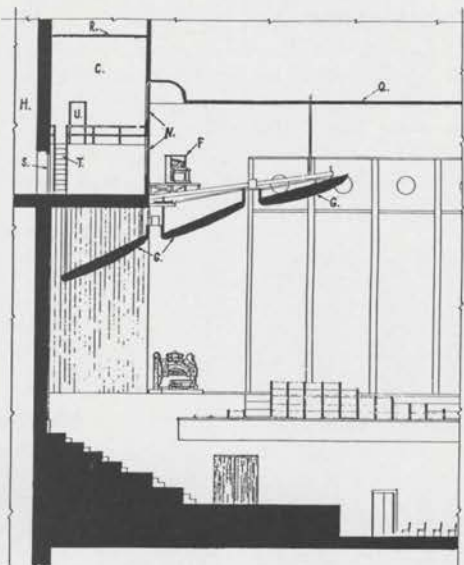
PS: Never mind who wrote what in our visitor's book. Your kind remarks and superb playing were a wonderful reward for four years unremitting work. Thank you, all of you. □

## FREE TRADE HALL



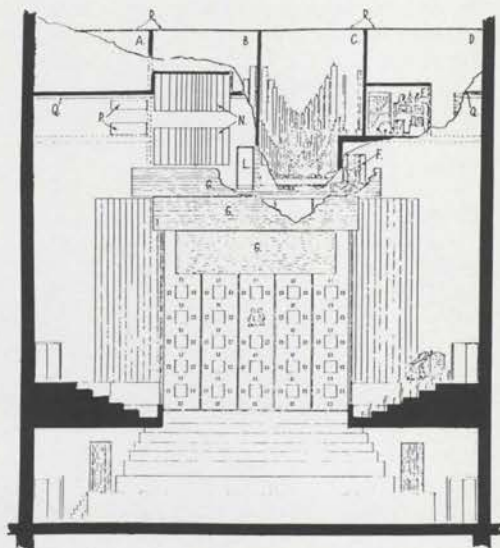
Cutaway view.

- A. Open chamber containing Marimba Harp and Master Xylophone.
- B. Main chamber containing Diaphonic Diapason, Flute, Tibia Clausa 1, Solo String 1, Viol d'Orchestre, Viol Celeste, Dulciana, Vox Humana, Clarinet and Tuba Horn.
- C. Solo chamber containing Tibia Clausa 2, Solo String 2, Quintadena, Kinura, Orchestral Oboe, Oboe Horn, Brass Trumpet, Brass Saxophone, English Horn and Tuba Mirabilis.
- D. Relay room, with
- E. Open chamber containing small Xylophone, Glockenspiel, Chimes, Sleigh Bells and all traps and effects.
- F. Organ piano, standing on platform above baffle.



Longitudinal section.

- G. Acoustic canopy over orchestra platform.
- H. Blowing plant and Transformer/Rectifier.
- J. Staircase from ground floor.
- L. Door from Main chamber onto baffles.
- N. Shutters in front of each chamber.
- P. Open grilles.



Cross section.

- Q. Roof level of auditorium.
- R. Roof level of chambers.
- S. Door from Blower Room into chambers via Solo.
- T. Iron cat ladders to raised platform either side.
- U. Door from Solo chamber into Relay Room and Percussion chamber.



# REGIONAL AFTERGLOW FEATURES HOME ORGAN TOUR

by Steven A. McCormick  
Photos by the author

Ask the average theatre organ enthusiast about instruments in Denver, Colorado, and you're likely to hear about some of the area's fine public installations. And why not? Certainly, the Organ Grinder restaurant is one of the world's premier pizza palaces, and the Denver Paramount houses what has been proclaimed by listener and artist alike as the country's preeminent Publix One.

But there's another side of the organ hobby which most people traveling through the Mile High City never see. The metropolitan Denver area has one of the finest collections of home installations to be found anywhere. Taken as a group, the region's residence installations have consented to open their homes for an Afterglow event to be held Monday, October 13, 1986, immediately following the Regional Convention.

As space limitations prevent Afterglow attendees from hearing all of the five instruments, four tours, each featuring three different organs, have been announced, and registrants will have the difficult task of selecting only one of the four offered tours. To aid in the selection process, a brief description of each of the five organs, and the home that houses it, follows.

The southwest Denver home of Priscilla Arthur is no stranger to theatre pipe organs. Back in 1978, Priscilla's husband, Bill, installed a 2/5 Marr & Colton in an addition to the home's family room. While sweet of tone, the Marr & Colton proved to be less than desirable from the organist's standpoint, as it had neither second touch nor combination pistons. A bigger and better organ was definitely called for, so in 1982, the Marr & Colton was sold, and Bill purchased the 2/10 Wurlitzer from the second Denver Orpheum Theatre. As installed in the theatre, the organ had been a combination of the Wurlitzer from the first Denver Orpheum, augmented with selected ranks, purportedly from the Wurlitzer in the first San Francisco Orpheum.

Purchased from local organ dealer Ivan Morel and Associates, the Wurlitzer had been in storage since it was removed from the theatre in the late '60s. A full restoration, including complete chest releathering, was warranted. With help from Priscilla and local chapter members, Bill began the laborious task of rebuilding chests, and installing them in two new chambers built on the back of the house. In March 1984 Bill passed away, leaving the organ about 40% complete.

Deciding that the finished organ would be a fitting memorial to her late husband, Priscilla courageously pursued its completion. She enlisted the help of Pikes Peak Chapter members Martin Meier and John and Bob Grunow. Working primarily on weekends and

holidays, they lovingly completed what Bill had started. A series of dedication concerts featuring Bruce Belshaw, Joel Kremer and Patti Simon were held in March 1986.

As installed in the house, the organ speaks into the living room and loft areas from the two chambers. The white and gold console occupies a prominent position in the living room. A surprisingly lush ensemble sound is the product of tonal finishing by Ed Zollman. It is anticipated that the winner of this year's Young Organist Competition will be featured at the Arthur residence Wurlitzer.

The only installation to be featured on all of the tours is the suburban Englewood residence of Dr. Bruce and Sally Belshaw. Their beautiful home, designed and built specifically to accommodate the organ, must rate among the finest residence installations to be found anywhere.

The story of this installation begins in 1959 when Bruce, then serving his internship, purchased and removed the 3/15 Wurlitzer from the Nortown Theatre in Chicago. From 1959 until 1964 the organ remained in storage in the Chicago area. In 1964 it was shipped to Denver, and again placed in storage while a fitting house was designed and built. By late 1969, chambers in the new house were ready to receive the results of the restoration and installation process.

Over the next decade, Bruce, with help from his son Don, reworked every detail of the organ. In the process, another seven ranks of carefully selected pipes were added. The console's inner workings were redesigned to provide easier access for maintenance. All work was supervised and inspected by master craftsman John Christina, who insisted that the Belshaws adhere to the highest level of workmanship. Today, every aspect of the instrument reflects the attention to detail which was exercised during the restoration process.

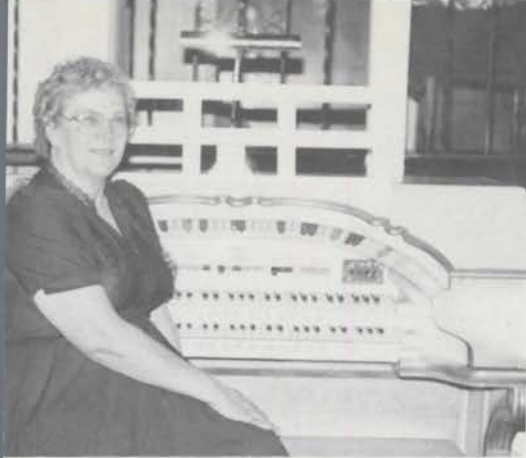
Situated in two chambers, the organ speaks through an elaborate grille into the spacious living area. The intricately carved gold console ascends from the basement on a lift. Popular local artist Dick Hull played the organ in its new environment for the first time in February 1980.

Ornate gold console of the Belshaw Wurlitzer.

Joel Kremer and his four-manual console, originally from Moody Bible Institute.







Priscilla Arthur seated at the console of the 2/10 Wurlitzer in her home.

Artist for this venue will be the owner, Dr. Belshaw. Bruce, a student of the late Dick Hull, has a delightful style which we believe you will find most enjoyable.

East and south of Denver, nestled at the foot of a rolling ridge of pine-covered hills lies the booming bedroom community of Parker. If you were to travel east from Parker up into the pine ridge, past ranchettes and small horse farms, you would eventually find your way to the lovely country home of Joel and Jerri Kremer. In this house's generously-sized music room, the theatre organ occupies a place of honor, flanked on one side by an upright piano and on the other by a Baldwin Grand.

The organ installed is the result of a collecting spree which started in 1947 when Joel purchased a 2/4 Robert-Morton, less console, from Fred Meunier, the legendary local Wurlitzer dealer. More than 20 years later, after several changes of address, the much expanded instrument came to rest at its present location. Along the way, bits and pieces were collected from such fine organs as those installed in the Trail Theatre (Colorado Springs), the Isis Theatre and the City Auditorium (Denver). Now standing at 28 ranks, this organ contains virtually every rank of pipes one would expect to find in a great theatre instrument, including both an English Horn and a Post Horn, together with a sampling of classi-

cal voices as well. The four-manual console, originally from Moody Bible Institute, has been rebuilt to accommodate a horseshoe stop rail.

In addition to being the proud owner, Joel Kremer is a veteran musician with years of public performances at the Denver Paramount Theatre to his credit. Who, then, would be better suited to present the many features of this magnificent instrument? Joel's toe-tapping renditions of the great music from the '20s and '30s will certainly be one of the high points of the Afterglow activities.

Fred Riser may not be the original organ enthusiast, but he must come close. Fred's involvement with the hobby dates back to as early as 1929, when he began collecting organs and organ parts. A greenhouse operator by trade, Fred's operation encompasses several acres. With spare land available, a building, separate from the residence, was a logical way to house the ever-growing collection. This building, affectionately referred to by some as "Riser's Barn," is the location of Fred's current effort, an ever-growing composite organ controlled by two consoles.

As originally planned, the building on the Fred and Evelyn Riser property was to have housed a 2/7 Wurlitzer in one end and a much larger instrument, of 30 ranks or more, in the other. An unfortunate fire in 1982, however, changed that plan. A four-manual Barton console, which was to have controlled the larger instrument, was nearly destroyed, and many other parts suffered either fire or water damage. The 2/7 Wurlitzer, however, came through the blaze with only minor damage. After reconstructing much of the building's interior, it was decided to abandon plans for two instruments and concentrate on enlarging the existing Wurlitzer.

Under the capable direction of Ed Zollman of Colorado Pipe Organ Service, the instrument grew from seven to 12 ranks. At that point, the two-manual console, originally from the Rialto Theatre, Denver, could not accommodate further expansion. A search for a larger console ended when Fred made

arrangements with the owners of the Mesa, Arizona, Organ Stop pizza parlor to obtain the three-manual console originally from the Denver Theatre. Currently, the organ stands at 22 ranks, with an eventual goal of 31 ranks.

John Lauter, popular artist from the Motor City Chapter, will be presented at the Riser instrument.

High tech may not seem like a phrase that applies to theatre organs, but in the suburban Aurora home of Dee and Charlotte Williams, the computer and traditional Wurlitzer technology combine into one of the most interesting instruments in the area. You see, this Wurlitzer features the first commercial installation of the Devtronix/Wilcox computer-controlled relay system in this country.

But that's getting ahead of the story. Let's go back to 1978 when Dee, who had been shopping for an organ for some time, located a 2/7 Style E Wurlitzer, Opus 1300, originally from the Boulevard Theatre in Jackson Heights, New York. The organ was removed from storage, transported to Colorado, and the tedious job of restoration and installation began. As is often the case with home organs, the Wurlitzer grew during the installation process. In the chamber, seven ranks made way for ten, and then an eventual 13. The console expanded from two manuals and a single stop rail to three manuals, nearly 200 stop tabs on two stop rails and 60 combination pistons. Clearly, such an expansion program was way beyond the capabilities of the organ's original switch stack and relays.

Dee began exhaustive research into the solid-state relay systems on the market, settling on the Wilcox system which was then fresh off the drawing board. Much more than a mere relay, the microcomputer-based system features among other "goodies," full record and playback facilities, a transposer, adequate memory to store several sets of combination piston setups, and virtually unlimited capacity to accommodate future expansion of the instrument.

Installed in a single chamber, the organ speaks into the living room via shutters situ-

One of the two consoles which control the Fred Riser residence organ. This one was from the Denver Theatre.

Dee Williams on the bench of his computer-controlled Wurlitzer.





ated high in the peak of the cathedral ceiling. Below the shutters, a glass wall allows full inspection of the immaculately laid out chamber. While it is possible, via the computer's playback facilities, for visitors to enjoy hours of entertainment by such luminaries as Hector Olivera and Donna Parker, the convention committee has opted to present a real live artist in the person of Melissa Ambrose, from the Detroit area. Melissa, you may remember,

was the first runner-up in the 1985 Young Organist Competition.

As space within the homes is restricted, the number of seats for each tour is strictly limited, and will be available on a first come, first served basis. To avoid possible disappointment, convention registrants are urged to forward their reservation requests at the earliest possible date. □

feel the periods of silence in their music is as important as, or more important than, the notes they play!

### Tempo

Tempo refers to the speed at which you perform your selection. Some composers and arrangers indicate a metronome tempo (number of beats per minute). As most students can't tolerate practicing with the relentless tick of the metronome, they choose to use an automatic rhythm unit instead. This works equally as well and is often easier on the nerves! But rhythm units have no compassion either, and will not wait while you falter for any little reason. Although many selections sound better without automatic rhythm, it is excellent discipline to practice with it to check the steadiness of your tempos. There are some commonly used musical terms referring to tempo: Adagio, largo and lento = slow; moderato or andante = moderate speed; and allegro, vivace or presto = fast. Accelerando means to speed up and ritard means to slow down. "A tempo" indicates to return to your original tempo. Remember the pros love to dazzle us with their dexterity at fast tempos. But, you must remember to always practice slowly and steadily, and gradually work up your tempo to a comfortable level for *you*.

### Articulation or Touch

We all have been taught that the organ is a very legato, smooth instrument. We practice finger substitution exercises and heel-toe pedal technique by the hour to develop that smooth, lush sound. But remember, sometimes a different touch might be better. For example, most marches are played with a marcato or detached touch wherein the notes are distinctly separated, but not necessarily short. A polka or novelty number might be played with a staccato or short, almost plucked, touch. Develop at least three distinct touches to have at your command in your hands and feet, and you will be prepared for any occasion. Always imagine how the orchestral instrument you are imitating would perform a passage and try to imitate that touch and sound.

Expression is a very individualistic area. There is no right or wrong. If you were to listen to five of your favorite organists interpret the same selection, you would hear five different interpretations. Who is to say which one is "correct" or even "best"? You will enjoy the one that matches your ideas of how it should sound. So why not spend some time analyzing your own playing, perhaps through taping yourself and listening critically as you play it back? After you have listened and corrected the obvious weak spots in note and timing, turn to interpretations and expression. Is there any life, feeling, soul and message to the listener? And as a final test, try to sing along as you listen to yourself. Did you give yourself time to breathe?

Remember, all the flamboyant arrangements and dazzling techniques will not please you or your audience half as much as a beautifully interpreted arrangement with your *unique* expression clearly displayed and refined. □

## KEYBOARD TECHNIQUES



by Cheryl Seppala



## EXPRESSION

When studying the organ, students must learn and memorize many patterns and formulas, such as those we have recently explored relating to rhythms and chords. There are definite procedures to follow in these areas. Even theatre organ styles, such as block chords, open harmony and chromatic glissandos, follow a particular structure or fingering pattern. But when the pupil turns to the subject of expression, there are really no rules or standards to follow. The pupil must not only learn to use the swell pedals smoothly, but to analyze phrasing, dynamics, tempos, and touches as well. All this, when it's hard enough just to hit the correct notes with the proper timing!

Let's divide this subject of expression into four important areas: dynamics and the use of the swell pedals, phrasing, tempos, and articulation. We will also include the necessary musical terms pertaining to these subjects.

### Dynamics and the use of the Swell Pedal(s)

There are some very frequently used terms and abbreviations relating to the volume recommended for a particular selection or passage, *p* = piano = soft, *f* = forte = loud and *m* = mezzo = moderately (preceding a "p" or "f"). Crescendo or  $\text{<math>\text{<img alt='crescendo symbol' data-bbox='135 815 185 835'/>}$  indicates to gradually get louder, while diminuendo or  $\text{<math>\text{<img alt='diminuendo symbol' data-bbox='135 835 185 855'/>}$  indicates to soften gradually. With these vague terms as relative guidelines, the arranger helps the player to interpret the mood of the piece through the selection of an appropriate level of volume. Operating the expression pedal with our right foot is usually the last of our four limbs we coordinate, after we can play both hands and the pedals with

our left foot. It would seem to be the easiest assignment, simply get louder or softer at your discretion. It is easy, but beware of a common pitfall. Do not keep time by "pumping" the expression pedal up and down. This has a sickening effect for the listener. Except when a strong accent is desirable by a quick jerk of the pedal, a gradual movement is much more effective. If you are fortunate enough to be playing a pipe or electronic organ with divided expression, make sure you know exactly which stops are controlled by which pedal, so you may use them individually to best advantage.

### Phrasing

Much can be learned in this area simply by studying the words of a song and observing the punctuation in your music. Occasionally you may find a popular organ arrangement where phrasing is indicated by long curved lines extending over the phrase. Most often, however, phrasing is left to the player. Just as you could not imagine listening to a singer perform a selection without breathing, you should not perform at the organ without letting your music breathe by lifting your fingers at the ends of the musical sentences or phrases. Often the accompaniment is carried through while the melody is phrased. If more dramatic punctuation is required, both hands and pedals lift simultaneously. Some people are blessed with the innate ability to phrase their music beautifully, while others must study and mark phrasing on their music with the aid of a teacher or by listening to a pro. Either way, it is an essential element in developing a professional sound. Many musicians



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# THERE IS ONLY ONE BILLY NALLE!

(Dan Moore photo)

by Dan Bellomy

"There is only one Billy Nalle!" a friend in Wichita, Kansas, said as he handed me an album of that name. I didn't realize until I got home and played the recording that no truer statement could have been made. As I listened I became an avid fan and admirer of this man and his work.

Billy Nalle was born April 24, 1921, in Fort Myers, Florida, the son of Porter and Nancy Jennings Nalle. His family had only recently moved there from Culpeper, Virginia, to start a new business.

Shortly after his third birthday, Billy's parents took him to a band concert. The next afternoon, Billy climbed onto the piano stool in his home and played both the melody and bass notes of "America" in the same key, Gb, in which he had heard the band play it. His parents were not in the room; each thought the other was playing and wondered what prompted it. In conversation at dinner that evening it soon became evident that it had been Billy playing the piano. This unexpected display of musical talent prompted his parents to engage a local teacher to help Billy learn to read music.

In November of 1925, at the age of four, Billy played his first public concert. It was a program of popular music played on the grand piano of the Fort Myers Pleasure Pier as one of the winter events presented annually

for the influx of tourists. Billy played more and more in the next few years for a great variety of civic, school and privately sponsored programs, even accompanying entire musical revues presented by the junior and senior high schools.

At the age of 11, a most unlikely opportunity developed for Billy in an emergency caused by the death of the pianist for the Allyn Linquist Orchestra, a crack jazz group just formed. With only days before the orchestra's debut at an important dance, Linquist was persuaded to audition the 11-year-old boy only after considerable effort from other group members who knew of Billy's playing. After arrangements were made for his school work and other obligations, Billy won the post. He was learning to read orchestra "sheets" (scores) only slowly, but this was unknown to Linquist because his new, young pianist was playing with the group mostly by ear. One evening during a local dance engagement, someone opened a stage door near the piano and Billy's music went flying, but he never paused in his playing. When asked how long this had been going on, Billy confessed that over half of the longer, more complicated new scores he'd not had time to read because of his school schedule, and was taking his cues from hearing the other instruments play. Billy played in this orchestra until the end of his last year in high school.

Billy was graduated from high school in

1939. In the fall of 1940, he entered The Juilliard School in New York City. In the interval Billy studied classical organ and piano with Eddie Ford, the organist of the Tampa Theatre in Tampa, Florida. From Ford, a graduate of the Yale School of Music, Billy learned enough classical organ and piano pieces to pass the entrance examinations in New York. One morning during a practice session Ford caught Billy playing popular music on the Wurlitzer, instead of the classical pieces on which he had been strictly admonished to concentrate. Allowing him to finish, Ford glared at him, then laughed and said, "Stop horsing around and get back to work!" Some years later, Ford told Billy's father that what he'd heard Billy do in that episode told him that theatre organ would win over classical organ in Billy's life. During the time in Tampa, Billy played in a fine jazz trio and in the last two months played afternoon intermissions at the Tampa on the Wurlitzer, including some duets with Eddie Ford on the organ and Billy on piano.

At Juilliard, Billy had a double major, piano and organ, both with the legendary Gaston Dethier, jazz performance with the great jazz pianist Teddy Wilson, and composition with Vittorio Gianinni. Billy tells a story about the weekly school assemblies, at which it was the custom for an organ student to open with the national anthem on the big Casavant organ in the concert hall. By the beginning of



his second year, it had come his turn to play the anthem, music he had always disliked. However, he had heard Arturo Toscanini and the NBC Symphony play it with the tempo and gusto that seemed to make it come alive. So, one memorable morning, Billy launched into it on the big classical organ, leaving the assembly behind in its singing, startling, but pleasing, everyone, especially the school dean, George Wedge. Afterward, Billy was called to the dean's office where he was congratulated for the "first time that thing ever sounded like music in this school," and was asked to coach the other piano and organ students in playing the piece so they "would avoid being crashing bores when they played it."

Before being accepted into Teddy Wilson's class, Billy had to audition. He so admired Wilson that he was afraid he would "black out" when trying to play before him, so he chose a piece he felt he could play while half asleep and get through it. The result was Billy's arrangement of "Body and Soul," not unusual in itself, except that it was in the key of B natural. That, in turn, was nothing special to Billy who had played in any key by ear since childhood, but it was a key seldom used

by keyboard musicians. When Billy had finished his audition, Teddy turned to his assistant and said, "Hey, that was a marvelous arrangement, but whoever heard of playing it in B natural!" Billy was admitted, and some years later Teddy said, "Whenever Billy wants to get to any place on a keyboard, he can find ways from here to there that knock you out!"

Just after World War II Billy received the "Friendly Invitation" from Uncle Sam. He chose to go into the Navy and, immediately after the horrors of boot camp, was selected by the entertainment division in Washington to join a musical show, *Hook, Line and Sinker*, composed entirely of Navy personnel. Its dance group was headed by Bob Fosse who was to gain fame later as a New York and motion picture dance producer. The instrumental combo, with Billy on piano, was headed by Armand Anelli, second trumpet with the Harry James Orchestra. The vocalist was Bobby Beers, from the Lawrence Welk Orchestra. For 18 months this show toured most of the Pacific Ocean areas, from Guam and the Truk Islands to all the islands of Hawaii and various remote spots that civilian shows were not allowed to visit during the postwar

period.

The tour, with everyone and gear carted in anything that would fly and not flounder in landing on water, covered 28,000 miles. Only in Hawaii did Billy find pianos tuned to standard pitch. The farther west the group went, the worse and older the pianos were. Some were nearly two whole pitches flat, meaning that Billy had to transpose all the music high enough to reach the register in which the other instruments could play it.

After his discharge from the Navy, Billy returned to The Juilliard School for two years of postgraduate work, while also starting to look for musical work. He auditioned for the talent coordinator of NBC-TV and was offered a job as pianist for the new musical show *Young Broadway*, which had just lost its pianist. His duties included occasional piano solos, as well as accompanying many famous vocal and instrumental musicians who were guests. Billy's efforts on this show impressed its director, Ralph Nelson, who was later to become noted for such films as *Lilies of the Field* and *Embryo*, the television production *Cinderella* and other work. During Billy's second year in television, Nelson left to direct the Maxwell House-sponsored network drama at CBS-TV, *I Remember Mama*. Dissatisfied with the first organist playing the Friday evening program because he sounded like soap opera, Nelson convinced the producer, Carol Irwin, to take a new musician with only one year of television playing experience. Billy was nervous thinking about his first network television program, and Carol Irwin was even more nervous. It took about a month before Billy and Carol relaxed and realized that all was going extremely well; the cast seemed delighted and content with music it felt was "right." The success grew and grew, keeping the show on the air for eight years.

Billy's television playing steadily brought him solo spots, at first on piano and later on organ. He was also engaged to play such shows as *Suspense*, *Kraft Theatre*, *Hallmark Hall of Fame*, *Studio One* (the long-running CBS dramatic series), the *Virginia Gilmore Show*, the *Ilka Chase Show*, the *Ed Sullivan Show* (both in the orchestra and as soloist on organ) and more than 220 others. He was on the air almost 6000 times from the fall of 1949 to 1970.

In one *Kraft Theatre* show, Jack Lemmon played the part of a concert pianist, despondent about his failing career, who killed himself with a gun while playing his piano at home. Billy rehearsed Jack in a sequence of suitable keyboard playing motions, intending to synchronize with them on the piano behind the scene. During the telecast, Lemmon became caught up in the drama of creating his impending "suicide" and lost all continuity of playing sequence. Billy had to make musical results coincide with the character and register of Jack's playing and managed to synchronize with one of the most bizarre episodes in all his television experience, much to the director's delight and Jack's relief!

Virginia Gilmore had a combination music and interview show for which Billy was often

Billy rehearsing for a U.S. Navy show, Florida Theatre, Jacksonville, mid-'40s. 3/14 Wurlitzer.





engaged to play a piano solo and accompany other guests. On one such show, she had a nightclub singer doing her first television stint who was extremely nervous upon seeing all the cameras and microphone booms. During her popular number, the lady changed keys three times, going higher each time because of her nervousness. Billy's sense of pitch kept him with her, even when she finally hit the stratosphere, so they ended together and breathless!

The *Ilka Chase Show* starred the Broadway actress, with Nalle and Durward Kirby as regulars to help with conversation involving guest interviews as well as with guests in musical episodes. On one show, Ilka had a famous dog fancier and breeder from whom she had bought her pet poodle, Mr. Puffle. The guest brought his personal pet, a beautiful female poodle, in which Mr. Puffle took an intense interest. During the final minutes of the show, the female escaped from behind the scenes and bounded onto the set in full view. Like a shot, Mr. Puffle jumped off Ilka Chase's lap and began a most amorous pursuit all through and around the set. Ilka was livid at being more than upstaged, for Mr. Puffle and the poodle visitor had taken the entire show out of her control and in just seconds transformed it into a circus. Conversation was ebbing and total bedlam imminent when Billy had a flash of inspiration, hurried to the grand piano in the living room set and started to improvise in coordination with the leaps, dashes and whatever else of the two dogs. This made the scene appear more as one intended to be a romp, which drew a bear hug from Ilka after the show was off the air. Then, as she released her hug, her face became fearsome and she virtually screamed at her poodle, "*MIS--TER*

*PUFFLE!*" He came penitently toward her, she grabbed him, took him into the hallway and the sound effects indicated she was blistering his behind for his Ringling Brothers contribution!

As television work slackened, Billy decided it was time to make a transition back into the solo field. However, a dramatic event was to have him enter not the piano field again, but that of the theatre organ.

RCA Victor Records wanted to do a memorial album in honor of Tommy Dorsey and His Orchestra, and do it on the organ in the theatre in which Dorsey and countless other famous entertainers had made their names. This was, of course, the famous Times Square Paramount Theatre in New York. Leonard Bernstein's favorite arranger, Sidney Ramin, was to select the organist and he strongly backed Billy, the two having worked together with Billy playing organ in the Ramin orchestra on some earlier recordings. Billy, who was unknown to RCA officials, had to audition for them on the 4/36 Wurlitzer in the theatre. At that point, he had never played a theatre organ larger than a 3/15. He used George Shearing's rhythm man, Ray Mosca. They just "cut loose," and after two numbers there was cheering in the darkened theatre and the date was set for the recording. RCA arranged for only three nights of rehearsal time for Billy just before the recording date. This terrified him, because he felt that he needed more time to set his music and feeling for such an instrument, especially because at that time no pistons were working on the console. Two weeks before he was scheduled to begin rehearsing, Billy entered the theatre late one night to find a tall, bespectacled and forbidding night watchman. After some conversation, the

watchman finally relented and said Billy could practice. He happened to play his budding arrangement of "Marie," which so impressed the watchman that he exclaimed at its conclusion, "Hey kid, *I like that number!* If you'll play that for me every night you come, I'll let you rehearse late, after all the stage people have left, all the nights until you record. Is it a deal?" Oh, you better believe it was a deal! So, Billy pulled everything together, including himself, and the result was one of the most dramatic theatre organ debuts in the instrument's history. The title of the RCA album was "Swingin' Pipe Organ" and the year was 1958, the beginning of Billy's third career.

Billy Nalle's theatre organ concert debut was to come eight years later in July 1966, on the largest of all Möller theatre organs, the 4/42 instrument in the magnificent Fox Theatre in Atlanta, Georgia. It was the first formal theatre organ concert sponsored by the American Guild of Organists at a national convention. This concert debut created a sensation with reviewers from Atlanta to New York. Billy began playing more and more on various theatre organs in concert situations.

In 1973, he went to Wichita to play the last concert (the first solo one) in that year's series on the newly installed Wurlitzer in the Exhibition Hall of Century II Center. This was the same organ on which he had played in New York at the Paramount Theatre. The combination of delegates to an AGO convention and the public provided an audience of 3000, and Billy's concert was to gain him the invitation to come live in Wichita and be the first artist-in-residence for The Wichita Wurlitzer.

Billy returned to New York, where he remained for the next two years fulfilling commitments both on and off television. Then, in May of 1975, he moved to "Center City, USA," where he was to be the resident musician for the next ten years. During that period, he had many notable accomplishments in concerts, recordings, television, large private gatherings sponsored by commercial films, and a convention of the National Federation of Music Clubs (its first theatre organ concert since its founding at the turn of the century). In May 1978, "The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band" cancelled its concert in Century II Center because only a few hundred tickets had been sold. In the same week, Billy played a Wichita Pops solo concert which drew over 2500 people, a situation which caused some talk on local rock music stations, as well as comment in the newspaper. Billy and The Wichita Wurlitzer created three brilliant recordings that have garnered worldwide praise from reviewers outside the theatre organ world, as well as from those within it. A list of his theatre organ recordings is given in Appendix I.

In retiring from full time musical work this year, Billy will have been "on the boards" for 61 years, worked with an amazing variety of show business people, and done so in every major musical medium. He has managed many "firsts" in music; the more important in the theatre organ field are listed in Appendix II. Though full time work is in Billy's past, we will look forward to the opportunities that will surely present themselves to hear him live

Billy at the New York Paramount 4/36 Wurlitzer, rehearsing for his theatre organ debut recording, late 1957. Photo by Ben Hall, taken for *Time* magazine and RCA for album jacket.







Billy at the Atlanta Fox 4/42 Möller for his theatre organ concert debut before an AGO convention in July 1966. (Lloyd Trimmier photo)

in concert and via new recording projects.

I have gained great insight into the world of music through Billy's work. He has total regard for the MUSIC when he plays. His approach to each piece of music is a new and exciting experience. It is no discredit to any other musician to say that, with such a wide-ranging career, "There's only one Billy Nalle." □

#### APPENDIX I

##### Theatre Pipe Organ Solo Recordings

1. SWINGIN' PIPE ORGAN (RCA Victor): New York Paramount Wurlitzer. Recorded 1957, released 1958.
2. BILLY! (Mirrosonic): Wurlitzer, Richard Weber residence, Schenectady, New York. Recorded 1963, released 1964.
3. THE WIZARD OF ORGAN (Concert Recording): RTOS Rochester Wurlitzer, 1967 concert; DTOC Detroit Wurlitzer, 1967 concert; ALLEN factory theatre organ, 1965 concert. Released 1969.
4. THE ORGAN PLAYS GOLDEN FAVORITES (RCA Victor): Strand Theatre Wurlitzer, Plattsburgh, New York; DTOC Detroit Wurlitzer. Recorded 1968, released 1969 by Reader's Digest. Re-released 1980 as THE MIGHTY PIPE ORGAN PLAYS GOLDEN FAVORITES.
5. Concert Recording album, untitled and not released because CR ended retail recording operation. First recording made on Link theatre organ, Roberson Center for The Arts & Sciences, Binghamton, New York. Recorded 1969. Vestal Press attempting to purchase for release.

6. BIG, BOLD & BILLY (Project 3): Long Island University Wurlitzer, Brooklyn, New York. Recorded 1970, released 1971.
7. BILLY NALLE/SHOW BUSINESS (Telarc): RTOS Rochester Wurlitzer. Recorded 1976, released 1977.
8. THERE IS ONLY ONE BILLY NALLE (WTO): The Wichita Wurlitzer, Wichita, Kansas. Recorded 1977, released 1978.
9. THE ROAD TO WICHITA (WTO): The Wichita Wurlitzer, Wichita, Kansas. Recorded 1980, released 1981.
10. BILLY LIVE AT WICHITA POPS (WTO): The Wichita Wurlitzer, Wichita, Kansas. Recorded 1983, released 1985.

(Other albums involving various instrumental groups ranged from "The Three Suns" in the 1950s, through various orchestras in the 1960s, to the most recent, a theatre organ solo included in a Reader's Digest album of orchestral selections for Christmas released in 1980.)

#### APPENDIX II

##### Some Music Firsts on Theatre Organ by Billy Nalle

1958: First American jazz album recorded on theatre organ ("Swingin' Pipe Organ"), New

After his concert at the Kirk of Dunedin, Florida, in 1970, Billy with his first organ teacher, Eddie Ford (left), and Terry Charles, curator of the Kirk organ. (Joanne Bushey photo)





York Paramount Theatre Wurlitzer.

**1966:** First theatre organ concert for national convention, American Guild of Organists, Möller organ, Fox Theatre, Atlanta, Georgia.

**1967:** First USA television commercial (Shell Oil Co.) using theatre organ, Studio Wurlitzer, Radio City Music Hall Bldg., New York.

**1968:** First public concert on a theatre organ installed in a performing arts center (Link), Roberson Center for The Arts & Sciences, Binghamton, New York.

**1969:** First theatre organ concert in a festival

of arts, Kilgen organ, Palace Theatre, Canton, Ohio.

**1970:** First theatre organ public concert utilizing a professional light show, Wurlitzer, Strand Theatre, Plattsburgh, New York.

**1970:** First theatre organ recording ("Big, Bold & Billy") in quadrisonic sound, Wurlitzer organ, Brooklyn Center of Long Island University, New York.

**1972:** After release of foregoing recording in 1971, it became a best-seller in theatre organ category, which continued through 1975.

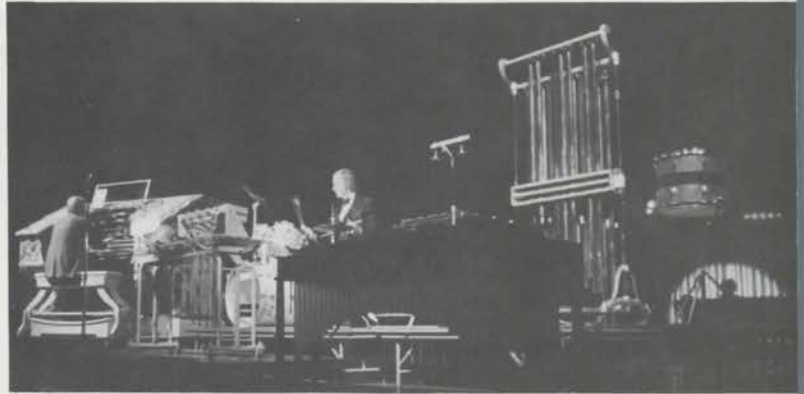
**1972:** First theatre organ concert (specially installed Rodgers theatre organ) in a cathedral, Cathedral Church of St. John The Divine, New York.

**1973:** First public all-solo concert on former N.Y. Paramount Theatre Wurlitzer, after its installation as The Wichita Wurlitzer, Century II Center, Wichita, Kansas. Sponsored by Wichita Theatre Organ, Inc. and the Wichita AGO Chapter.

**1975:** First artist-in-residence for The Wichita Wurlitzer, Century II Center.



Billy presenting a theatre organ concert on a specially installed Rodgers in the Cathedral Church of St. John The Divine, New York City, 1972. (Thom Loughman photo)



Billy at The Wichita Wurlitzer with percussionist J. C. Combs, Pops ninth season finale, 1981. (Richard Harris photo)



In rehearsal with the Peter Nero Trio for their 1979 Wichita Pops concert.

Billy playing a solo concert on The Wichita Wurlitzer, Century II Center, 1980.



The Wichita Wurlitzer Pops Tenth Anniversary show with Nalle at the organ, the WSU Big Band, Steel Band and Marimba Band, and the Isely Singers in "Center City Rag," 1982.

Billy at the Seattle Paramount Wurlitzer after his concert for the 1981 ATOS Convention in Seattle. (John Sharp photo)







Photographer Dan Lovett caught Billy in the Green Room at the Oakland Paramount after his POPS concert, March 1986.

# ATOS Committee Reports

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE Final Report 1986

The 1986 Nominating Committee was composed of Vice President Russell Joseph, Chairman; Rudolph Frey of San Bruno, California; Margaret Ann Foy of Denver, Colorado; and Richard Neidich of Washington, D.C., providing representation from the West, Midwest and East. We were fortunate in once again having Margaret Ann Foy serve as Teller.

The balloting process adopted for the first time in 1985 proved again this year its economy and efficiency. The total cost was \$871.51, a slight increase because of increase in membership. Not only were more ballots mailed, 5373 vs. 4912, but more were returned, 1162 vs. 743. This response was due in no small part to the insertion of small "reminders" throughout the entire March/April issue of THEATRE ORGAN, as recommended by last year's Committee.

At the same time, we should not take comfort in this small success; 1100 returns from a membership of over 5000 means that there is work to be done. We must generate an awareness on the part of our members of the importance of exercising their privilege of participation in the administration of our growing organization. Any suggestions along these lines will be welcomed and appreciated. A statistical report of the election follows:

### ELECTION EXPENSES:

5400 Ballot envelopes .....	\$257.58
UPS shipping charges .....	12.88
200 Resume sheets for overseas mailing .....	75.00
Tax .....	16.63
Foreign postage .....	84.92
Typesetting .....	25.00
Photoengraving .....	65.00
Artwork .....	90.00
Prorated cost of two additional pages in Journal for candidate resumes .....	157.50
Insertion of ballots in Journal .....	87.00
<b>TOTAL COST .....</b>	<b>\$871.51</b>

### BALLOTS PROCESSED:

Ballots in Journal for US and Canada .....	5180
Ballots mailed overseas .....	193

<b>TOTAL BALLOTS DISTRIBUTED .....</b>	<b>5373</b>
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Ballots returned from US and Canada .....	1103
Overseas ballots returned .....	59

<b>TOTAL BALLOTS RETURNED .....</b>	<b>1162</b>
Ballots disqualified (voted for more than 3) .....	7
<b>TOTAL BALLOTS COUNTED .....</b>	<b>1155</b>

### VOTING RESULTS:

1. Allen R. Miller .....	569
2. John Ledwon .....	548
3. Catherine Koenig .....	398
4. Alden Stockebrand .....	329
5. Ray Danford .....	324
6. Miles Rudisill .....	292
7. Dr. Edward J. Mullins .....	262
8. Robert D. Markworth .....	260
9. Irving C. Light .....	249
10. Robert J. Heinzen .....	150

### WRITE-INS:

1. Don Baker .....	2
2. Ralph Beaudry .....	1
3. Leon Berry .....	1
4. Shirley Flowers .....	1
5. Rudy Frey .....	1
6. George R. Johnson .....	1
7. Lance Johnson .....	1
8. Dick Kline .....	1
9. Lloyd Klos .....	1
10. Lyn Larsen .....	1
11. Madeline LiVolsi .....	2
12. John Muri .....	1
13. Jonas Nordwall .....	1
14. John Peters .....	2
15. Lee Smith .....	1
16. Tom Stehle .....	2
17. Walt Strony .....	2
18. Trousdale .....	1
19. Paul Van Der Molen .....	1
20. James West .....	1

Respectfully Submitted,  
**Russell Joseph**  
Chairman, Nominating Committee □

**1976:** First television color documentary about theatre organ in the USA, utilizing the Wichita Wurlitzer, made by PBS-TV station KPTS, Wichita, for national PBS syndication.

**1976:** First combination concert and public dance in the USA, music entirely on theatre organ, The Wichita Wurlitzer, Century II Center.

**1979:** First television program in the USA for which all music supplied by a theatre organ, "The Pipes of Christmas," on The Wichita Wurlitzer by PBS-TV station KPTS for national PBS syndication.

**1979:** First public concert by Peter Nero & Trio with a theatre organ, The Wichita Wurlitzer, Wichita Pops concert, Century II Center.

**1980:** First theatre organ presentation sponsored by a manufacturer in the USA for all its national and international representatives, The Wichita Wurlitzer, Century II Center, 2978 people present.

**1981:** First concert in the USA of "Big Band" jazz played on a theatre organ, assisted by J. C. Combs, percussionist formerly with Stan Kenton Orchestra, The Wichita Wurlitzer, Wichita Pops concert, Century II Center.

**1982:** First theatre variety show in the USA utilizing a theatre organ playing in combination with a xylophone combo, a steel band combo and a jazz orchestra, plus a combination choral/dancing group, Tenth Anniversary of Wichita Pops series, The Wichita Wurlitzer, Century II Center.


**1983:** Half-century tradition of all-classical music broadcast by *The New York Times'* radio station WQXR, New York, broken when selections of Billy Nalle WTO albums broadcast on *Around The Town* program, MC (and station's senior announcer) Duncan Pirnie.

**1984:** First theatre organ music used for logo music in station identification announcements by WQXR, New York. Music was in jazz and popular styles; all other logo music being in classical music styles.

**1985:** First theatre organ concert sponsored by the National Federation of Music Clubs since its founding in 1898, for its national convention in Century II Center. □

**Moving?**

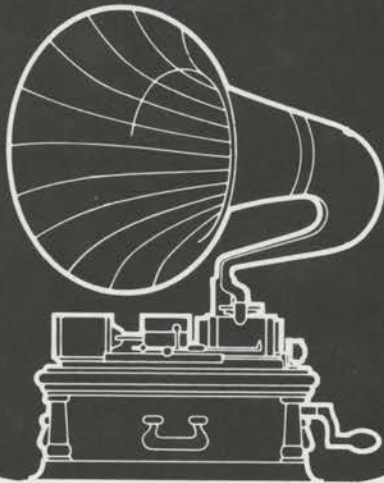
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95842**



## For The Records



Manufacturers, distributors or individuals sponsoring or merchandising organ recordings are encouraged to send review copies to the **Record Reviewer, THEATRE ORGAN, 3448 Cowper Court, Palo Alto, California 94306.** Be sure to include purchasing information (post-paid price, ordering address) and a photo of the artist which need not be returned.

**A PARAMOUNT CONCERT, with Peter Mintun at the piano and Jim Roseveare at the organ. Dolby stereo cassette tape, Cue Records, 472 Tehama Street, San Francisco, California 94103. Price \$10.00 postpaid.**

Peter Mintun and Jim Roseveare have assembled a Happy Hour of piano and organ solos and duets. The pre-production copy available to the reviewer arrived in a "black box" with no indication as to the ultimate title, cover photo, or program notes. There isn't too much one can do with a cassette box anyway unless one enjoys contemplating "How many angels can you get on the head of a pin?" Whatever the producers decide will eventually need the services of a magnifying glass. But it's what's inside that counts!

Both Mintun and Roseveare admit to being avid collectors of records and sheet music of the "Golden Age," that decade of popular music beginning in 1926. Their playing styles are decidedly pre-swing and remarkably consistent with the period pieces featured. The program as assembled on both sides of the 60-minute tape is nicely balanced. Selections for review purposes will be grouped according to piano solos, organ solos, and piano-organ duets.

Peter Mintun adopts a very full — almost player-roll style — piano when he is remembering the Gershwin tunes from *Shall We Dance?* Even without the visual magic of Fred 'n Ginger, "They Can't Take That Away From Me" remains among the finest from George and Ira. Peter also does a wonderful

job of re-creating Fats Waller's playing of his own "Viper's Drag." The Waller ebullience is very much present and accounted for.

This reviewer particularly welcomed the personal nostalgia of "In A Mist," a piano solo by cornetist Bix Beiderbecke. In spite of his fame as a horn player, Bix had a life-long love affair with the piano. Biographers tell us that arranger Bill Challis actually wrote down the notes for Bix as he developed and perfected his music over a six-month period. Paul Whiteman at a posh Carnegie Hall concert presented Bix at the piano playing "In A Mist" immediately following Ferde Grofe's "Metropolis." The original 1928 sheet music carries the testimonial "Paul Whiteman presents A Modern Composition for Piano." Peter Mintun's interpretation of "In A Mist" is perfection, although it must be noted that the "daring modernity" of the piece hasn't weathered the intervening years gracefully. Those hearing it for the first time in the '80s may well find it trivial and banal. But this was heady, challenging sheet music back in the '30s, and Mintun brings back the thrill.

An equally welcome old friend is Rube Bloom's piano solo, "Soliloquy." Bloom is perhaps remembered for his more commercial pop tunes ("Fools Rush In") and the novelty solos such as "Sapphire." What fun to hear this one again after so many years! A fifth solo by Mintun opens an Irving Berlin medley. "I Love A Piano" is impeccably played in the full piano-roll style of the rag-time era.

Jim Roseveare is presently staff organist at the Oakland Paramount and obviously knows the 4/27 Wurlitzer Special inside-and-out. He gets exactly what he wants every time. This reviewer particularly liked Jim's treatment of "Spring Will Be A Little Late This Year." The lush Paramount strings purr and the Vibraharp shimmers. Movie buffs may remember that this song was wholesome Deanna Durbin's first adult attempt to be sultry in *Christmas Holiday*.

Jim does an excellent Crawford seance with the tune "I Love to Hear You Singing." "Two Cigarettes" and "Call Me Darling" are additional atmospheric ballads which remind us of the sort of thing the organists in movie theatres did best. "It's Delovely" follows close on the heels of the George Wright version and, therefore, invites comparison. Actually, there is enough Moxie in this rendition to thoroughly confuse the results of a blind Coke/Pepsi test.

The remainder of the tape consists of seven piano-organ duets with the pooled talents of Mintun and Roseveare, and it's a marriage made in Oakland — if not in heaven. For one thing, the recording balance between piano and organ is less than ideal. Sometimes the piano is too obtrusive for what it is contributing to the arrangements. Sometimes the organ is pushed to center stage with too little to say. The "Duet Encore: The Cop on The Beat, The Man in The Moon and Me" seemed a gallant attempt to rescue a nothing tune from obscurity, but the results were more humanitarian than artistic. The tune suddenly ends (as it begins) for no reason.

"Zing Went The Strings of My Heart" is the most impressive of the duets with plenty of showboating on the piano and expert organ interweavings at high speed. "Moonlight on The Ganges" is equally spectacular as a slightly over-arranged ballad. The two artists are very much together; so close, in fact, that the music lacks the freedom to flow. Consequently, the solo playing of each artist is superior to his ensemble playing. With so much individual talent present, both can afford to relax a bit.

"Blue Moonlight" gives much tender loving care to preserving a '30s arrangement of a tune by Adolph Deutsch for the Paul Whiteman Orchestra. This sort of dedication is most commendable, but the tune itself hardly seems worth it. "Drifting," "My Love Song" and "Sweet Nothings" also get more than equal time and attention.

A correspondent recently asked, "Why is it that theatre organists always play the same tunes?" The plaintiff should be overjoyed with this album. Both Peter and Jim have tried their best to give us plenty of musical surprises from an era when Wurlitzers still played in the larger movie palaces, when upright pianos graced most parlors, and good pop tunes were a dime a dozen.

WALTER J. BEAUPRE

**JOURNEY INTO MELODY, Simon Gledhill plays the Christie in the Granada Walthamstow. COS Dolby stereo cassette tape, available from Cinema Organ Society Tapes, 23 Aveling Park Road, London E17 4NS. Price \$8.00 postpaid.**

Young Simon Gledhill has been collecting kudos (Northern Young Theatre Organist of the Year, Ian Sutherland Award) since the tender age of 16, and he is not about to break his winning streak with this release. Even the organ, a 3/12 Christie sadly neglected in the London suburbs for two generations, now shines brightly as one of the U.K.'s sweetest installations. The Theatre Organ Club also deserves a special award for its magnificent restoration efforts.

Don't be misled for an instant by Gledhill's youthfulness. This is one very wise artist who knows precisely how to please those of his "elders" who get nervous if any musical ideas beyond the '30s are introduced. There is nothing to set dentures on edge in this lad's playing.

Simon opens his program with Robert Farnon's "Journey into Melody." The organ is lush, breathy, and beautifully registered. There is no overstatement of counter melodies. Some riding of expression shades is easily overlooked because there is so much else to hear: super phrasing skills, clever registration changes, and an understated Vibraharp accent at the end. This is as nice a theatre organ rendition of the Farnon theme as we'll hear for a while at least.

One guesses that the "Harlem" referred to in the second selection is the area which once included 125th Street and Lennox Avenue (plus surroundings) in New York. Bright mix-



tures and a penetrating Xylophone keep the mood peppy and cheerful. Much more memorable is Simon's romantic serving of the Marlene Dietrich classic "Falling In Love Again." The Vox-Tibia treatment is panting and sensual. The medley continues with a squeaky clean reading of "Love Is Just Around The Corner," which is just what Mrs. Tick's son Ricky ordered! Whoever prepared the program notes listed the final tune as Gershwin's "The Man I Love" (and then crossed it out). Actually, it is Jerome Kern's "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man," but the sentiment is the same. Gledhill's insistent four-beat blues treatment works well, sultry but controlled good taste all the way.

How does church-type music work on the Christie? Gart's "Scherzo" is most authentic, and when the sparks begin to fly, Simon's virtuosity is impressive. "I Know Him So Well" is a new one for this reviewer. It's a pensive ballad with enough registration changes to keep it interesting as well as romantic. Before a reviewer can complain that things are getting too sticky-sweet, the artist goes Sidney Torch-y with "Bats In The Belfry." Good-natured program variety reigns always.

This reviewer was happily surprised with Gledhill's pruning of Gershwin's "An American In Paris." The organ gets stretched out in grand style, and the artist mercifully cuts away all the Gershwin polysaturates and cholesterol. No one should ever have to listen to "An American In Paris" as written — unless it is underscoring a Walt Disney animated ballet or Gene Kelly skipping around fountains with Leslie Caron.

More Sidney Torch-ery opens the second half of the taped program. "On A Spring Note" is a happily hectic novelty, pleasantly spriteful. Simon works his special magic with the Rodgers and Hart tune "Bewitched," which turns out to be breathy and funky rather than bothered and bewildered. It's a splendid arrangement. Gledhill's endings for tunes are discretely simple but always effective and unerringly professional. Artists twice and three times his age could well take lessons in good musical manners and modesty from Simon.

Debussy's "Arabesque" gets an expert reading. It works surprisingly well on the Christie, thanks to Gledhill's sensitive and sensible playing. "Summertime" is a prime example of Simon's approach to a popular song. The introduction is straight off the sheet music, but registration and skillful phrasing make it sound newly minted. Here is an organist who knows when not to use theatre tremors for dramatic effect.

No one has played "You Are My Lucky Star" with such joyous authority since Dick Liebert. This great movie musical tune serves as a frame for "Can't Give You Anything But Love" (nice pizzicato touches), "Would You" (a lovely waltz with Tibias dripping all over the place), "Fascinatin' Rhythm" (perky Xylophone accents), and "Singin' In The Rain" (not a Gene Kelly imitation).

The final offering is the seldom played "London By Night" by Carroll Coates. This gorgeous waltz will be featured on many more

organ programs once this tape gets around. This reviewer can only reiterate what U.K. fans have already discovered: Simon Gledhill has what it takes to be a star of the first magnitude. His style appeals to mainstream theatre organ fans, he makes the Christie sound wonderful, he polishes every tune to gem luster, and his modest, well-mannered playing is always pleasant. We'll be waiting for more of the same whenever he is ready.

WALTER J. BEAUPRE

**WELTE PHILHARMONIC ORGAN, Various Artists (1910-1930) on Welte Organ Rolls, Church of the Covenant, Boston. WPO 101 Dolby stereo cassette tape. Available from Organ Literature Foundation, 45 Norfolk Road, Braintree, Massachusetts 02184. Price: \$10.00 plus \$2.00 postage per order.**

This latest of the Welte Organ Rolls recreations on the Welte-Tripp organ in the Church of the Covenant, Boston, Massachusetts, is primarily for the hard-core AGO fan or the serious collector of such things. The original paper rolls were cut between 1910 and 1930 by virtuoso organists, most of whom escaped the ken of this reviewer the first time around. Eugene Gigout and Clarence Eddy are the notable exceptions. Actually, since the two Lemare tapes reviewed in these pages, the recording techniques are much better. Far less ambient noise in the quiet sections. Fidelity is superb. Registrations throughout are more "straight organ" oriented rather than concert

or theatrically oriented.

The "Concert Overture" by Hollins (sorry, we're not on a first name basis!) opens Side I. The artist is H. Goss Custard. The piece bursts upon us with a full organ fanfare, then a quick switch to soft, untremmed flutes. The style is that of the early 1900s, pleasantly romantic with changing moods. The "live performance" ambience of the recording is uncanny.

Next, organist Lynwood Farnum mercifully avoids the much-abused "Toccatina" from the Charles Widor organ *Symphony No. 5* and plays instead the "Meditation and Intermezzo." It's a "Greensleeves"-type of slow, somber melody, in case someone asks. One understands why most artists opt for the "Toccatina."

The "Grand Fantasie in E Minor" by Lemmens completes Side I, and it is organist H. Goss Custard's last stand. The long selection opens as a sort of "Flight of The Bungled Bee." Then nothing much happens until "The Storm" breaks. It's a brief downpour with lightning striking in very few places. Lemmens has been listening to too much William Tell along the way and has strung together too many hymn tunes. This reviewer nodded off the first time through. Obviously this is not riveting fare.

Side II opens with Welte himself doing an organ transcription of "Poet and Peasant Overture." Unless you are so fond of this instrumental warhorse that any interpretation will suffice, better skip this one. The registra-

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tion is strictly church postlude genre, and the early theme which always reminds this reviewer of the immortal "I've Been Workin' On The R.R." is tediously mechanical. Later the "chase" music is flawlessly fingered but lacks any fire. It's about as exciting as wet burning hay. If anyone comes out on top it must be the Peasant.

But then, organist Eugene Gigout takes over with a sparkling rendition of Schumann's "Etude, Op. 56, No. 5." Don't let the title keep you away. It's delicate, pizzicato, and works as well as any performance on the tape. Lynwood Farnum encores with the French composer's Vierne's "Allegro Vivace" from his *Symphony No. 1*. Expect no tremos and no celeste ranks, because this is all most respectable sanctuary music.

The final selection is one which may hold most interest for TO fans. Clarence Eddy has a wonderful time with the Franz Liszt "Fantasy and Fugue on a Theme of Four Tones, B.A.C.H." There are touches of Johann Sebastian, but it's mostly big and spooky. Just the music for a "Phantom of The Opera" performance. Eddy handles the breathtaking cadenzas with relish and perfect control.

This is a generous tape with over 53 minutes of music. For those classical organ lovers who long to hear flawless reproductions of artists who would otherwise be stilled forever, this tape is a must. For the rest of us, a maybe — perhaps.

WALTER J. BEAUPRE

**TREASURY OF FAVORITES and MELODIES OF LOVE (two record set).** Lenny Dee at the Hammond with instrumental and vocal group embellishment. \$12.98 postpaid (check or money order) from Suffolk Marketing, 155 East Main Street, Smithtown, New York 11787.

Readers may have seen and heard this two-record package advertised via a colorful television plug recently. It features organ entertainer Lenny Dee, a veteran of over a dozen commercially successful electronic organ LPs over the years. This is an especially deluxe offer because this time Lenny includes many extras — additional orchestral musicians and a vocal group which adds much color to the ensemble but never dominates. We noted a string bass, guitar, a violin section, both tonal and rhythm percussions, an occasional brass section and the vocal group which sometimes comes close mike for a solo but mostly provides background color harmony ("ooh-hoos").

This set isn't aimed at organ enthusiasts looking for off-beat effects and arresting arrangements. Rather, it's intended for the average person who enjoys easy listening and perhaps some romantic (mostly slow) dance music. In these areas it succeeds admirably.

Lenny's contribution is straightforward and uncomplicated. He works well with the instrumentalists and gets many registration changes from his Hammond. Lots of instrumental variety, too.

There are 24 selections on the two discs: Les

Bicyclettes de Belsize, Harbor Lights, Misty Blue, The Last Waltz, Goodnight Sweetheart, Aint It Funny How Time Slips Away?, Cheryl Moana Marie, My Elusive Dreams, Snow Bird, Tennessee Waltz, Can't Help Falling in Love, Moon River.

Sweet Memories, Help Me Make it Through The Night, Paper Roses, Somewhere My Love, Feelings, Only You, For The Good Times, Vaya Con Dios, I Can't Stop Loving You, Room Full of Roses, Love is Blue, Near You.

As an examination of the above tune list will indicate, Lenny's selections are an interesting mix of old standards and the more current. Recording is good and the review pressings are centered. The review pressings tended toward somewhat heavy modulation, but there was no groove jumping. There are no jacket notes.

Happy "easy listening!"

**VOL. III, THEATRE ORGANISTS OF THE PAST — JESSE AND HELEN CRAWFORD.** Available from Crest Cassettes, The Creegan Company, Inc., 508 Washington Street, Steubenville, Ohio 43952. \$14.95 postpaid.

At last, Jesse and Helen Crawford in the original! The Creegan Company, who have already given us Volumes I and II, "Theatre Organists of the Past," an assortment of original 78 rpm discs of the best known organists of yesteryear reproduced on cassette, have finally brought out a 60-minute cassette in their Crest series of the very best of Jesse and Helen Crawford's organ recordings. This is the first time since these recordings were first cut in the 1920s and '30s that the full-length, unaltered recordings of Crawford have been available to the public.

In the 1950s, RCA reissued some of the Crawford discs on LP, but with added reverberation and audio doctoring. An ill-fated English reissue in the 1970s gave us parts of some recordings with the vocal choruses removed — a travesty on Crawford's fine original work.

Now Creegan makes the originals available without any alteration, made from good quality 78 rpm discs with little surface noise. Wisely, they have selected a variety of organs on which to display Crawford's virtuosity: the instruments in the Chicago and New York Wurlitzer stores, the 4/20 Wurlitzer in the New Empire Cinema, London, with a plurality of selections on the famed ninth floor studio Wurlitzer at the Paramount Theatre, Times Square, New York (Crawford never made a disc on the main organ in the theatre itself).

Also included in this remarkable collection is one of the first commercially produced 33-1/3 rpm recording issued by Victor in the early 1930s, using a standard 78 rpm groove width and called a "Program Transcription." This one is entitled "Schubertiana" and includes a medley of five of Schubert's most familiar pieces. As one listens to Crawford modulating from one to another in unbroken



fashion, it is like being present for one of his exquisite organ interludes at the New York Paramount — a complete musical package carefully wrapped and delivered.

Helen Crawford is not neglected in this collection, either. First, we hear Helen and Jesse playing in tandem, a duet arrangement of "Masquerade Waltz" recorded in the Paramount Studio in 1932, and secondly, Helen is at the Hammond while Jesse wields the baton — Jesse Crawford and His Orchestra play "Dancing Under The Stars."

Included here are some of the best of Jesse's solos: "Roses of Picardy," "Somewhere A Voice Is Calling," "You're The Cream In My Coffee," "Singin' In The Rain," "A Broken Rosary," "So Beats My Heart For You," and others. We even hear Jesse with the Victor house orchestra conducted by Leonard Joy playing "I've Got A Feeling I'm Falling."

The cassette comes with matching photographs of Helen and Jesse at the New York Paramount Studio console, a biographical sketch of both artists and complete discographical information. Those who remember the great Crawford organ discs of yesteryear will want to obtain a copy of this cassette to become reacquainted. Those who have never heard Crawford owe it to themselves to listen to the original — in the opinion of this writer, the greatest theatre organist who ever lived!

DR. JOHN W. LANDON □

## Lance Johnson's Troubleshooting Guide Quiz Question

You find a dead note while testing under the chest with a test wire. You suspect a dead magnet, as there is no motion in the primary valve. Because the chamber lights are bright, you cannot see if the terminal will arc. Without restoring to a voltmeter, how else can you test the magnet for continuity? □

Answer on page 54.

### Questions and Answers

Lance Johnson will answer readers' technical 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. □



# 1986 ATOS Young Organist Competition

The second annual Young Organist Competition brought forth entries from 11 talented young artists. Their names and qualifications were known only to ATOS President Jack Moelmann, who duplicated the tapes for the judges, and to Lois Segur, Chairman of the Competition Committee. The tapes were numbered in sequence as they arrived, and the judges knew only the age of the contestant and the size of the pipe organ used.

The entrants this year were Richard Purvis, Tom Hazleton, Dennis James, Gwen O'Connor and Grant Whitcomb. Only Richard Purvis was identified at the outset; the names of the other four were announced after the final grading.

The entrants and their sponsoring chapters were:

#### Junior Division (ages 13 - 15)

Christopher M. Halon, 14, Puget Sound  
Neil H. Johnston II, 15,  
Southwest Michigan  
Frank E. Perko III, 15, Pikes Peak  
Jason A. Poteet, 15, Sierra

#### Intermediate Division (ages 16 - 18)

John J. Cook, 16, Eastern Massachusetts  
Terry Cunningham, 16, Valley of the Sun  
Colleen Feldpausch, 16, Motor City  
Neal T. Marple, 16, Cedar Rapids Area

#### Senior Division (ages 19 - 21)

Dwight M. Thomas, 21, Central Indiana  
Donald M. Walker, 20, Joliet Area  
Laura VanEyck, 19, San Diego

Dwight M. Thomas was the competition winner, as well as placing first in the Senior Division. He will be presented in a cameo performance at the Richmond Convention. Colleen Feldpausch was the winner in the Intermediate Division and Neil H. Johnston II won in the Junior Division. Each received an award of \$300 as division winner, and Dwight Thomas received an additional \$200 as competition winner. We offer our congratulations to the winners and our thanks to all who participated.

We appreciate the generosity of the judges, who so willingly gave of their time for this very important project. We hope their constructive comments will be helpful to these young people as they continue their musical careers.

LOIS SEGUR, *Chairman*  
Young Organist Competition □

## PIPES & Personalities

### SAVOY THEATRE, NORTHAMPTON, RE-INSTALLS COMPTON FOR REGULAR USE

An exciting moment in theatre organ history came on May 4, 1986, when Ronald Curtis brought up the Compton organ at the Savoy Northampton, England, for its inauguration. It was 50 years to the day after the theatre first opened.

Early in 1985 the theatre management made known its desire to have a Compton organ installed once again, in time for the anniversary program. In 1936, the Savoy opened with a 3/7 Compton with Melotone. That organ was removed in 1960.

ABC Cinema set about locating an instrument and an extensive search led to Mark Burgess, who owned the organ from the ABC Ritz Cleethorpes, as well as choice parts of several other organs. Mark agreed to lend the organ to the Savoy for a period of four years; one year being taken up with the installation.

A crew from the savoy, led by Kenneth Porter, Manager, and Ken Worley, Chief Projectionist, handled the task of transporting the organ to the theatre from its storage place 65 miles away. Following removal of the original Compton from the Savoy the pipe chambers were converted to dressing rooms, so it was necessary to reconvert them for installing the new organ. The original lift was still in place and in working order; it was only necessary to modify it to comply with current safety regulations.

David Pawlyn was employed to restore and install the organ. He has removed, installed or renovated many of Britain's remaining cinema organs, among them the ex-Trocadero Wurlitzer in the South Bank Polytechnic in London. The Savoy's new Compton is a 3/10 instrument, with the two string ranks played together. The ranks are: Flute, Diapason, Tibia, two Strings, Trumpet, Krumet, Oboe, Tromba and Vox Humana, together with Xylophone, Glockenspiel, Vibraphone, Tubular Bells and Toy Counter. One of the famous British "jelly mold surrounds" highlights the console.

The organ inauguration program began with newsreels of May 4, 1936, and featured Ronald Curtis in concert and accompanying a short silent film, with Michael Wooldridge also playing some concert numbers on the Compton. Other stars on the program were

singer Nigel Stephenson and mime Ellen Blueth. Tony Moss, well known in cinema organ circles, was master of ceremonies. The show closed with a duet featuring Ron Curtis on the organ and Michael Wooldridge at the grand piano.

There was a very unexpected and rewarding happening after the formal inaugural program. In the theatre after it emptied, a regular cinema audience of some 800 took their seats and Michael Wooldridge brought up the organ and played them in. All the heads of the ABC group who stayed for this event were staggered to find a young audience, average age 18, silent, attentive and open-mouthed at the dazzling display put on by Michael. When he took the organ down 20 minutes later, he did so to a standing ovation far surpassing that of the regular organ goes at the preceding program. This would seem to indicate that, when playing for a young audience with no prior knowledge of a theatre organ, it is possible to hold their attention and more with a virtuoso performance.

### OUT-OF-SIGHT SILENTS

In front of the cameras on the set of a new Woody Allen film, to be released this fall, all went as planned for organist Lee Erwin. But, later he literally found himself behind-the-scenes of two other movies and facing major obstacles.

Woody Allen's penchant for authenticity, down to minute details, included having new eyeglasses made for Lee set in 1940-type frames to complete his period wardrobe. So, of course a vintage Hammond organ was provided for him to play during the filming of this sequence at the Astoria Studios in Queens, New York.

Having played 68 silent film programs, nine concerts, seven TV and radio shows, besides recording tracks for two films, two ballet performances and doing two recording sessions with orchestra at RCA, Lee Erwin had experienced his share of the usual problems facing the professional organist. Soon, he was to encounter two unusual ones.

Scheduled to accompany two showings of *King of Kings* at Calvary Church in New York City, where the console of the organ does not permit the organist a front view of the screen, Lee had a TV monitor set up to allow him to synchronize his music score to the action on the screen. This method of viewing usually presents no problems for the performer — except when the monitor fails — which it did at Calvary Church five minutes before show-time. With a dead monitor and the back of the screen facing the console, Lee truly was behind the scenes. However, following the dim images leaking through the screen and reading the backwards sub-titles, the show went on.

The next challenge for Lee came in the form of having to record a music track without seeing the film at all! The D. W. Griffith opus, *Orphans of The Storm*, scheduled for a run at the Regency Theatre in New York, arrived without the music track it was supposed



to have. To beat a deadline, the Baldwin Organ Company made available an instrument in their showroom for a late night recording session. With no possibility of a 35mm projector for the recording session, Lee had to screen the movie elsewhere to make sure that his music cue-sheet was timed exactly like the print to be used. Since he had played the film dozens of times in past years, it was not too difficult to imagine the action going on as he stared at the stopwatch in front of him. The recording was delivered to the theatre the next morning and was played along with the movie for its entire run, every note of the music right in sync with the action on the screen.

MARLIN SWING

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The first full season of organ concerts at the Renaissance Theatre in Mansfield, Ohio, since the organ was installed in 1985, was a great success. In September David Weingartner played several classical pieces, something new for Renaissance audiences. Hector Olivera was the next guest, and in December Bill Taber, resident organist for the Akron Civic Theatre, performed the first Christmas Organ Concert. In January, the theatre welcomed Rex Koury. By this time, the Wurlitzer's piano had been installed, and Rex used it to play "Rhapsody in Blue." In April, Ron Rhode performed a variety of numbers including "Could I Have This Dance?"

The second season will feature artists who have played this Wurlitzer before it came to the Renaissance. Gaylord Carter will appear on September 13; although this will be his first appearance at the Renaissance, he is quite familiar with the organ from the days when he played for the *Amos 'n Andy* radio show. Donna Parker, who played this organ when it was known as the "Carson" Wurlitzer, will be heard on November 9. Dennis James, from the Ohio Theatre in Columbus, will provide

Rex Koury at the Renaissance Wurlitzer in Mansfield, Ohio.



live organ music for *Son of the Sheik*, starring Rudolph Valentino, on February 14. Tom Hazleton will perform on March 13, and the season will close with Walt Strony on May 9.

VIRGINIA WHITE

## DOES THE SHOE FIT?

A London Chapter member mentioned something which should be of interest to visiting American organists doing concert tours in Britain.

Britain is a relatively small country, with a huge, efficient network of railways. The trains depart every few minutes and travel at 80 to 125 miles per hour, which means that one can travel to any part of the country in a relatively short time.

He says that American organists tend to play the same program in a number of cities, not realizing that their fans are following them around the country and are hearing a repeat of what they've heard only a few days before. Nevertheless, American organists are held in high esteem by the British.

WILLIAM G. HALE

## A PSYCHIC PUZZLE

Some 50 years ago, it seems, a mystery woman ran down the center aisle of the Avon Theatre, Utica, New York, and shot the organist dead. Gossip of the time had it that the organist was cheating on his wife, and she took the traditional way out of the situation. From that time to the theatre's demolition in 1947, the building was deemed haunted. Night porters at the Avon testified that the organ would rise from the pit at midnight and play music, without the assistance of human hands. The theatre auditorium would be filled with this sinister music until someone entered. Then it stopped. During the last few years of its existence, the theatre had difficulty employing staff, so well known did the psychic happenings become.

Contributed by Robert Goodwin, from the book *Phantoms of The Theater*, by Raymond Lamont Brown, 1977. Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers.

## A MEMORABLE THEATRE ORGAN EXPERIENCE: A VISITOR'S IMPRESSION

A truly memorable theatre organ experience is a fairly rare phenomenon in the 1980s because its success relies on four independent pillars: artist, organ, venue and program — and, to a lesser extent, staging. At most of our concerts at least one of these pillars leans a bit. However, when each of these factors is outstanding in its own right and the whole brought together with professional staging, the result can be awesome indeed.

Yet this is just what happened on an ordinary Sunday afternoon in May up at the top

of New York state in Buffalo. The occasion was one of the periodic organ concerts at Shea's Buffalo Theater, the huge rococo palace beautifully restored into an active performing arts center that is one of the bright jewels in the crown of the city's downtown core revitalization.

The artist was a young man very well known in the theatre organ world who has mastered one of the most difficult balancing acts on the concert stage: he plays with authority; he talks with humility. Ron Rhode showed a spellbound audience of some 2000 what can happen when a well-trained, imaginative musician gets in four hours of practice night after night on a large well-maintained organ before a receptive Arizona pizza parlor audience. What emerges is a very accomplished, yet unstuffy, artist. If such be the case, long live the pizza parlors.

Ron's program was well selected and arranged for variety and dramatic effect, with a marked absence of overworked war-horses, yet included nothing too obscure for comfort. There was near-contemporary music (from *La Cage aux Folles*), opera (*La Traviata*), Berlin, Gershwin, operetta (*The Fortune Teller*), light classics (Grieg and Delibes) and the best rousing organ performance of Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance No. 1* we have heard since the coronation of Edward VII (this is a very ancient reviewer). He very thoughtfully omitted "Memory" (*Cats*), "Somewhere My Love," "Edelweis" and "Blue Spanish Eyes" (sigh). The arrangements showed commendable originality (but for a touch of Wright in "Of Thee I Sing") and were played with great style. Only once did the gremlins get in with an unplanned single note of Brass Trumpet — but only experienced eagle-ears would notice it, so smoothly was the offending single tab out of 282 located and zapped with neither batted eyelash nor missed beat.

The organ was Wurlitzer's showpiece large-theatre instrument, now thoroughly restored in high style — sounding great and sporting a very attractively refurbished mahogany console. The somewhat-less-than-full house left room for just enough natural reverberation to enrich the glorious wrap-around Tibias, Strings and Tubas.

And the theatre! From the vast lobbies and sweeping grand staircases to the soaring dome above the proscenium, the audience became part of the elegant majesty of the Viennese royal palace. Even with the lights dimmed for the performance, there was an imposing grandeur to the royal blue glow cast over the organ screens behind the muted amber sparkle of the mini-chandeliers.

Without taking anything away from the likewise impressive Grand Reopening program by Lyn Larsen two years ago, it must be noted that the organ no longer shows signs of hasty night-before-the-concert preparation, the staging has acquired a practiced polish and the renovated theatre now relaxes under a comfortable lived-in patina.

The staging of Ron Rhode's concert was so smooth, in fact, that one was scarcely aware of it — surely the goal of every concert organizer. From the computerized Ticketron re-



served seating to the camera and recorder control (all politely but firmly confiscated for the duration), it was one classy act. Of particular interest was the centralized control (from a NASA-like electronic console under the balcony) of PA system, house lights and spot-lighting. Four inter-fading fixed spotlights at the front of the balcony followed the artist. In place of any folksy welcome from an on-stage host, we heard the briefest of formal announcements from an invisible speaker and the music began. How nice.

The warmly responsive audience was certainly not restricted to organ buffs. There were plenty of brown and blond heads among the silver and pink, and even some family groups (Gee, Dad, it's a Wurlitzer!). The artist called for house lighting to introduce a bus-load of 40 fans who had made a 400-mile two-day trip from Kingston, Canada, and he played their national anthem.

All in all, this was a most memorable event which deserves to be proclaimed throughout the organ world as a model to which other concert venues might well aspire.

FRANK W. PRATT

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Jeff Weiler, theatre organist from the Chicago area, provided the accompaniment to the classic Cecil B. DeMille film, *King of Kings*, on March 22 at the North Iowa Community Auditorium in Mason City, Iowa. The program was well-received by an appreciative audience, many of whom had never experienced a silent film presentation, let alone one with live organ accompaniment. This was Jeff's second appearance in the North Iowa Community Auditorium. Five years ago he played a dedicatory theatre organ program on the Rodgers organ which had been donated by Dr. and Mrs. Frank Hoffman. At that time he accompanied another film classic, *The Phantom of the Opera*, starring Lon Chaney.

FRANK HOFFMAN

## COS/EPOCH COMPETITION 1986

The finals of the annual COS/EPOCH Young Theatre Organist of the Year Competition for 1986 were held on April 13 at Gunton Hall in Norfolk, England. (For those not familiar with it, EPOCH stands for Electronic and Pipe Organ Convention and Holiday.) Well-known British organists William Davies, Ena Baga and Len Rawle were the judges, with Rawle as chairman.

In the pipe organ competition Rachael Ward, 15, of Nuneaton, Werks, was the winner. She received £100 in cash, plus £50 toward further theatre organ training on the Wurlitzer at the South Bank Polytechnic in London.

Peter Holt, 13, from Wetherby, West Yorkshire, placed second and won £50. In third place was David Last, 17, from Ipswich, who won £25. In addition, all three received a selection of Cinema Organ Society tapes, an LP and a year's membership in the COS.



Winners in the COS/EPOCH Competition, L to R: Peter Holt, David Last, Rachael Ward, Chairman Len Rawle, Michelle Gosling, Budgie Groom and Julie Shipp.

The judges remarked on the overall standard of the entrants, which was higher than at some previous competitions both at Gunton Hall and elsewhere.

In the electronic organ competition for the Yamaha Trophy, first place was won for the second time by Michelle Gosling of Kings Lynn. Julie Shipp of Great Horkesley took second place for the third year running, and Budgie Groom of Little Strand, London, placed third.

DAVID LOWE

## SOUND FAMILIAR?

In a comment to me at a recent meeting, following a discussion of concert ticket prices, a new member said, "I did not realize the goal of the club was to accumulate a large treasury. If it is, I don't think I am interested." Because other new members might hold a similar view, I thought it desirable to address the issue.

The ATOS was founded for the purpose of preservation, restoration, use and furtherance of the theatre pipe organ — certainly a fine and worthy cause. To accomplish this, it takes money. The Young Organist Competition is part of the Society's plan to further interest in theatre pipe organ. Money is needed to sponsor such a cause. These young artists are tomorrow's professionals, and without them the cause will die. It takes money.

The twin-console Wurlitzer at the Paramount would have been scrapped by now if the ATOS in years past had not spent money to keep the organ playing. It is now one of the nation's most desirable concert locations because a concert performed by Father James Miller and myself raised the funds to purchase and later donate a Post Horn rank to the theatre. It took money.

A grant was recently given to Pikes Peak Chapter so that they could continue the installation of the 3/17 Wurlitzer in Mount Saint Francis Convent. When completed, this organ will be a highlight of our Regional Convention. Following the convention, it will be available for use by both Pikes Peak and Rocky Mountain Chapters. It took money.

We are soon to see covers installed to protect the consoles of the Paramount's Wurlitzer, so that these consoles will not be

damaged by dust, grime and careless people. It takes money.

We are by no means a wealthy chapter and we have no intent of becoming so. The board over the past several years has been dedicated to maintaining the local dues. National ATOS has the same dedication. However, if the theatre organ is ever to become recognized and admired for its true musical place, then we cannot undersell it for concerts and other public events. When we set ticket prices, which at \$8.00 is still considerably lower than other public events, it is not for the purpose of becoming wealthy, but to further our original goals to restore, maintain, use and enjoy the beauty of the mighty pipe organ.

PATTI SIMON, President  
Rocky Mountain Chapter

## ARE YOU INTERESTED IN MECHANICAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS?

For those theatre organ fans intrigued by music makers controlled by cylinders, rolls, discs and folding cards, there is an organization devoted to their interests and enjoyment. Known as the Automatic Musical Instrument Collectors' Association (AMICA), the association is made up of 16 chapters covering the U.S. and reaching into Canada. There are also several affiliated societies covering England, the Netherlands, Germany and Australia.

AMICA publishes *The AMICA News Bulletin* nine times a year. The sample copy we received is very attractive in format, well printed and contains 20 pages of the same size as in THEATRE ORGAN. There are reports of chapter activities, articles of general interest, technical articles, biographies of artists, and classified advertisements.

Regular membership dues are \$22 per year; overseas (surface mail) and Canada — \$28; overseas air mail — \$48. There is a new member initiation fee of \$5.00.

More information about AMICA can be obtained from the Membership Secretary, Will Wild, P.O. Box 172, Columbia, South Carolina 29202 (telephone 803/758-8846). □



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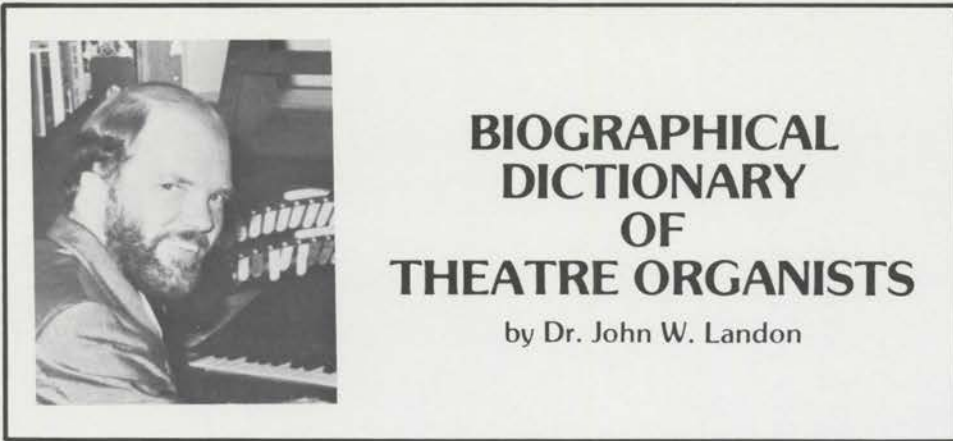
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ATOS ANNUAL CONVENTION  
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# BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF THEATRE ORGANISTS

by Dr. John W. Landon

## BROWN, DWIGHT

Brown was born in Dallas, Texas. He attended Forest Avenue High School in that city, and began his musical career as leading trumpeter in the school band. He soon switched to piano under the tutelage of Elizabeth Gay Jones and Julius Ilbert Jahn and progressed to the organ under Pietro Yon, later organist of the Vatican. He credited C. Sharpe Minor as the best of his teachers as far as the theatre organ was concerned.

He played the Hippodrome in Dallas, became organist at the 4/20 Wurlitzer in the Dallas Palace in August of 1925, and opened the 3/10 Barton in the Texas Theatre in Dallas in 1927. He opened the four-manual Wurlitzer in the Paramount Theatre, Toledo, Ohio, in 1929, and went on to a stint at Shea's Buffalo Theatre, Buffalo, New York, in 1929. He also played engagements in Houston and San Antonio, and at the Fox Theatre in Atlanta, Georgia. He returned in 1932 to the Palace Theatre in Dallas and was there for a time but relinquished the organist position to Joe Proctor, who remained there until the organ feature was discontinued. In 1935 he was selling Hammond organs in the Dallas area and he opened the first electronic organ in the Dallas Athletic Club. In 1942 he returned to the Palace Theatre in Dallas when organ inter-

Dwight Brown

(Fred Garrett photo)



missions were begun again. He played a number of years for the State Fair of Texas, and did radio and night club work from the late 1930s until the 1960s. He remained in the Dallas area until his death, December 9, 1965.

## BROWN, GRACE TAYLOR

Organist of the Society Theatre in Seattle, Washington, in 1927.

## BROWN, JEANNE

Broadcast over Radio Station WOWO, Fort Wayne, Indiana, from the Embassy Theatre (4/15 Page).

## BROWN, JOHN DAVID

Born in 1952 in Long Beach, California, Brown began organ study during his high school years. He was graduated with an Associate of Arts degree in Liberal Arts from Golden West College. During his college years he studied classical organ with Dr. Justin Colyer and Warren Peterkin.

Brown was employed in the Retail Home Organ Sales Division of the Gould Music Company. In addition to his employment and schooling, he found time to study theatre organ with Edna Scanlan, who helped prepare him for the 1972 Scholarship Competition sponsored by the Orange County Professional Organists Guild. Brown won first place and received a scholarship to help further his musical education. He majored in music and was graduated with honors from Golden West College in 1974.

Following graduation Brown taught at the Hammond Organ Studios of Orange County and served as organist for a chain of Wurlitzer-equipped pizza parlors in Southern California. He continued his own organ studies under the tutelage of Gene Roberson and Bill Thomson. He was hired as musical director for the Bird Cage Theatre at Knott's Berry Farm, where his assignments included playing the calliope.

After a stint as organist at a pizza parlor in Indiana, Brown returned to California where he teaches privately and appears as a free-lance concert organist.

## BROWN, MRS. JOY

Organist of the Wurlitzer Style 210 Special in the Liberty Theatre, Bellingham, Washington. This organ was repossessed by Wurlitzer

in June of 1924. Brown also played the Robert-Morton organ at the American Theatre and opened the new Mt. Baker Theatre, April 29, 1927, playing the Wurlitzer Style 215. The opening show was *Slide, Kelly, Slide* featuring William Haines. Mrs. Brown later worked at the Stark Piano Company which was Bellingham's major music and record store, where she was employed for many years.

## BROWN, MAE

Organist of the Kedzie Theatre in Chicago, Illinois, in 1928.

## BROWN, OLLA RAE

Student organist in the Eastman School of Music in March of 1924.

## BROWN, WEST

Well-known organist in the Seattle, Washington, area in the mid-1920s. Played the Blue Mouse Theatre in Tacoma, Washington, in 1925 and 1926. In 1926 Brown moved to the Embassy Theatre in Seattle and from there he moved to the Paramount Theatre, Seattle, in early 1927. In late 1927 he became organist of the Columbia Theatre, Seattle.

## BROWN, WILLIAM DeWITT

Organist of Cleveland's Palace Theatre in 1927. Later he moved to Allen and Loew's Stillman Theatre, Cleveland. Brown broadcast over various Cleveland radio stations in 1929.

## BRUBACHER, RAY

Ray Brubacher was born in Washington, D.C., in 1940. He began piano lessons at the age of nine and switched to organ at age 16. He studied classic organ with Dr. Louis A. Potter, F.A.G.O., and with Conrad Bernier at Catholic University of America.

Highlights of Brubacher's professional ca-

John David Brown





reer include serving as organist for the American Film Institute at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, concertizing on the organ in the George Washington Masonic Memorial, Alexandria, Virginia, performing at the 1972 National Convention of the American Theatre Organ Society, scoring and playing 14 full-length silent films for educational television, serving as senior staff organist and teacher for Keyboard Centers in Wheaton, Maryland, and serving as associate organist at St. Matthew's Catholic Cathedral in Washington, D.C.

In addition to his other duties and activities, Ray Brubacher has found time to tour and play concerts here and there across the country and to participate actively in the American Theatre Organ Society, both on a national and local chapter level. He served as Associate Editor of THEATRE ORGAN and is a past chairman of the Potomac Valley Chapter of ATOS.

Brubacher has broadcast his own program of pipe organ music, was actively involved in helping to restore the Wurlitzer organ in the Tivoli Theatre, Frederick, Maryland, and made a recording on that organ entitled, "Who Is Ray Brubacher and What's He Doing With Those Pipes?"

#### BRUGGERT, WILSON G.

Organist of the Windermere, Yale, Elmira and New Broadway theatres in Cleveland, Ohio.

#### BUELL, EDNA

Organist of the Colonial Theatre in Columbus, Ohio, in 1923.

#### BUHRMAN, BERT

At ten years of age Buhrman began playing the pipe organ at St. John's Episcopal Church in Springfield, Missouri. He was a student of Glen Stanback, who was the organist at St. John's as well as organist of the Electric Theatre. In the early 1930s, Buhrman attended Kansas City Junior College and he played the organ over Radio Station WOQ, owned by the Unity School of Christianity. His broadcasts originated in the Wurlitzer Building on Grand Avenue in Kansas City from either the 2/5 or 3/10 Wurlitzer organs there. In 1933 Buhrman had a program over Station WHB in Kansas City using piano and organ. The organ was a 3/5 Wicks instrument from the Jenkins Music Company.

Buhrman attended the University of Kansas at Lawrence from 1934 to 1936 and he played organ and piano programs over Radio Station WREN. The programs were broadcast from the Reuter Organ factory in Lawrence which had a small studio organ. He was graduated from the University of Kansas with an A.B. degree in Music. After his graduation, he returned to Kansas City and joined the newly opened Radio Station KCMO as musical director. He played organs in the Newman and Main Street theatres in Kansas City (both have since been renamed), accompanying slides for sing-alongs, playing for vaudeville acts and giving organ presentations. From 1936 to 1940 he was doing eight

shows on radio and five daily shows in the theatre. In 1940, he moved to New York City and took the position of staff organist with CBS, a position he held until the end of 1962. He also broadcast over NBC, ABC and the Mutual Radio network. This was done by arranging schedules so that artists could appear on a variety of programs and networks. Some of the radio programs with which he was affiliated were *Sherlock Holmes*, *Bulldog Drummond*, and *Joyce Jordan, Girl Interne*. Television programs included *Strike It Rich*, and *The Big Payoff*. For 15 years he played the organ on *The Guiding Light*, on both radio and television.

During the time that he lived in Ridgefield, Connecticut, Buhrman played the organ at St. Mary's Church for a period of three years. An opportunity came to return to his home state of Missouri to the School of the Ozarks at Point Lookout, Missouri. Buhrman decided to leave the pressures of big city life and accept the job. In February 1963, Buhrman moved to Missouri. His duties on the campus included overseeing the installation of a 2300-pipe Skinner pipe organ in Williams Chapel. A 3/15 Wurlitzer from RKO Keith's Theatre in Flushing, New York, was purchased and installed in a theatre in the Nettie Jones Learning Center on the campus, where theatre organ concerts are presented and silent films accompanied. The theatre organ series has been highly successful, repeatedly filling the 1000-seat auditorium.

#### BULLIS, CARLTON

Organist at B. F. Keith's Hippodrome Theatre in Cleveland, Ohio, in the 1920s. Director of the Cleveland Theatre Organist's Club in 1923.

#### BUNNELL, HARRY

Bunnell began playing piano and organ in theatres in southern Michigan when he was 17 years old. He spent a year and a half at the Majestic Theatre in Homer, in 1928 and 1929, after which he went to the Coliseum Theatre at Bronson, for a year. He spent four months at the Rex Theatre in Jackson, did a stint at the Garden Theatre in Marshall, and played for five months at the Bohn Theatre in Albion. From 1934 to 1936 he was organist at the First Baptist Church in Battle Creek. Moving to Detroit in 1936, he became organist at the First Church of Christ, Scientist, and organist and choir director at the Scottish Rite Cathedral. He was staff organist at Radio Station WJBK in 1945 and 1946, and was pianist in the Cass Theatre Orchestra at various times in the 1940s. □

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Correction to the biography of Ray Bohr in the January/February 1986 issue: The last show under the Radio City Music Hall, Inc. management was April 25, 1979. Ray Bohr was organist there for 32 years, from 1947 to 1979.

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January 24, 1987

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# Theatre Organ News From Australia



by  
*Bruce  
Ardley*



In Australia we were not blessed with the large number of theatre organs installed in Britain and the U.S.A. This was due to Australia's small population during the 1920s and 1930s. However, we did receive three 4/21 and five 3/15 Wurlitzers, as well as many smaller Wurlitzers and Christies.

Last November English concert organist Len Rawle revisited our shores and had the honour of opening the 3/8 Wurlitzer in the Collegiate College Hall, Hobart, Tasmania. Two more openings are scheduled to take place, one being the reopening, at the rebuilt Dendy Cinema Brighton, of the superb 3/15 Wurlitzer. This organ originally graced the orchestra pit of Melbourne's Capitol Theatre and in the latter days, the original Dendy Cinema. The organ has been lovingly and painstakingly refurbished by a dedicated team of workers. It has been fitted with solid-state switching. The console has been repolished and looks glorious.

The other opening will be that of the 3/8 Compton at the Albert Hall, Canberra. This organ was formerly in a cinema at Cheltenham, England. Originally purchased by the proprietors of the Dendy Cinema, it was intended to be installed in another of their theatres. However, this never came to fruition, and it was sold privately. Subsequently the Canberra Division of TOSA purchased it. The opening will provide an exciting event in

the Australian organ scene in 1986.

The TOSA National Convention is hosted in a different state each year and held over the Easter Vacation. The 1986 Annual TOSA Convention was held in Brisbane, Capital of Queensland, the Sunshine State. Titled "Puttin' On the Ritz in 1986," the featured artist was New Zealand's Richard Hore. Richard has been blind since birth and has a highly developed sense of hearing. He has released six LP albums on electronic organs and constantly tours throughout New Zealand.

Queensland's Division has its own organ, a 3/8 Christie installed in the Kelvin Grove High School Auditorium. This instrument was originally installed in the Granada Cinema, Maidstone, Kent, England.

During early March, the ATOS "Pipes Down Under" tour spent four days in Melbourne. Members of the group took the opportunity to inspect the still-silent Dendy Brighton 3/15 Wurlitzer. At the Village Cinema Reservoir they had the opportunity to play the 2/9 Blackett and Howden organ which is controlled from its Christie console. Also, they had the opportunity to see artists Tony Fenelon and Ray Thornley in concert at the Moorabbin Town Hall 4/22 Wurlitzer. A good deal of the concert was unexpectedly performed on a Yamaha FX20.

During 1985, the Assembly Hall at St. Peter's College Adelaide was severely damaged

by fire. The organ installed is the 3/15 Wurlitzer formerly in the Regent Theatre, Adelaide. The console suffered a scorching; however, the only damage to the pipes occurred when a fireman inadvertently trod on a few when checking through the chamber.

The rebuilding of the Hall is expected to be completed prior to the coming Christmas, but it will be a considerably longer period before the delightful Wurlitzer is giving forth. We must be thankful it was saved.

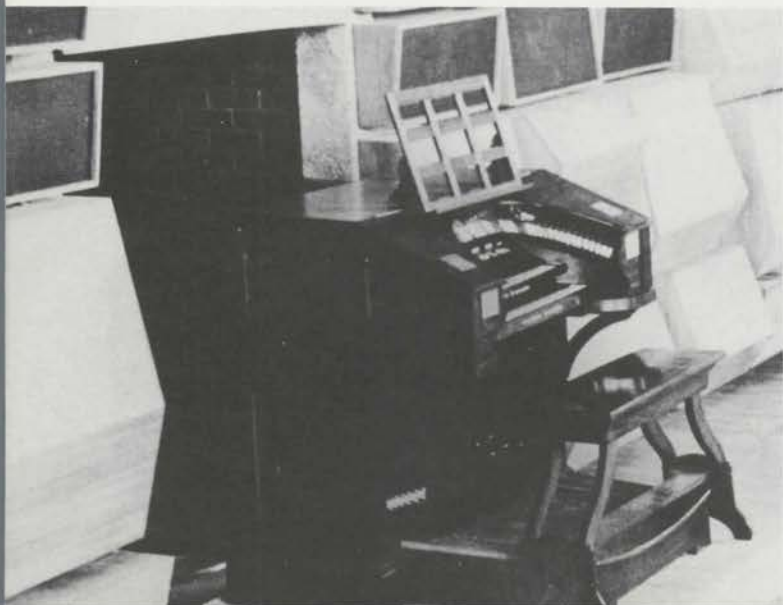
This year was the 60th birthday of the original opening of the 2/10 Wurlitzer in the Arcadia Theatre, Chatswood. A suburb of Sydney, it is situated on Sydney's North Shore, across the Harbour Bridge from the main city.

The Arcadia opened in 1915 and was successful from the beginning. In the early 1920s the owners had the building almost entirely rebuilt to seat just under 2000. The interior was Romanesque in style and the fittings were luxurious.

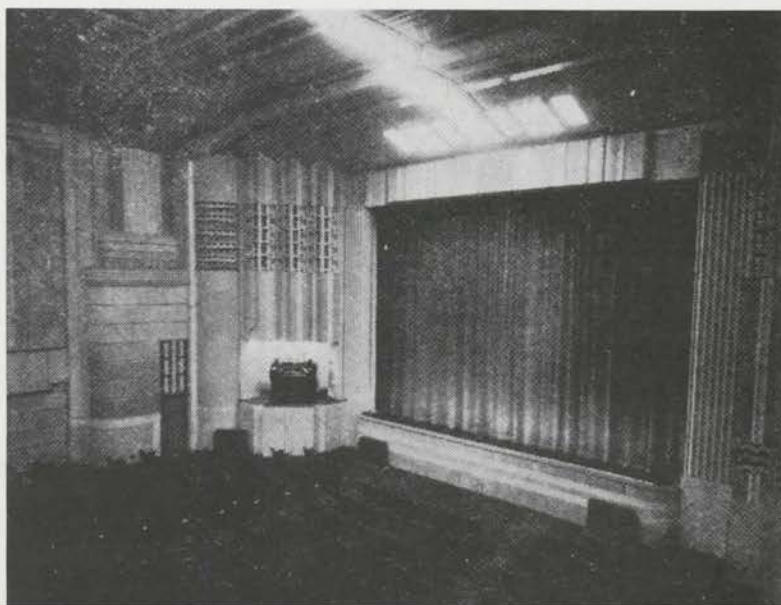
In 1924 the first theatre organ of larger dimensions was installed in Sydney's new palatial Prince Edward Theatre. The instrument was a 2/10 Wurlitzer Hope-Jones Unit Orchestra. The Arcadia's showman-manager Herb Crispe had been eyeing the scene in the United States, noting the increasing use of the unit organ. The success of the organ at the Prince Edward certainly did not go unnoticed by the proprietors of the Arcadia. In August 1925, after due consideration, the Arcadia proprietors travelled to the Prince Edward to meet the Australian Wurlitzer representative, and to hear American organist Eddie Horton, who soon put the organ through its paces. After playing a wide range of pieces to demonstrate the organ's amazing versatility, a reel of the movie *King of Kings* was then shown to the group. Obviously moved by the organ accompaniment, a contract was signed later that morning.

In December 1925 the Wurlitzer 2/10, Opus 1167, arrived on horse drawn carts with the labelling "Organ for the Arcadia Theatre Chatswood" and "The Largest Organ in the State." A cameraman was engaged to film the arrival of the organ at the Sydney docks, then

Console of the Arcadia Wurlitzer now installed in the Chatswood Town Hall. Part of the chamber coverings can be seen at either side of the recess where the console is stored when not in use.



Interior of the Arcadia Theatre, circa 1936. Genuine "Art Moderne."





to its eventual destination. Unfortunately, this film was lost during the 1960s. Little structural work was required to house the pipework and the console was placed on a raised dais to the left of the proscenium.

Some time earlier, a talented young organist and music teacher, Nicholas Robins, had been employed as pianist in the Arcadia orchestra. The manager often took Nicholas to the Wurlitzer representative's home to play the Wurlitzer installed there and did all he could to encourage his development of the-atre organ technique, so that he could have the honour of opening the Arcadia Wurlitzer early in 1926. However, this was not to be, for it was found that Eddie Horton, who had just concluded a season in Brisbane, was available. A hasty telegram confirmed arrangements, and on Monday night, February 8, 1926, Eddie Horton opened the new Chatswood Arcadia Wurlitzer, to a crowd never before seen in the theatre. *The Great Northern* newspaper reported this momentous North Shore occasion in full:

"The Arcadia Theatre Chatswood was packed from floor to ceiling last night, the chief attraction being the opening of the great Wurlitzer Orchestral Organ, which had been installed by that enterprising showman, Mr. Herb Crispe. The motto of the proprietor of the Arcadia is 'We lead — follow who may' and, determined to keep his playhouse in the vanguard of progress, Mr. Crispe, at an expense running into many thousands of pounds, decided to install this wonderful instrument, and to complete the programme, Mr. Crispe has engaged Mr. Eddie Horton, of Prince Edward fame, city, to render a programme of music each evening. Little wonder then that the Arcadia was booked out days before the opening night. Still there is ample opportunity to hear this great organ played by the Prince of organists as Mr. Horton is to render nightly an attractive musical program which is sure to be appreciated by the patrons.

"In a very few words the great organist was introduced last night to the audience by Mr. Crispe, and loud applause greeted his masterly manipulation of this King of Instruments. To show that the musical side of the programme at the Arcadia is to be on an elaborate scale, it may be mentioned that the present up-to-date orchestra is to be maintained in addition to the great organ. Such a feast of music cannot fail to appeal to the residents of the North Shore."

Details of the instrument and other words of praise for the venture followed. The film magazine *Everyone's* gave a front page cover story. The review is creditable, but several blunders were made, the most unforgivable being the mis-naming of the theatre as the Dreadnought. These two theatres were in constant competition.

The organ became very popular with the patrons and its music was loved by most; some people who previously had not been movie-goers would leave for home as the film started. Others, like an enthusiastic youth in the early '30s, had an insatiable desire to play it. This particular Horton hid in the theatre after an evening session, and after all had left,

JULY/AUGUST 1986

# ARCADIA THEATRE

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## EDDIE HORTON

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## MIGHTY WURLITZER

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and E. James Davidson & the Arcadia Concert Orchestra

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All Star Cast in  
"The Winding Stair"

Adolphe Menjou in  
"Lost a Wife"

Opening publicity in *The Great Northern* newspaper, February 9, 1926.

groped his way to the switchboards, put on a couple of lights, found the organ controls, and sat at the console, his dream wish come true, playing well into the early hours of the morning.

For a while, the organ and orchestra were used together to accompany silent films and do other feature work, the organist featured two and three times during the session, including intermission.

With the coming of sound to the Arcadia, the orchestra was dispensed with. However, the management decided to continue featuring the now-resident organist Nicholas Robins at the Mighty Wurlitzer, despite the new attraction of talkies.

In June 1936, the Arcadia was completely renovated and modernized by Chas. Bohring-

er to conform to the typical commercial architecture of the day, "streamlining," strong verticals and triangular motifs. The beautiful classic proscenium was razed and in its stead rose a monument in plaster-work and ornamental grille-work. The organ console was placed under the left chamber in a futuristically styled alcove. Not long after the installation, the Arcadia organ was regularly broadcast over the A.B.C. and several commercial radio stations. Recordings for international release were made by E.M.I. on many Sydney organs, including the Arcadia.

Shadows crept stealthily over the cinema scene from the advent of television to Australia in 1956. In November 1956, the Arcadia organ was used for the last time by a resident organist, Charles Tuckwell, and remained

Nicholas Robins (circa 1930), the first resident organist at the Arcadia.

(Photo courtesy of Mrs. Robins)





idle until organists Ron West and Barrie Brettoner were engaged for Wednesday matinees and Saturday evenings. The organ was used right up to the last night of the Arcadia, Wednesday, April 26, 1961. Thus the curtains fell for the last time, to an almost empty house, Ron West paying his last respects to the organ playing "We'll Meet Again."

The Arcadia Theatre building, furnishings, fittings and the historic Wurlitzer organ were placed on the market for sale. Though offers of more than \$2000 were made for the instrument, it was finally donated to the Council of the Municipality of Willoughby, where the theatre was located, by the theatre proprietors. It was later dismantled by organ builders S. T. Noad & Son and packed in car crates to be stored at the Council's Depot, where it lay untouched until November 1969.

So, quietly the Arcadia Theatre came to an end, even before the people were conscious of it, the local people who had by the thousands watched and helped this great suburban cinema grow over the decades from a small showplace to a fine top-ranking affair of the '30s to '50s.

I recall the radio broadcasts of the late 1940s and early 1950s by Charles Tuckwell, the then-resident organist. In the early 1950s, when on annual leave in Sydney, I visited the Arcadia for a normal movie session to hear the organ live. The sound was bright and un-

impeded by heavy curtaining, and Charles Tuckwell's snappy style of playing was memorable.

The organ is now installed in the Chatswood Town Hall and whilst it was officially opened in the 1970s, there is still much work needing to be done. This is sad, for although not large, it is a quality instrument and could proudly hold its own on the international circuit. Let us hope that this will soon occur.

I am indebted to Ian Griggs of Sydney for permission to use much of the material from his excellent book completed in the early 1970s on the history of the Arcadia and other cinemas in the surrounding district.

*Bruce Ardley, well-known Australian organist and theatre organ enthusiast, has agreed to write this column for THEATRE ORGAN on a regular basis. His column will cover the theatre organ scene in Australia.*

*Bruce studied classical piano for nine years, beginning at age nine. He first heard a theatre organ when he was 13 and immediately became addicted. He began the study of classical organ at 17, and subsequently studied theatre organ with the late Stanfield Holliday at the 4/19 Wurlitzer in the Melbourne Regent. He has been a member of the Victorian Division of the Theatre Organ Society of Australia for over 25 years. By profession he is a bank manager.* □

surmise is perhaps 60-65. Sorry to state, but most won't be around in the next ten to 15 years and there goes the theatre organ. Players, but no one to listen.

I doubt that the organ crews want to destroy their hobby by up-grading to synthesizers and electronic gizmos. We need to get more older people and those in their fifties to bolster the art. The new young generation of music lovers have tin ears. If it's not loud it's no good. They want to jump and shake, not listen quietly to some good music. They are also capable of damaging an installation. An exchange of audience is not an answer. A campaign to introduce new organ players to the pipes is in order. Use advertising money and price inducements to the organ and piano teachers and organ dealers to create a bigger audience of the present new organ players. Select the groups that will respond.

Maybe dealers and teachers can contribute to the cost of a bus load of new people who never heard of a pipe organ but want to see what it's all about. If they like to listen to it, I'm sure they may be an added customer for future concerts.

Special prices could be arranged with the chapters to get many from nursing homes who are the listening age. Dealer participation with their organ customers and organ classes should be made a part of the program. Maybe free copies of THEATRE ORGAN to people attending electronic organ concerts can help the education process.

ATOS and its chapters need a new way of thinking.

Musically,  
Al Kaufman

Bridgeport, Connecticut

Dear Mr. Gilbert:

With regard to the article "The Theatre Organ . . . Wherein Lies Its Future?" by John Ledwon, in your January/February 1986 issue, I have a few comments.

While I agree that much of the popular music today has its appeal based upon the delivery and style of the artist, with the melodic considerations coming in a distant second, it should be mentioned that the old-time style of music with "hummable melodies" is still alive and well — except that such music is now in the country and western category. The only problem is that the theatre organ is not recognized as a standard instrument in the country and western field.

Second, overlooked in the article was the fact that many theatre organ concerts — and a generous number of theatre organ recordings — emphasize classical music. This type of music has not gone out of style and is still popular with concert goers, if not teenagers and the younger generation.

Mr. Ledwon's points are well taken, and it is incumbent upon all of us to help promote the popularity of theatre organs. It is interesting that when theatre organs were first installed in pizza parlors back in the 1960's, much was said that indicated that purists were offended by the entire concept. Now it seems that purists are a bit sad that the day of pizza with pipe organ accompaniment seems to be fading.

## 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 Bob:

I would like to thank most sincerely all those very kind people who wrote to me and sent tapes of Al Melgard at the Barton organ in Chicago Stadium. The letters and tapes were very much appreciated. Thank you all.

Yours sincerely,  
Laurie Morley (Mr.)  
Stokely, England

Dear Editor:

"Why is it that the console of most theatre organs have been placed on the left side of the stage?" That gem extracted from *Etude* by Jason and The Old Prospector brought on acute nostalgia when I realized I was the question's author!

Since there were no theatre organs or theatre organists in my area, my meager source of TO lore was the yearly visits of the piano tuner. The *Etude* had a Q & A department and I bombarded them with TO queries so often that they began ignoring me!

All because I happened to walk by the local

music store with its Victrola in the doorway playing Crawford's "Indian Love Call."

So my special thanks to "Nuggets from the Golden Days" for digging up such treasures. (The other question referred to, about blowers, was probably mine, too! Fifty-two years is a long time.)

Incidentally, why is it that the consoles of most theatre organs have been placed on the left side of the stage?

Sincerely,  
Hugh Lineback  
Siloam Springs, Arkansas □

Dear Editor:

I would like to add a few comments to the article by John Ledwon in January/February 1986 THEATRE ORGAN. He has analyzed the problem correctly and his suggestions have merit. The present crop of theatre organists have a handle on the type of music the present older groups want. There should be no shortage of players. The shortage, however, is the audience. The median age I would



While THEATRE ORGAN is a dandy publication which tells of national happenings and occasionally delves into historical matters (such as the illustrious series years ago involving Dan Barton), it seems to me that the ATOS would be well-served if a companion publication were started, perhaps on the order of Tom B'hend's *The Console* which enjoyed a long publication run until it was suspended a year or so ago. Such a publication, if presented in an informal manner (as *The Console* was), could give information on instrument relocations, restoration techniques, hints for hobbyists, gossip (which is always fascinating to read), etc. There are ample precedents for this. The Musical Box Society International, for example, has two publications. One is printed on glossy paper and contains research articles and information of a more permanent nature, while a newsletter is more human-interest and deals primarily with current events. The formula seems to have been successful.

While some ATOS members, particularly those in larger cities, can regularly go to concerts, there are others whose enjoyment of the hobby, and knowledge of what is happening in the hobby, is more dependent upon what appears in print. Just an idea.

Sincerely yours,  
Q. David Bowers  
Wolfeboro, New Hampshire □

## Closing Chord

**Basel Cristol**, a leading Chicago area theatre organist in the great era, died on April 7. She was 86.

Born in Dublin, Ireland, she began piano study at an early age, her father, brother and sister being talented musically. After emigrating to America, Basel studied at the Chicago Musical College, winning the Diamond Medal for proficiency.

After organ study, she began her professional career at Chicago's Central Park Theatre. Other theatres in which she played were the Circle, Roosevelt, Riviera, Tivoli, Uptown and Chicago. In the '30s, Basel went into radio, performing on WMAQ and WCFL, using a Hammond. An engagement in the Marine Dining Room of the Edgewater Beach Hotel, occasional stints at the Chicago Theatre for stage shows, and a 17-year stint at Iglor's Restaurant kept Basel Cristol busy into her eighties. While at Iglor's, she had a heart attack in 1973 and Hall of Famer Edna Sellers subbed for her. She retired from there in 1980.

For the definitive biography on Basel Cristol, see the March/April 1985 issue of THEATRE ORGAN.

LLOYD E. KLOS

**Buddy Nolan**, whose career playing theatre organ spanned more than 50 years, died on April 13, 1986, after a lengthy bout with cancer. He was 68. A native of Norristown,



Buddy Nolan

Pennsylvania, Mr. Nolan started playing professionally while in the ninth grade. His mother was a pianist, organist and vocalist under whose guidance Buddy learned to love music. "I dropped out of school in the tenth grade," he once said, "and played professionally from then on." He served in the Army in

WWII. In 1952, he began a long association with the Embassy Theatre in Fort Wayne, Indiana, where he celebrated his fiftieth year in entertainment with a 1982 concert.

For many years Nolan played "Midnight Concerts" at the Embassy, which became a very popular attraction in Fort Wayne during the '50s and '60s. He recorded "Midnight at The Embassy," which has long since become a collector's item. In addition to his theatre work, Buddy Nolan was well-known in the Fort Wayne area for his nightclub and supper club engagements.

It was his long association with the Embassy that helped save the theatre in the early '70s when it was threatened with destruction. Buddy gave several well-publicized concerts and rallied support among the Fort Wayne public, who did not forget the years and years of theatre pipe organ pleasure given them by this very talented performer.

Surviving Mr. Nolan are a sister, Marcella, of Norristown, Pennsylvania, and a brother, Eugene, of Ellentown, Florida. Services were held in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne with burial in the Catholic Cemetery.

TIM NEEDLER


Rocky Mountain Chapter was saddened to learn of the passing of one of its long-time, very active members. **Jerry Cutshall**, husband of our secretary, Alice Cutshall, passed away on March 21 following a heart attack. Jerry donated many hours of his time working with chapter members to maintain the Paramount Theatre organ in downtown Denver. He retired from the Rio Grande Railroad after 48 years of service and, in addition to our chapter, he was active in Colorado Live Steamers, the Mile High Railroad Club and the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club. He is deeply missed by all who knew him.

DONALD ZELLER □

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# CHAPTER NOTES

Edited by Grace E. McGinnis

## ALABAMA Birmingham

205/942-5611 or 205/664-3606

As summer progresses, more and more exciting things are happening here. The Publix #1 at the Alabama Theatre continues to improve as Larry Donaldson and crew work ever harder to make this the Mightiest Wurlitzer in the South. The addition of a 32' Resultant, a 5-1/3 Quint (Main Tibia) and other mutations and unifications for both Tibias and Post Horn has dazzled audiences at the Alabama.

Our chapter-produced album, "Wurlitzer At Its Best," by Tom Hazleton at the Alabama, hit the streets on April 26, with tremendous success. This digitally mastered album is outstanding, and Tom has done a wonderful job!

Hector Olivera brought the house down on April 27 with one of the most exciting concerts ever heard at the Alabama. By far one of the best attended (visitors from throughout the Southeast and Arizona!) concerts ever produced by our chapter, Hector showed off the organ as never before! Prior to Hector's arrival, we held a pre-concert party in the reception hall of the Birmingham Wedding Chapel which is owned by member Freeman

Andress. Housed in the chapel are several of Freeman's musical instruments including a Rodgers Trio, and a Kawai grand piano. As a special treat, James Marsh, of Marsh Piano and Organ, brought out the latest electronic marvel, and he and Gary Jones played the evening away on a new Technics F-3.

Other recent events have included Christine McPherson at the console of the Publix #1 on April 13. Christine, a local musician and organ instructor, provided a program of many different types of music for an enthusiastic crowd. On April 24 we provided technical support and an operating crew for the Southern Regional Opera's production of "An Evening with The Great Swedish Singers" in conjunction with the Birmingham Festival of Arts. Organ music was provided by chapter Vice-President Gary Jones.

President Cecil Whitmire has accepted a position as technical director of the Alabama Theatre. Cecil is no stranger to *any* aspect of theatre operation and has our chapter heavily involved with the operation of this grand movie palace. One of our first events will be a summer classic movie series which will feature the Mighty Wurlitzer prior to each show.

Late-breaking rumor: Freeman Andress is reported to be actively seeking a Wurlitzer to be installed in the Birmingham Wedding

Chapel for both wedding and chapter use. More on this as it develops!

GARY W. JONES



## ALOHA Honolulu

808/696-4533 or 808/523-9079

Our chapter is alive and well in Honolulu despite having gone through a period of uncertainty and doubt about our very existence. "Our" 4/16 Robert-Morton is still in the (old) Hawaii Theatre in downtown Honolulu where we meet every Sunday morning and where the maintenance crew does servicing every Wednesday night. A group named the Hawaii Theatre Center has an option to purchase the theatre while we just keep on doing our thing. The organ has never sounded better with a new Tibia and Wurlitzer Oboe replacing lesser voices (a new Post Horn was added a year ago). The old Otis lift, installed in 1922, has been rejuvenated after more than 50 years of idleness.

Several concerts and silent movie presentations have been given in past months — the latest was a concert of 30 minutes followed by a Laurel and Hardy silent film, an intermission, another 30 minutes of clever arrangements and a Charlie Chaplin silent. All this by a very innovative Tommy Stark, recently of San Diego. Some 250 attendees gave him a rousing ovation.

We have had several ATOS visitors "just passing through," including our old friend, Dr. Edward Mullins. We must tip our (coconut leaf) hat to Scott Bosch and Jim Chandler for their dedicated and fantastic work on the improvement and maintenance of our beloved Robert-Morton. We'll stand it up against any theatre organ of its size. Aloha, brah!

PHIL DOOLEY



Christine McPherson at The Alabama.

(Billy A. McPherson photo)



Tommy Stark at the 4/16 Robert-Morton at his April concert and silent movie presentation.





Leon Berry at the Hunt's 4/17 Wurlitzer in Clearwater, Florida.



Central Indiana members Dusty Desterbecque and Dave Ketcham refurbishing wind chests at Manual High School "work party." (John W. Ennis photo)

**CENTRAL  
FLORIDA  
THEATRE  
ORGAN  
SOCIETY**



**Tampa**

**813/685-8707 or 813/734-5721**

Many exciting things have happened in our chapter since our last report. For our December 8 meeting, Leon Berry and his wife, Mildred, came from Chicago, and Leon gave a wonderful concert on Ken and Ruth Hunt's 4/17 Wurlitzer at their home in Clearwater. This organ came from the Terminal Theatre in Chicago and was moved to the Hunt's home in Dayton, Ohio, in 1962. From there it was moved to their new home in Clearwater in 1983.

As many organ buffs know, Leon Berry played for many years at the Hub Roller Rink in Chicago and has 18 records to his credit. He is also known for the Wurlitzer organ, which he restored, at his home in Chicago and which is fondly known as "The Beast in The Basement." This instrument came from a theatre in Crystal Lake, Illinois, and took many nights for Leon to complete. Our chapter was most fortunate to have this master artist play for us.

It seems that every month our club has more interested people, and at our April meeting Cathy (Hoffman) Blanchard also played a concert of many favorite songs on the Hunt's Wurlitzer with open console following. Thanks, again, to Ken and Ruth Hunt.

PAUL T. DANIELSON



**CENTRAL  
INDIANA  
CHAPTER**

**Indianapolis  
317/255-8056  
or 317/546-1336**

We traveled to Greencastle for our March meeting at the Gobin United Methodist

Church where Tim Needler and tenor Kevin Aikman presented the program. Tim played the large Kimball organ and Kevin sang several selections, including "The Lord's Prayer" and "Danny Boy." Tim's selections demonstrated the many beautiful stops on the organ. "Trumpet Tune," by Henry Purcell, featured the majestic Harmonic Trumpet which, on 15 inches of wind pressure, is the loudest rank of the organ. Tim ended the program with "Finlandia," which lent itself well to the resources and tone colors of the organ. The 4/65 Kimball was installed in the late 1920s. In the mid-1950s the Möller Organ Company rebuilt the instrument, removing the gallery organ and changing some of the pipework. The gallery organ is now installed elsewhere on the DePauw campus. DePauw University uses the Kimball as a teaching and concert instrument.

Dwight Thomas is the winner of our Young

Organist Competition, and his tape will be sent to the National Competition for judging.

The April meeting at Manual High School was followed by a "Work Party" coordinated by Kevin Aikman assisted by his group leaders. Many volunteers cleaned, buffed, stained and polished wood pipes; others unsoldered and cleaned wind chests. Tim Needler provided organ music throughout the evening. The organ is a 3/17 Louisville Uniphone theatre organ which was purchased from the Crescent Hill Church in Louisville. Teachers and students at Manual dismantled the organ and converted it to a theatre organ. The first public concert was performed on January 22, 1977, by Lee Erwin, and proceeds



GRACE E. MCGINNIS.

**CHAPTER  
CORRESPONDENTS  
PLEASE NOTE**

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  
Phone: 503/654-5823





Central Ohio member Willard Fine shows some tricky fingerwork on his portable fourth manual at the Blegens. (J. R. Polsley photo)



Fay Chakeres poses at the keyboard at the Central Ohio meeting in March. (J. R. Polsley photo)

from this concert were used to add to the instrument. Carl Wright, a teacher at Manual, and Larry MacPherson, pipe organ builder, were the guiding forces who spent countless hours restoring and reassembling this organ which presently has 1478 pipes. Our chapter assists in the maintenance of this instrument.

CAROL M. ANDREJASICH

### CENTRAL OHIO Columbus

513/652-1775 or 614/882-4085

We met at the home of Jim and Irene Blegan on February 23 for a delightful occasion. Jim's Conn 651 with two separate auxiliary speaker systems was certainly the next thing to pipes. The informality that prevailed encouraged some seldom-heard members to take advantage of open console. At the meeting, President Mark Williams gave a progress report on the winding of the Main chamber of our Worthington organ installation. Adjustment of wind pressure and separate tremulation should markedly enhance and enrich the Diapason, Tuba, Violins, Concert Flute and Vox Humana.

It was, indeed, a celebration — the fifty-eighth anniversary of the Ohio Theatre with all its splendor and its first-nighter atmosphere. The Columbus Symphony Orchestra, teamed with Dennis James at the Robert-Morton, revived the silent era of 1928 with the movie, *The Circus*, starring and directed by Charlie Chaplin. The interplay between the organ and the orchestra woven into the fabric of the story was a tribute, not only to the lyricist and arranger, but also to the clever animation of the performing artists. Certainly the silent movies did not suffer for lack of expression; the action, the illusion was all there, almost to the point where one wondered — did the talkie really have to be invented?

No more gracious hosts exist than Bob and Betty Richards, and it was at their home we met on March 23. Following the business meeting, we were delighted to hear Betsy's mini-concert. Her theatre-organ styling is sec-

ond to none and the envy of all of us who would like to emulate her playing style. We again witnessed a growing participation at open console by those heretofore reluctant to play in front of a group. Perhaps the mutual support system that exists within our organization, in which there's much understanding and encouragement, is responsible for their willingness.

JOHN R. POLSLEY



Chicago Area

Theatre Organ Enthusiasts

312/794-9622 or 312/892-8136

The jewel of theatres, the Chicago, is scheduled to reopen on September 10 with a



Organ crew member Willard Ebner receives a plaque as a tribute to his contributions to the installation of Central Ohio's Wurlitzer. (J. R. Polsley photo)

gala program. This is terrific news, and it is marvelous to note the amount of work that has been done and will be done by September. Headlining the opening program will be Frank Sinatra, which is another great surprise. Yes, plans can change, but all the rumors seem quite certain. Accolades galore to the many workers on this project, both professional and volunteer. The organ? It is hanging in there and is flexed almost every week.

In March we had a big turnout at United Church of Christ in Lombard. Mark Noller was the soloist, and the 2/5 extensively unified Smith theatre organ surprised many as Mark presented its array of sounds. His registration was marvelous, as was his program. It is always a treat to hear Mark perform.

A cast of former movie stars appeared in April at Chicago's Civic Opera House in the classic silent film, *Don Juan*. Dennis James accompanied this film on the 3/50 Skinner. The duo of Dennis James and a silent film is a marvelous combination, a joy to behold — and hear!

Our meeting in April was at Downers Grove High School where Tom Gnaster played the 3/10 Barton and, as an added feature, did a bit of opera "en costume a la prima donna." Dennis Peters accompanied Tom on the stage grand piano. It was comical and a surprise to hear Gnaster's range. Who knows what talent lies hidden within the anatomy of man!

The Hinsdale Theatre was the site of Jim Riggs' concert in March. It was an overflow attendance, and rightfully so. Jim's programs are always excellent, entertaining and varied. This one was no exception and was well received.

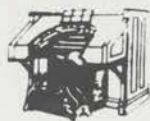
Our business meeting, board election and social in May was at WGN Studio. A packed room heard Gaylord Carter on the Studio Wurlitzer. We were, indeed, fortunate to have Gaylord with us. His program was entertaining and beautiful. Thank you, Gaylord, for being with us.

ALMER N. BROSTROM





**CONNECTICUT VALLEY  
THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY, INC.**



**Thomaston**

**203/357-4581 or 203/261-5269**

Our April membership meeting was held in the home of Garo and Ruth Ray in Orange, Connecticut, where we were treated to a truly fascinating experience regarding both the house and the organ. The organ is a 3/45 low pressure pipe organ which was designed and constructed by Garo Ray. This unique installation is a combination of church and concert organ with some theatre ranks and a Hammond electric organ built into it. The organ loft was actually built first, and the beautiful ranch house built around it. On a lower level there are several work areas where two organs are under construction, and there is considerable evidence of the owner's interest in organs and of his long career in radio and television broadcast engineering.

The artist for the concert portion of the meeting was member Brian Colton who presented a program of standards and a medley from the Broadway hit, *La Cage aux Folles*. Brian provides the organ accompaniment to the Travelogue Series at the Bushnell Auditorium in Hartford, and recently placed first in the Hobbyist Division of the Yamaha Electronic Festival held at the Sphinx Temple in Newington.

We are hopeful that the fire code difficulties at the Thomaston Opera House will be resolved, and we will be able to return soon. In the meantime, plans are underway for a fall and winter concert series on the 3/12 Austin theatre organ installed in the Shelton, Connecticut, high school.

**BARRY GOODKIN**



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

The fifth anniversary of the "rebirth" of the Riverside Theatre was celebrated with a concert by Walt Strony on April 20. It was a little over five years ago that a group of chapter volunteers cleaned and painted the theatre and did enough organ repair work to have the first concert. That concert also featured Walt Strony. The theatre, with its Wurlitzer, has since become an outstanding attraction in Milwaukee.

The success of the organ concert is not only a credit to our membership, but also to our dedicated organ crew, Gary Hanson, Clark Wilson and Fred Wolfgram, who spent many hours installing the Van Der Molen Post Horn and a 16' Strassman Barton Tibia in the Pedal for the Strony concert. These same people, along with Gary McWithey, put in an ad-



Allen Miller (right) receives congratulations and a commemorative plaque from CVTOS Vice-President Bob Bailey recognizing his many contributions to the chapter during its first twenty-five years. (Rita Goodkin photo)

ditional week following the concert to assist Walt in recording the first album at the Riverside. It is entitled "Down By The Riverside" and is to be released in early summer.

At the same time, the Avalon Wurlitzer has been receiving an equal amount of work. The wiring of the new console, which will allow the instrument to grow to over 20 ranks, was completed at the end of April. Scott Bilot, Phil Martin and Rick Johnson have spent the past year working on the organ. Ralph Conn now plays the organ before the show on Monday nights. The Avalon has also attracted some attention from *The Bay Viewer*, a local newspaper. An article in March centered on the history and neighborhood appeal of the theatre, while an April article featured our involvement with the organ and the concerts held there. A fall program will likely be scheduled for the Avalon.

**BILL CAMPBELL**

**DELAWARE VALLEY**

**Philadelphia  
215/566-1764**

On March 22 we traveled to the Rajah Theatre in Reading, Pennsylvania, to enjoy open console on the 4/32 Austin concert organ which was installed when the theatre was built in 1922 and is the only theatre installation left in the city. After our visit to the Rajah, we were invited to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Schmitt in Wyomissing to enjoy open console on the 3/8 Kimball. We had the interesting opportunity to hear and compare the difference in sound between the Austin in a theatre and the Kimball installed in a comfortable music room. For us, the trip to Reading was a first. In the coming months we plan to broaden our scope of operations even further. Future programs will include trips to the Forum Auditorium in Harrisburg, the Community Theatre in Hershey, the Marietta Theatre in Marietta and the 19th Street Theatre in Allentown.

In our ongoing restoration program we are continuing to work on the Möller organ in the Convention Hall in Philadelphia. This organ is designed to play both classical and popular music and is equipped with two consoles, a

four-manual theatre console and a four-manual classical console. The entire instrument can also be played by an automatic roll-player. One of our aims in restoring this organ is to bring this fine instrument to the attention of a much wider public than it now enjoys.

Also, our restoration crew is working on the society's own instrument, a 3/19 Möller originally installed in the Sedgewick Theatre in Philadelphia.

**EARL E. STRAUSSER**



**Babson College, Wellesley  
617/662-7055**

The irrepressible Father Jim Miller delighted our Babson concertgoers with his infectious mirth and joyful music. As he is an Eastern Orthodox priest, one would not expect the blues and jazz styles to emerge from those talented hands and feet, nor a display of flashy suspenders of piano keys nor a pair of false teeth which chattered while he used the castanets. Father Jim opened with a breezy "The Best Things in Life Are Free" followed by some great Fats Waller, Cole Porter and Romberg selections. His sing-along accompaniment, as well as his playing for the 1919 silent *The Garage*, with Buster Keaton and Fatty Arbuckle, were very well done and gave him particular pleasure. "Deed I Do" was his finale, but the audience's enthusiasm dictated otherwise. Father Jim said his encore would be "one for the Boss," and a majestic, stirring "How Great Thou Art" ensued.

The following day, member Lenny Winter was our artist. Opening with a "little tribute to St. Patrick," he then turned back the years with music from the Gay Nineties and Roaring Twenties. Len has a great ability to bridge one song into another, and his medleys are a joy to hear. His 50 years of playing in theatres, restaurants and roller rinks make it all seem so easy. Lenny's audience gave him a long, standing ovation, well deserved.

On April 27, we heard Lenny Winter once again along with member Bill Forbush, our artists on "0" notice as scheduled artist Tom Holloran was sick. Long experience and an amazing repertoire came through just as though they had been scheduled. Len played requests from the audience plus songs of his own choosing, while Bill presented radio themes and commercials which he challenged us to guess. With many of us his age or older, there was always someone who knew. Bill closed his performance with two familiar hymns and a few bars of the Paramount News March. Thanks, guys, you did yourselves proud!

It has been a few years since our spring concert artist, Rex Koury, has been with us, but, if anything, he is younger and even better! A medley of "This Is A Lovely Way to Spend An Evening," "You're The Top" and "It's De-Lovely" was an appropriate opener, and a medley from Romberg's *The Desert Song* contributed additional great music.





Lew Williams at the Trenton War Memorial Möller.  
(Jinny Vanore photo)

A first for us was to have a member play a cameo during a paid concert, but Rex graciously invited our 16-year-old John Cook to play, and "If I Ruled The World" and "The Repasz Band March" were his selections. John has been encouraged by Rex and will be in the Young Artist Competition again this year. Mr. Koury gave deserved praise to John before resuming his concert with a medley from *42nd Street*. Rex did a superb accompaniment to the 1928 Laurel and Hardy silent *You're Darn Tootin'*. He closed with "America the Beautiful," but long applause brought him back to our Wurlitzer with "When The Saints Go Marching In," and a second ovation gave us "May The Good Lord Bless and Keep You." Rex brought all present an evening of pleasure with his clean playing and fine programming — a real pro!

The next day our regular meeting at Babson had John Cook as our artist. With "I Want to Be Happy" as his first selection and "God



Eddie Buck at the Robert-Morton console in North Bergen, New Jersey.  
(Jinny Vanore photo)

Bless America" his closer, he had to play an encore which was the march he had played the previous evening. This young man, with so much promise, had nice arrangements which were well-executed with many registrational combinations in seldom-heard songs — a refreshing change.

STANLEY C. GARNISS



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

**New Jersey  
609/888-0909  
or 201/445-1128**

The fourth of the Trenton Concert Series took place on March 16 at the Trenton War Memorial and featured Jim Riggs. Jim first came to our attention when we heard him per-



Jim Riggs autographs a record for little James Albert Cutillo.  
(Jinny Vanore photo)

form during the ATOS Convention in Chicago last summer. His Sunday afternoon concert was bright, with an upbeat tempo which is always enjoyable, as we have noted that some artists include music geared to a slower, laid-back Sunday afternoon instead of a livelier Saturday-night feeling. All of Jim's music was dated before 1930, which was interesting, but we wished that he had included more tunes that we could recognize. The usual picnic on the stage followed. Open console on the big Möller was entertaining, and many of our organist-members are showing vast improvement with this "hands on" experience.

The April 13 meeting took place in the chapel of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in North Bergen. A business meeting, conducted by Chairman Joe Dorsey, was followed by open console on the 3/12 Robert-Morton. An enjoyable mini-concert was given by the well-known local organist, Eddie Buck. While the Robert-Morton still needs further work, it is being lovingly cared for by Pete Polito and his faithful crew. Coffee, snacks and socializing made it a fun day.

Lew Williams was the artist for the final concert of the current Trenton War Memorial Series on May 4. Early in the concert, the talent and skill of this young organist was very much in evidence as Lew played a wide variety of favorite, not usually heard, numbers. The Big Band sounds made our feet want to dance, and we enjoyed Wagner's wild "Ride of The Valkyries." During intermission, Chairman Joe Dorsey introduced crew chief Bill Smith, Rowe Beal, and Vinc De Blois and complimented the crew for their dedication and care of the Möller. The usual picnic on the stage became a super party when Ashley Miller arrived. He was late because he had, earlier that afternoon, dedicated a new piano at the Ethical Cultural Society in New York City. A wonderful, impromptu jam session took place with Ashley at the Steinway Grand and Lew playing the Möller. Open console followed for those brave enough to follow such professional artists. Needless to say, all enjoyed, and the party broke up much later than usual.

JINNY VANORE



Lew Williams at the Moller and Ashley Miller at the Steinway at the Trenton War Memorial.  
(Jinny Vanore photo)





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

**715/262-5086 or 612/771-1771**

On March 26, a chilly, blustery day, Dr. Edward Berryman, organist at the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis, played for us on the 4/85 Möller in this beautiful church with its needlework artistry and objets d'art. Dr. Berryman played some orchestral transcriptions and a few show tunes. Open console followed and Tom Neagle, also a church organist, needed no coaxing to try it.

On April 26 Chapter Event Chairman Burt Frank arranged for Bill Eden, popular Twin Cities organist/pianist to play for us in the Garden Level of Town Square Park in downtown St. Paul. An article in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press and Dispatch*, November 30, 1985, refers to the organ as "this electronic re-creation of the Paramount organ, one of the largest — and generally regarded as one of the greatest — of the instruments which were used to accompany silent films in the elaborate movie houses of the early part of this cen-

ture." It was discovered by a friend of Bill in Woodstock, Illinois. Bill flew down, took one long look at it and bought it right then and there. He obtained a long-term lease from the City of St. Paul, and the organ was installed in one of the parapets where Bill has been playing it two or three times a week, preparing his program at home on the piano. It was very pleasant sitting in the glass-enclosed "Garden," with its theatre-in-the-round, listening to Bill play tunes from Broadway shows.

The Organaires met at the home of Bill and Jean Ludquist on April 17. Bill has musical instruments galore, a Conn 651, a theatre pipe organ which he built out of a mixture of parts (Wurlitzer, he thinks) and a piano. Sometimes all three instruments are played simultaneously! Bill is currently building a new console for the theatre pipe organ.

Wurlwind Tours, Inc. (Mike Erie and Verna Mae Wilson) arranged a bus tour to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to hear Jim Riggs at the Paramount Theatre. Thirty members boarded the bus at 8 a.m. on May 3 and proceeded directly to the Paramount Theatre where they were cordially greeted by Leonard Santon, President of CRATOS, and John Hockaday, ticket sales chairman for the concert. John then

gave us a tour of this gorgeous theatre. Jim Riggs, as usual, played in his own inimitable fashion to an almost-full house. After the concert, we were invited to Drake's Salad Bar for snacks and ice cream. And that's where our bus driver failed to show up at the appointed time for our return to the motel! However, he did appear, and we finally reached our motel for a good night's rest. The next morning our genial hosts guided us to Kirkwood College to see and hear a seldom-played Style E Wurlitzer. After lunch at the York Steak House, we went back to the Paramount for open console. A few of us were not bashful and had to try this marvelous organ. Again, our hosts were even more hospitable, serving refreshments before we departed for home. We arrived in St. Paul about 8 p.m. after a very interesting weekend with friendly people all around.

On May 6 several of us met at the home of member Oscar Mogen who was host to the Minnetonka Sharps of AOIA whose members are generally interested in electronic organs. Mike Erie had been invited to play Oscar's 2/6 Robert-Morton. There were guests from the Northwest Organ Club, Brooklyn Center Club and the Robinaires. I did not realize that there were that many organ clubs in this area. A very enjoyable evening, indeed!

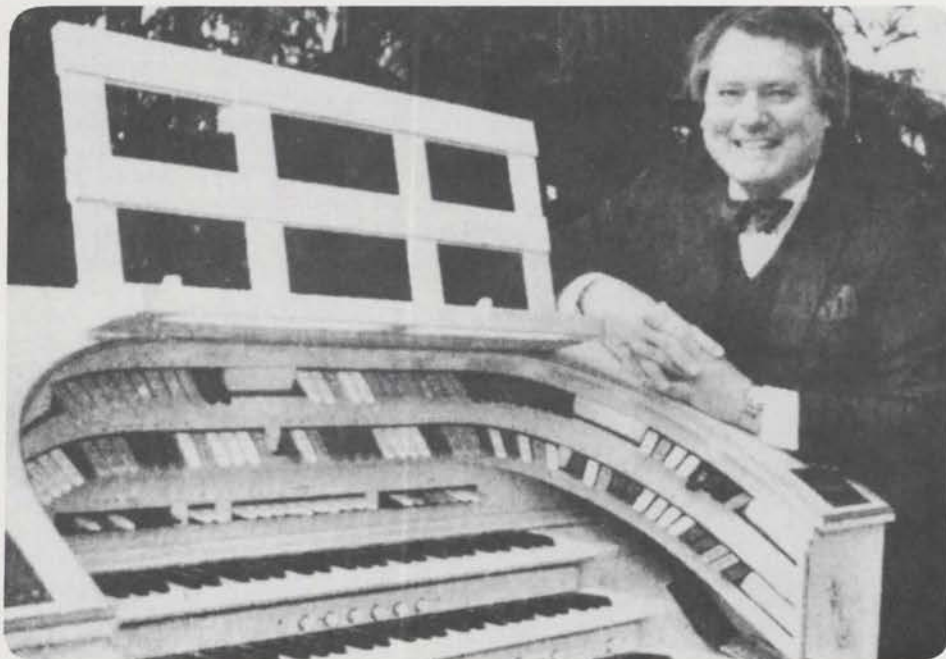
VERNA MAE WILSON



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&  
SOUTH  
OF ENGLAND**

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The first event of our 1986 season was the welcome appearance of our talented young member, Mike Wooldridge, as our January Chapter Club Night Guest at Edith and Les Rawle's magnificent 3/19 Wurlitzer. Mike's sparkling program emphasized his special ability to orchestrate his playing in the original definition of the theatre organ. This he did only shortly after having given the 5/17 "Duchess" Compton in the Odeon Leicester Square its most competent public airing in several years, tastefully using all five keyboards together with the Compton patent Melotone electrostatic unit, in his first appearance at this distinctive instrument, and with less than half an hour of practice.



Bill Eden stands with his pride and joy, a re-creation of the famed Paramount Theatre organ, which he plays at Town Square Park in St. Paul, Minnesota.

**ashley miller**  
a.a.g.o.

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Jo Williams plays the 2/8 Wurlitzer at the LATOS Spring Social at Joann Weisbart's home. (Zimfoto)



Jim Melander plays the 2/8 Wurlitzer in Joann Weisbart's home at LATOS Spring Social. (Zimfoto)

February saw us back at our favorite Granada Harrow with its bright, snappy, late-model 3/8 Wurlitzer for a Youth and Experience presentation symbolizing our aim to suit all musical tastes. This brought two most agreeable artistic styles to the console. The velvet touch of young Stephen Vincent was complemented by the "Big Theatre" sound of veteran Welsh star of the halcyon years of the supercinema, Walford James. Interlude entertainment was provided in the foyer by Chris Theobald and Suzanne Hancock, two of our brightest young organists, playing a Yamaha.

Stan Whittington, well-known Midland veteran and ATOS favorite on both sides of the Atlantic, brought his popular repertoire to Northolt for our February Chapter Club Night. His charming wife, Gladys, also joined the usual, happy, full-house audience.

Only two weeks later we were back at Northolt for our Annual General Meeting at which we were able to report excellent progress on all fronts and to enjoy a wide exchange of members' views. The most welcome news was that our chapter had at last achieved "Charitable Status" with its substantial benefits in tax concessions in the pursuance of our basic objectives. This most constructive meeting was concluded by a presentation to Chairman Len Rawle of a Wurlitzer-like carriage clock in appreciation of his sterling work on behalf of our chapter through an intensely busy and rewarding two years.

Meanwhile, our central objective of organ restoration and presentation continues to proceed apace on a wide front, notably in the

re-installation of the 4/14 "Torch" Christie in the Memorial Hall in the resort town of Barry on the Welsh coast. Under the able leadership of Les Rawle, several members of our Technical Team are spending several days each week "on the spot" thanks to the kindness of member Desmond Jenkins making available local accommodations.

All-in-all, therefore, we are happy to report a happy start to what promises to be one of our happiest years — to be highlighted with an exciting return to the famous Top Rank Club at Kilburn in North London in May for a grand re-opening of the 4/16 "Torch" Wurlitzer with Len Rawle at the console and to celebrate our tenth birthday in the best style that we could hope for.

DR. NORMAN BARFIELD



Dan Bellomy and LATOS President Ralph Beaudry clowning during chowtime at the Spring Social. (Zimfoto)



LOS ANGELES  
THEATRE ORGAN  
SOCIETY

California

818/792-7084

Those who had been waiting to hear Jim Melander had their chance at the Spring Social at Joann Weisbart's home in Van Nuys on April 27. The short and inspiring concert was followed by refreshments. Several members had a chance to play the 2/8 Wurlitzer to complete a wonderful day. Two long-distance visitors were welcomed, Bill Exner from Seattle and Dan Bellomy from Portland. Special thanks to Harvey Heck for having the organ in top-notch shape for our Social!

MARIA OLIVER

### MID-FLORIDA

We discovered a 3/11 Robert-Morton in storage in Austin, Texas, and on March 19 three stalwart members, George Mattison, Chuck Thomas and John Thoren, flew up there at their own expense and loaded the entire instrument on a huge semi-truck. On March 21 the entire load was put backstage of the Polk Theatre in Lakeland, Florida, and over the next few weeks was carried, pipe by pipe, up to the second story level where, we hope, the entire organ will be sounding forth from two chambers by Christmas.

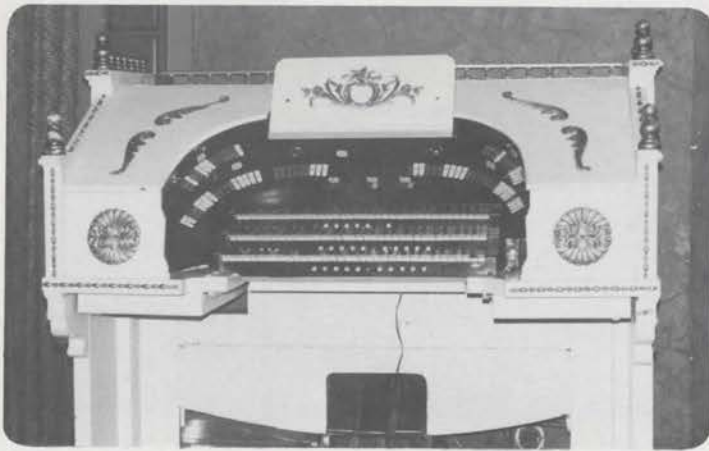
This instrument started life in the late 1920s in Loew's Theatre in Canton, Ohio,

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Console of the Mid-Florida chapter's Robert-Morton being installed in the Polk Theatre in Lakeland, Florida.



George Krejci played the Barton theatre pipe organ at the Royal Oak Theatre for Motor City's Fourth Sunday concert in March. (Fred Page photo)

and later was installed in a home before its most recent appearance on the scene in Scampi's Pizza in Austin, Texas. Our goal is to restore this beautiful organ in a likewise beautiful example of a 1920 movie palace, and soon we can bask in the memories of the "good old days."

WALTER KIMBLE



**MOTOR CITY  
Detroit  
313/537-1133**

Ron Rhode performed at the 3/16 Barton at the Royal Oak Theatre on April 12 where he received a warm reception from the audience. Ron's program was a pleasing mixture of smoothly executed renditions of old standards and upbeat selections. Also on the program were the Harmonica Varieties, a five-piece harmonica band, in their second appearance for our chapter.

A membership social at the Redford on April 26 featured magicians Don Jones and Jeff Hobson. Jennifer Candea played pre-show music at the Barton, and a salad buffet followed in the lobby.

The playing of "The Star-Spangled Banner" was the subject of an organ workshop chaired by Gil Francis and Bob Mills at the Redford on April 6. Several versions, in at least three keys, were encountered with Bb being the most popular. Tony O'Brien offered

tips on playing the National Anthem which opens each of our biweekly classic film programs at the Redford. We are hoping to have organ workshops with visiting artists in the near future.

George Krejci was our Fourth Sunday artist at the Royal Oak on March 23. We thank George for a superb program and for volunteering his time to come all the way from his home in Avon Lake, Ohio.

One of our newer, but very enthusiastic, members, Sharron Patterson, presented an interesting and varied program as our Fourth

Sunday artist at the Royal Oak on April 27.

Coming events: Tony O'Brien at the Redford on October 11; a Young Artists' Concert featuring Colleen Feldpauch, Peter Hansen, Melissa Ambrose and Steve Schlesing at the Royal Oak on November 8, and Lyn Larsen and the Dunav International Dance Ensemble at the Redford on December 6.

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

DON LOCKWOOD



Ron Rhode and two members of the Harmonica Varieties. In front, Ron Rhode with director Chuck Moll and bass player Bob Quenneville. Back row, Cornell Candea and Maurice Sandidge, Motor City Chapter crew at the Royal Oak.

(Bill Vogel photo)

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Gary Phillips performed for New York Chapter at the 4/26 Wurlitzer at Long Island University. (Walter Brunke photo)



Young Organist Competition finalist John Cook at the LIU Wurlitzer where he performed a cameo for New York Chapter. (Walter Brunke photo)

**NEW YORK  
THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY  
New York  
914/343-1756 or 201/694-0779**

Beautiful weather, a magnificently restored movie palace and the wonderful sounds of a pedigreed Mighty Wurlitzer made Palm Sunday afternoon in Manhattan particularly en-

joyable for the more than 100 members and guests who attended the Jeff Barker concert on March 23 at the Beacon Theatre on Broadway.

Originally designed to be one of Sam "Roxy" Rothafel's circuit theatres, the Beacon has been completely and painstakingly restored. The giant tasseled-canopy ceiling with its freshly painted fabric-like geometric

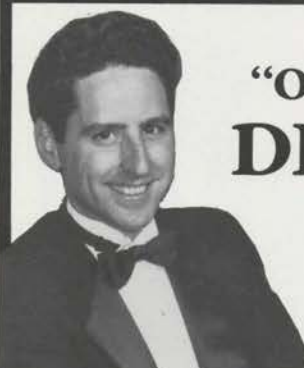
patterns and multi-hued lighting create the effect of being inside some huge Mesopotamian battle encampment, and the fact that the Beacon has its original 4/19 Wurlitzer intact, restored and playing lured many members across the far off deserts to listen to the sounds that sultan Jeff Barker so effortlessly conjured from the 260 Special. Jeff's program included such favorites as "Stardust" and his inimitable arrangement of "The Twelfth Street Rag." A hallmark of Jeff's playing is his English style, and the New York crowd quickly warmed to the rhythmic and bright manner in which he played.

Open console rounded off the afternoon, and all too soon members disbanded and returned to their camels, carpets and cars for the trip back to the "real" world. Thanks to members Mel Robinson and Joe Vanore, the Beacon Wurlitzer sounds better than ever. Unfortunately, this magnificent movie palace is being threatened, in spite of its landmark status, with being converted into a huge disco. A massive effort is presently underway to try to save the theatre which is operating successfully as a concert hall.

On April 27 we gathered at Long Island University (formerly the Brooklyn Paramount Theatre) for a concert by Gary Phillips. Thanks to some excellent publicity in *The New York Times*, an audience of several hundred filled the bleacher seating in LIU's gymnasium to hear the 4/26 Wurlitzer, one of the mightiest of them all. Having worked with Bob Walker for several years to maintain the LIU organ, Gary was able to demonstrate an intimate familiarity with the instrument



New York Chairman Tom Stehle presents plaque and Crawford arrangements to cameo guest John Cook during concert featuring Gary Phillips (left) at LIU. (Walter Brunke photo)



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*"I am deeply impressed with your work and accomplishments, particularly in the fascinating and specialized field of silent film accompaniment in which you are without a doubt the leading exponent of the day, but also in the field of classical performance as well, your appearance with the Chicago Symphony, etc. It is certainly developing a great deal more respect in the minds of many people for the theatre organ, in the fact that a man of your calibre and accomplishments in the classic field is also a leader in the theatre organ world. Bravo!"*

Howard Alan Jewell

*"I am enthralled by your work and not only by your ability. Your technical skill simply serves to make possible the art that I admire. It is that tangible personal relationship that you have both with the music and the instrument that raises your work to the level of art. Your work is sincere and accessible, and it means so much to those who partake of it."*

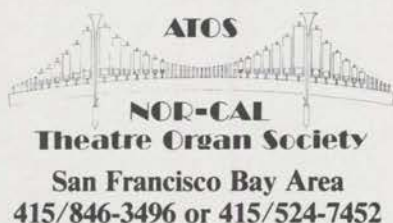
Bob Mitchell



which was evident in the variety of his registrations. His program of standards, including "Here's That Rainy Day" and "Swanee," showed off the vast resources of the organ. A highlight of the afternoon was the cameo appearance of one of the 1985 ATOS Young Organist Competition finalists, John Cook, who had come to share his talent with the New York audience, and judging from the sustained and enthusiastic applause, he was a hit. His selections included a dramatic arrangement of "If I Ruled The World" and "God Bless America" with some "Yankee Doodle Dandy" mixed in. The afternoon ended with an open console session.

Meanwhile, Bob Seeley and crew have the chapter's 2/10 Wurlitzer at the Middletown Paramount playing, and, although there are many finishing touches still to be done, the Paramount audiences are enjoying the sound of a Mighty Wurlitzer in the theatre for the first time in several decades, and the chapter will be holding its July open console meeting there.

DAVE KOPP and TOM STEHLE



Our March meeting was held in Martinez at the Bella Roma Pizza Parlor with long-time Nor-Cal member Kevin King playing the 3/15 Wurlitzer which is kept in tip-top condition by Bill Petty. The Mighty Wurlitzer is like a thoroughbred racing horse — you can't win without a great jockey (organist) and a great trainer (technician). A visit to Bella Roma on any Friday or Saturday will prove that this pizza parlor has a winning Wurlitzer!

When Kevin started his opening number, Cole Porter's "From This Moment On," a busboy, who was busy cleaning the table beside the console, stopped and took the microphone and started to sing! We were quite surprised, and I thought Kevin was caught off-guard, too, but after the song was over, Kevin let us in on his surprise by introducing the "busboy" as Devon Allen, one of his close friends and fellow theatre major at Hayward State. Kevin then serenaded us with a program that included a jazzy rendition of "42nd



Nor-Cal member Alice Breckenridge during open console session at Angelino's. (Dave Schutt photo)



Dean Cook led open console session at Nor-Cal April meeting. (Dave Schutt photo)

Street" and "The Little Red Monkey" (with a composer's note to "Play grotesquely.") Devon returned and sang "I Only Have Eyes for You" and a very funny "The Big Bad Wolf," a story told in song with special effects from the Mighty Wurlitzer. Kevin, a serious student of the music of Gershwin, concluded the first half of his program with "Lady, Be Good" and "S Wonderful,"

which set everyone in a good mood. After intermission, Kevin opened with a swing-style "Blue Moon" followed by a number of excellent arrangements. He closed his program by accompanying Devon for two very upbeat pieces, "Get Happy" and "Great Day." And, thanks to Kevin and Devon, everyone was happy, and it did turn out to be a great day! Kevin is truly a gifted organist; he registered all of his many colorful and interesting changes by hand as this console has no combination action! Be sure to hear Kevin the next



Gary Miller at the 3/15 Wurlitzer at Angelino's in San Jose. Gary conducted the raffle and was open console player. (Dave Schutt photo)



Dan Lovett "gives it a Wurl" during Nor-Cal open console session at Angelino's. (Dave Schutt photo)

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Dave Hooper at the 3/15 Wurlitzer in Angelino's in San Jose where he played a concert for Nor-Cal.  
(Dave Schutt photo)

time you are in Northern California.

Nor-Cal members Dr. Ed Mullins, Robert Vaughn and Grant Wheeler toured Australia and New Zealand with the ATOS "Pipes Down Under" group. Ed's complete report will appear in THEATRE ORGAN.

Our chapter Wurlitzer installation is progressing. The swell shades are in; complete re-leathering has been started; the console is being rebuilt, and the chests are being refinished.

On April 20 former director Dave Hooper performed at Angelino's Restaurant (former Thundermug) in San Jose where he plays the 3/15 Wurlitzer on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights. He opened his concert with a selection from *Fiddler on The Roof* and showed off the String ranks with Leroy Anderson's "The Waltzing Cat." Another cat piece, "Memory," from *Cats* had the audience purring for more. A Ragtime medley was a crowd-pleaser. After intermission, he cued a short version of Buster Keaton's *The General* and then concluded his program with Anderson's "Belle of The Ball." His encore was the theme from the Mike Douglas TV program. Several members "gave it a Wurl!" at open console afterwards. Organ technician Dave Moreno had the 3/15 Wurlitzer in top condition. It was an enjoyable afternoon, and we look forward to hearing Dave play again.

MICHAEL VERN KNOWLES and  
DR. ED MULLINS



We tried something new to end 1985. We demonstrated the versatility of the Emery Wurlitzer by accompanying an 80-voice chorus performing Handel's *Messiah*. Choirs from the Madeira, Pleasant Ridge and Silverwood Presbyterian and the St. Paul Methodist churches provided the voices, and a harpsichord, played by Nina Key, provided accompaniment for some of the recitatives which helped set the work in its historic period. Ric Jaeggi, organist and musical director of the St. Paul church, played the Wurlitzer and used most of the new softer ranks we've added since we retrieved the organ from the Cincinnati Albee Theatre. Especially effective was the Krummet featured in the accompaniment of the alto solo, "O Thou That Tellest," sung by Chris Denmark. Other soloists were Susan Wayo, Lionel Williams and Chris Hall. Dr. Simon Anderson of the College Conservatory of Music of the University of Cincinnati, conducted the ensemble and produced a very spritely rendition of the Handel opus. The organ chambers at Emery are stretched across the rear of the stage which makes our Wurlitzer well-suited to support a large chorus seated in front of the swell shades, and the acoustics of the theatre also helped make a successful performance. The almost-sold-out house joined the chorus in singing carols after the concert.

On December 28 we had our annual Holiday dinner meeting on stage at Emery. Prior to the dinner several members entertained at the Wurlitzer. Add Lovejoy played the piano quietly during dinner. After the meal and a short business meeting, Dave Weingartner and Rodney Barbour, from the Springdale Music Palace, entertained at the organ, and Add Lovejoy accompanied a silent movie.

On March 8 we met at the Springdale Music Palace before the public was admitted. Karl Cole, Dave Weingartner and Rodney Bar-

bour, organists at this pizzeria, were our hosts. These three moved from the Wurlitzer organ to the Wurlitzer grand piano like musical chairs, often playing four hands at the piano. They did numbers from the recordings available at the Music Palace. Prior to these featured artists, open console was in order.

Gaylord Carter visited Cincinnati on April 6 for what was billed as his farewell appearance in the greater Cincinnati area. Gaylord played our dedicatory concert in 1978, and had made several visits since then. During the eight years that we were rebuilding the Albee (since razed) to help us raise funds for the restoration. At this concert, Gaylord accompanied portions of Harold Lloyd's *Hot Water* and selections from his newly released VCR tape of *Wings* for which he composed the score. He then accompanied Harold Lloyd's *Girl Shy*, a 70-minute stint which proved that he is still tops at playing a silent movie with chase sequences. He ended his program with a nostalgic rendition of "The Perfect Song." We'll miss this showman of the organ here in the Queen City. In addition to the piano, Gaylord had eight more ranks to play than he had at the first concert, and he made use of most of them.

The organ crew is adding the twenty-ninth rank to our instrument, a Flute Celeste in the Main chamber. The pipes are a gift from new member Paul Welch and were originally installed in the Cathedral of St. Peter-in-Chains here in Cincinnati. This rank is similar in scale, but operating at lower pressure, which makes an ideal combination, when tuned, to create a gentle, undulating tone. For the first time, we are building a chest from scratch and using Kimber-Allen Vertical Pull Magnets instead of Wurlitzer action. This rank, along with the Main Flute, will be rigged so that both can be played without tremors. Crew chief Tote Pratt has lain awake nights figuring out ways to fit the rank into the chamber and to find room on the console for the tabs so that the stoprails are kept true to Wurlitzer placement.

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Lyn Larsen entertained a large group of enthusiasts at the Portland Organ Grinder 4/44 Wurlitzer. (Claude Neuffer photo)



Organ Grinder staff organists (l to r) Russ Chilson, Paul Quarino, Dan Bellomy and Don Feely served as busboys and bartenders at the Lyn Larsen dinner and concert. (Claude Neuffer photo)

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BILL AHLERT

## OREGON Portland

503/775-9048 or 503/771-8098

On April 21 we had an occasion to hear a distinguished artist on a noted instrument. The performer was Lyn Larsen, and the organ was the 4/44 Wurlitzer in the Organ Grinder Restaurant. Through the generous efforts of Organ Grinder owner Dennis Hedberg, members had the rare opportunity to hear this instrument in a concert atmosphere. The res-

taurant was closed for the evening, and admission was by ticket only. After being treated to a pizza and salad bar buffet, concertgoers settled into seats for an evening of excellent music. Lyn presented a varied program, most outstanding being two songs by Edvard Grieg and two Duke Ellington numbers. His encore, dedicated to the late Howard Vollum, was "When Day Is Done." An added attraction was the four Organ Grinder staff organists who acted as bus-boys and bartenders for the evening, much to the delight of members. Following Lyn's performance, a champagne reception was held where we were able to chat with the artist, socialize with old friends and look forward to the possibility of another such event in the future.

DON FEELY



## POTOMAC VALLEY Washington, D.C.

We sponsored a bus trip to the Delaware Valley on April 19. It was a full day with the first stop at the University of Pennsylvania to visit with members of the Curtis Organ Restoration Society who have the awesome responsibility of maintaining the tenth largest pipe organ in the world, the Curtis Sesquicentennial Exhibition Organ, which is installed in the university's Irvine Auditorium (see July/August 1985 THEATRE ORGAN). Thanks to Bernie McCorrey, Kevin Chun and others

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Potomac Valley members visit with Curtis Organ Restoration Society members inside the Austin Universal Windchest.



Host Bernie McGorrey describes the Austin console to Potomac Valley members. The Curtis organ is at the University of Pennsylvania's Irvine Auditorium.

who were on hand to give us a walking tour of the organ and demonstrate this magnificent instrument, we quickly developed an appreciation of the organ's size and capability. Unfortunately, we had to share part of the auditorium with a rock group which was setting up its equipment for a show that night, and Bernie's demonstration had to be cut short. In spite of this, we had a most enjoyable time at the Irvine Auditorium and heartily endorse the Restoration Society's goals and activities. While the restoration work being done by our chapter is on a much smaller scale, we share at least on thing in common with the Curtis group, that of having to replace Perflex in our Kimball at the University of Maryland.

We next stopped for a few hours in Philadelphia's downtown area to take in the sights and sounds at the John Wanamaker store, including the afternoon concert on the Wanamaker organ. The highlight of the trip was Dickinson Theatre Organ Society's concert by Tom Hazleton in Wilmington that evening. Mr. Hazleton's performance was truly outstanding and capped a perfectly enjoyable day. This was our first bus trip in several years, and thanks to the hospitality of our Delaware Valley friends and to splendid weather, it was a memorable event.

DONALD D. FAEHN

### PUGET SOUND

Seattle

206/852-2011 or 206/631-1669

Virginia and Ed Donaldson and Marion and Jim Park planned a weekend of organ ac-

tivities at Pullman, Washington, in early April for our members. Ed and Jim are physics professors at Washington State University who also maintain and play the 2/7 Robert-Morton in the physics lecture hall at the college. For this occasion, the Phi chapter of PEO, of which their wives are members, planned a fund-raising event to aid the scholarship fund and provide entertainment for a local audience as well as chapter guests. The organ, originally purchased in 1928 for the Cordova Theatre, was moved to the Physics Department in the '70s. It is identical to the organ purchased for the Kenworthy Theatre, which is now housed in an auditorium at the University of Idaho at Moscow. Ed Donaldson accompanied a rousing sing-along, and during intermission sacks of popcorn were provided to all for the movie, Douglas Fairbanks' *Mark of Zorro*, accompanied by Jim. A quartet of local high school vocalists was also included on the program, which drew a sell-out crowd. Open console time was made available on this organ as well as on the large Schantz concert organ in Bryan Hall.

Work continues on the installation of an organ in the grand new Washington Center for The Performing Arts (formerly the Liberty Theatre and Parking Garage) in Olympia. The beautiful theatre, which seats 1000, is tiered in such a manner that every seat is within 75 feet of the stage. Olympia organist Andy Crow, formerly co-owner of the theatre, removed the organ during the remodeling process and is now involved with returning it to the chambers in the proscenium which are left from the original building. The organ has been enlarged from 10 to 22 ranks and more

additions are expected in the future. Completion is expected by Easter 1987, and anticipated uses include a regular silent-film series, community celebrations, beauty pageants and fund-raising events.

DIANE J. WHIPPLE



Davenport

309/793-1451 or 319/359-5620

Our spring Pipe Organ Spectacular, with more than 1100 in attendance, was an overwhelming success thanks to one very talented Tom Wibbels. The April 20 show was presented on the 3/12 Wicks theatre pipe organ which was built specifically for the Capitol Theatre in Davenport, Iowa. By tailoring his program to please everyone, Tom captured his audience with dazzling virtuosity, unique blends in registration and harmony and a charming, humorous personality. Utilizing the full resources of our Wicks, Tom played everything from "Five-Foot-Two" to "Memory" from *Cats*. He is on of the few artists who can become part of the instrument he is playing regardless of the song, and we

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Lance Johnson with Colleen Moore at the 3/15 Wurlitzer at the Fargo Theatre.



Hildegard Krause and Colleen Moore at a reception at the Fargo Theatre.

look forward to having him back in the near future.

Plans are underway for the October 5 fall Pipe Organ Spectacular featuring Bob Ralston of the Lawrence Welk Show. Ralston is also a favorite at the Capitol, and we are anticipating a sell-out crowd.

ARTHUR L. FELTS

**RED RIVER ATOS**  
218/287-2671  
or 701/232-6325



April 18 and 19 marked two very special nights at the Fargo Theatre as we presented, in person, Colleen Moore. Miss Moore was America's number one box-office attraction in 1926 and 1927, and was known for her comedic talents and for setting fashion trends with her "Flapper" styles. The program began with film clips and slides of her fabulous career, with music by Lance Johnson and narration by Boyd Christenson who then introduced and interviewed Miss Moore. She delighted the audience with stories of the fun she had in the Hollywood of the 1920s. *Orchids and Ermine*, a comedy hit of 1927 starring Miss Moore, followed with a marvelous score

by our own Hildegard Kraus. Hildegard enjoyed providing accompaniment for Miss Moore's films in the '20s as well as the opportunity to do it again, so it was a kind of "reunion" for both of them. To add to the excitement, a camera crew from ABC's *Entertainment Tonight* was on the scene, and a doorman and waiters in formal attire at the champagne receptions made the atmosphere festive. That weekend there were free tours of the theatre, and many of our new booklets on the history of the theatre were sold.

Again this summer we look forward to our

involvement in the family film series at Moorhead State University when some of our members will be playing the prologues and movie accompaniment on the 2/6 chapter organ.

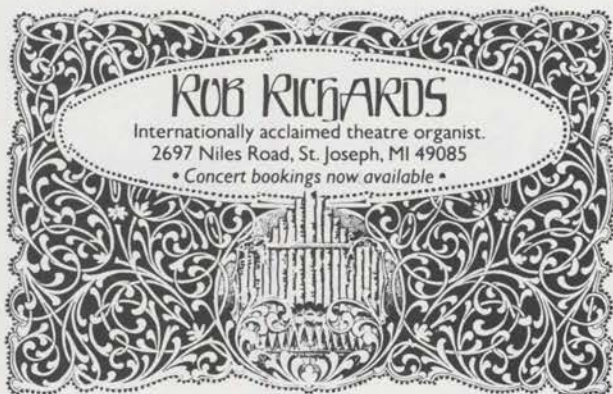
SONIA CARLSON

**The River City  
Theatre Organ Society  
Omaha, Nebraska**

402/292-7799 or 402/572-1040

We held our March meeting in Omaha's Orpheum Theatre, an authentically restored Rapp & Rapp movie palace which opened in 1927. It is now a heavily booked performing arts center owned by the City of Omaha. Thirteen members tried their hands at the 3/13 Wurlitzer which is an original installation in mint condition. We are indebted to Mr. Terry Forsberg, city official in charge of the Orpheum, for access to the theatre.

The Bellevue Little Theatre (formerly the Roxy) in Bellevue, Nebraska, was the setting for our April 5 meeting. The theatre has a 2/5 Wurlitzer installed and expertly maintained by George Rice. After a short business meeting conducted by President Ann Gabelman, George presented an interesting history of the Bellevue Theatre and of the organ which originally came from a York, Nebraska, theatre. George played one selection and then turned the organ over to open console. Jack Moel-



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Organist Jack Moelmann at "Those Were The Days."

(Tom Jeffery photo)



George Rice demonstrates the 2/5 Wurlitzer in the Bellevue Little Theatre.

(Tom Jeffery photo)



Nostalgia was abundant at "Those Were The Days." Flappers were (front row l to r) Kim and Laura Markworth. (Back row) three actresses currently appearing at the Norton Repertory Theatre.

(Tom Jeffery photo)

mann brought the meeting to a close with a short silent film.

On April 13 we presented an organ concert, starring Jack Moelmann, in Omaha's Orpheum Theatre as a benefit for the Omaha History Museum, Western Heritage Museum. Entitled "Those Were The Days," the program was a nostalgic excursion back in time to the days of flappers, movie palaces and silent films. Jack was back at the 3/13 Wurlitzer by popular demand, having presented the first edition of the show last August. Jack's rapport with the audience and his fine showman-

ship made this a memorable occasion for the more than 1800 in attendance. The benefit was also a success financially, and the museum netted over \$8000. It was a special afternoon for the organist, too, as his mother had flown in from Chicago for the concert. Colonel Moelmann, ATOS National President and a career Air Force officer, is scheduled to be transferred to the St. Louis area at the end of September. We will miss Jack very much, but we expect him back for another public concert in November.

TOM JEFFERY

## ROCKY MOUNTAIN Denver, Colorado 303/773-3124 or 303/233-4716

Over 100 members and guests celebrated the arrival of spring on a gorgeous March Sunday with a sumptuous potluck dinner followed by a delightful concert by President Patti Simon. The event was held at Fred Riser's home where a large workshop building has been converted to a music hall capable of seating over 100 people. The organ is a 3/16 (and growing) mostly Wurlitzer that Fred has collected over the years and which is now controlled by two consoles, one of which was formerly installed in the Denver Theatre.

Patti's program was a preview of the music she would use in her concert tour of Florida. Especially enjoyed were "Spring Is Here," a Duke Ellington medley, a medley from *Gigi* and several Ragtime selections. Several members took advantage of the open console time, and Patti returned for some duets with Ragtime pianist Dick Kroeckel.

For our April gathering the chapter met for a short business meeting and mini-concert at the historic Paramount Theatre in downtown Denver. Paramount organist Bob Castle delighted us with his stylings in a program which included several George Wright and Jesse Crawford favorites as well as Dave Brubeck's "Take Five" and selections from *West Side Story*. The Paramount Wurlitzer is a 4/21 twin-console Publix model which has been maintained for many years by our members in

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Patti Simon introducing a number at Fred Riser's "Music Hall" in Denver.

(Don Zeller photo)

Denver's last remaining downtown movie palace.

Both of these organs will be heard during the Rocky Mountain Regional to be held in Denver, October 10-13. One of the highlights of the convention will be a twin-console concert at the Paramount featuring the popular duo, Lyn Larsen and Ron Rhode. Jim Riggs will open the convention with a concert also at the Paramount. On Saturday we will feature a trip to the Colorado Springs area and a concert at Mt. St. Francis Convent (the Mundelein of the West) featuring Paul Quarino on the newly installed 3/20 mostly Wurlitzer. Dr. Joseph Galema will be featured in a concert at the U.S. Air Force Academy Cadet Chapel that afternoon. Back in Denver on Saturday evening, Keith Chapman, of Wanamaker Grand Court fame, will present a concert at Denver's historic Trinity United Methodist Church on the 82-rank Roosevelt organ installed there in 1888. Other concerts will include Jonas Nordwall at the Organ Grinder and Patti Simon at the C.S.U. Lory Student Center Wurlitzer in Fort Collins. The Monday Afterglow will feature an organ crawl of some of the notable home installations in the Denver area.

Registration is open to all, and details and a registration form may be obtained by writing to Robert M. Castle, Registrar, P.O. Box 39834, Denver, CO 80239. We hope to see YOU at the ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL in Denver, October 10-13.

DONALD D. ZELLER

### ST. LOUIS Missouri 618/654-7855

Summer is in full swing and so is the work on the 3/15 Wurlitzer that we are installing in the gorgeous Granada Theatre, the last of the vaudeville movie palaces in St. Louis. We are trying to locate a Barton four-poster lift and a Wurlitzer Post Horn and Xylophone for the organ. We are still hoping to have a formal dedication in November, but we will have to wait until next year to enlarge the organ and install the solid-state relay. If anyone knows where we can get the lift and other items, please call or write. We are looking forward to helping restore the Granada and to being able to perform nightly on the organ. We plan this installation to be one of the few theatre organs in daily use. It will also be fantastic to have a nice place to entertain other ATOS chapters.

The lobby organ which we have installed in the Fox Theatre is still silent, but we are trying to schedule a fall dedication with the Fox management. The Fox is looking for more ways to use the 4/36 Crawford Special Wurlitzer in the auditorium. After the Summer Classic Movies Series, the organ is usually silent for a long period of time. We have had so many requests for the Fox Summer Movie Series schedule, when our own vice-president, Jack Jenkins, performs before the movies, that we are listing the August dates here: August 4 — *Dangerous When Wet*, starring Es-

ther Williams and Fernando Lamas (Swim suit contest on stage — wear one and get to appear); August 11 — *High Noon* with Gary Cooper; August 18 — *Bright Eyes* with Shirley Temple (Shirley Temple look-alike contest on stage); August 25 — *Gang's All Here* with Busby Berkeley and Carmen Miranda (Most outrageous headdress contest).

We want to welcome ATOS President Jack Moelmann as a member of our chapter when he moves to our area soon — what an asset he will be!

DENNIS AMMANN

### SAN DIEGO California 619/746-3581

Spring (and our Program Chairman) brought two very capable performers to the console of our 3/22 Wurlitzer. On April 12, Ty Woodward presented a well-balanced program that included something for everyone to appreciate. Among the variety of numbers played was a precisely done "Maple Leaf Rag" which would have earned the approval of Scott Joplin himself. Ty has a gracious personality, and we enjoyed both him and his music.



Ty Woodward at the California Theatre in San Diego.



## Donald F. Overend

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Our May concert artist was Chris Elliot. This was the second time that Chris has played for us. The first time was his professional debut at age 16, so it was special to see him again at the California Theatre. Chris demonstrated his mastery of the art of silent film accompaniment by playing Buster Keaton's *Steamboat Bill, Jr.* and Harold Lloyd's *All Aboard*. The nautical theme of the program was chosen because the Maritime Museum Association of San Diego participated in the concert with us for the raising of funds to sail the full-rigged ship, *The Star of India*, on Memorial Day. The *Star of India* is one of the museum's three historic ships. Built in 1863, she was acquired in 1926 by San Diegans who wanted to preserve a link with the city's maritime heritage. The completion of her restoration culminated in her sailing on July 4, 1976, in honor of America's Bicentennial. Memorial Day is to be her first sailing since that day. The evening's program with the Maritime Museum Association members was a very successful blending and sharing of each society's interests and objectives.

MARY JANE HYDE

## SIERRA

Sacramento

916/726-5132 or 916/332-2837

A near capacity audience filled the Fair Oaks Community Club House on May 4 to enjoy one of the finest presentations that we have seen in a long time, "Pipe Dreams," a musical review produced and directed by Sue Lang. June Anderson was the emcee and story teller of the dream sequences while Dale Mendenhall lay dreaming as the show unfolded. The overture, "Dream," was played by Don Wallin on the Wurlitzer with his son, Dave, on the bass guitar.

The opening act was a Dixieland group, Riverbank Blues Band, that had the audience toe-tapping and applauding as each artist played a solo. Karen Cuneo presented a group of Country and Gospel selections which were enjoyed by the crowd. This was followed by an unusual song and dance routine done with black light. The Umbrella Girls (Joyce Clifford, Louise Daggett, Betty Taylor, Betty DeGabriel and Margaret Hetherington) danced their way through "Singing in The Rain" while twirling their umbrellas which were painted in many colors and looked like a huge

tapestry in the black light. For a finale, Louise Daggett sang "Blue Skies" with Don Wallin at the console. Dwight Finger then presented a group of organ selections both old and new.

The Whistlers (Chuck Shumate, Ray Anderson and Art Phelan) came marching on stage to the "Colonel Bogey March" as the audience broke into laughter and applause. This act was the hit of the show as the Whistlers had their bodies painted (their chests were the eyes and their navels were the mouths and lips). Their costumes were very tall hats, and their suits covered the lower halves of their bodies. You could see them "whistling" as their bellies inhaled and exhaled — it was a howl!

We got back to a semblance of dignity, however, with a fine vocal selection by baritone Graig Morphus. Then one of Sacramento's popular lady organists, Joyce Clifford, played her well-known arrangements of favorite organ selections. Another black-light act was presented as Sue Lang and Louise Daggett, dressed as a couple of tramps, did a fine song and dance routine to "Side By Side." The Feather River Four, a vocal quartet from Paradise, California, sang several old-time numbers in barbershop harmony which greatly delighted the audience. Master organist Rex Koury brought the house down as he played selections from *42nd Street*. The talent and presentation of this fine artist is admired by all. Diane Lovely and Sue Lang on banjos and Marge Macken on clarinet gave us a fine rendition of "Bye, Bye Blues." The Grand Finale was a vocal and instrumental production with audience participation of "God Bless America" as the American flag slowly unfurled from the proscenium. At the end of the show, Sue Lang was presented with a beautiful bouquet of flowers to express our appreciation for this fine production. We would also like to thank the production staff for the many hours of work they gave to the preparation of this show.

After the show, a barbeque and cast party was held at Dave Moreno's home.

BUD TAYLOR

## SOONER STATE

Tulsa

918/742-8693 or 918/437-2146

Our March meeting was held in the home of Sam and Ruth Collier. Sam's modified

Gulbransen Rialto is a joy to play, as he says, "You can really get some special sounds with the drawbars." This he proceeded to do with a program of favorites. "Nola" was especially sprightly. Sam's program was followed by open console.

April found us once again at Central Assembly of God Church where Lorene Thomas presented a program on the 4/14 Robert-Morton. Our "technical crew," headed by Harry Rasmussen (at least for this project), assisted by Phil Judkins, Lee Smith, Vic Thomas and Sam Collier, had completed the repairs on the Tibia regulator and had re-routed the windline from the regulator to the chest, and it certainly made a difference in the sound. At open console we heard from our regulars as well as new member Don Kimes and guest Bob Gerdes, who had driven from Atwood, Oklahoma, to be with us.

By far the most fun of the evening was, once again, organ and piano together. Lorene's guest, Margaret Crawford, surprised us. This little-old-lady (she's a great-grandmother) turned out to be somebody who could play a mean piano — and all by ear. During one of their duets we heard Margaret say, "Put it in 'F'," and Lorene promptly made the key change with no trouble at all. We particularly liked "Doin' the New Low Down." Margaret was fascinating to watch and delightful to hear, and Lorene has promised to bring her again.

DOROTHY SMITH

## SOUTHEAST TEXAS

We recently traveled to Houston for a meeting in the home of Buster Matteson. As on previous occasions, this was an exquisite pleasure. Buster has installed in his home a 3/14 Style 235 Wurlitzer (Opus 1501) with Post Horn added. The organ is from the Metropolitan Theatre which opened on Christmas Day in 1926. It was removed from the theatre to Buster's house in 1971. Rebuilding and installation were done by Jim Peterson of Fort Worth. At our meetings at Buster's we have been fortunate to hear such great artists as Don Baker, John Steele, Harry Heth and Rick Matthews.

For this event, Carter Bidwell and Rick Matthews were the guest artists. Carter has only been a member of the chapter for about six months and really surprised us all when he

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Carter Bidwell (left) and Rick Matthews play for Southeast Texas Chapter.

asked to play during open console at a meeting. Rick Matthews has played for us many times and given a number of concerts for us. We are deeply indebted to Rick for all the work on the chapter organ, great showmanship at concerts and his dedication and support. If you are ever at an event where Rick plays, be sure to request "New York, New York." His version is inspirational. The meeting concluded with Rick and Carter playing several duets on the Wurlitzer and piano. As usual, the afternoon was memorable.

FLOYD BROUSSARD



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We are forging ahead! Last February our meeting was held at the magnificent Toledo Museum of Art Perystyle Auditorium which houses a 4/45 Aeolian-Skinner concert organ. In this 1930 Greco-Roman theatre we were treated to a program by various local organists including Melissa Ambrose from the Detroit area.

After a long winter of making improvements and additions to the former Rivoli Marr & Colton at the Ohio Theatre, our efforts paid off on April 12 at a public concert featuring the last Toledo Paramount organist, Virg Howard. Virg was in top form as he played familiar music, sing-alongs and ac-

companiment to a rare 35mm Larry Semon silent comedy from 1925, *The Show*, showing backstage shenanigans at a vaudeville theatre. One feature of the concert was a video camera which was trained on the console and shown by projection on the movie screen, an excellent way to involve the audience in the mechanics of theatre-organ playing. Virg's comments about registration and his anecdotes about famous theatre organists made fascinating background. Mr. Howard's lovely wife, Karen, made a surprise appearance with an excellent rendition of "Tico-Tico" as well as a treme-off "Tocatta" by Widor — Excellent! We are proud of our hard-working organ crew, stage crew and many volunteers who have made a success of our struggling chapter. Toledo chapter CAN DO!

EVAN J. CHASE



Phoenix

602/972-6223 or 602/278-9107

Our January 19 meeting was held at the Phoenix Organ Stop where a very talented and witty member, Johnny Harris, performed on the Wurlitzer. Much of his music was contemporary, including songs from John Denver and Kermit the Frog.

Chairman Ray Danford and his wife, Ione, invited us to their beautiful Sun City home for our February 23 social gathering. Several members participated in open console on the Danford's theatre organ, the Kawai electronic and the piano. There were a few times when we had a real jam session going, with all three instruments being played at the same time.

We were back at the Phoenix Organ Stop for our March 23 meeting with two featured artists. Sixteen-year-old Terry Cunningham, our chapter's Young Theatre Organist Competition representative, played his competition program. He was followed by another talented young man, Walter Strony, who billed himself as the "filler" organist for the day.

The Mesa Organ Stop was the location of our April 20 gathering. Mike Everitt, who

happens to be one of the restaurant owners and a very talented musician, presented the program for us that day.

Chapter members continue to help in the restoration of the Wurlitzer in the First Christian Church Fellowship Hall.

MADELINE LIVOLSI



VIRGINIA THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

We have been busy, very busy, preparing for the National Convention this summer. Not only is there a great deal of planning to do by the Convention Committee, there is also a lot of dirty, back-breaking crawling around in dusty organ chambers. Two of the organs, in the Mosque and the Byrd, have been virtually rebuilt over the past several months by a dedicated crew which puts in several days a week on these two vintage instruments. Most of the work has to be done on weekends, and this is awkward at the Byrd since the organ is used for a live stage show on Friday and Saturday nights (and during the day for rehearsals). Things are coming along on schedule, however, and Allen Miller, the expert tonal finisher, will arrive from Glastonbury, Connecticut, in early June to voice the two organs. When the Convention opens, these two organs will never have sounded better.

On April 26, the meeting took place at the Richmond Mosque (see March/April '86 THEATRE ORGAN). This time we gathered to hear first-hand the vast improvement to one of the most massive sounding installations in the country. All 96 swell-shade pneumatics as well as their corresponding bumpers have been releathered by the crew headed by Paul Harris. The same has been done on the swell shades at the Byrd. Lin Lunde demonstrated how different the organ sounded, and several members tried it out during a short open console session at the close of the meeting. Afterwards, we walked the few blocks to the newly restored (\$36 million) Jefferson-Sheraton Hotel on a beautiful spring day, through Monroe Park with its many flowering trees. At the Jefferson, members treated themselves to lunch at TJ's, one of the smart eating places in the vast hotel.

MILES RUDISILL



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