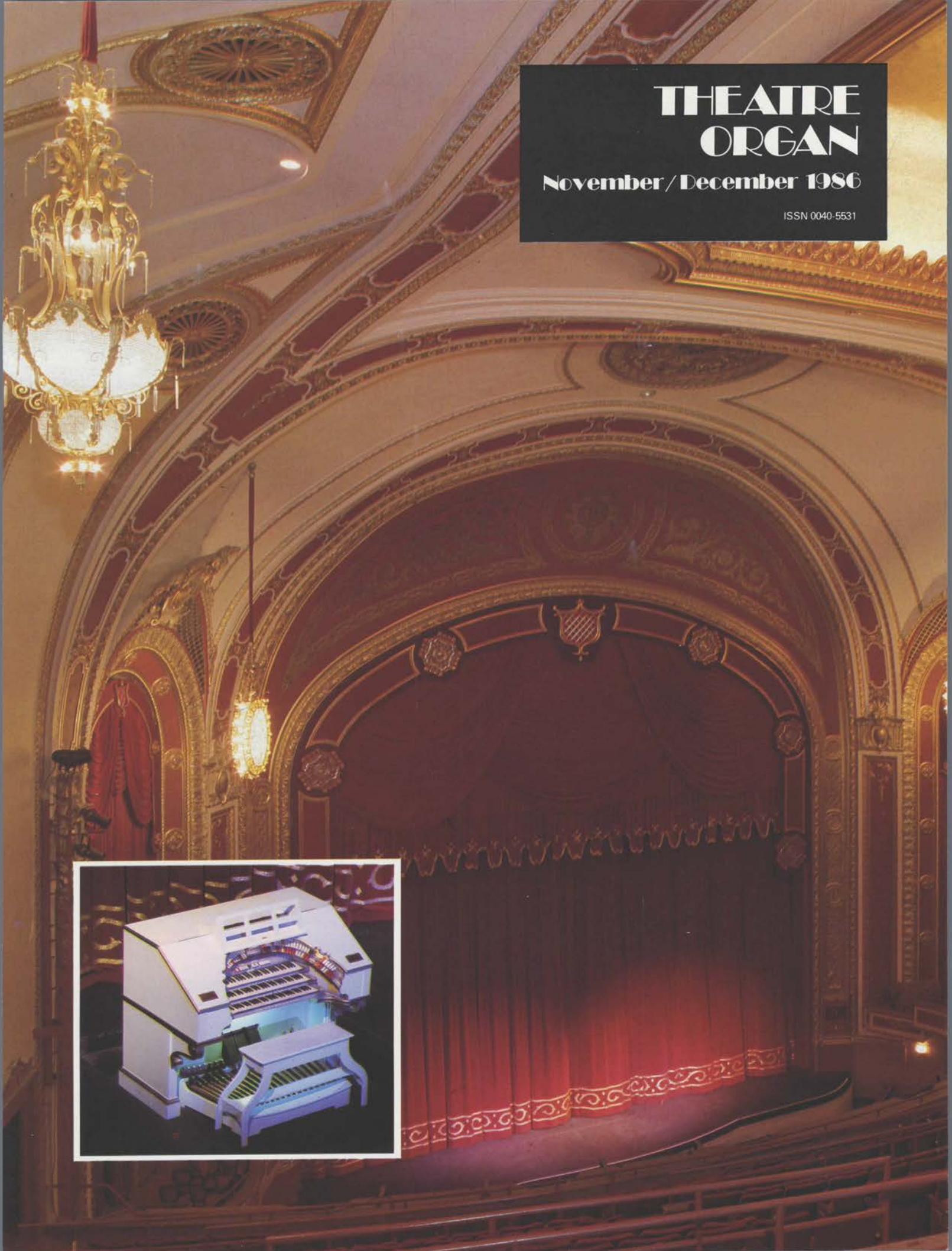


# THEATRE ORGAN

November / December 1986

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## May we introduce . . . SIMON GLEDHILL



Simon Gledhill

Although still only 20 years old, Simon Gledhill is no stranger to British theatre organ audiences. He has very rapidly made a name for himself during the past four years.

Simon's musical awareness became apparent at an early age, and when he was seven, his fascination with a friend's toy accordion was so great that Simon decided this was the instrument he wanted to play. At the age of 16, he was runner-up in the British Under-18 Solo Accordion Championships and was the Advanced Duet Champion.

Simon's interest in the organ developed concurrently with his study of the accordion, and in his early teens he began lessons with Michael Woodhead, one of the foremost home-organ teachers in the north of England. In 1982 he passed grade eight with honors in the organ examinations of the Southern Music Training Centre and was awarded their Founders Cup for achieving the highest mark of all candidates in the country.

John Norris, Principal of the SMTC, encouraged Simon to consider the theatre organ, which he did, and his interest developed more strongly after a suggestion from theatre

organist David Shepherd that he should enter the Northern Young Organist of the Year competition. In January 1982, at the age of 16, he played a theatre organ for the first time. Just three months later he won the Northern contest with flying colors, which led to an immediate booking on the prestigious weekly BBC show, *The Organist Entertains*.

Simon immediately scoured the country for any theatre organs he could find and studied intensely all aspects of the lore and legend of the instrument. Within a short time he was able to play any instrument, however peculiar, with great flair and confidence, and his knowledge of the whole theatre organ scene, both in Britain and the USA, gained him a reputation and status previously unknown in one so young.

The Cinema Organ Society found Simon to be the natural choice to be the first holder of their annual Ian Sutherland Award to an up-and-coming organist. As a result, he performed a spectacular concert at the magnificent, Art Deco Grays State Theatre where he was presented to an enthusiastic audience by famous broadcasting organist Nigel Ogden.

For the past two years, Simon has been studying Natural Sciences at Cambridge University. All the major theatre organ groups have been clamoring to book him for their shows, but he very sensibly accepts bookings only during the vacations, proving that it is possible to combine university life with the world of theatre organ.

"The finest theatre organ playing this side of the Atlantic!" This comment came from a well-known theatre organist after hearing one of Simon's shows. Another artist, at a chance meeting with Simon at another venue, said to him, "I know you — you're brilliant!" Simon's first recording, "Simply Simon," was a sell-out. He has two albums in the catalogs at present. "Journey into Melody" is a cassette featuring the Granada Walthamstow Christie and "The Spirit of Youth" is a record made on the Ossett Town Hall Compton.

Simon is an avid listener. "I enjoy the styles of a wide range of theatre organists," he says, "and I would certainly include George Wright, Lyn Larsen, Walt Strony, Jim Roseveare, Bryan Rodwell, David Shepherd, Nigel Ogden, Sidney Torch and Quentin Maclean amongst my favorites." Hints of some of these artists filter through in Simon's playing, but he is in no way a clone of any of them — he has an identifiable style all his own, and he is clearly destined to go down in history as one of the small number of artists who will have defined the scope and range of this singular musical instrument.

Simon is a devotee of the American theatre organ scene. "I admire the professionalism shown in musicianship, presentation and technical standards in a great many aspects of American theatre organ life," he says, "and I would love to play some of the fine instruments that I've had the pleasure of hearing on records."

Simon can be contacted at 13 Norton Street, Elland, West Yorkshire, HX5 OLU, England.

JOHN LEEMING □

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Interior of Riverside Theatre, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.  
Console of Riverside, see article starting on page five.  
Credit for both photos: Larry Widen

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# American Theatre Organ Society

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Our newsletter, appropriately titled *ATOS International News*, is well underway. After inviting comments from our members, both Tom B'hend, our newsletter editor, and myself have received many replies. The response has been most favorable. Members have indicated that this is just what ATOS needed to get timely news items to the members, let them know what is going on and advise them of coming organ programs and other events. We

thank you for your responses. As I told you before, we are doing this newsletter on a six-month trial basis. After about the fourth issue, your comments and recommendations will be evaluated, and the Board will decide whether to continue its publication. We will also evaluate the size of the newsletter, its content, and, most important, whether we can afford it. We do appreciate the donations which some of our members have sent to cover expenses and make it a continuing publication. We do not want to turn this into a subscription or to raise dues to pay for it. Any help you can give will be greatly appreciated.

Our Young Organist Competition for 1987 is also underway. Each chapter president should have received a package of information, rules, and registration forms. If you haven't, please contact Lois Segur or myself. While this competition has been directed primarily to chapters, there may be other people out there who might want to compete, but who live in an area where there is no chapter. If you are an unaffiliated ATOS member and think you might know of a participant, please let Lois Segur or myself know. We really need to get the young people into the world of theatre organ entertainment.

I hope that you took some time to read the "business aspects" of ATOS in the last issue of THEATRE ORGAN. I refer to the minutes of the meetings of your Board of Directors, Executive Committee, General Membership and Chapter Representatives. While the print is small and may not be as interesting as the life of Jesse Crawford, you can read about what is going on throughout ATOS, and how your elected Board members are attempting to further the goals of ATOS. If you have any comments, please let me know. Also, the election of the Board members is coming soon. ATOS is a dynamic organization and could use your help. Start thinking about the possibility of serving ATOS as a Board member.

On a personal note, I have moved from Offutt Air Force Base (Omaha, Nebraska) to my new job with the Air Force which is at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois (near St. Louis). I have enjoyed receiving your chapters' newsletters and correspondence from members. Please note my new address and telephone number which you will find on page three where the officers are listed. I am excited about being a member of St. Louis Chapter and look forward to my Air Force assignment in my home state.

Your officers and Board of Directors join with me in wishing each of you the blessings of this Holiday Season and the very best to you and yours in 1987. It will be an exciting time in 1987, and we are glad that you are part of the American Theatre Organ Society.

Sincerely,

Jack Moelmann

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



For more than 60% of our membership, this is the time of year the decision is made to continue for another year or drop. While the membership has grown for the past three years, the number of members who do not renew has remained steady and equals about 25% each year. Why do members choose to leave? With better information about the reasons why members leave, we may be better able to tailor

programs differently where possible to deal with those reasons.

Since many of you know someone who has not renewed his/her

membership, you could be of help to ATOS and the chapters by doing one thing. Ask the person why they dropped out; write their reasons down and send them to me. With a reasonable number of replies, a pattern may develop which could be helpful in reducing future losses. Please take a few minutes to find out why one person left. Write down the reasons and send them to me. Out of this we may come up with a plan helpful to the preservation of members and thus helpful to the preservation of the theatre organ.

Sincerely,

Douglas C. Fisk



# Renaissance in Milwaukee

by Fred Wolfram and Gordon Schwacke

In the world of the theatre organ, the Riverside Theatre's Wurlitzer is in a happy minority. It has known only one home since those master organ builders in Tonawanda, New York, shipped it to Milwaukee some 58 years ago. True, in that location it has had its share of ups and downs — and we don't mean those supplied by its lift — but, unlike many theatre organs of its vintage, it has never experienced a period of being both down and out.

Life for this Wurlitzer began with a gala opening night on April 29, 1928. The *Milwaukee Journal* reported the next day: "The new Riverside theater, a monument to the bigger and better in vaudeville, was opened Sunday for the edification of a good part of the city's population. All day long the theater was filled to its capacity of 2900 seats and visitors apparently had a capital time with their looking and listening, mostly looking.

"Plenty to look at has been provided in the new house, but the general tone is conservative. Items such as a gold coffered ceiling in the outer lobby, black and gold marble walls, bronze doors, gold plated lighting fixtures,

marble floors, thick rugs, draperies and what not may be listed, but the effort has been to avoid the garish.

"The theatre has been provided with all manner of modern conveniences for the fussy variety fan and everything is agreeably ritzy. Slim young men in form-fitting blue uniforms are the ushers. They seem to know what it is all about and they certainly are decorative. They show customers to unusually comfortable seats. An elevator is available for the leg weary.

"Lighting in the auditorium is excellent and all seats, apparently, have a satisfactory view of the stage. The designers have been attentive to acoustics and the report of listeners is that the stage can keep no secrets. Old ivory and ormolu gold — the reporter is quoting now — make up the general color scheme, with touches of peacock blue.

"The stage is wide and deep and dressed up handsomely as to curtain and framing. A

massive organ is installed. It is possible, of course, that some detail has been overlooked, but if so the naked eye does not discern the oversight.

\* \* \*

"Harry Billings, who has been managing the Majestic these many years, continues as impresario of the new house, with Anthony Thenee as assistant. Franq J. Wenkel is the organist and William Benning conductor of the orchestra."

The theatre, whose style, some say, is based on French Baroque, was constructed as part of the Empire Building, a twelve-story office building with stores at street level. Kirchoff and Rose, a force in the Milwaukee architectural community of the 1920s, designed it, as well as the Palace Theatre in New York City and the Junior Orpheum (also called the Hennipen) Theatre in Minneapolis.

The Riverside occupied a prestigious and easily accessible downtown location on the west bank of the Milwaukee River with the entrance facing Gimbel's Department Store across the street on Wisconsin Avenue. It quickly became the showplace of Milwaukee. The combination of vaudeville, first-run silent movies, orchestra and theatre organ, all in a posh, 2500-seat (the *Journal* reviewer miscounted), air-conditioned house, had them lined up at the box office.

Perhaps the *Journal* reviewer was a bit too enthusiastic when he called the 3/13 Wurlitzer a "massive organ," but there is no denying that the instrument was well-chosen for its setting and purpose. It continued to hold audience interest long after the silent films, vaudeville, and orchestra fell victim to technology, changing times, and the Depression.

During the heydays of the 1930s and '40s, the Riverside was a mecca, first for fans of vaudeville, then for fans of big bands. Abbott and Costello worked there as relatively unknown comics; Olsen and Johnson's *Hellzapoppin* was born there; the big bands of Dick Jurgens, Wayne King, Horace Heidt, Orrin Tucker, Jimmie Dorsey and Tommy Dorsey

The new marquee and entrance.

(Milwaukee Journal Photo)





vied for Riverside attendance records. They drew people from afar, and not a few students played hooky when their favorites were booked. By the 1950s the theatre was almost exclusively a first-run movie house and downtown Milwaukee was *the* place to go to the movies.

In the late 1960s, downtown was no longer the shopping and entertainment center it had been a decade earlier. Shopping centers and multi-screened movie houses in suburban areas had taken a heavy toll. By the 1970s, the film fare at the Riverside had descended to *Kung Fu* level. The condition of the theatre matched its use — it had become sadly neglected and dirty. The only live shows were occasional rock concerts, which did not help the condition of the theatre. Things couldn't get much worse. The Wurlitzer? It was hidden under a thrust stage which had been built to protect it during the rock shows.

Enter Conrad Walters, a retired office worker and theatre organist. In 1972 he became involved with the Riverside organ, and through the '70s he played the Wurlitzer several times a week before film showings in the late morning or early afternoon. Conrad often used his own funds for critical repairs to keep the organ playing. When not in use, he kept it under lock and key. Were it not for his interest and dedication, the organ would have been silent and, perhaps, beyond repair when Dairyland Theatre Organ Society, a chapter of ATOS, came on the scene in the summer of 1980. Dairyland had a singular purpose — to negotiate with Towne Realty, owners of the theatre and organ, and United Artists, operator of the theatre, an agreement to refurbish the faithful Wurlitzer. Towne Realty agreed to finance the needed materials, and United Artists gave Dairyland Chapter access to the organ. They also agreed to remove the thrust stage so the console could again see the light of day and be more accessible to the work crews. Conrad Walters had actually had to play it under the stage by the light of a single bare bulb hanging from a cord at the side of the console!

In October 1980, restoration work began in earnest. After lubrication, cleaning, rewinding of the brake coil, and new fuses, the console had its mechanical ups and downs again! However, extensive water damage from roof leaks had left only about half the ranks in the Main chamber playing. Work on the two four-rank chests and offsets included the re-leathering of secondaries, pallets and valves, and repacking top boards, bottom boards and wind trunks. Finally, the console combination action was re-leathered, and the organ was playable for a public concert.

Dairyland contacted a suburban Barber-shop (SPEBSQSA) Chapter to co-sponsor and produce a program at the Riverside. And so it was that on April 26, 1981, the Meno-HAR-monee Chorus and a nationally ranked Barber-shop quartet were on stage with Walt

Removing the RKO vertical sign on Sunday, March 5, 1967. The eight-ton sign was removed to "modernize" the theatre facade, and was done on a Sunday when traffic on Wisconsin Avenue was light.

(Milwaukee Journal Photo)

Stromy at the Mighty Wurlitzer. The show they presented was equally barbershop harmony and theatre pipe organ, and the most amazing part of all of this was the size of the audience — 1600 people came, saw, heard, and loved every minute of it! What those happy people did *not* know was what had been done to prepare the Riverside for their coming.

Dairyland volunteers had been at work on the house for weeks. Yes, the organ was ready, but when the switch was pulled backstage for the house lights, five crystal chandeliers remained dark. Volunteers went to the hoists above the ceiling and lowered the fixtures. Then came the long and tedious task of wiping off years of dust, replacing bulbs, checking circuits and winching the chandeliers back to their lofty positions. Then came the moment of truth. The switches were thrown, but still no light! Back to the drawing board. The trouble is finally found to be burned contactors in the switchgear. Parts are scavenged from the remaining light panel, and, at last, the big moment *does* arrive. The chandeliers are bright for the first time in years — only to highlight the sad condition of a house long neglected. What now?

Another project is the solution. The same volunteers pitch in and attack the accumulated grime from the basement restrooms to the top balcony and most everything in between. Later, some folks even repaint the main foyer. The Riverside still looks old and tired, but it is clean for the day of the Wurlitzer's second debut.

Meanwhile, exciting things were happening on Gimbel's side of Wisconsin Avenue. A plan to revitalize downtown Milwaukee was taking shape, and in August 1982 the Grand Avenue Retail Center opened. This 70-million-dollar jewel now includes 165 shops, boutiques, and dining spots in four blocks of beautifully restored buildings all connected by glass-enclosed areas with skywalks bridging the street crossings.

Ironically, however, this renewed vitality did not extend to the Riverside. In fact, it went dark on Labor Day 1982 when United Artists let their lease expire. The apparent hopelessness of the situation was expressed in a letter from a *Journal* reader some months later: "Not long ago, at the Grand Avenue Retail Center, there was a display of photographs of Milwaukee's movie palaces, past and present . . . Will someone send a photographer to the Riverside Theatre, too, so that we can lament its destruction after it's too late to save it?" The end seemed near and inevitable, not only to this reader, but also to much of the community as well.

And the Wurlitzer? Dairyland Chapter events and open consoles were held through the dark days until one disastrous night in December 1983 when the sprinkler pipes froze and burst, flooding the theatre's basement. The dc organ lift motor was soaked, but miraculously, once dried out and lubed, the 58-year old veteran ran just fine. Perhaps it presaged the soon-to-be-demonstrated fact that dawn can come to a darkened theatre!

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1986



Inside the Riverside in 1931. Note top of console in orchestra pit at left.

(Albert Kuhli Photo)

Milwaukee's downtown resurgence became graphic in the financial success of the Retail Center, and in the spring of 1984, the owners of the Riverside, Towne Realty, made a momentous decision — they would refurbish the theatre! Renovation would include re-upholstering all of the seats, replacing the carpeting, restoring the ornate plaster work, adding refreshment areas, and painting the entire theatre in a handsome rose and burgundy color scheme. Dressing rooms, rest rooms and the office were to be entirely remodeled, and the air-conditioning, plumbing and electrical systems were to be repaired. After thousands of hours of work and a \$1.5 million investment, the theatre opened to its new era on November 2, 1984.

Improvements not visually evident to the layman were also included. Acoustical scrim material was installed in front of the organ chambers. Plans to carpet the entire floor, rather than just the aisles, were dropped when the designers were convinced that this would have a negative effect. Hard-wall surfaces

were retained in all areas, and an acoustically excellent house became even better! We can "modestly" say that Dairyland has an enjoyable example of these acoustics in a cassette album, "Down by the Riverside," recorded by Walt Stromy at the Wurlitzer in April 1986, in which no electronic sound enhancement techniques of any kind were employed.

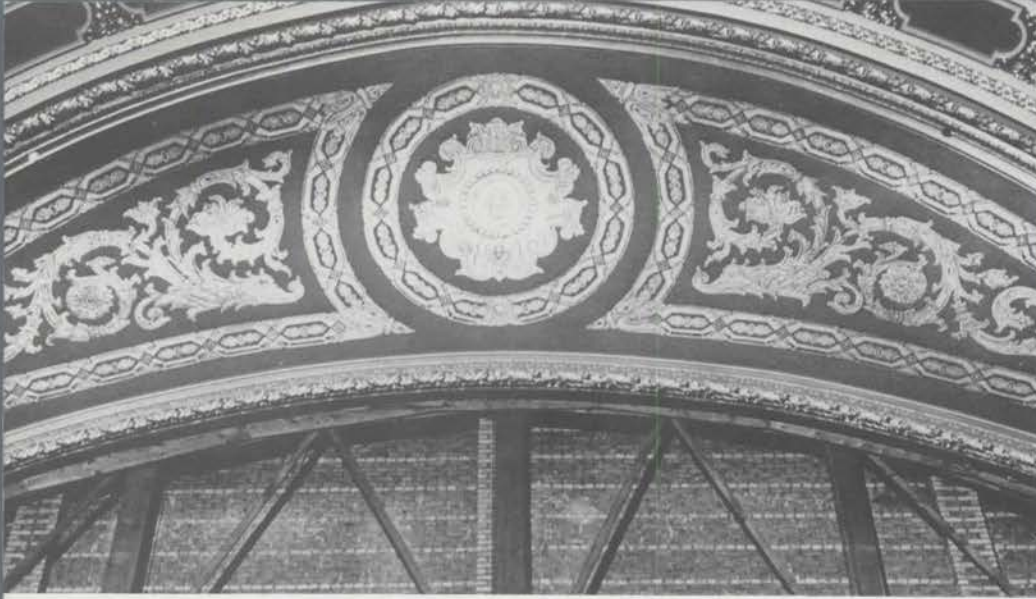
Refurbishing of the theatre was entirely without public subsidy. It was undertaken and completed by Towne Realty. Since its renaissance, it has been operated by a private corporation, and the entertainment booked there ranges from ballet to pop and rock and, periodically, there is an organ concert sponsored by Dairyland.

Early in 1985, there was another upgrading of the organ. Its specifications were completely reworked, resulting in a more unified stop-list. A Post Horn and 16' Tibia were added as was a relay and switchstack. Solid-state lies somewhere in the future. The organ's restoration was "quarterbacked" by Gary Han-

Reopening night, November 2, 1984. Swagging was missing from top of wall arches in balcony, but was installed some weeks later.

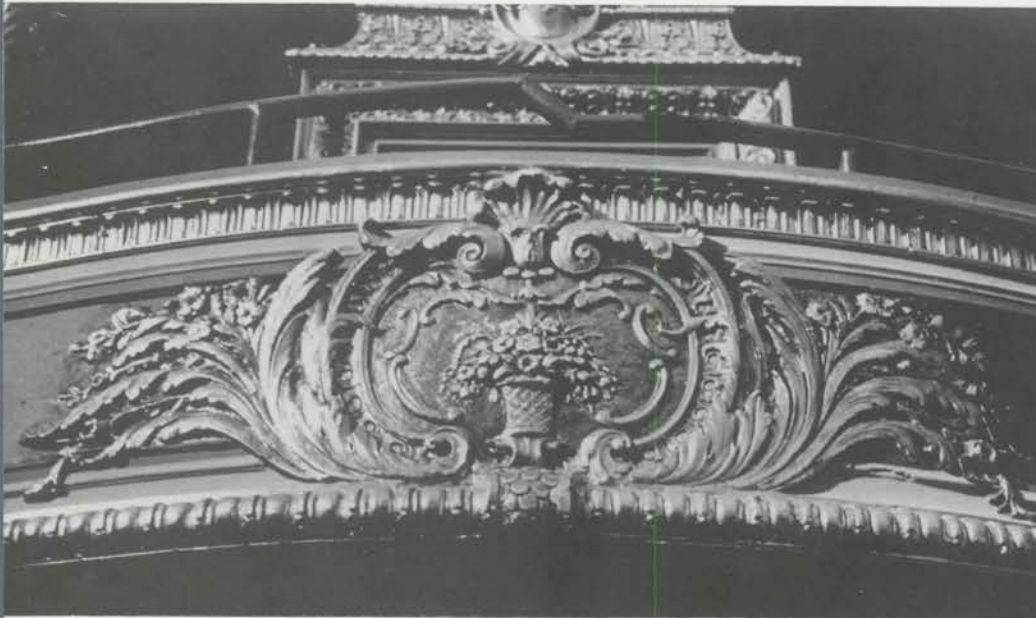
(Milwaukee Journal Photo)





Closeup of proscenium detail after refurbishing, but before new valance was hung.

(Milwaukee Journal Photo)



Detail of plasterwork on front of box-seat balcony.

(Milwaukee Journal Photo)

View of dome above scaffold floor during renovation.

(Milwaukee Journal Photo)



son, with valuable technical assistance from Bill Hansen and Clark Wilson. The efforts of many other Dairyland members and friends were essential to the success of the entire project. Also, we have been pleased to present some fine artists on the renewed Wurlitzer — these include Tom Hazleton, Jonas Nordwall, Lyn Larsen, Dennis James, Rex Koury and two concerts by Walt Strony.

If Wurlitzers have feelings, certainly this one is enjoying its new-found fame, as last October 13 it was heard on a network of 260 PBS radio stations across the nation when it was played as part of the famous *A Prairie Home Companion* broadcast starring Garrison Keillor. Gary Hanson was at the console that evening. The Wurlitzer probably had more listeners than in its entire history! Who knows what exciting adventures are still waiting in the wings. We only wish that those master organ builders of 1928 could hear their Wurlitzer now . . . but perhaps they can.

Were the dreams and thousands of volunteer hours that went into the organ and the theatre renewal a good investment? You bet! Milwaukee now has a gem of a theatre and what many judge to be the Midwest's best-sounding theatre organ still in its original home. The efforts of all are rewarded each time that very special Wurlitzer speaks. And maybe, just maybe, the Dairyland Theatre Organ Society's efforts in those days when the Riverside Theatre and its Wurlitzer were down (but not out), helped to motivate the owners to this exciting renaissance, a significant contribution to Milwaukee's future as well as to that of the theatre organ. □

Solo swell shades (just above plastic-wrapped chandelier) before acoustical scrim was hung.

(Milwaukee Journal Photo)







Seven past Presidents at chapter party celebrating 25 years. (Zimfoto)

# LOS ANGELES CHAPTER CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

by Ralph Beaudry

On August 28, 1961, a group of Los Angeles organ buffs met in the home of the late Richard Simonton in Toluca Lake to organize a Los Angeles Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society. Six years earlier, ATOS had been founded in that same home.

After a screening of *The Phantom of the Opera* with Gaylord Carter at the console of the Simonton Wurlitzer, the group was informed that Dick Simonton, organ buff Don Wallace and organist Ann Leaf had just negotiated an agreement with the Stanley-Warner Corporation to rebuild the 4/37 Kimball organ in the Wiltern Theatre.

With this incentive, our chapter was born and immediately set to work to prepare the huge instrument for the ATOS National Convention in June, 1962. To help organize the work parties needed to rebuild the Kimball, member Tom B'hend launched what became *The Console* magazine in January of 1962.

Now it is 1986, and we celebrate 25 years of preserving and presenting theatre organs to an increasingly aware Los Angeles public.

Malin and Lenore Dollinger offered their home for our party as it would accommodate more than the 200 expected guests. The Dollingers have a magnificent 4/26 Wurlitzer in their spacious home. Special guest artists for the celebration were our chapter's youngest and oldest "pro" organists, Chris Elliott and Lloyd del Castillo. More than 225 members participated in the event and shared the spectacular anniversary cake along with the great music and good fellowship.

During the afternoon, two of our "founders" were introduced, Tom B'hend and Lorin Whitney. Also present were seven of our past presidents: Ralph Beaudry (now serving his second term), Gene Davis, Sam Dickerson, Malin Dollinger, Bob Hill, Neil Kissel, and Jack Shemick.

Not content to rest on its past laurels, Los Angeles Chapter is currently moving ahead with plans to relocate its 3/25 Ross Reed Memorial organ in Sexson Hall, on the campus of Pasadena City College, in time for the 1987 ATOS National Convention. □



Lloyd G. del Castillo, now known as Del Castillo, plays the Dollinger's Wurlitzer at the Los Angeles chapter's twenty-fifth birthday party. (Tom B'hend Photo)

Charter members Tom B'hend (left) and Lorin Whitney reminisce at the birthday party for Los Angeles Chapter. (Zimfoto)



Chris Elliott plays for the birthday party of Los Angeles Chapter. (Zimfoto)





Jesse Crawford at the Empire Theatre Wurlitzer in London, 1933.

(Photo courtesy John Landon)

June 13, 1933. Courtesy of *The Manchester Evening News*. Supplied by John Potter

Newspaper article from 1933, sent by John Potter of England.

# JESSE CRAWFORD IN ENGLAND

by Dr. John W. Landon

In 1933, with the Great Depression at its worst, Jesse Crawford, together with other New York Paramount employees, was asked to take a cut in salary. Crawford bridled at this suggestion. He knew he was an "attraction" and that part of the audience at the Paramount, for any given performance, was there to hear him play the organ. He, therefore, refused to take a cut in pay, resigned in a huff and departed on a hastily arranged tour of English theatres, the London Empire and the Paramounts at Manchester, Newcastle and Leeds. Helen, meanwhile, signed a separate contract with the New York Paramount and continued to play there alone.

Jesse arrived in England aboard the ocean liner Olympic on April 8, 1933. He went imme-

## America Praises Our Women Musicians

MR. JESSE CRAWFORD, the world's most famous organist who plays at the Paramount Theatre, Manchester, this week, is puzzled.

"I heard a concert of you B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra recently," he told the *Manchester Evening News* to-day, "and I was surprised, and delighted, too, to see at least 20 women members of the orchestra."

"Why is this? One never sees women in big American orchestras, except perhaps as harpists."

"But in your orchestra there were women players among the first violins. We have brilliant women musicians in the United States, but there is a prejudice against them playing in orchestras. Some managers are prejudiced about the appearance of women on the platform."

"I have always disagreed with looking upon the organ as a substitute for an orchestra. I have always been interested in the individuality that one finds in the Wurlitzer," added Mr. Crawford.

### AS NOTHING ELSE CAN

"I look upon the organ as an individual creation that can produce the musical colour that nothing else can." Mr. Crawford has an organ at the



Mr. JESSE CRAWFORD

Paramount in New York which is worth 90,000 dollars. He has been playing in cinemas since he was 16, and he is recognized as the greatest cinema organist in the world.

## England Surprises a World-Famous Film Organist

### WE ARE DIGNIFIED, BUT LIKE JAZZ

DESCRIBED as the world's most famous cinema organist, Mr. Jesse Crawford is going to make it "hot" for Manchester.

To-day, on the occasion of his first visit to England from America, when he began a week's engagement at the Paramount Theatre, Manchester, he told an *Evening Chronicle* reporter that clean,

rhythmic jazz will be the feature of his concerts.

"England has provided me with two surprises," he said. "One is that English cinema-goers attach more importance to the organ interlude than they do in the States, and are much more demonstrative in their appreciation."

"The other is that although serious music has been greatly appreciated, most interest has been shown in rhythmic jazz selections."

### ENGLISH DIGNITY

"English people are more dignified than Americans, and I confidently expected that their serious-minded outlook would be reflected in their taste in music. Yet all along it has been the jazz that has got most appreciation."

Mr. Crawford is expecting a "big hand" in Manchester. When he appeared in London he heard of parties making the journey from Manchester to hear him play, and his postbag included many letters from Lancashire enthusiasts asking him to make the journey North.

Special extension of this permit had to be obtained from the Ministry of Labour to enable him to do so, but he is hoping that next year he can bring his wife with him to give duets.

He told the *Evening Chronicle* that the organ at the Paramount Theatre was built to his own specification and is the biggest of its kind in England.

He ought to know all about it, for he was working on it until nearly midnight last night, and then put in another three hours this morning, just to make sure that the "combination of tone colours" was correct.

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diately to London via train and was met at Waterloo Station by Major Wright, manager of the Wurlitzer Company in Great Britain, Harold and Mrs. Ramsey (a Texas girl, born in Dallas), Reginald Foort and Sandy MacPherson. Ramsey, Foort and MacPherson represented perhaps the best-known theatre organists in England at the time.

Crawford appeared in London at the Empire Theatre in Leicester Square on Friday, April 14, 1933, and remained there for a full month. The Empire, a beautiful theatre, was the flagship of the MGM company in England. Designed by architect Thomas Lamb, it seated 3500 and cost over three million, pre-Depression American dollars. The organ was the first 4/20 Wurlitzer to be installed outside of the United States; it was on a lift which included a turntable. Crawford liked this organ and, in addition to his personal appearance there, made several recordings on the HMV label and broadcast once for the BBC.

Crawford's broadcast was the first occasion on which the Empire Wurlitzer was ever heard on radio. It was a 15-minute show, aired at 10:20 p.m. on Monday, April 24, in the midst of prime broadcast time. Selections heard on this show included "Trees," "Lullaby of the Leaves," "Try a Little Tenderness," "Her Name is Mary" and a segment of Crawford's own transcription of Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue." The broadcast was well-received, and Reginald Foort was quoted in the local press as saying that Crawford used "exquisite phrasing which was such that one could . . . almost hear him making the organ speak the actual words . . ." Odd-

ly enough, as far as it is known, the Empire organ was never broadcast thereafter during the 1930s.<sup>2</sup>

Just a few days after his BBC broadcast, Crawford recorded the first of what are his rarest, and probably his best, recordings. April 30, 1933, found him again at the console of the Empire Wurlitzer when HMV engineers arrived to record the organ. Crawford, who was accustomed to doing all of his recording and broadcasting in the New York Paramount Studios on the ninth floor of the Paramount Building in Times Square, was uncomfortable when the HMV engineers hooked up one small microphone to record the Empire organ. In fact, he protested. Victor Record engineers in this country had told him that large theatres simply swallowed up the sound. None of his Victor Records had been made in a theatre proper — all were recorded in studio settings. The HMV engineers assured him that one microphone would be adequate. The results bore them out. Sound recording in England was clearly more advanced than in America. The first of these records revealed this, and Crawford was extremely pleased.

All told, Crawford recorded eight sides (of 10", 78rpm discs) for HMV. On six sides, Jack Plant, a popular British singer of the day, was featured on the vocal choruses. The first discs recorded were:

- HMV 4434 A Broken Rosary  
My Love Song
  - HMV 4435 My Wishing Song  
The Old Spinning-Wheel
- (the above were recorded on April 30, 1933)

On May 28, Crawford returned to the Empire to record four more sides:

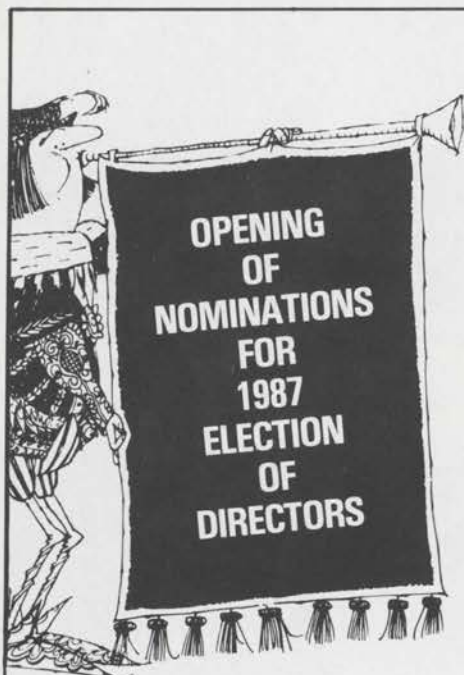
- B 4460 Drifting Down the Shalimar  
Hold Me
- B 4461 Friends Once More United  
In the Valley of the Moon<sup>3</sup>

Only one of these four discs reached the American market, "A Broken Rosary/My Love Song." The others have been heard by few Americans, except for some advanced collectors.

Crawford considered these to be his finest Victor records since they were made in the theatre itself. The sound was rich, full and lush, just as he likes it. He resolved that when he got home he would insist on recording in the Paramount Theatre. Alas, it was not to be. Crawford recorded no more material for Victor, and, although he did sign a contract with the new Decca firm, all of those discs were cut in the Paramount Studios. Although he was in the Paramount Building, on his way to the studio for broadcasting and recording, on many occasions, he never once set foot in the theatre again — the theatre where he had reached the apex of his career!

#### FOOTNOTES

1. John W. Landon, *Jesse Crawford, Poet of the Organ: Wizard of the Mighty Wurlitzer*, Vestal, New York: The Vestal Press, 1974, p. 106.
2. Letter from Donald L. Hickling, Northampton, England, March 11, 1986.
3. Recording dates were supplied by Mr. Ernie Bayly, editor of the British publication, *The Talking Machine Review*. □



**NOTE!  
DEADLINE  
MARCH 1, 1987**

It is time to nominate candidates for the National ATOS Board of Directors for the three-year term from July 1987 through June 1990. All regular ATOS members are eligible for nomination and may nominate themselves or be nominated by other members, in which case written consent of the nominee is mandatory and must be received before the nominee's name can be placed on the ballot.

A nominee need have no special talent or experience in pipe organ technology or musicianship. However, in addition to the benefits enjoyed by Directors, one of which is the reimbursement of certain meeting-related expenses, there are also certain responsibilities. Along with a willingness to participate in the administrative affairs of the society, it is most important that the Board members faithfully attend both Board and Committee meetings.

The Board usually meets only once a year during Convention, so attendance of all Directors is necessary if the decisions and actions of the Board are to be truly responsive to the membership. In addition, Directors serve on one or more committees providing valuable input to the Board. The chairmen of these committees are responsible for submitting a written report of their activities and recommendations prior to the annual Board meeting.

Procedure to be observed in the nomination process is as follows:

1. Each nominee shall furnish a small black and white photo, together with a statement, **not to exceed 100 words**, including personal data, work and theatre organ experience, and a short platform statement.
2. All candidates must have their resumes and photos mailed to the ATOS Secretary, 423 North Stafford Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23220, **no later than March 1, 1987**.
3. Your ballot and the resumes of candidates will be included in the March/April THEATRE ORGAN. By voting for the candidate of your choice, you are demonstrating your interest in and support of ATOS objectives.

If you have any questions, write or call Russell Joseph, Chairman, Nominating Committee, 18 Fenchurch Drive, Bella Vista, Arkansas 72714, or phone 501/855-1002. □

## Rocky Mountain Regional:

# A WINNER!

### Friday

As the huge 737 began its glide into Stapleton Airport, the pilot cheerfully announced that snow was expected — up to eight inches — in Denver over the weekend. Impossible! Patti Simon herself had proclaimed that it would not snow in Denver in October, and we were reassured when we noted that rain was lightly misting the windshield of our taxi as we rode to the Marriott Hotel. Of course, Patti was right, and this was going to be a wonderful weekend.

And wonderful it was!

A cocktail party at the hotel was prelude to the opening concert, and warmed by the welcome extended by Rocky Mountain Chapter's hosts and hostesses, we did not mind the rain at all as we walked the three short blocks to the Paramount Theatre. Sounds of Ragtime music drew us into the lobby where we found Denver's Dick Kroeckel at the grand piano literally playing up a storm. As soon as the more than 400 attendees were seated, a barbershop group, the Mountainaires, played "singing ushers" with a harmonic rendition of "Hi, Neighbor" that reinforced the aura of hospitality. A dapper David Love then appeared onstage and graciously welcomed us to the "Regional in the Rockies" before introducing Jim Riggs, opening artist for the convention. Jim's concert sustained the we're-glad-we're-here feeling, and once again reminded us how fortunate we are to have artists of such high calibre and instruments of such quality for our listening pleasure.

An unusual surprise awaited those who had elected to attend the post-concert Jam Session — we were to ride double-decker busses to the Organ Grinder. What an adventure! We learned that sight-seeing from the "second story" is not without its price in stability, especially when turning corners. The Jam Session was opened by petite Patti Simon who is a staff organist at the Organ Grinder. Her vivacious and sprightly style set the tone for the other participants who followed: Ed Benoit (also a staff organist there), Warren Lubich, Don Feely, Melissa Ambrose and Kevin King. Jam sessions are always fun, and this one was no exception, and it was still raining when we returned to the hotel sometime after midnight.



Double-decker busses were our transportation to the Organ Grinder for the late-night Jam Session on Friday.

(Don Zeller Photo)

Members of the Convention Committee pose with "Dolly Deco" during the Gala Artist Reception on Sunday night.

(Don Zeller Photo)



**Saturday**

By Saturday morning, however, the pilot's prognostication had materialized — it was snowing. Because of the weather, the busses began loading a bit earlier than scheduled for the ride to Colorado Springs, and we appreciated the security of the large, comfortable tour busses as we noted cars which had slid off the highway along the way. The roads were fairly clear, though, by the time we reached the Mount St. Francis Convent where Paul Quarino reminded us musically that this was going to be a "Great Day!" And a great day it was! Following Paul's inspiring concert, the busses "detoured" through the Garden of the Gods before delivering us to the Colorado Springs City Auditorium where we lunched to the music of Ray Young at a 3/8 Wurlitzer augmented by a jazz combo. Our next stop was the Air Force Academy for a

concert in the Cadet Chapel, an awesome glass and steel building which houses a 3/79 classical organ. Joseph Galema's memorable program demonstrated the multifaceted nature of this instrument in its unique setting. As the busses headed back to Denver, we felt that no amount of white precipitation could detract from the musical magic we were experiencing.

And it didn't!

After dinner we walked to Trinity Church, a three-block hike back into another century, where Keith Chapman presided at the 1888 Roosevelt pipe organ. Mr. Chapman's artistry was so effective that we were still glowing when we returned to the hotel — this gentleman is truly one of the best!

And this had most definitely been a great day!



Jim Riggs at the console of the Denver Paramount for the opening concert on Friday night. (Don Zeller Photo)



Ray Young and jazz combo at Colorado Springs City Auditorium where convention lunch was served. (Don Zeller Photo)



Paul Quarino at the Mount St. Francis Convent. This organ was installed by Pikes Peak Chapter. (Don Feely Photo)

Luncheon concert at Colorado Springs City Auditorium. (Don Zeller Photo)



Keith Chapman at the console of the 1888 Roosevelt organ in Trinity Methodist Church. (Don Zeller Photo)





San Francisco's Warren Lubich pipes us to the busses on the steam callope in the Organ Grinder parking lot on Sunday morning. (Don Zeller Photo)



Jonas Nordwall at the Denver Organ Grinder 4/37 Wurlitzer. (Don Zeller Photo)

**Sunday**

Sunday morning was clear and cold, and it was nice to climb into a warm bus for the short ride to the Organ Grinder to hear Jonas Nordwall at the 4/37 Wurlitzer. Even had there been a blizzard, Jonas would have melted the snow with his brilliance and his rendition of "Finlandia" a la Nordwall. Traveling north to Fort Collins provided time for visiting and relaxing before lunch in the Lory Center at Colorado State University. The view of the Rockies from the dining room added a spectacular dimension to the good food and fellowship that prevailed during lunch. Patti Simon provided the afternoon's music on the 3/19 Wurlitzer in the Lory Student Center. Patti has a refreshing style that is both animated and imaginative, and a smile that would defy any snow to fall.

We were back in Denver in time for a leisurely dinner before returning to the Paramount for the Grande Finale featuring Lyn Larsen and Ron Rhode at the twin consoles of the Paramount Wurlitzer. Piano music in the lobby was played by Ed Benoit, and a good-size crowd nearly missed out on their seats because they stayed so long to listen.

After opening with a rousing college fight song, the dynamic duo recreated the type of program that made Jesse and Helen Crawford so popular in the 1920s, and the large, enthusiastic crowd was absolutely delighted. This was clearly an excellent choice with which to conclude the concert schedule.

The last event on Sunday night was a gala reception for all of the convention artists in the Grand Ballroom of the hotel. A stunning statue of Dolly Deco dominated the scene and threatened to steal the show from the guests of honor.

Patti Simon at the Lory Auditorium Wurlitzer at Colorado State University in Fort Collins. (Don Zeller Photos)



Convention Chairman David Love watches benevolently as conventioners enjoy lunch at Colorado State University. (Don Zeller Photo)

Convention committee members dressed in the styles of the 1920s were easy to spot during the weekend. (L to R) Dorothy Retallack, David Hagerman, Martin Meier, Priscilla Arthur, Chairman David Love, Steve McCormick and Louis Retallack. (Don Zeller Photo)



**Monday**

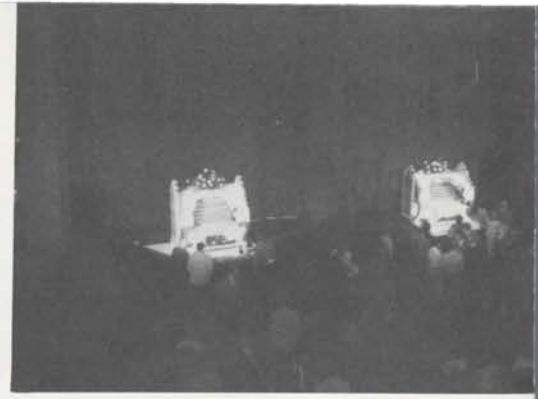
The Afterglow on Monday consisted of tours of residences to hear mini-concerts on excellen. home installations. Each tour included three of the five available homes. At Priscilla Arthur's we heard Jane McKee Johnson at the console of a 2/10 Wurlitzer. Dr. Bruce Belshaw performed on his 3/22 Wurlitzer, and Joel Kremer played his 4/28 Hybrid. John Lauter entertained at the Riser residence where there is a 3/22 Wurlitzer, and young Melissa Ambrose was featured on the 3/10 Wurlitzer in the home of Dee Williams. This was certainly an excellent culmination of

a convention that was first class all the way. Even if it did snow!

**Afterword**

Convention Chairman David Love, Rocky Mountain Chapter Chairman Patti Simon, Martin Meier of Pikes Peak Chapter and all of those hard-working, charming, hospitable, members of both chapters who were responsible for this rollicking romp in the Rockies deserve highest accolades for what will surely be remembered by the 400 attendees as one of the merriest, madcap, musical events of the decade.

In spite of the snow. □



Lighted consoles at the Paramount await the arrival of the Larsen/Rhode duo. (Don Feely Photo)



Ron Rhode and Lyn Larsen at the Denver Paramount.

(Don Feely Photo)



Ray Gorish, one of the founders of ATOS, visits with Priscilla Arthur and Martin Meier. (Don Zeller Photo)

Joel Kremer (left), Dr. Bruce Belshaw (right), Melissa Ambrose (left) and Jane McKee Johnson (right) were Afterglow artists on home installations. (We regret that a photographer was not present at the Riser residence so organist John Lauter is missing from the pictures. Ed.) (Don Zeller Photos)



# LARRY EVRITT'S MAGNIFICENT 3/18 THEATRE PIPE ORGAN

by Bill Yaney

In the heartland of northwestern Ohio, some 40 miles south of Toledo, lies the small, but thriving, city of Defiance, population 16,000. Steeped in agriculture and industry, this quiet community is home to a magnificent residence installation, a 3/18 theatre organ owned by Larry and Janet Evritt.

Installed in a 15-room house built in 1887, the organ has transformed the house and the lives of its owners. As one approaches the home on Hopkins Street, the only indication of what lies within is a small calliope in the side window, one of two working calliopes on the organ. The polished black console sits in a parlor to the left of the front entrance foyer. The large chamber, complete with a very quiet shutter linkage, is situated down a narrow hallway in another parlor converted for this purpose. At the end of the hall is the piano, splendidly rebuilt and speaking at 16', 8' and 4' levels. As the organ is played, the entire house seems to take on the acoustical properties of one large chamber. Two Spencer blowers (5 hp and 3 hp) are located in the



Larry and Janet Evritt at their console.

basement and power the organ at 19 (static) inches of wind. A second phase of the organ — the second half of the Accompaniment division — is completed in the upstairs portion of the house and is ready to be wired. Also upstairs is a parts room and relay room.

An interesting addition to the organ is a player mechanism which Larry proudly states was salvaged from scrap. When he puts on a QRS march roll, the organ becomes a giant marching band. Larry's ability to turn scrap into a finished product is a tribute to his exceptional ingenuity.

Theatre organs are no passing fancy with Larry; he has harbored a lifelong love for them. From 1966 to 1970, Larry and Janet were Gulbransen organ dealers in Defiance, and Larry's background as an aircraft mechanic for 25 years proved invaluable in the logistics of theatre organ installation. Larry currently manages the truck garage for Dinner Bell Foods, Inc., in Defiance.

In 1974, after an exhaustive search, the Evritts obtained the console, which had been

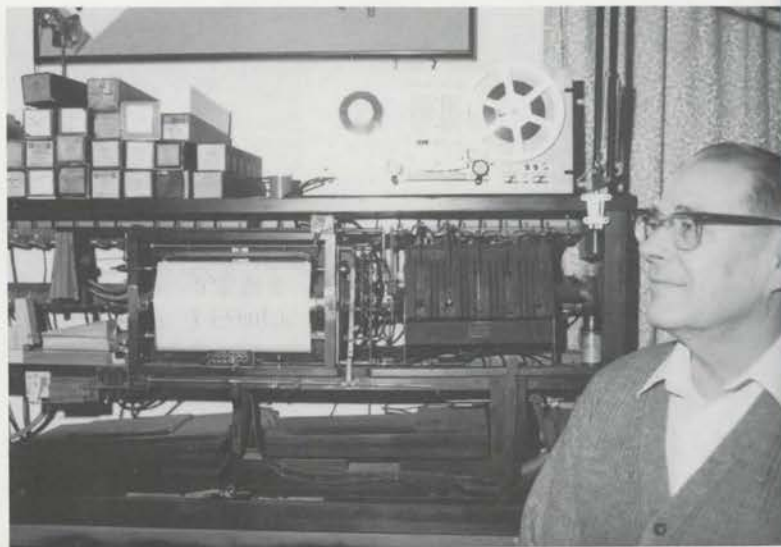
modified to a four-manual straight organ, from Defiance High School. Larry converted the console to a three-manual, enlarged the organ to 18 ranks and installed electronic relays. The original console and accompaniment had been installed in the Alhambra Theatre in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1917 and 1921. The console, Diapason, Concert Flute and Vox Humana are all Wurlitzer; the Strings and high pressure Tibia are Estey, and there is a Marr & Colton xylophone, Page carillon harp and Robert-Morton horses hooves. The more than 40 toys on the toy counter are all operable along with two electronic rhythm units and an extensive coupler system. An obvious rarity is the fact that every voice and function works perfectly, including the combination action. A finishing touch is a beautiful Chinese gong hanging in the stairwell opposite the chamber.

Needless to say, the organ will never be completed if Larry has his way. He is a member of the Toledo Area chapter of ATOS, and his expertise has been invaluable

Bill Yaney, resident organist at Toledo's Ohio Theatre, at the console of the Evritt organ.



Larry Evritt contemplates the roll player connected to the console of his home installation.







Piano and Xylophone fit snugly into the hallway of the Evritt home.



Chinese gong could serve as dinner-bell.

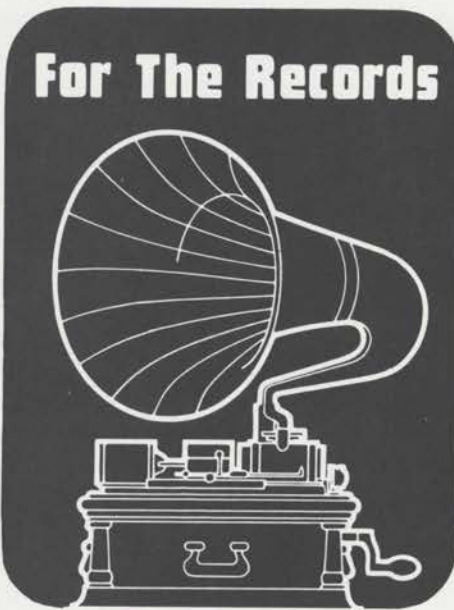
Steam engine made from spare parts is connected to console.



in the installation of the chapter's organ, a four-manual Marr & Colton originally installed in the Toledo Rivoli Theatre.

The dream of Larry and Janet Evritt has become a reality, one which would rival many a theatre installation. Northwestern Ohio is very proud of its own "Theatre Organ Wizard."

**Note:** Author Bill Yaney is the resident organist at the Ohio Theatre in Toledo, Ohio. □



*Manufacturers, distributors or individuals sponsoring or merchandising organ recordings are encouraged to send review copies to the **Record Reviewer**, THEATRE ORGAN, 4633 SE Brookside Drive 158, Milwaukie, Oregon 97222. Be sure to include purchasing information (post-paid price, ordering address) and a photo of the artist which need not be returned.*

**RAWLE AT THE HALL**, Len Rawle at the Wurlitzer organ of the Free Trade Hall, Manchester. Available from Mr. V.A. Drinkall, 4 High Elm Road, Hale Barns, Altrincham, England. International money order \$12.00 postpaid airmail.

**BRAVO!!**

Rarely does an album of this calibre appear on the organ scene. This is one of the very few that could be called a definitive theatre organ album.

The organ is both typical and not typical of British installations. It is typical in that it is well-regulated and beautifully tonally finished. It is not typical because the tremos sound more like eastern United States than England. It is hard to imagine this organ sounding so good in its original home. This reviewer is sorely tempted to call it virtually perfect. Organists will be waiting in line to record this one. The Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust and their 4/20 Wurlitzer have made a most impressive mark on the theatre-organ world.

Len Rawle — unique, creative and well-ex-

ecuted performances and arrangements typify this recording. He keeps you wondering what he is going to do next, and always leaves you wanting more. Rawle is a superb, polished performer who has claimed his place as one of theatre organ's brightest stars. Selections include "Music, Music, Music," "Soft Lights and Sweet Music," "Fame," "Let's Face the Music," and more. There's not a weak one in the bunch.

Microphone placement is ideal. The recording engineer captured the sound of a big organ in a big hall perfectly. The only thing wrong with this recording was a bit of extraneous background noise. Everyone connected with the installation of this organ and the production of this album should be very proud. See THEATRE ORGAN, July/August 1986, for the complete story of this magnificent installation.

Don't miss this recording.

BOB SHAFTER

**GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PAUL**, Paul Quarino plays Old-Time Gospel Favorites at the 4/44 Wurlitzer, PQ 101 Dolby Stereo Tape. Available from Paul Quarino Recordings, P.O. Box 06311, Portland, Oregon 97206. Price is \$11.00 postpaid, \$13.00 outside the U.S.

"Burnout" is considered a threat in many professions these days. Could it also happen to an organist who plays five nights a week in the Portland Organ Grinder, cues for silents at the Sherwood Oriental Theatre, serves as church organist, plays ATOS chapter meetings and national conventions, keeps AGO fans happy and owns his own pipe organ service company? But perhaps "burnout" is not a word we should use around one who has still another activity closer to the Pearly Gates. Paul Quarino has been wowing fans during those slack hours in his schedule (Sunday afternoons) playing Gospel music. This tape is a fitting testament to his success.

As an opener, Quarino proceeds to warm up the devout with "Victory in Jesus." The arrangement begins harmlessly enough. But then the artist turns on a mechanically cycling rhythm section. If, as the album title says, this is to be "Gospel According to Paul," the automated Boogaloo is strictly from St. Elsewhere. Fortunately, the organist only resorts to such plastic fervor at the beginning of Sides I and II (plus one other tune). Remaining selections are "Amen!" all the way.

"In The Garden" is a wonderful evocation of what may well be the loveliest of the old Gospel ballads. Paul rolls out the Vox, Tibias, and Strings and lets them sing. This consummate artist can evoke sentiment without bathos. One of his secret ingredients is pacing — not too slow. Even the half chorus on chimes seems eminently fitting. True, what Paul does is basically theatre style, but it also has the conviction and serious commitment we expect from performances of religious music. No tongue-in-cheek in these performances. The artist genuinely respects what he plays — and it shows.



Paul Quarino

(Claude Neuffer Photo)

Other equally fine slow hymns include "How Great Thou Art," "Softly and Tenderly," "Heaven Came Down and Glory Filled My Soul." Registrations are prodigiously rich but never cloying. When Paul uses a big finish, it is smooth and powerful with no rough edges. He obviously knows the strengths and weaknesses of the Wurlitzer, skillfully avoiding the "warts." Perhaps the most ingenious arrangement in the album is "Take Up Thy Cross." Lush, modern harmonies in the intro show off the masses of strings. The Chrysoglott and Harp are used to excellent effect in the accompaniment, while a subtle Cymbal beat gives thrust and drive to the musical flow of it all. In this reviewer's opinion, Paul Quarino brings the same sort of professional depth and control to theatre organ playing one hears from the best of the British School (i.e. Len Rawle).

Upbeat tunes such as "When The Roll Is Called Up Yonder" get the Glock-'n-Shlock treatment, spirited and happy without being too cute. Quarino uses the Piano for added zip and spice. "I'll Fly Away" is Spiritual via George Gershwin. The percussions at one point get out of hand (or is it "out of feet?"). Again, let us concede that the mechanical rhythm device probably works very well on a Sunday afternoon in the heat of a live audience response. In the living room of the reviewer, it has the effect of a reiterating chigger bite. "Do, Lord," which begins Side II, can best be summed up with one word — don't.

"Blessed Assurance" features full church organ sound in 6/8 time. Although the arrangement becomes somewhat introspective as it develops, the Gospel beat is never far away. A very impressive untremmed churchy finale. The final cut of the second side is the traditional "Oh, Worship The King," more mainstream than Gospel — but who's counting! It builds from quiet chamber organ sounds to the roar of the great cathedral. Recording engineering has captured the 4/4 Wurlitzer with a faithfulness ranging from excellent to quite good.

This is a very impressive use of a restaurant

installation to interpret Gospel songs in theatre stylings. If Paul Quarino plays this brilliantly every Sunday afternoon, the engagement may last well into the next millenium.

WALTER J. BEAUPRE

**HAPPY TOGETHER, Peter Holt plays the Compton organ at the Three J's, Gomersal. Available from the Organ Literature Foundation, 45 Norfolk Road, Braintree, Massachusetts 02184. Cost is \$9.00 plus \$2.00 postage per order.**

Peter Holt is a talented young man who shows great promise. At twelve years of age, he demonstrates an understanding of the theatre organ that would belie his youthfulness. As a British organist, he does not play in the typical Sydney Torch-influenced style. The opening medley, "Strike Up The Band/Up With The Curtain," is a well-executed pit-raiser. The most notable selection is the medley of "When Sunny Gets Blue/Lullaby of Birdland," which is simply excellent. "I Know Him So Well" is also worthy of special mention. Most of the rest of the album is very good (there are 15 bands). There are, however, three exceptions: "Sleigh Ride," "The Continental," and "Orpheus in the Underworld Overture" suffer from insecure performance and weak arrangements.

The Compton organ at the Three J's is a fine representation of the British theatre organ. It tends to be bright with a strong orchestral flavor and exceptional reeds. There were some tuning problems at the top of the Tibia that tended to make it sound shrill at times.

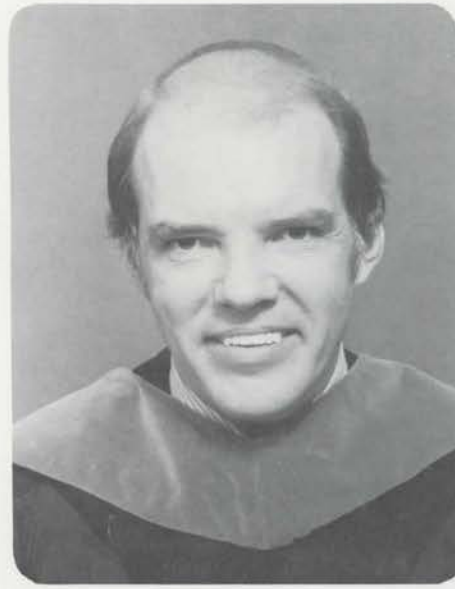
The recording engineer did a good job, and the pressing was clean overall, with only a couple of stray pops in the review copy. A good album.

BOB SHAFTER

**CHRISTMAS AT THE PARAMOUNT, John Landon playing the Page organ in the Anderson (Indiana) Paramount Theatre. Available only on cassette, \$8.00 postpaid from the Paramount Organ Society, Inc., 902 East 27th Street, Anderson, Indiana 46014.**

There is so small a Christmas repertoire that we must choose wisely to avoid repetition and even boredom. This year our choice is played by John Landon on the Page organ in the Paramount Theatre in Anderson, Indiana.

In case the reader is new to the hobby, John Landon is a multiple talent, a lecturer, university professor (social sciences), clergyman and author (his biography of famed organist Jesse Crawford is about to be re-issued). How he also finds time to be an organist is a mystery which has intrigued this reviewer for years. Yet, whatever he tackles, he does well. This applies especially to his recorded efforts. There are several LPs, dating from 1965. His style is theatrical, but he can do a convincing "trem-off" cathedral bit where called for, and the seven-rank Page responds beautifully.



Dr. John W. Landon

The Paramount Page organ would seem to be an extension of John Landon. He discovered it in 1955 when he was a college freshman, and after some refurbishing, he started playing it during intermissions. He is still playing it 31 years later! That's devotion. The instrument has three manuals and a divided seven ranks: Flute, String, Vox and Sousaphone are in the Main chamber and Tuba, Krumet and Tibia on the Solo. It is a well-balanced instrument from the tonal viewpoint, and very well unified (148 stopkeys for seven voices). It has undergone two restorations, one in 1965 by hobbyists Lewis Hodson and Rex Hoppes of Anderson, and again in the early '70s by Hodson, Carlton Smith and Bob Dunn, who still service the instrument.

Let's examine the selections. "O Holy Night" starts with an attractive baritone melody which provides an aura of majesty as the volume builds — nice phrasing. "White Christmas;" what can we say about this more recent addition to the Yule repertoire? John plays it with a gentle, rhythmic lilt, and we can imagine the shade of Bing looking on with approval. "The First Noel" is heard without added embellishment, nor does it need any. Expert phrasing takes care of that. John plays with theatrical zeal throughout this recording, yet manages the majesty of a cathedral organ with only seven well-unified ranks. Nowhere is this better illustrated than during "It Came Upon The Midnight Clear." We have never understood what "The Little Drummer Boy" had to do with Christmas. For those who do, John's rhythmic version will hit the spot.

"O Little Town of Bethlehem" and "Joy to The World" add to the festive spirit. The latter gets a partial "trem-off" treatment. The Page organ still sounds good un-trem'd. John uses full combinations, orchestral bells and xylophone to give a crispness to "Jingle Bells." It works. "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks" gets a traditional treatment, and tremes are used sparingly. "Silent Night" is played with the reverence it deserves, especially when the Page Tibia is featured. The ef-

fect is somewhat marred by a solo reed in need of voicing touch-up.

A rhythmic and lighthearted "Winter" opens Side II with the tonal percussions dominating, then back to the majestic for "Birthday of a King" played on an auditorium-filling registration. This is followed by "The Herald Angels" in an often Baroque style. Next, a happy "Here Comes Santa Claus," which is quite reminiscent of "Ain't We Got Fun," and pleasantly so. Then a maestoso "Adeste Fideles" during which that off-key reed is heard briefly. Then on to a gentle "Silver Bells" followed by "Angels from The Realms of Glory." "Away in A Manger" is given a traditional treatment for the verse, but the Tibia takes over for the chorus. A very good Tibia. The closer is, appropriately, Schubert's "Ave Maria," played very sweetly. John is in fine theatrical form throughout these selections. In fact, we have not heard him play better.

Recording is good. The package includes notes about the music, the instrument and the organist in very fine type. Incidentally, the profits from this recording are spent for maintenance and improvement of the Anderson Paramount organ. A good cause, and the cassette is well-worth the reasonable price.

**NICKELODEON THEATRE MUSIC, played on the Robert-Morton "Fotoplayer" by Dennis James. Available only on cassette; \$10.98 postpaid (New York residents add 7% sales tax) from Vestal Press Ltd., Box 97, Vestal, New York 13850.**

The first instrument to be widely used to accompany silent movies was the piano. For a while it sufficed, but was limited in supplying all of the emotional moods called for as film stories became more complex. So, additions were made: first, a battery of sound effects actuated by the pianist's muscle power, hand pulls which acted directly on hammers which

whacked the cymbals, wood blocks, drums, etc.; then short sets of pipes began to appear, usually a 4' Flute or String (or Quintadena) with ranges of 49 to 65 notes, played from the full, 88-note piano keyboard. It wasn't long before the builders discovered that they could obtain a variety of pleasant effects by unifying the abbreviated pipework and later adding mutations to the Flute at 2 2/3' and 1 3/5' (not to mention a 2' Piccolo). Thus the range of the pipework began to expand, first upward (it was cheaper), then downward to encompass an 8' Bass Flute. This model has 31 orchestral bells and one chime — that's about where this Model 25 Robert-Morton Fotoplayer was in the gradual metamorphosis to full theatre organ status a few years later.

Dennis James has been careful to select (or improvise) music in keeping with the times of this model, which graced small movie houses (often converted stores they called "Nickelodeons" based on the price of admissions) in the first quarter of this century. At the stage of development illustrated here, the pipes were extra; the performer still depended on the piano as his mainstay. Thus, we rarely hear the pipes alone, although the piano could be muted. The piano lefthand provided the foundation while the pipes rarely soloed. That's the setting for this interesting look back to the development of the theatre organ. At this point, it hadn't quite arrived.

Let's look at the selections. Side I: An improvisation with titles which don't mean much, except descriptively, a melange of the type of music played in the early movie days which left nothing to the imagination. The titles which Dennis James has supplied are: "The Great Train Robbery," a Strauss-like main theme and a dance-hall scene (borrowed from Stephen Foster's "Doo-dah"); "Ragtime," "Nightingale" (a hurry), "Struggle Music," "Mysterioso," "Furioso," and a second Ragtime tune named "Bobolink." The moods depicted are self-explanatory.

Side II is a bit more complex; it is rolls



Dennis James, ready for the silent movies.

punched out by some long-forgotten roll-perforator, but with embellishments added by Dennis James. The titles are: "Serenade Grotesque," "Sorrow Theme," (organ alone briefly), "Implorations," "Treachery and Vengeance," and the closer is "Gawky Rube" (probably played on the screen by Wesley Barry who specialized in such roles in the 1920s). It isn't as descriptive in the "Rube Department" as "Goofus."

Dennis obviously did much research in the legacy of such prolific silent film composers as J.S. Zamecnik, Otto Langey, Max Bergunker and Scott Joplin and Eubie Blake for the rags. His stylings might be described as "authentic." At no time does he get out of character. Remember, this period in silent film accompaniment might be described as the "shoot-'em-up" era when action dominated on the screen. Subtleties came later. Both the Fotoplayer and Dennis James come out with a large plus.

Incidentally, this music was first released on an LP disc by Concert Recording some years ago. It's worth a second hearing. We might add that this tape is being issued as a companion piece to the new book, *Nickelodeon Theatres and Their Music*, by David Bowers, a noted authority on such instruments. The book is also published by Vestal Press.

**RHAPSODY IN TWO, Howard Beaumont and Byron Jones play the Wurlitzer Style F at the Mechanical Music Museum at Cotton. Available from the Organ Literature Foundation, 45 Norfolk Road, Braintree, Massachusetts 02184. Priced at \$9.00 plus \$2.00 postage per order.**

In a two-hundred-seat, authentic cinema at the Mechanical Music Museum at Cotton, a 2/8 Wurlitzer Style F has found a good home. Originally from the Leicester Square Theatre, it has been modified by the addition of a



Style 25 American Fotoplayer, used for silent movies. Trap pulls operate (L to R) sleigh bells, train whistle, tom tom, bass drum, cymbal, Chinese crash cymbal, pistol shot, wind, bird whistle, trolley gong or cathedral chime. Side chests also contain three ranks of organ pipes and other sound effects. (John J. Young Photo)

piano and the replacement of the Tuba with a Trumpet. The installation and the environment have made this organ sound like much more than eight ranks — a truly superb Wurlitzer. Both artists know how to get the best from this instrument.

Side I: Howard Beaumont. While being a rather traditional theatre organist, Mr. Beaumont brings flair and life to his performances. There are, however, three selections that have weak chord progressions which detract from his solid style.

Side II: Byron Jones. As outstanding a ballad organist as you might want to hear, "Always" has never been played better, and "L'Amour, Toujours L'Amour" is truly outstanding. Ballad organists are not often exciting, but Byron Jones certainly is!

The recording is excellent, and the pressing is good. This album is a must!

BOB SHAFTER

**COUNTRY GARDENS, Nigel Ogden at the organ of Tatton Hall, Knutsford, Cheshire. Available from Mr. V.A. Drinkall, 4 High Elm Road, Hale Barns, Altrincham, Cheshire, England. International money order \$12.00 postpaid airmail.**

Originally built by Henry Willis and Son in 1935, and modified considerably by Alfred E.

Davies in 1938 and 1950, this 3/34 is an interesting example of English residential Romantic/Orchestral organ building. Restoration began in 1975, by the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust, and was completed in 1977. This organ has some incredible lush sounds, but the upper work screams — partly because it is not in tune and partly because it is just too loud.

Mr. Odgen's credits are many and varied, but here it will suffice to say that he has a thorough understanding of classical, orchestral and theatre music. His performances are flawless and tasteful, and he utilizes the resources of this organ to their best advantage. His program is, as the title of the album suggests, "The Flower Dance," "My Wild Irish Rose," "We'll Gather Lilacs," "Country Gardens," etc.

The recording engineer slipped up a bit here. The recording sounds as though the microphone was placed too close to the organ, and that it was recorded too loud. It actually distorts in a couple of places, and there were a couple of rather loud, annoying pops on the review copy.

This album would make an interesting addition to a collection because of the uniqueness of the instrument, or if you happen to be particularly fond of the type of music presented.

BOB SHAFTER

**BURNS, ROBERT ("Bobby")**

West Coast organist in the 1920s. Organist of the Liberty Theatre in Seattle, Washington, in 1926 and organist of the Broadway Theatre in Portland, Oregon, in 1927.

**BURRSTON, PERCY**

Organist in the Salem, Oregon, area, who opened the Elsinore Theatre in Salem in 1926 and remained there as organist.

**BURRIES, MAY W.**

Organist of the Broadway Theatre in Richmond, Virginia, in 1925.

**BURRIS, DOROTHY**

Organist of the Pekin, Illinois, Theatre in 1930.

**BURROUGHS, W. RAY (Wesley)**

Organist of the Regent Theatre in Rochester, New York, in 1914. Organist of the Madison Theatre (Wurlitzer) in Rochester, New York, and Lyndhurst's Kohl organ in Rochester in 1927. Later Contributing Editor to *Diapason*, where he wrote articles and submitted news clips on the theatre organ to that periodical.

**BURTON, HOWARD**

Born August 6, 1901, near Woodburn, Iowa, in Clark County. Burton began playing the piano and organ for silent movies at the Strand Theatre in Creston, Iowa, in November of 1923. He played a winter engagement at the Rex Theatre in Geneseo, New York, in November 1926, then returned to the Strand Theatre in Creston, playing there until August 1929. He then entered the Knauss School of Theatre Organ Playing at Allentown, Pennsylvania, for an advanced seven-month course in theatre organ study. He broadcast over Iowa radio stations KMA in Shenandoah and KSIB in Creston. He played for many special events such as horse shows, clubs and dances. Burton's last theatre engagement was at the Paramount Theatre in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where he was featured soloist on the Wurlitzer from November 1958 to 1961.

**BURTON, MARTHA**

Played the Rembert Theatre in Longview, Texas (a 1/4 Seeburg combination piano-organ).

**BUSHONG, ERNEST**

Played the Ligonier Theatre in Ligonier, Indiana, in 1926.

**BUSWELL, BILL**

Buswell started his professional career at the age of 16, at the Comerford-Public Roosevelt Theatre in Scranton, Pennsylvania, where he was billed as "Scranton's Youngest Organist," and where he gave daily radio broadcasts from the organ console of the Masonic Temple. For 15 years he played intermission solos at theatres in Newark and Irvington in New Jersey, and at Cleveland, Ohio. When sound movies displaced theatre organists, he turned to playing and selling

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1986

**BIOGRAPHICAL  
DICTIONARY  
OF  
THEATRE ORGANISTS**

by Dr. John W. Landon



**BURCHARD, E. (MRS.)**

Vice President of the Cleveland Theatre Organist's Club in 1923.

**BURKETT, BURTON**

Organist of the Strand Theatre in Muncie, Indiana, in 1924.

**BURLAND, HERBERT W.**

Organist of the Rialto Theatre in Los Angeles, California, in 1922 and 1923.

**BURNHAM, FRED**

Organist of the Irvington Theatre in Portland, Oregon, in 1927.

**BURICH, S. J. (Mrs.)**

Broadcast over Radio Station WOC, Davenport, Iowa, in 1922.

Herbert Burland

(Photo from Larry Widman)





Howard Burton at the 3/11 Wurlitzer, Paramount Theatre, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1958-1961.

electronic instruments in the Pocono Mountain resorts, in Baltimore and Cleveland. One engagement had Buswell playing piano and organ simultaneously each evening for ten years. At the same time he was Staff Organist at Radio Station WGAR with his own shows, *Top of the Morning*, and *Give Billy a Hand*. Baseball fans enjoyed his artistry at the Cleveland Municipal Stadium for two seasons. In 1957 he joined the sales staff of the J. L. Hudson Company of Detroit in their piano and organ salon and subsequent engagements have been in hotels, clubs and restaurants in the Detroit area. He played several concerts for the Detroit Theater Organ Club and for the Motor City Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society.

#### BUTLER, EDDIE

Born in Council Bluffs, Iowa, Butler began studying piano at the age of four at St. Francis' Academy in Council Bluffs. At age seven he learned the rudiments of playing the organ and by 11 years of age he began accompanying silent films at the old Liberty Theatre. At the same time he was taking organ lessons in Chicago once a week. His father worked for the railroad, so Eddie Butler used his father's pass, took the seven o'clock sleeper on Friday nights, and awakened the next morning in

Franklin Butte at the Kimball Organ, 20th Century Theatre, Juneau, Alaska, 1954. (Franklin Butte Photo)



Chicago, ready for his lessons.

Butler's career has taken him around the world. He has performed at church and theatre organs in Rome, Paris, London, Vienna, Madrid, Prague, Budapest, New York City, Mexico City and Los Angeles. In 1969 he gave a private recital before Pope Paul VI at the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. He has recorded with Mario Lanza and Andre Segovia, classical guitarist. He served for a time as official organist for the Academy of Motion Picture, Radio and Television Arts and Sciences. Yet, of all his experiences, none was more memorable than becoming organist of the 3/13 Wurlitzer in Omaha's Orpheum Theatre. It was a case of "local boy makes good." The Orpheum, designed by Rapp and Rapp, seated more than 3000 people, boasted a ceiling of ivory and gold, walls lined with marble imported from Italy, and a \$7000 chandelier. Advance publicity described it as "a triumph of beauty, elegance and majesty." Opening night, October 9, 1927, featured guest artist J. Earl Estes at the organ accompanying a silent film, *The Fighting Eagle* (starring Omaha's own Hollywood star, Rod La Rocque).

Butler, long associated with the Omaha Orpheum, now plays the organ at St. John's Church on the Creighton University campus (Omaha) each Sunday. He plays an electronic organ for the appearances of the Kansas City-Omaha Kings at the City Auditorium, and operates his own recording company in Harlan, Iowa, where he now makes his home.

#### BUTTE, FRANKLIN

Butte was a radio engineer from Portland, Oregon, assigned to Juneau, Alaska, in September 1953 by the U.S. Army Signal Corps. He restored the Kimball organ in the 20th Century Theatre, Juneau, and played intermissions daily from 1953 to 1955. Also, because of Butte's involvement as a radio announcer-engineer, the organ was featured on a live radio morning show and in Sunday afternoon broadcasts. Butte played requests sent in by listeners. This instrument was subsequently sold to Mr. Howard Remly of Douglas, Alaska, who later presented it to the State of Alaska. In 1976 it was installed in an enclosed courtyard of the State Office Building in Juneau.

In 1965 Butte purchased a 2/8 Wurlitzer from the Northern Lights Presbyterian Church, Juneau (he had previously owned and sold this instrument), and installed it in his home. In 1971 he moved the organ to a larger residence, adding a console from the Rivera Theatre, Chicago, which was shipped to Anchorage via Northwest Orient Airlines jumbo jet. Since 1971 thousands of school children from the Anchorage School District and hundreds of adults have toured the installation.

Butte has also performed at the 3/8 Robert-Morton pipe organ installed in 1975 at Uncle's Pizza in Anchorage.

#### BYERS, GENE

Organist of the Rainbow and Climax Theatres in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1927.

#### BYRD, DESSA

See biography in THEATRE ORGAN, March/April 1984.

#### BYRD, VIRGINIA (Mrs. Stephen Rechteris)

Virginia Byrd Rechteris is the younger sister of Dessa Byrd. She was born August 12, 1914, to William N. Byrd and Emma Holt Byrd in Robinson, Illinois. William Byrd was quite musical, playing several instruments without formal training. Sister Dessa was 16 years of age when Virginia was born and brother Noel Byrd was 14. William Byrd died shortly after Virginia was born. When Dessa won a scholarship to study piano at the Indianapolis Conservatory of Music, mother Byrd moved her family to Indianapolis to a house on Walnut Street where the Scottish Rite Cathedral now stands.

Virginia attended Shortridge High School and Arthur Jordan Conservatory of Music. Theory, counterpoint, music history and composition were everyday classes, along with piano lessons. At age 14 Virginia began to study organ with Dale Young, organist at Roberts Park United Methodist Church. While studying music, Virginia found practical application by playing for weddings, dance classes, parties and banquets.

In 1936 Virginia was employed by the Pearson Music Company, Indiana agents for the new Hammond organ. The first Hoosier demonstrators of the new instrument were Dessa and Virginia Byrd. Virginia traveled to Pearson's stores in Indiana to give programs and demonstrate the versatility of the Hammond organ.

Outstanding mastery of the Hammond organ led to her selection as demonstrator of the instrument at the National Music Dealers Convention in New York City in 1941.

In 1940 Virginia entered the field of radio, doing programs for WIRE (with studios on the ninth floor of the Claypool Hotel). The Novachord, with tone produced entirely by oscillating radio tubes, had been invented by Laurens Hammond of the Hammond Instrument Company. Virginia's Hammond organ and Novachord talents aired on a daily feature, "Editorially Speaking." Virginia became staff organist at WIRE when sister Dessa married in 1942.

In January of 1942 Virginia married Stephen Rechteris. When daughter Beverly was born, big sister Dessa took over for Virginia to play her programs. Beverly Ann Rechteris is now a graphic artist with WRTV, Channel 6, Indianapolis, Indiana.

During the eight years with WIRE Virginia was organist on the *Trolley Trio*, featuring Harry Bason and vocalist Frank Parrish. On *The Block's Make-Up Program*, heard daily from the WIRE studios at 12 noon, Virginia played Deagan chimes amplified through large speakers on the roof of the Claypool Hotel. A most popular program aired each night at 11 for Hook's Dependable Drugs was *Starlight Trail*, with Sidney Mason reading poetry.

In September 1949 Jimmy Boyer returned to Cornell University to finish his college de-

gree. He offered to Virginia, and she accepted, his staff position with WISH-TV, a new station started in 1943. Her first program was in 1949 from the Indiana State Fair WISH studios. Virginia had many commercial programs while at WISH (with studios located in the Board of Trade Building).

Virginia Byrd Rechteris has a number of firsts with WISH and WISH-TV. By playing at their inaugural program, she was the first organist to play at their new studios at 1440 North Meridian Street. On July 1, 1954, almost four years later, Virginia played the background music for the dedicatory program of the second television station of WISH-TV, Indianapolis, Indiana.

*Virginia Byrd Time*, an all-request program, was on radio for several years. Virginia was featured soloist on *The Catherine Daniels Show*, and the *Laugh With The Ladies* show.

*Chapel Door*, a 15-minute interdenominational religious program, debuted on television in 1954. It ran for a full 16 years, becoming the longest running religious program in the Middle West. Virginia was co-director of the show and played for the respective singers who assisted the minister with the program.

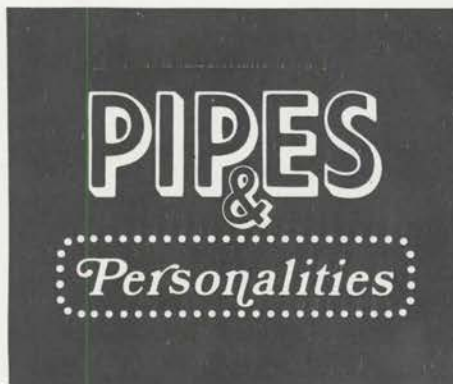
Currently, Virginia is heard on *Meditation*, a sign-on and sign-off program for WISH-TV. Each week Virginia programs ministers of different denominations, taping seven three-minute sign-on and seven sign-off programs. Virginia plays a piano background for the programs, which are taped on Monday. They are viewed 14 times the following week. On occasion, Virginia also appears on the current *Indy Today Show* with Alpha Blackburn.

Along with her musical association with WISH-TV, Virginia has found time through the years to devote many hours to civic work. She received the TSP Award for her many civic and volunteer projects. "TSP" stands for "Those Special People," and is an honor conferred by the Women in Communications group.

Presently, Virginia is a member of the Civic

Theatre Board of Directors, Repertory Theatre of Christian Theological Seminary, American Theatre Organ Society and the American Guild of Organists.

Husband Stephen Rechteris is treasurer of Hugh J. Baker Steel Company. □



## Silents Set for TV Showing

Subscribers to Bravo cable service were delighted last summer when they tuned in and viewed the most complete version of D.W. Griffith's controversial *The Birth of a Nation* yet to be seen on TV. Best of all, it had a fine organ score but failed to credit the organist who improvised an original musical setting rather than use the now-dated score issued at the time of the film's original release in 1915. A little digging revealed that the scorer was Rosa Rio, and the only sour note was that the score was played on a Hammond. Rosa explained that she would have preferred a pipe organ, but since the Marr & Colton in the Thomaston Opera House is not available, and the Austin in Shelton High School can't be rented on a regular basis, there are no pipe organs near enough to her Connecticut home for practical use, so she settled for the Hammond B3000 which, she says, "has two kinds of piano and a snazzy Post Horn."



Rosa Rio

(Photo courtesy Stu Green)

Bravo Cable Service reveals that it plans to run six or eight silent classics each year since they received such favorable comments about the first one. These films are distributed in video cassette form by Video Yesteryear, Sandy Hook, Connecticut, which we hope will locate some suitable pipes for Rosa so her work at the manuals and pedals will be that much more authentic.

## Good News from Hawaii

*Honolulu*, a magazine published in and for Hawaii, ran an excellent article in August about theatre organs and the Aloha chapter of ATOS. The author, Ben Hyams, writes a column entitled "Classical Music," and the occasion for this article was a joint meeting/concert for Aloha Chapter and Hawaii Chapter AGO which featured John McCreary at the Hawaii Theatre Robert-Morton. McCreary introduced long-time ATOS member Frank Loney who played music from *Show Boat* plus the introduction to the third act of *Carmen* with "an unbelievably realistic flute sound," which turned out to be a real flute played by Bob Alder. Aloha Chapter is, according to Mr. Hyams, the "caretaker, repairer, restorer and, in general, foster parent of the organ."

## Carillon Player Chimes in to Play Rock Songs, Requests

Can you imagine "Material Girl" being played on a carillon? How about the theme from *The Jetsons*?

It's happening every day on the DePauw University campus at Greencastle. Martin Ellis, a freshman music major from Monrovia, plays the 37-bell carillon atop the Performing Arts Center between classes and varies the music menu to include popular rock songs and old TV theme songs.

"It's something I thought was interesting and kind of fun," Ellis said. "Sometimes I just go up there and klunk around; it depends on how I feel."

Traditionally, the carillon is programmed

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Dessa Byrd at the piano in her home in Indianapolis; Virginia Byrd Rechteris, her sister, standing beside her.

(Virginia Byrd Rechteris Photo)



electronically to play a standard piece at certain times of day.

Now, the fare has been spiced and Ellis even is willing to take music requests from other students.

From *The Indianapolis Star*

Note: Martin Ellis is the 1985 winner of the ATOS Young Organist Award.

## Editorial from COS Newsletter

The upright piano was stacked high with cards. The fireplace looked like a Flower Boutique. The place? Florence de Jong's flat in Kensington Church Street. The occasion? Her ninetieth birthday on August 1. The first lady cinema organist in the land sipped a little whiskey as her friends gathered around to wish her "Happy Birthday," and many more. Friend Yvonne Smith brought a beautiful cake with nine candles, and sister Ena Baga and COS members Joan and Bill Hiscock organised the tea. Ena entertained for a brief while at the piano, and a very jolly time was had by all. Your editor did the washing up.

TONY MOSS

## John Barlow gets Ian Sutherland Award

The Ian Sutherland Award, named after the former editor of the Cinema Organ Society Newsletter, is presented annually to a young organist who deserves encouragement. The award includes a cup to be held for one year, a concert alongside a "big-name" organist and the production of a cassette of the young artist. The 1986-87 Ian Sutherland artist is John Barlow, from Gomerall in West Yorkshire. His year-in-office began with a concert with veteran theatre organist Bobby Pagan on the Christie organ at the Granada Theatre, Walthamstow, London.

Ian Sutherland Award-winner John Barlow joins veteran Bobby Pagan at the 3/12 Christie in the Granada Walthamstow. (John D. Sharp Photo)



Buster and Betty Matteson with Allison and Hector Olivera at the console of the Mattesons' Wurlitzer.

John Barlow has been involved with theatre organs since 1980, when he played the Three J's Compton which was situated only 200 yards from his home. John's style fuses traditional and modern aspects in both his repertoire and performances. He believes strongly in the theatre organ as a musical instrument capable of great expression. His cassette, entitled "Music in the Dales," features the COS Northern Wurlitzer at Hamps-thwaite and is available from the COS, 23 Aveling Park Road, London E17 4NS, U.K., for \$8.00 postpaid.

## Hector in Texas

Recently, Hector Olivera gave a superb concert at the Miller Open Air Theatre in

Houston. However, the evening before the concert date, Hector was honored at a reception at the home of Buster and Betty Matteson. During the party, Hector played the Matteson's 3/13 Wurlitzer for the 100 guests, and all agreed that the organ had never sounded so good. Harry Heth and Rick Mat-



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thews spent a couple of days fine-tuning the instrument, and it really paid off. Open console was also enjoyed by the guests. We really feel we were blessed to be able to attend such an event. There's only one Hector Olivera, and we were able to enjoy his music as well as sharing conversation with him and his wife, Allison. We hope to be able to present him in concert at the Jefferson Theatre in Beaumont next spring.

FLOYD BROUSSARD

## Larsen and Curley in Convention Overture Program

Two of the organ world's top stars will join forces for a spectacular Overture to the 1987 ATOS Convention in Los Angeles when Lyn Larsen and Carlo Curley play solos and duets on Pasadena Civic Auditorium's 5/28 Möller and Allen Organ Company's top-of-the-line classical organ. This unique event is scheduled for eight o'clock on Sunday night, June 21. All seats are reserved and conventioners will be able to choose either main floor center or lower balcony center. This event will be open to the public, but ATOSers have the best seats reserved for them at just \$17.00 which includes round-trip bus transportation from the Biltmore.

RALPH BEAUDRY

## The Chicago is Back

On September 18, the star of Chicago Area's show in the newly restored Chicago Theatre was the grand old 4/29 Mighty Wurlitzer, breathing heavily as she adapted to the three distinct styles of Rob Calcaterra, Lew Williams, and Hal Pearl. It was a magical night in the old movie palace which has been saved from the wrecking ball to reign once more as the Grande Dame of the Chicago entertainment world.

Some 3000 fans trooped into the magnificent lobby, which was filled with the sounds of Tom Gnaster's piano artistry. TV celebrity Buddy Black welcomed the audience, and the show began with Rob Calcaterra's gentle nurturing of the Wurlitzer's dulcet tones, utilizing every rank in an expert mixture of the tender and the passionate. Next, Hal Pearl captured the nostalgic in the crowd with a



Rob Calcaterra, Lew Williams and Hal Pearl opened the Chicago for CATOE in September.

(Bill Lamb Photo)

rousing sing-along and accompaniment of a silent Laurel and Hardy movie. Hal got so carried away that he played right through the intermission! Lew Williams tantalized us with exotic arrangements of little-known compositions, with a few standards added for balance. The highlight, if one could top all this, was a duet with Lew Williams on the Wurlitzer and Rob Calcaterra on the grand piano offering a concert version of Gershwin's immortal "Rhapsody in Blue." All three artists joined in the finale, Williams on the organ, Pearl on the piano, and Calcaterra enthusiastically belting out "Chicago."

Yes, the Chicago is back with a bang — and so are the organ fans!

HAL PRITCHARD

## CORRECTION

Mr. Leonard Santon, Chairman of the Cedar Rapids Area chapter has requested that we correct an error in the article entitled "There Is A Way" on page 14 of the September/October THEATRE ORGAN. The article states that his chapter "donated the instrument to Kansas City (Missouri) Theatre Organ, Inc.," and Mr. Santon would like it made clear that this instrument was not

donated, but was hurriedly removed and an agreement was later reached on terms of payment agreeable to both seller and purchaser. Mr. Santon says that the Cedar Rapids Area chapter does not wish to be erroneously looked upon as a heroic benefactor for they still retain the title to the instrument, and they want the record to be correct and to experience the fulfillment of the contract terms.

□

## Rodgers Organ Names New Chief

HILLSBORO, OR — Robert Ulery, 43, a 15-year high tech executive with Hewlett Packard Company of Corvallis, Oregon, has been named president and chief executive of-

The Chicago Theatre ready for theatre organ buffs.

(Bill Lamb Photo)



## Magazine Problems?

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ficer of Rodgers Organ Company.

The announcement was made by Bruce Stevens, president and chief executive officer of Steinway Musical Properties, Inc. Newton, Massachusetts, parent to Rodgers Organ Company, Steinway & Sons, Lyon & Healy harps, and Gemeinhardt flutes.

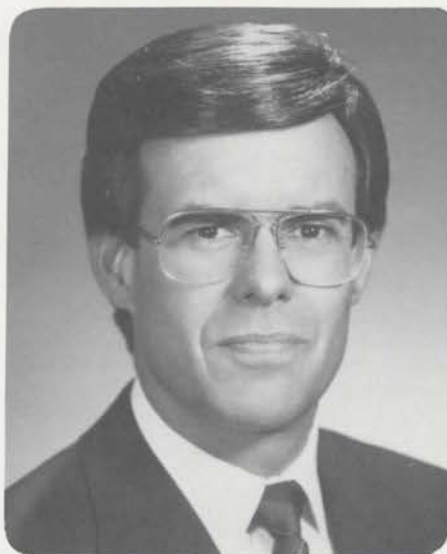
The ten-month search to find a successor for Allen Harrah, former Rodgers president who moved to Atlanta to become administrator of the Walter & Emilie Spivey Foundation, Inc. was headed by the Boston-based recruiting firm, Organization Resources Incorporated.

Rodgers' new CEO has been a key executive with Hewlett-Packard (HP) in several of the company's strategic moves which have brought increased market share and worldwide attention to the California-based computer and electronics equipment firm.

In the early 1970s, Ulery sold commercial and technical computer systems in a variety of territories in the Los Angeles area. He was a member of the \$1 Million Club, and Hundred Percent Club (for achieving in excess of 100% of quota), and was a member of HP's Field Advisory Council to the Business Computer Group.

From 1977-81 Ulery managed all field sales and support activities for HP's commercial computer systems operations located in Orange County, California. Over a four-year period, the business grew at a compounded rate of over 38%. The support business, including a new customer training center, matured into a profit based activity during this time.

Ulery, who has managed the development of new products — from identification of market demand through to introduction and



Robert Ulery

worldwide distribution, sales, and support — understands the importance of timely products, launched at the right price point for a particular market segment, with the features needed to be competitive.

For the past two years, Ulery has been HP's technical marketing manager at its Portable Computer Division in Corvallis, Oregon, and has managed all elements of the division's technical support including service engineering, software support, product documentation and service manuals, localization of products for major international markets, and internal/customer training. He was also the Product Marketing Manager responsible for the development and worldwide introduction of the market's first MS-DOS based, battery-

powered portable personal computer for HP.

Robert Ulery holds a M.S. in Marketing from the University of Arizona, and a B.S. in Mathematics from California State Polytechnic College, Pomona Campus. He is married, and his wife, Ewa, is presently a doctoral candidate in psychological foundations at Oregon State University.

Steinway Musical Properties officials were at the Rodgers factory in Hillsboro, Oregon to make the announcement. Bruce Stevens said, "I know the search has seemed long, but now I know the time was worth it. We have located the best possible candidate for our needs."

First official occasion for dealers to meet Rodgers' new president will be December 8 at the Hillsboro facility when Rodgers Executive Partnership (REP) members convene to hold their second dealer panel meeting.

According to Rodgers' director of marketing, James Walls, the newly-formed REP Panel has already proven to be an invaluable tool in marketing assessment of field needs in an organized network of dealer feedback. REP members include: Fred Buch, Buch Church Organ Company, Ephrata, PA; Robert Daffer, R.A. Daffer, Inc., Fulton, MD; R.D. Roberts, Roberts Music Center, Columbia, SC; Gerald Daynes, Jr., Daynes Music Co., Salt Lake City, Utah; John Green, Green & Associates, Lincoln, NE; and Pat Phaneuf, Scott's Piano & Sound, Grand Forks, ND.

Ulery, who himself served on HP's Field Advisory Council, told reporters he strongly supports dealer feedback, and looks forward to getting a hands-on grasp of the organ business through REP members, other Rodgers dealers, and future NAMM shows. □

## LOS ANGELES HAS MORE THAN ORGANS!

Our Convention Hotel is located in the new center of Los Angeles. With historic Pershing Square on one side and skyscraping Bunker Hill on the other, it is close to shopping, the Music Center, the Civic Center, finance and business.

And close to freeways that can whisk you away to these major tourist attractions:

Magic Mountain — 40 min.  
J. Paul Getty Museum — 30 min.  
Century City — 20 min.  
Farmers Market — 15 min.  
Universal Studios — 20 min.  
L.A. Zoo — 20 min.  
Griffith Observatory — 15 min.  
Dodger Stadium — 10 min.

Coliseum — 15 min.  
L.A. International Airport — 30 min.  
Marina del Rey — 30 min.  
Marineland — 40 min.  
Queen Mary — 35 min.  
Knott's Berry Farm — 30 min.  
Disneyland — 30 min.  
Movieland Wax Museum — 40 min.



**PLAN NOW — Sunday, June 21 thru Saturday, June 27, 1987**

# something new for something old

by Ray DeVault

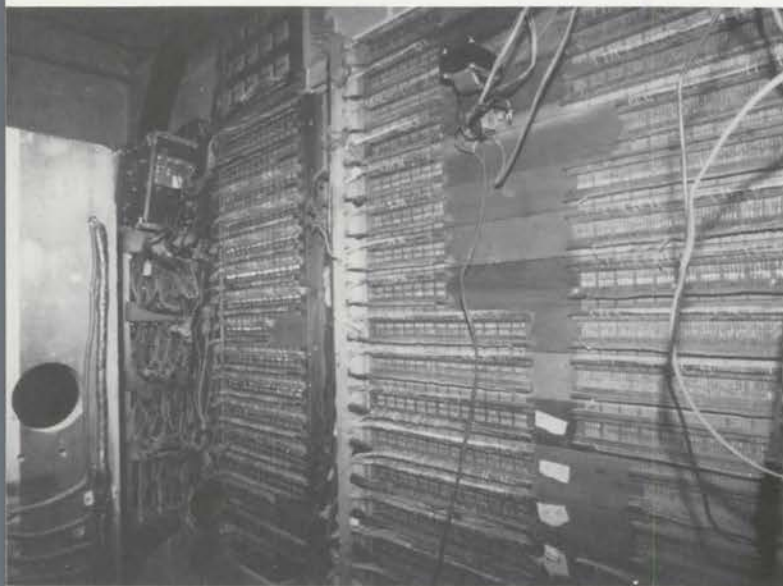
The original unified pipe organ relays were cumbersome, exceptionally heavy caseworks filled with chattering magnetic relays (some had pneumatic action) and were connected by miles of wire that became wrist-size cables running to organ chambers and consoles. These have been shrinking in the past two decades, and today there are a number of electronic systems that have outmoded the originals. Solid-state electronic relay systems, for example, are a vast improvement in that

weight is no longer a problem; there are no moving parts; less wiring is needed, and space requirements dictate their minimum measurements. Electronic relays have provided greater flexibility which has led to the ability to produce recordings and playback without the necessity of hauling in expensive recording equipment.

However, for all their new features, solid-state systems are still saddled with some limitations. And now another new idea has ap-

peared in the organ world. Conceived in the mind of an electronics expert, the latest relay system for an organ, either electronic or pipe, provides even greater flexibility and simplicity through a computer and software written especially to perform all organ functions, including record, playback and repetitious overdubbing, if desired.

Because it is far more complex than the straight, or classic organ relays which usually have one stop-key for each rank of pipes, only

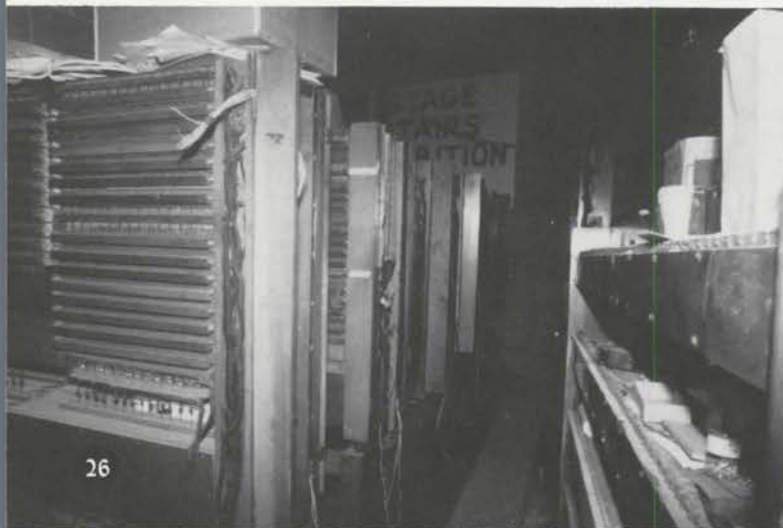


These two photos show parts of the giant Wurlitzer relay in Wichita's Civic Auditorium 4/37 Wurlitzer that have been replaced by computer and flat ribbon cable of the Devtronix system. (Devtronix Photo)



Mike Coup, head of Wichita Theatre Organ, Inc. holds original Wurlitzer cable in right hand and Devtronix flat ribbon cable in left. The small cable replaced the wrist-thick cable when the Devtronix computer relay was installed in the big 37-rank instrument. (Devtronix Photo)

This is the computer unit that replaces cumbersome, heavy relays in the Devtronix computer relay system. (Devtronix Photo)



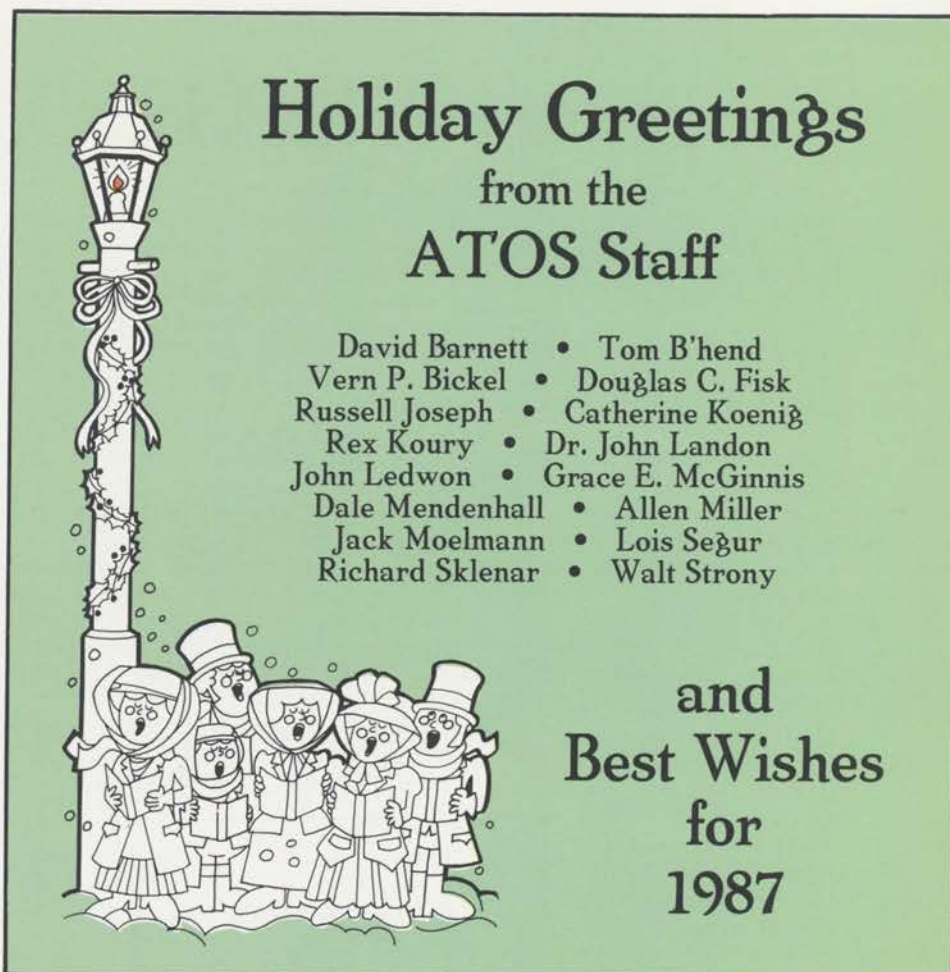
the unified organ relay is the concern of this article. The unified organ relay has the capability of allowing any of the ranks of pipes in an instrument to be played on any of the divisions at the pitches required by specification; this is accomplished by a complex switch matrix. As noted, relay rooms of large theatre organs are a myriad of hundreds of multi-contact pneumatically or magnetically operated relays with thousands of soldered connections and miles of wire evolving into various sizes of cables. Combination actions and special effects create an even more complex system.

There was no change in organ relays until long after the transistor was invented. Germanium transistors and diodes, which were really not adequate for intended functions, were very expensive and could not be adapted. It was not until silicon solid state devices became available that better characteristics appeared for use in solid state relays. It was then that the simple silicon two-diode and resistor switch came into use which eliminated all moving contacts and increased reliability. However, it did little to reduce the number of wires in cables and the number of solder joints. Many diode switch relays are currently in use and are still being manufactured because they are simple, and the average organ man who understood the old switch relays can understand them. However, the units are expensive to produce, and the cost is still very high for their minimum capability.

With the advent of the integrated circuit (IC), it became feasible to introduce scanning key and stop contacts at super speed by a method known as multiplexing. Not limited exclusively to organ relays, multiplexing was developed years ago for circuits in the electronics industry — its organ use was adapted primarily to reduce the number of wires normally necessary. Many organ men are still anti-electronics because of the stories that were perpetuated by early designs when the needed variety of ICs was not available. Too, there were times when organ magnets' high current switching transients got into signal circuits and caused no end of trouble by switching incorrectly. One installation would be trouble-free while another might have all sorts of malfunctions.

While it is the relay we are discussing, many things that have been said also apply to solid state combination action which interfaces, or joins, the relay wiring at the stop switch. Their designs must be compatible if a single stop contact is used for both circuits. Both solid-state, multiplexed relays and solid-state combination actions are very complex circuits and require large quantities of ICs, transistors and diodes on may printed circuit boards to make up the total circuits. In such systems, it is common to order add-on circuits for special functions.

In 1979, Dick Wilcox, who was living in Newport Beach, California, was a computer designer and organ buff who reasoned that the many different electronic circuits used in the latest solid-state relays and combination actions could be replaced with a computer



# Holiday Greetings

from the  
**ATOS Staff**

David Barnett	•	Tom B'hend
Vern P. Bickel	•	Douglas C. Fisk
Russell Joseph	•	Catherine Koenig
Rex Koury	•	Dr. John Landon
John Ledwon	•	Grace E. McGinnis
Dale Mendenhall	•	Allen Miller
Jack Moelmann	•	Lois Seğur
Richard Sklenar	•	Walt Strony

and  
**Best Wishes**  
for  
**1987**

and special software written specifically to perform all organ functions, including record and playback. He ordered a four-manual, Wurlitzer-style French console from Devtronix Organs. This console had 325 stops with 20 sets of tone generators because Dick felt that he should make the first model of an organ computer control and test it on a large instrument. The computer for this organ was a new model just introduced by his company and one of the first to use the new Motorola 68000 microprocessor.

Interface boards were designed so the computer could work with the console and the tone generators. Dick wrote the software while Devtronix built up the console and installed the electronics. The organ was completed and tested only a few hours before a December 21, 1981, Christmas party at Devtronix hosted by Sierra Chapter ATOS. The first demonstration of this organ was given at this time (An article and cover photo of the organ may be found in the January, 1982, *Console*). The organ remained at Devtronix for a year where it was used as a test bed for the computer system and other electronics.

Concurrently, the Old Town Music Hall's 4/23 Wurlitzer in El Segundo, California, had a relay and a console that were falling apart. The keydesk needed rebuilding and the relay needed replacing, but there was a problem because of the need for the organ to be played at nearly every performance. Wilcox agreed to lend the Music Hall his four-manual

console, already wired with interface boards for computer use, and to supply the magnet driver interface boards to connect all chest magnets. The Wurlitzer chest magnets were then wired to the new interface boards and both console and computer were shipped from Devtronix to Old Town Music Hall. All that was needed to make the console play the organ was to plug the small, flat ribbon-cable from pipe chambers into the computer and reprogram the disk memory so the console would know which ranks of pipes were available on the stop rails. The organ was soon playing from the new console and was used for a year until restoration of the Wurlitzer console was completed.

In the meantime, Dr. Dee Williams of Aurora, Colorado, was installing a 10-rank Wurlitzer in his home. He had no space for his Wurlitzer relay and had heard about the computer organ control, so he visited Devtronix to learn more about it. He was impressed with what he saw, and ordered one for his installation. It was fabricated using the same commercial computer used in the Wilcox console. Williams pre-wired console input boards and chest magnet output boards, and a quick trip was made to his residence with the computer to install and program it to match the pipe ranks to the stops on the three-manual Wurlitzer console. In two days the organ was playing from the console. Minor chamber adjustments and some rough tuning needed to be done; however, the sound was tremen-

dous, and Dr. Williams was pleased with the results. His Wurlitzer has been playing perfectly since the spring of 1984.

After reviewing the excellent results of both installations, the company realized that there could be a good market for such a versatile and simple system, but that the use of such an expensive commercial business computer was not practical for many reasons. Rights for the use of the basic computer design were negotiated. This was desirable because it had proven to be a reliable, trouble-free system based on thousands of production units. A new computer was then designed for organ control, and interface boards for this computer, built by Devtronix, are now in their third production run.

To describe this new system and its capabilities, there are only three sections to it — the computer, the INPUT and the OUTPUT boards. The 10 x 12 inch computer board is mounted in a neat 17 x 13 x 5 inch enclosure which also contains the regulated power supply and a 3½ inch drive and disk which permanently contains the special operating system and program. It connects the console to the pipes by software.

Every switch contact in the console is an INPUT signal to the computer. A 5 x 9¼ inch printed circuit, designated an INPUT board with 18 eight-pin connectors, can handle up to 128 contacts. For example, two 61-note keyboards can be connected to one board. As many INPUT boards are required as there are total contacts (pistons, stop switches, playing keys, expression, etc.) divided by 128.

The third part of the system is also a 5 x 9¼ inch printed circuit, designated an OUTPUT board, which has 12 eight-pin connectors and can drive up to 96 magnets (either chest magnets, dual magnet stop assemblies or lights). For example, one OUTPUT board can control a full Tibia rank or up and down coils of 48 stop assemblies.

Stop action OUTPUT boards are used in the console with INPUT boards. All the console boards are daisy-chained together with a small, flat ribbon-cable which plugs into the computer. A second identical ribbon-cable runs from the computer into pipe chambers and daisy-chains with all pipe chest magnet driver OUTPUT boards. This is all the wiring necessary for computer control. Expansion of the organ, both in console contacts and pipe ranks, is as simple as adding the necessary INPUT and OUTPUT boards.

The relay is a software multiplex sampling system and is capable of every known relay action through software control. The system also supports an elaborate capture-type combination action with an almost unlimited number of separate sets of memories, each of which may be recalled instantly. Each of an almost unlimited number of pistons may be considered to be generals and may be assigned to any of the stop switches to function as division pistons. Any stop in the console may be programmed to be a neutral on any piston.

The system is also capable of recording and playing back for up to two or four hours on a 3½ inch floppy memory disk. Total record-

ing time is a function of the number of keystrokes made, not how long the recording takes. Recordings may be made up of any number of selections, and each may be played back instantly from the name or number given the recording. Each recording may be overdubbed up to 17 times, but such a complex recording would be reduced in playing time. The computer, in this case, plays back the previous recording at the same time it is recording the new part being played — try that on your home recorder some time!

Computer control systems are usually ordered in two steps. All INPUT and OUTPUT boards are ordered first and are delivered with an instruction manual with pre-printed wiring sheets so the customer can easily keep track of where each organ connection is on the interface boards. After the wiring is complete, the connection sheets are returned to Devtronix where the organ specification is programmed into the memory disk. The computer is then ordered with the memory disk — the customer plugs the small, flat console and pipe chamber ribbon-cables into the back of the computer — and the pipes will play from the console. An instruction manual is included which explains how to make tests of wiring, how to change mis-wired connections without

touching a soldering iron, how to set up combination action, record, playback and overdub, plus a host of standard features not described here.

Reliability is the key feature of the system since all complex circuits are in software which can easily be changed to perform new functions. The standard INPUT and OUTPUT interface PC boards are extremely simple circuits as their only purpose is to reduce the number of console and chamber wires to two small, flat ribbon-cables.

There are ten of these systems now in operation, and ten others being wired for installations. New Mexico Military Institute in Roswell, New Mexico, was the first to install one, and Lyn Larsen played the dedication of that Wurlitzer in October 1985. Lyn is now installing the same system on a 3/25 church instrument in Phoenix. He recently completed three compact disk recordings on the 4/37 Wurlitzer, which has been equipped with the computer system, in the Wichita Civic Auditorium. Nor-Cal Chapter will have one on the 4/30 Wurlitzer being installed in Berkley Community Theatre, and Bob Maes has ordered one for the 3/20 Barton being erected in the Granada Theatre in Kansas City, Kansas. □

## ORGAN-IZING POPULAR MUSIC

by  
**AL HERMANN**



There are three ways to play popular music on the organ: by note, by ear, and by a combination of both methods. Classical and church organ compositions should be played as written by the composer. This usually requires from six to twelve years of music study with primary emphasis on note reading.

On the other hand, popular music was not intended to be played on the organ! The composers usually had in mind performances by dance bands, pianists, or vocals with piano or orchestra accompaniment. Therefore, the organist who performs popular music on the organ must be able to play by ear and/or study keyboard harmony and arranging techniques in order to play popular songs in a musical manner. The best way for most people is to read the melody notes, use the chord symbols for harmony, and develop your accompaniment by rules or by ear. The disadvantage of playing a published arrangement as written is that you will always sound the same. If you learn to make your own arrangements, your arrangements will improve as you learn more about harmony and what to

do with it.

During the performance of an ordinary popular song on the organ there are six musical elements all working together to make the total sound that the listener hears:

1. Melody — the obvious "tune" that everyone hears
2. Harmony — simple or advanced
3. Bass — alternating, sustained, walking
4. Rhythm — many varieties
5. Tone Color — choice of stops or other tone controls
6. Style — solo or chord melody, phrasing, expression, etc.

If any of these details are not carefully considered, the result is poor, unmusical arrangement.

In subsequent articles, I shall present the necessary arranging techniques to enable you to make a good sounding arrangement of anything you want to play. This is not difficult and can be learned by anyone who loves music enough to make the effort. □

## Hall Console Is Back On Track

Without fanfare, the prompt (left) side console at Radio City Music Hall was returned to its niche for the first time in over two years on Friday, November 14 in the new Christmas Show that opened. The show runs through January 8.

The keydesk had been removed and taken to a large basement dressing room where it was completely restored—all new wiring, keys recovered by Lance Johnson in Fargo, No. Dak., and all worn parts replaced—then brought back up and mounted on its track.

Even the transport system that brakes the console was given attention; a new motor and brakes were installed. The console rides its short distance in and out in well-balanced fashion. It has a three-way safety system: limit switches; if they fail, then the brake system; and finally, if that doesn't keep the big four decker from trying to be seated in the audience, there is a hefty chain attached to the back of the console to yank it to an abrupt halt. Replacement parts for the rebuild came from Arndt Organ Supply and Schantz Organ Co.

The 5,000-circuit main cable was replaced from the console to a new junction that will take care of problems previously encountered, according to Ron Bishop, who directs maintenance of the 58-rank Wurlitzer. He noted the right niche console is still in fairly good shape and will not be rebuilt for several years.

Music Hall management is continuing its on-going maintenance plan for the organ so that the huge music maker does not have to be "down" at any time. This insures that it is available as required for any production in the theatre; Liberace requested its use for his show, as have several other producers.

## Xmas Music For Kalamazoo Mall

Ken Butela, Betty Darling and David Moore will play Christmas music Dec. 5, 6 and 7 at Crossroads Mall in Kalamazoo, Michigan, it was announced in Southwest Michigan Chapter's November newsletter. Member Neil Johnson is loaning his Allen organ and Keyboard World Music is supplying a Technics organ for the three-day music fest.

### "Singing" In Duet

For those who direct glee clubs, choirs and big heavenly bodies, Dallas Public Library has a vocal duet arrangement for the tune, *I Love To Hear You Singing*, it was disclosed by ATOS member A. Howard Pettigrew.

## Nor-Cal Donates \$500 For ATOS Int. NEWS

Nor-Cal Theatre Organ Society has donated the sum of \$500 to help defray cost of publishing ATOS *International NEWS*, it was announced by National President Jack Moelmann. He thanked the chapter on behalf of the Board of Directors and all members of ATOS. "It is organizations and people such as you that allow ATOS to venture on with new projects such as ATOS *International NEWS*," he said.

Also during November, member Bill Exner of Puget Sound Chapter donated \$25 for the NEWS.

## Granada To Have Two Premieres

Granada Theatre Historical Society is presenting two dedication programs for the recently installed Barton organ. On November 22, Kay McAbee played a concert for an audience composed of those who were involved in rescuing the former movie house and turning it into a non-profit performing arts center.

Lyn Larsen plays the second dedication show on Dec. 13. This will be open to the public and features, in addition to the organ premiere, a giant Christmas show on the stage.

According to Robert J. Maes, society president, the newly opened performing arts center has been getting excellent TV coverage. "This draws attention to our efforts to once again bring theatrical entertainment back to Kansas City, Kansas," he said.

## CRATOS Given Fund Donation You Can Visit Castro Wurlly

Geogre Kuba has given \$10,000 to Cedar Rapids Area Theatre Organ Society to establish the Ruth Kuba Scholarship Endowment, it was reported in CRATOS, official newsletter of the society.

A \$500 scholarship will be provided each year for qualified members or children of members based on terms and conditions of the agreement drawn up for the donation. A local bank administers the fund and a scholarship committee made up of members will select the yearly recipients.

## Theatre To Open Organ March 9

St. Paul's World Theatre will dedicate its organ on March 9, 1987, it was learned this month.

## Newsletter Needs Support

Our ATOS *International NEWS* is off and running. This will be the fourth issue since we've started publishing. I hope that you saw the October issue in the center of THEATRE ORGAN JOURNAL. Distributing it in the Journal saves quite a deal of postage and also means that you can keep it with the Journal or remove it from its center position.

We have appreciated receiving all the mail appraising the newsletter in both content and format. Almost all of the letters we have received have been positive, and some have even included ways of improving the publication.

We are in a trial and error period for six months (six issues). Your Board of Directors then has the task of evaluating it and seeing if it fulfills a need for ATOS members and probably more important, can we afford it?

I do want to thank those of you who have made financial contributions to the newsletter. We don't want to increase dues and we don't want to start subscriptions as the latter would be very complicated administratively.

With the majority of ATOS members renewing in the next couple of months, please consider a few dollars additional for this new project. ATOS is moving and we need not only your moral support but your financial support as well. We thank all of you for your help.

Sincerely, Jack Moelmann

## Rosa Rio Taped Over 250 Features

Every Tuesday Rosa Rio records original music scores to great silent photoplays, and to date she has completed over 250 films for Video Yesterday, Sandy Hook, Conn. Recently BRAVO TV network featured *Birth of a Nation* with her original score. "This film proved such a hit with their audiences that BRAVO now presents silent film fare quite often," she said.

## Raymond Bohr III

Raymond F. Bohr, one of the top organists at Radio City Music Hall during the many years the house operated as the leading New York City deluxe film and stage show mecca, is seriously ill, it was learned this month. It is reported he appreciates receiving cards from those who know him and those who heard him at the Music Hall Wurlitzer. His address: 585 Newark Avenue, Apartment 14-B, Elizabeth, New Jersey 07208.

When visiting San Francisco—one of the nation's great cosmopolitan centers—you can embellish your stay with a trip to see, hear and possibly play the famed Castro Theatre Wurlitzer 4/(we refuse to give a rank count since it seems to increase without warning).

Dick Taylor and Ed Stout, the two who are mainstays of maintenance and tender lovers of care for the fabulous instrument, enjoy having visitors. However, due to their heavy organ business schedules, they are not always at the Castro on Saturday and/or Sunday mornings, the normal time devoted to this great warbler.

To arrange your personal appearance, call Taylor and Stout at the organ shop—(415) 541-9211. You will hear one of two things: (1) the voice of either man, or (2) an answering machine voice. If it's the latter, don't give up hope yet. You can call Dick's dad, Ray Taylor. He's an excellent tour guide. His number is (415) 944-0547. If a woman answers, don't hang up—It's Doris Taylor, Dick's mother. She as helpful as papa and can assist in arranging a time for your visit.

At the present time the two organmen are re-leathering the Great Division at Grace Cathedral. That's another tremendous box of whistles well worth touring, even if they are classical.

Dave Hegarty plays the Castro Wurlitzer five nights a week; Jim Riggs comes over from Oakland on occasion for two nights, and from time to time other organists take over the two-night spot. Call the theatre for organ interlude time.

## Want A Posthorn?

A reasonably new Trivo Posthorn set on 20 inches wind pressure is offered for sale by Los Angeles Theatre Organ Society. For complete information contact President Ralph Beaudry, 12931 Haynes Street, North Hollywood, Calif. 91606.

## Candi Still Playing

Candi Carley, popular blind organist, married Mark Roth last August 30, and the couple now live in Canyon Country, Calif. Although she could not be reached for comment, it is understood Candi will continue to concertize in the future. She is slated to appear at the National '87 Convention in Los Angeles.

## Organ Out At N. Y. Garden

A 50-year-old tradition has come to an end in the Big Apple. Organist Dave Kopp reports that Madison Square Garden no longer uses 'live' organ music at sports events. In fact, they no longer have an organ on the premises. A radio cart machine is now used to cue up tape segments during hockey and basketball games. The National Anthem is performed accapella.

Live organ music started at the "Old" Garden in 1935 when Gladys Gooding (also of Dodgers baseball fame) and her Hammond B-3 entertained at events.

The present Garden (over Penn Station) originally had a large Rodgers with Eddie Layton, Tobey Wright and Ashley Miller at the console. In later years a new Hammond was used by Miller and Kopp.

The recent change was, according to Garden officials, "made to improve game events." Baseball fans might also have noticed the absence of "live" music at Shea Stadium (N.Y. Mets) during the World Series. 1978 was the last year Jane Jarvis played there. Tapes have been used since that time.

## Berry Beast Dodges Damp Damage

by Jim Koller

During Sept. 26 through Oct. 3, Chicago metropolitan areas suffered record high water levels and flooding. Hardest his area was suburban Park Ridge, which just happens to be the home town of Leon and Mildred Berry, and their famous "Beast in the Basement." Fortunately, only two or three inches of water seeped into the basement and did not ruin or damage the organ. Mildred claimed that "strong prayers, strong arms and four Kawasaki pumps, running 24 hours per day, saved her from dampened spirits."

The "Beast" had entertained Windy City Organ Club on Sunday, August 10; Leon, its trainer, put it through paces reminiscent of Chicago Hub Rink days. The crowd was so large two shows were presented. The 2/10 Wurlitzer was reported showing no signs of wear and was expertly tuned by the master.

## Drop In On Kay For A Sunday Brunch

For all you Sunday drivers out for an interesting time, drop in at Ramada Classic Hotel, 6815 Menaul Blvd. N.E., Albuquerque, New Mexico and listen to Kay McAbee at the console of the five manual Kimball (former New York Roxy Theatre) play during the Sunday brunch hours. Kay has at his command 27 excellent organ ranks and the five manuals to please your ears while the brunch satisfies your tummy.

## It Takes A Good Man To Know A Good Man!

Any organist who, by virtue of his musical genius, is able to create an aura of sophistication—which in other words boils down to pleasing and thrilling his audiences—is deserving of all the accolades tendered. In the same vein, any organist who is a leader in the concert field, who can highly recommend a fellow-organist, has definitely carved a lasting niche in the theatre organ world.

It is a pleasure to report that such an organist exists. He has well established his own stature as a concert artist and on a recent concert tour in England it was his pleasure to hear and meet a young artist who is on his way to becoming a superb concert star—he is already considered one of the finest young theatre organists in Great Britain. His name is Simon Gledhill.

"I know that chapters are always looking for new organists to present to our membership, and frankly there aren't too many good ones," our well-statured organist wrote recently. "I have run into an extremely talented young man in England named Simon Gledhill. In my opinion he is amongst the most talented young organists I have ever heard. He is currently studying at Cambridge University, and I think that you would agree he has all the qualities necessary to become very popular . . . talent, looks, and enthusiasm. Many people I respect think he is the best living organist in England.

"If he had been submitted to our National Competition he would have probably won this last year. That's how good he is.

"I recommend him without reservation. It would be an excellent opportunity to introduce him in the United States at the 1987 Convention, either by giving him a slot or by having him make a cameo appearance (I would be honored to have him play at my concert) . . ."

Thus did Walter Strony write to the committee of "L.A.'s The Place 1987 ATOS National Convention" in recent weeks.

## Three Shows Left In Shea's Show Series

Lance Luce will present the next Wurlitzer concert at Shea's Buffalo Theatre February 22. Lou Hurvitz follows with his program on March 22, and Chris Elliott closes the present series next May 3.

## Phantom Frazzled; Rests This Year

This has been a dead year for Lon Chaney's classic silent horror film, *The Phantom of the Opera*. There were less showings than in past years, according to Organist Jeff Weiler. He played the film last year in a combined silent film and rock show to an audience of over 4,000 at Chicago's Navy Pier. "It was a howling success," he noted.

However, this year the photoplay was shown only in a few places across the county. Next October Weiler may accompany the film in the Chicago Theatre.

## Good "Organkeeping" Seal For Paramount

If there was such a thing, Seattle's Paramount Theatre Wurlitzer organ would undoubtedly have the 'Good Organkeeping Seal of Approval'. Since January 1985 Puget Sound Chapter maintenance crew has been accomplishing a general upgrading of the chamber areas. Walls have been washed down, lighting improved, ladders and walkways re-positioned, three new organ heaters purchased and installed.

## BE IN THE NEWS

Not that we have received complaints about failure to include all regions in our news columns, it is, nevertheless, noteworthy to advise all chapters and members at large that ATOS International NEWS' news gathering agency is dependent on members being reporters when items of interest develop within their areas.

Where but within ATOS is organ news generated? That's right—organists, organ buffs are "in the know" and make the best reporters because they understand what they see and hear. Every member of ATOS has a high intelligence quotient and therefore has the ability to convey information, either by phone or mail. Keep your area in the NEWS.

## Rebuilding Organ

Organman Richard Villemin of Porterville, Calif., is reported to be refurbishing the 4/15 Page organ in Catalina Island's Casino Theatre.

## ATOS Libray Has Music, Fair Prices

Are you looking for old music? The recent offer made by the 'NEWS' to send out an old tune has prompted some members to suggest publishing a "Songs Wanted" column.

Concurrent with this suggestion is the announcement by ATOS Archives Curator Vern Bickel that the Library-/Archives is now equipped to copy all music on hand for those who want it. The new catalogue, which lists all song titles in file, is currently available. Complete information may be obtained by writing Bickel at 1393 Don Carlos Court, Chula Vista, California 92010.

There are also firms and individuals dealing in old sheet music. One dealer sends out monthly lists of available pieces. His prices range from \$10 to \$40 per single copy. Contact Bickel for the best prices!

## Some Mail Loss Is Inevitable, P.O. Says

Postoffice officials admit that some loss in the delivery of third class mail is inevitable. This fact is borne out by some ATOS members who are not happy because they haven't been receiving their copies of ATOS International NEWS. Rosa Rio discovered that she had never heard of the publication and thought the inserted issue in the Sept/Oct issue of Theatre Organ Journal was just that—part of the magazine. She was sent the September and November issues.

The NEWS is issued separately every other month. If you fail to receive your copy by the end of the month, write Executive Director Doug Fisk about it.

P.S.—The postoffice department says it is trying to improve third class mail distribution so that everyone will receive what is sent to them.

## Encyclopedia Author Writes For Dictionary

Organman David L. Junchen has just completed an article on theatre organs which he has written by request for publication in the new Groves Dictionary of American Music. The dictionary is published in four volumes and sells for \$450 per set, it was learned.

recovered.

The Solo 16' and 8' Tibia has been re-winded and re-wired, and Chryso-glott and Solo shutter winker re-located.

An Oboe Gamba has been purchased and installed. This brings the Wurlitzer up to 21 ranks. Cleanup and shellacking of wood pipes is underway. The instrument, a 4/20 Publix No. 1, is opus 1819 and was shipped from North Tonawanda Dec. 22, 1927.



## T O Radio Show In Fla

Central Florida Chapter member John Otterson presents a series of one hour programs of recorded theatre organ music every Sunday at 5pm on WBVM-FM 90.5 from St. Petersburg, Fla. The station is owned by the Catholic Diocese.

## "Built-In" Organ

Sale of the former Harold Lloyd mansion in Beverly Hills, Calif., by Everest Record Group owner Bernard C. Soloman to Ted Field, Chicago department store heir, in October was noted in the press. Describing the mansion, one item listed was "It has a built-in pipe organ and projection facilities." The "built-in" is a 2/32 Aeolian Duo-Art organ.

## Classic Add For Hollywood Organ

Ralph Sargent and Alan Stark, owners of the 4/18 Wurlitzer that has been played by Gaylord Carter in accompanying famed silent Paramount photoplays for home video cassettes, have purchased the Principal and Mixtures ranks formerly part of the J. Ross Reed Memorial Wurlitzer, it was announced this month by officials of Los Angeles Theatre Organ Society. The classical ranks are wanted by the pair to add greater sound dimension to their instrument.

## State Theatre Saved

Minneapolis' State Theatre will not be razed, according to Jim Moe, Land O'Lakes Chapter member. Auditorium size and seating will be reduced but organ chamber space will remain and plans to install an organ are under study.

## Organ For Center

Olympia, Washington's former Olympia Theatre has been completely refurbished—even to adding three shallow balconies to the house—and the organ formerly in the theatre, which was removed during refurbishing work, will be re-installed in what is now the Washington Performing Arts Center. It is understood the instrument is an over proscenium installation.

## PROVACATIVE QUESTION

"What Is Theatre Organ Music?" This provocative question is asked by L. Diana Haskins of Kalamazoo, Michigan. She isn't the first person to pose the question, but she is the first one who has forwarded it to ATOS International NEWS with the request she would like to have it answered.

So would the staff. How many readers have an answer?

## Only 400 Can Go

Two outstanding artists, lunch and then cocktails and dinner while cruising the ship-filled harbor has been planned and finalized for the 400 organ socialites who attend the "Encore" event following the 1987 National Convention in Los Angeles next June.

Keith Chapman opens the event playing the large outdoor Austin organ in Balboa Park. His concert will be followed with a box lunch munched in the park area.

Later in the afternoon buses will transport Encore socialites to the California Theatre where they will hear George Wright in concert on the Wurlitzer organ. From the theatre they will be taken to the harbor where they will embark on three ships for no host cocktails and dinner while sailing in and around the interesting ship and dock scene.

Around 8:30 the ships return to dockside and passengers then load buses for their return trip to Los Angeles.

As noted above, this event will be limited to the first 400 ATOS members who sign up for it at the Los Angeles meeting. Cost of roundtrip bus fare and Encore events is \$60 per person; boat elbow bending is not included.

## Billboard Boosts Organ

*Billboard*, one of the nation's leading theatrical trade magazines, publishes its top 30 best sellers in CDs each month. In the issue of Nov. 15, Lyn Larsen's organ CD was 22nd in that listing.

## Some 78s Command Big Prices

Old records get scratchy and seem worthless. But, surprisingly, there are some that are worth much more than their original selling price if they can be found today. Several that have become valuable collector's items involve the late Bing Crosby. He recorded on four 78 sides with theatre organ accompaniment.

The four—with Helen Crawford at the N.Y. Paramount Studio Wurlitzer, on Brunswick label—"Can't We Talk It Over" #6240, and "I Found You" #6248. Both were recorded Dec. 21, 1931. The others featured Eddie Dunstetter at the 3/18 Wurlitzer in Warner Brothers Sunset Blvd. Studio, Hollywood, on Decca label—"Little Lady Make Believe" #1794, and "When Mother Nature Sings Her Lullaby" #1874, both recorded April 25, 1938.

Originals of these fetch whatever owners think the traffic will bear.

It is also interesting to note the Warner organ was sold to the CBS network and moved into Columbia Square, about eight blocks west of Warner's. Then actor Joe Kearns bought the organ and moved it one block above Hollywood Blvd. to a home he built almost due north of Columbia Square. Subsequently the

## First Timer Assesses Conclave, Regional

What are the impressions of a first-time convention and regional goer? Next month the NEWS will publish the thoughts of a member, who is 34-years-old and has been an organ nut since age 10, who attended his first national convention (Richmond) and first regional meeting (Denver).

## Vaughn Still Is Active At 75!

Since closure of San Francisco's Avenue Theatre, some organ buffs have wondered if Bob Vaughn is still actually playing silent film shows. The answer is a definite "Yes".

Vaughn recently put *Phantom of the Opera* through its horror run at the Berkeley Unitarian Church. He played the score on the 3/about-50-rank Skinner organ. On Oct. 31 he piloted a two-manual Baldwin electronic to play the score for *Wings* at U. C. Berkeley Theatre, and Nov. 17 saw him at the Wurlitzer keydesk in the Castro Theatre goading Garbo and Gilbert in their *Flesh and the Devil* dealings.

He also fired up *The Iron Horse* recently for a private showing. His present schedule includes mortuary, church and wedding dates. "At my age—75—I find it pleasurable to do some volunteer playing for senior citizen groups locally. So while I may not go travelling into the 'big time,' I keep busy and everyone seems happy," he said.

late Robert Carson moved into the house and Lyn Larsen recorded a number of LPs on it. Carson later married organist Helen Dell and she recorded many platters on it. Johnny Duffy turned out two discs while the organ was at CBS. This instrument is now in the Renaissance Theatre at Mansfield, Ohio.

Now we go to England and other foreign countries that undertook to record the famed "groaner". Crosby, Capt. Eddie Dunstetter, on an electric organ, and his West Coast Air Force orchestra produced several discs. The selection "By The Light Of The Silvery Moon" was issued in England and India. "But Not For Me" went only to India. Also, "I Found You" was released only on the Japanese Lucky label, Lu J 5006, and is one of the most sought after 78s in the world.

In 1968 a mint copy of the original Brunswick or Lucky labels was fetching around \$100 or more since they were the only ones ever made.

Bing also recorded with Dunstetter on a Hammond organ and these records went to Italy, Germany, England and Australia; some were re-issued as many as five times. Bing also recorded with Ethel Smith and Buddy Cole on electronic organs.

## Buff Puts Organ In Warehouse

Organ buff Jim Spahn, who lives in Tehachapi, Calif., has the former California Theatre (Glendale) Robert-Morton organ installed in a warehouse in the Bakersfield area of Sumner. Built in 1926 as opus 2471, it was a 3/7 instrument and played to thousands of silent photoplay theatregoers.

In 1938 it was moved to Radio Station KFOX, Long Beach, and stayed there until pre-recorded music resulted in it being sold to the First Baptist Church in Long Beach. Here it lost all traps and percussions. In 1939 the Church of Latter Day Saints in Porterville, Calif. bought the organ. This is the hometown of Richard Villemain, well-known organ builder. He added five ranks to the organ. In 1983 the church moved to a new location, ordered an electronic and put the Morton up for bid.

Villemain notified Spahn about the organ. His bid was accepted and he started looking for a suitable building with at least a 12-foot ceiling; he found it in Sumner. Next a search for missing traps and percussions that ranged as far east as the Moller Company and as local as Villemain's shop was successful. In the 18 locations he contacted he replaced all the components. Many original units were found.

### Vaughn Frequent Visitor

A description of the organ as installed was given the News by Organist Bob Vaughn: "My son lives in Bakersfield and I get down there from time to time and when there I have a go at Jim's mighty 'wunder' Morton. It has a fine sound, and as long as it is in its present spot it will always be a MIGHTY Morton—there are no swell shades and 17 ranks does contribute to making its presence felt.

"When he has finished—it will top out at 21 ranks—it should be quite a baby!"

The organ is equipped with a Style R player. Two 3-horsepower and one 5-horsepower Spencer blowers supply the wind.

Spahn also owns the former 3/33 Robert-Morton console from Miller's California Theatre in Los Angeles.

## Weiler Leads A Double Organ Life

Organist Jeff Weiler can also be addressed as Technician Weiler. He is an experienced organ beater and builder. During November, working as an installer for Cassavant Organs, he was in Indianapolis at Tabernacle Presbyterian Church helping erect a 3/62 classical giant. Shortly after completing this job, he hurried down Houston way where he is currently assisting David L. Junchen on the installation of a large Rodgers. It is expected this job will be finished during late spring 1987.



# IT'S NOT A HOTEL. IT'S THE BILTMORE.™

by Ralph Beaudry

"LA's the Place," and the Los Angeles Biltmore will be our convention headquarters. The Biltmore was selected for three reasons: its central location, its newly modernized rooms and suites and its exquisite Spanish-Italian Renaissance architecture. The Biltmore's architecture is so unique that the hotel has been declared a Historical Cultural Landmark, and when you enter the lobby, the surrounding architectural beauty will immediately captivate you.

The Biltmore opened in 1923. Earl Heitschmidt was the architect, and John B. Smeraldi (who had worked on several palaces at the Vatican) was the designer and painter of the ceilings and walls. Within the past year, the beautiful murals, gargoyles and beamed ceilings have been fully restored to their original condition.

What used to be the lobby is now the Rendezvous Court, replete with plants and trees, chairs and sofas and, at times during the day,

## CONVENTION '87 HEADQUARTERS

a string orchestra. If you should decide to have lunch or dinner in Bernard's (on the south side of the Court), you'll find yourself dining in an exact replica of a palace uncovered from the ruins of Pompeii!

Up the twin staircases from the Court is the elevator lobby with its six high-speed elevators, and just beyond is the Galeria which runs the entire width of the Biltmore. Our Registration, Hospitality and Record Shop rooms and all of our in-hotel meeting rooms

The elegant Galeria in the Los Angeles Biltmore.



are just off the Galeria. The Galeria is one of the most beautiful areas in the Biltmore with a coffered ceiling and three-dimensional sculptures as well as large surfaces covered with oil paintings set in a wheel mosaic and interspersed with bronze filigrees.

The Crystal Ballroom, which will be the scene of our banquet, has the most elaborate ceiling in the Biltmore. Mounted in its concave, domed surface is a single canvas of great proportion decorated with goddesses, cupids, satyrs and other mythical figures. Two mammoth crystal lighting fixtures, imported from Europe, are suspended from the ceiling to add a truly glittering effect.

Although these public spaces are designed after the palaces and cathedrals of Europe, the more than 700 guest rooms are newly decorated in bright colors with plants and hanging artwork (many by Jim Dine who is famous for his stylized depictions of hearts).

Yes, "LA's the Place," and the Biltmore is the perfect setting for the headquarters of our 1987 Convention. □



The Biltmore Crystal Ballroom where the Convention banquet will be held.

## Theatre Organ News From Australia



by  
*Bruce  
Ardley*



On August 17 an exciting event occurred when the 3/9 Compton was opened by Tony Fenelon at the Albert Hall in Canberra. This is the first theatre organ to have been installed in the capital city of Australia. This organ was installed in the Gaumont Palace Cinema, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, U.K. Purchased by the owners of the Dendy Cinema, Brighton, Melbourne, it was intended for installation in a new cinema, but the cinema was never built, and they sold it to the up-and-coming TOSA Society in Canberra. It was an appalling mess when purchased, and seven labourious years were spent on its restoration. The top manual is a coupler one, and the aim is to bring this to the requirements of a full "solo" manual. The instrument is controlled from a handsome white and gold console which looks stunning against the red velvet of the stage curtain.

Prior to the opening, the final regulation and voicing was carried out by organ consultant and builder George Stephens. George has a sympathetic approach to theatre organs and manages to obtain the best from them. Canberra's organ proved to be no exception.

The grand opening provided a wonderful

reward to all those who worked so hard and freely gave their time to the restoration and installation. The affair was very professionally organised, and it was obviously heartening to see the Albert Hall packed with people eager to listen. Quite a change for Australia's capital city which, for some time, has been famous mainly for its politicians spreading the gloomy message of our troubled economy. Featured artist Tony Fenelon provided the usual deft performance that we have come to expect and delighted his audience with an attractive and well-chosen programme. An attractive souvenir booklet of the Inaugural Concert, which includes a splendid colour photograph of the console, is available for the Australian equivalent of U.S. \$4.50, which includes postage. Order from: Theatre Organ Society of Australia, (A.C.T. Division) Inc., P.O. Box 367, Civic Square, A.C.T. 2608, Australia.

We move to the Western Australia TOSA Division with its headquarters in Perth. The membership there has purchased the 3/10 Compton installed at present in the Purvisonic Sound Studios. This organ was first installed in the Plaza Cinema, Worthing,

Sussex, U.K., and migrated to Australia in the 1970s. The acquisition follows the death of the former owner who was a TOSA member.

Organist Tony Fenelon travelled from his home in Melbourne to Adelaide recently to give two theatre organ concerts in two days to appreciative audiences. The first took place on the 2/12 Wurlitzer (ex-Plaza Melbourne) installed in Wyatt Hall, Adelaide. The organ was in top condition, and it gave many of the audience great pleasure to hear it again. It had received fairly low profile whilst so much interest and activity was diverted to the Capri Theatre project.

The Capri Theatre provided the second venue for Tony to play the 4/16 hybrid instrument so interestingly installed there. Tony played many of the selections he had featured on his early LP recordings — particularly those made on the 4/19 Wurlitzer when it resided in Melbourne's elegant Regent Theatre. The South Australian TOSA, proud owners of the Capri Theatre, is having the console placed on a lift — quite an expensive undertaking, but the results will justify the cost. The first public concert using the lift will be by organists Tony Fenelon and Ray Thornley in November.

South Australia will be host for the next annual National TOSA Convention in Adelaide next Easter, commencing on Friday, April 17 and concluding on Tuesday, April 21. With currency rates as they now stand between the U.S. dollar and the Australian dollar, a trip to this country around convention time could be an attractive proposition. We hope that we can welcome great numbers of you people. For information about the convention, write to:

The Convention Secretary,  
Mrs. Bernice Larritt,  
Theatre Organ Society of Australia  
G.P.O. Box 595,  
Adelaide, 5001. South Australia

In June Dennis James again toured. This time with his associate, Thom Gall. As on



Father James Miller talks to his audience from the console of the 3/8 Style F Wurlitzer during his excellent concert at St. Michael's School Hall, Hobart, Tasmania. (Eric Wicks Photo)

previous occasions, Dennis impressed all with the quality of his musicianship and his entertaining presentation. Dennis and Thom played several concerts on this tour, and in Victoria, the concert was held at the Memorial Theatre, Ballarat. The 3/9 Compton there is a gem, and Dennis certainly knows how to use it. His accompaniments to Thom's singing provided a good lesson in what the art of accompaniment is all about. Please return and give us more great music, Dennis.

During August, the exuberant Father James Miller made a nationwide tour of Australia, including tiny Norfolk Island and then New Zealand. In all states, he wowed his audiences with his music and brand of humor.



Dennis James and Thom Gall relax after their concert at the Historical Memorial Theatre at Ballarat, Victoria. (Warrick Kittson Photo)

In Melbourne, he played the 2/9 Blackett and Howden at Village Cinema, Reservoir, and the 4/22 Wurlitzer in the Moorabbin Town Hall. Both different programmes and a very good number of people who attended the first concert turned up for the second, and loved it! Father Jim has the ability to involve his au-

dience in what he is playing. Apart from the concerts, he did at least one radio interview in each concert location, except in Hobart, Tasmania, where he had a quarter-page feature article in the daily newspaper. An extremely full tour, and we look forward to the next.

Another favorite organist is Australia's

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own David Johnston, who recently made the journey from Melbourne to Perth to play a silent movie and concert for the Western Australian Division of TOSA. From reports received, David obviously gave the audience a great time with his thoughtful arrangements and outgoing style of presentation.

Theatre organ has found its place back on radio in Sydney, New South Wales. TOSA Vice President Frank Ellis is presenting a weekly half-hour featuring tracks from overseas organists as well as our own. It is probably 30 years since a regular programme of theatre organ music has been broadcast in Australia. In Perth, past TOSA President Val McInnis is also presenting a half-hour show on FM radio with a similar format including current and coming events in the theatre organ world. Both men put a great effort into ensuring that there is a good spread of different playing styles.

That's all for now. □

## NUGGETS from the GOLDEN DAYS

Prospected  
by  
Lloyd  
E.  
Klos



This time, we incorporate items about well-known theatre organists from the pages of *Diapason* (D), *Metronome* (M) and local press (LP).

*August 1923 (M).* ALBERT HAY MALOTTE was born in Philadelphia and went to the Pacific coast several years ago, where he rapidly rose to the fore as one of California's leading organists. After playing in the large picture houses and receiving numerous offers from eastern houses, he came east where he is now featured at Shea's Hippodrome in Buffalo, New York.

Mr. Malotte is one of the few singing organists in the United States. For a number of years, the featuring of popular songs through slides has been in vogue in the west. It has only recently been introduced in the larger cities in the east, Mr. Malotte being a pioneer in this field. He is not only an authority on the organ, but a well-known teacher and songwriter of merit as well. Two of his recent successes were "After Every Party," and "I Cried For You," both published by Sherman & Co. We predict a great future for him.

*March 1925 (M).* C. SHARPE MINOR, the well-known feature organist, has been at the Rialto and Rivoli theatres in New York for four weeks. His original and interesting offerings were very well received and his demon-

stration of the organ was not only a complete exposition of the possibilities of that instrument, but it was also a practical lesson in music for the audience.

In this feature, which was called "The Organ," very well written and lucid slides defined what was meant by melody, accompaniment, bass and counterpoint, "Sweet Rosie O'Grady" being played.

Each of the stops was then displayed and the voices of the instruments were heard in characteristic music. The titles are very humorous. Of the clarinet, the following was said: "Lots of clarinetists, hearing how their instruments sound to an audience, have given it up and taken up bootlegging." The oboe was described as "an instrument which sounds like a motorman's glove tastes." The usual effects which a modern organ can create and a laugh-provoking series of tricks, imitations and dialogues completed the act.

Another feature was "Little Old New York." This treated of changes in fashions and customs, showed the development of the picture theatre, the passing of the horse, and the coming of the automobile. In telling this story with the organ, old melodies of years gone by were used and very vivid effects were secured.

*May 1926 (M).* An organist of the very first rank, and a pioneer in motion picture house music, is HENRY B. MURTAGH, who took command of the organ at the Rivoli Theatre, 49th Street and Broadway in New York, on Sunday, April 18.

Murtagh studied the piano under Godowsky, and in Springfield, Massachusetts, did concert work and conducted his own school of music. In the early days of motion picture houses, he realized the possibilities of the organ and was assigned to play the first large organ installed on the West Coast back in 1914, in Jensen & Von Herberg's Liberty Theatre in Seattle.

After two years in Seattle, Murtagh played for three years at the Isis Theatre in Denver. Sid Grauman engaged him in 1919 to open his new Million Dollar Theatre in Los Angeles and serve as assistant conductor. When Grauman opened his Metropolitan Theatre there, Murtagh was at the console. Murtagh's first vacation in 10 years was during the Metropolitan engagement, enforced by the fracture of his skull in a YMCA handball court.

From Los Angeles, Murtagh went to Buffalo where he was firmly entrenched for the past two years, endearing himself to patrons of the Lafayette Theatre by his novel entertainment on the 3/15 Wurlitzer organ.

Gifted with a keen sense of humor and knowing the public tastes enables him to create innovations which find ready listeners. Murtagh, moreover, is a believer of psychology, studying his auditors' moods, and continually striving to produce such entertainment from the organ as will synchronize with their attitude and with the screen presentations.

*June 1926 (M).* LLOYD G. DEL CASTILLO, organist of the Rialto Theatre in New York, received his musical education at Harvard from which he was graduated with hon-

ors in 1914. In his undergraduate days, he was conductor of the 50-piece Pierian Sodality Orchestra, secretary and co-founder of the Harvard Musical Review, and musical director and composer of one of the annual musical comedy productions of the Pi Eta Club. A "Fantasy on Harvard Airs" was written and conducted by him at the Boston Symphony Orchestra's pop concerts.

After graduation, he wrote the incidental music for a Biblical pageant, "The Chosen King," with which he toured two seasons as musical director. He was connected with eastern picture theatres as organist and musical director, but for the most part, in Boston where he was organist at the Fenway Theatre. During the war, he saw service overseas as bandmaster with the 302nd Field Artillery. In January, 1926, he went to Shea's Buffalo Theatre to open the largest Wurlitzer in the east, a 4-manual, 210-stop instrument. There he remained until called to New York for his present engagement at the Rialto.

He has written various short numbers, published by Belwin, Inc. and Jacobs, Inc., and two years ago conducted his own concert overture "Gonzalo de Cordoba," with the People's Symphony Orchestra of Boston, of which he was the organist. This overture was afterwards played at the Boston Symphony Orchestra's pop concerts.

*November 1930 (LP).* The Paramount Theatre in Lynn, Massachusetts, is showing Jackie Coogan, Mitzi Green and Junior Durkin in Mark Twain's classic *Tom Sawyer*. For his spotlight solo on the 3/22 Wurlitzer, ARTHUR MARTEL is presenting "A Wee Bit O'Scotch."

*August 1931 (LP).* BOB WEST is playing the 4/36 Wurlitzer in the Brooklyn Fox. Sam Jack Kaufman and his Band are featured in the pit.

*December 15, 1931 (LP).* The stage play *Once In a Lifetime* is being presented at Rochester's Auditorium Theatre. Organist ROBERT J. BERENTSEN plays "Hits From Hollywood" in a pre-show recital. (In January, the stage hit *Stella Dallas* was presented and Berentsen in the pre-show organlude played the overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.)

*December 11, 1934 (LP).* The Laugh Clinic, supervised by Russell Pratt and Ransom Miles Sherman (later of "Club Matinee" fame from Chicago), known to thousands as the two doctors, will introduce their program from origination point, KMOX, "The Voice of St. Louis," from 10:30 to 11 a.m. They will be assisted by organist EDDIE DUNSTEDTER and Al Roth's orchestra.

*December 1934 (D).* PIETRO YON played a recital on the Möller organ for an audience of over 1800 in the Larkin Administration Building in Buffalo.

*GOLD DUST:* 2/27 AL MELGARD teaching at Barton Organ School, Chicago ... 5/27 ARSENE F. SIEGEL, Chicago and Uptown theatres ... 6/27 LLOYD G. DEL CASTILLO opens his organ school in Boston ... 7/27 Dr. MELCHIORRE MAURO-COTTONE, New York's Capitol ... 9/27

HENRY FRANCIS PARKS, Roosevelt in Chicago...10/27 MILTON CHARLES, Chicago's Tivoli...4/29 LEW WHITE, Chief Organist, New York's Roxy...3/34 JESSE & HELEN CRAWFORD, RKO Palace, Rochester, New York, on tour...12/34 STANLEIGH MALOTTE, WJZ, New York; DICK LEIBERT, WFAF, New York; ELMER TIDMARSH, WGY, Schenectady...9/35 FRANCIS J. CRONIN, WAAB, Boston; FRED FEIBEL, CBS at

noon; TOM GRIERSON, WHAM from RKO Palace, Rochester; ALBERT DAWELEY'S "Slumber Hour," WBEN, Buffalo; ELSIE THOMPSON with contralto Evalyn MacGregor and Baritone Roger Kinne, WABC, New York.

With this column go our best wishes for a most enjoyable holiday season and a New Year filled with happiness.

So long, sourdoughs!

Jason & The Old Prospector □

collar.

His comment on the duct tape is legitimate (*mea culpa*). It was temporary and should have been replaced with a flex collar during our experiments with windline lengths.

As to the careless installation inferred in his letter, the Grant Whitcomb review which I cited, and Mr. Hedberg's comment thereon, I refer to page 40 of the September/October, 1984, THEATRE ORGAN, where Mr. Whitcomb also said, "... probably the best installed and voiced of the convention." If Mr. Hedberg would read and absorb comments of organ experts, he would not so readily cast aspersions on ideas other than his own on an organ he has not seen, heard or played. In fact, Henry Gottfried, of the famous pipe-making family, sought me out following the Afterglow, to tell me that this was one of the most beautiful Wurlitzer sounds that he had ever heard.

Mr. Hedberg also refers to "skimpy manual chest feed lines," relative to my recommendation to replace large, wooden, manual wind trunks with 4" metal feed lines. No less an organ expert than Allen Miller, in the same issue (September/October, 1984), page 59, suggests the same procedure to replace the wind trunks with a 4" line. The picture accompanying the article shows a 4" windline feeding a four-rank chest manifold with two of the ranks fed by a 3" branch line... a "soda straw" (?) feed, yet it works, and believe me, it does make a more effective tremolo, as Mr. Miller says.

As far as our designing this trem system by "committee," over a period of many months our crew tried several different designs of trem runs — heavy regulator weights, light weights, no weights, less elbows and more elbows, no trem weights, light trem weights and heavy trem weights, and different lengths of runs on each of our eleven tremolos. When we made the last run on the brass chest, the present configuration, we turned on the wind and the trem started immediately with near-

## 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  
4633 SE Brookside Drive #58  
Milwaukie, Oregon 97222

Dear Editor:

Mr. Lineback wants to know why organ consoles are placed "on the left side of the stage." I assume he means the left side of the pit. The reason is that the organ on the left balances with the same amount of room used by the percussion members of the orchestra on the right. In 1920 when I took my first job at the Fenway Theatre in Boston, there was no orchestra and no pit, so the organ was placed in a small pit in the center.

Theatre architects weren't always as knowledgeable about such things as they might have been. At the Fenway, the organ chambers were built backstage on one side so that the organ sound had to fight its way through canvas. In the deluxe movie palaces of the 1920s the organ frequently showed up on the right. At the Rialto in New York City the organ had to be on the right as the only usable backstage area was on the right. The State and Metropolitan in Boston both had the organ on the left where it should be.

In the grand old days of Jesse and Helen Crawford, Jesse would rise majestically on the left console elevator while Helen would unobtrusively sneak onto the duplicate console on the right platform. After the 1930s, most organs found their way into pizza parlors. With the advent of sound in 1928, the great days of the silent theatre organist were over.

Del Castillo  
Los Angeles, California □

Dear Editor:

I feel it incumbent upon myself to respond to Dennis Hedberg's somewhat vitriolic critique of my views on tremolos and the Emery Wurlitzer. ATOS and its journal is, and should be, a catalyst and forum for dignified discussions of technical ideas, not for recriminations. I am fully aware of Mr. Hedberg's reputation as an organ consultant and find it

hard to equate the caustic attitude in his letter to the fact that the systems have been recommended by both Dan Barton and Allen Miller, whom I will cite in this letter.

First, my article stated "no flex runs" which he quoted verbatim. A flex run, as any experienced organ man knows is a length of flex in lieu of a metal windline which can (and does) pulse with trem action, creating a secondary wave. A flex *coupling*, on the other hand, is not only acceptable, but is also desirable as a seal only, particularly in a trem line so a trem can be removed for service without having to take out flange-collar screws, often difficult to reach, and subsequent galling of the screw holes in the trem. When flex is used in this instance, opposing windlines are generally fitted about 1/8 inch apart, with the flex used only as a firm air-seal

*The members and guests were all nestled in seats  
To await the coming of musical treats*

*When out of the chambers there arose such a chorus  
Of melodious refrain; it was all right before us*

*The console in trim, ablaze in the light  
Was ready to show its Wurlitzer might*

*To herald the season of good Christmas cheer  
With Yuletide medleys; it was that time of year*

*As the artist's quick fingers flew over the keys  
I heard him exclaim what I'm sure he believes,*

*"The Season's best wishes for each member here,  
And to all of us present, a Happy New Year!"*

JOHN POLSLEY  
Central Ohio Chapter

perfect beat, no adjustment required.

Mr. Hedberg stated that "with all this weight on the poor tremulant valve and skimpy manual chest feed lines, it's a wonder it works at all! . . . some professional organists say it doesn't." Please be advised that only two prominent organists have played this organ in its present trem/feed-line configuration which has only been operative the past 18 months. Previous organists played it with shorter original Wurlitzer trem lines and large wind trunks which did not work! As to the "weight on the poor trem valve," the valve opens against pressure so it is not detrimental to the valve hinge — so much better than umpteen pounds on a regulator, destroying the regulator's pressure control and rebound.

To further support this system, Dan Barton, in a THEATRE ORGAN article in November/December, 1985, advocates the same system; i.e., long 3" trem lines up to 30 feet, numerous elbows, etc., and weights on trem. In reference to the comment criticizing my use of the word "reverses" of air in the trem lines during operation, I should more properly have said "surges" caused by the continuing movement of air to the trem valve which suddenly closes causing the air pressure to temporarily build up in the wind box and results in a jerky, uneven regulator action. The long windline to the trem acts as a cushion to absorb this and results in a perfect balance and harmony between the regulator and the trem. The key word in this trem reaction is "sine wave," like a good coloratura voice rather than a "Bert Lahr-cowardly lion" unmusical quaver and forced uneven beat. A short windline requires much added weight on the regulator to satisfactorily achieve any trem at all (there are no weights in the Emery installation), so the only way to achieve any beat is by throwing more weights on the regulator — sometimes 100 pounds — which automatically destroys the fluidity of the regulator movement.

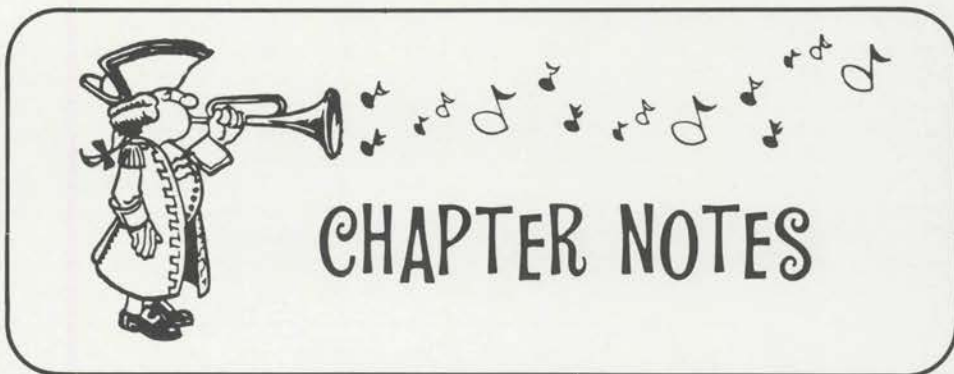
In conclusion, Mr. Hedberg seems to complain about many theatre organs in which he has not had a hand, inferentially insulting to many organ buffs; after all, the average organ buff is responsible for the resurgence of interest in theatre organs, without which many professional theatre organists would not have jobs. Those in the know should help them as a gift to their fellow hobbyists.

Mr. Hedberg says he will write an article with a different slant than mine on trem. I will look forward to reading it. Mathematical proof is not the factor in music — it's the feeling a beautiful, lush, even trem imparts.

As to my qualifications, I designed, sold, planned and supervised installations for a leading American pipe organ builder for 20 years and have been a consultant for 45 years. I have played, serviced and enlarged organs since I was 14 years old in the '30s, so I am hardly a newcomer to the field.

My suggestion to Mr. Hedberg, if he has an open mind, is — try it, you'll like it.

Sincerely,  
Everard S. (Tote) Pratt  
Cincinnati, Ohio □



## ALABAMA Birmingham 205/942-5611 or 205/664-3606

We are based in Birmingham, and being from the "Heart of Dixie," take great pride in our Southern heritage and way of life. We also hold to the belief in "southern hospitality" — even for those from the North. The months of July and August were no exception as we extended our hospitality to two Northerners — Bill Snyder and Jim Wright, both from Tennessee (that is north of Birmingham!), marched southward into Alabama to perform at the Alabama Theatre. These two are certainly not strangers to our chapter, and in July, Dr. William (Bill) Snyder graced our console for the first time in several years. Bill is house organist at the Tennessee Theatre in Knoxville, the sister theatre to the Alabama. The Tennessee's Wurlitzer, a 3/14 Balaban 2, is decorated in the same style as its sister organ here (did I just call him a Northerner?), and Bill felt right at home. Dr. Snyder is Dean of the College of Engineering at the University of Tennessee, and we are always very pleased and fortunate to have him as our guest.

August found Chattanooga Jim Wright on vacation from college and right at home at the keydesk of the Publix #1. Jim is an organ major at Bob Jones University and is well-versed in both theatre and classical organ. He just keeps getting better year after year —

watch as he emerges into one of the finest theatre organists in the Southeast.

Work is progressing steadily on the Wurlitzer going in at the Birmingham Wedding Chapel. A three-manual console has been procured, rebuilding is coming along nicely, additional pipework and chests are being gathered and alterations to the pipe chambers have begun. Work crew foreman Gary Jones is very pleased with results, so far.

We wound down the Alabama Theatre's



Artist Jay Mitchell at his May concert for Alabama Chapter. (Gary W. Jones Photo)



Dr. William (Bill) Snyder at the Wurlitzer Publix #1 console — Alabama Theatre. (Gary W. Jones Photo)



Organist Jim Wright at Alabama Chapter meeting in August. (Gary W. Jones Photo)

very successful Summer Classic Movie Series with *The Sound of Music* and kicked off the fall/winter series with *The Student Prince*. Fifteen movies have been scheduled for this second series. If you are passing through the Birmingham area, chances are that something will be happening — give us a call!

GARY W. JONES

**CENTRAL  
FLORIDA  
THEATRE  
ORGAN  
SOCIETY**



Tampa

813/685-8707 or 813/734-5721

Our September meeting was held at the Tampa Theatre where many of our members have been working on the organ for months, and we are looking forward to the many events in the future that will include this instrument. Lee Erwin will be the guest organist at the theatre's sixtieth anniversary celebration in October. There has been a silent movie presented almost every month accompanied by this magnificent organ.

At our May meeting, Mr. Charles Stanford, who is a well-known organist, played the Tampa Theatre organ for our members, and we heard many of our favorite songs. This was followed by open console.

Our June meeting was held at the home of Ed and Ginny Lawrence in Seminole where member Al Hermanns played an excellent concert on a Conn 651, with open console afterwards.

Our club is proud that one of our members, Mr. John Otterson, who has been instrumental in the installation of the Tampa organ, now has a radio program airing locally every Sunday. With the interest being shown in organ music in this area, this fall and coming year should be exciting for our club.

PAUL T. DANIELSON



**CENTRAL  
INDIANA  
CHAPTER**

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

The beautifully restored Embassy Theatre in Fort Wayne was the site of the August meeting at which Bob Goldstine presented a wonderful concert. Home of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, the ornate Embassy Theatre has been totally restored to its original appearance. The 4/15 Page organ was installed in 1928, and has been in almost continuous use since then, with many concerts presented every year. Major restoration work was begun in 1960. Local interest in this instrument was inspired by the effort and talent of the late Buddy Nolan, whose name became synonymous with the Embassy. A dedicated group of technicians maintains this organ.

CAROL M. ANDREJASICH



To top off Central Ohio's August meeting, Cliff Pollock proudly presents his Wurlitzer Band Organ.

(John R. Polesley Photo)

**CENTRAL OHIO  
Columbus**

513/652-1775 or 614/882-4085

We are abuzz with the rumor that one of our members is installing a 4/24 Wurlitzer in his home — nothing we can pin down yet, but what an installation that would be!! Our sleuths are out with their bloodhounds, and we'll have more details later.

The spectre of the silent movie — August 29 — it happened. The fabulous, the seductive Greta Garbo teamed with handsome John Gilbert in *The Flesh And The Devil* accompanied by none other than our own Dennis James at the Ohio's Robert-Morton. Dennis composed and arranged the music to set this epic in motion. It was, indeed, a gala evening which attracted a nearly full house. Maybe this format could be adopted on a

**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**  
4633 SE Brookside Drive, #58  
Milwaukie, Oregon 97222  
Phone: 503/654-5823



Member Bob Cowley lets loose with the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" at the Polsley's August social.

(John R. Polsley Photo)

broader scope as a popular offering of the theatre organ in today's entertainment market.

Our August 24 meeting was hosted by John Polsley and his wife. No more perfect day could have been ordered for 41 members and guests to enjoy this occasion. Downstairs in the studio we were privileged to hear member artists Margo Burkhart and Bob Cowley present an opening program which began with a brisk rendition of "Entertainment" and ended with a toe-tapping "Battle Hymn of The Republic." Then followed open console with options to play the 3/8 hybrid (mostly Wurlitzer) or the Baldwin Studio II. The highlight of the afternoon was the arrival of members Clifford and Mary Pollock with their Wurlitzer Band Organ. Parked in our driveway, complete with trailer and Honda generator, this carousel gem peppered the neighborhood with rousing band-tempo music. The afternoon potluck offered every conceivable edible we could imagine — our chapter does not lack for culinary talent! After dinner the focus switched back to downstairs where member Henry Garcia, at the organ, teamed up with Martha Hoyle in an organ/piano duo which played some crowd-pleasing rhythmic numbers.

The Main chamber of our Worthington installation has rewinding virtually complete with acquisition of an additional regulator. The Vox Humana will be wound from this regulator after the leathering task is done. We look forward to several winter meetings at the high school.

JOHN R. POLSLEY



Chicago Area

Theatre Organ Enthusiasts

312/794-9622 or 312/892-8136

It just so happened that Ty Woodward was coming our way recently, and we heard about it. There wasn't much time for publicity or for arranging a social, but we were fortunate and received permission to use the facilities of WGN Studio and its 3/11 Wurlitzer. It was a grand July Thursday evening which is unusu-



Featured organist Margo Burkhart plays a mini-concert for Central Ohio Chapter at the Polsleys.

(John R. Polsley Photo)

al for us as we rarely hold a social on a week night. Ty gave a stunning performance, allowing us to experience his vast talent and training in a program which covered classical, popular and contemporary numbers, all in Ty's professional styling. Thank you, Ty, for a great evening of organ music.

Past President Jim Shaffer was honored with the presentation of a plaque by new President Jim West. This was a token of appreciation by the membership for Jim Shaffer's outstanding effort during his two year term. All of our past chairmen are worthy of similar recognition as are the many dedicated people who have served on our boards of directors.

Conventioneers will remember the Music Box Theatre from the 1985 tour. A fundraiser for the Chicago Theatre organ restoration was recently held there by co-owners Bob Chaney and Chris Carlo. The program was a showing of *Citizen Kane* and *The Magnificent Ambersons*. Chaney, Carlo and Bob Coslett were scheduled to play the super three-manual Allen theatre organ during intermission. There were two showings on this one-day, well-attended affair. CATOE extends sincere appreciation to Bob and Chris for this and their numerous other efforts on our behalf.

The grand, old Auditorium Theatre has been getting some use lately. In July the crew restoring the theatre's murals was treated to an impromptu concert by our own Barbara Sellers at the console of the Saville Electronic classical organ. Using her famed theatre organ stylings, Barbara really brought life to this instrument — a real treat.

Bill Kuzcek and Don Springer presented mini-concerts at the Elm Roller Rink August social. It was an evening of organ music which was greatly appreciated by those in attendance. This hybrid organ is always a delight to hear. Our sincere thanks to Bill and Don for their generous efforts.

Chicago Mayor Harold Washington was present as the Chicago Theatre's lights went on after many weeks of darkness. The theatre's restoration progress has been reported extensively by the news media, which is good publicity. The results of the scheduled programs will be known soon, and we all believe the outcome will be excellent. The Chicago Theatre organ restoration crew was recognized by the mailing of a special four-page presentation of gratitude. CATOE members

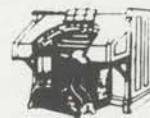
and this crew assisted wherever possible in the restoration of the theatre, and there is still more to be done. Dedicated people are a huge asset to any organization! If you are going to be in this area soon, try to include a visit to the Chicago Theatre.

Happy Holidays to you all!

ALMER N. BROSTROM



CONNECTICUT VALLEY  
THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY, INC.



Thomaston

203/357-4581 or 203/261-5269

On June 29 we traveled to the home of Patsey and Rosalie Fucci in Waltham, Massachusetts, for a joint meeting with Eastern Massachusetts Chapter. We thoroughly enjoyed the picnic provided by our hosts, the camaraderie of our neighboring chapter and the 4/20 Robert-Morton installed in the "Crystal Palace" addition to the Fucci's home.

The August meeting, as has been our annual custom, was held at the home of Gen Roberg in Plymouth, Connecticut. Ample time was allowed for open console on Gen's exceptional, mellow-voiced, hybrid pipe organ which her late husband, Jack, spent over five years constructing and refining. Several outdoor grills were fired up, and members and guests enjoyed picnic fare on the rolling lawns. After a brief business meeting the concert duties were handled by members Ed Crew, Brian Colton and Allen Miller.

Bill Hastings and Joe Colliano held open house in their North Truro, Massachusetts, home on September 13. It began with open console, followed by a concert by Alden "Mitch" Mitchell on certainly one of the best-sounding installations anywhere. After a dinner break in which the 90 guests wandered off to a number of Cape Cod dining spots, the evening program began with Bill Hastings stating how their weekly concerts during the summers have raised over \$14,000 for the Truro Historical Society. He also explained that his programs consist of what he considers musical put-togethers, for example, combinations of favorite songs with a singular theme which are continually interwoven throughout his performance. He began with a spring theme, moved to a Gypsy combination and then to a trip to London. Between the tolling of "Big Ben" and the hoofbeats of the horses during the trooping of the colors, it seemed that the room was filling with London fog. Bill was then joined by Joe Colliano at the grand piano for a series of masterful duets. The program concluded with a stirring rendition of "America the Beautiful" and the unfurling of Old Glory which brought everyone to their feet, madly applauding, and many had tears in their eyes.

The Shelton High School organ crew,





Jack Moelmann and Chairman Joe Dorsey on stage of Rahway Theatre.

(Jinny Vanore Photo)



Jack Moelmann at Moller console, Trenton War Memorial.

(Jinny Vanore Photo)

under chief Norm Turner, has been working incredibly long hours to prepare the Austin 3/12 theatre pipe organ for our 1986-87 concert series. Allen Mills will appear on December 6 and Ron Rhode on February 28.

BARRY GOODKIN



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

Our annual summer picnic was held at the estate of Jasper Sanfillipo in Barrington Hills, Illinois. The artist for the day was Don Springer who provided us with a short program on the wonderful Wurlitzer. The organ is well-suited to its space and does not blow you off your seat. Jasper also has a collection of antique mechanical musical instruments, some of which were demonstrated after the concert. There was also a tennis court and swimming pool available for those who wanted to further enjoy a beautiful August afternoon.

On August 17, Dairyland presented Don Jenks at the Racine Theatre Guild Wurlitzer. Don's variety of music was enthusiastically appreciated by all in attendance.

BILL CAMPBELL

**DELAWARE VALLEY**  
**Philadelphia**  
215/566-1764

On September 7 we traveled to the Sunnybrook Ballroom in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, for a delicious Sunday Brunch made even more enjoyable by the music of house organist George Batman playing the 3/11 United States Pipe Organ Company instrument installed in the Ballroom on the fiftieth anniversary of its Grand Opening in 1931. The organ is played every Sunday during Brunch and at special concerts. George Batman shares the position of house organist with Don Kinnier, who appears monthly.

In the past, Sunnybrook was one of the main stops on the Big Band circuit featuring virtually every big name in the musical entertainment world, and even today the remaining big name bands on tour are booked at Sunnybrook.

Brunch was followed by open console with nearly all of our members participating. Our program concluded with the unexpected pleasure of hearing guest artists Joe Fernandez, Andy Kasparian and Joe Dorsey, President of Garden State Chapter.

EARL E. STRAUSSER



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

We proudly hosted a theatre organ evening on July 23 for the National Convention of the National Railway Historical Society. Their "Minuteman '86" included this theatre organ concert and railroad movies expertly played by Lee Erwin on our 3/13 Babson Wurlitzer. There seems to be an affinity between many railroad hobbyists (particularly steam) and theatre organ buffs, so this event was a "natural." Lee's format was a short concert which included a medley of railroad songs, a movie and a longer group of Gay Nineties tunes. After intermission, many questions were asked by our guests about ATOS and our organ, and President Dick Johnson did his best to answer all of them. Mr. Erwin then superbly fitted sound effects and music to a silent comedy which left the audience howling with laughter. Other popular selections, ending with "I Could Have Danced All Night," brought the program to a close, but the audience had M-O-R-E in mind, and a short group of tunes finalized by "Goodnight, Sweetheart," evoked happy memories for all present. Lee's long-established popularity didn't just happen—he earned it!

Several of our members were involved with

organ events during the summer, including a concert on August 9 on the nice 2/10 Wurlitzer in the Berlin (New Hampshire) Middle School where member Jim Martin is its mentor. John Cook, Cheryl Linder and Bob Legon did the honors for our chapter, and Bob ended with a sing-along. Berliners appreciated this evening out with the former Albert Theatre organ which has been kept in their town during its entire existence — a rarity indeed!

STANLEY C. GARNISS



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

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

On June 27 we presented a free concert with Jack Moelmann playing the 3/16 Moller in the Trenton War Memorial. Colonel Jack, our National President, has maintained many friends in our chapter, and all were delighted to attend his concert which was lively and lots of fun. Amusing, off-the-cuff quips interspersed with a nice variety of music, plus a silent film, made the evening most enjoyable. After the concert, Jack greeted friends, some of whom he had not seen since leaving New Jersey. We thank him for his generously donated talent.

On June 29 members gathered at the Rahway Theatre (now called the Union County Arts Center) for a business meeting. Because he was spending the weekend in New Jersey, Jack Moelmann attended the meeting and answered questions relating to the separate National dues and local chapter dues. Bob Balfour pointed out the growing number of improvements in the theatre, and open console followed.

The National Convention in July attracted 16 members from our chapter. Everything was enjoyable — the hotel, the air-condi-



Garden State members enjoying picnic at Point Pleasant, New Jersey.

(Jinny Vanore Photo)

tioned busses, and the beautiful Byrd and Mosque theatres. The artists were top notch, and it was difficult trying to decide who was best. The Virginia chapter is to be complimented on a smoothly run convention. The visits to the beautifully restored Jefferson-Sheraton Hotel for cocktails and to Williamsburg for the Afterglow were wonderful extras.

A summer meeting at the Jersey shore, with open console followed by a picnic, is always fun, and August 16 was no exception. The unexpected sun, which had been hiding all week, made a glorious appearance and added to the pleasure of the members. The business meeting and open console were held at the Asbury Park Convention Hall which houses a 3/7 Kilgen theatre organ which speaks into a large auditorium from chambers on either side of the large stage. The sound rolls around with delay and heavy reverberation, and our members enjoyed the open console. The convention hall is on a pier jutting out into the ocean. It has covered promenades on either side, running the length of the building. The organ music poured out the open doors and many of the senior citizens and visitors enjoyed it —

some even came in to investigate. After the meeting, members drove to nearby Point Pleasant for a lively picnic supper at the home of Michael Cipolletti. The evening came to an end after everyone enjoyed a walk on the Boardwalk. It was a most pleasant day.

JINNY VANORE



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

612/689-9201 or 612/771-1771

As usual, the Music Festival over the Labor Day weekend, sponsored by Bob Schmidt at his Indian Hills Resort at Stone Lake, Wisconsin, was a fun-filled musical weekend with Jack Olander, from Chicago, at the console of the custom Rodgers on Saturday and Sunday evenings. Mike Erie, from our chapter, played Sunday evening between Jack's programs. Jack has a Masters Degree in Music and is in charge of the musical programs in the Main Township high schools; he is also a church organist. After both concerts, we

gathered around the player-piano with Jack at the keyboard and Don Taft playing his accordion — a great twosome. The player-piano was kept busy with several individuals taking turns and the rest of us singing all the old songs we know so well. For once, the weatherman cooperated, and we had sunshine the whole weekend and the lake sparkled like jewels.

Member Ed Hirschoff is busy preparing a special feature article for THEATRE ORGAN concerning the history behind the preservation of the State Theatre in Minneapolis (Yes, it has been saved from the wrecker's ball!), a story about the chapter's organ installation at the Olivet Baptist Church and one about the installation of the 3/21 Wurlitzer in the World Theatre in St. Paul, home of Garrison Keillor's radio show, *A Prairie Home Companion*.

Gaylord Carter made his fourth appearance at the Phipps Center for the Arts in Hudson, Wisconsin, on September 6 and 7. He accompanied that funny silent film, *The General*, with Buster Keaton. That film would not be anything at all without Gaylord's expert interpretation at the organ. What a performer!

One of our members, Bill Yunker, who lives in Madison, Wisconsin, sent us the following note which we would like to share with readers of the journal: "Every 14-year-old boy should have an 'Auntie Mame.' Mine was one Emma Dutton, an English lady in the grandest tradition, a milliner (you young folks look it up) by trade, a good neighbor, a dear friend.

"I remember the first of many wonderful trips to Chicago. We took the electric train from Elgin to the Loop, walked from the depot to the Berghoff for a pleasant lunch, had dessert in the Walnut Room at Marshall Fields and then were off to a place called the Chicago Theatre — supposed to see a stage show and movie. As we entered, I was overwhelmed by the size and beauty of the place. We took our seats. I'd never seen such a grand room (the Grove Theatre would fit on the stage).

"Soon the lights dimmed and all of a sud-



Mike Erie at the player-piano, Indian Hills Resort.



Jack Olander acknowledging applause at the custom Rodgers — Evelyn Schmidt Music Room, Indian Hills Resort.

den that huge room came to life — its very fiber vibrant with the most beautiful sound I'd ever heard! Up out of a dark pit came a delightfully lit musical giant. A spotlight showed a man in a tuxedo seated at the console. This kid's eyes almost popped out. I looked at Mrs. Dutton — she smiled approvingly. What a program! I went to the moon! Probably the stage show was nice. I don't remember. It seems to have faded.

"Each time I hear one of these old beauties, I experience that same thrill, except now I cry a little as I look next to me and think of you, grand lady. Thank you for introducing me to a lifetime of enjoyment."

VERNA MAE WILSON

## LAND OF LINCOLN

Rockford

815/965-0856 or 815/399-8536

Our chapter and ATOS were well represented by the LOLTOS booth at the On The Waterfront festival over the Labor Day weekend in Rockford, Illinois, on the banks of the Rock River. We offered a prominent display of literature describing the Grande Barton organ and its "home," the Coronado

Theatre. Also available were records and tapes featuring the Barton organ along with "stop tablet" key chains, "I Love Theatre Organ" buttons, post cards of the Barton and the newest printing of the LOLTOS booklet describing the Barton and the Coronado.

After a quiet summer, our Grande Barton organ music "fast" was broken on September 21 by concert organist Ty Woodward. Our fall/winter schedule includes Father Miller on November 16 and our Fourth Annual New Year's Eve Celebration on New Year's Eve, of course.

RICHARD HULL



## LONDON & SOUTH OF ENGLAND

8956-32369 or 1-788-8791

Our summer program of events provided an exceptionally enjoyable combination of "at home" and "in theatre" attractions to preface an equally attractive fall season.

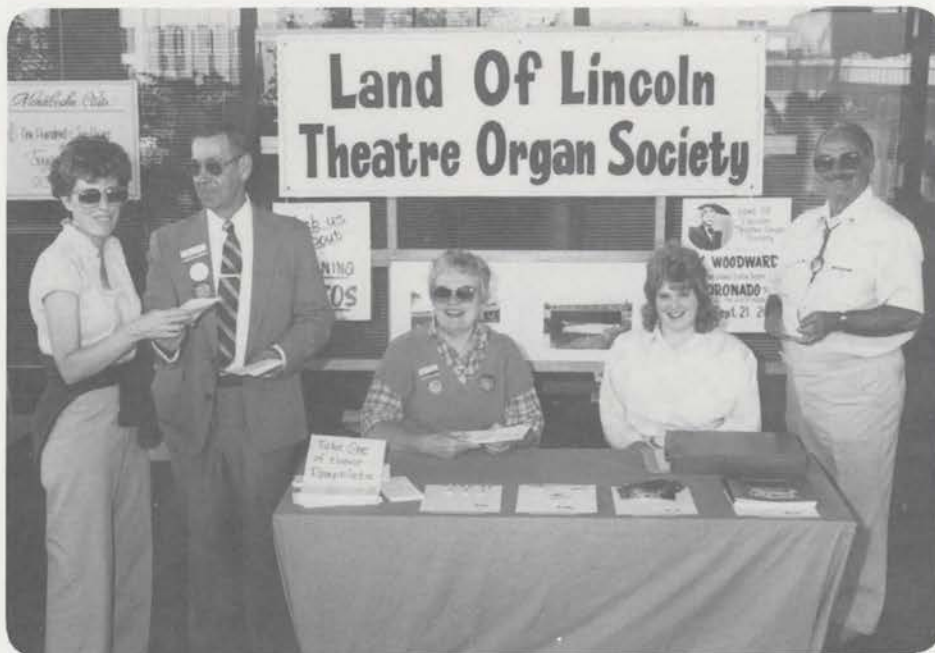
Popular member Desmond Jenkins arranged a superb fund-raising Open House

Meeting and Tea at his delightful home at Radlett, just north of London. Attended by 42 members and featuring three organs and piano, culminating in a concert by George Blackmore, a \$100 contribution was made to our organ maintenance fund — in good time for Les Rawle and our indefatigable technical team to acquire a substantial topping up of stocks of leather for their extensive program of restoration work.

As good as the weather was for Desmond's party, so it was just the opposite for our annual "Barbeque Funday." Kindly hosted by members Alan and Maureen Jordan at their lovely home at High Wycombe, about 20 members thoroughly enjoyed a superb indoor feast — with several also sampling the heated swimming pool and, of course, Alan's Eminent organ. Again, another \$100 raised.

Our annual summer outing took in a short cruise (a 20-minute ferry ride!) from Portsmouth to the Isle of Wight for a three-organ crawl featuring top artists Len Rawle and Nigel Ogden. First stop was at Monks Farm at Freshwater, the home of Arthur Stark and his Harrison and Harrison Organ that was originally installed in London's famed Westminster Abbey and later in St. Alban's Abbey to the north of London. The much appreciated hospitality was perfectly complemented by happy music from Nigel Ogden. On, then, to East Cowes where we were re-united with the ex-Ritz Aldershot 3/7 Wurlitzer that Len Rawle knew well during his National Service days in this famous Hampshire Army Barracks town. The organ has been carefully preserved by Peter Coles and, again, Nigel was in command for our enjoyment. Meanwhile, Len Rawle was awaiting our coach at the exceptionally fine, 1934 vintage Walker concert organ in Ryde Town Hall. A characteristically special day out, organized efficiently by Edith Rawle, this happy excursion was another memorable chapter achievement.

Our in-theatre highlight was the second of our series of spectacular concerts at the Top Rank Club in Kilburn. Our "Transatlantic Harmony" presentation featured well-known ambassadors Searle Wright, from the USA, and our own George Blackmore playing the sparkling and popular 4/16 "Torch" Wurlitzer now happily restored to full voice and in perfect complement to the beautifully restored Italianate-style of this famed and loved venue. Their contrasting styles, ranging



Land of Lincoln President Don Milne, daughter Lyn and wife Carole, and treasurer Vernon Barger, give a listing of the fall/winter schedule of Barton Organ concerts to one of the festival's 250,000 visitors. (Don Bissell Photo)

# ashley miller

a.a.g.o.

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Searle Wright at Gaumont State concert.

(John Sharp Photo)



George Blackmore at the Gaumont State for August 31 program.

(John Sharp Photo)

over many great theatre organ standards, were highlighted by George re-creating his imaginative "ATOS Convention March" which he composed for the 1980 Silver Anniversary Convention in London and which premiered at the (then) Gaumont State.

After our usual summer break at Convention time, our August Club Night featured talented, 12-year-old Peter Holt, current holder of our "Young Theatre Organist of the Year" title and Chain of Office, playing the 3/19 Wurlitzer at Les and Edith Rawle's. Coming with his parents, Arthur and Pat, from Wetherby in Yorkshire, Peter provided

an exciting evening with a capability well beyond his tender years. With a full public and charity concert diary complementing his school priorities, Peter has already appeared on radio and television in the UK and the USA, and cut his first LP disc. We shall doubtless be hearing and seeing much more of this outstanding young artist.

As we are looking forward to the ninth edition of our Young Organist Competition, we are also enjoying a fabulous new disc cut by our own Len Rawle. Dubbed "Rawle at the Hall," this features the magical Publix-style 1930-vintage, 4/20 Wurlitzer in the Free

Trade Hall under the enterprising auspices of the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust. This is the latest in their exceptional LP disc series, the proceeds of which have enabled them to restore and maintain numerous fine organs in the Manchester area. Recorded by Len some years ago in its original venue, this new platter is a must, not only for the joyous sounds that this magnificent instrument has always breathed, but especially for Len's truly outstanding handling and fullsome renderings in its new home, combined with the best of modern recording techniques.

Finally, great news to report of the massive restoration and re-installation of the ex-Regal Edmonton 4/15 "Torch" Christie in the Memorial Hall in the South Wales resort town of Barry — now nearing completion, and with lift also installed to complement the understage pipework, we are coming within sight of a grand civic and chapter opening.

Happy season, happy sounds and happy prospects with a happy and confident chapter.

DR. NORMAN BARFIELD



Members of the Ladies Team of London and South of England Chapter: (Top row — L to R) Muriel Jackson, Jean Pittey, Suzanne Hancock, Joyce Taylor; (Middle row) — Marie Watts, Veronica Bosson, Vera Crook, Mavis Sharp; (Front row) Terry Parsons, Dena Cooper, Edith Rawle.

(John Sharp Photo)



LOS ANGELES  
THEATRE ORGAN  
SOCIETY

California  
818/792-7084

A Gala Champagne Benefit was presented by our chapter on July 20 at Standard In-

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Gaylord Carter



Stan Kann



Dan Bellomy



Hal Sanguinetti was master of ceremonies. (Zimfoto)



John Ledwon



Chris Elliott



Bill Wright

dustries in La Mirada. The purpose of this gala event was to raise additional funds to be used for the re-installation of the Ross Reed Memorial 3/27 organ into its new establishment, the Pasadena City College, by May of next year.

Hal Sanguinetti, from radio station KPCC, was the MC for the program which was one of the most enjoyable we've had in a long time. Six prominent artists donated their time and talent for the cause, Billy Wright, Gaylord Carter, John Ledwon, Stan Kann, Chris Elliott and Dan Bellomy. We would like to thank the LATOS committee for sponsoring the event and the full audience for their generous support.

The six artists who played the final concert on the Ross Reid Memorial Organ.

(Zimfoto)

MARIA OLIVIER



View of the audience at the final concert on the Ross Reed/La Mirada organ belonging to Los Angeles Chapter. (Zimfoto)

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Removing the console from the Punch and Judy Theatre.

(Van Steenskiste Photo)



Gaylord Carter arrived at the Redford Theatre in a 1931 Packard Phaeton. With Gaylord are Harold Bellamy, Bob Mills and Evelyn Markey. (Bill Vogel Photo)



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

May 10 marked Gaylord Carter's farewell performance for our chapter at the Redford Theatre. Gaylord's arrival at the theatre in a 1931 Packard Phaeton was reminiscent of October 24, 1967, when "Flicker Fingers" and his partner, Jim Day, arrived in a vintage motorcade for Motor City's first public program.

The film Gaylord chose to accompany this time was the Harold Lloyd comedy *Kid Brother*. Although he has returned to Detroit again and again during the intervening years, there were people in the audience who were experiencing a Gaylord Carter program for the first time. As expected, he left them spellbound. There were also former members and friends in the audience we hadn't seen in years — a tribute to Gaylord and his magic.

The second pipe organ to be restored by our chapter (the Redford's was the first) was the 2/5 Wurlitzer in the Punch and Judy Theatre in Grosse Point Farms. The first of several chapter programs there was presented to a sold-out house on May 10, 1968, with Bill Buswell accompanying *The Covered Wagon*. On April 27, 1986, the Punch and Judy Wurlitzer was removed — a victim of changing times. Originally shipped to the Wurlitzer

Company in downtown Detroit where it was a demonstration instrument, it was subsequently installed in the Punch and Judy in time for its gala January 29, 1930, opening. Used infrequently in the early years, the organ blossomed in Motor City's hands and was heard regularly during Friday evening intermissions and, more recently, in free morning concerts on the first Sunday of the month. Chapter improvements to the organ include the addition of a Diapason rank and refinishing of the console. However, since it had ceased operation as a classic film house after a succession of managers, the building owners decided that conversion to retail and office space was the only solution for the vacant building. The Wurlitzer has been donated to the chapter and was removed by chapter members in April. Because of a lack of storage space and our desire to keep the instrument intact, the organ has been moved to the home of one of our members.

Shirlee Schenk was featured at the 3/16 Barton at the Royal Oak Theatre for our Fourth Sunday program on May 25. Shirlee has appeared at the Macomb Theatre and Detroit Theater Organ Club and is a substitute church organist who also teaches organ and piano.

Our Fourth Sunday artist at the Royal Oak on June 22 was Grace Joslin who, in addition to being heard at the Redford, plays with a four-piece combo at fashion shows and parties and has also been a church organist.

Over 100 attended our annual picnic on July 20 at Murray Lake as guests of Norm and Gena Horning. In addition to picnic activities, there was open console at an Allen organ furnished by Stan Zimmerman and Smiley Bros. Music Company.

Our thirteenth annual moonlight cruise on the 84-year-old passenger steamer, the Columbia, attracted just over 1000 people for a three-hour cruise under a full moon on August 19. Two organs, one on the ballroom



Shirlee Schenk was the Fourth Sunday artist at the Royal Oak Theatre in May. (Jim Ambrose Photo)



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February 22	Church, Portsmouth, Ohio
February 28	Michigan Theatre, Ann Arbor, Michigan
March 28	Castro Theatre, San Francisco, California
April 4	Castro Theatre, San Francisco, California
April 11	Church, Oakbrook, Illinois
April 25	Cleveland Gray's, Cleveland, Ohio
May 31	Ohio Theatre, Columbus, Ohio
June 6	John Dickinson High School, Wilmington, Delaware
June 22-26	ATOS NATIONAL CONVENTION, Los Angeles, California
July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30	Frauenthal Center, Muskegon, Michigan
October 16	Roberson Center, Binghamton, New York
October 17	Museum of Glass, Corning, New York



Grace Joslin was featured at the Royal Oak Barton in June. (Fred Page Photo)



Motor City members participating in the Fourth Sunday program at the Royal Oak Theatre in July were: (back row) Claudette and Faith Sunman, (front row) Gloria Sunman, Margaret Tapler, Gil Francis and Jim Fox. (Fred Page Photo)

deck and another for open console on the bar deck, were provided by Stan Zimmerman and Smiley Bros. Dance organists were Stan, Steve Schlesing, Fred Bayne and John Lauter. This marks the twelfth year that Don Lockwood has organized these cruises.

Our congratulations to Colleen Feldpausch who won the Intermediate Division in the National ATOS Young Theatre Organist Competition.

The Fourth Sunday Show at the Royal Oak

Theatre on July 27 featured Gloria Sunman and daughters Faith and Claudette, Margaret Tapler, Gil Francis and Jim Fox at the console of the 3/16 Barton. Steve Stephani, a long-time member and supper club organist, was featured at the Royal Oak on August 24.

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

DON LOCKWOOD

### NEW YORK THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY New York 914/457-5393

Organ music lovers from the mid-Hudson area joined our members and took a break from the summer heat on August 23 when they attended the first public concert on the chapter's newly installed Style H Wurlitzer at the Paramount Theatre in Middletown, New York. Organist Frank Cimmino was featured artist and put the Mighty (though not quite complete) Wurlitzer through its paces with a



Interior of Paramount Theatre in Middletown, New York, showing chapter 2/10 Wurlitzer.

(Walt Brunke Photo)



New York Chapter's Style H, 2/10 Wurlitzer now playing at the Paramount Theatre in Middletown, New York.

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L to R: Bob Seeley, Lowell Sanders, Bob Welch and Tom Stehle after unloading the Ben Hall Wurlitzer onto the stage of the Middletown Paramount for temporary storage.



Frank Cimmino at the New York chapter's Wurlitzer in Paramount Theatre, Middletown, New York. (Walt Brunke Photo)

program of traditional theatre organ selections that left the audience wanting more.

Frank opened his program with a rousing "Strike Up The Band." He included a medley of tunes associated with Radio City Music Hall. The "Washington Post March" made good use of the snare drum which, along with some other traps, had just been installed the day before the concert. He closed with an inspirational arrangement of "God of Our Fathers," and as an encore, played a novelty tune, "Loco Locomotive," requested by a member of the audience. Despite the absence of the train whistle, bell and steam which are yet to be installed, the enthusiastic audience thoroughly enjoyed their musical train ride.

Both the artist and the instrument performed splendidly, and all who attended the debut of our chapter's Wurlitzer seemed to agree that it was worth the more than two-year wait to hear the organ finally play. The instrument fills the 1100-seat auditorium with a sound far bigger than would be expected from its 10 ranks, a tribute to the instrument, the installation and the excellent acoustics of the house.

The luxury of unlimited open console time induced several members to stay and enjoy more music. In all, it was a successful day and a most rewarding one, especially for Bob Seeley and his Paramount crew, Bob Welch, Bill Istone, Lowell Sanders and Tom Stehle, who have spent the past two-and-a-half years rebuilding and installing the organ since its

donation to our chapter from the Clairidge Theatre in Montclair, New Jersey. The Arts Council of Orange County, which owns and operates the Paramount, is planning to use the organ regularly for concerts as well as with its own programs.

Meanwhile, on a very short notice, our chapter was requested by Carnegie Hall to remove the Ben Hall Wurlitzer from the Carnegie Cinema to make way for construction work which is part of the overall renovation of the hall. A crew, headed by Biff Butler and Tom Stehle, dismantled the instrument and removed it from the Carnegie Cinema amidst incredibly dusty and difficult working conditions and the heat of July and August in New York City. Thanks to chapter members Warren Laliberte, Bob Welch, Lowell Sanders, Phil Yankoschuk, Joe Vanore and Dave and Ronnie Kopp, all of whom did yeoman service, the 2/5 Wurlitzer, which belongs to ATOS, was removed in three working sessions. Member Bob Seeley constructed pipe trays, and Frank Dunhuber and Mark Erickson assisted with transporta-

tion. The organ is temporarily in storage at the Middletown Paramount while plans to re-install it are under consideration.

TOM STEHLE



**NORTH  
TEXAS  
CHAPTER**

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We had suspended playing weekend intermission music at the Lakewood Theatre for the summer because the summer schedule emphasized children's matinees and because of summer vacations. However, in mid-summer we were advised by the theatre manager that he had received many inquiries about when the organ would be playing again, showing the interest that our volunteer professional organists had generated this past year with their performances on our 3/8 Robert-Morton installed there. Secretary Lorena McKee put out a call to the volunteer group and found willingness to continue the activity immediately, rather than wait for the fall program season to begin. The chapter owes a debt of gratitude to those who have given so generously of their time and talent to promote the enjoyment of theatre organ, especially Charles Evans, Bill Hanson, Mark Kenning

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Five artists who played for North Texas at their August meeting; Top, L to R: Byron Melcher, Charles Evans. Bottom, L to R: Bill Hanson, Irving Light, and at right host Gordon Wright.

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and Lloyd Hess. This exercising of the organ has also helped to identify problems needing correction, and Chairman Gordon Wright wants only to have some professional tonal work done before we begin presenting public concerts on this chapter organ.

In August, our members gathered in the beautiful residence of Gordon and Evelyn Wright for a stimulating afternoon of theatre pipe organ music from their fine Wurlitzer played by some of our chapter members, including our host. For many of our members, this was the first time they had heard Gordon

play, and now that they have experienced his talent, he will not get away without performing for our chapter in the future.

Bill Hanson says that his brightly flowered, red shirt has become his "costume" when he plays at the Lakewood Theatre. He feels that this informal attire creates a much more receptive atmosphere for his playing there than would a suit and tie. He attributes the friendliness of the audience and their requests for favorite selections to his informality. Well, that's show biz!

IRVING LIGHT



**OREGON  
Portland**

**503/775-9048 or 503/771-8098**

Our annual picnic was held August 17 at the beautiful country home of Jerry and Nickie Gaylord, located in the rolling hills southeast of Portland. With each of us contributing, and our chapter providing coffee and dessert, we enjoyed a fine variety of delicious food. Perfect weather allowed eating either indoors or out, punctuated by appropriate bugle calls by member Gary Zenk.

Gaylords' 2/7 Wicks sounds directly into a very large recreation room and has a fine compact console built by original owner Bob



Appreciative audience in Gordon Wright listening area, North Texas Chapter meeting.



Oregon Chapter member Bob Rickett records the open console and picnic.  
(Claude Neuffer Photo)



Oregon Chapter members enjoy the sun and fun at their annual picnic at the Gaylords.  
(Claude Neuffer Photo)

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Rickett. Extensive unification, including full Tibia mutations, make this a joy to play and hear. Open console included many members and a surprise visitor, the famous Kurt Von Schakel from Indianapolis, who gave this organ a very strenuous workout.

Thanks to our gracious hosts, Jerry and Nickie Gaylord, for a most enjoyable afternoon.

BUD ABEL



Members Keith Roberts, Gene Mignery and Ken Davies rebuilding the four-poster Barton lift for the Pikes Peak chapter Wurlitzer at Mount St. Francis.

**PIKES PEAK AREA**  
**Colorado Springs**  
**303/687-6530 or 303/633-4407**

It has been an extremely busy summer for our chapter as we have been preparing for the Rocky Mountain Regional Convention in October. Our members have been hurrying to complete the installation of our chapter instrument, a 3/20 (mostly Wurlitzer) theatre organ. This organ is a combination of a 3/9 Wurlitzer and a 2/8 Wurlitzer with some extra additions from other sources. Our Technical Chairman, John Grunow, designed the specifications, and he and his brother, Bob, have literally been living with the instrument to assure that it gets finished on time. Many of our members have worked long and hard on this project. Denver theatre organ technician Ed Zollman has been generously lending assistance with voicing, regulating and other finishing. The organ will be featured in a sneak preview, private concert for our chapter and Rocky Mountain Chapter on September 28, with our special guest artist, Mr. Joel Kremer, at the console. In addition to the organ work, the entire auditorium has been repainted by chapter members, and the organ lift has been rebuilt and improved by Keith Roberts and his crew.

Meanwhile, down at Colorado Springs City Auditorium, our 3/8 Wurlitzer has been kept busy at our First Sunday and mini-concert sessions. We are planning a Christmas event which will feature the organ, instrumental groups and local choirs.

DAVID WEESNER



Crew member Mary Lou Becvar in Main chamber, Seattle Neptune Theatre.

**PUGET SOUND**  
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In a continuing effort to vary chapter events and to give old and new members the chance to become acquainted, the September meeting was a series of home tours with time allowed for socializing and open console.

The first organ to be visited was the former Whitting/Myers 2/10 hybrid which began as an Estey Minuet in a grand piano case and grew to its present size as a result of the efforts of Gennie Whitting and Don Myers. It is presently being installed in the Neptune Theatre in Seattle's University District by owner Mike Wallace, to be used regularly in an ambitious schedule of art and classic films. The chamber size and accessibility in this theatre are highly unusual as there is only a short flight of concrete steps to the Main chamber and a newly built bridge across to the Solo. Other components are on the stage behind the screen. Plans are to bring the organ to 12 ranks.

Russ and Joanne Evans, owners of Evans' Music Stores, have recently completed installation of a Wurlitzer Style B in their Kenmore home which included organ chambers when it was built. The organ, originally a 2/4, was installed in the Empire Theatre in Anacortes in



John Grunow at the 3/20 Pikes Peak Chapter organ at Mount St. Francis.

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Backstage at the Seattle Neptune Theatre, showing components installed behind the screen and walkway built for access to Solo chamber.

1925. In the late '30s it was purchased by Finley's Mortuary in Portland, Oregon, and was later acquired by Stan Smith whose son, Greg, now plays regularly at Bellevue Pizza & Pipes. Russ has brought the organ to ten ranks, and it proved to be a delightful installation.

Wes Spore, also of Kenmore, had long nursed an ambition to own a pipe organ and

jumped at the chance when he heard of one for sale next door to a construction job where he was working. It was a 2/4 Wurlitzer, first installed in the Montlake Theatre in Kelso in 1924. It was later installed in the Dyer residence in Mt. Baker in 1936, and after that in the Blue Ridge Drew residence in 1941. Wes and Bev completely restored the organ, in addition to enlarging their home. Joining the "Sweep and Buy" fraternity has enabled them to increase their organ to eight ranks, a combination of Flute, Morton Tibia, Salicional, Vox, Diaphonic Diapason, Gottfried Tuba, Horn Diapason and Flute d'amour. This organ was also a pleasure to play and to hear, and everyone who participated on this tour felt that it was very successful.

DIANE WHIPPLE

tainment which included our own stage band, the Fargo Theatre Big Band All-Stars, who recently played for an enthusiastic crowd at the Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, Water Carnival in the heart of the resort area. At this writing, we are at the halfway mark to our goal of \$460,000. One of the unique donations has been the free use of a 1929 Ford Roadster replica, courtesy of Bill Wallwork, owner of the Fargo Ford dealership.

At the end of August, Cinecon, the convention of cinephiles, took place in Minneapolis. It centered around a tribute to Dorothy Gish, with Lillian Gish appearing in person. The movie, *Orphans of the Storm*, starring Dorothy and Lillian Gish, was scored by Lance Johnson at the State Theatre on a three-manual Conn.

The Fargo Theatre's rigging and flyloft have been rebuilt during the summer and are ready for future stage presentations.

SONIA CARLSON

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



Our main event for the summer occurred on August 27 when we held a three-hour telethon at the Fargo Theatre to help our fundraising efforts toward restoration. WDAY, the ABC affiliate, televised the varied enter-

**The River City  
Theatre Organ Society  
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Our July meeting was hosted by Bob Markworth at his home in North Omaha, and was attended by 73 members and guests. During open console nine members took turns on Bob's expertly installed 3/13 Kimball theatre



Popular Jeanne Cooper entertains River City with a mini-concert. (Tom Jeffery Photo)



Guest Rich Oberle from St. Louis Chapter tells River City members what his group is doing. (Tom Jeffery Photo)

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pipe organ, originally from the Leona Theatre in Homestead, Pennsylvania. Special thanks are due Lillian White for organizing the bountiful picnic supper, and to Bob Markworth and Jack Moelmann who furnished the hamburgers. Among our guests, we were pleased to have Rich Oberle and his family from St. Louis Chapter who told of some of the activities of that group. During a brief business meeting, Bob Markworth in-



Wendall Hall, well-known Omaha musician, joined Jack Moelmann in a banjo/organ jam session.  
(Tom Jeffery Photo)

roduced member Joe Hogya who presented Jack Moelmann with a cast-bronze plaque that Joe had made. It bears Jack's family crest, Air Force insignia and an appropriate verse and will be mounted on the chest of Flute and Calliope pipes which were presented to Jack by the River City family at a recent meeting.

Our program included a special treat — new member Wendall Hall, who plays banjo with Bill Bailey's Banjo Band, joined Jack Moelmann for a banjo/organ jam session, including a sing-along with slides. Jack then concluded the meeting by cueing the silent film, *The Big Shot*, starring Snub Pollard.

On August 18, Marv Frey and his staff hosted our meeting in a spacious facility near their Baldwin dealership, with two Baldwin organs for all to try. Seven members took advantage of open console. President Harold Kenney welcomed the many guests and called upon Mike Riley to demonstrate the features of the large Baldwin theatre organ. Later, member Jeanne Cooper, organist at Casio's Steak House, joined Jack Moelmann in an organ duet after which she played a mini-concert.

Jack Moelmann introduced Stanley Gross, a long-time member of our chapter who has not been able to attend before. In 1963, Stanley and member George Rice restored the Omaha Orpheum's Wurlitzer to mint condition and have maintained it since then. That's real dedication! Once again, we were treated

to a foot-tapping banjo and organ duet and sing-along, with Wendall Hall on banjo and Jack Moelmann on organ. Jack concluded the program with his tribute to America.

TOM JEFFERY

## ST. LOUIS Missouri 618/654-7855

Joyous Holiday Greetings from St. Louis Chapter! We hope your New Year's plans are as full and exciting as the ones we are making.

Late winter should find the installation of the 3/20 Wurlitzer in the Granada Theatre about finished and ready to dedicate. Work has been progressing at a good rate, thanks to our members and the cooperation of the owners of the Granada. It promises to be a fantastic installation.

By the time you read this, the 2/10 Wurlitzer that we installed in the lobby of the fabulous Fox Theatre should be in somewhat regular use. Although we own the lobby organ, we really enjoy playing the 4/36 Wurlitzer in the auditorium of the Fox. Thanks to Marlin Mackley, of Mackley Organ Service, for arranging for us to do that in October at our monthly meeting. His superb restoration and continuing maintenance really shows.

One of our performing artists, Mark Gifford, has quite a varied life. As a sales consul-



Joe Hogya (left) presents his cast bronze plaque to Jack Moelmann as Bob Markworth watches.  
(Tom Jeffery Photo)



Mark Gifford (left) with composer/artist Robert Hebble at the console of a Rodgers classical organ.

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tant for Bybee Church organs, Mark calls on churches throughout central and southern Illinois representing pipe and electronic organs and playing frequent concerts. Mark is both a classical and theatre organist, and Halloween



Martha Eitel adjusts chef Charlie Porter's hat at San Diego Chapter picnic.

night found him center stage at the fantastic, restored Union Station playing spooky music on our chapter's traveling organ. While in London, England, Mark played the "Duchess" at the Odeon Theatre in Leicester Square for the premiere of the movie, *The Man Who Would Be King*. He has also served as organist for the Kemper Arena in Kansas City, Missouri.

DENNIS AMMANN

### SAN DIEGO California 619/746-3581

Kathie Eitel, Social Activities Director, arranged a lovely August picnic for us away from the city in beautiful, rustic Deer Park. Hamburgers and hotdogs were barbequed by our own renowned outdoor chef, Charlie Porter. Charlie looked the part in the apron and hat designed and made by Martha Eitel especially for the occasion. And we certainly couldn't do without theatre organ music, so Chuck Kramarich dismantled his stereo, hauled it to the park and put it back together under the trees. This provided us with taped music of many organ greats which really added to our enjoyment of the picnic. No one went away hungry for food, good music or

fine fellowship.

Two members of Garden State Chapter visited us while on vacation in San Diego. Dan and Elaine Dawson came down to the theatre and shared a morning of open console. They are a neat couple, and we hope to see them again.

Guest artist for our September 6 concert was Jim Roseveare, staff organist at the Oakland Paramount. This was Jim's first appearance at the California Theatre, and we hope not the last! He is an excellent musician — his phrasing and coloring are exceptional.

Under the able direction of crew chief Bruce Burkett, maintenance and additions to our organ are going as planned. We have completely rewinded the Solo chamber and rebuilt the swell bumpers. The additions include a Harp, Sleighbells, 16' Tibia and a 32' Diaphone. Voicing and tonal finishing will be done by Chris Gorsuch, our tonal consultant. This will bring our organ to peak performance for the 1987 Convention Encore which San Diego Chapter will host.

MARY JANE HYDE

### SIERRA

#### Sacramento

916/726-5132 or 916/332-2837

Dale and Maryann Mendenhall's beautiful home was filled with organ music on August 3, the day of our annual picnic. Benches and seats were placed out under the trees which gave shade for the many guests while they chatted in a temperature of 104 degrees. Pop, punch and a beautiful cake with the ATOS signature in the frosting was served throughout the day, a donation of our hosts. The 3/15 Wurlitzer and a Gulbransen Rialto theatre organ plus a beautiful Yamaha grand piano were the stars of the day as guests seated themselves on the benches to entertain the 63 or so organ fans who enjoyed the picnic. Artists during the afternoon included Jerry Nagano, Warren White and Chet Smith. The big surprise was the beautiful music played on the Yamaha in duets by our hostess and Judd Walton — a bundle of talent! We were pleased to have so many from the Nor-Cal chapter join us in the festivities.

Overheard during the gabfests was a discussion about the Z-tronic device which Sierra Chapter is interested in putting on their Wurlitzer to replace the relays. Also, we learned that a 3/12 Wurlitzer is being installed



Chow time under the old oak tree at San Diego picnic.

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in the home of Steve Restivo and Roy Dawson in San Jose. A great loss to our chapter is the news that Randy Warwick and family will soon move to Fresno where Randy will work as sales manager for radio station RFRE.

It was a great day for all, and we want to thank Maryann and Dale for a most joyous time.

BUD TAYLOR

## SOONER STATE

### Tulsa

918/742-8693 or 918/437-2146

There was nothing to indicate that our July meeting at Tulsa's Assembly of God Church was anything other than the usual fine performance we have come to expect from Lorene Thomas. She coaxed much easy-listenin' music from the 4/14 Robert-Morton, including "Stardust," "Sunrise Serenade" and "Sleepy Time Gal." Then, at open console, we heard from a number of our playing members.

Imagine our surprise, then, to read in the paper a few weeks later that the Central Assembly congregation had decided to sell their building and move to a yet-undetermined site toward the south part of the city. The organ is to be put in storage until a new auditorium can be built, and the word we got is that it might be as long as five years before this takes place. Plans are for the organ to be renovated during this time, and when it is re-installed it will be augmented with additional ranks and a toy counter. Our Phil Judkins is to oversee the project.

In such circumstances, there is only one thing to do — hold a farewell concert. Ours was to be more of a "Sleeping Beauty" concert, on our regular meeting night, with our playing members performing. Perhaps, we thought, we could get a story in the newspaper; after all, this instrument is the only one left in Tulsa from an original Downtown Theatre, the Rialto. Member Don Kimes, who works for Newspaper Printing Corporation, said he'd see what he could do.

The *Tulsa World* sent Tom Carter to the church a couple of nights before our program to interview Chairman Lee Smith, Harry Rassmussen and organist Lorene Thomas. The story he wrote, accompanied by a picture of Lorene at the console, was absolutely fabulous! What's more, it appeared in the paper

the day before the program, which gave people time to make plans to attend.

And attend they did! The church seats 1000, and there were an additional 200 folding chairs placed in the auditorium. We put the overflow up front, in the choir seats, and still had some standing in the foyer in the back. They came from miles around, even from as far away as Fayetteville, Arkansas. The "Power of the Press" was truly remarkable.

Our chairman was master of ceremonies, and he was delightful. Lee told the audience a little of the history of the organ, then introduced his Uncle George, who had been manager of all four of the Downtown Theatres at one time or another, and his Aunt Sedalia, George's wife, who had been a box office cashier. He told them about our chapter-owned 3/10 Robert-Morton, and they started to applaud before he finished telling them about its nearly complete installation at the Broken Arrow Campus of the Tulsa Vo-Tech High School. He told jokes — and they laughed at all of them.

Suffice it to say that our performers gave them a good program. Phil Judkins, who opened with the RKO "Paramount on Parade" newsreel march, and Jerrye Beard had to be the bravest as they had TV cameras staring over their shoulders (Channel 6 News had seen the story, too). Luther Eulert and Don Kimes added much with their distinctive styles, and the audience even clapped for this writer — and I've never played for that many people in my life!

At intermission the audience was invited to climb the stairs to view the south chamber of the organ. The number who did so was unbelievable! We also took lots of names of interested persons, most of whom exclaimed, "I didn't know you existed!"

Dick Van Dera began the second half of the program, and they loved him. He started by saying that if he'd known there would be so many people there he'd have worn his tux instead of his jeans and work shirt. He had them all singing "Has Anybody Seen My Gal" and "I'm Looking Over A Four-Leaf Clover" and all we were missing was a bouncing ball. Sam Collier was next, playing nicely and bemoaning the fact that Dick "sure was a tough act to follow." Lorene Thomas was last, and when she presented 80-year-old Margaret Crawford at the grand piano, it brought down the house. They closed with "I'll See



Sooner State's Program Chairman, Phil Judkins, opened the "Sleeping Beauty" program on the 4/14 Robert-Morton at Tulsa Assembly of God Church.

You in My Dreams."

Of course that wasn't all — is it ever? Lorene kept right on playing as many people gathered around the console. We heard two superb singing voices, a man and a woman (who sing in their respective churches) were singing hymns and then some selections from *Oklahoma* as Lorene accompanied. We got their names as both are interested in theatre organ music. We think the "playing member" concept for this concert was a tremendous idea, one that other groups might want to try. A paid professional might have shown the instrument off to better advantage, but for our audience to hear ordinary people play for the sheer pleasure of it, with all gradations of skill and expertise, surely must have stirred some thoughts of, "If they can do it, maybe I can, too." The interest is there — all we have to do is keep it going!

DOROTHY SMITH



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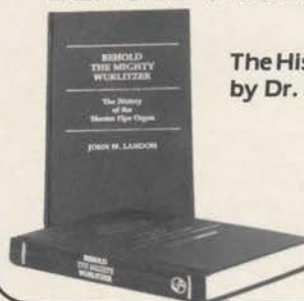
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the recent installation of a larger main wind regulator. Members present were shown some pipe organ films from the 1930s and '40s on the Ohio's big screen.

Our organization is expanding its operations as membership grows, and our next meeting is scheduled at the beautiful Ritz Theatre in Tiffin, Ohio. The Ritz originally had a 2/7 Wurlitzer in 1928, but has had empty chambers for many years. The theatre is undergoing restoration and is successful as a performing arts center. The talented Bill Yaney will accompany a silent film on an electronic organ. We will be assisting the Ritz organization to find another theatre pipe organ for possible donation. For more information, call Evan Chase at 419/381-6730.

Motor City Chapter has generously donated several ranks of pipework and chests for our installation in the Ohio Theatre, and some are up and playing now. We thank them for this spirit of helping one another reach the goals of ATOS.

EVAN J. CHASE

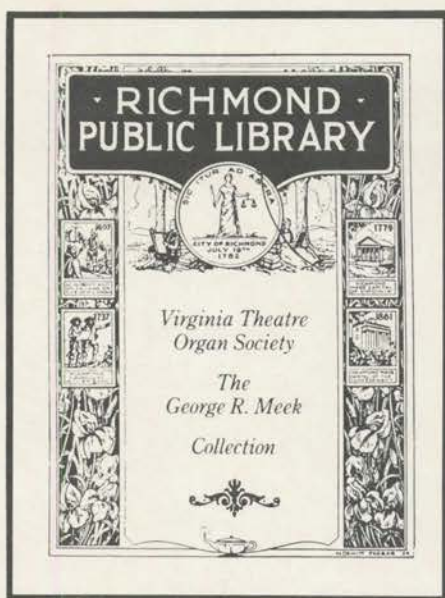


We kinda skipped over the month of July for a formal club meeting because we were so involved with the convention, and it left little time for anything else. It was, however, a lot of fun, and we enjoyed arranging concerts and events for all of the wonderful people

who came to Richmond.

On August 29 we met at the Richmond Public Library to present to the city the private collection of George R. Meek. George was from Roanoke, Virginia, and had been a member of ATOS since its beginning. At that time, Roanoke had the beautiful American Theatre with a fine three-manual Wurlitzer — which explains George's interest in the theatre organ and movie houses in general.

Anne Meek, George's lovely wife, turned the material over to VTOS, and we arranged for the public library to house this extensive collection so it will be safe and available to the public and to scholars doing research on



Copy of label placed in each item in the George Meek Collection donated to the Richmond Public Library.

organs or theatres. The material includes all the issues of THEATRE ORGAN, *The Console* and *Marquee* (the journal of the Theatre Historical Society). There are also organ manufacturers' catalogs, Wurlitzer shipping lists compiled by Judd Walton, souvenir books of great movie palaces plus many interesting and valuable papers and photographs. The accompanying bookplate was placed inside every publication so whoever uses the material will know where it came from. We are indebted to Anne Meek for this generous contribution which will be remembered for years to come.

Our club was recently informed that the owner of the Colonial, State and Towne (National) Theatres in downtown Richmond will give to our organization anything we want out of the theatres. The theatres have been closed for several years, and all date from the middle '20s. The Towne and Colonial are large houses, and the Towne had stage shows right up to the '50s. We are busy making our list and checking it twice, 'cause Santa Claus is coming to town!

MILES RUDISILL



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In July we once again gathered on the shore of Commerce Lake, Michigan, to hear and play the Devtronix which Les Hamilton and Bob Kynaston have installed in their lakeside home. Once again, Melissa Ambrose set the pace with Schubert's "Marche Militaire" and the "A&W Song" ("Root Beer Rag"). Many



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Fred Bane at the Wurlitzer in the Voydanoff home.

(Fred Page Photo)

others took turns playing three-selection cameos. And where there is Fran Carmody, there will be some songs. Fran sang some old favorites, accompanied by Margaret Dixon.

In August, two cherished friends hosted the chapter picnic in their new location. David Voydanoff and Glen Rank relocated in 1985, from Detroit to Algonac at the head of Lake St. Clair. Their Lady Wurlitzer was readied

for her latest coming-out party. On hand to help celebrate were a handful of nationally known talents, including John Steele, Dennis Minear, Fred Bayne, Steve Schlesing, Steve Stephani and Gary Montgomery. Also, Fran Carmody provided the vocals, her son Brian manned the console and son Terry played some golden trumpet. It was particularly gratifying to have Gary Montgomery back with



Accordions on wall moves, and keys move when played from Devtronix console at Hamilton residence.

(Fred Page Photo)

us after his recent illness; he and H. C. Scott virtually waged their own reunion of Theatre Organ Pizza & Pipes people at this Wolverine event.

CHARLES AND BETTY BAAS □



Sign outside Voydanoff residence, Algonac, Michigan.

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Melissa Ambrose at the console of the Hamilton's Devtronix special.

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