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Cover Photo:
The "Buddy Cole" Wurlitzer in
Britain's National Motor Cycle
Museum Banqueting Complex will
be featured at the 1999 "Convention
With A Difference."

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EDITOR: THOMAS L. DeLAY
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY: MICHAEL FELLENER

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President's Message



Another year is upon us. New Year's resolutions are already being broken. That is human nature, I guess.

By the time you read this, the nominations for the ATOS Board of Directors should be in and the ballot materials are being readied for mailing. The term covered by this election is from the summer of 1999 to the summer of 2002. I hope we have a slate of candidates with a variety of experiences for consideration. Most of all, watch for the election materials, study, and vote promptly. Careful analysis and voting will insure that ATOS has guidance as we enter the next century.

All Chapters, please note: Michael Fellenzer, our Executive Secretary needs current and accurate information as to your officers. Please be sure to keep him informed after your annual election.

Tom DeLay, the keeper of the Pipe Piper, needs your updates on instruments that are installed in public venues. This information is published annually in the Theatre Organ Journal.

Our Annual Convention for 1999 is being hosted by the London and South of England Chapter. This promises to be quite an adventure for those of us who have never traveled internationally for the annual feast of theatre organ music and socializing. The Regional Convention for 1999 is being held in Wichita, Kansas. The anchor instrument is the famous New York Paramount Wurlitzer.

Encourage young people who show an interest in playing or maintaining theatre organs. They are our future. I hope some Chapters have had good experience in gaining new and young members; if so, please share your experiences with us.

Have questions or problems? The contact information for all ATOS Directors, Officers, and Staff is listed on the previous page. You elected us and we are ready to help.

Harry Heth

General Information

THE ATOS ENDOWMENT FUND Part 4: How May I Donate to the ATOS Endowment Fund?

As mentioned in previous articles, most of us are unable to make a sizable outright financial contribution to the ATOS Endowment Fund. The most practical way for most of us to contribute to this most important cause is to make sure that we include it in our estate planning.

The only way for you to be assured that your estate will be distributed as you wish is for you to have a will or trust. In fact, you must have a will or trust or the state in which you live will decide how your estate will be distributed after your death. Too many people do not have wills or trusts. Since most of us work very hard for what we own, we want to be sure that after our death, our assets are distributed as we wish. Only a will or trust can give you the peace of mind that comes when you have put in writing specific directions for the distribution of your assets after your death.

In a will or trust you can name the specific beneficiaries. It is important to know that a will usually has to be processed through probate court. This can result in much of the estate being used to pay court and attorney fees. A trust allows your assets to pass directly to a trustee without probate proceedings. Many members prefer a trust because the entire estate passes directly to the individuals or organizations named in the trust. In either a will or trust, you can make a bequest to the ATOS Endowment Fund and still leave sufficient funds for a surviving spouse or other loved ones. This can be accomplished by giving a specified percentage of the estate to the Endowment Fund. In rare cases, a member may desire to leave their

entire estate to the Endowment Fund.

No matter what you decide, you are encouraged to consult an attorney to prepare the necessary legal documents. Remember, if you do not have everything in writing in a legally accepted will or trust, the state in which you live will decide how your estate will be distributed.

For information regarding the ATOS Endowment Fund, please contact Vern Bickel, 785 Palomino Court, San Marcos, CA 92069-2102, 760/471-6194.

ATOS Endowment Fund Grant Money is Available

If your chapter would like to apply for grant money from the ATOS Endowment Fund, now is the time to send for your grant application form. Each year, grants from the ATOS Endowment Fund are made to ATOS Chapters for projects and/or programs which will have a lasting impact on the preservation and/or presentation of the theatre pipe organ as an historically American instrument and musical art form, and for projects and/or programs of particular historical or scholarly merit. All ATOS Chapters engaged in such projects and/or programs are urged to submit a grant application form for review by the ATOS Endowment Fund Board of Trustees.

Information and application forms may be obtained from Vern Bickel, Chairperson of the ATOS Endowment Fund Board of Trustees. (See page three for address and phone number.) THE COMPLETED GRANT APPLICATION FORMS MUST BE POST-MARKED NO LATER THAN APRIL 1, 1999, in order to be eligible for consideration this year.

ATTENTION NEW MEMBERS:

For a copy of the ATOS by-laws or information on the ATOS Preservation and Restoration guidelines, please visit our website at www.atos.org or contact our Executive Secretary, Michael Fellenzer at P.O. Box 551081, Indianapolis, IN 46205-5581, 317/251-6441, Fax 317/251-6443 or fellenzer@atos.org. ■

A few minor factual errors need to be corrected and amended in the article "The Michigan Theatre Celebrates Twenty-Five Years of Organ Overtures," which appeared in the September/October 1998 issue of THE-ATRE ORGAN:

On page eleven, the article stated: "... the instrument is three ranks larger than the standard 3/10 configuration known as the "Butterfield Special," usually placed in the theatres operated by the W.S. Butterfield chain throughout Michigan. The additional ranks include a Posthorn, Solo String, and Oboe Horn ..." The Butterfield Special" was actually a 3/11 Barton, and was mechanically half-unit and half-ventil. The Ann Arbor Michigan Theatre Barton is all unit, as were the vast majority of Barton organs. The two additional ranks are Posthorn and Orchestral Oboe. Oboe Horns were standard issue on virtually all instruments over seven ranks built by the firm. Pressures and scales were higher in several ranks in the Ann Arbor organ, as well.

In the stoplist appearing on page 15, the Solo to Great 4' is actually Solo to Great 16', the Clarion 4' on the Great should be a Solo String 4', and the Sforzando is not a toe stud, but a locking toe lever.

Member's Forum

Dear Editor:

I am a "commuting" CRATOS member living about a hundred miles from Cedar Rapids, so I was not a member of the convention committee, and can take no credit for the fine planning and eventual success of the event. However, I can say that the CRATOS group has been one of the most pleasant and rewarding associations I have been involved with. These folks are, without exception, some of the nicest and most sincere people I ever want to meet. President Bill Peck, always busy and involved in the leadership of the club, also spends many, many hours up to his ears in dust and pipes, tweaking the Paramount's Wurlitzer into the magnificent creature it is. His wife Pat is also found busy with a million details, while still finding time to welcome everyone who crosses her path. The Pecks are native to upstate New York, but we're very glad they settled among us mid-westerners!

Vice-President Ray and Secretary Susan Frischkorn also devote many hours to the club's business matters, and Susan is the smiling face who fixes great food and sells you more CD's than you can afford! Treasurer George Baldwin has lived most of his life in the shadow of the Paramount and remembers the excitement of the early days when the building was a cornerstone of Cedar Rapids' entertainment. The names of other equally active members also come to mind, too numerous to mention here.

Our [piporg-L] list owner, Dave Kelzenburg, expanded his literary talents to serve as an excellent master of ceremonies of the event!

All in all, a chapter, a town, theatres, and organs to be proud of!

Paul MacVey

(Editor's note: This first appeared as a posting to piporg-L. It is used with permission by the list owners and the author of the original posting. Great job CRATOS!)

Dear Editor:

I have just received my copy of the September/October issue of THEATRE ORGAN.

On page 50 there is an excellent review of the Theatre Organ Society of South Australia's new digitally processed (picture and stereo sound) video about the Capri Theatre and its well known and highly regarded organ.

I would agree with every word that was written about the video in Ralph Beaudry's review, but he stated that the video was available only in the PAL system that is used in Europe, the United Kingdom, Australia, and several other countries. However, the video IS issued in the North American NTSC system, and each copy is recorded individually from the master on state-of-the-art digital converters. They are NOT copied from second generation PAL versions. Of course the resultant videos are identical apart from the system used.

Simply specify which version -- NTSC or PAL -- you wish to receive when ordering copies from the address given in the THEATRE ORGAN review.

Cheers,

Brian Pearson, President
Australia Felix Chapter, ATOS
Volunteer State Member,
Capri Theatre (TOSA-SA)
Adelaide, South Australia

Dear Editor:

THEATRE ORGAN readers might be interested in this month's 12/98 "The Diapason," page 15, column 2. Under the bold heading "The Pedalboard," it notes that "... these circa 1800 or earlier pedalboards apparently included a 'Rolante,' or drum, a device simultaneously activating a number of harmonically unrelated wooden pipes, thus reproducing the sound effect of the rolling of a drum."

I didn't know that! An eighteenth century toy counter!

J.G. Owen

Huntington Station, New York

Dear Editor:

This is directed to the Editor of "An Acre of Seats in a Palace of Splendor."

After many years I have never seen you feature my favorite theatre, Radio City Theatre (nee Minnesota) in Minneapolis, Minnesota, my home town. I have never seen a more beautiful building. My mother took me there when I was six years old, and I've been around a lot of years.

Please include this theatre in a future issue. Thanks.

Sincerely,

Bob Mahoney

(Editor's Note: Mr. Levin stated that the Radio City Theatre is in the line-up for a future issue.)

Dear Editor:

As a member of ATOS, I can no longer sit by and constantly read time after time the growing concern about declining membership in the ATOS and the "small" turnouts at organ concerts.

While it may be true that there is a lack of promotion to the general public, the blame has to be shared by the concert organists and the old and out-dated ways and policies of the society. It seems to me, there are people who know what the problem is but can't see the forest through the trees.

Case in point: In the July/August 1998 issue of THEATRE ORGAN, Al Hermanns article, Preserving the Music (ORGAN-izing Popular Music) stated that since the beginning of ATOS, the whole purpose was to preserve the theatre organ and its music, and all except the youngest members had a clear memory of how the theatre organ sounded in the theatres and on the radio! Looking at videos and reading old books is not going to increase the membership rolls. Members of ATOS and its chapters are already interested in the theatre organ or they wouldn't be members of the ATOS!

While it is true the theatre organ has many wonderful sounds that

made it popular with the public, that public audience is no longer around, or, at very best, very few of them are. Can you see where I am going with this? Members who are leaving ATOS whether they are bored or dying off, are being replaced by baby-boomers like myself and younger people, but at a slower rate compared to the faster decreasing rate of membership. The ratio is backwards! It should be the other way around. Why you ask? Very simple. Younger people are not familiar with the music most or all of the organists are playing.

Case in point: I went to a concert not too long ago at a large venue in Southern California and I counted probably not more than thirty people under the age of twenty-one years old. Also, at different times during the concert, I looked around and saw more than a few people sleeping out of boredom! This is not good. Perhaps all concerned people including organists on the concert circuit, should look up an article in the July/August 1997 issue of THEATRE ORGAN and re-read a letter to the editor by Stan Krider of Pickerington, Ohio. If you are going to attract younger people to attend organ concerts, and want them to become members of ATOS to shore up the declining membership, you

had better wake up, and soon. There is a lot of music out there, (1970 to present) with some very pretty melodies. A good organist should be able to figure out how to incorporate this music along with the traditional music that is being played now. The music played now, alone, isn't working anymore.

I will tell you one thing, nobody ever slept for a second at one of Leon Berry's concerts! His music was alive and snappy and of its time. Leon Berry made full use of all the tuned percussions and traps and toys. It was fun to watch and listen to him play. Use of these things today seems to be a lost art by many of today's organists. Making your own "beat" with the tools at hand is gone except for a very few organists (i.e. pizza parlors, roller rinks, etc.) To quote Stan Krider, if you are going to draw young people into the world of theatre organs, you better start playing the music they know or, pretty soon, concert organists will be playing for only family and friends on their home electronic organ. Then, once again, the mighty theatre pipe organ will once again be put to sleep. For Good!

Sincerely yours,
Al Cameron
Sunland, California

*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. Send to Editor, THEATRE ORGAN, P.O. Box 3168, Salinas, CA 93912.
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The Convention With A Difference

Convention 99 Highlights London: Saturday, July 3 to Thursday, July 8

The London and South of England Chapter bring you a Convention With a Difference. Sixteen organs played by twenty different organists, a wide variety of food, and coaches with tour guides. The UK organs, countryside, hospitality and playing styles are unique. Come and experience the trip of a lifetime.

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Saturday Morning is Pre-Glow Day: We journey northwest out of London to visit a British built 3/10 Compton reinstalled in a Girls School on the outskirts of Birmingham. Our organist is Nigel Ogden, presenter of our National BBC programme "The Organist Entertains." The afternoon and evening will be a great concert at The National Motorcycle Museum featuring the late Buddy Cole Wurlitzer organ played by Chris McPhee from Australia who was winner of the Young Organist in 1995. There will be time for a tour of the museum before a full dinner with resident organist Keith Tomlin providing the music.

Sunday 4 July: A day round London with a morning concert at the Top Rank (State) Kilburn 4/16 Wurlitzer with Richard Hills, 1997 Overall Winner at the console. This is



one of the few Wurlitzers still in its original venue. Food will be available at the theatre before moving on to the next venue at the British Broadcasting Corporation Concert Hall where we will be entertained by William Davies at the 4/33 Compton. The evening will be the Young Organists Concert at Woking where we will be entertained by Ron Reseigh from Michigan, last year's overall winner and this year's class finalist at the console of the 3/17 Wurlitzer which was reinstalled by the chapter in 1995.

Monday 5 July: Out of town again to enjoy a concert at Abingdon where one of our long standing organists Arnold Loxam will give a concert of popular music on the 4/10 Compton. In the afternoon we travel the short distance to Blenheim Palace where there will be time for a snack and a tour of Winston Churchill's birthplace. We will then return to the Long Library for a concert on the Father Willis organ by one of our most outstanding classical organists, Thomas Trotter. We will then return to the hotel by 8:00 approximately.

Tuesday 6 July: A day in the London area with a concert in the morning at the 5/18 Compton in London's premiere cinema the

Leicester Square Odeon. The auditorium has just undergone a refit to return it back to its original 1937 design. Your organist will be Donald McKenzie who is the theatre's regular organist. There will be time to find food in nearby theatreland before rejoining the coaches for a split afternoon at two venues. The St. Albans Organ Museum houses two transplanted organs, a 3/6 Rutt of British manufacture, and a 3/10 Wurlitzer played by one of Britain's popular organists, John Mann. The other venue is a Catholic Church at Clayhall, where a 3/6 Compton theatre organ in a splendid acoustical setting will be played by the two Michaels, Maine and Wooldridge. The evening is free for you to enjoy the sights and theatres in London.

Wednesday 7 July: Out and about with a tour to Southampton Guildhall where David Shepherd and Douglas Reeve will entertain us on both consoles of a dual purpose Compton 50 rank organ. A boxed lunch will be provided at the venue. We will then go to Woking for a concert given by our chapter musical director and convention chairman Len Rawle on the 3/17 Wurlitzer. We will return to the hotel in time to change for a dinner cruise

on the River Thames where we will be entertained by Byron Jones on the Wersi organ and Russell Holmes at the piano.

Thursday 8 July: Afterglow Day.

Two similar 3/19 Wurlitzer organs in different surroundings. In the morning we will be entertained by Nicholas Martin who plays to large audiences at Turners Musical Merry-Go-Round daily. A light lunch will be supplied before going on to the second venue with Robert Wolfe at the console. You will also see a variety of steam vehicles and enjoy a meal here before returning to London.

If you have not booked it's not too late to join us for the "Convention With a Difference." But, please do not delay. We are over half full and we can only take the first 300. If you still want more, the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust are arranging a long weekend following the convention which will, of course, include the famous Blackpool Tower Wurlitzer.

THE "BUDDY COLE" WURLITZER

The organ is comprised of a Robert-Morton and a Wurlitzer totaling three manuals and 26 ranks. The basic organ was a style 260 Wurlitzer, and was installed in the United Artists Theatre in Los Angeles. The organ was purchased and removed by Buddy Cole and his family and completely re-installed unmodified in the Cole home with the exception of the 32' Diaphone and 16' Tibia Clausa. It is felt that these two extensions were omitted due to their limited usefulness in recording.

The Robert-Morton portion was originally installed in the Iowa Theatre of Marshalltown, Iowa, and was later re-installed in a Los Angeles radio station. The Robert-Morton was purchased by Buddy and became the first recording organ in his home. Later, he purchased the Wurlitzer and

added the Morton to the Wurlitzer in a new and larger studio behind his home.

After Buddy's death in 1964, the organ was sold and moved to Virginia. In 1970 the instrument was purchased by Bill Breuer, owner of the Capn's Galley pizza parlour chain, refurbished and installed in a parlour in Campbell, California, where it played until the 1980s. It was then bought privately and remained in storage boxes.

The organ was shipped to Britain in 1987 for installation in the National Motor Cycle Museum Banqueting Complex which has a unique collection of British Motor Cycles, which will be open for all convention registrants to see.

On inspection, the console was found to be in a terrible state. A new console was constructed in the UK Granada style. The stop action is now solid-state, new keyboards and toe pistons have been installed. The chests and pipe-work have been fully overhauled and equipped with solid-state relays. The specification has remained the same with the exception of an added Wurlitzer Krumet, Tuba Mirabilis, and electronic piano. All the percussion section remains the same together with the accordion added in the pizza parlour.

The organ is installed in an Imperial Suite banqueting hall, two floors below ground level. This was constructed accordingly to reduce building height as it is located near the Birmingham Airport. The hall can accommodate 1,000 people and has a sprung dance floor with under-floor lighting and has easy access for all.

This is the first time the organ has been used in a concert format and this was at the specific invitation to ATOS by owner Mr. W.R. Richards, with Chris McPhee at the console. During the dinner, we will be entertained by Keith Tomlin. Mr. Tomlin has been the resident organist for the last ten years.



CONVENTION ITINERARY

DAY	MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING
Friday, July 2		Registration	
PREGLOW Saturday, July 3	St. Martin's School Solihull 4/10 Compton Organist: Nigel Ogden	National Motor Cycle Museum 3/26 Wurlitzer Robert-Morton Museum Tour Full Dinner (No Host Bar) Organist: Keith Tomlin Concert Organist: Chris McPhee	
Sunday, July 4	Top Rank Kilburn 4/16 Wurlitzer Organist: Richard Hill	BBC Concert Hall 4/33 Compton Organist: William Davies	Woking Leisure Centre 3/17 Wurlitzer Organist: Ron Reseigh 1999 Young Organists
Monday, July 5	Abingdon 4/10 Compton Organist: Arnold Loxam	Blenheim Palace Tour & Concert Organist: Thomas Trotter	
Tuesday, July 6	Odeon Leicester Square 5/17 Compton Organist: Donald McKenzie	St. Albans Organ Museum 3/10 Wurlitzer; 3/6 Rutt Organist: John Mann Clayhall 3/6 Compton Organists: Michael Maine & Michael Wooldridge	
Wednesday, July 7	Guildhall Southampton 4/40/50 Compton Organists: Douglas Reeve & David Shepherd	Woking Leisure Centre 3/17 Wurlitzer Organist: Len Rawle	Dinner Cruise Organist: Byron Jones Pianist: Russell Holmes
AFTERGLOW Thursday, July 8	Turners Musical Merry-Go-Round 3/19 Wurlitzer Light Lunch Organist: Nicholas Martin	Thursford 3/19 Wurlitzer Including Meal Organist: Robert Wolfe	



Odeon Leicester



Thursford Wurlitzer



Woking Wurlitzer

The Sounds of Silent Movies

by Robert Gates

THE SLAPSTICK ENCYCLOPEDIA WITH A CAST OF THOUSANDS

ORGANIST, KEN ROSEN
FOTOPLAYERIST, ROBERT ISRAEL

In the *Slapstick Encyclopedia*, David Shepard presents a massive collection of 17 hours of short silent comedies in eight video cassettes or "Volumes." They are organized (loosely) by type or performer, and span 20 years of production from a 1909 Ben Turpin romp to a 1929 vaudeville turn starring Lupino Lane. Most of the films are two-reelers.

All of these comedies are very nicely restored and have been given new music backgrounds. Small orchestras predominate, but four films are accompanied by a Wurlitzer organ played by Ken Rosen and five by a Fotoplayer tamed by Robert Israel. These latter performances are sprinkled throughout the collection, but three of the volumes, 1, 2, and 7, contain one of each.

Rosen's instrument is the 4/26 in the Old Town Music Hall, El Segundo, California, which was recorded head-on but with sufficient room sound to make it pleasing. He handles the Wurlitzer well, and if you think that his muse might be Gaylord Carter, your ear has not misled you. Many Carter phrases, registrations and cadences appear deliberately. Rosen spent hours listening to "His Master's Voice" before these performances were recorded.

In *The Wrong Mr. Fox* (Vol. 1), an out-of-work actor (Victor Moore) attempts suicide à la Hope-Jones, but is interrupted by a job offer. While traveling to the new position, he is mistaken for a newly-hired Reverend Fox. He assumes the role, pockets the collection, performs a discrete strip-tease to cause the parishioners to hide



their eyes while he escapes back to New York. Rosen gives us original bits and familiar tunes, one of which, "The End of a Perfect Day," is heard during the suicide attempt. Carter might not approve of that.

Super-Hooper-Dyne Lizzies (Vol. 2), is Frank Capra's mid-twenties look at 21st century technology. Capra, who had an engineering degree, equipped a garage in this film with a camera-less open-circuit television monitor and a radio remote control and an energy transmission system for automobiles. The gadgets are accepted by the community, but more things go wrong than you can imagine. Rosen, with Carter looking over his shoulder, provides a nicely-synchronized and musical background.

In *Know Thy Wife* (Vol. 3), our hero marries a girl other than the family choice. To know his parents better, she accompanies him home disguised as a boy, whereupon all of the expected funny consequences ensue. Again, the music works well.

The last of the Rosen two-reelers, *Out Bound* (Vol. 7), is one of the most mirthful of the whole collection. Through bizarre circumstances, a truck driver tended by a physician is stranded in an iron bed on the outriggers of a dump truck above an impossibly high cliff. How they got there

challenges description as does their eventual rescue.

Fotoplayers were one of many brands of orchestrions, or "pit organs," designed for theatres too large for a piano but not spacious enough for an enclosed pipe organ. Based on an upright piano, they could involve organ pipes and percussions which were usually housed in one or two cabinets placed beside the piano in the pit. The standard toy counter offerings were available, as were others such as automobile exhaust, telegraph key and crackling flames. In the case of the Fotoplayers, these noises were unleashed by yanking one of the many pendants disposed across the front of the piano. During the accompaniment of a spirited movie, the pulling motions of the pianist lead to the sobriquet "cow photoplayer" for this brand. Most of these machines were playable from rolls. Many such rolls, produced specifically for silent movie accompaniment, were once available. Some involved classical themes. Some were mood-or action-related and titled accordingly.

Fotoplayers were manufactured by the American Photo Player Company, a forefather of the Robert-Morton Company. They provided a unique sound, which Robert Israel demon-

strates vividly. What we hear is mainly from rolls; bridges between them are hand-played by Israel. Effects, such as the report of a pistol or the tocsin of a slide whistle, were added while the rolls were in use.

Mabel's Dramatic Career (Vol. 1), offers a movie within a movie. Farm girl Mabel (Mabel Normand) leaves home over a blighted romance and becomes a movie star. Her ex-boyfriend and another patron (Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle) watch her on the screen. At this point, the film becomes a comedy of reactions in which the boyfriend is increasingly upset over what he sees in the movie and decides to take action himself.

In *A Movie Star* (Vol. 2), a self-important ham actor (Mac Swain), sees one of his own films and, again, the differing responses of members of the audience toward the actor are the basis of the comedy.

The Garage (Vol. 4), is a slapstick classic in which Buster Keaton and "Fatty" Arbuckle compete for pratfall honors and to see who can cover the most clothing with crankcase oil. A sequence on a turntable presages Keaton's athleticism in his later feature films. Needless to say, the garage is set afire at the end.

Get Out and Get Under (Vol. 6), showcases Harold Lloyd's comic creativity in turning a simple road trip into a series of near-disasters and banana-peel-induced spills. (In one case he falls without even getting near the peel). A startling sequence shows a passerby surreptitiously injecting himself with a narcotic (presumably) substance which Lloyd then steals and uses to start his balky car.

Water Wagons (Vol. 7), is a chaotic Sennett production featuring chase after chase on land, on sea and in the air. All of the expected ancillaries are there, from inept Keystone Kops to overdressed Bathing Beauties.

The Fotoplayer background for these films is arresting, to say the least. In the "hurry" scenes, percussive tones spray from the machine at an astonishing rate. In quieter times, flute and string pipes can be heard. Occasionally, a

mandolin effect enhances such "oldies" as "Hearts and Flowers." Israel always provides appropriate accompaniment and disguises the roll changes effectively. It's toe-tapping stuff, even to us in the 90s!

In brief: fun galore, especially when taken in small doses. From Kino International Corp., 333 W. 39th St., New York, NY 10018; 800-562-3330. \$24.95 per cassette, \$89.95 for each of two boxed sets of four.

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Opened: November 7, 1931
Architect: G. Albert Lansburgh
Capacity: 2756
Organ: Kimball 4/37 KPO 6644
(Moved from the Forum)

Having dodged bankruptcy via the introduction of Vitaphone talking pictures, Warner Brothers set out to develop what Fox, MGM and Paramount already had: a circuit of theatres. In the Los Angeles area they acquired several existing houses and commissioned five new ones, two from Lansburgh and three from his arch-rival on the coast, B. Marcus Priteca. The Western was Lansburgh's only foray into Art Deco and his first collaboration with ace

decorator Anthony Heinsbergen, whose close association with Priteca had not endeared him to Lansburgh. (It was Heinsbergen who broke the ice with a spur-of-the-moment assault on Lansburgh's San Francisco office.) Their association produced one of the major monuments of the Art Deco period of movie palace design.

Wilshire and Western had the highest traffic count of any corner in Southern California, but this did not necessarily translate into ticket sales; the Western was always too large for its location and had to compete with an established Fox West Coast house nearby. After standing closed for several years it reopened in 1935 with a new name, compounded from the two streets, and a sub-run policy which worked well. Threatened with demolition in 1979 and stripped of its furnishings, it was saved by developer Wayne Ratkovich and restored as a performing arts center in 1985.



Left: Lansburgh designed only the theatre. The Pellisier Building was the work of Morgan, Walls & Clements.

Theatre Photos: Terry Helgesen Collection, THS.



*Jim Roseveare at the Kimball in 1969, shortly before the console was returned to its original wood finish.
Steve Levin Collection.*

The builder's largest theatre job, KPO 6644 was first installed in the Forum (1924), a single-floor neighborhood theatre of only 1800 seats, where it must have been over-powering. A feature of the Forum installation was a second set of shutters on the eight-rank Echo division, allowing it to speak outside as well as inside. Warner Brothers controlled the Forum in the early 'thirties and chose to move the organ to their new house. Revived thirty years later by the Los Angeles ATOE chapter, the big Kimball was a major venue in the early days of the theatre organ revival. Removed in 1979, it was stored pending several proposals for its reinstallation; none developed, and the organ was sold. It remains in storage. A complete specification and several spectacular pictures of the organ at the factory can be found in Junchen Vol. 1.

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LISTEN carefully to as much good, well performed music as you can. Pay attention to all the details which make up the complete sound. Whether it is orchestra or organ music, listen to the bass notes - do they alternate 1st and 5th, or move up and down the scale? Listen to the rhythm - is it a waltz, tango, polka, march? Listen to the introductions and endings - do they include the theme of the song? Listen to the style of the melody - is it solo or legato, chords or detached chords?

When listening to an orchestra, try to hear what each instrument is doing. You can often get ideas that you can use in your own playing - that is what George Wright did.

When listening to popular music played on an organ, notice how each style of playing the melody requires a different registration to make it sound

right. Also listen for rests and phrasing in the melody. The sound should NOT drone on and on from beginning to end.

A good theatre organist never plays the second chorus of a song the same as the first. The ideal way is to play a completely different arrangement. This requires some musical imagination which is what makes some organists better than others.

You should be able to determine how you are going to play a song away from the organ so that when you sit down to play it, you know how it will sound. Always plan your programs so that no two songs sound the same. Variety and contrast in style and registration is what separates the best organists from the others.

I hope you have all discovered the TV. series "Marsalis On Music." If not, make an effort to find it in your TV programs. He presents musical ideas you may never have thought of.

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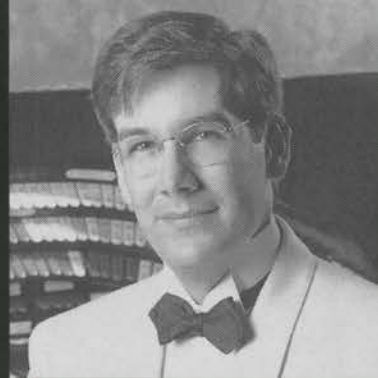


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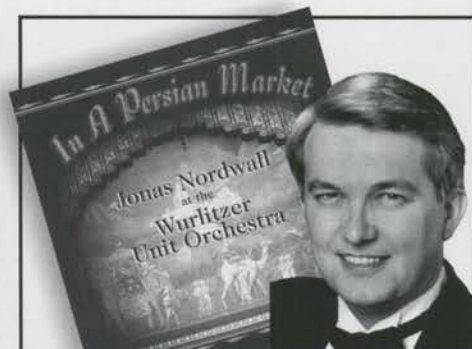
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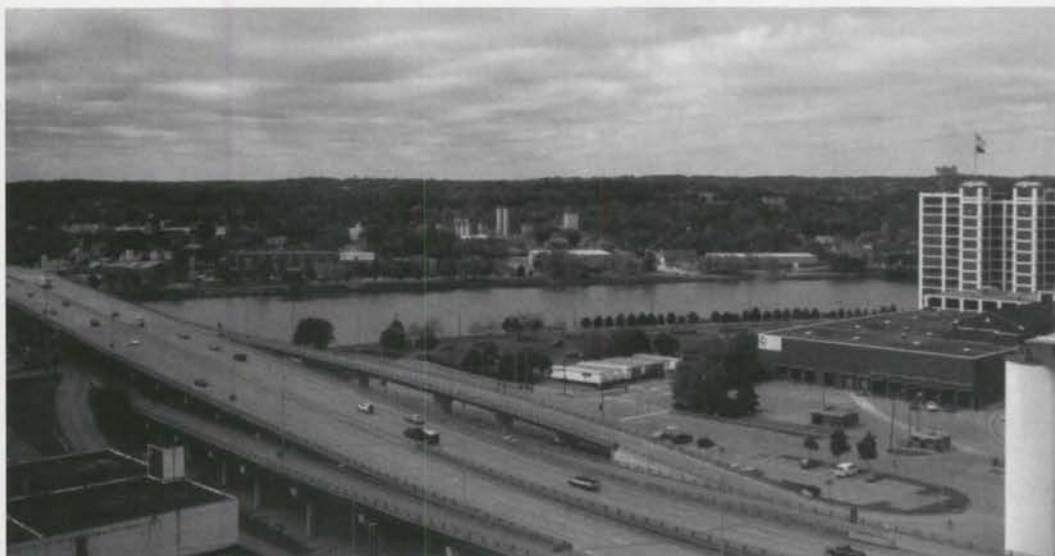
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CEDAR RAPIDS

A MIGHTY MINI

by Ron Musselman



As autumn drifts in and begins to show its colors and cool, cozy weather, it's the perfect time to visit a jewel of a heartland city like Cedar Rapids, Iowa. With three venues housing concert-ready pipe organs, it is an ideal site for an ATOS fall regional convention. It all came together in mid-October, 1998, and the fine folks of the Cedar Rapids Area Theatre Organ Society gave the fortunate attendees an experience that begs for a repeat sometime in the future.

Many of the 250 ATOS members who drove or flew in for the seven concert event expected to find Cedar Rapids to be a town of perhaps 75,000 but were surprised to find, instead, a bustling middle-sized city of about a quarter of a million. It's not limited to three-story buildings in the downtown area: in addition to several 8- to 10-story mid-risers, our own Crown Plaza convention hotel is a 16-story beauty with a restaurant and lounge at the summit, both of which afford exhilarating views of the city and some of the pastoral outskirts. The scenic Cedar River runs along the edge of downtown, one bank lined in trees ablaze with fall colors, and the opposite side featuring the classic



The Crown Plaza, our convention hotel.

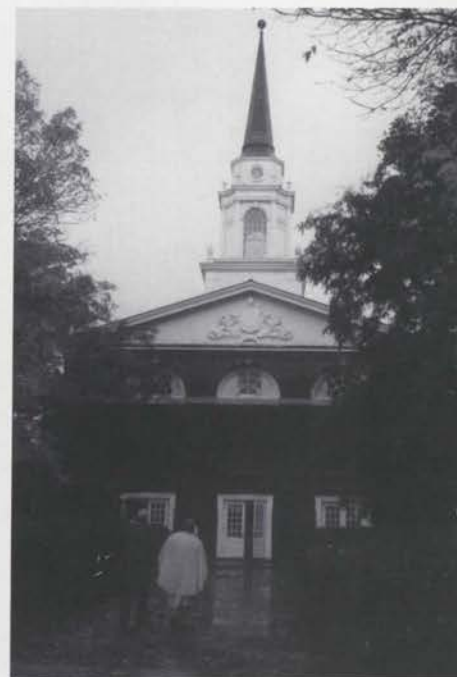
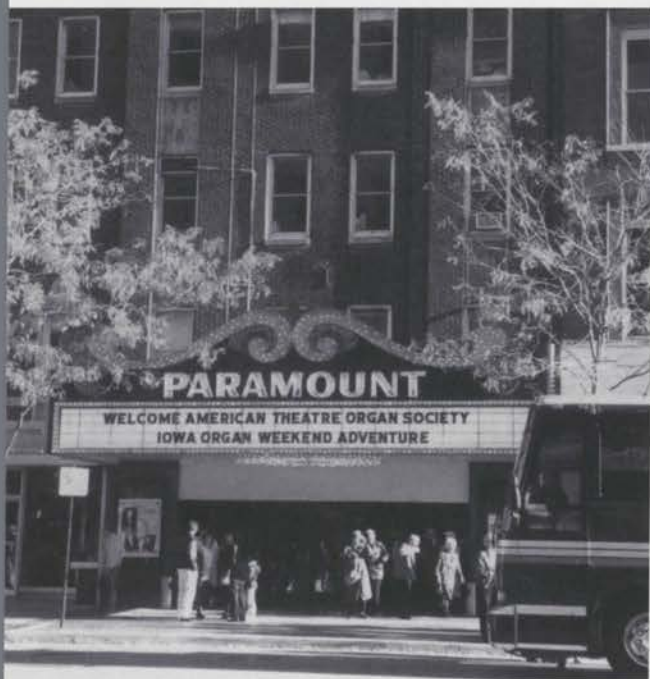
midwest landmark; a big Quaker Oats plant complete with concrete grain towers, and its own personal railroad spur running through the middle of downtown Cedar Rapids.

Many arrived wondering: "How good can an event be that is based mostly on just two moderate-sized theatre organs and a single performance on a college concert organ?" But, before this 2-1/2 day extravaganza was over, everyone had been treat-

ed to an equivalent of the tireless variety of a full annual convention. The entire affair was exceptionally well-planned and executed, and the matchless hospitality of the CRATOS personnel cannot be praised enough. All the artists were perfectly matched to their instruments, which went a long way in extracting a maximum amount of variety from the three organs. What a special group of organs! Both theatre organs are original, essentially unaltered installations, and the Skinner concert organ is one of the most gloriously original of the genre still playing. One endearing mental snapshot: An elder conventioner who asked a CRATOS volunteer endless questions about the history of one of the featured organs was pampered with equally endless patience and enthusiasm in answering the queries ... the epitome of mid-western helpfulness.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16

Many of the visitors arrived and checked in at mid-day, which allowed them plenty of time of visit, look over the record store and survey the surroundings while waiting for the first performance that evening. After dinner, it was an easy four block, ten-



L to R: The Paramount Theatre, The Iowa Theatre, and the Coe College Auditorium.

minute walk to the Cedar Rapids Paramount Theatre to hear David Peckham at its 3/12 Wurlitzer. Just experiencing the ambiance of this theatre was almost worth the entire trip to Iowa. After entering under a tastefully-restyled marquee, you walk into the long, spacious grand lobby, flanked by large mirrors and sporting elegant, but not overly busy, plaster work, and topped by three large chandeliers. There are numerous nicely appointed hallways, lounges and other public spaces in the Paramount. The 2,000 seat auditorium itself is quite well sculpted and decorated, incorporating elements that are strongly reminiscent of both the New York Roxy and the Times Square Paramount. After all these visual delights, the theatre's Wurlitzer more than held up its end of the bargain, as did David Peckham. This East Coast artist, who now has two fine CDs to his credit, finally achieved national recognition in 1996 with a stunning performance at the ATOS annual convention, followed by a second home run at the 1998 ATOS annual.

Emcee David Kelzenberg, a friendly presence throughout the convention, welcomed the assembled crowd,

then introduced the first featured artist. Peckham then came out of the pit with an appropriate "Paramount on Parade," which led into "Strike Up the Band," ending with a full organ push that established the Paramount instrument as being more than just a little ballad organ. There were many musically pleasing things in the concert that are becoming identifiable as part of the "Peckham sound." It can definitely be said that another up-and-comer has joined the ranks of a very select group of artists. Some of these traits were heard in Gershwin's "Promenade," a pleasant stroll across the deck of a cruise ship, in which he used a generous variety of the organ's gentler solo sounds. One of his concert favorites, "Chant of The Jungle," featured a velvety tibia/clarinet combination, and a memorable tuba solo carrying the melody. "Love Will Find a Way," a beautiful ballad from early 20s Broadway, was skillfully adapted and played by David for a 90s audience.

An anticipated change of pace in any Peckham concert is a classical offering, giving us a seasonal "Scherzetto" by Vierne. It came off very well, partly due to the tight state

of tuning in which CRATOS keeps the organ, and also because of David's correctness of registration of the piece. He characterized the piece as being descriptive of leaves "skittering about" as they leave the trees in fall. As another tip of the hat to the Gershwin centennial, Mr. Peckham played a medley of tunes from *Tiptoes*, some of the really great show music from the 20s.

After an intermission, we heard a song by Radio City Music Hall Organist Dick Leibert; "Just a Radio, a Bungalow and You," one of those carefree little songs from the golden era of the theatre organ. David usually plays at least one sacred piece. This time, we heard a most unusual version of "Come Thou Fount." It opened with some nice church organ textures, but took off into a highly unusual arrangement that was both bluesy and mysterious. One of the nicest moments of the evening was the moving melody of the recurring theme from Ken Burn's PBS "Civil War series. A solo violin-like tremmed string intro launches this melancholy, nostalgic piece.

The closing collection from the *Nutcracker Suite* included an homage

to one of his childhood musical influences, John Seng. Dave had purchased a copy of John's *Nutcracker Suite* (which has long been acknowledged as a miniature masterpiece) as a youngster, and said he "just about wore it out," playing it over and over. Peckham's rendition was absolutely superb, and strikingly orchestral in places. In the well-known "Dance of The Sugar Plum Fairy," there was the expected clarinet and chrysoglott, and pipe organ copies of orchestral counterparts were used. The implementation of the Wurlitzer's string ranks produced some very pleasing accompaniment. As usual, the applause that followed was strong and enthusiastic.

A dazzled and contented group of people walked back to the hotel, and as is typical on the first night of any ATOS convention, many hung around at the 16th floor hospitality room until past midnight. One of these round table verbal jam-sessions featured artists John Seng, Barry Baker and Clark Wilson, and much of the entertainment was provided by Mr. Seng, who is one of the all-time great storytellers.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17

This regional was very "venue-convenient," and Saturday morning's Ron Rhode appearance at the Iowa Theatre was right across the street from the hotel. Several types of weather were experienced in just over two days, and Saturday was "storm season," with a light sprinkle starting as people were filing into the Iowa. This theatre, although greatly reduced in room volume through remodeling, still retains much of its decor in the front half of the house, but even more importantly, still has its original pipe organ, in place and intact; the renowned "Rhinestone Barton." While the glitter and rhinestone-on-black console has the Barton look and nameplates, this unique 3/14 was actually farmed out to be built by the Wangerin Organ Company during a very busy time.

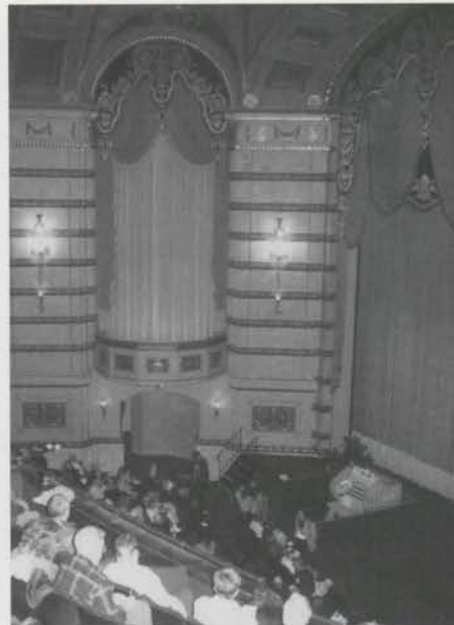
Ron Rhode was a good choice to play the Barton, and he showed a relaxed familiarity with it in a program of music drawing largely from the 20s and 30s. The opener was a typical Rhode, happy-go-lucky tune, "Sunny Disposition" (while rain was



Dennis James at the Paramount.

falling outside). Even though this instrument is decidedly incisive in nature, the melody in "Stars are the Windows of Heaven" began with a classic theatre organ tibia/vox combination that melted together nicely. Ron played a gorgeous Victor Herbert medley, which included a magnificent "Rose of the World" with registration that was very sympathetic to the material. This was some of his most wonderful playing ever, and it brought lengthy applause.

Ron made his acclaimed "Cornsilk" CD on this very instrument, and strangely enough, it's the only commercial release made on this organ to date. It was enjoyable to hear several songs from the album played at this concert; "I Can't Believe You're in Love With Me," "Cornsilk," and "Red Lips Kiss My Blues Away." As good a recording as the CD is, you really have to hear this machine first-hand. A couple of other highlights: a haunting, spiritual "Give Me Jesus," almost prayer-like and played with a great depth of feeling, and "A Shine on Your Shoes," a great old-timer he recorded at the Byrd Theatre with his brother Chuck singing the vocal solo. Ron played another Victor Herbert piece, "When You're Away," which made use of the Barton's keen "frying bacon" strings. He quipped: "You smell bacon when they play." While still a gentleman at the console, he was a little bolder than usual, with a



ready and pointed wit: his closer, "Hot Lips," was "dedicated to Monica Lewinsky.

The rain from Cedar Rapid's first real fall storm of 1998 stepped up by afternoon. Fortunately, our next concert was far enough away that buses were provided. The Sinclair Auditorium at Coe College with its towering spire surrounded by trees in fall colors, has the appearance of an ivy league college chapel. Inside is a 4/58 E.M. Skinner concert organ, and it was our privilege to hear it played by Clark Wilson. In the area of talent, Clark is one of those "triple-threat guys." In addition to being a first-rate organ technician and noted theatre-style organist, he is equally adept at the console of a fine concert/orches-



Jam Session at the Paramount.



Dennis James (left), and Barry Baker at the Paramount Wurlitzer.

tral organ. Many in the audience were not aware of this last category of his expertise, and Clark's concert was a real eye-opener. The tonal variety and overall beauty of these old Skinners is something to behold, and he managed to show off just about every facet of this fine instrument. It wasn't dry, mechanical, academic playing, rather, it was vital, warm artistry that shows a good grasp of what this type of organ can do when registered properly. The sound was characteristically agreeable E.M. Skinner, and while this writer expected a mild, laid-back presence, the egress is unimpeded. This baby really gets out and fills the audi-

on the rarely-heard English Horn (an organ Cor Anglais, not a Post Horn), a mild pleasantly-voiced reed, a Flugelhorn, a string antiphonal effect between the two sides, and a coda showing two more varieties of celest-ed voices. His closing piece was Sibelius' "Finlandia," superbly played, using much of the organ's considerable resources, and ending with a spectacular taste of full organ, earning him a standing ovation. For his encore, Clark played an unidentified novelty piece with some of the instrument's more diminutive delights. Then things opened up into a jazzy strut that sounded suspiciously

torium.

The program consisted primarily of orchestral transcriptions and overtures, and opened with the Prelude to Act III of *Lohengrin*. In contrast to this, Clark continued with "To a Wild Rose," which began with one of those heavenly celest-ed ranks and featured many orchestral strings, much to the delight of this theatre organ group. A most welcome and fitting inclusion to the program was "Forest Green," so beautifully written by "the immortal" Richard Purvis and deftly rendered by Mr. Wilson, who made a few refreshing registration substitutions. It was absolutely enchanting and in its own quiet way, one of the convention highlights.

Clark also played Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance #4," a grand piece that sounded magnificent on this organ. There was lighter fare such as "The Serenade," a little Spanish-flavored ditty that he categorized as "potted palm residential E.M. Skinner music." Fletcher's "Fountain Reverie" featured solos

like "Fats" Waller, and underpinned by an almost wickedly rhythmic pedal line. This mystery piece added a sly, humorous wink to a satisfying program.

As a group of us had dinner in the restaurant atop the hotel, we looked out at the Quaker Oats plant and the countryside beyond and noticed the rain subsiding. An hour earlier, stiff winds were driving the rain sideways, rendering umbrellas useless, and there was concern for the majority of the conventioners who would be walking four blocks to the Paramount that evening for the Dennis James performance. Fortunately, the storm moved on by then, and everyone strolled into the Paramount, quite cool, but dry.

Dennis rose out of the pit at the light gold console as the Wurlitzer's big ensemble and robust pedal rolled out of both chambers in a vintage 1912 march. Thus began his usual, interesting mixed bag of pre-movie solos. Next, from the year 1908, a light-hearted novelty, followed by a couple of "Amsterdam novelties," somewhat different, and yet vaguely familiar. Next up was a hard-driving "Wang-Wang Blues." His solo segment ended with his "concert piece for the evening," "Voices of Spring" by Strauss.

The movie Dennis accompanied, *That Certain Thing*, was a very late silent, released in 1928. The plot involves the do-nothing son of a restaurant magnate who marries and eventually finds the way to success. It proved to be an entertaining movie even to this day, and was built more on situational humor than the outrageous slapstick gags of many earlier silent comedies. The score that Dennis put together to support this picture consisted of cleverly woven song fragments. As usual, his music enhanced the proceedings up on the screen without drawing attention to itself. Dennis James is a master of silent film presentation, and his comments do much to enhance the total package. He was certainly at his best that night, and was rewarded by a very positive audience response. He finished the evening with "Hooray for Hollywood." We all walked out of the theatre into a brisk and almost intoxicating Iowa autumn night. Back at the

hotel, the usual late-nighters cruised the record shop or sat and swapped stories.



ATOS conference call.



Bill Schlotter and Ron Musselman



John Seng signs his CD for Fred Cordes.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18

It was down the elevator and out of the lobby into the crisp morning air to head over to the Iowa Theatre for Walt Strony's concert. Walt was in top form for this interesting and varied performance. His intro to the opening number was, unusually, a soft one, and very effective; a hint of "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning" utilizing the Diapason and Clarinet. Then he

segued into "It's Delovely," starting from the Main Chamber of the left, then with deft maneuvering of the swell shades, spread the sound across to the Solo Chamber, then geared it up into a bold, brassy wake-up call for the audience. He talked about the rhinestone-on-black Barton console, calling it "a precursor to velvet pain-ing ... and I thought maybe we could update it ... put a few pictures of Elvis on it!" In a classical vein, his "Carmen Fantasy" was a typical showcase of Walt's fertile imagination with several tempo, mood and registration changes. The harmonies used in a couple of sequences cleverly mimicked the passion of an opera singer's vocal.

In the middle of the lush, soft "Time to Say Good-by," a train horn from the "Quaker Oats Express" sounded through the exit doors over on the Main side. Walt stopped, looked in that direction and proclaimed to the unseen train engineer: "WRONG CHORD!" Someone in the audience assumed that Walt had mistaken it for an organ malfunction and yelled out to Walt: "Train!"

In honor of the George Gershwin centennial, he played a medley of three Gershwin songs, another spectacular package of arranging. In "Bess, You is My Woman," the strong declarative emotion was captured perfectly. The many (and quick) stop and combination changes were not to be "showy": Everything he did reinforced the material and made it a more effective musical experience. The closing crescendo was absolutely thrilling. For those who would be in a worship service at this time, Walt played A.H. Malotte's "The Lord's Prayer," which in itself was practically a religious experience. The varied subtleties and judicious layering at the end belied this Barton's mere 14 pungent ranks. It was one of those moments of unadulterated musical magic.

Another highlight of Strony's program was a masterfully-played *Showboat* medley with an impressive selection of combinations and refreshingly unpredictable bridges. The concluding "Old Man River" was given a subdued coda, a welcome variation. His closer, "American Patrol" was played in his best "show stopper"



John Seng at the Iowa Theatre Barton.

style, and brought an immediate standing ovation. The resulting encore, "Maleguena," along with the rest of the concert, effectively silenced



the critics who have recently grumbled that "Strony has been playing everything too loud and aggressive." This remarkable final piece exhibited the widest dynamic range of anything played at the convention. There was nothing he could have followed this with. Mr. Strony has long earned his place in the top echelon of theatre organists.

Sunday developed into an invigorating day by the time the group headed back to the Paramount for Barry Baker's afternoon concert. As well as being part of the ATOS regional, this event was also one of the CRATOS series of public organ concerts. The combined audience of nearly 700 would witness a musical phenomenon: starting with his console riser, "Together, Wherever We Go," Mr. Baker displayed playing techniques that smacked of a 20-year veteran. He followed with his original arrangement of "Lover," which showed him to already be a master of the glissando. His rendition of the McGuire Sister's hit "Sincerely" was played in the style of that simpler era with much of the feel of the original. He made good use of combos with color reeds to suggest a female harmony group.

He presented a medley of lesser-known Gershwin songs, extremely well played, using a great deal of the instrument's tonal facilities; strings,



The Iowa Theatre with the Convention Hotel beyond.



Ron Rhode at the Iowa Barton.

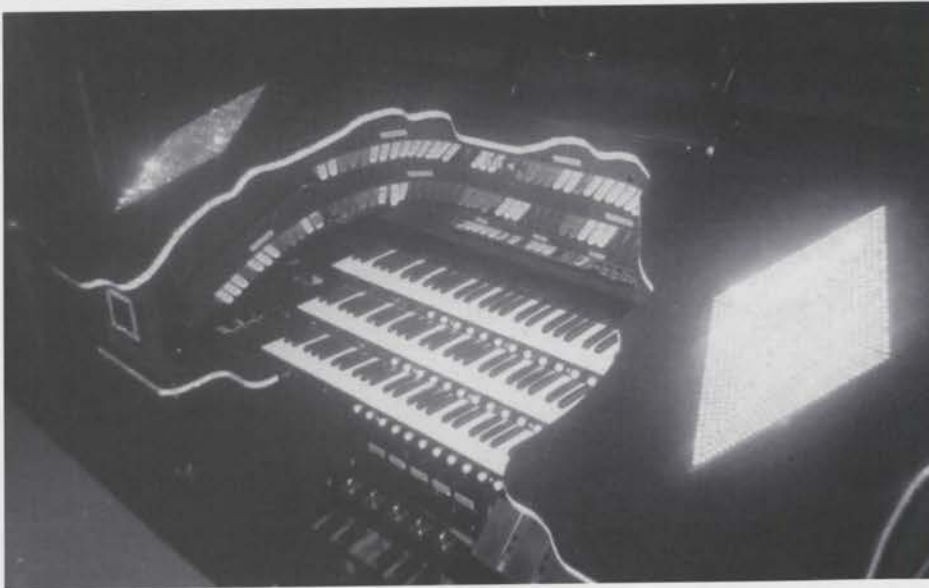


Walt Strony at the Iowa Barton



The Iowa Theatre.

*Below:
THE IOWA THEATRE'S ORIGINAL PIPE ORGAN,
IN PLACE AND INTACT;
THE RENOWNED 3/14 "RHINESTONE BARTON."*



Main Chamber at the Iowa Theatre.



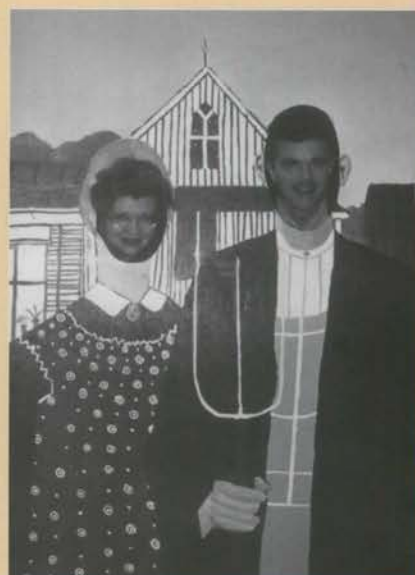
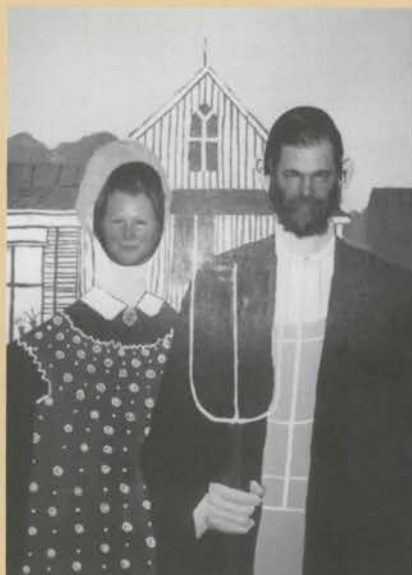
The altered auditorium of the Iowa Theatre.



David Peckam caught taking a tour of the Iowa Theatre Barton Main Chamber. That is NOT a bent or broken pipe behind him!

CEDAR RAPIDS REGIONAL

October 16-18, 1998



Wild parties took place at almost every spot in the hotel!



The Marx Brothers?



The Record Shop



Dennis James played for lunch guests at the hotel



Clarinet, and Orchestral Oboe solos, and numerous combinations. "You've Come a Long Way from St. Louis" was a jazzy romp with the feel (in places) of a 60s jazz combo, with the pedal line simulating an acoustic slap-bass. In a tribute to the late George Wright, Barry played a Jesse Crawford arrangement: "Birth of Passion." He captured the Crawford sound very accurately with no attempt to modernize anything. His playing of tunes from the 40s *Buck Privates* was another hit with the crowd, and included the well-known "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy," a massive driving big-band stomp. It showed how quickly Barry can get around a console, most of his transitions being absolutely seamless.

His Frank Sinatra tribute covered familiar songs like "Chicago," "All the Way," and "Got the World on a String," and ended, most appropriately, with "My Way." The coda was electrifying and passed the "goose bump" test. Baker even gave us some Mozart (from the 40th Symphony), and very skillfully adapted to the pipe organ, with some interesting interplay between voices in the Solo and Main. This musical feat brought him a standing ovation.

Probably the best way to convey just how good a musician Barry Baker is would be to tell you what was related to me by a most reliable source. During the concert, a certain, very capable veteran organist in the audience (who was also a featured convention artist!) sat there with his mouth wide open, shaking his head in disbelief and muttering things like: "How does he play so fast and clean? I can't get my fingers to move that fast!"

It cannot be said that anyone will ever inherit a certain theatre organist's mantle, but Barry Baker, only in his early 20's, has already developed an astonishing level of musicianship. If he stays dedicated to his craft and art, we could possibly see the emergence of an artist who is in a class all by himself.

The closing concert that evening at the Iowa Theatre was to be played by one of the theatre organ's true legends, and had been looked forward to with eager anticipation. After all, the mere mention of "Seng" and "Mundelein" is enough to stir feelings

of nostalgia and excitement in the heart of any seasoned, savvy theatre organ enthusiast. So, when John Seng came up out of the pit at the rhinestone Barton console playing "That's Entertainment," the feeling was "fasten your seatbelts." But unfortunately and inexplicably, it got off to an uneven start, and several things were heard that are uncharacteristic of this great musician. Much of the opener was played with the swell shades closed, which gave a "down the hall" presence. It was a typical Seng treatment with clever registration and fillers, but the various pieces of the arrangement didn't join together as they should, and John almost seemed to be distracted. His next number, "It's Only a Paper Moon," had a nice light jazz feel about it, and a cleverly-integrated piece of the Widor Toccata, but there were still some ragged edges. He played a medley that showcased some inventive "Seng-isms," but the lapses continued, and he repeated "Paper Moon," which had been played just minutes earlier. A look of concern began to form on several faces in the audience. This major artist was clearly struggling with something, but what? Between numbers, he seemed relaxed, and was very fluent and humorous, but his playing displayed errors, and there were puzzling things like abrupt changes in volume as most of the swell shades opened or closed quickly. But as John launched into a lightly-swinging "Harlem Nocturne" he came up to speed, and the real John Seng took flight. After that, he gave us one of those inimitable "Fats" Waller stride organ pieces, "Little Rock Getaway." Then, he played one of the best renditions of "Willow Weep For Me" I've ever heard; soaring string passages and several delights with the unmistakable Seng stamp on them. The old chestnut "Remember" started with an ear-catching intro, then launched into a "Roller Coaster" variation, then left the earthly realm on a wild Seng flight of fancy. The rest of the concert was a feast of choice J.S., featuring some traditional soft ballads, but much of it jazz-infused and displaying the intriguing sophistication that characterizes John's approach to theatre organ. There is undeniably "something" in his playing that sets

him apart from all the others, and the lucky people in the audience that night heard it in full measure. In a few instances, there were some flashes of sheer genius.

John played a very touching tribute to George Wright, prefacing it with some very pertinent remarks. He said: "If this guy hadn't been around, hadn't made those records in the 50s, I really believe, frankly, there would be no ATOS, because he was the catalyst that put the whole thing together." He then played "The Song is Ended, But the Melody Lingers On." The intro was a contemplative clarinet solo and the essence of George's playing was present. There was a haunting passage on the Concert Flute with a descending phrase at the end that was very effective.

His closer was a light classical "Spinning Song," cleanly played on the Barton's bright strings. He took the console down with a brassy "Just One of Those Things." The crowd wanted more, so he came back and set the audience on its ear with one of his trademarks, "La Danza."

So what was plaguing him at the beginning of the evening? It was merely a simple case of nerves. Before his final number, John talked about "screwing up a lot of things tonight" and said; "I get nervous ... I don't play a lot of programs," and that he hadn't played one for some time. But all's well that ends well, and things certainly ended well at that final concert. As we walked out into the lobby, an authority and keen observer of theatre organ artists summed it up best: "John Seng is a madman, a genius and a magician ... and tonight, we saw him pull a rabbit out of a hat."





Coe College Sinclair Auditorium; (at right) the Coe College Skinner.



Clark Wilson at the Coe College Skinner.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS ...

As our plane taxied out to the runway at the Cedar Rapids Airport early the next morning, it seemed incredible that so much had taken place in scarcely more than two days. I thought about how late the crowd had caroused on the top floor after the closing concert, not wanting the party to end. It almost felt like the end of a full week. It just goes to prove that you don't necessarily have to have ten big pipe organs and 15 artists to stage a successful convention. Cedar Rapids was a most satisfying experience in every way. CRATOS did their homework, put in the time to properly prepare all the components to make it work, and their ultimate reward was that they made 250 lifetime friends.

As the plane lifted off the runway and the vista of farm houses, barns, fields and trees in colors of orange, ochre and crimson came into view below, there was a reluctance to leave. This place grows on you fast. You think in terms of "next time." We should be seeing more events like this in Cedar Rapids in the coming years.

My advice:

When these folks send out the notice they're putting on another shindig, heed the call and go!



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For The RECORDS

RALPH BEAUDRY, EDITOR

Compact discs, cassettes, videos, and books to be reviewed should be sent to Ralph Beaudry, 1119 N. Louise #5, Glendale, CA 91207. Please be aware items must be received three months prior to the issue date in which the review will appear. Information telephone: 818/243-8741

OOPS! WE GOOFED!

In the review of Jelani Eddington's *Discovering the Unit Orchestra* (Sept. '98) we wrote that the Forum/Wiltern Kimball was the world's largest "unit orchestra" until Radio City Music Hall opened. WRONG! The fact is that Kimball Opus 6644 (a 4/37 installed in LA's Forum Theatre in 1924 -- moved to the Wiltern in 1931) was superseded when Möller Opus 5566 (a 4/42) opened in the Atlanta Fox Theatre in 1929. Radio City's Wurlitzer Opus 2179 (a 4/58) did not open until 1932. We regret this error and offer our sincere apologies to all.

The Best of Times LYN LARSEN



Sub-titled "The Jerry Herman Songbook," Lyn's newest album is one of the rare theatre organ releases to salute one composer's lifetime output. Herman's name may not be as instantly recognizable as his predecessors Irving Berlin and Cole Porter, but his dozens of song hits certainly put him in the same class. Like Porter and Berlin, he wrote his own lyrics! In fact, he is the only lyricist/composer to write three musicals that exceeded 1,500 first-run

performances on the Great White Way. Born in 1932, Herman can quite accurately be described as the last Broadway composer to consistently write tuneful, joyous shows that delighted audiences who left the theatre humming the frothy melodies instead of the scenery.

By the time Herman arrived, Broadway audiences, with a few notable exceptions, were turning their attention to shows with rock music (*Hair*, *Grease*, and *Godspell*) or which had darker story lines and almost operatic scores (*Evita*, *Man of La Mancha* and *Sweeney Todd*.) To paraphrase some Broadway critics, Herman continued to write melodious tunes, and his shows were meant to be a source of enjoyment, but the rest of the musical theatre drew further away from "traditional" pop music.

For this 64-minute CD, played on the Wichita "Dowager Empress" 4/(now)38 Wurlitzer, Lyn has chosen 23 of the best (but by no means all of the best) melodies Herman wrote. The selections are grouped by shows (but not played as medleys) and the shows are in chronological order. Lyn's arrangements and registrations sound as if they are based on the show orchestrations which tend to be bright and brassy -- as one might hear in a live theatrical performance.

The opening tune, from Herman's 1960 off-Broadway show *Parade*, is the delightfully fresh "With Your Hand in Mine." Not the typical console-raiser, but it does set the stage for the wonderful melodies that follow. Lyn next plays four selections from Herman's first Broadway hit, 1961's *Milk and Honey* -- the romantic "Shalom" ("Say 'Good-bye' with a little 'Hello' in it"), the rousing "Independence Day Hora," a tender "Let's Not Waste a Moment," and the rhythmic title tune.

From 1964's Tony Award winning *Hello Dolly*, we hear "It Takes a Woman" ("All powdered and pink -- to lovingly clean out the drain in the sink,") the rhapsodic "It Only Takes a Moment," and a choo-choo-like "Put on Your Sunday Clothes." While 43-year-old Carol Channing certainly made *Dolly* her roll for life (she revived it 30 years later for a 2nd run on Broadway) the roll was actually written for Ethel Merman (who turned it down but relented six years later to take the part for a few months.) During the show's 2,844

performances almost every female star in Hollywood played the role including (among many other) Ginger Rogers, Betty Grable and Martha Raye (!), and Mary Martin opened in the London run. Of course, it also became a film hit with Barbra Streisand and, in the second male lead (Cornelius Hackl) none other than Michael (The Phantom) Crawford.

Two years later, Herman's second super-hit, *Mame*, opened starring Angela Lansbury in one of her rare singing roles. Lyn plays the bright, cheery "Open a New Window," the nostalgic "My Best Girl," "Loving You" (added to the unfortunate Lucille Ball film version,) the melodramatic "If He Walked Into My Life," and the blockbuster title tune. By then Broadway had definitely turned its back on "traditional" musicals and 18 years passed before Herman had his next smash hit.

But Herman shows continued opening, and in truth, some of his finest songs were written for the failures *Dear World* (1969, again with Angela Lansbury in the lead roll), *Mack & Mabel* (1974), and *The Grand Tour* (1979, which didn't travel anywhere despite starring Joel Gray.) Lyn plays the title tune from *Dear World* as well as the carousel-like waltz "I Don't Want to Know" and an emotional "Kiss Her Now" but has only "Hundreds of Girls" from *M & M*. The delicate "Marianne" and snappy "You I Like" come from Herman's score for *Tour*.

La Cage Aux Folles in 1983, again a Tony Award

winner, was hailed for its instantly "hummable" music and was an unabashed throwback to the more carefree musicals of yesterday. In Lyn's 8-minute group from *La Cage* are the title tune, "Masculinity," "Look Over There" and, of course, the rousing "Best of Times," an appropriate conclusion for a long overdue tribute to Jerry Herman.

Now in its 27th year in Wichita's Century II Exhibition Hall, the former New York Paramount organ recently has been refurbished and will be featured in this year's Labor Day 1999 ATOS Regional Convention. The last recordings of this landmark organ were released over a dozen years ago in the series of CDs Lyn recorded for the Pro-Art label. On Lyn's *Give My Regards* album will be found an 18-minute group of tunes from *La Cage* (including the unlisted "Song on the Sand") which makes for a fascinating comparison with this new release. Compact disc only for \$20.00 postpaid from Wichita Theatre Organ, Inc. 6141 Fairfield Rd., Wichita, KS 67204.

Take The "A" Train DAVID LOWE



Wales - the "Land of Song" - is also the land of magnificent scenery, medieval castles, and narrow gauge stream railways. But - until 1996 - Wales never had a Wurlitzer! During the

1930s a Compton and some Christies were installed in several Welsh cinemas; and in World War II, the Foort/BBC 5 manual Möller was hidden away in Wales. From 1941 to 1943 it was broadcast from the Grand Theatre in Llandudno and from 1943 to 1946 it played from the County Theatre in Bangor. A few years ago, our ATOS London Chapter was given the noted 4/15 "Torch" Christie organ from the Regal Edmonton, and they relocated it to Barry's Memorial Hall in the south of Wales.

This first Welsh Wurlitzer is Opus 2203, a 3c/8 (the top manual is a coupler) from the Granada, Woolwich. One of only six Granada I Style Wurlitzers built, it's a sweeter organ than the brassier 3c/8 Granada 2 Style organ played by Paul Roberts on his *Wirly Bird* video (also reviewed in this issue.) David Lowe's association with Opus 2203 goes back to its days in Woolwich where he often played concerts in the 70s. Several years ago, this organ was bought by John Smallwood who had been seeking an organ for his home town of Tywyn on Cardigan Bay in Wales. With the help of fellow organ and rail buffs, as well as workers from the Talylyn Railway in Tywyn, the organ was temporarily installed in a nearby stable and, once more, Lowe was a frequent concert artist.

Soon arrangements were made to install the organ in Tywyn's newly remodeled 1912-vintage Neuadd Pendre Community Hall. The Talylyn Railway and its workers helped transport much of the organ to the hall. (The complete story of the organ's travels and installation is printed in

the Spring and Summer 1998 issues of *Cinema Organ*.) David played both the Preview Program in May 1996 and the Grand Opening concert on August 29.

David's organ career began in 1962 when he started playing for special events on the 3/10 Wurlitzer (Opus 2203) at the Gaumont, Bradford. (That organ, now in Howden-le-Wear, is heard on Nigel Ogden's CD *Decade of Delights*, Journal Jan. '98). David also has been a featured organist at ice rinks throughout England and has played on the BBC, along with making concert tours in the UK and abroad. Railroads and organs seem to fit together naturally so it's no surprise David is both an organist and full-time British Rail employee. With the Talylyn Railway and its workers having been so involved with this Wurlitzer, it's appropriate this album features some railroad tunes along with other selections that beautifully showcase this small but versatile organ.

David opens his 67-minute program with "Coronation Scot," a number written to celebrate the famous 1930s London to Edinburgh passenger train. The other obvious railroad titles are "Choo-Choo Samba," "Chattanooga Choo-Choo," "Branch Line," Lennon/McCartney's gently rocking "Ticket to Ride," and the album's title tune. (Did you know the 'A' train goes to sea? On its 31-mile run from 204th in Manhattan to Far Rockaway it crosses a 4-mile-long trestle over Jamaica Bay.) There are also a few "disguised" railroad numbers. "We're Getting There" was a BritRail advertising slogan.

"Thunderbirds Theme," (which comes from a TV show) is also railroad slang for standby diesel locomotives on the electrified main line between London and Scotland. Lastly, Eric Coates' descriptive "London Bridge" could also refer to the nearby London Bridge Railway Station on the South Bank.

Turning to the non-choo-choo music, David plays three medleys: first is a group of seven cheerful melodies from the musical hit *Me and My Girl*, later is a brief group of Welsh folk songs, and lastly, are seven pleasant numbers from *White Horse Inn* (a romantic operetta, it ran for almost a year on Broadway in 1936.) David also has included the fiery "El Adorno," the charming novelty "Poodle in the Park," a saucy "Gigolo," and the somewhat Latin-rock "Fernando." Completing his tune list are some beautiful ballads: "Moon River," "Beauty and the Beast," Burton Lane's ravishing "Too Late Now" (sung by Jane Powell in the 1951 film *Royal Wedding*) and, from Ivor Novello's W.W.II musical *Perchance to Dream*, the poignant "We'll Gather Lilacs."

All in all, it's a well-balanced program. David's playing is clean, refreshingly relaxed, and thoroughly enjoyable. The 250 seat room's bright, spacious acoustics give the Wurlitzer a larger sound than might be expected from just eight ranks -- it's brilliant without sacrificing lushness. Compact disc only for US \$20.00 postpaid - cash (no checks) or you can charge it to your VISA card - from David Lowe, 72 Primrose Lane, Gilstead, BINGLEY, W. Yorks, BD16 4QP, UK.

Intermission Interlude DON SPRINGER



Back in 1969, organ buff Jim Glass took over the partially installed (ex-Chicago Tivoli) Wurlitzer in the suburban Hinsdale Theatre. Within a few months the organ was completed and Glass founded the non-profit Owl Cinema Organ Guild. Since 1975, the Guild has produced almost-monthly concerts featuring many of the country's finest organists on their 3 manual 25 rank hybrid organ. (For the complete story, with photos, of Jim and this amazing organ see the *Console Magazine* issues of June 1976 and July 1981). The 5m console shown on the CD's cover sits next to the 3m Kimball console (from Chicago's Senate Theatre) which actually controls the organ.

ATOS convention-goers will recall some notable concerts at the 600 seat Hinsdale Theatre. Kay McAbee was featured during the 1977 Chicago Convention while both Jim Riggs and George Wright were presented during the 1985 convention. Don Springer is a Chicago area organist - and a student of Al Melgard - who appeared in a cameo performance at the 6 manual Stadium Barton during the 1985 convention. He also was organist at Sally's Stage, a Northwest-side pizzeria

which featured live vaudeville acts, roller-skating waitresses and a 3/11 Barton. Don's remarkable LP, *Live from Sally's Stage*, is one of the rarest of theatre organ mementos.

Don opens his program with Gershwin's rather gushing "Swanee" followed by a nicely done three tune medley from the newly restored classic film *Wizard of Oz*. "Jalousie" (sic) is next in a reasonably accurate George Wright arrangement. 1926's "Blue Room" receives an appropriately ricky-tick treatment. "More Than You Know" and "South" precede a mock-Crawford arrangement of "I'm Confessin' (That I Love You)" which builds to a full organ (with 32' pedal) shouted declaration at the conclusion. The organ's beautiful voxes and tibias are featured throughout the next selection, "L'Amour, Toujours, L'Amour."

A rip-snorting, yet somewhat pedantic, "España Cani" is next. "Counting the Stars Alone" (the composer is indicated as "N/A" which may mean "unknown") sounds like a bubbling novelty from the teens or 20s while "You Made Me Love You" receives a near-red light, runway treatment, oddly ending in a whisper. Jesse Crawford's best known composition, "Forgotten Melody" is followed by an astounding 7-minute medley of five selections from *West Side Story* (including the unlisted "I Feel Pretty.") Leonard Bernstein's music, to say the least, is complex and harmonically challenging and Springer's treatment is certainly unique if not outright bizarre.

"Jeepers Creepers" bounces along lightly. From Broadway's current hit

revival, Don plays the flashy "All That Jazz." Again the credits show "N/A" on the album - actually, of course, the tune is from Kander and Ebb's *Chicago* (which originally opened in 1975.) Another mock-Crawford arrangement is "So Beats My Heart For You" while "Chatanooga (sic) Choo Choo" chugs along with horns(!) bells, and whistles. What sounds like another 1920s song, "Halfway to Heaven" precedes a moody arrangement of "What I Did For Love." It's credited here to Schyler and Maher, but actually came from the Marvin Hamlisch score (with lyrics by Edward Kleban) for *A Chorus Line*. Completing this 66-minute disc is Eric Coates' "Knightsbridge March."

The recording and Hinsdale organ both are first-class, and hopefully, future albums will be released of this fine instrument. Springer obviously has worked hard to record a concert program which fully demonstrates the organ's capabilities. We're confident his Chicagoland friends and fans, along with the Hinsdale Theatre's patrons will enjoy this album. CD only for \$18.00 postpaid from Owl Cinema Organ Guild, 29 E. First Street, Hinsdale, IL 60521.

Through The Decades: The 1970s NIGEL OGDEN

C'mon, you remember the 70s. They weren't that long ago; it was the era of lava lamps, polyester leisure suits, gas shortages, 8-track tapes, and disco dancing. The now ubiquitous yellow, smiling face



was born in the 70s! But, the music had changed since the decades of the Big Bands and tuneful Broadway and Hollywood musicals. However, some of the 70's song hits have become "standards" frequently played at theatre organ concerts in the 90s and many of these are featured on Nigel Ogden's newest 74-minute *Decades* disc.

Temporarily skipping the 60s (it and the 40s *Decades* are due out later this year), Nigel has selected 34 of the most popular 70s tunes to play on the Blackpool Tower Ballroom's 3/14 Wurlitzer. While most of the selections are well-known on both sides of the Atlantic, a few certainly will be surprising but all were among the most popular in the UK. Opening the disc is a medley of three cheery tunes: "Tie a Yellow Ribbon" (remember Tony Orlando?), a Patsy Cline hit, "Snowbird," and "Save All Your Kisses for Me."

The first of two Richard and Karen Carpenter medleys is next. "We've Only Just Begun," "Close to You," and "Sing (A Song)" were written by other composers but their second group has their own compositions "Yesterday Once More," "Good-bye to Love," and "Top of the World." Nigel also plays two rather shocking medleys of tunes written by the Scandinavian rock group ABBA (who may be recognized for their 80s musical

drama *Chess* which was a smash-hit in England for three years but lasted only 68 performances on Broadway!) The beat may be a bit much for some ears, but the ABBA selections are varied in style and tempo with some of the melodies being quite enchanting.

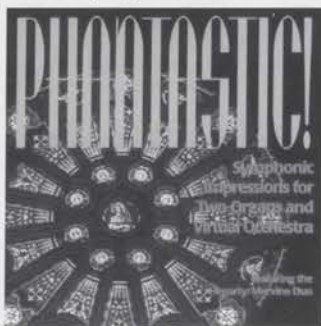
In contrast, Nigel presents selections from Broadway and Hollywood musicals of the 70s which are now "standards." These are John Williams' rather pompous main theme from *Superman* and his unusually tender "Can You Read My Mind?" Stephen Sondheim's best known melody "Send In the Clowns" (from *A Little Night Music*,) and the title tune of *Jesus Christ Superstar* along with the emotional "I Don't Know How to Love Him." A completely unexpected title for a 70s "hit" is Ogden's own arrangement of almost everyone's all-time favorite hymn, "Amazing Grace!" Nigel assures us two of the top recordings in the UK. were Judy Collins' version in '71 and that by the Band of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards in '72. "You Light Up My Life" and "The Summer Knows" are two of that era's most popular ballads. Nigel also includes the breezy Latin delights "Una Paloma Blanca" and "Y Viva España."

Outstanding on this disc are the up-tempo tunes Nigel and this particular Wurlitzer do so very well by giving them a danceable sophisticated jazz beat. These are "The Old Fashioned Way," "Chanson d'Amour," "Where is The Sunshine of My Life" and the closing medley of "Can't Smile Without You" and Barry Manilow's "Copacabana." Who says

theatre organs can't play good modern music? Well done, Nigel! Compact disc only for \$20.00 (postpaid - checks in US\$ are OK) from Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust, 21 New Hall Road, Jericho, BURY, Lancs, BL9 7TQ, UK.

Phantastic THE HEGARTY/MERVINE DUO

Bob Shafter, Guest Reviewer



This recording is billed as "Symphonic impressions for Organ and Virtual Orchestra." The recording was made at San Francisco's St. Anne of the Sunset Church which has an Allen with the new Renaissance Technology; another Allen was brought in and the Orchestral voices were generated on a Korg X5DR module which was accessed through Allen's MIDI assignment. The selections are, perhaps, more varied than any recording I've yet heard. The opening selection is the main title music from the film *The Big Country*, with Korg providing its impressions of orchestral voices. Throughout this recording the Korg produces only an impression of orchestral voices. It is painfully obvious that those voices are synthetic, but they blend well with the organ voices.

Next is an orchestration of a Debussy vocal piece titled "Romance." Then

comes an arrangement by David Hegarty for two organs (no MIDI voices) of "The Phantom of the Opera/Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor." This arrangement was perhaps a stretch. Other selections include, "Suite from Spellbound," "Dialogue for Mixtures," "Olympic Fanfare," and the ever popular "Tocatta from Widor's Fifth Symphony."

Dick Clay, as recording engineer, did his usual superb job, and the new Allen organ technology is simply amazing. When examining this recording, I had to ask myself if it did what it set out to do, and how well did it do it. The answers are, yes it did do what it set out to do, and it did it very well. Two very fine musicians, David Hegarty and Kenrich Mervine set out to record a CD of Symphonic impressions and they succeeded, but I still found myself thinking that this recording was even a bit too eclectic for me. Compact disc only for \$18.00 from David Hegarty, 4388 - 23rd Street, San Francisco, CA 94114.

Red Hot and Blue GEORGE WRIGHT

Ron Musselman,
Guest Reviewer



In the early 80s, George Wright was busy building his second studio organ in a building adjoining his Hollywood Hills residence. The Hollywood Philharmonic Organ was his ulti-

mate recording instrument, and seated at its 4 manual Art Deco "waterfall" console (controlling more than 30 ranks of pipes), he would ultimately make ten albums on it. The 10th recording, the now haunting *Salon* (recently reviewed in these pages) was his final opus. The inaugural recording, *Red Hot and Blue*, made in 1985, has been re-released by popular demand. This is a most fortunate occurrence for those who missed it the first time around. In terms of programming, arranging and overall sound, it is one of the finest offerings of his work on this legendary instrument.

George opens with a medley on which the album title is based, selections from Cole Porter's "Red, Hot and Blue." This superbly played package opens with a typically spectacular Wright intro, segues into a few bars of "It's Delovely," then moves on through a collection of excerpts that are very cleverly woven together. From the James Bond movie *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold*, he plays the ballad "Nobody Does it Better," featuring George's beloved style D trumpet.

Many theatre organ artists have played the "St. Louis Blues," but the Wright treatment of that piece here is the definitive arrangement of this W.C. Handy classic. In this 6-minute excursion, several variations are explored, including one that is flavored with a Bizet opera theme! After this rendition is heard, it could be said that George "owns" this composition.

Wright was always the ultimate interpreter of novelty fare on the theatre organ, and *Red, Hot and Blue*

includes two of his best examples. Brian Hyland's 60s rock 'n roll ditty, "Itsy Bitsy Teeny Weenie Yellow Polka Dot Bikini" is a humorous adaptation, starting with a calliope-like intro, then utilizing untremmed strings and his "patented" talking Vox. There is a priceless passage on some seemingly out-of-tune pipework, followed by a chorus with the bird whistles. The other example of novelty material on this CD is Confrey's "Kitten on the Keys," an extraordinary example of George's dexterity. The melody is established and repeated on an ear-tickling color reed combination with some contrasting registration in between. This cleanly played version is finished off with a spirited brassy ensemble. It is a pure delight to hear, and shows what an absolute master of this instrument George was.

His arrangement of the Simon and Garfunkle hit "El Condor Pasa" is a prime example of where the Wright imagination could go with a simple, familiar tune. Its atmospheric intro and opening verse with Trumpet accents are propelled into the second Bach-like fugue sequence by a mellow celested horn Diapason. One of George's cleanly-fingered runs appears near the close.

David Rose's 50s pop orchestral instrumental "Holiday for Strings" features the Hollywood Philharmonic Organ's strings in a pizzicato effect reminiscent of the original recording.

"Oodles of Noodles," a famous sax solo by Jimmy Dorsey, is a technically taxing piece easily negotiated by Mr. Wright's nimble fingers. The "Carioca" is an

extremely spirited Latin-American number taken at a fast clip, and featuring one of George's most dazzling endings.

His skills as a composer really shine in his nostalgic "The Blue Dove," an obvious tip of the hat to his boyhood musical idol, Jesse Crawford. This wonderful tune from Wright's pen, which showcases the Hollywood Philharmonic organ's choice tibias, has an infectious 20s Spanish feel and has the style and spirit of Crawford written all over it.

The final piece, "Secret Love," is a very effective closer to this special collection, and one of the most heartfelt recordings of his career. It is a beautiful, complex arrangement incorporating the haunting infusion of a Wagner operatic theme, which builds to a brass-topped medium organ ensemble. Then a lone tibia signals the concluding moments of this almost prayer-like statement. There is a subtle and perfectly-timed overlapping of voices near the end that is a textbook example of skillful musicianship. The actual ending is pure perfection in its simplicity.

A few months ago, it was our privilege to have been present at Mr. Wright's studio when two of the pieces on this album ("Kitten on the Keys" and "Carioca") were played via the organ's digital playback system, with the organ playing "live," just as George had played each song. It was amazing how well the CD captured the sound of the pipe organ as heard first hand.

Our recommendation? This is one of the finest albums of George Wright's vast body of recent recordings, and Banda has seen fit

to give everyone a second chance to acquire a copy. Don't pass this one up.

A Tribute to George Wright: LYN LARSEN playing the Hollywood Philharmonic Organ

Ron Musselman Guest
Reviewer



By now, everyone in the theatre organ community has learned of the passing last May of George Wright, the greatest theatre organist of all time. Some other theatre organ greats who've been lost in previous years have eventually been honored with some sort of tribute. But the loss of this singular giant of the field dictated that something should be done as soon as possible. And indeed, just a few months after Mr. Wright's death, a most fitting tribute has been paid. First of all, it was done by an outstanding colleague, and probably the best choice for the honor, Lyn Larsen. And secondly, it was done on George's carefully assembled and voiced Hollywood Philharmonic organ, the renowned studio instrument he recorded on exclusively the final thirteen years of his life.

Lyn, who himself has recorded and concertized extensively in a very successful and lengthy career, knew George very well and has been a lifelong admirer of Wright's musicianship.

Far from being something that has been hastily thrown together, this is obviously a well thought out assemblage of pieces that covers several important phases of George's career. And it was not Lyn's intention to just present all note-for-note and stop-for-stop replicas of Wright's recordings. Rather, Larsen has maintained a careful balance between the identifiable "Wright-isms" and his own interpretations. And the result is that this CD is not just a program of slavish copies, but the spirit of George Wright is present in Lyn's playing. And at no time does Lyn draw attention to himself: his playing at all times keeps the light shining on the honoree.

Things get off to a start with the trademark "Dizzy Fingers," the knuckle-buster George played in a talent contest (which he won) at the age of 12. After this 100-mph opener, we hear an atmospheric string/vox intro to "San Francisco," an arrangement by Lyn that will bring a lump to the throat of anyone well-acquainted with George's career. In this expanded and varied version, Lyn actually paints several sonic pictures of George's early successes in the bay area of northern California. It is a nostalgic and fond remembrance, and strongly reinforced by his use of some soft tuned percussions and very effective sentimental chords. There is even a passage with strong oriental flavoring that represents George's stint at Oakland's "Shanghai Terrace Bowl" nightclub - his first professional playing job after he finished high school. Wright's great popularity at the magnificent San Fran-

cisco Fox Theatre Wurlitzer is represented by Larsen's playing of "Varsity Drag," an up-tempo dance tune from the roaring 20s. George's landmark recording of "Jalousie" was a must to include, and it is wonderfully played here, with all the excitement of the original intact. The whimsical "Ukulele Lady" (a Wright arrangement) is from his years at DOT Records, and gives a glimpse of George's musical sense of humor.

Lyn plays "Moonlight on the River" and "I'm Confessin' That I Love You," both strongly identified with the king of the theatre organ in its golden era, Jesse Crawford. George Wright adored Crawford and his music, and "Crawford-isms" were evident in many of George's ballads, so these two pieces are doubly nostalgic.

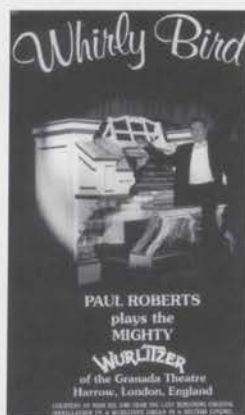
One of Lyn's favorites, of anything George played, is Gershwin's "Bess, You is My Woman Now". The Larsen rendering of it in this tribute is first-rate. George wrote a piece especially for Lyn, entitled "Sonet." It is a beautiful and well-written composition, soft and melodic, with a big finish, and Lyn shares it with us in "Tribute."

This remembrance of George Wright concludes with a most touching gesture that needs no explanation beyond its title; "Auf Wiederseh'n." It was an emotional experience to listen to this through my stereo system in preparing this review. One can only wonder what Lyn felt as he played "Good-bye" to his mentor and dear friend ... seated at what had been George's personal studio organ, and to realize that the legendary George Wright would never again

take his place at this bench.

It should be quite obvious by now that this wonderful tribute to one of the finest musicians of the century carries the highest recommendation. It can be appreciated on several levels, and is more than a tribute: It also represents some of Lyn Larsen's best work.

VIDEO REVIEW **Whirly Bird** PAUL ROBERTS



In the first Paul Roberts "video concert" we reviewed, he played the Christie organ at Sandford Park (Journal, July 1998) and on the second it was the dual-console Compton in Southampton's Guildhall (Aug. 1998). On his third video it's the 3c/8 original installation Wurlitzer in the Granada (Cannon) Harrow, a London suburb. Opus 2216 (the Walton Wurlitzer List shows it as 2217 due to an error in numbering from 2215 upwards) was installed for the 2,200 seat theatre's opening in 1937. The cinema was triplexed (two additional screens were installed under the balcony) in 1973 and in 1987 the lavish Italian Renaissance style interior (designed by the noted artist Theodore Komisarjevsky) was refurbished to celebrate the theatre's 50th anniversary.

sary.

At the time the video was shot, this was the last Wurlitzer playing in a operating cinema in Britain (although several other original Wurlitzers are still in venues converted to other uses.) Unfortunately, that statement is no longer true for, in November, 1996 it succumbed to a newly opened nearby multiplex. For years, the organ has been maintained and used by our ATOS London Chapter. (The prominent ATOS initials can be seen under the organ bench.)

As noted in David Lowe's *Take the 'A' Train* review (in this issue) the Harrow organ is a somewhat "brassier" Granada II Style Wurlitzer. While both have Diapason, Tibia Clausa, and Flute, the Granada II's have a Post-horn in place of a Trumpet, a Tuba for the Clarinet, a Saxophone for the Vox and a Gamba and its Celeste in place of a Violin and Celeste. And you'll note the top manual has no pistons for it's a coupler manual.

Paul brings the console up playing his signature tune "I Want to be Happy" and launches his 50-minute program with the cheerful novelty "Hors D'oeuvres," a cute arrangement of "Ain't Misbehavin'" and the bright, brassy title tune "Whirly Bird." A mellow ballad, "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You," features the organ's tibia. Up to this point we've had varied close-ups of Paul's hands and feet so the next eleven minute group of eleven tunes accompany a visual trip around London; some of the shots show Paul strolling along the Thames, through Berkeley Square, and past some unidentified London locations. There are

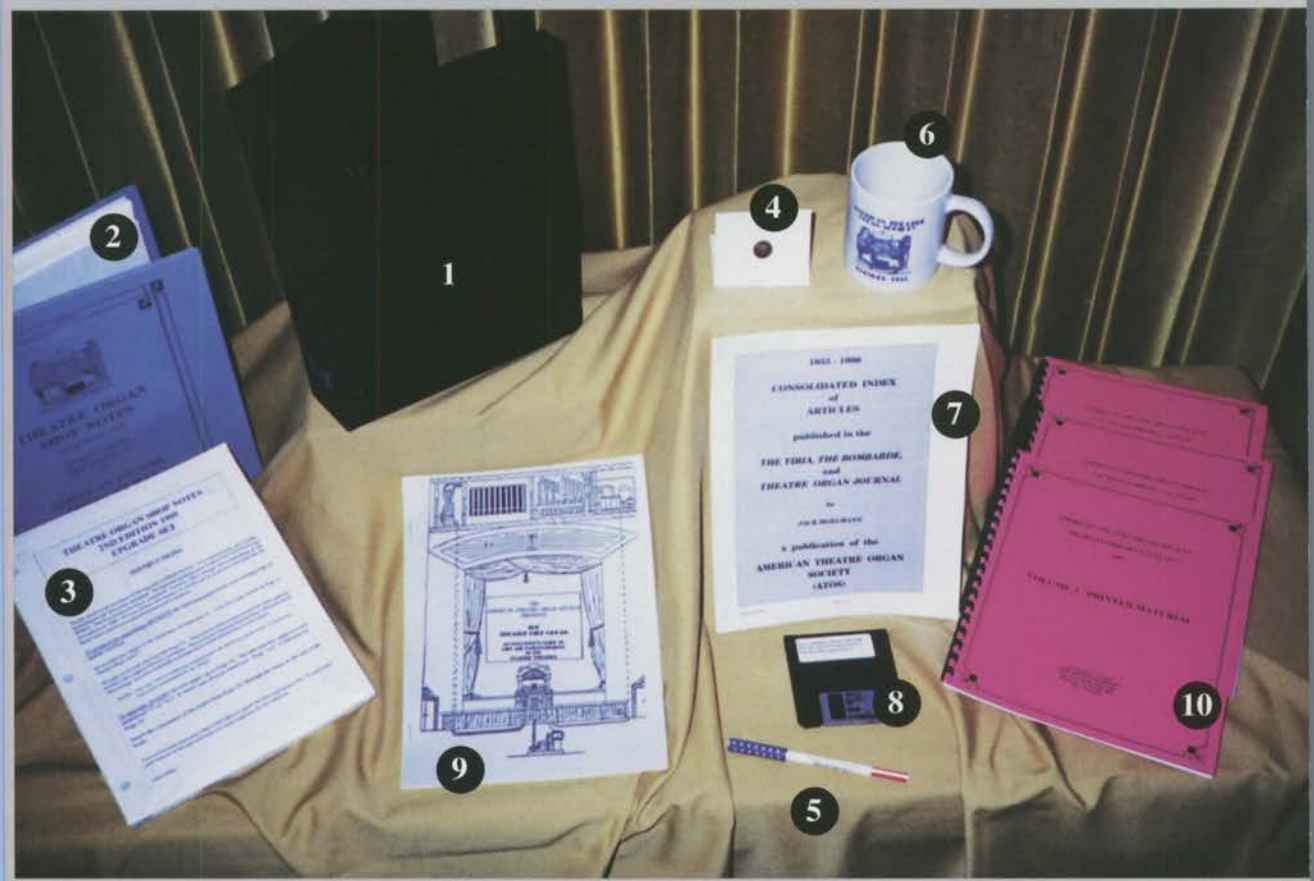
both archival and current views of some parades, and what almost appears to be crowd mass hysteria (possibly V-E day celebrations?) For some reason the view of Big Ben features not the familiar resonant chimes but rather the same tinny chimes heard on the Southampton Guildhall video.

Returning to views of Paul's playing there are "The Things We Did Last Summer" followed by a shrill, overly busy "Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen," a quieter "Polka Dots and Moonbeams," and a rattling, rocking "Choo Choo Ch' Boogie." Paul next introduces Tony Moss, one of England's foremost organ buffs, who guides us through a brief but informative history of all the Granada Theatres in the UK. It's well illustrated by archival photographs and some beautiful interior views of the Harrow's auditorium. Returning to Paul at the console, the video closes with a variety of melodies ranging from "Arrivederci Roma" and "Rose of Tralee" to "S'Wonderful."

In all, there are 31 tunes, most played in the typically crisp, relatively unadorned, steady beat, British style with a bit of Blackpool manual hopping here and there. Again, we note Paul makes only minor registration changes within his selections, but there are varied registrations throughout his program. It's an entertaining, nostalgic salute to the Granada chain of cinemas and their Wurlitzer organs. The video is available in the NTSC (American) format and is in stereo for \$30.00 postpaid from Cardinal Productions, P.O. Box 22035, Beachwood, OH 44122.

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Closing Chord



HARRY RASMUSSEN

Oklahoma lost a stalwart theatre organ enthusiast with the death of long-time Sooner State Chapter member Harry Rasmussen on September 11,

1998. Born in Chicago, Illinois, on December 5, 1913, he was 84 years old.

His family moved to Tulsa in 1919, and he graduated from Tulsa's Central High School in 1932. It was during his high school days that he fell in love with theatre organ! He hung around the downtown Ritz theatre (with its 4/17 Robert-Morton) and became friends with organist Milton Slosser; he also was well acquainted with the 3/10 Wurlitzer in the Tulsa Coliseum.

One of Harry's biggest thrills came during those high school days when Kilgen installed a 4/45 pipe organ in the school auditorium, and Harry got to help! For one thing, the organ wasn't loud enough, and they had to open up some additional swell shades behind the stage - Harry was on hand to assist!

He attended the New York School of Radio and Television after high school, and then went to work for KVOO Radio. During those early days, he never lost an opportunity to promote theatre organ. One of his accomplishments was to engineer simultaneous dual organ concerts from the Ritz Theatre and downtown Rialto Theatre, live, with both organists wearing headphones so they could hear each other!

He left KVOO in 1957 to devote full time to the family business, Sound Unlimited, which he sold after he retired.

Through the years, he was always helpful with the organ at Tulsa's Central Assembly of God Church, while that instrument (originally from the Rialto Theatre) was available to us; he diagnosed the problem on the Robert-Morton in Muskogee's Civic Center: it needed a new power-supply part, which he replaced. His expertise in electronics (along with Harvey Barbour's and others) was invaluable when our chapter installed the Z-Tronics relay system on our 3/13 Robert-Morton at Tulsa Technology Center in Broken Arrow.

Harry's pride-and-joy was the Artisan organ installed in the servant's quarters in the garage behind his home. Its Möller console originally came from the ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City. Harry had purchased the instrument, with its Artisan components, from the late Frank B. Framl, many years ago, and then spent many hours these past years, mod-

ernizing it with Devtronix electronic components. He never played "in public" for any of us to hear; just for his own amusement.

He could tell you anything you wanted to know about the early days of Tulsa. He was a delightful person to call our friend! He is survived by a son, Kent, (of Folsom, California), two grandchildren and two sisters. We shall miss him.

Dorothy Smith

J. TYSON FORKER

J. Tyson Forker was born in 1919 in Morristown, Pennsylvania, just about the time theatre organs were first being installed in theatres to accompany the silent films being shown in that era. Talkies were not too far in the future.

Tyson came from a religious family with a strong work ethic. His parents saw he had a natural musical talent and started him on piano lessons at age five. His musical ability soon brought reward as he was allowed to play the organ at his local church.

By 14, during his summer vacation, six nights a week, he professionally played the organ at the Park Theatre in Stone Harbor, New Jersey. After that successful experience, he played the pipe organs in the Morristown, Pennsylvania, area; including The Garrick, Lyric, Grand, Westmar, and Colonial. He was a relief or substitute wherever and whenever needed.

The summer of 1927 saw him playing the piano at the Broadway Theatre in Bridgeport, Pennsylvania; as Tyson was equally at home on the piano or the theatre organ. One evening, he was called an hour before show time to substitute for the regular organist. She had fallen and broken her leg. This was a brand new theatre and also opening night. With sweaty palms he made it through just fine. He found it always exciting but somewhat nerve wracking at times.

The last professional engagement he had was during the summer of 1929 at the Strand Theatre in Ocean City, New Jersey. This was the year of "talkies" and the death blow to theatre organs. All of Tyson's professional playing was done while still attending school. With more time now, he could finish his education and attend college.

Tyson went on to the business world and spent most of his working life publishing law books for the State of Pennsylvania.

Even though his professional music career ended in 1929, Tyson kept his hand active on his own piano and a three manual Rodgers theatre style organ which he bought in 1966, after moving to Sarasota, Florida. He loved music and it was an integral part of his life.

Passing on in December 1997, he is survived by a daughter, two grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. He gave of

himself and reaped the rewards with lots of loving friends. He was a long time member of ATOS and joined the Manasota Theatre Organ Society in 1993.

Vernon Blanch

FRED BOCK

On August 2, 1998, following a catastrophic series of medical mishaps after what should have been a routine, relatively quick, out-patient kidney stone procedure, Fred Bock, 59 years old, composer, arranger, music publisher, pianist/organist, long-time music minister at Hollywood Presbyterian Church, and a lovely, bright, wickedly funny man ... died. Even the doctors said that this was a death that should not have happened. A shocked, stunned family, a vast community of friends and thousands of people in the music industry, across America and around the world, shared with disbelief and grief, the difficult reality that Fred is gone.

Fred Bock, his bride of thirty-five years, Lois, their sons Stephen and Jonathan, Fred's eighty-seven year old mother, and over a thousand people filled the historic Hollywood Presbyterian Church for a joyous memorial service. It was a celebration with a few tears but a great deal of laughter; a celebration of Fred Bock's amazing, productive life, and his enormous body of accomplishments.

When he was just 31 years of age, Fred borrowed \$1,000 from his father to start a publishing company (he was already well known in publishing circles as the founder of the publishing division of Word, Inc.), and within a year had a thriving publishing company called Gentry. That small but ambitious company became Fred Bock Music Company, one of the truly great independent sources for church and school musicians.

Fred was the editor who created *Hymns for the Family of God*, (over four million in print), a hymnal that combined hymnody with popular praise and worship songs, a first in major publications of this kind.

An accomplished organist and pianist, Fred published many organ compositions as well as piano arrangements and piano-organ duets. A friend to many in the organ world, he published music of Lyn Larsen, Richard Purvis, and others ... even a Christmas arrangement by George Wright, and a Christmas tune by Dick Leibert! Fred valued people and often dedicated published arrangements to friends and colleagues, your author being the recipient of two dedications. Fred was keenly interested in the theatre pipe organ, having made numerous recordings of gospel music on the Robert-Morton organ at the Whitney Studios in Glendale.

Those privileged to know this man, will always be grateful for his sharp wit and vast musical gifts. He is sorely missed.

Chris Elliott

AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY CHAPTER NEWS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1999

AUSTRALIA FELIX

Brian Pearson: INT+61882986201

Adelaide, South Australia. A most successful concert by Tony Fenelon and Ray Thornley at TOSA(SA)'s Capri Theatre Sunday afternoon, 22 November, ranging from a beautifully played Grieg piano concerto and other classical orchestral transcriptions to a tribute to the works of Rogers and Hart, wonderfully entertained a capacity audience. As I write this, several hours after midnight, the euphoria of that concert and the anticipation of traveling the five hundred miles to Melbourne to hear the young classical organist Thomas Heywood's concert the next week on TOSA(VIC)'s Malvern Town Hall Compton have kept me awake - too excited to sleep. I'll be going by train, but such interstate visits by organ enthusiasts are quite common - other Adelaide people, including Graham and Gail Ward and John Thiele, will be in Melbourne that same weekend to attend the wedding of well known theatre organist John Atwell's daughter, and, at a cost of nearly five hundred dollars each, two people flew today from Melbourne to hear Tony and Ray on the Adelaide instrument.

Many ATOS members know Chris McPhee who won the overall award in the Young Organists competition at the Fresno convention. He has made several concert visits to the USA, and has been invited to play during the next convention in London. They will be pleased to know that he married Katrina Polglase, a friend since their school days, in Adelaide on 26 September. Once again, long distance travel was involved. Shirley and Jim Clausen from Portland, Oregon, who had flown across the Pacific to Adelaide at Easter to attend their third TOSA Convention, made the long journey once again to be honoured guests at the wedding. They also brought their daughter and son-in-law to make their acquaintance with this country which is so very similar in many ways to the United States and yet so different in its scenery.

The sudden death of Mal McInnes, presenter of the theatre organ radio programme in Perth, Western Australia, deeply saddened his very many friends throughout this vast country, but we are all glad that we shared his friendship.

Two happy events and one sad passing in the lives of Australian ATOS members - but they are two sides of the very same coin. While the love of the music of the theatre organ is the tie that binds us, with world wide friendships which are engendered by our common interest are not the least of the joys which it brings into being.

Brian Pearson

CEDAR RAPIDS

William Peck: 319/393-4645

Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The "Iowa Organ Week-end Adventure" is now history. From comments heard from registrants as well as artists, it will be remembered as a well-organized and enjoyable regional convention which had been in the planning stage for two years. Thanks to all the CRATOS members who worked on various committee assignments during those two years, every comment we heard (orally or by follow-up letters) said it WAS "A-1" and a huge success.

Our chapter president, Bill Peck deserves great credit as he was also our convention chairperson and left no strings unattached. He called monthly convention meetings for progress reports in addition to our regular board meetings to make sure everything was progressing according to schedule. To be sure, unexpected situations arose which caused frustrations, but Bill managed to solve them himself or get it done through the appropriate committee. Thanks Bill, for spearheading the entire regional! We wish you and your wife, Pat, the best on your upcoming retirement at the end of this year.

The Wurlitzer at the Paramount, the Barton at the former Iowa Theatre as well as the Skinner at Coe College all performed almost flawlessly. We expected as

much with the untold hours of preparation given them before hand. All artists were appreciative of the work the maintenance crews did prior to the convention and the help given each during his practice session and performance.

At the time of this article's deadline, all convention expenses are not available, but we anticipate a net figure in the black - which is good news to all of us as well as the National Board of Directors!

As mentioned in previous chapter note articles, other activities have been at a minimum for us with all effort towards the convention. By the time this issue is mailed, we will have had our annual meeting in December at which time we will elect officers and directors for 1999.

George K. Baldwin

CUMBERLAND VALLEY

Robert Eyer, Jr.: 717/264-7886

Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. Sunday, September 20, 3:00, Capitol Theatre -- joint outing with the Free State (Baltimore area) and Susquehanna Valley (York area) theatre organ societies. Bob Eyer, Jr. will present a 30-minute mini-concert, then open console will reign (musicians, bring your music!). A potluck dinner will be served later in the afternoon, and attendees are asked to bring a salad, vegetable, snack, or dessert to share. Don't miss a great opportunity to enjoy music, friendship, and food at our own venue.

Friday, September 25, 8:00; Sunday, September 27, 3:00; Capitol Theatre -- The Rainbow Makers will entertain with their fifth benefit concert. At the Möller, accompanying vocalist Will Pananes, will be CVTOS member Wayne Mowrey.

Sunday, October 4, 3:00, Capitol Theatre -- the second annual Capitol Concert Band concert will include Bob Eyer, Jr. playing an organ pre-show beginning at 2:30 and accompanying the band on several numbers, including the finale, *Phantom of the Opera*.

Last year's event was a spectacular suc-

Chapter Correspondents Please Note New Editorial Address:

AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

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cess, so get your tickets early.

On a quiet Sunday afternoon in mid-September, the local council for the arts sponsored a fundraising event featuring a number of in-town venues showcasing a wide variety of art and music. Participants walked from venue to venue, and closed out the afternoon at the Capitol Theatre with a rousing mini-concert by Bob Eyer, Jr. at the chapter's Möller theatre pipe organ.

Later that month, a Capitol Concert, at the theatre featured a 45-member concert band composed of the area's finest musicians playing a wide variety of popular music. Bob Eyer, Jr. played an organ pre-show and later was accompanied by the band for the Saint-Saëns "Finale" from the Symphony for Organ, for which the virtual sellout crowd of nearly 840 gave several standing ovations.

By mid-October, the chapter's organ crew, led by Mark Cooley, completed the installation of four ranks of pipes to the Möller's Main chamber -- a Tuba, Tibia, and two strings, bringing the current total to 12. Also, construction of an organ lift has begun. The continuing improvements to the organ, coupled with the new-found success of the theatre as a performing arts center, bode very well for the chapter's activities.

Wayne Mowrey



Marilyn Stulken at her church's 3/25 Wangerin in Racine. Sandy Knuth photo

DAIRYLAND

Corey E. Olsen: 414/646-8647

Racine/Milwaukee, Wisconsin. We kicked off our fall season with a social on Sunday, September 27, in Racine at St. Luke's Episcopal Church where Marilyn Kay Stulken is organist. Marilyn teaches organ at the college level, so she gave us a lecture on the history of organs, beginning

with the first "organ" in 250 B.C. and continuing through to the present time. She demonstrated the various styles of organs using playbacks on several CD's and also played a few pieces on the church's 3/25 Wangerin organ. Then, we went to her home for refreshments.

Our annual Halloween social was held on October 25, at Fred Hermes' home in Racine with 120 people in attendance. His instrument is a 5 manual Wurlitzer. On his large movie screen, he showed the one hour silent film *High Lights of Horror* and added organ accompaniment to it. To lighten the mood he also accompanied a silent comedy, *Railroad Stowaways*, featuring Abbott and Costello and the Keystone Cops. Refreshments were served.

We are happy to report that our fund drive to save the Wurlitzer organ at the Avalon Theatre in Milwaukee was a success! Our club came up with enough money to purchase the organ from Fred Hermes, and we plan to keep the organ in the Avalon Theatre.

Sandy Knuth

DELAWARE VALLEY

Harry Linn, Jr.: 610/566-1764

Pottstown, Pennsylvania. The Theatre Organ Society of the Delaware Valley club function for October was a visit to the home of Richard Kline in Thurmont, Maryland. Twelve members made the trip on the 29th. Six of these members did not play, so the other six had plenty of time to play this fine Wurlitzer 4/28 formerly in the Washington D.C. Capitol Theatre. Surely, our club looks forward to each opportunity to visit with Dick Kline, and our sincere thanks go to Dick for his hospitality!

Quite a few of our members attend and participate in local concert series. One of the best of these, is the concert series of The Reformed Church of Willow Grove. About a dozen of our members attended the October Pipe Fest program on the 30th featuring artist Paul Fleckenstein on the hybrid 3/34 organ constructed by members of the church. The program selections were from Bach to Scott Joplin to Robert Elmore. This writer's favorite selection was a pedal solo called "Pedaling Through China" by Ron Boud Really something to see and hear. It was a great program well enjoyed by all in attendance. Tom Rotunno

EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

Donald Phipps: 508/990-1214

New Bedford, Massachusetts. Richard Knight Auditorium, Babson College, September 27, we had our first social of the season with our own John Cook again

on the bench. "I Feel a Song Coming On" opened his program and the title was most appropriate as he felt many, all well arranged and skillfully executed. A touch of the classics was included, a fiery Latin number, and several songs not often heard, made up John's offerings. A great "El Capitan March" was his closer. A theatre pipe organ is the ideal instrument for marches with its orchestral pipework, traps and percussion and John showed this off to perfection.

Hank Lysaght and President Donald Phipps, on behalf of our chapter, with Pamela W. Goldberg (legal liaison for contracts) and John D. Eldert (Vice-President of business and financial affairs for Babson) signed an agreement for our continual use of the auditorium for an indefinite period. This is most heartening news for our chapter as previous arrangements were for ten year periods with new negotiations then required. All worked long and hard for these positive results.

October 18 had member Edward Wawrzynowicz play our organ. Two members of the Ben Angelo Trio accompanied him on cornet and saxophone. These three entertained our members for over an hour and were given hearty applause in appreciation. Our 4/18 Wurlitzer performed equally as well, with neither a cipher nor a dead note, and in good voice. This was entertainment!

Stanley C. Garniss

GARDEN STATE

Cathy Martin: 973/256-5480

Trenton, New Jersey. Garden State Chapter presented a silent film *Halloween Special* on October 25, at the Brook Theatre in Bound Brook, New Jersey. Featured was the original *Phantom of The Opera* starring Lon Chaney as the phantom. The well known organist in the theatre organ world was Lee Erwin on a Rodgers Trio.

Lee began the program with a short medley starting with his famous theme song "Moon River." He accompanied a short silent film and an enthusiastic sing-along. Lee used his own original score. This *Phantom*, the first silent film shown in Bound Brook in many years, was well attended by a curious, as well as very knowledgeable, audience. They were quickly drawn into the film due to Lee's excellent accompaniment.

The afternoon was a complete success as this fund raiser was enjoyed by all and the proceeds after bills were given to the Wurlitzer restoration. This program was a special day for the Brook Crew. Hard work paid off.

Our chapter had first become aware of this theatre when we were seeking a home

GARDEN STATE cont.

for our 2/8 Wurlitzer which we removed in June 1997 from the Pascack Theatre in Westwood, New Jersey. Large theatres with pipe chambers are hard to find in New Jersey. This large all brick theatre with two chambers, filled the bill and a contract was signed. The Brook Crew began its restoration of the Wurlitzer, September 1997 on the back of the stage.

Curious about the history of the theatre and searching old newspapers and speaking to local townspeople we found that the Brook Theatre, in all its glory, was built and opened in January 1927 complete with a 2/4 Wurlitzer in one of the two chambers. The theatre remained a movie house through the years. On August 25, 1963, the Delaware Valley Chapter held a meeting and showed a silent film. There was a sing-along with special hand colored slides which were from the New York Paramount Theatre. The Wurlitzer was removed in the 1980s. According to Bound Brook residents our *Phantom* program has been the first silent film at the Brook in many years. Currently, this theatre is a working arts theatre movie house and intermissions by our members are played before the film on an Allen organ. Hopefully in 1999, the 2/8 Wurlitzer will sing again.

Jinny Vanore

HUDSON-MOHAWK

Frank Hackert: 518/355-4523

Schenectady, New York. The annual season kick-off banquet on September 28 was held on the stage of Proctor's Theatre in Schenectady, New York; the home of "Goldie" the 3 manual 18 rank Wurlitzer pipe organ. The repast, logistics arranged



Veteran theatre organist, John Mazzae, from Utica, New York (left); and Allen Mills visit "Goldie" at Proctor's Theatre.



by members Dick Calderwood and David Lester, was catered by a local restaurant. The cuisine was excellent as was the melodious dinner music provided by John Wiesner at the console of "Goldie." Following the fine dining, David Lester led the revelers in a spirited sing-along; music provided by Ned Spain. The evening also saw the installation of the chapter officers who will serve for the 1998-99 season.

The Hudson-Mohawk Chapter and Proctor's Theatre have for many years sponsored a series of free noon-time organ concerts at the theatre featuring the Mighty Wurlitzer and various talented member artists. The first such concert of the 1998-99 series was held on September 29 and featured popular area entertainer Ned Spain. Ned had a background in area television and plays this organ each month

as the culmination of the theatre's walking tours. Ned's presentation consisted of an "all request" program which was appreciated by the large audience.

The second noon concert was offered on October 20 and featured organist Carl Hackert with guest vocalist Charlotte Lowe. Both artists were real crowd-pleasers with selections from *The Phantom of The Opera*, *Porgy and Bess* and a terrific patriotic finale. In the audience was 89-year-old veteran theatre organist, John Mazzae from Utica, New York. After the concert, Mr. Mazzae delighted chamber members with an impromptu performance of exceptional skill. He is truly a vintage treasure of the theatre organ world.

The concert event of the fall was, of course, the return of native son Allen Mills to Proctor's Theatre on October 18. Allen's

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Charter Member Martin A. Lilley at the five-manual console from San Francisco's Grace Cathedral in its new home in Fremont, California. Ed Mullins photo



Dr. Ed Mullins, left, presents membership certificate to former Radio City Music Hall organist Bob MacDonald in front of the Choir Division of charter member Martin Lilley's 1882 Father Willis organ in Fremont, California. Wooden pipes behind Choir Division are the 16' Bourdon pipes of a 1921 Robert-Morton organ originally installed in All Saints Episcopal Church, San Diego. Martin Lilley photo

repertoire included light classics, popular music and novelty tunes. His vocal/piano rendition of "The Circle of Life" from Disney's *Lion King* was powerful and moving. He delighted the audience with a wide variety of musical selections including a 1920's novelty piece, a calypso selection, an Astaire/Rogers romp and other treats both familiar and new. His mastery of the theatre organ was apparent to all. The large audience included his many area fans and a delegation, led by Jon Vanderlee, from the New York Chapter of ATOS. A reception to meet the artist was hosted by the Hudson-Mohawk Chapter in the theatre's Guild Room following the performance where light refreshments were served.

Norene Grose

JESSE CRAWFORD

Steve Plaggemeyer: 406/252-1915

Billings, Montana. The Jesse Crawford chapter was well represented at the 1998 ATOS convention in San Francisco. The furthest traveled was Charter Member Bruce M. Ardley and wife Cynthia from Melbourne, Australia. Chapter President Steve Plaggemeyer, Secretary Dr. Ed Mullins and the Ardleys took a trip to Fremont, California, visiting Charter Member Martin A. Lilley.

Martin has two pipe organs, two electronic organs and six reproducing pianos in his home. In January 1990, with the assistance of Les Rawle and Southeast England Chapter of ATOS and the Windsor Theatre Organ Trust he removed

the Father Willis organ, dating from 1882, and shipped it to Fremont. It is a three manual (56 keys) and pedal (30 keys) instrument which was originally installed in St. Paul's Church, Brentford, Middlesex, England. Dismantling of the organ and preparation for shipment to the USA was accomplished during the last three weeks of January 1990.

Although the Willis organ was a mechanical action instrument the decision was made to convert it to electropneumatic action by the addition of pulldown action boxes mounted directly beneath the annual windchests. This was done to reduce the height requirements, to allow optimum placement in the available space and to permit the organ to be played from either a console or a computer via a MIDI interface.

The 7-rank Choir Division consists of the following ranks of pipes from front to back:

Corno di Bassetto	8'
Piccolo	2'
Concert Flute	4'
Lieblich Gedact	8'
Claribel	8'
Dulciana	8'
Viola da Gamba	8'

When the Choir Division was installed, it was found that the organ was pitched at A=453 Hz. The pitch has been subsequently lowered to A=440 Hz to permit the organ to be played with a Duo-Art reproducing piano modified to play via MIDI interface to the computer.

At present, only the Choir Division is playing. The conversion to electropneumatic is being done in such a way that the process is totally reversible if a future restorer cares to convert it back to a tracker instrument. It was for this reason that it was decided to obtain a "new" console rather than try to modify the original key desk. As it turned out, the "new" console obtained, was the 1969 five manual Ruffatti console from San Francisco's Grace Cathedral. It controlled the 123 rank Aeolian-Skinner organ for thirty years, initially with Chapter Charter Member Richard Purvis and then John Fenstermaker as organists.

Robert MacDonald, former Radio City Music Hall organist, visited with Martin Lilley on August 16. Mullins, who is membership secretary of the Jesse Crawford Theatre Organ Society, took this opportunity to present MacDonald with his membership certificate. MacDonald is organist at the First Presbyterian Church in Fort Worth, Texas, and joined the chapter this year.

When not organ building, Lilley's other interests include producing MIDI

JESSE CRAWFORD cont.

sequences for organ, piano and two piano arrangements. A chapter meeting is planned for 1999. There were 52 chapter members in 1998, thirteen of whom live in California. *Ed Mullins*

LONDON & SOUTH OF ENGLAND

Gwen Light: 01932-565819

On Sunday 6 September, we were entertained by organists Craig Boswell, resident organist at Ashorne Hall, Warwickshire, and Simon Pattison, winner of the Young Organist Competition in 1997.

At Northolt, we heard Sue Hancock, at the console of the Wurlitzer in Les Rawle's home. Sue's programme included television theme tunes.

October's monthly members concert was played by Graham Wright. Graham's selection of music included tunes by Billy Mayle.

This year's Young Organist of the Year Competition was a great success, with six entrants, two girls and four boys. Congratulations to Joanne Baldwin from Dereham in Norfolk for winning this year's competition. All contestants played very well. Whilst the judges were deciding the winner, last year's winner Simon Pattison played a musical interlude. Simon won the Sean Herrick Memorial Trophy for the most promising performer from the previous year. Thomas Horton from Halesworth, Suffolk received the Christie Cup awarded to any contestant in the competition who shows promise of future improvement and potential.

Our organist at Kilburn in October was Michael Woolridge. Michael played a varied programme, which was enjoyed by everyone present.

ATOS and the Windsor Organ Trust will combine for our annual Supper Dances which are held at the Memorial Hall, Old Windsor. This year, we enjoyed an evening of dancing to the music of Len Rawle at the console of the Compton organ at Windsor. *Gwen Light*

LOS ANGELES

Joseph McFarland: 213/256-1469

Los Angeles, California. On September 13, a number of LATOS members heard Allen Mills play a delightful concert on the 4/35 Wurlitzer in Plummer Auditorium in Fullerton. Our thanks to the Orange County Theatre Organ Society who sponsors these concerts.

Shirley Obert, the seemingly tireless LATOS Social Chair, arranged what is fast becoming an (almost) annual boat trip to nearby Catalina Island on a late October Sunday. The early morning boat trip is always enjoyable in itself and the group immediately boarded a trailer bus for a sightseeing tour up the steep, winding road to the Airport in the Sky. Then, it was back down the same winding road to the Avalon Community Church where, after a tasty lunch, Bob Salsbury played the first of two concerts of popular and religious music on the Rodgers Electronic Organ in the church's sanctuary. There was just enough time for the leisurely walk to the recently renovated Avalon Theatre in the Casino building where Bob entertained us a second time for well over an hour on the 4/16 original installation Page Organ. A number of people took their turn at open console after Bob's program. There was ample time for dinner on our own and shopping before heading back to the boat terminal for the trip back to the mainland.

Rob Richards and friends (Ralph Wolf and John Giardina) entertained LATOS members and friends at the San Gabriel Civic Auditorium where LATOS maintains the 3/16 Wurlitzer. Rob used this opportunity to debut a new image: "traditional" theatre organ music with no pre-recorded electronic synthesizers or rhythm machines, and new black formal attire! There were tributes to George Wright, and the music of George Gershwin, Sigmund Romberg, Hoagy Carmichael, as well as others. Ralph Wolf's flawless piano blending, with Rob Richards' superb organ registrations, and the golden voice of tenor John Giardina, made a most enjoyable evening of music. The San Gabriel Civic Auditorium has been closed for six

months for rewiring and restoration of the auditorium and lobby to the original decor. The ceilings are spectacular, as are the organ grilles and the proscenium. As we all know, knocking down plaster creates dust and almost guarantees organ "problems." Rob got through six hours of practice and the first half of the concert without any difficulties. After his second half opener, in the middle of attribute to his mother and late father, the organ decided it had dirt in a magnet armature and there was a cipher; and not one, not two, but three ciphers, almost simultaneously! Fortunately all were in the same chamber and, after starting over for the third time, the show went on without further problems.

There is a new LATOS information line which can be reached toll free at 1-888-LATOS 44 (1-888-528-6744). Outside the Los Angeles metropolitan area you can dial 1-310-217-9202 (sorry, it is not toll free) to hear recorded announcements about upcoming LATOS events, to request membership information, or to charge LATOS event tickets on Visa or Mastercard.

Wayne Flottman

MANASOTA

Charles Pierson: 941/924-0674

Sarasota, Florida. Work on the chapter Wurlitzer is accelerating. The second week of November found Norman Arnold, Bob Alexander, Frank George and Bob Briner transporting several large pieces from the shop into Grace Baptist Church. There, the crew lifted into the right chamber a 7 rank chest, the marimba, the chrysoglott, a 4 rank chest, as well as a 3 rank chest. A full day indeed, and a task made much easier by the use of an electric chain hoist, with not a scratch on the church or the Wurlitzer parts.

In succeeding weeks, additional chests will be lifted into the left chamber. Then the wind lines can be installed and the wiring to the computer can be started. Hopefully the console will arrive soon.

November was the occasion of our Birthday Party at the Charles Ringling mansion on the campus of The University

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of South Florida in Sarasota. We were honored to hear Marion Parkinson play the restored Aeolian. Mrs. Parkinson often played Sunday afternoons on a similar Aeolian in the adjacent mansion of circus magnate John Ringling. That was 25 years ago, before the organ became unplayable.

The December meeting of the chapter was in the home of Charles and Joanne Pierson in Sarasota. There we were entertained by Rosa Rio playing Chuck's mostly Hinners pipe organ. The Pierson grounds were grandly decorated with thousands of twinkling lights. A couple of thousand more were added this year. We enjoyed a carry-in dinner on the patio.

Carl Walker

METROLINA

John Apple: 704/567-1066

Charlotte, North Carolina. MTOS met for a dinner meeting on August 30 and then joined an audience of over 300 for the final program in the Summer Recital Series of the Charlotte Chapter AGO. This was a concert of organ transcriptions and other familiar and enjoyable pieces that are rarely found in a typical organ recital. Gil Pirovano, organist of First United Methodist Church, Charlotte, and a staunch supporter of theatre organs, per-



Don MacDonald. Michael Johnston photo

formed with style and excitement. He played the new 3/49 Goulding and Wood organ at the Davidson United Methodist Church (in Davidson, home of Davidson College). Pirovano, in his choice of pieces and through his commentary to the audience kept the interest of the audience so that they wanted more! He demonstrated Lemare transcriptions such as the "Poet and Peasant Overture" by von Suppe and the *Carmen* "Fantasy" by Bizet that a modern classical organ can imitate an orchestra. John-Palmer Smith assisted in one humorous number, and they both received a rousing standing ovation.

Our September meeting was held at the home of John Apple and Michael Johnston. We discussed plans for the restoration of the Carolina Theatre, but most of the time was spent viewing video highlights of the convention in San Francisco. This was the first year using the new 16:9 digital video shown on a large-screen television.

October 27, Don MacDonald performed on the three-manual Allen theatre organ at Central Church of God in Charlotte. This is one of Allen's biggest, and the quadruple-amplified electronic can produce some mighty sounds. His fifty-five minute program included a *Titanic* medley that wasn't what you might think. It included songs that were played on the *Titanic*! Michael Johnston joined Don for the sentimental "When You Wish Upon a Star." After Don's encore, there was time for open console, at which time, the organist at Central Church, Dan White, demonstrated the one sound for which he had yet to find a use in a service: the Oogahh-Oogahh Claxon!

MTOS is one step closer to securing a home for our own chapter theatre organ. The Carolina Theatre, Charlotte's only remaining theatre with organ chambers (1927), will not be demolished but restored. A trio of corporations, including the newly-formed NationsBank/Bank of America has pledged \$1 million towards restoration. We will make sure the funds for the theatre organ are included in the restoration budget.



Ron Rhode at the 4/26 Long Island University/Brooklyn Paramount Wurlitzer where he performed a September concert for the New York Chapter. Tom Stehle photo

NEW YORK

David Kopp: 973/305-1255

New York, New York. On September 27 the New York Chapter hosted organist Ron Rhode in concert at the Long Island University/Brooklyn Paramount 4/26 Mighty Wurlitzer. Ron opened his excellent program, his first in New York in twenty years, with two toe tapping lift raisers, "Oh By Jingo" and "Strike Up The Band." Highlights of the afternoon included a *Titanic* medley, a wonderfully eclectic selection of tunes loosely related to the ship. This medley included both music dating from the era of the great ship such as "Alexander's Ragtime Band" as well as the dramatic "My Heart Goes On" from the current Broadway musical *Titanic*. All demonstrated Ron's excellent musicianship and the great versatility and dynamics of the LIU Wurlitzer. Other highlights included an excellent medley from *The Student Prince*. The audience showed their appreciation for Ron and this Mighty Wurlitzer with enthusiastic applause that called for an encore, and brisk sales of his CDs at the record table. Thanks to LIU

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Organist Dave Kopp entertained New York Chapter members at the chapter's 2/11 Ben Hall Memorial Wurlitzer at the Lafayette Theatre in Suffern, New York, during the October fall foliage organ crawl. Tom Stehle photo

crew chief Warren Laliberte assisted by Keith Gramlich and Margie Plows, the big Wurlitzer was in fine tune and performed flawlessly.

October 18, the New York Chapter sponsored a fall foliage bus trip that combined the beautiful colors of the Hudson Valley with a day of excellent theatre organ music. The first stop for our bus, after leaving Manhattan, was at the Lafayette Theatre in Suffern where members got to take turns at open console on the 2/11 Ben Hall Memorial Wurlitzer in the Lafayette Theatre. There was ample time for all who chose to play, while others enjoyed listening and socializing with friends over coffee and refreshments. The highlight of the morning was an excellent demo concert played by house organist Dave Kopp. From the Lafayette, the bus headed north to Schenectady to the beautifully restored Proctor's Theatre. Here, organist Allen Mills played a delightful concert on "Goldie," Proctor's wonderful 3/18 Wurlitzer. Allen served as house



L to R: Ron Rhode, Marge Renwick, Marilyn Hartung.

organist at Proctor's for many years, and obviously retains his popular following as more than 800 enthusiastic concert goers attended the program. Following a reception with the artist and dinner, our tired but happy group of theatre organ enthusiasts settled back on the bus and the long ride back to New York City. Thanks to John Vanderlee for organizing the day's events, to Dave Kopp for hosting the Lafayette Theatre activities, and, as always, to theatre owner Al Venturini for making the Lafayette available to us, and to Mike O'Brien for serving as bus captain.

Tom Stehle

NORTH FLORIDA

Dave Walters: 904/781-2613

Jacksonville, Florida. The afternoon of September 19, a date that North Florida members had anticipated for months, finally arrived with Ron Rhode at the console of John McCall's Allen 317 EX in John's Ponte Vedra home. All was perfection - the weather great, the hospitality the usual warmth and vibrancy. The artist in his usual great form, welcomed an occasion to play intimately for an audience who understood and enjoyed every nuance of his music. Guests were here

from Daytona, Atlanta, and as far away as Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Elmer Osteen arranged to hold our October meeting at Calvin Presbyterian Church where he and Irma attend. Instead of trying to extract theatre organ sounds from the Allen church organ, Gene Stroble trailered his Allen theatre organ from his Hillyard home, and set it up in the sanctuary. The acoustics were marvelous - actually camouflaging the fact that all the sound was emanating from speakers within the organ console! Gene played show tunes and melodies from the ages, past and present. His playing was very well executed. His medley of two well known excerpts from *Phantom of The Opera* and *West Side Story*, was exceptionally dramatic as arranged by Gene and played in this particular acoustic environment. After the concert, jovial conversation took place over delicious refreshments as members caught up with one another's activities.

Erle Renwick

NORTH TEXAS

Donald Peterson: 972/517-2562

Dallas/Ft. Worth, Texas. President Don Peterson, had set a goal of October 1 to have the chapter's Robert-Morton in the

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Lakewood Theatre playing again, after completion of the extensive rebuild that was projected. Though we missed this goal by a few weeks, it was only after a herculean effort by leaders Don Peterson and Earl McDonald and many chapter volunteers that we succeeded in meeting the most important objective of having the organ playing in time for the 60th anniversary celebration of the opening of the Lakewood Theatre on October 29.

With the insistent urging of the Lakewood manager to have the organ ready by the October 21 videocast by the local ABC affiliate to recognize the Lakewood anniversary, many long days were spent in the effort. On the appointed morning broadcast that included interviews and a performance by saxophonist Joseph Vincilli, the console rose from the pit with pipes playing and a view of Don Reasons seated at the beautiful white and gold console. To those of us watching at home, it was apparent that Don was doing all of his playing with both hands on the Solo manual - the only one that was working. What mattered most was the fact that the organ play at the allotted time when we could get the couple of minutes to showcase our instrument on "Good Morning Texas." Much more concerted effort by the crew and other conscripts, was successful in getting all eight ranks playing in time for the very important dates: October 29-31!

On October 29, the theatre was booked for a special meeting by people from Brinker International who had asked to hear a one hour program on the organ. Of course, we were happy to be able to oblige, with organist Bill Flynt and the Robert-Morton very warmly received by this very mixed audience.

On October 30, the USA Film Festival "Monsterama" had a special showing in the Lakewood of the original *Phantom of the Opera*, with organ accompaniment using our Robert-Morton. Organist Bill Flynt received standing ovations as the console rose with Bill playing introductory music and later after the showing of the accompanied movie.

Don Peterson reported that Bill Flynt spent several days prior to his concerts helping make final repairs and adjustments; invaluable help at a time when it was greatly needed.

The Phantom showing gained us valuable exposure and accolades, including a letter from Jeanette Crumpler, Lakewood historian and author of a book, *The Lakewood Star Walk*, stating her joy in hearing and seeing the Robert-Morton. She has also pledged her ongoing support of our preservation activities including gratis publicity of our future activities and events.

Finally, the organ made its showing at the Lakewood 30th anniversary party with organist Bill Hanson bringing the organ up on the lift and playing for the celebrants, many in costume, including our crew chief, Earl "Mac" McDonald who, I'm told, appeared in drag. Oh! If only I had a picture of that for our chapter notes.

Chapter members, who have waited patiently for the opportunity to hear our chapter's organ once again (and many of whom have pitched in to make it happen), will finally have their chance on November 29 when we will have a North Texas Chapter meeting in the Lakewood Theatre. Chapter officers plan to publicize this as a Welcome Back Robert-Morton appearance and invite the general public to share in our excitement. The aforementioned Jeanette Crumpler has pledged to put her resources to work in helping us publicize this event and help to draw a crowd. In the meantime, work continues to tie up loose ends and make the renovation complete. It has been a very intensive couple of months but the results make it all worth while.

Irving Light

OHIO VALLEY

Jan Peek: 606/331-0962

Cincinnati, Ohio. Fall continues to be a busy time for the Ohio Valley Chapter. October 17, the chapter presented a live recreation of WLW's "Moon River" radio show. This was in conjunction with local radio station WMKV 89.3FM. This station

broadcasts Moon River programs every night at 11:30 p.m. and this show was taped live to be used on future broadcasts. Gene Wilson presided at the Emery Wurlitzer, Bill Myers recited poetry and the vocals were performed by Lynn Scott. The show was performed in the true tradition of WLW's founder, Powell Crosley, who envisioned the need for such a program to help relax the listeners at the end of the day. There was also a tribute to Ed Dooley and the late John J. Strader for their contributions to radio broadcasting and promotion of the efforts for restoring theatre pipe organs. The organists for this program were Jim Barton and Jack Doll, Jr.

October 18, the chapter enjoyed a visit to the newly opened Music Palace in suburban Sharonville. This is a restaurant type establishment with a theatre organ Wurlitzer located in the front center up on a platform so all can view it. This Wurlitzer originally came from the Mastbaum Theatre and was installed in a local restaurant years ago, and now has a home in The Music Palace. Two young men rotate the organist duties: Barry Baker and Trent Sims. Trent was our entertainer for the evening and was enjoyable to listen to. All in attendance had a good time!

The Ohio Valley Chapter just wrapped up its popular 3D movie series. The Emery Theatre shows the true polarized format with two projectors running simultaneously on a special screen. The selected films were *The House of Wax*, *Friday the 13th* (on Halloween night), and *The Maze*. The 3D glasses used for this are not the usual blue/red lenses, but clear lenses, similar to sun glasses. As with all movies, the Emery Wurlitzer is played for pre-show, intermission, and at the end of the show along with an organ tour. This 3D format is popular with younger people and it is satisfying to see them marvel at the organ and ask questions about it. For many of them, it is their first time in seeing anything like it. Hopefully, somewhere down the road, some of them will become members. Is this not one of the purposes of the American Theatre Organ Society?

Joseph L. Hollmann



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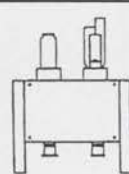
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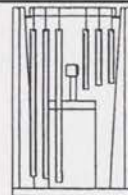
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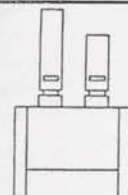
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ORLANDO AREA

Wayne Tilschner: 407/331-4271

Orlando, Florida. We did it! On October 17 and 18, 1998, after almost a decade of fund raising, hard work, ups and downs, failures and achievements, we were able to have the dedication concert on our 3/21 Don Baker Memorial Wurlitzer. The concert artist was none other than the incomparable Bob Ralston!

Plans for the dedication concert have been in the works for over a year. This involved designing tickets, concert flyers, news releases, concert programs and newspaper ads. We held a number of meetings and worked closely with our local County Arts Council. Our chapter handbook became our bible. Checking, re-checking and re-re-checking. Finally, the magic weekend arrived.

Mr. Ralston flew into Orlando on October 15. Friday was spent setting up the stage with our Wurlitzer, a nine foot Baldwin grand piano and the new Thomas "Floridian" organ loaned to us by Southeast Music Corporation. We also had to give Bob time to set pistons and the crescendo pedal. After that was completed, Bob wanted to practice some of his arrangements. We worked until 2:00 a.m. Saturday morning.

Saturday morning, the technical crew corrected some minor problems with the organ and adjusted a couple of tremulants to accommodate Mr. Ralston. In the afternoon, we went through a rehearsal which included a sing-along that Bob had suggested. The lights were adjusted and programmed and the audio system was checked. By this time, working chapter members nerves were getting "frayed." Concert time was almost here!

The lights went down, and Mr. Ralston was introduced to a very enthusiastic audience. Bob started by playing the theme from *The Lawrence Walk Show*. The concert continued with dynamic arrangements played on the pipe organ, piano and the electronic Thomas. The audience loved it when Bob went from instrument to instrument.

Bob's performances on Saturday and Sunday were impeccable. The crowd was thrilled when he stepped down into the audience to take requests. They couldn't wait to have Bob play their favorite songs. The audience marveled when he went from soft and lush "Ebb Tide" to the earth shattering music of *Phantom of The Opera*. This certainly was one of the high points of the concert.



Bob Ralston played the Don Baker Memorial Organ Dedication Concert in October.

The most gratifying moment was when Bob played "God Bless America," and the audience stood and sang along. To hear our National Treasure, the Mighty Wurlitzer, "ROAR" in tribute to our country, with the audience singing proudly, was very moving to all of us. It made the last ten years of hard work and frustrations all worthwhile.

We would like to thank everyone who helped make our dream come true: the hundreds of people who generously donated money, equipment and time to our project; the OATOS Board of Directors; the organ technical crew; Lake Brantley High School; and the Seminole County School Board all contributed to this monumental task. We must give a special thank you to Ms. Juliette Laval. Without her support and enthusiasm, the Don Baker Memorial Organ would never have materialized!

We want to thank the many people who joined us in the dedication of our Wurlitzer. Special notice should be given to the many organ enthusiasts who flew in from England, California, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Kansas, and Nebraska. We also want to give a special thanks to Ms. Marion Flint, who came down for our dedication concert. Marion has become one of our organ "family" members. Her encouragement and advice has always helped us! We really welcome Marion's visits.

We also want to thank Mr. Bob Ralston for dedicating our "Mighty Wurlitzer." It truly was an honor and a privilege for us. His cordiality, professionalism and artistry were greatly appreciated by all.

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Leroy Lewis played the Wilfred Hall tracker organ at the Kline residence.

Clinton, Maryland. We had a very enjoyable chapter meeting at Dick Kline's home near Thurmont, Maryland, September 19. Warren Thomas arranged to have fellow Floridian and veteran organist, Leroy Lewis play an outstanding program on Dick's 4/27 Wurlitzer. Leroy's opening number, "On a Wonderful Day Like Today" perfectly describes the experience we shared that day.

Leroy played almost non-stop during both halves of the program. He took his material from movie themes, Broadway show tunes, marches, and several seasonal medleys. George Gershwin's 100th birth-



Leroy Lewis

day wasn't forgotten either, with two varied arrangements of "Someone to Watch Over Me."

After intermission, he performed a brief demonstration of the Wilfred Hall tracker organ which forms the focal point of the Wurlitzer chamber facade. It was a delight to hear Leroy's improvisation, especially with the new diapason pipes Dick recently installed in that instrument. Chairman Mike Hartley presented Dick with a certificate citing his nomination as Honorary Life Member for his long and valuable service to the chapter.

We also enjoyed the company of several long-distance members who attended the program. Our youngest member, sixteen year old Chris Parent, displayed his developing skills at the console after the program was over. We predict we'll hear more from Chris in the future. Our



Chairman Mike Hartley and host Dick Kline holding Honorary Life Membership certificate.

autumn meetings at the Kline residence have always been a special treat. This was no exception.

Member Bob Lachin was a special guest performer/lecturer at George Mason University November 5. The chapter had been invited to participate in their Music Appreciation class that day. Approximately 150 students were treated to a mini-concert by Bob at our 2/9 Wurlitzer. The program began with an introduction using a video from our 1998 fund-raising telethon featuring the late Fay Marvin, Paul Roberts, Floyd Werle, and George Mather. Don Faehn explained the significance of the Harris Theatre instrument and the unique place the theatre organ holds in American music. Bob, Don, and Ken LaCapria continued the discussion on stage with interested students after

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POTOMAC cont.
the formal part of the class.

This program could become a regular part of the course, judging by the positive reactions of the class and the professor. Special thanks go to George Mather, Jr., Ken LaCapria, and Ed Wilde for their effort in preparing the instrument for the class.

Due to the anticipated high demand for tickets to our Fairfax Choral Society program with Tom Hazleton in February, a second program was recently added. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Saturday, February 6, and 3:00 p.m. Sunday, February 7, 1999.

PUGET SOUND

Robert Zat:

Seattle, Washington. Puget Sound Chapter has had a busy and fun-filled autumn season.

On September 12 and 13, PSTOS joined with Columbia River Organ Club to sponsor "One Big Weekend - Opus V", a two-day event in the Portland area. Featured in concert during the event were Charlie Balogh playing the 3/18 Wurlitzer at Uncle Milt's Pipe Organ Pizza Co., Chris Nordwall at the Scottish Rite Temple 3/13 Wurlitzer, Marti Lynch at the club's 3 manual Devtronix Paramount, Martin Ellis at the 3/41 Kimball at St. Michael's Lutheran Church, and the Jonas Nordwall / Donna Parker duo playing twin Allen instruments at Day Music Co. Many Puget Sounders used the much appreciated chartered bus from Seattle and Tacoma, which provided transportation to all events. One Big Weekend is an annual event, with hosting responsibilities alternating between



Ron Rhode

CROC and PSTOS. The 1998 event will occur in the Seattle / Tacoma area and will be difficult to top!

On October 24, Ron Rhode presented a concert on the Leif & Bonnie Johnson 4/48 Wurlitzer in Gig Harbor. Attended by nearly 300 PSTOS members and friends, the event was the first PSTOS evening concert ever at this venue. In spite of less-than-wonderful weather, people had a marvelous time. Ron played a varied and enjoyable program, which included a number of piano novelty numbers arranged for organ. It was a return visit for Ron after nearly 15 years, and his concert was enjoyed by a very enthusiastic audience.

Good news for all PSTOS members is the return of the Seattle Paramount Theatre Wurlitzer after a four-year silence. The instrument was preserved, protected and maintained by PSTOS for nearly 30 years prior to the theatre's recent restoration. The theatre has been committed to saving the organ and it is now back and running. Dennis James presented a 3-week Silent Movie Monday series in August to an appreciative audience. Much to the surprise and delight of both theatre management and PSTOS enthusiasts, the crowds grew with each presentation. An estimated 2,000 enjoyed the final movie, Harold Lloyd in *Safety Last*. With a surprisingly large percentage of the audience clearly in the under-40 age group, the several ciphers experienced by Dennis, provided him the opportunity to stop the program and explain to the audience exactly what was happening and where the sound was coming from (not the stacks of speakers at the sides of the stage). Dennis is to be congratulated for a superb job - he's a real pro!

A new program aimed at capturing the interest of younger folks in theatre organ has been added to Chapter offerings. The

"PSTOS Membership & Event Sponsorship" program offers paid membership and concert tickets to young people under age 25 who qualify. Board Member Tom Blackwell was introduced to theatre organ through such a program as a youngster in San Diego, and has been instrumental in formulating the program for PSTOS. The application consists of basic information including questions to establish interest level. If anyone would like more information from Tom, he can be reached through the PSTOS website at pstos.org.

A recent non-Chapter event of interest in the area was reviewed by Jerry Gould and Greg Smith as follows: "On Oct. 11, Jerry and Mary Gould hosted on their magnificent Wurlitzer, an inspired concert by Walter Strony. Walter played an impossibly difficult program including Bernstein transcriptions, Widor's Toccata from the Fifth Symphony, Highlights of Andrew Lloyd Weber's five Broadway hit musicals and operatic arias making full use of the abundant pedal resources including the newly installed 32' diaphone extension. No less than three times Walter remarked how he loved playing this wonderful instrument and the concert hall sound that surrounded him. 'It's easy to play', he countered. This landmark event was attended by 93 people including 27 from the local PSTOS chapter. JoAnn Evans

RIVER CITY

Greg Johnson: 402/624-5655

Omaha, Nebraska. On September 20, River city Chapter was invited to Bob and Joyce Markworth's home for their annual potluck picnic. Lynn Lee chaired a short

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Jeanne Mehuron put the Hammond organ through its paces, both in solo numbers and in lively piano-organ duets with Greg Johnson.

Tom Jeffery photo



Lois Thomsen, who hosted our October meeting, plays a 4:00 p.m. concert every afternoon for residents of the Nye Square Retirement Center. Tom Jeffery photo

business meeting, with 31 members and guests in attendance. A brief report was given on continuing Wurlitzer installation progress at the Rose Theatre - our own George Rice has been putting in yoeman hours, assisting the installation crew. Our afternoon's entertainment included the screening of a video of a very young Simon Gledhill performing at the Organ Grinder in Portland, Oregon; mini-concerts on a Hammond organ by both Donna Baller and Jeanne Mehuron; and organ/piano duets by Donna and Jeanne. Bob Markworth conducted tours of both of his pipe chambers and the console work on his mighty Kimball theatre pipe organ, still a work in progress. We anticipate

hearing these two magnificent theatre pipe organs in the coming months!

For our October 25 meeting, member Lois Thomsen invited the chapter to meet at the Nye Retirement Center in Fremont, Nebraska, where she now resides. Fremont is a pleasant 35-mile drive from Omaha. We had a perfect fall day for our jaunt. Lois Thomsen is a talented organist with a vast musical repertoire. Her Hammond Regent electronic organ is placed in Nye Square's large and comfortably furnished Fireside Room, where Lois entertains Nye Square residents every afternoon with informal organ concerts. President Greg Johnson opened the short business meeting, welcoming our Nye Square guests and explaining our goals and interests in preserving the theatre organ and its music. Lois Thomsen was the first organist to perform, offering old favorites like "Wonderful One" and "Fascination." Then Bob Markwork screened an excerpt of one of W.C. Field's "talkies," *Circus Slicker*. After the film, Jeanne Mehuron (on organ) and Greg Johnson (on piano) played lively duets, offering tunes like "Has Anybody Seen My Gal" while Bob rewound the reel. Then another excerpt of W.C. Field's sound film, *Big Thumb* was shown. Finally, we ended our program with a sing-along, complete with song slides, with Jeanne Mehuron on organ and Greg Johnson on piano. Greg and Jeanne have perfected these duets over many years, and the results are fantastic. It's no exaggeration to claim that Nye Square's Fireside Room was literally "jumping" this Sunday afternoon. After enjoying light refreshments furnished by Lois Johnson's family, many of the River City members adjourned to a local restaurant for a "wives day off" meal.

Tom Jeffery and Harold Kenney

SAN DIEGO

John Dapolito: 619/463-5638

San Diego, California. Our two sell-out dinner show spectaculars at Casa de Brooks, the first in August and the second in September were a tremendous success. Bob Brooks again opened his home to us and arranged for organist Ray Whitaker, and vocalist Gary Favron who provided wonderful entertainment. Dinner was accompanied by strolling Gypsy violinist, Steven Ball. In September, music for dining was very capably played by Leroy Snyder. Sylvia Lorraine entertained us with a wide variety of tunes. Her ability to accompany her vocal renditions on piano and harp amazed us. The accompaniment was superb, as was her outstanding, well-trained vocal artistry. Adding the two together displayed her great talent. We are

most grateful to Bob Brooks for all his efforts.

On October 9, a few of our chapter members were privileged to hear our own Chris Gorsuch play one of the finest organs anywhere; the 4/33 Wurlitzer in the Nethercutt Collection at Sylmar. Chris was in his glory as he proved the value of the large organ in the wide variety of available tonal colors which he used most tastefully. His registrations and arrangements were wonderful. His creative chord progressions provided major improvement over those in the original compositions. The audience was spellbound from start to finish and responded with enthusiastic extended applause and a well deserved standing ovation. His concert was a profound learning experience for the professionals in the audience and for all those who appreciate "the way it ought to be done." Our Board of Directors made a wise decision in choosing him for our premier concert to be scheduled later.

Our organ project is complete, except for the console which is under the charge of Ken Crome, with no definite date of delivery known at this time. *John Dapolito*

SIERRA

Craig Peterson: 916/682-9699

Sacramento, California. In August, Sierra Chapter was invited to Johnson's Winery in the Alexander Valley for another picnic. Tom's 3/10 Robert-Morton was in excellent form. Several chapter members played during open console. Special treats were selections played by two of our guests, Bill Langford and Dave Schutt.

We returned to the Towe Auto Museum and the ATOS 3/16 Wurlitzer in September. Chris Elliott opened his performance with a wide range of beautifully played selections that included a march, a Broadway show medley and finally an Offenbach light classic. Then, he accompanied *Grandma's Boy* with Harold Lloyd. This has to be one of Lloyd's best films, and Chris was at his best as well.

Our October program continued our tradition of Paul Quarino at the Towe Auto Museum for our Halloween film. This year we returned to the very popular *Phantom of The Opera*. Paul opened with music of Webber's *Phantom* and then segued into the film. Paul did a great job accompanying the film, as he always does.

In November, Sierra Chapter in conjunction with the Grant Union High School Alumni will present a "Tribute to George Wright" on the organ he played at Grant Union. Barry Baker will be our artist. Our Christmas party will be at the Fair Oaks Clubhouse. *Pete McCluer*

ST. LOUIS

Jim Ryan: 314/892-0754

St. Louis, Missouri. September found our chapter at the home of Wallace and Elsa Dittich for our monthly meeting. Wallace and Elsa are always extremely gracious hosts, and we always feel welcome at their home. After the business meeting, Wallace played a delightful program on his Yamnaha organ to which he has added a Kurzweil synthesizer.

October meeting was held at the home of SLTOS President Jim Ryan. Nomination and Election Chairman, Alan Haker, read the list of candidates for the election in November. After the business meeting, Jack Jenkins, International Sales Director for Wicks Pipe Organs, and also house organist at the St. Louis Fox presented a real treat for the membership. He accompanied the feature length silent movie *It*, starring Clara Bow, (Jim Ryan's favorite movie star). He did an excellent job adding just the right touches to bring this classic to life. He was right at home on the 4 manual custom built theatre console just as he is at the Fox.

October 25 found our lot of members at the historic Lincoln Theatre in Belleville, Illinois. The occasion: two special theatre organ centered programs. Jack Jenkins and Dennis Ammann were the featured concert artists for the day. The afternoon and evening shows featured the screening of the feature length silent horror classic *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, starring Lon Chaney. Jack, as always, provided a wonderful pre-movie concert that showed off both his dazzling technique as well as his sensitive interpretations of some great music. These were his first public concerts at the Lincoln, although he has also performed there occasionally before the movies. Dennis did a great job accompanying this cinematic masterpiece. He put together his own score and executed it masterfully. Thanks to Lincoln Theatre owners, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Wright for providing the St. Louis area with a great venue, as well as wonderful theatre pipe organ centered programs. *Dee Ryan*

SOONER STATE

Sam Collier: 918/834-6255

Tulsa, Oklahoma. We had quite a few changes for our September meeting, held again at Tulsa Technology Center's Broken Arrow campus. Since our scheduled artist was unable to be with us, our program consisted of extended open console. Lee Lomas filled in for Paul Craft as Master of Ceremonies, and did an excellent job. Even with substitutes filling in for others who



Host Larry Evritt (at left) and TATOS President Nelda Reno at the October TATOS meeting. William C. Frisk photo



Some of the percussion instruments on the staircase of Evritt home. A band organ string rank is at left, which is playable from the organ console. William C. Frisk photo

were away, music on our 3/13 Robert-Morton was delightful.

First on the bench was Irma Lile. Among her selections were a couple of Latin numbers, her trademark. We persuaded Lee Lomas to play, and he included a perfectly beautiful "Today," a song made famous by the New Christy Minstrels. We heard Wayne Barrington play music from *A Chorus Line*. Dorothy Smith played some show tunes, a gospel medley, and "God Bless America."

Julius Chapin began the second half of the program, followed by Sam Collier, who played some old standards. John Hickman took a turn, with more popular standards, and we also heard from Mel Sutter. Sam finished off the evening with

his own arrangement of "Stardust." We certainly appreciated the last-minute fill-ins of all those who played on such short notice.

New member Roberta Jayné (say "Jay-nay") was the artist for our October mini-concert, also held at Tulsa Technology Center. Her program consisted of popular standards and old favorites.

Five people played for open console, which also included a vocal solo by Bonnie Duncan singing "Can't Help Lovin' That Man of Mine" in honor of Paul and Carolyn Craft's 43rd wedding anniversary.

We have had to say "Good-bye" to long-time member Harry Rasmussen, who died on September 11, 1998. We offer con-

dolences to his family, and all the many friends he leaves behind. *Dorothy Smith*

TOLEDO AREA

Nelda Reno: 419/241-6785

Toledo, Ohio. For our October meeting, 22 members and guests ventured up the scenic Maumee River Valley to the home of Larry and Janet Evritt in Defiance, Ohio. They share their home with a 3/manual 29 rank Wurlitzer with many unusual features. We enjoyed an afternoon of music by Dennis Kroeckel and Dick Leichtamer. Larry demonstrated many of his musical "gadgets." We toured the organ chambers, relay and blower rooms as well as seeing several projects in his workshop.

Larry Evritt is also noted for building calliopes and other automatic musical instruments. TATOS is particularly thankful for his rebuilding organ components for our organ at Toledo's Ohio Theatre. Work will continue this winter on completing our new right side chamber and the reinstallation of our four manual organ as a divided installation. With the additional chamber space we will be adding several more ranks.

VALLEY OF THE SUN

Donald Reazor: 602/877-0635

Phoenix, Arizona. The Valley of the Sun Chapter gave Australian visitor Tony Fenelon a very warm welcome when he appeared with Lyn Larsen at the Orpheum Theatre on July 26. It was probably 110° in the shade that day! But, the theatre was cool and comfortable, and we really enjoyed the keyboard artistry of the two musicians. Their program featured organ



Tony Fenelon and Lyn Larsen after the Orpheum concert. Madeline LiVolsi photo



Rob Richards in the Orpheum Theatre lobby. Madeline LiVolsi photo

solos and piano and organ duets. There was something for everyone; ballads, blues, and show tunes, Gershwin, Rachmaninoff, and George Wright's arrangement of "Rollercoaster."

We returned to the Orpheum on August 15 for a silent film festival featuring Rob Richards at the console. After opening with a few familiar numbers, Rob accompanied three silent comedies - Buster Keaton's *The Blacksmith*, Charlie Chaplin's *The Cure*, and Laurel and Hardy in *Two Tars*. Silent film programs have been very popular with the Phoenix audiences, and we hope to have more of them.

Our September 13 meeting included a salad and pizza buffet at Organ Stop Pizza in Mesa. Music was also on the menu, with Lew Williams at the Mighty Wurlitzer. He seemed to have something for every musical taste - or as Lew put it,

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VALLEY OF THE SUN cont.

"Everything from the sublime to the slime." We heard the lush sounds of love songs, but also chuckled over the bullfrogs and other swampy sound effects in "Chloe." "Elvira" and "Boogie Woogie" were for our resident "Red Hot Momma"!

October 4 found us at the north Scottsdale home of Bill and Inge Benningfield. Following the business meeting, Bill entertained our group with a wide variety of music on the Allen organ. His program even included a piece that he had composed for his wife. We thank the Benningfields for their gracious hospitality.

We are looking forward to a Christmas concert at the Orpheum which will feature Charlie Balogh (and perhaps a few surprises!)
Madeline LiVolsi



Karl Cole with "Anna Chovy" at the Cleveland Grays' Armory 3/15 Wurlitzer. R. MacCallum photo

WESTERN RESERVE

Janice Kast: 216/531-4214

Cleveland, Ohio. Western Reserve Chapter presented Karl Cole to a near-capacity crowd in a concert at the restored downtown Cleveland Grays' Armory on Saturday, September 26. Unseasonably warm weather did not hamper the 3/15 Wurlitzer or the Florida-based artist in their collaboration of medleys, the accompaniment to the ever-welcome Chaplin classic *The Rink*, and the evening's sing-along. Karl's "right hand" colleague, the puppet "Anna Chovy" was "on hand" for a singing medley. Lastly, Karl observed the 100th anniversary of George Gershwin's September birth with a medley featuring *Rhapsody in Blue*.

The next day, Howard Kast greeted guests to Harold Wright's residence with outdoor organ grinder music for our September social. Howard's crank and battery notwithstanding, the real treat was indoors, where member George Cooper entertained at the 3/10 Wurlitzer. Combined with open console and ample refreshments, the musical treats made for a delightful afternoon.

Pat and John Murray hosted our October 18 gathering at their home. John has lovingly cared for a 2/7 Wurlitzer and chapter member George Steffy was at the manuals arranging favorites including "Carolina in the Morning" and "Bye Bye Blues."

November 8 was spent at the Cleveland Grays' Armory with a business meeting, the election of 1999 officers, open console at the 3/15 Wurlitzer, and a pot luck dinner filling the agenda. All the aspects blended into a pleasant get together.
Jim Shepherd

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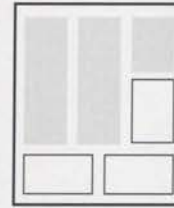
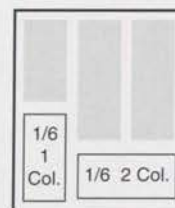
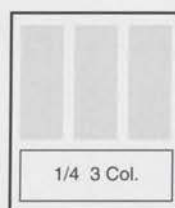
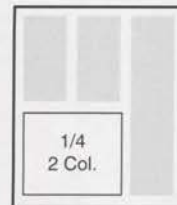
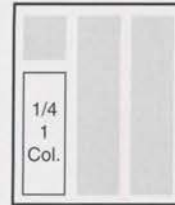
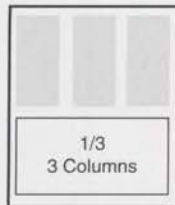
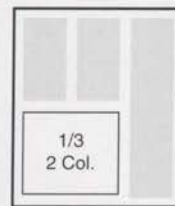
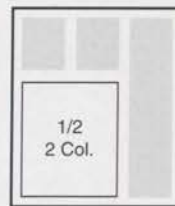
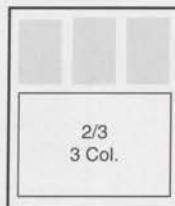
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