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JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY



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# Theatre Organ

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John Ledwon's 4/52 Wurlitzer Agoura, California

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**EDITOR** **Thomas L. DeLay**  
P.O. Box 3168  
Salinas, CA 93912-3168  
831/443-5917 • Fax 831/443-5826  
E-mail: tdelaycalifornia@worldnet.att.net

**PRESIDENT** **Harry Heth**  
1247 Peden / Houston, TX 77006-1130  
713/527-8096 • Fax 713/527-9182  
E-mail: tibvox@aol.com

**VICE-PRESIDENT** **Robert Maney**  
229 Ellen Avenue  
State College, PA 16801-6306  
814/238-2022 • Fax 814/238-4034  
E-mail: rlm1@psu.edu

**SECRETARY** **Jack Moelmann**  
P.O. Box 25165  
Scott AFB, IL 62225-0165  
618/632-8455 • Fax 618/632-8456  
E-mail: rjgp84a@prodigy.com

**TREASURER** **Alden Stockebrand**  
2030 E. Lafayette Place  
Milwaukee, WI 53202-1370  
414/224-6442 • Fax 414/224-9406

**ADVERTISING** **Michael Fellenzer**  
P.O. Box 551081  
Indianapolis, IN 46205-5581  
317/251-6441 • Fax 317/251-6443  
E-mail: fellenzer@in.net

**ATOS SPECIAL SERVICES** **Vernon P. Bickel**  
785 Palomino Court  
San Marcos, CA 92069-2102  
760/471-6194 • Fax 760/471-6194 (\*51)

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY** **Michael Fellenzer**  
P.O. Box 551081  
Indianapolis, IN 46205-5581  
317/251-6441 • Fax 317/251-6443  
E-mail: fellenzer@in.net

#### Journal Staff

**EDITOR** **Thomas L. DeLay**  
**ASSISTANT EDITOR** **Donna Parker**  
**EDITOR EMERITUS** **Robert Gilbert**  
**ADVERTISING** **Michael Fellenzer**  
**PUBLISHER** **Alden Stockebrand**

#### Associate Editors

**REVIEWS** **Ralph Beaudry**  
**ELECTRONICS** **Jack Moelmann**  
**SILENT FILM REVIEWS** **Robert Gates**

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Brant Duddy  
Doris Erbe  
John Ledwon  
Shirley Obert  
Donna Parker  
Connie Purkey  
Dorothy Van Steenkiste

#### CORPORATE OFFICE

American Theatre Organ Society, Inc.  
5 Third Street  
San Francisco, CA 94103-3200

#### DESIGN & TYPESETTING

Stanley LeMaster Typesetting

#### PRINTING & MAILING

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#### ATOS COMMITTEES & CHAIRPERSONS

**AGO LIAISON & AWARDS & RECOGNITION**  
Donna Parker  
P.O. Box 6103 / Aloha, OR 97007-0103  
503/642-7009 • Fax 503/848-6607  
E-mail: donnaparker@webtv.net

#### ARCHIVES/LIBRARY

(Position Vacant at this time)  
152 York Road, Suite 200 / Elmhurst, IL 60126-2806  
630/782-1800 • Fax 630/782-1802

#### BYLAWS

Robert Maney  
229 Ellen Avenue / State College, PA 16801-6306  
814/238-2022 • Fax 814/238-4034  
E-mail: rlm1@psu.edu

#### CHAPTER RELATIONS

Doris Erbe  
4942 Hummelsheim Avenue / St. Louis, MO 63123-4711  
314/481-1840 • Fax 314/481-5885

#### CONVENTION PLANNING (through 1999)

Tim Needler  
5440 N. Meridian Street / Indianapolis, IN 46208-2656  
317/255-8056 • Fax 317/257-7031  
E-mail: tneedler@in.net

#### CONVENTION PLANNING (beginning in 1999)

Mike Kinerk  
2655 Pine Tree Drive / Miami Beach, FL 33140  
305/532-9000 • Fax 305/376-3679  
E-mail: mkinerk@herald.com

#### EDUCATION

Connie Purkey  
564 E 4050S #9J / Salt Lake City UT 84107  
Voice: 801/265-9794  
E-mail: Purkeygal@aol.com

#### ENDOWMENT FUND

Vernon P. Bickel  
785 Palomino Court / San Marcos, CA 92069-2102  
760/471-6194 • Fax 760/471-6194 (\*51)

#### INNER-CITY YOUTH PROGRAM

Dorothy Van Steenkiste  
9270 Reeck Road / Allen Park, MI 48101-1461  
313/383-0133 • FAX 313/383-1875

#### NOMINATIONS

Nelson Page  
485 Walnut St / Ridgefield NJ 07657  
201/854-7847 • FAX: 201/854-1477

#### ORGANIST COMPETITIONS/SCHOLARSHIPS

Dorothy Van Steenkiste  
9270 Reeck Road / Allen Park, MI 48101-1461  
313/383-0133 • Fax 313/383-1875

#### PUBLIC RELATIONS

John Ledwon  
28933 Wagon Road / Agoura, CA 91301  
818/889-8894 • Fax 818/707-3808  
E-mail: jblprod@westworld.com

#### PUBLICATIONS REVIEW

Alden Stockebrand  
2030 E. Lafayette Place / Milwaukee, WI 53202-1370  
414/224-6442 • Fax 414/224-9406

#### RESTORATION & PRESERVATION

Allen Miller  
167 Carriage Drive / Glastonbury, CT 06033-3231  
860/633-5710 • Fax 860/633-7230  
E-mail: ztronics@tiac.net

#### SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION ORGAN PROJECT

Brant Duddy  
P.O. Box 179 / Cedars, PA 19423-0179 • 610/584-4035

#### TECHNICAL

Brant Duddy  
P.O. Box 179 / Cedars, PA 19423-0179 • 610/584-4035

#### THEATRE ORGAN INTEREST GROUPS

##### THEATRE PIPE ORGANS

Al Self  
156 San Luis Way / Novato, CA 94945-1715  
Voice/Fax 415/897-9148  
E-mail: pipeorgn@aol.com

##### ELECTRONIC ORGANS & YTOE LIAISON

Jack Moelmann  
P.O. Box 25165 / Scott AFB, IL 62225-0165  
618/632-8455 • Fax 618/632-8456  
E-mail: rjgp84a@prodigy.com

##### COMPUTER NETWORKS

David Kelzenberg  
2801 Highway 6 East, #344 / Iowa City, IA 52240-2629  
319/351-3926 • Fax 319/335-1366  
E-mail: kelzenberg.david@mcleodusa.net

# Theatre Organ

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PRESIDENT: HARRY HETH  
EDITOR: THOMAS L. DeLAY  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY: MICHAEL FELLENER

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## President's Message

The Internet has been buzzing recently about real and imagined problems in ATOS. I have also received some input from ATOS members on various subjects.

One previous member feels that ATOS is still the same old thing as it was years ago. This may be the perception to those who are not members because they are not aware of the new things that ATOS is doing; the Scholarships, Grants, and Competitions, just to name three. We all need to be salespersons to spread the word about what is going on these days.

Last November, the ATOS Journal had the annual call for nominations to the Board of Directors. Only the three incumbents were successful candidates. This tells me that the membership is not interested in change or that people with ideas are content to just sit back and gripe, but beyond that, do nothing. Change and growth do not occur with a passive membership.

There was a letter in the Member's Forum section of a recent issue of the THEATRE ORGAN regarding chapters that seem to shun potential new members. Yes, some chapters appear to be resistant to change, new ideas, and new members. Other chapters have leadership that encourages growth by making life pleasant and exciting for new members, particularly the young and curious. If you receive a cool reception, just hang in there, be positive; hopefully, you will be

noticed. All Chapters have annual elections. Vote and be counted.

Many of the younger members complain that all the music played on theatre organs is the old stuff from the 20s. This year, the Young Organist Competition had entries that included music of the 1990s. Ron Reseigh is playing a concert at the 1999 Annual Convention as he was the overall winner in the 1998 competition. Come on, Ron, show us that current music works on a theatre organ. We also will hear the three divisional winners. These Young Artists deserve not only the support of their home Chapters, but from us as well.

The Young Organist Competition has been going on for many years and some of the winners have gone on to making their mark as respected performers. Some have not decided to pursue a career in performance, but at least they entered the competition. AND, it took chapters with foresight to encourage and sponsor these young competitors. It seems that only a few Chapters become involved in the nurturing and caring of the potential young members/artists/technicians. Surely some of the successful chapters in this endeavor would be good enough to share your way of doing things by writing an article for the THEATRE ORGAN.

A few people complain that the same people are always on the ATOS Board of Directors. The ATOS Directors are elected by the membership at large, at least when there

are more qualified candidates than there are positions open in a given election year. The seated Directors serve for three (3) years. The first activity each year is the appointment of the Officers who serve one (1) year at a time at the discretion of the Directors. The Offices of President and Vice-president are tenure limited to three (3) years. This insures that these Officers are not "recycled." The Directors can serve, if elected, for two (2) consecutive three (3) year terms. After six (6) years, they cannot run until a period of time has passed. This also reduces "recycling."

If you have ideas or suggestions, don't sit on them. Write to the Directors, run for Office, take part.

We get negative opinions and comments from people who do not attend the Annual and Regional Conventions, the Member's Forum, and the Annual Membership meeting. ATOS has evolved over the past years; take part and you will see it is not the same old mashed potatoes.

I hope to see you at the Annual Convention in London and the Regional Convention in Wichita.

Now, have you done your part in donating to the Smithsonian Fund? We are getting close and we welcome your financial help. The size of the donation depends upon your situation and we appreciate each and every dollar.

*Harry Heth*

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# General Information

## Chapter Correspondents:

Visit the Chapter Contact Page of the ATOS Website to verify that we have the correct chapter information. Contact Michael Fellenzer with any additions or corrections.

## Additions and Corrections to the Chapter Officers List:

### POTOMAC VALLEY

Secretary: Kenneth LaCapria  
12917 Clarion Rd  
Fort Washington MD 20744-2822  
(301) 292-6145

### CENTRAL INDIANA

President: Carlton B Smith  
2175 N Irwin St  
Indianapolis, IN 46219-2220  
(317) 638-4918  
Secretary: Louise Eddington  
1111 E 6th St  
Muncie, IN 47302-3510  
(765) 282-7943

### CONNECTICUT VALLEY

President: Jane Bates  
35 Perkins Row  
Wethersfield, CT 06109  
(860) 529-7141  
Secretary: Arthur Bates  
35 Perkins Row  
Wethersfield, CT 06109  
(860) 529-7141

## For Your Consideration:

The November/December 1997 issue of THEATRE ORGAN, page 12, included an article entitled, "Attention Artists, Managers, Composers, and Authors." We explained our intent to publish as a semi-annual feature of THEATRE ORGAN, a list of theatre organ disks, tapes (audio and video), LPs, books and/or brochures and articles relating to theatre organ that are currently available for purchase. The nominal fee of \$5.00 per year will help to defray some of the administrative costs.

Please refer to your November/December, 1997 THEATRE ORGAN

for additional details or you may contact us as follows:

Doris Erbe  
4942 Hummelsheim  
St. Louis, MO 63123-4711  
314/481-1840 • Fax 314/481-5885  
Steve Schnieders  
7321 Vine • St. Louis, MO 63143-3210  
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## OFFICIAL NOTICE

TO:

Members of the American Theatre Organ Society (ATOS)

FROM:

Jack Moelmann, ATOS Secretary

SUBJECT:

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

DATE:

SEPTEMBER 4, 1999

The Annual Meeting of the members of the American Theatre Organ Society (ATOS) will be held in the morning of September 4, 1999 at the Hyatt Hotel, Wichita, Kansas, during the 1999 ATOS Regional Convention. The Hyatt is the convention hotel.

Agenda:

Approval of the 1998 Annual Membership Meeting Minutes as printed in THEATRE ORGAN (Nov/Dec 1998)

Presentation and acceptance of the Treasurer's Report

Old Business:

Report of Board Actions during the past year by the Secretary

Other status reports

New Business

Announcement of next Membership Meeting

Adjournment

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Jack Moelmann, ATOS Secretary

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## ATOS SPECIAL SERVICES

VERNON P. BICKEL  
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619/471-6194  
Fax 619/471-6194 (\*51)

# Member's Forum

Dear Editor:

I would like to comment on a letter that was written by Stan Krider in this past issue of the Journal (May/June). One of the main points he made is not wanting to hear the same pieces, and wanting to hear new repertoires. I totally agree with all of his points. ESPECIALLY his last statement at the end of his letter, stating: "Fate of the theatre organ fifty years from now rests in the musical tastes of current teenagers, like it or not!!" How true this is!

See, most of us are used to the traditional theatre organ "favorites," such as "I Love to Hear You Singing," "Dizzy Fingers," "Somewhere My Love," "A Broken Rosary," etc. Those are some of the great pieces made famous in the theatre organ world, and we love them all. However, if you brought a theatre full of teenagers (ages 13-18) to a theatre and your organist played those pieces for that age group, they would probably snicker, or start making wise cracks about the stuff the organist is playing. Also, the comment that was made by David Lowe about "... Many of our players are more comfortable with certain types of music and it would be wrong for us to exert undue influence such that they attempt a repertoire with which they are comfortable." Well, if someone doesn't exert that influence, each and every one of us can almost count on never hearing another theatre organ CD or concert in about 10 years. We must start this form of playing very soon or be left behind.

I play at the VanAndel Museum on a 3/30 Wurlitzer every weekend and have been doing that, as well as taking part in playing private events for the last year. In that year, I have not heard one laugh, snicker, or bad comment about the music selections. Now why is that? Well for starters, let's take a little look at the music. When playing for a group of teenagers, I don't play anything before 1950. Why? Because they recognize the music written and performed after

1950. Elvis tunes, Beatles, Beach Boys, Disney, Brian Setzer & Big Bad Voodoo Daddy (both very good 90s swing bands), current movie themes, etc.; it's things they recognize.

If I hear one more person say "We have to get the younger generation into theatre organ," then darn it, they ALSO better have a solution to do so, whether they choose to act upon it or not. That's one of the main problems within the theatre organ world today. Everyone always says they want to see younger people involved in theatre organ ... well, that's great. But almost everyone I've heard say that, fails to come up with or try to find a way to see that happen. It's all a matter of music. Even if you have to use (Yes ... that illegal word in the theatre organ world) a drum machine. You don't see kids getting into "Chopsticks," or "Mary Had a Little Lamb." They're getting into things with a beat behind it. If you've ever heard any of Brian Setzer's music, or any rock band - there's some kind of a drum backup. Many of our people frown upon the use of a drum machine, but I look at it like this; if that's what it's going to take to intrigue young audiences, then I'm going to do it. Maybe it's that fact that I am a member of the younger generation that wants to see this younger generation involved with theatre organ.

If you want teens, especially, to like theatre organ music, you need to play things that they can relate to. Another problem is that when someone say the words "theatre organ music," they may think of "I Love to Hear You Singing," or "Forgotten Melody." Now this may come as a newsflash to some of us, but you can play other styles of music on the theatre organ, besides what we're all used to.

Would you believe that the music of the 70s bands "Weather Report" and "Spyro Gyra" go over great on the theatre pipe organ? Some of their music gets a most enthusiastic response. Another good example is

Huey Lewis' "Hip To Be Square." It's a standard rock number, but is gangbusters with anyone 15-16 on up. Also, another key to what Stan and I are talking about is the playing of the music. If you're going to take the bull by its horns and venture into that "new music" realm, then you've got to find someone who can play the new music with precision, down to every last note, and most importantly, play it well. I look at it like this; the better it is played, the better impression you're going to leave with that young crowd. (*This works with all music—Ed*)

I guess that's why pizza organists got so criticized years ago. They always went out and played the "new" things. Some people didn't like that. Well, nine out of the ten people that didn't like that are the very folks now saying "we want to see younger generation ..." It just doesn't make sense. So as I conclude, let me just end by saying that if you want to see the younger generation involved with the theatre organ in ANY way, then either act upon it in a way you think may work, or sit back and let the people that are coming up with the ideas go to work at them.

Ron Reseigh  
Grand Rapids, MI

Dear Editor:

In the THEATRE ORGAN May/June "Member's Forum," I would like to reassure Stan Krider on a number of points. I agree almost totally with all he says. It is important that modern music (i.e. that written after 1950) is performed on theatre organ. When I said that 'popular music ... is at an all time low right now' I did mean, literally, right now, i.e. the pop chart music of the nineties. The music of the Beatles, Bacarach, Mancini and Hamlish; which Stan mentions, is rightly regarded by most people in the business as being of the highest quality. Also, yes there was much rubbish written in the 20s and onwards as well!

My enthusiasm for and commitment to more modern music is such that in a recent concert I played a program which was almost entirely taken

from the popular music repertoire post - 1950, with emphasis on the 70s and 80s.

Yours sincerely,  
David Lowe

Dear Editor:

Following is an extract of the last newsletter to be put out by the Cape Town Chapter of the South Africa Theatre Organ Society, which has been running for 25 years. The letter is self-explanatory. Are there lessons to be learned from it? Comments please!

Yours sincerely,  
Dr. Arthur Hovis  
Johannesburg, South Africa

Dear Member, Friend, and/or anyone else it may concern:

The time has come the Walrus said, to speak of many things, such as the fact that those of us who are still living are, unfortunately, all growing older, becoming more frail, and generally not able to do those things which we did before. For a lot of us, our "Get up and Go" passed our 'Sell by ...' date. To which may be added the sad fact that the youngsters whom we hoped would have been interested in what we were trying to achieve and would have come along to join us, never materialized, so now there is no one to take over and keep the pot boiling.

What went wrong? Well, nothing really, we were simply standing in the way of progress. We did not appreciate, or we stubbornly tried to ignore, the remarkable rate of progress which has resulted in the creation of state-of-the-art equipment, much more compact and much more manageable than the huge, clumsy instruments it was our aim to attempt to preserve, capable of producing sounds by digital means, far more realistically than the old pipe organs ever could. And what of the interest by the general public? Here the answers may be taken from the condition of Dean Herrick's Wurlitzer at Witbank, the old Alhambra's organ at the Nico and the Capitol Theatre's organ, now back where it came from in Pretoria, but with very little hope of ever being refurbished and re-used.

However, the music of the old days

will always remain alive. We need have no fear of that. But, there will not be many establishments about, where it will be heard played on a pipe organ. Viva "Blackpool's Tower Ballroom!"

If anyone out there would like any of the old scraps of theatre organ memorabilia which have been foisted upon me over the years, let them please come forward now, before I have to throw it all out.

Well that's it!

Farewell from Dave Cochrane,  
and the Ex-Cape Town Chapter  
of the South African TOS

Dear Editor:

With reference to Bill Casara's letter in the May/June 1999 issue of THEATRE ORGAN; the Radio City Music Hall Grand Organ rebuilding project is all but complete. The instrument was changed over to Peterson solid state control for the 1995 Christmas show (using the stage right console). In July of 1996, the instrument was featured during the American Guild of Organists National Convention playing to an audience of almost 4,000 people.

The stage left console was completed in time for the 1997 Christmas production being connected into the already installed solid state relay system. At the time the rebuilding work was authorized in 1992, releathering of all windchests, reservoirs, shutter actions, and tremolos began. This work (now completed) was done in stages so that the organ was ready for use when required. In addition, the entire instrument has been cleaned throughout and completely rewired. Some final adjustments need to be done in the trap chamber and this work will be completed shortly. At this time, the organ has been fully protected during the course of the theatre's extensive restoration project.

As I stated in previously published materials, the conversion to solid state control has greatly enhanced the production possibility of the organ. Both consoles now have plug in connectors and can be removed from their alcove platforms for use anywhere on the stage elevators (including the turntable) plus the orchestra

pit elevator and its movable band car platform.

It has surely been an honor to be entrusted with this great work. Mrs. Bishop and I wish to extend our deep appreciation to our son Richard, who serves as the Music Hall Project Chief, to the Music Hall Staff for their encouragement and support, and to the Schantz and Peterson firms for the great assistance they have rendered.

Most sincerely,  
Ronald C. Bishop,  
Executive Director  
Bishop Pipe Organ Service

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E-mail: [tdelaycalifornia@worldnet.att.net](mailto:tdelaycalifornia@worldnet.att.net) ■

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- \* It Ain't Necessarily So
- \* Amazing Grace
- \* The Thrill Is Gone
- \* How High the Moon
- \* You Go to My Head
- \* Last Night on the Back Porch

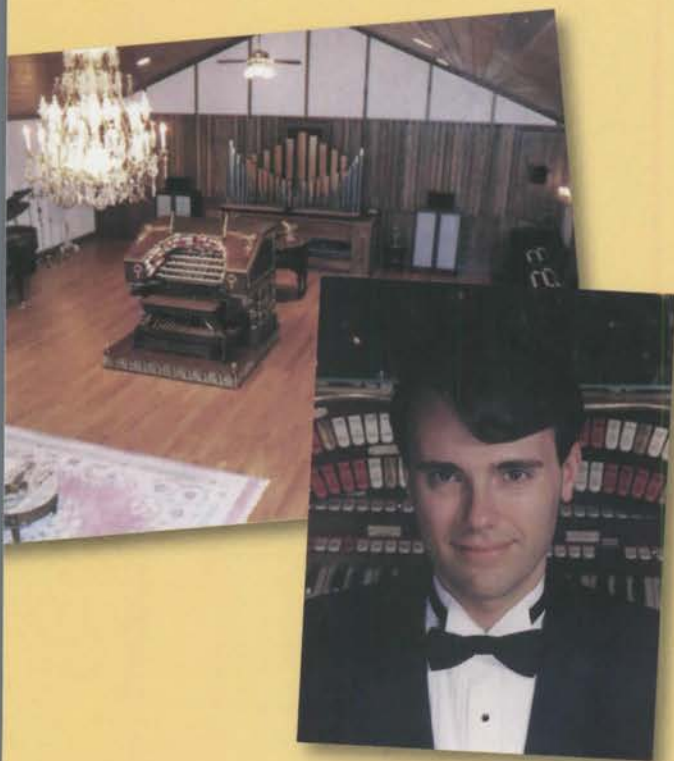
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It's not too late to contribute to the ATOS Smithsonian Fund, which will help finance the installation of the Lowell Ayars two manual, eight rank Wurlitzer at the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of American History in Washington, D.C.

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# Organ House Agoura

By John Ledwoon



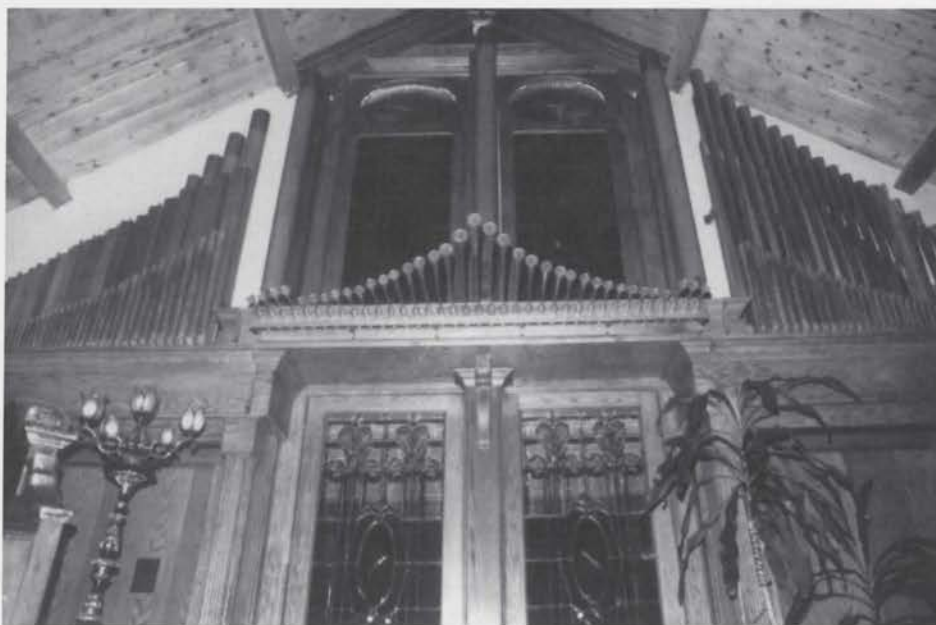
*The console of the organ. The Antiphonal division sits above, with the Imperial Trumpet mounted horizontally.*

You might say this has been a 14 year ongoing project, but, in reality the expansion/improvement has occurred in the past six years. After the devastating fire that damaged the original 3/2, the organ was reinstalled as a 3/29. The original three manual console, Steinway grand piano and most of the original mechanical parts were retained. Only six ranks of the original instrument were reused. After the reinstallation, I was so disappointed with the sound that I almost removed the organ and said the heck with it. Even though the chambers were basically the same and the living room virtually the same, the organ "didn't have it." I decided to do a "little tweaking" here and there and this new instrument is the result.

I had always wanted a four manual console but wasn't willing to give up the superb unification my large three manual afforded me. With 222 stop-

keys the organ was quite well unified. Then, I made the mistake of going to Ken Crome's (then) Los Angeles organ shop and seeing the large console he was building for the Sanfilippo organ! Here was a console that would allow for the unification I wanted and still allow for the fourth manual! I found the price, while not inexpensive, reasonable, so I ordered a Fox Special replica console. While the console was under construction, I planned the specification and totally redid the chambers. With the exception of the 26 ranks of chests that are in the floor, almost everything was relocated. Several ranks originally located on the floor chests were moved to other locations. At one point, I had 46 ranks in the chamber ... and 17 had never played. I resisted the urge to rewire various chests so that I could hear some of the fruits of my labor. I tried to remain focused on the end project.

Due to the height of the chambers (20 feet from the tops of the floor chests), I was able to stack much of the organ. In several cases, organ is stacked three ranks high. Due to stacking and the fact that there are absolutely no regulators on the main floor, access to everything is excellent. A word about the double flooring: The lower levels of the Main and Solo chambers are totally dedicated to regulators, tremos and the various wind conductors. Also located on this level are the three Trousdale demultiplexers that service the electronic needs of the organ. This double floor installation makes for a reasonably quiet residence organ. Yes, you know when the tremos start, but the noise they make is not objectionable. After the console was delivered and finished, I found myself in the interesting position of having space available for more stopkeys than originally planned. In the end, I actual-



*The Antiphonal Division. Six ranks unenclosed on the south wall of the music room. The room is twenty feet high in the center.*



*The music room from under the Antiphonal Imperial Trumpet pipes. The organ chambers are seen through the Plexiglas swell shades. Room dimensions are 30' wide and 47' long.*

ly was trying to decide what other unification I could add as more and more stopkeys became available.

In trying to develop an instrument that would be able to handle most every type of music, I elected to include a small, unenclosed classical division. I was fortunate to acquire 11 ranks of the 1925 Mormon Tabernacle organ. Through the efforts of Mike Ohman, I purchased the Great Principal Chorus and a Skinner CorAnglais. Also included were two

mixtures, the five rank Great mixture, and a Pedal mixture which were placed in the chambers. The remaining Tabernacle ranks were installed as the Antiphonal division, divided on the south wall of the living room above both the console and grand piano. A Trivo Trompette, which was made to have 37 En Chamade pipes, was the last rank to be installed. This is a fiery French style rank that really caps the organ.

In deference to new technologies, I

elected to add extensive MIDI capabilities. 32 channels of MIDI are available and I have two synthesizers and one sampler presently operating. I have programmed the synthesizers to provide voices that ordinarily would not be available through pipes. One listening to a sampled orchestral French Horn or a stringed harp or tuned timpani in the pedal will convince most purists that MIDI *can* be a valuable addition to acoustic pipes. An electronic reverb system (Lexicon) was used to enhance the room ambiance. I was originally going to pull up the carpet and put down oak flooring but then "chickened out" fearing that the organ, already quite powerful, would become oppressive.

To say the organ speaks with an authoritative voice is understating the situation somewhat. However, who says you have to play it all at once? Big is not for volume but rather for variety. I deliberately left the blower at 15 horsepower so there would be a reminder if an organist got a little heavy-handed. Strangely I have not run out of wind (I meant the organ, I'll never run out of hot air!) even with everything going. There is a separate two horsepower blower on the Antiphonal due primarily to the fact that there was absolutely no way to get the main blower supply to the south end of the house. The Antiphonal division, incidentally, is on five inches.

Now, the big question, how does it sound? Mike Ohman and Tom DeLay have done extensive tonal work on the instrument and, while it is not completed tonally, the sound I am looking for is there. In selecting ranks, I tried to select most of the ranks that would be found on both small and large theatre organs. I am also a proponent of multiple accompaniment ranks in a residence organ. I feel that theatre organ manufacturers did not provide enough accompaniment ranks. As a lover of celestes, I have included eight celeste ranks as well. With the two organs (Antiphonal and Main/Solo) at opposite ends of the living room the sound must be experienced to understand the all encompassing tonal effect that is available.

## THE MAIN CHAMBER



*The Main chamber showing the Clarinet, Open Diapason, Violin, Flute, Violin Celeste, Gamba and Orchestral Oboe. The rear chest holds the Main Vox Humana, Lieblich Tibia, Style D Trumpet and Tuba Mirabilis.*

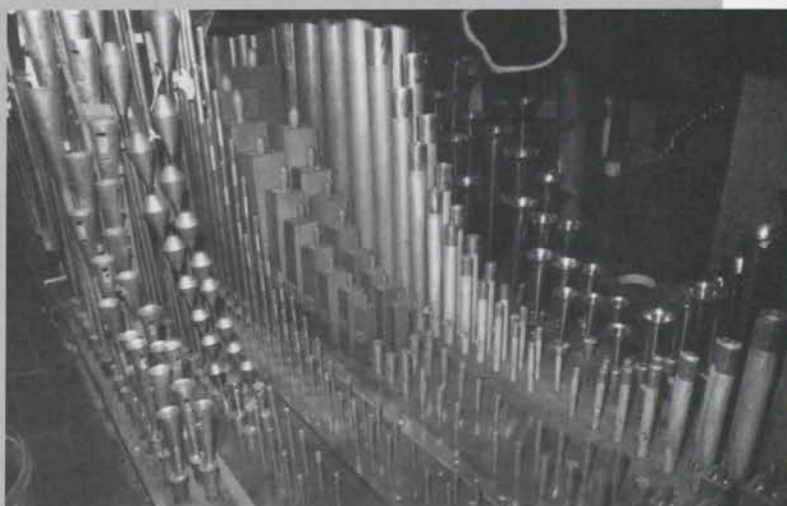
*The Main chamber showing the Tuba, Main Tibia Clausa, Dulciana, Flute Celeste and Gamba. On the left are the two Chrysoglotts and high in the rear are parts of the Tuba Mirabilis and Gamba*



## THE SOLO CHAMBER

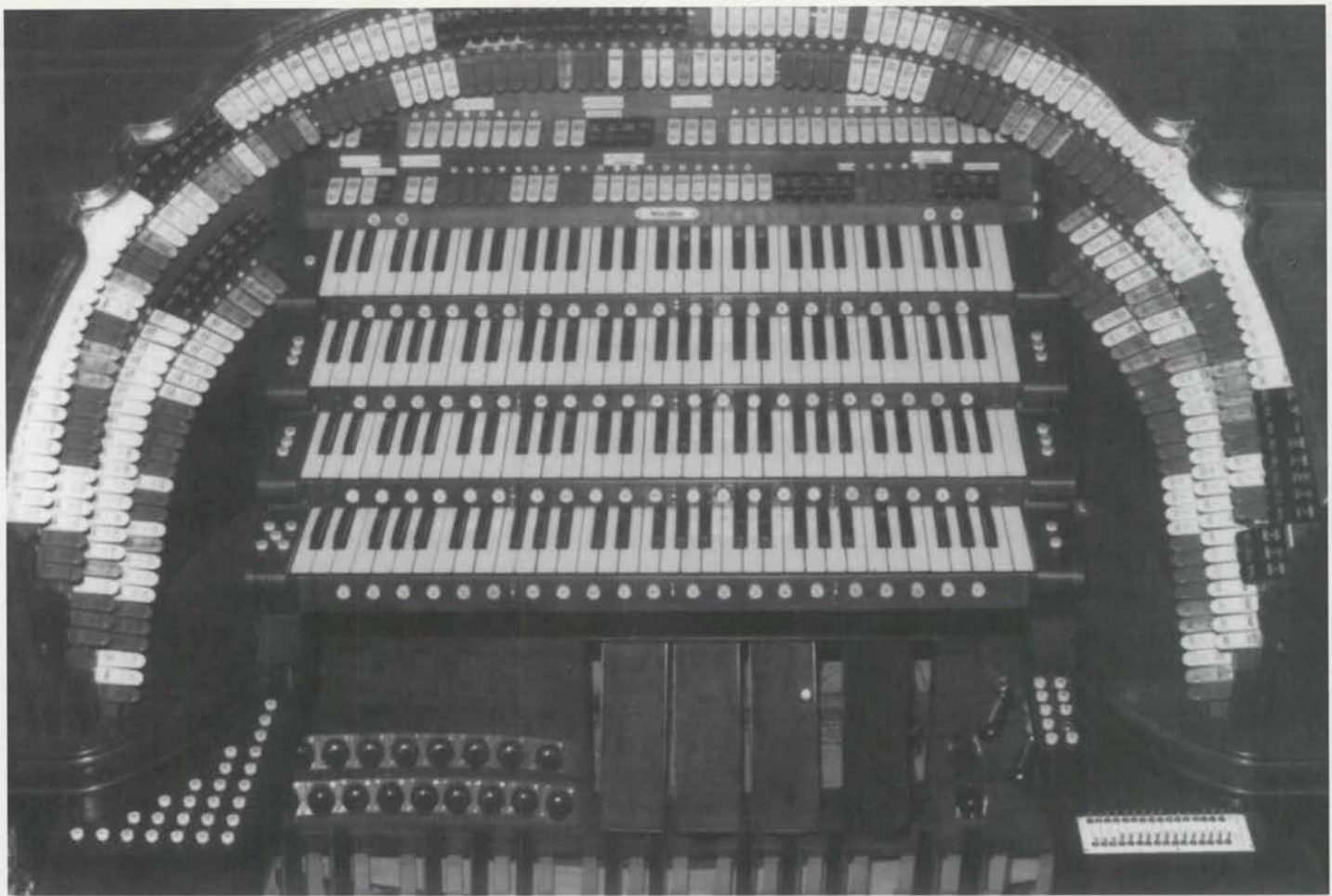
*At right: The Solo chamber showing the Wurlitzer 3-rank Viol d'Amour in the foreground with the toy counter high in the background. The Harp, Sleigh Bells, Xylophone and Glockenspiel are on the right.*

*Below: The Solo chamber showing the Brass Saxophone, Harmonic Flute, Kinura and Horn Diapason Celeste. On the left are portions of the Pedal Mixture and 16' Viol.*



*The Solo chamber showing the English Post Horn, English Horn, VDO Celeste, Solo Tibia Clausa, Horn Diapason and Brass Trumpet.*

*At left: The Solo chamber showing Solo String and Celeste, Oboe Horn, VDO, Quintadena, Krumet and Musette. 16' Viol and Pedal Mixture in background.*



The console keydesk with its 418 stopkeys, 96 combination pistons and 112 miscellaneous controls. Counting the keys, there are 1024 different control devices for the organist.

## FUTURE PLANS?

*Making it available for recording should anyone desire to use it, certainly using it myself for recording. But most importantly, sharing it with others by making it available to those who have never experienced the sound of the theatre organ in order that they might become as enthusiastic as most of us are toward theatre organ.*

8'-4' Gamba  
 8'-4' Gamba Celeste  
 8'-2' Violin  
 8'-4' Violin Celeste  
 8' Orchestral Oboe  
 8'-4' Dulciana  
 8'-4' Dulciana Celeste  
 16'-2' Concert Flute  
 8'-4' Flute Celeste  
 8' Vox Humana  
 Mixture 5rks  
 Chrysoglott  
 Chrysoglott Celeste  
 Chimes  
 Saucer Bells  
 Accordion

8'-4' Solo String Celeste  
 8' Brass Trumpet  
 8' Kinura  
 8' Krumet  
 8' Musette  
 8' Saxophone  
 8' Quintadena  
 8' Vox Humana  
 4' Viol d'amour 3rks  
 4'-2' Harmonic Flute  
 Pedal Mixture 3rks  
 Harp  
 Master Xylophone  
 Xylophone  
 Glockenspiel  
 Sleigh Bells  
 Traps

## Chamber Specifications

### MAIN CHAMBER

16'-4' Tuba Horn  
 16'-4' Open Diapason  
 8' Trumpet  
 16'-8' Clarinet  
 8' Tuba Mirabilis  
 8'-4' Tibia Clausa  
 16'-2' Lieblich Tibia

### SOLO CHAMBER

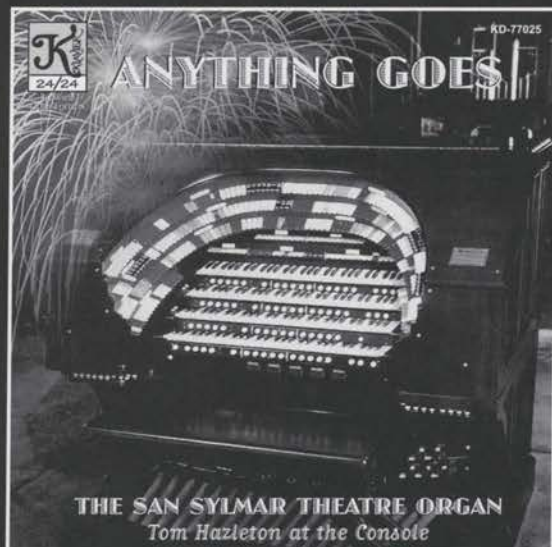
16'-8' English Horn  
 16'-2' Tibia Clausa  
 16'-2' Viol d'Orchestra  
 8'-4' Viol Celeste  
 16'-8' Oboe Horn  
 8' Cor Anglais  
 16'-4' Horn Diapason  
 8'-4' Horn Diapason Celeste  
 8'-4' Solo String

### ANTIPHONAL

8' Trumpette EnChamade  
 8' Principal  
 8' Gedeckt  
 4' Nachthorn  
 2-2/3' Twelfth  
 2' Fifteenth  
 Steinway 8' Grand Piano  
 (Pianocorder)

# TOM HAZLETON *plays* The Enlarged San Sylmar Organ

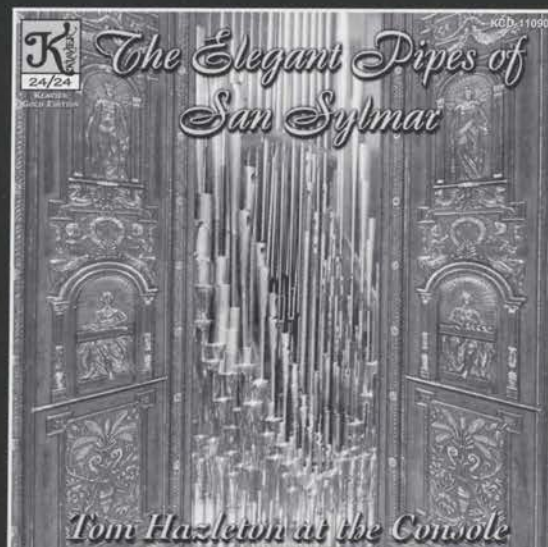
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# Holiday at the Paramount



## Preglow Concert Theatre Pipe Organ: THE BURNETT RESIDENCE KIMBALL SPECIFICATIONS:

Tuba	Violin I
Tibia	Violin II
Clarinet	Diapason
Kinura	Salicional
Vox Humana	Flute
Orchestral Oboe	Horn Diapason
Post Horn	Quintadena
Trombone	Flute Celeste
Vox Humana	Vox Humana



Fifteen years ago, *The Console* carried a front page story about a theatre organ in Halstead, Kansas. Affectionately dubbed the "King Kimball," the residence instrument of Dr. Dean and Jackie Burnett has entertained great numbers of organophiles, but it has never been part of an official ATOS convention until now.

The Great Planes Chapter will proudly include Dr. Burnett's Kimball as the PreGlow for the Holiday at the Paramount Fall Regional Convention, Sept. 2-5, 1999. Organist Patti Simon (who will by then, with her husband, Ed, be an official Kansan) will offer two concerts on Thursday evening, September 2, for groups of 45 patrons each. Patti will introduce to her guests, 18-year-old Brett Valliant, an up-and-coming young theatre and classical organist and the two will present a delightful introduction to a grand weekend of theatre organ. Now

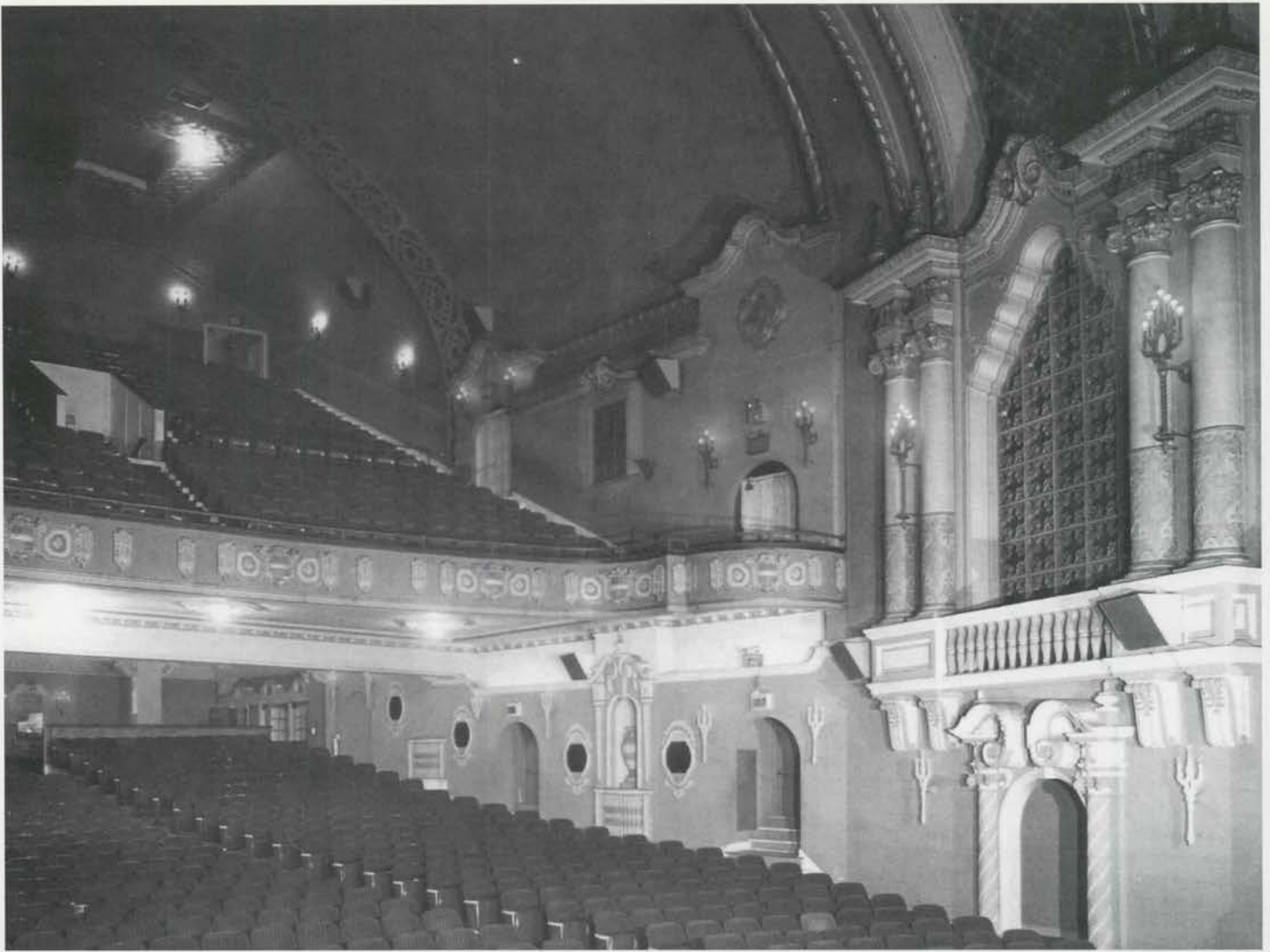
a mixture of Kimball, Wurlitzer, and newly manufactured pipes, the original 3 manual, 10 rank Kimball was installed in a fine Rapp & Rapp house, the Mainstreet Theatre, in Kansas City, Missouri in 1921. Built at a cost of \$2,000,000, the house seated 3,200 and a "ten piece orchestra and a \$35,000 Kimball pipe organ" provided the theatre's patrons with music. Part of the Junior Orpheum circuit, the theatre originally offered "two-a-day vaudeville acts" and eventually offered "full screen fare with stage acts." The theatre's name was changed to the Empire, but, like most inner-city theatres, it was later plagued by loss of patronage and closed. The building still stands but has been ravaged by time and vandalism.

The organ was removed from the theatre about 1965 and shipped to Wichita where it was partially installed in a residence, only to be

removed again and purchased by Dr. Burnett and a friend, Dr. Bill Dreese. (Before retirement, both men were general surgeons at Halstead's well known Hertzler Clinic.) For ten years, the two doctors and a few others (including Dr. Burnett's son, Steve) worked to restore and install the instrument in a specially constructed building adjacent to the Burnett's home. Along the way, Dr. Burnett became sole owner of the organ, which was expanded to 18 ranks. During the mid-1990s, Ed Zollman voiced and regulated the organ and installed a Uniflex relay.

Like most all theatre organs, the Kimball is in a continual state of "improvement." Since 1984, It has been presented by Dr. Burnett, Steve, and visiting artists to entertain a multitude of visitors. The Burnett family is looking forward to introducing their "King" Kimball to ATOS enthusiasts!





## HISTORY OF THE ORPHEUM

The Orpheum Theatre was constructed in 1922 and designed by the famous architect, John Eberson. Originally built for vaudeville, the theatre soon incorporated the new popular medium: the silent movie.

The Orpheum was one of the two largest movie palaces built in Wichita. John Eberson was one of the most influential of the movie palace architects. Eberson created a whole new design for theatres, the Atmospheric. He brought the outside indoors, coining his slogan, "an acre of seats in a garden of dreams." Under a ceiling painted to resemble the night sky, and small pinpoint lights to mimic stars, the audience would be transported into a classic Spanish garden scene. Eberson even crafted a cloud machine which sent drifting clouds across the ceiling. In the 1920s and 30s the atmospheric theatre reigned and it all started

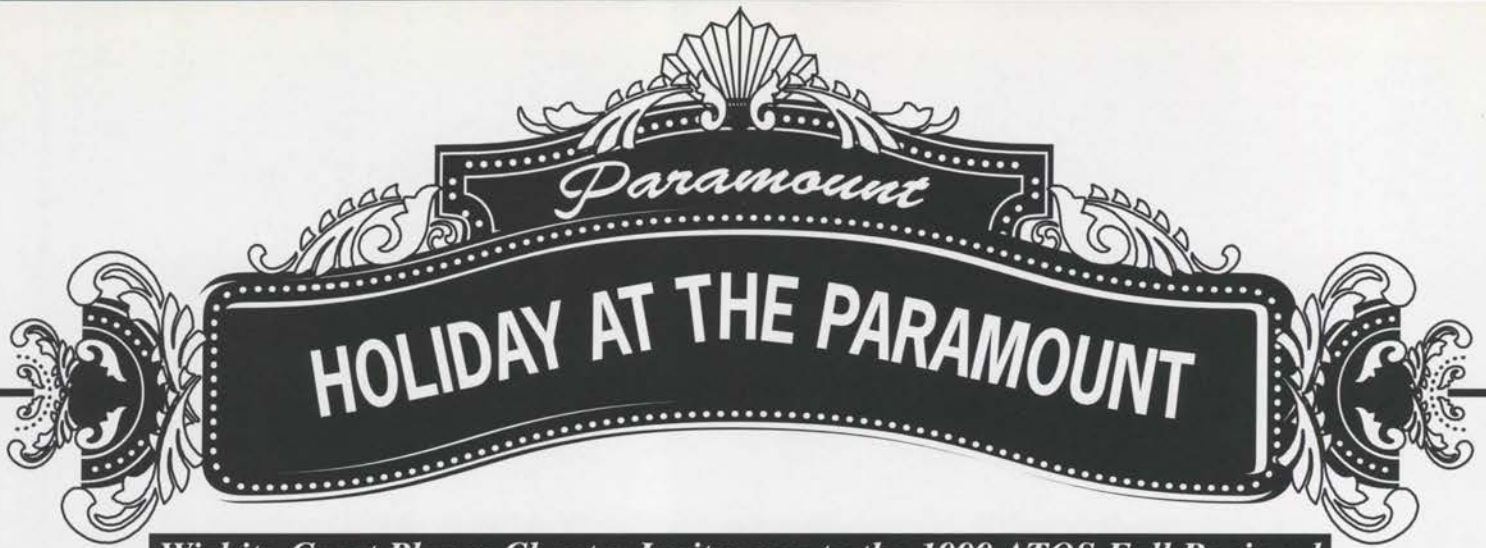
with the Orpheum Theatre in Wichita, Kansas.

Fortunately almost all of the Orpheum's original architectural details are intact, some slightly deteriorated. The theatre boasts excellent sight lines and incredible acoustics. The fact that the Orpheum was also built for live performances provides it with a stage and dressing rooms that many other movie palaces lack.

The Orpheum was converted to sound movies in the late 1920s. Sound pictures ended vaudeville, however, live performances continued to be an important part of the mix at the Orpheum. Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington and other jazz greats graced the theatre's stage. Famous comedians such as Eddie Canter and Red Skelton were also here. Harry Blackstone, one of the most famous illusionists of his day, made a magical appearance at the Orpheum Theatre.

During the war years of the 1940s, Wichita aircraft plants were running 24 hours a day. The Orpheum responded by running movies practically 24 hours a day so that second and third shift workers could enjoy their favorite movies also. The theatre itself was still popular through the 1960s, but the city's demographics were changing. By the late 1970s, deferred maintenance, changing tastes and traffic forced the Orpheum to close.

Preserving the Orpheum is important because it is the last remaining movie palace in Wichita, it is a John Eberson design, and it is the first example of his atmospheric design. The Orpheum is also important for its cultural impact on the City and its residents. Every Wichita native over 30 has fond memories of trips to the Orpheum and how it marked important milestones in their lives.



# Paramount HOLIDAY AT THE PARAMOUNT

**Wichita Great Planes Chapter Invites you to the 1999 ATOS Fall Regional**



*Patti Simon*



*Barry Baker*



*Jelani Eddington*



*David Harris*



*Jeff Weiler*

## THURSDAY

SEPTEMBER 2

8 p.m. PreGlow: Patti Simon, Burnett Residence Kimball (limit 60)

## FRIDAY

SEPTEMBER 3

9 a.m. Barry Baker, NYP Wichita Wurlitzer, Exhibition Hall, Century II  
 11 a.m. Lunch Break  
 2 & 4 p.m. Jelani Eddington/David Harris, Miller Wurlitzer, Little River Studio, Groups 1 & 2  
 2-5 p.m. Seminars or speakers – Groups 3 & 4  
 6:30 p.m. Buffet Dinner\*, Exhibition Hall  
 8 p.m. Jeff Weiler/Silent Movie Night, NYP Wichita Wurlitzer  
 10 p.m. Open Console, NYP Wichita Wurlitzer



*Clark Wilson*



*Walt Strony*

## SATURDAY

SEPTEMBER 4

9:00 a.m. ATOS General Membership Meeting  
 10:30 a.m. Clark Wilson, NYP Wichita Wurlitzer  
 11:45 a.m. Lunch\* (location tbd)  
 2 & 4 p.m. Jelani Eddington/David Harris, Little River Studio (Groups 3 & 4)  
 2-5 p.m. Seminars or speakers – Groups 1 & 2  
 6:30 p.m. ATOS Awards Banquet\*, Exhibition Hall  
 8:30 p.m. Walt Strony, NYP Wichita Wurlitzer



*Jonas Nordwall*



*Peter Conte*

## SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 5

10 a.m. Jonas Nordwall, Renaissance Allen, Orpheum Theatre  
 11:45 a.m. Lunch\*, Orpheum Theatre  
 3 p.m. Peter Conte, Schantz, First United Methodist Church  
 6:30 p.m. Buffet Dinner,\* Exhibition Hall  
 8 p.m. Lyn Larsen, NYP Wichita Wurlitzer



*Lyn Larsen*

\* Meals require purchase of a Meal Ticket.  
 See Registration Form.

Note: Times, artists, and activities  
 are subject to change.

1999 ATOS Fall Regional September 2-5

# Toledo Area Theatre Organ Society (TATOS) Presents An Introduction to Theatre Organ Workshop for Inner City Schools



On April 22, 1999 TATOS (Toledo Area Theatre Organ Society) held its first Inner City School Workshop, "An Introduction to Theatre Organ," at The Historic Ohio Theatre.

We opened the program with two silent cartoons, accompanied by house organist, Bill Yaney. Mr. Yaney talked about the purpose of theatre organs before talkies and Nelda Reno gave a brief history of the Marr & Colton. Mike Hornyak talked about pipes and "amplifiers" (swell shades) along with Dick Leichtamer who demonstrated the sound of each pipe or percussion instrument. A few students (top left) were allowed to come on stage and observe the pipes close up and blow into them. They could not get sound from the large pedal pipe (bottom left). We did two sets of sing-alongs (top right). The children enjoyed them as did the teachers. We then asked if any student knew how to play a keyboard or piano. One young man raised his hand and came up and played the theme from *Titanic* on the Marr & Colton (bottom right). What a thrill for him! We also had one teacher come forward, after much urging from her students, to play for us. The teachers and students had a great time and want to come back again so we are planning another workshop for the fall. This workshop was an exciting and educational experience for us as well as the students and teachers. We recommend every chapter do this as a regular on-going ATOS activity. We gained a family membership and a future young organist, so it was very worthwhile.

*Nelda M. Reno, TATOS President*

# Recipients of 1999 Scholarship Awards

## Category "A" - \$1,000 Scholarships

Students working toward college organ performance degree. Scholarship award will be given to their college and applied toward their tuition.

### ELVA FLEMING

#### MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

##### SEAN HENDERSON (20)

Arizona State University School of Music  
Tempe, Arizona  
Home - Australia

### WILLIAM B. WARNER

#### MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

##### SUSAN LEWANDOWSKI (20)

Eastern Michigan University  
School of Music  
Ypsilanti, Michigan

## Category "B" - \$500 Scholarships

Students working toward college organ performance degree. Scholarship award will be given to their college and applied toward their tuition.

### STEVEN BALL (20)

University of Michigan  
Ann Arbor, Michigan

### STEPHEN J. WARNER (21)

University of Michigan  
Ann Arbor, Michigan

## Category "B" - \$500 Scholarships

Students studying with professional theatre organ teachers. Scholarship award will be given upon completion of lessons with professional theatre organ teachers. (All scholarships must be completed by May 1, 2000).

### VERONICA ANN DILLON (21)

Auckland 1702, New Zealand  
Teachers:

Mr. Chris Powell, New Zealand  
Mr. Jelani Eddington, New Haven,  
Connecticut

### CATHERINE DRUMMOND (17)

Wigston, Leicester - England  
Teacher: Len Rawle, England

### RYAN HEGGIE (20)

Glenelg SA 5045 Australia  
Teacher: Pamela Buccini - Australia

### KRISTI MUMBRUE (14)

Bloomfield Hills, Michigan  
Teacher:  
Mrs. Melissa Ambrose-Eidson

### HEATHER NOVAK (14)

Farmington Hills, Michigan  
Teacher:  
Mrs. Melissa Ambrose-Eidson

### DANIEL JEROME PIERCE (17)

Muncie, Indiana  
Teachers:  
Jelani Eddington - New Haven,  
Connecticut

### John Ferguson - Indiana

Dr. Frederick B. Schulze -  
Upland, Indiana

### ROBERT SUDALL (15)

Eldwick, Biongley,  
West Yorkshire England  
Teacher:  
Michael Woodhead - Southway, Eldwick,  
Bingley England

### HEATH WOOSTER (21)

Burwood Victoria 3125 Australia  
Teacher:  
Mr. Addam Stobbs,  
N. Balwyn Victoria, Australia

Members of the Scholarship Committee are: Paul Fleming, John Ledwon, David Love, Tony O'Brien, Connie Purkey, Gordon Schwacke, Steve Schlesing, Jinny Vanore, Bob Wilhelm. Chairman, Dorothy Van Steenkiste.

On August 1, 1999 Requirements and Applications Forms will be ready to send out for 2000. Watch for additional news of our 2000 Scholarship Program in your September issue of the Journal. Also, it will be listed in every issue of the Journal. This program is very important in keeping in touch with our young theatre organ students and encouraging them to continue their studies.

We were very pleased to receive 19 applications in 1999 and we awarded twelve scholarships. The William B. Warner Memorial Scholarship is set up for two more years by Mrs. Warner. The Elva Fleming Memorial Scholarship has been set up by Mr. Paul Fleming in his trust so that it will continue for many, many years.

Our program was listed in the guidance information system (GIS) published by Houghton Mifflin Company in Chicago, Illinois, and also the Educational Assistance Council, National Research and Processing Center in Burbank, California. We receive requests from various colleges and their students apply. There were several requests for applications from these reports. Also, our chapters are getting the news to their local colleges and organ students. Word is out and everyone feels that this program is encouraging young adults to continue their education in organ performance.

Anyone interested in contributing to the program may contact the chairman, Dorothy Van Steenkiste: 313/383-0133; Fax 313/383-1875.

## Hazleton!

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Proceeds benefit the restoration of the Kentucky Theater's Mighty Wurlitzer, Lexington, KY Copyright 1999 House of Commons CLS 2000 A/B

# The Young Radical Comes of Age

by Billy Nalle

As the theatre organ has been making its return to the international music scene in recent years, much of the thinking and articles concerning the instrument have had the smell of King Tut's mothballs in Aunt Pittypat's attic. Of course, this is understandable in the United States where sixty years are viewed as six hundred in most other countries. Our quaint notions about music and our ways of dealing with history do not square with the sophistication applied to the space and undersea programs. In the happy hoop-de-doo of taking inventory of the theatre organ's percussion effects and accompanimental virtues, professional journalists and public alike largely have ignored the instrument's fullest capabilities and contemporary uses. It is one of a very small and elite group of musical instruments properly called complete. Until this is understood, neither the instrument's capacity for making music nor its history can be viewed fairly and valued fully.

The English inventor and organ builder Robert Hope-Jones conceived and fathered a new kind of organ approximately sixty years ago. His intention expressed to friends and associates was to build an instrument which could encompass areas of music for which a straight organ was not suited. The man's reasons were *musical* ones, not anti-church ones and not pro-one particular use of the instrument. In building an organ appropriate to the character of Popular and Semi-classical music categories, he succeeded brilliantly several years *before* his patents and firm were bought by the Rudolf Wurlitzer Company. The ingenuity of his inventions and the quality of his workmanship were of the highest order as attested by contemporary organ builders, players an amateurs alike who have done their homework. The theatre organ cost approximately four times more to build than the straight organ. Church organ committees take note! That the instrument was ahead of its time as to its fullest potential only now is beginning to be understood.

This gives reason to believe that in due course a large kettle of highly adulterated hogwash will be given the ceremonial flushing it so richly deserves.

Two tenets of this absurd brew are that restoring a theatre organ is akin to unearthing and repairing the antiquities of Pompeii and that it is mainly a large and mysterious sound effects machine both old and new fashioned. The time is ripe for the gentlemen of the Fourth Estate to heed their own admonition to reporters: Get the *whole* story and get it *straight*. No restoring of any other instrument ever is viewed in print via dust laden adjectives. No other musical instrument ever is relegated just to one particular use. No other musical instrument is adjudged "old fashioned" because it has been on the scene for some arbitrary number of years. For all their evolving, musical instruments are *timeless*. However, some journalists and others ignorant of the theatre organ, make it the exception to this, though the reader will search in vain for a sensible, mature reason. In their saying it is old, we reach the choice irony and piece de resistance. All the other major instruments are hundreds of years old via their various stages of development. The theatre organ "*old?*" It is the *baby* in the history of musical instruments! By hundreds of years it is the *youngest* of them all! *Vas iss dass dis "old?"* Can't you hear the very question on the lips of Sebastian Bach? *Facts über alles!*

What is the youngest of all major musical instruments "up to" these days? Astonishingly much and most of the story lies outside commercially operated theatres. The Music Hall in New York, the Fox Theatre in St. Louis, the Byrd Theatre in Richmond and some others provide entertainment organ fare on a regular basis. However, it is in several hundred homes and the many new situations (with more in planning) in colleges, universities, commercial auditoria, civic centers and even one performing arts center where most of the musical activity on new terms can be found. Even the presentation of the instrument in its accompanimental function, whether for silent films or soloists or groups, is in a new context. The major field of activity growing apace in all these locations is that of theatre organ concerts. The instrument's flexibility and tonal range and quick response are the basis for its having been a great solo instrument from its earliest days. The big difference now is that it is being heard in all manner of locations non-existent until

recent years. Just a few examples are representative of both sides of the Atlantic: The Kirk of Dunedin Auditorium (Dunedin, Florida), Robertson Center for the Arts and Sciences (Binghamton, New York), Rochester Theatre Organ Society (Rochester, New York), Empire State Theatre Museum (Syracuse, New York), Detroit Theatre Organ Club (Detroit, Michigan), Wichita Civic Center (Wichita, Kansas), San Gabriel Civic Center (San Gabriel, California).

Just in the foregoing alone there is now or soon will be full season concert series annually, a fact of no small significance. Not touched here is a long list of commercial situations presenting regular concerts. Involved also are numerous chapters now around the country of the American Theatre Organ Society, organized in 1955, and like societies in all the British Isles, Australian and elsewhere.

The American Guild of Organists has given the finest kind of comprehensiveness in its devotion to the organ by including theatre organ concerts at its national conventions and individual chapters increasingly are including such in their yearly planning of musical activities. One of these is the Canton, Ohio chapter which presented a theatre organ concert in October as an official part of that city's Festival of the Arts.

The "Young Radical" indeed has come of age. No longer is it regarded as the least radical. In fact, conservative aficionados in the theatre organ world are more conservative than their straight organ counterparts. Twelve years ago, about fifty years after the debut of the theatre organ, the writer recorded an album of contemporary jazz seasoned with some rock rhythms. The ensuing brouhaha in print, assorted conversational flaps, and even poison pen letters (really!) were memorable. Desecration had taken place at the High Altar of the New York Paramount!

Happily, in recent years, it has come to be appreciated that, as there needs to be more than one type of orchestra, so there needs to be more than one type of organ if the organ is to serve (for want of better terms) *both* Classical and Popular music. That which unceasingly sits in judgment on both types of organ, Music, remains the source of all we call radical and ever has the final word because it alone justifies the very existence of these and all other musical instruments. Both types of organ will remain alive and young as long as they can say "Music is bigger than us both."

# The Typical Versus the Top

by John Muri

In this day of the preservation and featuring of some of the finest organs ever built for theatres, some of us are prone to forget that the representative or typical theatre organ was a quite small affair. In the early days (1920 to 1924) the average theatre organ was not particularly impressive in tone. My first organ was a tonal horror with slamming swell-shades. It was a rare theatre in which the console rose on a lift. For every house that featured a lift in 1925, there were approximately twenty that did not. The typical theatre seated a little over a thousand people, it changed its movie attraction from three to five times a week, and it offered vaudeville on weekends. On most weekdays, the smaller theatres depended on their organists to supply the entire musical program, and if the organist was suddenly ill or incapacitated, what a panic was created in the management offices! Getting substitutes would seem to have been much easier then than now, but good players were always hard to find for everybody who was any good was busy on this own musical assignment.

How those organists did work! In most cases they were paid union scale (about sixty-five dollars for a seven-day week of playing) and they played long hours. Many of the theatres did not run matinees, so the organist would start work between six and seven in the evening and finish about eleven or eleven-thirty. During that time, he would get about three fifteen-minute intermissions; the rest of the time he was playing. The good ones cued the pictures well, but the bad ones made all sorts of noises, some of which were so original as to be fascinating. Others made stabs at cueing, but their preoccupations with eating at the console or talking to their friends resulted in horse-running music being played while the hero was kissing the heroine or in love music being played while the horses were running. Favorite pieces of

music of the particular sub-mediocre organists were Ponchielli's "Dance of the Hours" and Felix Arndt's "Marionette." they must have loved these pieces, and I never could figure out why, for almost invariably they couldn't play the notes and keep the tempo. The best of the bad players might bravely try "Nola" and then mangle it. Since most of them had inferior instruments (many of the organs were four to six-rankers, some of them with enormous consoles full of blank tabs for show) the results were poor, but the audiences in those days would stand for almost anything. Radio was just coming in, and you couldn't turn music on with a switch or faucet like tap-water. Almost anything was better than nothing.

There was something pathetic in the way the smallest houses would feature their organists. The daily newspaper ads would indicate that the theatre was presenting Joe Tibia in an organ novelty on the mighty something-or-other. Imagine doing a feature number when all you had to work on was a four-ranker that everybody in the theatre has just been listening to for the past hour! The managers also like to call their instruments "grand organs." "Grande Organ" was even more posh, even though it didn't mean anything. It was standard practice for managers to claim they had paid twice as much for the organ as it really cost.

*"The good ones cued the pictures well, but the bad ones made all sorts of noises, some of which were so original as to be fascinating."*

Moral standards for organists varied with their positions. A top organist could not afford to get too bad a reputation. It would hurt business. Most of the featured organists behaved very well. Nothing has been more saddening and depressing than to witness the aged wreck of a man who had formerly been an organ star in some of the finest theatres in the country. The morals of the less-than-top or the second-stringers were less strictly judged, but they were certainly dealt with more rigorously than the transgressions of today's young per-

formers. A man could be a periodic drunkard at the console and keep his job provided that he could keep on making music while under the influence. I have known players who had to be propped up at their consoles and music stands. Many toppers were fired when the managers reached their boiling point, but a specially good man might be kept in spite of his weaknesses. Drugs were not much of a problem; life then had plenty of its own legal and legitimate kicks.

Some reports I have heard about recent concert performances bring to my mind the elegance of men like Crawford, Gutow, Baker, and Miller at the console in contrast with the flamboyance of some of our more exhibitionistic colleagues. I am referring to the flying and flourishing of hands and arms, the convulsive twistings and contortions on the bench, all presumably supposed to convey to us the idea of how hard the artist is working and how deeply he feels the music. Tommyrot! Crawford and Gutow at the Chicago Theatre amazed me (and their audiences, I suppose) with their ease and relaxation at the console. Crawford always wore a plain business suit and never acted "artistic." Gutow didn't even seem to be moving his hands as he got superbly beautiful music out of his instrument. Rapid and difficult passages were played with ease as if he might must be operating a simple mechanical organ. When I worked in theatres I had one manager tell me to put more flourish into my movements. Recently a television producer asked me for some more body-English. It seems to me, though, that such gyrations take the audiences' minds off the music and are pure corn. They are a relic of the late eighteen-hundreds, when musicians were supposed to be super-sensitive and delicate souls, above the common herd of humanity. More tommyrot! A good performance is done with ease because it has been well prepared and is almost second nature to the player. A fellow who makes it look hard is either trying to impress the least intelligent of his listeners or else he is trying to cover up his own deficiencies in playing technique. The top organists didn't have to do such shenanigans; even most of the typical ones didn't have to do it. Only those at the bottom were the real hams who sweat drops of blood and tears for "art."

# BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

by John Muri

A fairly large number of us who are active in the theatre organ field are reaching the age when we can see that other and younger hands will have to take over in the not-distant future. We need not fear that there will not be good players, for each generation has its quota of ability and genius. What we ought to be considering is the insurance of a reservoir of talent in organ-building and maintenance. I see a wholesome interest developing in that field among our younger members, but we need to make sure that these new workers are dedicated to furthering the public life and usefulness of the instruments they work on and that they do not work in semi-ignorance or in careless search for immediate profit. In our generation, we have had our fill of organ mechanics who have ruined pipes and wiring, of pipe-stealers and tinkers who, knowing next to nothing about organ repair, have fooled trusting theatre managers into letting them "work on" the pipe organs. I know of one outfit that got into a three-thousand seat theatre of a major chain whose first act in repairing the organ was to strip the console of its elaborate decorations. The vandals were thrown out as soon as the management got wise to the fact that no work. It took a lot of talking by reputable people to get access to the theatre and its organ again. Organ vandalism closed the doors of many a theatre to the rest of us.

I know some fellows who have learned the basics of organ construction and maintenance by trial and error experimentation, at the expense of the theatre owners. I know organ mechanics who have used their privileges to use a theatre for socializing with friends and for showing off before visiting firemen from other

cities. They do only the minimum of work necessary to keep the organ from collapsing; they never have a maintenance or work schedule. Much of their time is spent complaining about the unappreciative management and debating whether it makes sense to give so much free time to an enterprise that might be sold out from under them any day. It may be that they have a point when they say that they are entitled to some fun in return for the service they are giving. OK - but they need to make sure that they do not create situations in which the management has to worry about risks and cancelled insurance policies. They ought also to consider the future of an organ that is being held together by only "bailing wire and a prayer."

Pipe-stealers do serious damage to our cause in their desire to hoard the organ sound for themselves alone. I should like to include in this category those who have purchased organs out of theatres in which our members have devoted weeks and months of their time to restoration with no other pay than the satisfaction of hearing a beautiful in-theatre organ tone. Our best efforts should be devoted to making theatre owners want to maintain and use their pipe organs, not sell them. When organs must come out of theatres that are going to be razed, we should see that the instruments go into other auditoriums where large numbers of people can hear them. In this regard I can offer no finer example than the recent activities of the Motor City, the Wolverine, and the Western Reserve Chapters who are busily engaged in the installation and readying of organs for public performances. Anyone who would undermine their work by purchasing instruments they have sponsored

deserves the highest censure. Anyone who purchases an instrument out of a theatre that shows potential for public use deserves censure. Such people are no friends of theatre organ, for they are destroying its future.

What of the future? Will we be able to keep the theatre organ alive as a permanent element in public musical entertainment? Can we make it flourish and reach the large-scale audience it had years ago? Or will it stay at the peak it has now reached and remain only the isolated delight of those few thousand of us who have been lucky enough to come into contact with it? Will it die in a relatively few years because our civilization has moved in directions that offer no scope for our special big sound? Will it die because we have been greedy enough to rip out every organ we can get our hands on? Our generation should help in making satisfactory and constructive answers to these questions.

It may be that we enthusiasts are doing more to spread musical enjoyment than we know. Certainly theatre organ music is being performed to larger audiences than ever since 1930. Enthusiasm is spreading, but we need to be watchful that the movement is more than a flurry. We'll have to make sure that the on-coming generation will be able to listen often and find joy in the sounds of real theatre organs in theatres, played well enough to make listeners want to come back for more. This means we'll have to do a good job in maintaining organs and in preventing them from being carried off by individualists. Our soloists will have to work hard enough in building not only good, but excellent programs, programs that will leave audiences asking for more. All of us who love the theatre organ will have to do all we can within the bounds of decency and dignity to make theatre managers and patrons see what a wonderful entertainment device they have been neglecting for so long.



Hollywood's  
Legendary  
El Capitan Theatre  
"Pulls Out  
All The Stops"  
with the  
June Premiere  
of its  
Newly Installed  
"Mighty" Wurlitzer



Starting in June, with its special engagement of Walt Disney Pictures' new animated feature, *Tarzan*, Hollywood's legendary El Capitan Theatre will premiere its newly installed "Mighty" Wurlitzer organ and has named Dennis James as its house organist, it was announced by Richard Cook, chairman of The Walt Disney Motion Pictures Group. The organ, the last of only five magnificent "Fox Specials" built in the 1920s, is considered the top of the line in theatre organs and was designed with all the "bells and whistles" for movie palaces. It was meticulously restored over a one-year period and installed during the last six months at the theatre by G.M. Buck Pipe Organs, Inc. of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Theatre organ experts Gordon Kibbee and Bill Schutz served as consultants on the project and wrote all the specifications.

A special lift has been built at the El Capitan Theatre to transport the "Mighty" Wurlitzer to stage level. Additionally, over 2500 pipes have been installed in four chambers - two on each side of the theatre. The largest pipe is over 32-feet long. The El Capitan's "Mighty" Wurlitzer was originally installed in 1929 at the San Francisco Fox theatre and subsequently purchased by Frank Lanterman in 1963 for his home in La Canada. Three other "Fox Specials" are currently in use in St. Louis, Detroit and Wichita.

Dennis James, an international touring theatre organist, will be performing on the spectacular 4/37 Wurlitzer (four keyboards, 37 ranks of pipes each of which represent different musical instruments). Celebrated "Fusion" electronic and pipes creator Rob Richards has been named associate. A crowd-pleasing pipe organ presenta-

tion will precede an all new live stage production at each showing of *Tarzan*.

Commenting on the announcement, Cook said, "Hearing a 'Mighty' Wurlitzer played in a great theatre is truly an unforgettable experience. We are thrilled to be able to provide today's moviegoers with this unique opportunity and we believe that it adds to the fun and excitement of seeing a show at the El Capitan. George Buck and his team have done a great job overseeing the installation of this landmark instrument and we're glad that it has found a good home in Hollywood."

George Buck added, "I am greatly honored to have been chosen to be part of the team selected to preserve the art form in a way no one imagined. Working with Disney to bring back this very special form of entertainment has been awesome."

Gordon Kibbee, one of the top experts in the theatre organ world, added, "When I was invited by Disney to serve as a consultant with Bill Schutz, I was overwhelmed. And now that several years have passed, I still am. To see this marvelous instrument, which was dormant for so long, come to life again is magnificent. It is the thrill of a lifetime."

The El Capitan Theatre's "Tarzan Summer Spectacular" engagement will run from June 16 - July 22 with daily shows scheduled at 9:00 a.m., 11:45 a.m., 2:20 p.m., 5:15 p.m., 8:00 p.m., 10:30 p.m. and 12:45 a.m. Advance tickets can be purchased by calling 1-800-DISNEY6 or at the box office.

For more information about Disney's *Tarzan*, visit the web site at [www.tarzan.com](http://www.tarzan.com), part of the GO Network @ [go.com](http://go.com).

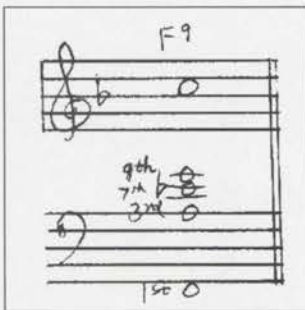


# ORGAN-IZING POPULAR MUSIC

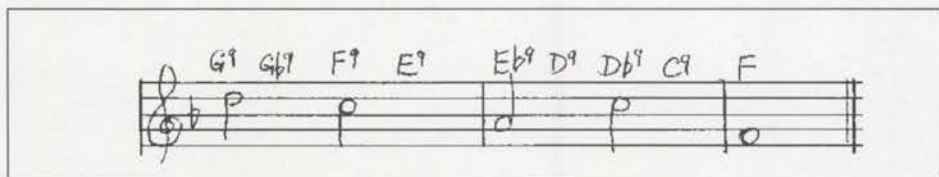
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The last few measures of the theme from *New York, New York* may be played this way:



For a longer example, try the last eight measures of "Deep Purple" this way:



Any changes in the original harmony should always be reserved for the second chorus. After playing and listening to these applications of chromatic 9<sup>th</sup> chord accompaniment, most of you will probably be thinking one of two things:

1. This sounds terrible - why would anyone want to play like that?
2. This sounds great - I always wondered how organists obtained that effect.

Those who like this sound should be careful not to overdo it. Do not cram chromatic 9<sup>th</sup> chord progressions into songs where they don't fit or your listeners will begin to wonder if your organ is out of tune.

## Journal of American Organbuilding

Quarterly Publication of  
the American Institute of  
Organbuilders

This publication is devoted to the dissemination of knowledge regarding the design, construction and maintenance of pipe organs in North America. Although primarily a technical journal for the benefit of organbuilding professionals, it is also a valuable resource for architects and project consultants, church musicians, building committees, seminary and university libraries, and anyone involved with the design or renovation of contemporary worship space.

Far from being the "lost art" that the average person believes it to be organbuilding in the United States and Canada is maturing and thriving in hundreds of small and large shops throughout the continent. At the same time, serious challenges lie ahead for those promoting the pipe organ in an era of limited budgets and competing options. Readers of the *Journal of American Organbuilding* will benefit from the thoughtful exchange of information and ideas intended to advance this time-honored craft.

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# The Sounds of Silent Movies

By Robert Gates

## STILL MORE SILENT FILMS FROM PARAMOUNT Organist, Gaylord Carter

It should be noted that all of the movies in this series are recorded on the Sergant/Stark Wurlitzer in stereo. The advantage of the stereo is not so much to give spatial definition to individual organ voices as it is to broaden the soundstage. This effect is most apparent when separation is maximal, as would be obtained through earphones.

### THE WEDDING MARCH (1928) with Erich Von Stroheim and Fay Wray

Poor, pretty Fay Wray, always unlucky in love. Long before liaising with her jungle-buddy Kong, she has to go and fall for this fop of a balding hussar (Erick Von Stroheim) with heavy nose framed by wind-catching ears. What does she see in him? Could it be the candy he brought her or how he sits his horse in red-collared tunic and horse-hair festooned busby, or is it possible that what motivates her is the modest headline that we see on the screen, "In its entirety an ERICH VON STROHEIM Creation"?

This, by the way, is not far from the truth. In addition to playing the lead, Von Stroheim directed this film and collaborated on the script, editing, art direction and costume design. Surely that hat was also his doing!

The scene is Vienna in 1914. A youngish Prince in a noble but impoverished family, Nikki (Von Stroheim), has amassed gambling and womanizing debts that must be paid. His sophisticated mother (Maude George) tells him he must give all this up "or

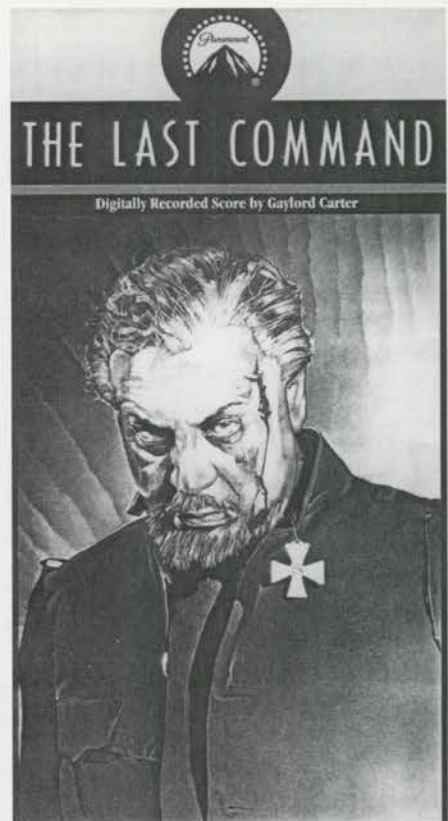


marry money." He looks upon her suggestion with interest.

It is now the day of Corpus Christi, an annual religious and military celebration. In his capacity as "First Lieutenant of the Imperial and Royal Life Guard Mounted," he commands the troops outside of St. Stephen's, where the ceremony is to be held. Mitzi (Wray) is there to watch, accompanied by her butcher suitor, Schani, (Matthew Betz), a brute of a man who treats women and animals with indiscriminate cruelty. During the ceremony, Nikki spies Mitzi, and they flirt openly. The courtship continues in clandestine meetings thereafter.

Between scenes of the lovers in embrace under overloaded bowers of apple blossoms, we visit a "little crooked house," a playpen for well-placed libertines, where a bargain is made. Nikki's father (George Fawcett), in monetary distress, agrees with the ambitious magnate of a corn-plaster factory (George Nichols) that Nikki will marry the magnate's limping daughter Cecelia (ZaSu Pitts) in exchange for a bribe of one million Kronen. When told of this, Nikki speaks of his love for Mitzi. "But Nikki," says Mom, "this would mean so much money."

They are married in St. Stephen's



where (oh no!), we see Death playing the organ not once, but twice! No one there seems to mind, but as the pair leaves the church they notice Mitzi and Schani standing in the rain. He is holding a gun in his pocket, and she, to save the life of her Prince, agrees to marry the butcher if he will only spare Nikki's life. As the newlyweds are driven away, Cecelia asks, "- who was that sweet girl - in tears - and that awful looking man?" Nikki responds indifferently, "I-I never saw them before."

Although Vienna is characterized as the city of "pure sweet love," this film pulls out all the stops to show us the evil in everyone physically unattractive. In contrast, the only good-looking members of the cast, Wray and Pitts, are sweet innocents, loving and preyed-upon. Pitts, who resembles Lillian Gish in appearance, is especially endearing. A few years later, however, she would be typecast as a comedienne and never be allowed to return to sympathetic roles.

Picture quality varies widely. Unfortunately, most of Wray's close-ups are seen in so soft a focus as to suggest splicings of 16-millimeter or narrower film, yet the bargaining scene between the two crass old men

is so well-detailed that sensitive viewers might want to put it on fast-forward. The Corpus Christi Procession leaving St. Stephen's has color added, reds in abundance and some faint green. Von Stroheim's skill as a director is clearly evident, and the actors, with the exception of one minor character, perform beautifully.

Carter decorates this film with Strauss waltzes and appropriately menacing mood music. Synchronization is fine and registration, as always, is right-on.

In brief: Social commentary with a trip-hammer.

From Movies Unlimited, 3015 Darnell Rd., Philadelphia, PA 19154; 800/4MO-VIES; \$29.99.

## THE LAST COMMAND (1928) with Emil Jannings and William Powell

Hollywood, 1929. A Russian director (Powell) is looking for extras to serve as soldiers in a battle movie. As he searches through photographs, he sees someone he recognizes and calls him in to play the general of the troops. This quiet old man (Jannings) joins the extras on the day of the shoot only to be jostled as he prepares for his role and teased for his strange tic and for claiming that he was once an important military officer.

The scene shifts to Russia in 1917,

with the country deeply at war. A powerful General (Jannings) Grand Duke Serius Alexander, cousin to the Czar, is reviewing the troops. Although running battles on many fronts, he finds time to check the passports of an actress, Natalie Dabrova, (Evelyn Brent) and the director of the Kiev Imperial Theatre (Powell), both of whom are regarded as "revolutionists." Powell is imprisoned but the actress is taken by the General to a palatial new headquarters. In the evening that follows, they first dine together then go up to her quarters. Although she had planned to assassinate him with a concealed pistol, she changes her mind as his patriotism and great love for country become ever more apparent.

This is a memorable scene; a vivid encounter between two skilled actors uplifted by Carter's wonderful accompaniment which reflects each of the many turns of emotion with perfect harmonic and thematic continuity. It would be hard to find a better example than this of the melding of organ music to dramatic content.

But the fortunes of the General quickly change. During a train ride to the front, he is captured by revolutionists, and, at the suggestion of the actress, is made to shovel coal as the train continues to Petrograd, where he is to be hanged. However, the girl, loving him all the while, has secretly plotted a means of his escape. He jumps from the train only minutes before a trestle fails and all on board

perish in an icy river. The shock of Natalie's death leaves him with a tremor which still afflicts him ten years later at the start of the filming of the battle scene, his Last Command.

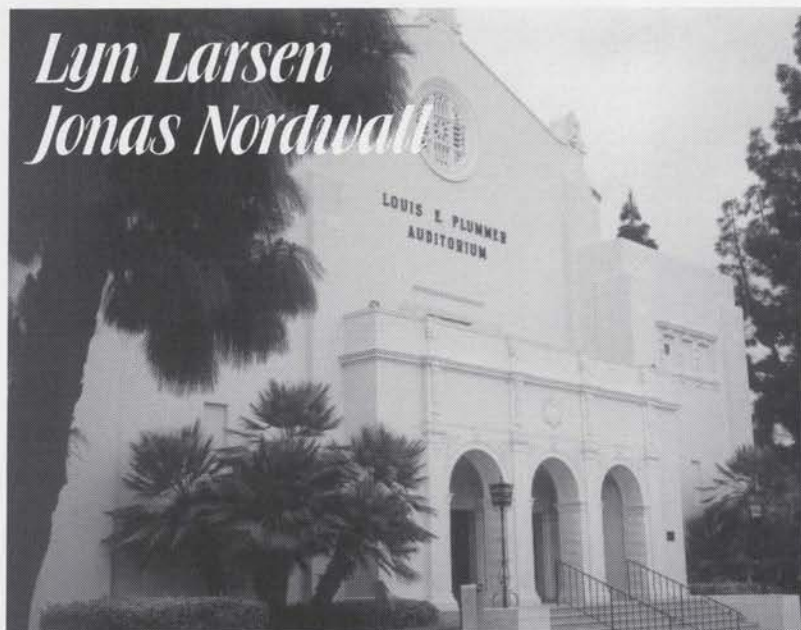
Not a minor film, *The Last Command* was nominated for Best Picture (drama) in the year that *Wings* took the honors. Jannings was given a single Best Actor Oscar for this film and also for *The Way of All Flesh*; two films, one award. He had other memorable roles, the best known was the professor debased by Marlene Dietrich in the *Blue Angel*. His heavy German accent barred him from talking films in English, so he returned to Germany and for more than ten years acted in Nazi propaganda movies.

William Powell, on the other hand, became well known in "talkies" for parts such as Philo Vance in three murder mysteries, Nick Charles in the *Thin Man* films and Clarence Day in *Life with Father*. He made 97 films in a 33-year career, and was nominated three times for an Academy Award.

A clear print is used throughout, and Carter is, of course, fine.

In Brief: Well-plotted social commentary with a small trip-hammer.

From Movies Unlimited, address above; \$24.99.



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# "An Acre of Seats in a Palace of Splendor"

## Los Angeles

Los Angeles, California

Opened: January 30, 1931

Architect: S. Charles Lee

Capacity: 2190

Organ: Wurlitzer 2/10, Style 216,  
Op. 1620 (Moved from the Tower)

Among the last period-revival movie palaces in an era dominated by Art Deco, the exquisite Los Angeles bucked another trend as well: it was built downtown rather than in the more fashionable Hollywood district. Although clearly inspired by the San Francisco Fox, the Los Angeles is not, as is sometimes claimed, a half-sized replica. As small as it is, the house can easily hold its own in comparisons with the Fox or any other movie palace. The opening attraction was another throwback: Chaplin's *City Lights*, a silent film with recorded music and sound effects.

Encouraged by the success of his Tower Theatre (S. Charles Lee, 1927), independent exhibitor H.L. Gumbiner again engaged its architect for his next project. Working with designer W. Marbury Somerville and decorator Anthony B. Heinsbergen, Lee created the most opulent theatre Los Angeles had ever seen, and the one least like the streamlined modern houses for which he is remembered. Over extended, Gumbiner lost the house within a year. It had a number of operators over the years; the last, Metropolitan Theatres, closed the Los Angeles in April 1994. It does, however, open for special presentations and can frequently be seen in movies and commercials.

The facade and lobby suggest the Fox without copying it verbatim, but the two-balcony auditorium, excepting the dome, is quite different. The lobby and auditorium ceilings are more elaborate than the Fox's, with cast coffering in

place of the stencil-work employed in the larger house. Beneath the lobby and most of the auditorium is a vast lounge suite featuring a wood paneled oval lounge, as large as the lobby itself, and a series of smaller rooms, including a restaurant. The decorations and furnishings throughout the house were the equal of any.

Several years into the sound era, the Los Angeles hardly required an organ; Gumbiner moved the Wurlitzer from the Tower anyway, but it saw little use after the first year or so. Ann Leaf played a concert and recorded it in the 1960s. A while back it quietly vanished and is presumed to have become part of some larger installation. *Steve Levin*

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Opposite: An early exterior drawing shows a large window in the facade and a heavier treatment for the flanking storefronts; a later one, otherwise accurate, has a huge statuary group in the niche. The amazing marquee was replaced long ago, but the vertical sign survives.

Right: Balcony patrons pass through an intermediate landing before climbing again to the first mezzanine, from which this shot was taken. Note the extravagance of crystal and the unusual front doors. In the lower left is a small portion of the fountain on the first landing.

Below: Among the amenities of the main floor are eight aisles, making each section no more than six seats across, and neon tubes recessed into the floor on each side of the aisles. Balcony patrons made do with six aisles.

The curtains are among the most elaborate ever crafted. The valance features three sets of swags woven around a hand-appliquéd panel centered on the seal of the city of Los Angeles. On the tapestry-like front curtain, the figures have velvet and satin costumes and real wigs. The two-manual console seems dwarfed by the sixty-foot spread of the proscenium opening.

All photographs: Terry Helgesen Collection, THS

#### Department of Corrections

In our coverage of the Minnesota Theatre (March/April 1999), the closing organist is called "Dick Dissel." Make that Dick LaSalle.



#### THE STYLE 216

Designed by Frank Lanterman for West Coast Theatres, this model was a "hot-rod" version of the Style 215, the circuit's standard organ. Frank felt the 215 lacked the "crack" to be satisfactory in the new theatre under construction or in planning. He replaced the Kinura with an English Horn, and added couplers and a crescendo, features rarely found in two-manual Wurlitzers. Hoping to sell West Coast something pricier, Wurlitzer balked at first, but when Robert-Morton expressed interest in the order, they gave in. A dozen were built, all but this one for West Coast Theatres.

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Vox Humana 16'	Double English Horn 16'	Kinura 8'
Trumpet 8'	Kinura 8'	Musette 8'
Tuba Horn 8'		Vox Humana 8'
Open Diapason 8'		
Tibia Clausa 8'	<b>Accompaniment</b>	
Orchestral Oboe 8'	English Horn 8'	<b>Tremulants</b>
Krumet 8'	Tuba Horn 8'	Main Tuba
Clarinet 8'	Open Diapason 8'	Solo Tibia
Viol Celeste II 8'	Clarinet 8'	
Vox Humana 8'	Viol Celeste II 8'	<b>Combination Action</b>
Tibia Quint 5-1/3'	Quintadena 8'	(Lighted Pistons)
Octave 4'	Concert Flute 8'	Generals: 1 2 3 4 5
Piccolo 4'	Vox Humana 8'	Divisionals:
Viol Celeste II 4'	Octave 4'	Great
Tibia Twelfth 2-2/3'	Piccolo 4'	pp p mf f ff 1 2 3 4 5
Tibia Piccolo 2'	Viol Celeste II 4'	Solo 1 2 3 4 5
Viol 15th 2'	Flute 4'	Accompaniment/Pedal
Tibia Tierce 1-3/5'	Harp	pp p mf f ff
Tibia Fife 1'	Chrysoglott	Pedal 1 2 3 4 5
MIDI A (LP)	Snare Drum	Set and Cancel
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Tibia Minor 4'		<b>Rhythmaker™</b>
Mixture IV		Swing
Trumpet 16'		Rock
	<b>Solo</b>	Country
<b>Pedal</b>	English Horn 8'	Dixie
Diaphone 32'	Trumpet 8'	Waltz
Tuba Profunda 16'	Tuba Horn 8'	Bossa Nova
Diaphone 16'	Tibia Clausa 8'	Latin 1
Contra Violon Celeste II 16'	Orchestral Oboe 8'	Latin 2
Bourdon 16'	Krumet 8'	March
Tuba Horn 8'	Saxophone 8'	2nd Pattern
Tibia Clausa 8'	Piccolo 4'	
Clarinet 8'	Tibia Twelfth 2-2/3'	Rhythm start/stop
Cellos II 8'	Tibia Piccolo 2'	Rhythm break
Flute 8'	Solo Suboctave 16'	Sync/Start
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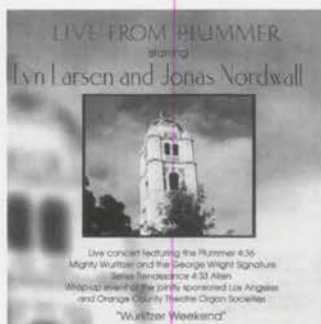
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# For The RECORDS

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

## Live From Plummer LYN LARSEN and JONAS NORDWALL



What could be better than a concert played by TWO of the world's finest organists? Having TWO wonderful organs on which they play their solos and duets! This rare event was the final program of the "Southern California Wurlitzer Weekend" which was jointly sponsored by the Orange County Theatre Organ Society and the Los Angeles TOS last January. One of the organs, of course, is the Plummer Auditorium's 1930 original-installation four manual Wurlitzer (now altered and expanded to 36 ranks) and the other is the 4/33 George Wright Signature Allen. Lent by its owner Jack Darr, it was augmented by 43 speakers (16 channels of sound) and beautifully balanced by the artists and Allen dealer Henry Hunt to match the Wurlitzer in the 1,300-seat

auditorium.

Fortunately, hoping this would prove to be a dynamite program worthy of being released on compact disc, Bill Lightner was on hand to professionally record it. This exciting 66-minute album has captured that sensational program as the near sellout crowd enjoyed it live! While the liner notes indicate which artist is playing which organ in their solo selections, half of the 18 tracks are duets and which one is at which organ really doesn't matter. The program definitely was NOT an organ duel - it was, in truth duets on dual organs!

The show starts with OCTOS President Don Near's brief spoken introduction of Lyn, and his explosive opener, "Smile, Darn Ya, Smile." After Lyn introduces Jonas, they play their first duet, the first of several George Wright recreations; a tune titled "The Cactus Polka" (as Wright called it on his Conn album, HiFi #712.) Later Wright recorded this same melody as "Jesusita en Chihuahua" on his South Pasadena Rialto LP (Dot 2712). It's lots of fun as a Mexican polka! Next is a Grand Waltz duet on Crawford's arrangement of the romantic "Masquer-

ade." Jonas at the Allen plays next the 1950s #4 best selling single (by Al Hibbler) - "Unchained Melody." (Recently revived in the film *Ghost*, it had been written for the 1955 film *Unchained* which starred NFL Hall of Famer Elroy "Crazy Legs" Hirsch!)

Jerome Kern's "I Won't Dance," is a gentle swinger with Lyn at the Wurlitzer. Jonas at the Allen is next with Delius' delicate, wistful tone poem "Winter Night." Lyn at the Wurlitzer plays Rodgers and Hart's very first hit tune "Manhattan," written in 1921 when Rodgers was just 19 years old and Hart was 26! Lyn and Jonas together again, give a rousing rendition of Schubert's "March Militaire" and the duo continue with a sparkling version of Tinseltown's Civic Anthem, "Hooray for Hollywood."

Jonas solos on the next two selections; first is a passionate "Jealousy" and then Lalo Schifrin's "The Wig." Schifrin is one of the modern composers who has scored dozens of Hollywood films but is probably best known for his TV theme, *Mission Impossible*. "The Wig" might best be described as demented jazz with a classic touch; it's wild and wonderful! Lyn and Jonas duet on Mancini's Oscar-winning "Moon River." For a rather startling change of pace, Lyn next duets with himself by playing the Allen (along with the pre-programmed Wurlitzer) on a recreation of George Wright's "Dancing Tambourine." While he doesn't attempt to duplicate Wright's tinkly speed-up effect (one of Wright's tracks

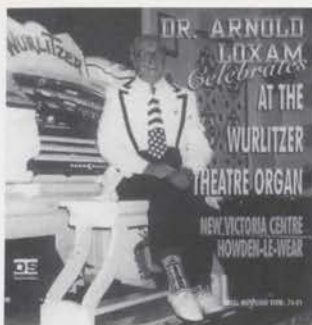
had been prerecorded at half speed) all the pizzicato touches and plinks on the percussions are right where they belong.

"Embraceable You" is a Larsen solo at the Wurlitzer and then he moves to the Allen for a dead-on recreation of Wright's remarkable rocketing "Roller Coaster." Both artists are heard on the album's closing selections: Mozart's "Turkish Rondo," Saint Saëns' hair raising "Dance Macabre" and, the show's encore, a brief reprise of "Hooray for Hollywood."

Only four of the numbers played at Plummer are not included on this album. This remarkable live recording (with hardly a cough anywhere) is a thrilling, exhilarating "You Are There" recreation! The combination of artists and their superb musicianship, the beautifully matched organs, and the masterful live recording well deserves a Must Have recommendation. (The liner notes have the specifications for both organs and a photo of the mural which adorns the outside of Plummer Auditorium.) Compact disc only for \$19.00 (postpaid) from Beldale Records, 13722 Rushmore Lane, Santa Ana, CA 92705.

## Dr. Arnold Loxam Celebrates

Arnold Loxam, one of England's best known and most loved theatre organists made this recording to celebrate several notable events in his life: his 80th birthday, his 50th year as a theatre organist, his 45th wedding anniversary, and his receiving an Honary (sic) Doctorate degree from the



University of Bradford (in his home town) "... in recognition of his accomplishments and good work in the field of music." Appropriately, this recording features the same organ on which he first learned theatre organ techniques and stylings (for he played only piano and classical organ until 1946.)

It's the former Bradford New Victoria Cinema Wurlitzer (Opus 2116, a 3/10 Style 220) now reinstalled in Howden-le-Wear's new Victoria Centre with an added English Horn and Kinura. The 20 tracks on this 74-minute album contain a sampling of the tunes Loxam has played in the numerous venues he's appeared in during his lengthy career. Quite an "International" group of selections it is, with "Hawaiian Holiday," "Spanish Gypsy Dance," "Zuider Zee Ballade," "Berliner Luft," and "Amsterdam."

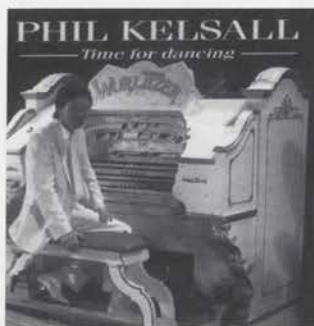
The album opens with a most appropriate "Celebration March" and continues with two exquisite melodies by Dmitri Shostakovich; his "Romance" and "Second Waltz." Loxam's other ballads are "This is My Mother's Day," a melodic "Audrey's Lullaby" (one of the several tunes Loxam has written over the years for his wife,) Massenet's "Meditations" (from *Thaïs*) and Kreisler's "The Old Refrain." On the lighter side are the bouncy "Jumping Charlie," "In the Pink" "Mr. Snowman Goes to Town,"

"Hors d'oeuvres," and "The Cuckoo Waltz."

More familiar are *The Third Man* theme and a rather raucous, "I Got Rhythm." Loxam's 7-1/2 minute "Storm At Sea" opens with the usual brief series of nautical tunes until the full storm strikes during the "Skye Boat Song," (which is an interesting change from the more common "Finlandia" and "Fingal's Cave.") The album closes with a complete arrangement of Loxam's longtime signature tune "Come Back to Sorrento."

Throughout the album, Loxam presents each selection with the crisp, absolutely accurate, clean, unembellished playing his fans relish. The recording quality is excellent and the interesting liner notes are by Frank Hare and Tom Musgrave. It's available in cassette for \$13.00 and CD format for \$21.00 (plus \$3.00 per order postage) from Organ Literature Foundation, 45 Norfolk Road, Braintree, MA 02184-5918.

## Time For Dancing PHIL KELSALL



Phil Kelsall is so popular in the UK that his earlier recordings on Blackpool's Tower Ballroom 3/14 Wurlitzer are now being reissued on the Pickwick reprint label. We believe this album was released under the title *It's Just the Time for Dancing* on Grasmere #18 in

the 1980s. This album was originally an analog recording and now has been very nicely converted to digital. In comparing it with Phil's recent digital recordings, we find only a faint hint of shrillness in the upper end. For some years, Phil has released one Blackpool recording a year (in addition to his electronic organ albums) and each year alternates between a strict-tempo dance album and one done as a "concert" program.

As the title suggests, this is a 66-minute strict-tempo disc with 53 selections presented in a wide variety of dance rhythms - everything from the Viennese Waltz to Jive with Foxtrots, Two Steps, Cha-Chas, and even a Barn Dance in between! All but four tunes are heard in medleys of two to four selections. The singles are "The Skaters' Waltz," "Spanish Gypsy Dance" (in Paso Doble rhythm,) the Tango "La Cumparsita," and "Scotch Mist" (which is a kind of Highland Fling!) We've commented in earlier reviews that the producer of Phil's albums is composer Bob Barratt. Three of Barratt's tunes are on this album; the delightful Foxtrot "Make Mine Love" (combined with "Memories of You," and "Stars Fell on Alabama,") his Bosa Nova "Destination Love" (combined with "Girl from Ipanema,") and "Scotch Mist."

Most of Phil's tunes will be instantly recognizable and include (among the others) many rarely heard standards like "Avalon," "Dancing With Tears in My Eyes," "Answer Me (My Love)," "Love in Bloom," "La Golondrina," "Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White," "Little Red Monkey," "The Pink Waltz"

(which most will recognize as "Beautiful Lady,") "Happy Feet," "Glad Rag Doll," and "Tip Toe Through the Tulips." Phil also has a Jive medley of "Nagasaki" and though it's not listed, "Sweet Georgia Brown." While the tempo is absolutely rigid throughout (as it must be for dancing), it's good listening all the way through. Compact disc only for \$21.00 (plus \$3.00 per order postage) from Organ Literature Foundation, 45 Norfolk Road, Braintree, MA 02184-5918.

## Beneath The Lights of Home PHIL KELSALL



This CD is a second Pickwick re-issue of a previously released Kelsall album (Grasmere #34 with the same title.) It, too, has been nicely converted from analog to digital with just a whisper of shrillness at the upper end. This 60-minute disc has a total of 33 tunes, a number of them played in medleys, but it's a well-rounded *concert* program with a great variety of tempos.

Phil's console-raiser is "Follies Bergere" which comes closer to a spirited march than a can-can; in fact, it's not the least bit French sounding. Surely everyone knows "The Wedding of the Painted Doll," but it's of interest to note this Nacio Herb Brown tune was written for the first

real "All Talking! All Singing! All Dancing" film, *The Broadway Melody*, which premiered at Grauman's Chinese on February 1, 1929. (In fact, a "cover" silent version was also released just in case the "talkies" didn't catch on!) This film not only won the Academy Award as Best Picture of 1929 but also spawned several later Broadway Melodies!

A Girls Medley of "Stella by Starlight," "Nancy (With the Laughing Face)" and "Laura" is followed by the cheerful "In Party Mood," a medley of familiar Burton Lane tunes, and the "Black and White Rag."

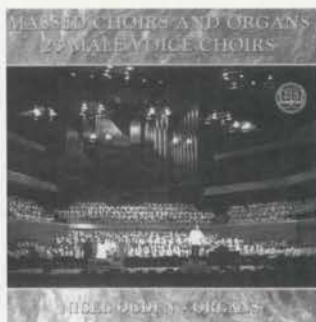
You might be surprised that Eric Coates wrote Phil's next ballad - it's the rarely heard "Sleepy Lagoon." That's followed by "Pennsylvania Polka," a 6-minute medley of familiar Italian melodies, and some of Irving Berlin's best tunes from the Fred Astaire films. The balance of Phil's program includes (among others) "The Wistful Waltz," a novelty "The Dicky Bird Hop," a not too successful version of Schubert's "Ave Maria," "Punch and Judy Polka," and a luscious 4-1/2

minute arrangement of the World War I favorite, "Roses of Picardy."

Closing the disc, is a bouncy medley of the album's title tune, "Whispering Grass," and "The Trolley Song." If you're unfamiliar with "Beneath the Lights of Home," it was sung by Deanna Durbin in 1941's *Nice Girl?* She ended her rather brief 12 year film career as Hollywood's highest paid woman star, and has lived in France since 1948! As is true of all Phil's albums, there is a delightfully entertaining mix of rarely heard favorites and good tunes which are new to us in the US, but are surely favorites in the UK. Same price and ordering information as given in the above review.

## Massed Choirs and Organs NIGEL OGDEN

Here's something a bit different! For over ten years, the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust in Manchester, England, has presented a concert each year featuring massed choirs with theatre organ accompaniment. Until 1997, these concerts were



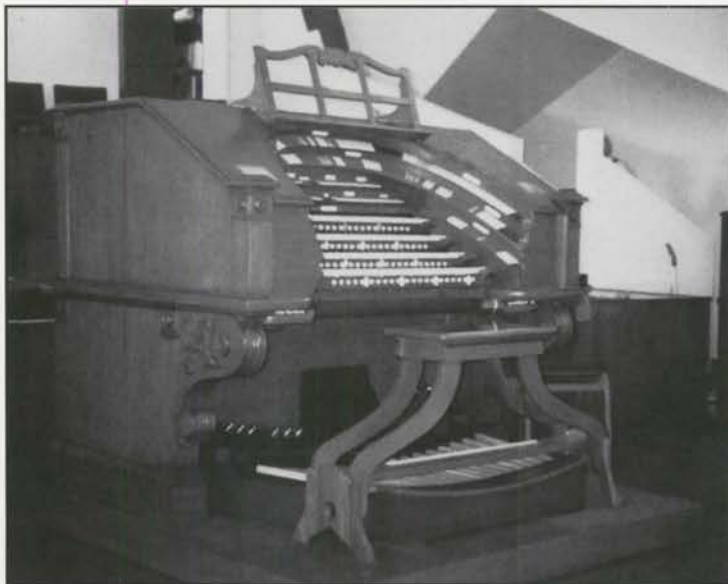
held in the Free Trade Hall and, of course, used their 4/20 Wurlitzer (Opus 2120, a Publix 1, from the Paramount/Odeon Theatre.) In that year, the Free Trade Hall was closed (and later partly demolished) to be replaced by the new 2,000 seat Bridgewater Hall. Since the city fathers had ordered a Marcussen tracker organ of almost 6,000 pipes for the new Hall, LTOT is now completing a reinstallation of their Free Trade Hall Wurlitzer in the nearby Stockport Town Hall.

Since the Marcussen (on 3" of wind) couldn't quite support the almost 500 voices of the 23 male choirs, the LTOS's October 17, 1998 Autumn Concert featured Nigel Ogden playing a three manual Allen Renaissance organ (with 60 speakers) in both solo spots and to accompany the choirs. This

75-minute compact disc beautifully captures that sold out, exciting and joyous musical evening - it's a pleasant change from the usual theatre organ release.

Renditions of three British favorites open the program: "Border Ballad" (with words by Sir Walter Scott) is followed by "Fishermen of England" and a choral, rather than a march, arrangement of Eric Coates' "The Dam Busters." Nigel then takes the spotlight with three contrasting organ solos. Berlioz' "Hungarian March" shows off the Allen's concert organ voices while Kalman's "Play Gypsy Play" (which is not so old as you might think for it was written for the 1926 operetta *Countess Maritza*) is treme on theatrical and Lange's "Tuba Tune" uses appropriate classical voices.

The choir returns for an acapella version of the poignant American folk ballad "Shenandoah" (with a magnificent tenor solo) and the haunting African folk song "Kwmbayah" (also known as "Kum-Ba-Yah.") Nigel's next two solos are given full theatre organ registrations. Robert Elmore's



This handsome Empire style console originally controlled the four-manual Wurlitzer organ in the Strand Theatre, Madison, Wisconsin. It was recently rebuilt and enlarged to Style 285 specifications with new, deeper main, partial and back rails for the Theatre Organ Society of San Diego, now installed in Trinity Presbyterian Church. The renovation included a new concert bench, exclusively from Crome.

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diaphanous "Portrait of a Lady" is a breezy, charmer while "Granada" has all the romantic Spanish fire it needs. Closing the concert's first half, the choirs, with piano and organ, sing a 9-minute medley of five tunes from the hit stage and film musical, *Oliver*.

Nigel moves to the Marcussen organ to accompany the choirs in the rousing second half opener, "76 Trombones." Although the liner notes state, "The choir sang three Beatle songs unaccompanied giving Nigel a chance to descend from his lofty perch at the Marcussen" one of the organs is clearly heard accompanying "Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da" and "Penny Lane" while the piano supports the choir on "And I Love Her."

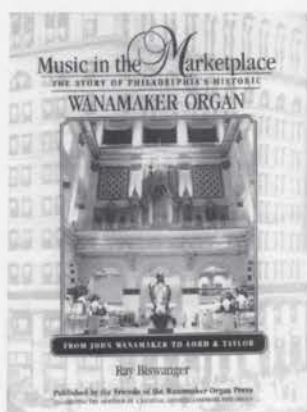
In any case, these wonderful Beatles tunes fit right in beautifully.

The program's sacred songs are next and begin with the hymn "Abide With Me" (to a melody by Lyte and Liddel rather than the usual "Eventide.") From A.L. Webber's *Requiem* the choir, with soprano Lynne Williams (the only woman on the program other than pianist Doreen Allis) sing "Pie Jesu." The lovely Welsh hymn "Cwm Rhondda" concludes this group. The emotionally thrilling Grand Finale includes "Jerusalem," "Rule Britannia," and "Land of Hope and Glory."

Throughout the program, the massed choirs are nothing less than magnificent. Great credit is due each choirs' conductor, but special mention must be made of Alan Herbert, who, with minimum rehearsal time always manages to meld the 23 separate choirs into a glorious whole and obviously inspires them to sing their best! The recording

throughout is superb with a perfect balance between the piano, both organs, soloists, and the choirs. You are only aware of the audience by their enthusiastic applause at the end of each number. It IS something quite different, but it's a thoroughly enjoyable musical experience. Compact disc only for \$20.00 (postpaid - US\$ checks are OK) from LTOT, 21 New Hall Road, Jericho, BURY, Lancs BL9 7TQ, UK.

## BOOK REVIEW



### Music In The Marketplace RAY BISWANGER

Keith Chapman undoubtedly said it best; Philadelphia's world famous Wanamaker Organ does not sound like a conventional pipe organ because "it wants to be an orchestra." Parts of this amazing instrument's fascinating 95-year history have been told before. But this new, oversized, lavishly illustrated 300-page volume is the complete story.

From its 1903 conception by Murray M. Harris in downtown Los Angeles until the 1930s, it has been, without question, the world's largest organ. Since its 1911 opening in Wanamaker's (now Lord & Taylor), it has definitely

been the world's largest organ to be played almost every business day for the past 88 years.

This book is so much more than just the story of a music-making "machine" that seems to have grown like Topsy, for it contains the detailed, intimate stories of all the men and women who have been connected with this unique and wonderful instrument. And it also gives the readers a fascinating insight into the social thinking and cultural activities of the late 19th and first half of the 20th centuries.

The book's author, Ray Biswanger, is one of the founders of the Friends of the Wanamaker Organ and is presently its President and Editor of their quarterly publication, *The Stentor*. He has extensively researched and pieced together all the accessible material, including recently unsealed Wanamaker personal and business files at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and private correspondence files of England's Henry Willis organ builders.

The first three chapters detail the story of how Harris built this pipe organ to the somewhat revolutionary (for those times) specifications of George Ashdown Audsley, and of the organ's successful introduction at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis. The third chapter is devoted to that world's fair and includes numerous panoramic views of its magnificent buildings and grounds.

To oversee the organ's construction, Harris hired the then 50-year-old William Boone Fleming who, fortuitously, was employed by Wanamaker to install the organ in Philadelphia, and then remained to oversee all its later expansions. Fleming

retired in 1927, after constructing the organ's present massive six-manual console!

Other chapters briefly describe the growth of John Wanamaker's increasingly successful business, his social and cultural philosophies, and how his son Rodman, whose "passion was the cult of the beautiful," became "the hero of this story." Chapters concerning the organ's installation and dedication introduce two other important people for the organ's future: the Wanamaker Organ Shop tonal-and-voicing chief George W. Till (who deserves full credit for the tonal work and voicing until his retirement in 1938) and the Wanamaker Stores' music director, Dr. Alexander Russell, who (among his other duties in both the Philadelphia and New York stores) selected the world's finest musicians to be presented in concerts at both Wanamaker stores and in major venues across the continent.

On June 22, 1911, Dr. Irvin J. Morgan played the formal dedication program. Despite its being the world's largest organ, listeners described the 10,000-pipe instrument as sounding "puny" in the store's seven-story Grand Court. Plans were immediately made for its first enlargement. The expansion, designed by Till and executed by Fleming, adhered to Audsley's theory of having orchestral voices with a profusion of eight foot stops and mixtures. Fleming also designed and built a new five manual console. By 1917 the organ had grown to 293 ranks of 17,125 pipes and the daily organ recitals during business hours had already become a well-established tradition.

(continued on next page)

## For The Records

BOOK REVIEW *cont.*

Mary E. Vogt (with occasional assistants including, among many others, theatre organist Leonard "Melody Mac" MacClain) presided at the console for the remarkable record of 49 years (1917 to 1966.) Keith Chapman, despite his tragic early death, held the post for 23 years. His replacement, current organist Peter Richard Conte, is but the fourth Grand Court organist in 88 years!

The flowering of Wanamaker's music program is dealt with in several chapters, beginning with Belgium's famous organist Charles M. Courboin, and the evening organ-orchestra programs featuring various artists with Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra. These popular concerts were held from 1919 until Rodman Wanamaker's death in 1928 (only six years after his father's death.) During the 20s and 30s the world's foremost organists (Marcel Dupre, Nadia Boulanger, Virgil Fox and many others) were pre-

sented in concert at the Grand Court Organ.

The second major expansion of the organ took place during the 1920s. The organ received its stunning Orchestral, String and chorus divisions, along with a new six-manual console. All of this is covered in fascinating detail, as are the three challenging proposals (one from England's Henry Willis) for the never-built Stentor Division, which was planned to have ranks on 100 inches of wind! Surely such a division could "cut through" full organ and orchestra, but one must wonder if, in fact, it would have added much to this magnificent organ which already had been recognized as the ultimate American Symphonic Organ.

The main body of the book closes with an updating of the personalities who, over the years, have been connected with the Wanamaker organ. It brings us up-to-date on the various "problems" that have afflicted the organ due to recent remodelings of the building. But now, with the wholehearted support that the restoration project has re-

ceived from the May Company and Lord & Taylor, the Wanamaker organ's future is assured!

There are five appendices covering the organ's original (1904), 1917 and present specifications, the console control layout, a tribute to Fleming, the intimate story of how Virgil Fox created his arrangement of "Come Sweet Death," and some personal notes about Keith Chapman.

The 23 pages of Endnotes deserve special mention for, unlike the usual Footnotes, they contain more technical information about the organ and more detailed views on the personalities and events than are found in the main text. We recommend they be read in conjunction with each chapter.

In addition to the overall beauty of the page layouts, there are more than 270 photographs and drawings throughout the book; over 30 of these are full-page photographs, with almost 20 which show the Grand Court through the years, and many of these are of the spectacular seasonal decorations.

Mr. Biswanger's smoothly flowing prose has beautifully captured the human emotions along with the historical facts. It's both wonderfully instructive and thoroughly entertaining. This is a book one will proudly display and surely enjoy reading again and again as - thanks to the tremendous support from Lord & Taylor, the Friends of the Wanamaker Organ, and, of course, the dedicated organ technicians - this most glorious example of the American Symphonic Organ continues to fulfill its role of providing the most magnificent "Music in the Marketplace."

Copies can be obtained by sending a \$66.00 donation (plus \$7.00 for shipping priority mail in a crush-proof box) to Friends of the Wanamaker Organ, 224 Lee Circle, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010-3726.

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as well as chapter e-mail contacts and website locations  
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Thank you

# Closing Chord

## Porter Warrington Heaps

Porter Warrington Heaps, one of America's most accomplished and versatile organists, died on May 3, 1999, three weeks short of his 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday. A recitalist of classical and popular music, radio and television entertainer, organist for churches and synagogues, composer and arranger, editor and publisher, he gained recognition early on as an organist and performer throughout the country and much of the world.

Born in a Chicago suburb in 1906, Mr. Heaps began playing organ and piano at an early age, and as a schoolboy took his first position as church organist, a service he provided continuously thereafter for almost eighty years. He went on in the 1920s to attend Northwestern University where he received the Bachelor of Music, Bachelor of Science, and Master of Arts degrees, spending the summers of those years in Paris studying organ with Marcel Dupre.

In 1930, he married Dorothy Hill, a native of Los Angeles and also a Northwestern graduate, thus beginning a 67 year marriage that ended only with his wife's death in 1998. They made their home in Evanston, Illinois, where two daughters, Barbara and Portia were born in 1931 and 1938.

For three years, Mr. Heaps was chapel organist at Northwestern University, and for four years played daily Vesper recitals in Rockefeller Chapel at the University of Chicago. In the 1930s, he served on the organ faculty of the Cosmopolitan School of Music and Dramatic Art in Chicago, taught at Northwestern, and substituted for Arthur Poister at the University of Redlands, California.

In the 1940s and 1950s, he did extensive radio and television work at major Chicago stations. For over a quarter of a century he was organist for the Chicagoland Music Festival, held in Soldiers' Field every August, where he was noted for conducting gigantic ensembles of over seventy organs and harps. During this period, he also served as organist and choir-

master of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Evanston, Illinois.

Mr. Heaps' reputation depends equally on his work with the Hammond Organ Company, which began in the 1930s and continued until his retirement in 1970. It was he who worked out and programmed the sound registrations that turned a musical curiosity into a serious instrument. Though not called by that name, the Hammond was in fact the first synthesizer. With the reluctance of The American Guild of Organists to consider the Hammond an "organ," Mr. Heaps played a judgment competition in the Rockefeller Chapel against the pipe organ installed there. When the judges could not decide or agree on which instrument was which, the Hammond Organ had come of age. Although his musical training and early career were strictly in classical music, it was Porter Heaps who helped popularize organ music in this country by bringing the organ into homes and by writing and arranging music for beginners as well as accomplished organists. For thirty-five years, he traveled the world for Hammond, giving seminars, programs and concerts, demonstrating with virtuosity and droll, infectious humor the versatility of the instrument's use in homes, schools, and supper clubs, as well as in churches and on the concert stage. He also established Keyboard Publications in order to distribute teaching material, arrangements, and sheet music for the Hammond Organ to amateur and professional musicians of all levels of proficiency.

In 1970, Porter and Dorothy Heaps moved to Palo Alto, California, where Mr. Heaps continued an active retirement. For three years, he was Dean of the San Jose Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. He was involved with the Pacific Council for Organ Clubs, representing 40 different organizations in the Bay Area. He continued to give demonstrations, recitals and concerts on both electronic and pipe organs and to perform yearly at the Home Organ Festival at Asilomar in Monterey County, California. For many years, he was the organist and music director for the Unity Palo Alto Community Church.

His library, one of the most complete private libraries of classical and popular organ music in the world, will be donated to the School of Music at Northwestern University.

Mr. Heaps was preceded in death by his wife, Dorothy, and a younger brother, Willard A. Heaps. He is survived by his daughters, Barbara Van Slyke and Portia Leet, five grandchildren and six great-grand children. A memorial service was held on Friday, June 4, at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 600 Colorado St. in Palo Alto, California. Donations may be made to The Porter and Dorothy Heaps Fund for Organ Students, Northwestern University School of Music, Office of the Dean, 711 Elgin Rd., Evanston, IL 60208.

*Dr. James Welch*

(For further information, see article by James Welch: "Porter Heaps: Versatile Twentieth-Century Organist." *The American Organist*, June 1990, pp. 84-86.)

## Claud Beckham

Although Claud Beckham has not been an ATOS member for many years, old-timers will remember him as the gentleman who produced one of the greatest ATOS Conventions of all time. It was the "Fabulous Fifteenth" (1970) that was held in the New York area. Claud died suddenly on April 23, 1999, at age 76.

As convention chairman, Claud brought his formidable organizational skills to a diverse group of theatre organ celebrities. They held concerts in venues that we can only dream about now. The extraordinary artists were picked from the cream-of-the-crop. Many of the organ technicians have progressed to important roles in the organbuilding realm. The convention brochure is a masterpiece.

ATOS wasn't Claud's only love. He held executive positions with the phone company. When he retired in 1980, he was in charge of government telephone communications at the AT&T headquarters. After that, he worked with the Accreditation Board for Engineering Technology that accredits university engineering curricula throughout the United States. He established a similar Computing Sciences Accreditation Board, and they made him the Director Emeritus

when he retired from that. Throughout his professional career, he never followed anyone in a job. He saw a need, developed the requirements, and then did the work.

Claud established a respected relationship with the management of the Radio City Music Hall. The late John Henry Jackson, Producer and Vice-president of Stage Operations at the Music Hall, recognized Claud's enthusiasm for theatrical matters. This led to privileges at the Music Hall which were unprecedented and are unequalled in the history of the ATOS. In addition to the Dick Leibert, Ray Bohr, and Jack Ward concerts as part of the 1970 National Convention, other ATOS events were held in both the main auditorium (4/58 Wurlitzer) and the Plaza Sound studios where a 3/13 Wurlitzer once resided. Claud's crowning theatrical achievement was his assignment as Stage Manager for a regular Music Hall stage show in 1973.

Claud was born in Memphis and graduated from Georgia Tech. His love of music came from constant exposure at his family's home. His

love of the theatre organ came from his days of sneaking into the Fox Atlanta Theatre to hear the Mighty Möller.

Claud and his wife, Aline, moved to New York in 1963. He was on the Board of Directors of the New York Theatre Organ Society for many years. On a personal note, Claud and I worked in the same building in New York and would occasionally get together for lunch. Several times, Claud invited me to attend dress rehearsals at the Music Hall with him. Those opportunities are among my fondest memories. It was Claud who introduced me to Jimmie Paulin. I grew to consider Jimmie my blood brother, and his friendship has had a significant impact on my life. Claud is survived by his wife, Aline, his daughters, Claudia and Gloria, four grandchildren, and his step son, Edward.

*Dave Schutt*

### Charles C. Zimmerman

We sadly announce the passing of Charles C. Zimmerman, a long time member of the Los Angeles Theatre

Organ Society. "Charley" or "Chuck" as he was known to his many friends, is perhaps best known for his "Zim Photos" appearing for many years in THEATRE ORGAN.

Charley was born on May 12, 1910 and died on June 13, 1999 from complications of a heart attack he suffered on May 22. An engineering graduate of John Hopkins in his native Baltimore, he was founder of West Coast Plastics, which he and his devoted wife, Frieda, operated since 1945. As an amateur musician, he once played saxophone and attended organ classes taught by the legendary Jesse Crawford.

*Bob Hill*

### Virginia Maxine Carley

Virginia Maxine Carley entered our world near Wynoka, Oklahoma, in 1925, and succumbed to the ravages of cancer in Long Beach, California, on April 28, 1999.

Virginia was best known to us organ buffs due to her guidance and encouragement of the brilliant organ concert career of her daughter, Candi Carley-Roth. Yet, through all this, she steadfastly resisted the image of the "stage mother," preferring to remain in the background.

While Virginia is gone, her memory lives on. Her sparkling personality and incisive sense of humor legend as was her immaculate appearance.

Our humble hacienda is replete with pleasant memories of Virginia, most of them of her own crafting. A stellar reminder of her aptitude is the elegant framed montage of some 200 snapshots of mutual friends, along with the identities of each. Perched beneath this personal treasure, resides a graceful snow white ceramic swan, perhaps representing the depth of her devotion.

Virginia is survived by her talented daughter, Candi Carley-Roth and her husband Mark and their young son Gabriel, and her son Bob and his wife, Shelia and their young son David. Both siblings seem to have inherited her matchless sense of humor and zest for life.

Please, Dear God, if you have room for another star in your heavens, please mark it "for Virginia Carley."

*Bob Hill*

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# CHAPTER NEWS

JULY / AUGUST 1999



*Ron Carter played a great concert for us in June.*

## ALABAMA

Cecil Whitmire: 205/252-2868

**Birmingham, Alabama.** The Alabama Chapter met on Sunday morning, June 20, at the Alabama Theatre, where a caravan of cars left for Ron Carter's home in Georgia. The group stopped for lunch in Douglasville, where more vehicles joined the group. After lunch, we started off following Larry Donaldson. Everyone was confident that since we all had cell phones following a leader wouldn't be a problem. Unfortunately, the various cell phones, many with different companies, didn't especially want to talk to each other. After the last two vehicles became separated from the group, this became a real problem. When we called Larry we got a busy signal. He was trying to call us but couldn't get through. The lost vehicles decided to stop in the parking lot of a catfish restaurant to decide what to do. After about 30 minutes, one of our three cell phones got through to Larry. He gave us some directions and in ten minutes we were at the beautiful Carter home on Lake Somerville. The concert had started, but Ron assured us, we hadn't missed anything. He reminded us of tour buses at conventions that always get lost. He said the artist just repeated the missed numbers at the end of the concert; this he graciously did.

Ron gave a great concert. He played all types of music from "Danny Boy" to themes from the musical version of *Titanic*. During the concert, Ron played a special tribute to his wife, Donna. Their 31st anniversary was the next day.

After the concert, Donna and Ron served a wonderful ice cream cake. It was covered with white icing with red letters, "Welcome Alabama Chapter ATOS." Ron escorted the group to the organ chamber. After the concert, he opened the console to anyone who wanted to play.

Ron Carter's Wurlitzer is one of the most beautiful home installations I have ever seen. The room is big and the console looks as if it had been built for this location. The organ is a 1927 Wurlitzer originally with seven ranks when it was taken from the Carolina Theatre. The expansion to 16 ranks took place in 1993. The console was taken from the Diversy Theatre in Chicago (via Pizza and Pipes Serramonte in Daly City, California.) It also has a Roland-Rogers W50 MIDI which provides additional electronic voices. The organ is now equipped with a Devtronics multi-action control system. Ron has named this organ, "Lake Somerset Wurlitzer."

*Virginia Robertson*

## CEDAR RAPIDS

Ray Frischkorn: 319/364-6300

**Cedar Rapids, Iowa.** Following our very successful and profitable "Iowa Organ Weekend Adventure" regional convention, CRATOS began preparation for our spring spectacular on April 25 with artist Jim Riggs at the console of the Wurlitzer at the Paramount Theatre. It too, was a well-attended and profitable Sunday afternoon.

CRATOS greatly appreciated the fine, detailed review of our regional given us in THEATRE ORGAN. Ron Musselman outdid himself in the ten-page spread relative to our "Mighty

Mini" convention - the term he used as a headline. Our mayor, Lee Clancey, was presented a copy of the Journal to read what our chapter had done to help promote our city by having the convention here and showing off the instruments that we are most fortunate to have.

Besides regular membership meetings at various places including both theatres and church organ visitations, we are now gearing up for another first! CRATOS will be sponsoring a spectacular at the Iowa Theatre building that houses the Rhinestone Barton! That concert will feature Jonas Nordwall on August 15. After hearing him at our Wurlitzer and at various conventions we look forward to a great performance by him.

The Rhinestone Barton had further use on the last day of April and the first of May when I played half-hour preludes at the Barbershoppers' three extravaganza performances.

Our fall spectacular will feature Clark Wilson at the Paramount Wurlitzer. We will look forward to welcoming him back for another appearance.

It is not difficult to see from the above that we have our work cut out for us in preparation for the upcoming events. In June, we will take time out for a picnic at a local park for all our members. Music we will enjoy there will be taped theatre organ selections of favorite artists. Also in June, we will have our membership meeting in the Iowa Theatre building where all who wish can have the opportunity to sit down at the Rhinestone Barton that afternoon.

We sincerely appreciate the congratulatory messages received by registrants of our regional and thank those who were kind enough to let us know they enjoyed our efforts.

*George K. Baldwin*

**ATOS WEBSITE:**  
<http://www.ATOS.org>



## CENTRAL FLORIDA

David Braun: 941/957-4266

**Tampa, Florida.** Our March business meeting was canceled due to the prospect of hearing our own Rosa Rio play a concert at the Pinellas Park Assembly Hall. Although the attendance was disappointing due to the stormy weather, Rosa, at the console of the beautiful new Empire Theatre Organ rewarded us with another sterling performance. She is a gem and we thank her most heartily for her continued support, artistically and financially. She must know how much she is appreciated! We also want to thank Cliff Shaffer who masterfully assumed the duties of Master of Ceremonies for the day.

The April meeting, our annual meeting, was poorly attended, but proved to be a most productive one. After the usual business had been taken care of, new business brought on a lively discussion with lots of suggestions and criticism. We are concerned with apathy in our organization. It seems it is a problem with other chapters. But, with the strong

support of those in attendance, we look forward to a healthy and vigorous chapter. Interest in our chapter having a convention, regional or annual, seems to be gaining support. It shall be decided either way at our next meeting. Also, our 2/9 Wurlitzer is getting closer to the finish line. Pinellas Park is installing the wall that will enclosed much of the wind lines and some reservoirs. Some work is still necessary, but, the end is around the corner.

A local ABC affiliated television station featured the Tampa Theatre and Bob Baker in "Tampa Bay Treasures." Bob ably demonstrated the organ by showing just how the theatre organ was used in conjunction with the silent films.

Our May meeting found us at the beautiful Tampa Theatre once again. Since it was Mother's Day, our president, David Braun, presented all the ladies in attendance with a lovely carnation. A nice surprise for the "girls." Another surprise greeted us as we approached the theatre. The marquee had a big CFTOS thank you on it. It

was wonderful to see our organization's name up in lights. Thank you, John Bell, manager of the Tampa Theatre. After a short meeting, the members were treated to our own "Peanut Butter and Jelly" duo, namely David Braun and Bob Baker. Each played a short program in two totally different theatre styles. Both were sensational and the program allowed for the members to really take part in open console.

June found us at the home of Johnnie June Carter. She is the proud owner of a Hammond B-3. Some of our members are truly "Hammond Nuts." There was much discussion of draw bars and the like; then a memorable afternoon hearing old favorites on June's Hammond. She and her daughter were charming hostesses. Our meetings are ad-journed until September when we hope to hear the Pinellis Park Wurlitzer play.

*Peg Mayer*

## CENTRAL INDIANA

Carlton Smith: 317/638-4918

**Indianapolis, Indiana.** The Central Indiana Chapter met on April 11 at Manual High School for the regular monthly meeting. During the business meeting, Chapter President Carlton Smith reported on work in progress on all three of the installations our chapter maintains: Warren Central and Manual High Schools, and Hedback Theatre. Bill Tandy, one of our members, who presented an enjoyable selection of old and new favorites, presented the musical program that followed.

Our May chapter meeting was not held due to the concert presented on May 9 at Warren Central High School by Simon Gledhill. As we have come to expect from Simon, it was an exciting concert, including many familiar

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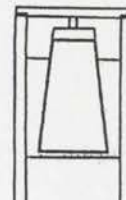
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tunes and a medley from the Rogers and Hammerstein musical *Carousel*. A touch of humor was interjected into the program in the form of a special musical birthday tribute to Tim Needler, including a slide show of baby pictures! The concert was very well attended and enjoyed by all.

*Louise Eddington*

## CUMBERLAND VALLEY

John Eyer, Jr.: 717/264-7886

**Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.** The Capitol Theatre in Chambersburg, home of the chapter's original-installation Möller, held its 72nd anniversary celebration in April, and the organ was featured in spectacular half-hour-pre-show performances by Bob Eyer, Jr. The *Fabulous Fifties* was the celebration's theme, and many of the attendees wore period outfits that added to the atmosphere. Two shows were held: one on Friday night, the other on Sunday afternoon, and both were well attended at this annual fundraiser for the theatre. The organ crew had been extremely busy preparing the organ, and for the first time ever, the Tibia and Tuba individually had their own reservoir and tremulant, a change that resulted in a noticeably different, and much improved, sound.

Chambersburg's downtown business association, which owns the theatre, has invested in a number of building improvements in recent months, including new carpet, paint, and auditorium lighting. The theatre truly has become a restored gem and a source of great pride for the community, and the chapter is grateful that the organ has been included in that success.

## DAIRYLAND

Corey E. Olsen: 414/646-8647

### Racine / Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Our St. Patrick's Day social was held on Sunday, March 14 at the home of Bill and Pat Campbell of West Allis. On Bill's Rodgers organ, he played Irish and other songs, along with a sing-along. Several door prizes were also given out. Bill, who will be the convention chairman for the ATOS Annual Convention in 2000, gave us updated convention plans along with naming committee heads and asked for volunteers for the necessary work involved in hosting an annual convention. Plans are to showcase organs in Milwaukee, Racine, Madison, and Baraboo for the convention in 2000. Open console and refreshments followed.

We had a rare opportunity on April 11, when our monthly social was held at the Riverside Theatre in downtown Milwaukee. The theatre is kept extremely busy throughout the year with "big name" acts and other musical productions, so our club jumped at the chance to spend an informal afternoon with the Wurlitzer we own there. It is considered one of the finest examples of a Wurlitzer still in its original home in the country! The artist was Perry Petta who played a short program for us. As he concluded, he left us all wishing he could have played longer, but since this was such a rare occasion, he wished to leave time for those who desired to try their hand at the organ during open console. When our allotted time was up, the group drove to Gary Hanson's Organ Pipe Music Palace for an afterglow, where Barry Baker entertained us on the 3/27 Kimball-Wurlitzer.

*Sandy Knuth*

## DELAWARE VALLEY

Harry Linn, Jr

TOSDV Hotline: 610-275-5623

Web Site: <http://theatreorgans.com/pa/tosdv/>

**Pottstown, Pennsylvania.** On Saturday afternoon, March 27, TOSDV was the guest of Allen Organ Company to hear and play the George Wright Signature theatre organ installed in the Jerome Markowitz Memorial Museum. Members of South Jersey, and Garden State as well as friends and guests accompanied us. In all, about 70 Theatre Organ enthusiasts were present. Fifteen were privileged to play that instrument and others took time to sample the other instruments in Octave Hall. TOSDV member Rudy Lucente served as host for the Allen Organ Company.

The event started with a demonstration recital on the George Wright by Candi Carley-Roth who exercised most of the stops and devices. Opening with "In the Mood," Candi diversified with "Pachalbel's Canon" and a medley of sacred music requested by the audience. Candi closed with her own R&B improvisation on "Ode to Joy" followed by the "Colonial March" (a tribute to the theatre in Phoenixville), both of which used the full capacity of the instrument. Next was a special number as performed by George Wright through the magic of modern electronics as recorded via a digital MIDI sequencer which also played back on the instrument. It was intriguing to hear the music while watching the stop tabs being sequenced and no one on the bench. Open console followed with Wayne Zimmerman heading the list of Musicians who sampled the instrument.

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## DELAWARE cont.

There were a number of different models of Allen instruments set up in Octave Hall. Two instruments in particular were connected to the internal system for our enjoyment, a 317EX theatre organ, the top of the line of that model and a large four manual Renaissance Series symphonic/classical organ voiced in the English Style. Many of the attendees tried one or the other. The piece de resistance came when Candi was playing the 317EX and began playing "The Stars and Stripes Forever" and was joined by Rudy on the Renaissance for a powerful duet finish.

Many thanks to Rudy Lucente and the Allen Organ management and staff whose efforts allowed us to leave with pleasant memories in our minds and music in our hearts. *Al Derr*

On Sunday, April 18th, twelve enthusiastic TOSDV members assembled at Sutherland Building Auditorium at the Penn State Abington campus to play and hear the newly installed Rodgers 340, 3 manual theatre organ recently donated by member Lee Hulko and installed in the auditorium by TOSDV members. The crew included: Bob Barraclough, Norman Rosander, Bob Raymond, Jr., Bob Raymond, Sr., Ralph McKelvey, Herb Ziegler and a PSU student known as Buddy, all under the capable leadership of TOSDV member and Penn State Booster Tom Smerke. The instrument sounds great but is still being regulated and having some lately discovered bugs tracked down and eliminated. The dedication concert, which we originally hoped to schedule for May has been put off until after the start of the fall semester.

*Tom Rotunno*

*This Correspondent wishes to thank Mr. Al Derr for reporting on the Allen Organ visit.*

## EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

Hank Lysaght: 781/235-9009

**New Bedford, Massachusetts.** The very talented Walter Strony, no stranger to our chapter, was again our guest organist on March 27 at Babson. Between his previous concerts, records, tapes and CDs, he has developed a good following and this drew a very large audience.

A lively "Puttin' on the Ritz" got his "show on the road" followed by a medley of some dramatic compositions of Andrew Lloyd Webber. Mr. Strony cleverly played music with a Times Square atmosphere, some timeless Gershwin and Broadway show songs plus a medley of audience requested music - always a crowd pleaser.

Walter's tour de force was a well-known meat packer by the name of Oscar Meyer and the variations our artist wove into this production were something to be seen and heard!

Mr. Strony used all the Wurlitzer's resources during his program - KAWAI upright piano, traps and percussions. The audience was well pleased and gave him a vigorous standing ovation at both intermission and conclusion.

Sarah and F. Garrett Shanklin invited our chapter members and some from Pine Tree, Connecticut Valley and SENETOS to the third concert by Ron Rhode on April 25 at their new four manual, 34 rank Wurlitzer located in the new Shanklin conference Center, Groton. This organ and building represented the culmination of a dream come true by Garrett after years of planning and collecting all Wurlitzer pipework, chests, regulators and other components excepting the Trivo brass trumpet EnChamade and Mason & Hamlin 7' grand piano. However, a Wurlitzer upright piano is

also included in the specification. The console is beautifully restored and originally from the Metropolitan Theatre, Boston of 1930 (now Wang Center) which was a Publix 4 of 26 ranks. The core of this "new" organ is from the Palace Theatre, Cleveland, Ohio, a three-manual, 15 rank Style 260 Wurlitzer.

In designing this large building, much thought was given to the best acoustics possible, a very sturdy structure and even with a 44-seat balcony and projection booth. The chambers span the entire width of the building and are very spacious and well lighted. A 25 HP three stage Spencer turbine blower, originally from the Center Theatre, Rockefeller Plaza, New York City, gives breath to this fine instrument. Many technicians labored on this large organ over many months, but the two who were with it from the start are Donald L. Phipps and Allen R. Miller. Both men were given due credit by our host.

Two previous concerts were given by Ron, one for all the contractors and families, and one for the Shanklin Corporation employees and families. This three day weekend was like the opening of a new theatre in the 20s and 30s with wonderfully catered hors d'oeuvres and beverages of all varieties at the beginning and intermission. A light buffet after the concert rounded off the event.

As for Ron Rhode's concert, what can be said that hasn't been said many times before? It was just wonderful! At the start, the console's back was to the audience. As "Everything's Coming Up Roses" was heard, it rotated showing the artist and a gorgeous white and gold-leaf key desk. Thirteen selections, including a medley, were heard before intermission. After the intermission, the grand

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piano was spotlighted, using the original Ampico player action. Our host then played "I've Got a Feeling I'm Falling" before Mr. Rhode skillfully rendered seven more numbers, including an encore. A standing ovation was given by those present as they applauded a fine concert of waltzes, marches, light classics, and other popular varieties including a wonderful "Crazy."

This was a very special opening celebration - a class act - and the Shanklin's made the most of it. Thank you once again, Sarah and Garrett

On May 8, a public silent movie night with Chad Weirick on our 4/18 Wurlitzer at Babson drew a large audience. Before each of the five silent films, Scott and Jan MacGillivray made appropriate comments. Scott is the Grand Sheik of the Boston Brats, the local chapter of the Sons of the Desert. This group is the oldest tent of 150 chapters worldwide and focus on Laurel and Hardy films, but Keaton, Lloyd, Chase, W.C. Fields, Chaplin, The Three Stooges, The Ritz Brothers, etc., are also appropriate for their appreciation, research and are screened monthly. The five silent films were: *Teddy at The Throttle* (Keystone wonder dog), *One A.M.* with Charles Chaplin, *Luke's Movie Muddle* with Harold Lloyd as lonesome Luke, *The High Sign* with Buster Keaton and *From Soup to Nuts* with Laurel and Hardy.

The large screen was raised for a fine group of seven female tap dancers called "Stage Mothers" from the Cindy Wright Studio. Two members of the troupe are a mother/daughter team. They all looked elegant in black, with Chad's fine accompaniment as they danced in perfect time. Our organist played a number at the end using the Kawai upright piano frequently and with fast inter-manual pyrotechnics had his audience leaving with smiles after an evening of mirth.

This double-header weekend had EMCATOS meeting on May 9, with two members at the console: Carol Bray Moller in her own distinctive, smooth style and Bob Legon, a regular. Carol included some Thomas "Fats" Waller and Irving Berlin numbers, while Bob concentrated on music of the 50s in long medleys. Before we get together again, one third of the year will pass until September making fond memories of our Pipe Organ Pops and Spectaculars all the more appreciated. *Stanley C. Garniss*



*Jelani Eddington, Everett Oliver and Catherine Oliver.*  
*Jimmy Vanore photo*



*Ralph Ringstad at the Kilgen Theatre organ in the Mayfair Theatre, West New York, New Jersey. Tony Rustako photo*

## GARDEN STATE

Cathy Martin: 973/256-5480

**Trenton New Jersey.** Sunday March 21, 1999 was a very special day, as our members were able to hear, for the first time, the great sounds of our chapter's 3/4 Kilgen Theatre Pipe Organ which is placed in the Mayfair Theatre in West New York, New Jersey.

The Kilgen was originally a 2/4 organ installed in the Rivoli Theatre in Hastings, Nebraska. It was removed and stored until purchased. The new owner added a third manual. The Ochmann family installed it in their home in Whitehouse, New Jersey. Garden State Chapter acquired the Kilgen in February 1997 and it became the first theatre organ owned by our chapter. We call it our Opus 1.

Ralph Ringstad well known organist and chapter member presented an excellent mini-concert. His selections featuring the four ranks surprised and pleased us with the powerful sounds of such a small organ. We had an enjoyable afternoon including a big surprise birthday for Ashley Miller. A big thank you to crew chief Bob Miloche and his crew for his dedication and the many hours of work installing the organ. Our chapter is most fortunate to have the enthusiasm and co-operation of the theatre owner Andrew Dai who was all smiles when the organ played.

A concert featuring Jelani Eddington at the Everett Oliver residence in Brielle, New Jersey was held Sunday April 25, 1999 at 3:00 p.m. The Oliver's home has a beau-



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## GARDEN STATE cont.

tiful large music and library room that contains the 3/11 Wurlitzer. Because of space, the seating was limited to the first fifty members and reservations were required. Jelani's popularity as a highly acclaimed national and international organist had the reservation list closed in a couple of days. The gorgeous spring day did not lure the members to stay home and garden. All attended and enjoyed an excellent concert. Jelani's program was a pleasing variety of lush ballads, a Broadway medley of *Westside Story* and *Fantaisie-Impromptu* with recognition to Ashley Miller, who listened, seated in the balcony of the room. Refreshments were served and members enjoyed talking to Jelani who signed his CDs. Both Jersey and New York chapters are pleased that he will be close by, working in New York City after graduation. President Cathy Martin thanked the Oliver's for making this day possible and for sharing their beautiful instrument with us.

*Jinny Vanore*

## HUDSON-MOHAWK

Frank Hackert: (518) 355-4523.

**Schenectady, New York.** The location of the Hudson-Mohawk Chapter's spring 1999 meetings differed from the norm. Generally, meetings are held in Proctor's Theatre, Schenectady, New York, with its beautiful resident, Goldie the 3/18 Wurlitzer pipe organ. However, due

to scheduling conflicts, the theatre graciously allowed the Chapter the use of its posh Guild Room, in the building's arcade, on March 22. The subject of the meeting was a lecture and slides on the history of Proctor's Theatre presented by members of The Proctor's Theatre Historical Society. The talk was very informative and much appreciated by the audience. Refreshments and open console on Goldie followed.

On April 26, Chapter member John Van Laak graciously opened up his home to the club for a special spring meeting. John's home is a music-minded person's Mecca; since it houses a built-in 4/26 rank pipe organ, two Grand Pianos and a harpsichord. He also has an excellent record collection of vintage 78s. Great fun was had by all playing the musical various instruments and listening to the wonderful sounds ringing through the house. The business portion of the evening included the announcement of nominations for the Chapter's officers for the 1999-2000 season.

The Proctor's Theatre/Hudson-Mohawk Theatre Organ Society's sponsored free noon concert series continues to gain an audience with each successive month's offering. Also, the concerts are continuing to be diversified with combinations of theatre organ, vocalists, piano offerings and musical groups; but of course always emphasizing our favorite musical instrument. The concert



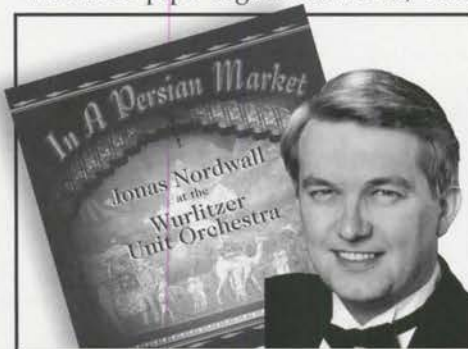
*Carl Hackert and Avery Tunningley*



*Al Moser and Ruby McGrory*

offered on March 9 featured Carl Hackert and Avery Tunningley on theatre organ and piano. Both are accomplished musicians whose program, comprised of duets and solos, was exceptional. On April 20, the stage of Proctor's Theatre was packed with a wide variety of entertainment as featured artist, organist Al Moser welcomed guest artists Ruby McGrory on piano and the Over the Hill 4 Plus 5, a Dixieland Band. The show was great and the audience large. On May 18, New Jersey organist Jinny Vanore will be the featured performer followed by the concluding noon concert of the 1998-99 season on June 15 with Robert Frederick.

Chapter member Carl Hackert volunteered his considerable talent to perform in a fund-raiser for the Visiting Nurses Association on April 23. The event featured actor, director, and activist for the disabled, Christopher Reeve. Mr. Reeve offered an inspirational and hope-inspiring talk and answered audience ques-



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tions. Carl accompanied a vocal duet rendition of The Prayer on piano.

Hudson-Mohawk Chapter members (including Bill and Helen Menz, Dick Calderwood, Norene Grose, Marion Hackert and Frank Hackert) journeyed out of the immediate upstate New York area to enjoy organ concerts offered in Poughkeepsie and Syracuse, New York. Dennis James performed at the Bardavon Theatre in Poughkeepsie on April 16 in a mini-concert birthday salute to the great Charlie Chaplin. His exciting repertoire included Chaplin musical compositions and the accompaniment of a marvelous Chaplin short: *A Dog's Life* using Chaplin's original musical score. Paul Roberts performed on April 18 on the Wurlitzer pipe organ at the Empire State Theatre and Musical Instrument Museum at the New York State Fairgrounds in Syracuse. His program also delighted the upstate New York travelers who were glad they spent the weekend chasing organs. Local concerts in the spring and summer include Dennis James at Proctor's Theatre on May 23, an organ pops concert featuring Carl Hackert at the Round Lake Auditorium's Ferris tracker pipe organ at 8:00 p.m. on Sunday August 29 with a reprise on Monday at 2:00 p.m. August 30. Information regarding the Round Lake Auditorium concert is available at (518) 899-7141.

Norene Grose

## LONDON & SOUTH OF ENGLAND

Jim C. Bruce

Our year started with a concert at Woking Leisure Centre, where Brian Sharp entertained us at the console of the Wurlitzer. Everyone had a marvelous evening. Member's concert nights at Northolt, unfortunately, are coming to an end. As Les Rawle is retiring, and has put his Wurlitzer up for sale.

In January and February, our organists were Michael Wooldridge and Alan Shirrow, and in March and April, we heard Len Rawle. Members enjoyed a marvelous evening of music. Len's programme included the "ATOS March" composed by George Blackmore for the 1980 Convention held in England.

Keith Beckenham played for us at the State Kilburn. Keith also played a Hammond organ, including a selection of tunes from Walt Disney shows. Our patron, Bill Davies, gave us a very enjoyable morning of music at Kilburn in April.

Our organist at the end of April was Jean Martyn at the console of the Woking Wurlitzer. Catherine Drummond played a cameo spot at the beginning of the second half. Catherine was a Young Organist winner in 1994.

Gwen Light

## LOS ANGELES

Donn Linton: 213/254-6985

**Los Angeles, California.** The Los Angeles Theatre Organ Society recently rediscovered an organist who first played for our organization during an organ crawl in 1980 which began on a Saturday morning at the pizza parlor in Reseda, toured four home installations by bus before returning to the restaurant for pizza and more theatre organ.

John West played the Sargent-Stark Wurlitzer then, and during the intervening 18 years has honed his skills in the genre of classical organ. His early organ studies were under the tutelage of Richard Purvis and he holds a master's degree with honors from the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. He is currently Professor of Organ Studies at California State University at Northridge and is

Director of Music at Immanuel Presbyterian Church. John is also highly involved in the commercial music industry working with keyboards and the MIDI as well as voice. He works in television, movies and commercials and has worked with such artists as Bette Midler, Julio Iglesias, John Williams, and others. He is also the House Organist at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium.

John's show, "100 Years of American Music" wasn't organized chronologically, but did cover 100 years or a little more and consisted of medleys of two to four pieces representative of twelve styles of American music. "Everything's Coming Up Roses" was an appropriate opener with West bounding onto the stage in a bright red tux. The first medley was from musicals and movies. Other segments included ragtime (with a Scott Joplin which actually predates 1900), country, television themes, blues, gospel, classical, and a tribute to John Williams. *Titanic* brought us up to the 1990s. He drew on many of the less well known and infrequently heard tunes (at least on theatre organ) for his examples. His skill at the console was evident and the registrations were different than some of us are familiar with. If this fellow can be kept at the theatre organ console, he may very well become another superstar theatre organist to entertain us.

The LATOS General Meeting for spring was held on Sunday afternoon,

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## LOS ANGELES cont.

April 11, at the Wilshire-Ebell Theatre, with members of the Southern California Organ Grinders (electronic) Club as guests.

After two very short business meetings, Tom Sheen, a long time member, entertained us with a mini concert. Tom began teaching piano and organ at age 18 and started his playing career in an Irish bar in 1958. He soon became a theatre organ enthusiast and had a good relationship with several of the Chicago area theatres where he was able to fine-tune his theatre organ skills. He has been teaching piano and organ ever since. He and his partner, Kim, operate as Orange Coast Piano in Santa Ana, California, rebuilding pianos and other musical instruments. Following the mini-concert, many LATOS members and guests took their turns on the bench in open console.

Sunday April 18, many LATOS members joined the Orange County Chapter for a concert featuring Jelani Eddington at the Plummer Auditorium 4/36 Wurlitzer in Fullerton.

LATOS members were deeply saddened by the death of Chapter President, Joe McFarland. Although Joe had been in and out of the hospital several times over the last few years (and was in the hospital when he passed away,) it's strange to realize that he won't be bouncing back to keep the Board "on track" when members begin to wander off the subject at hand.

Wayne Flottman

On May 22, ninety-four members and friends of The Los Angeles Theatre Organ Society assembled at the San Pedro terminal of the Catalina Express, for a trip to Catalina Island and a day of adventure and music. At

exactly 9:00 a.m., the boat pulled away from the dock with four of our members missing! Because they were coming all the way from Hemet and didn't want to be late, they came to Long Beach Friday night and stayed at a hotel. This put them just the length of Terminal Island from the dock but what none of us knew was that Caltrans would close the Vincent Thomas Bridge on Saturday morning! By the time they found their way around to San Pedro, the boat was gone.

The boat was extremely fast and relatively smooth and we made the trip in just over an hour. When we landed, we found the missing members of our party waiting on the dock! They had come over by helicopter! Everyone hurried to the El Galleon restaurant where breakfast was waiting for us. The restaurant has a view of the harbor so they could see the boat on it's way in. The El Galleon is not normally open until 12:00, so we had the place to ourselves. After breakfast, there was time to explore and shop before the 1:00 p.m. movie, *The Thief of Bagdad*.

Most of us arrived at the theatre early to admire the restoration work that was completed in 1997. The emcee pointed out that the theatre is 70 years old, the projectors are 65 years old, the film is 75 years old and the 16 rank Page organ is 70 years old. So this was really a trip to the past! The film was remarkable for its clarity (restored and re-released) as well as for its special effects. The theatre and film are maintained by the Wrigley Island Conservancy for silent movie presentation. The film is full of flying horses, flying carpets, magic ropes, magical armies, and other effects that were unheard of before this. The emcee also said that Douglas Fairbanks performance was a little overplayed, which

was the understatement of the year. It is always fascinating to observe a master of silent films at work, the subtitles were at a minimum but there was seldom any doubt of what was going on. The musical accompaniment was played by resident organist Robert Salisbury; who arranged and composed the score, with the exception of a love theme borrowed from *Scherazade*. Over the last few years, I have seen a good many silent films accompanied by the theatre organ. Most was random music played without much regard to the action on the screen, and with almost none of the sound-effects that were cued by the events. This was not the case here! The music set the scenes beautifully. All told, it made the three-plus hour film most enjoyable. Many of the audience cheered the hero and booed the villains, which showed that their attention was on the action.

After the film, there was a reception in the museum where the organist and the other people connected with the event were available to meet the public. There was time after the film for people to shop, eat, or visit other parts of Avalon. We met at the pier at 6:00 p.m. and the boat left for San Pedro at 6:30. The ocean was glass-smooth most of the way home and we arrived at the terminal a little before 8:00 p.m. tired, but pleased and happy with the day's events.

Shirley Obert

## NEW YORK

David Kopp: 973/305-1255

**New York, New York.** Spring turned out to be a busy season for the New York Chapter as members got a triple dose of theatre organ with three concerts on three consecutive weekends at three different venues by three fine artists. In addition to these chap-

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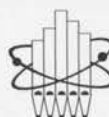
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ter-sponsored programs, the Bardavon Theatre in Poughkeepsie also presented Dennis James at our 2/8 Wurlitzer on April 16, as part of their Classic Film Series.

On April 18, NYTOS presented organist Joe Graif in concert at Chaminade High School in Mineola, New York. Joe put the Chaminade 3/15 Austin-Morton through its paces playing a fine program that featured music from the movies and several authentic Jesse Crawford arrangements, among other selections. Highlights included music from *Gone With the Wind*, such old favorites as "Granada" and "Dark Eyes," and Crawford's famous arrangements of "Roses of Picardy," "Baby's Birthday Party" and "Wedding of the Painted Doll." The audience requested an encore and Joe obliged with a toe tapping "Tico-Tico." Following the concert, chapter members and guests had an opportunity to play open console. Many thanks to Chaminade High School and its dedicated organ crew, Brother Bob Lahey, Ken Ladner and Bob Atkins for hosting us and seeing to it that the organ was well-tuned and concert ready.

The following Saturday, April 24, NYTOS members were treated to a delightful concert by English organist Paul Roberts at the New York Military Academy 4/33 Möller in Cornwall, New York. Paul opened the program with his signature tune, "Deed I Do," and kept the audience tapping their



Organist Joe Graif at Chaminade High School's 3/15 Austin-Morton in Mineola, New York, where he played an April concert for the New York Chapter. Tom Stehle photo



Barry Baker at the Long Island University/Brooklyn Paramount 4/26 Wurlitzer. Barry performed a May 2 concert for the New York Chapter.

Tom Stehle photo



Paul Roberts at the New York Military Academy 4/33 Möller where he performed in concert for the New York Chapter on April 24. Tom Stehle photo

toes with many old favorites such as "Bye, Bye Blues" and "Ain't She Sweet" played in his rhythmic British style. Other highlights included a medley of Noel Coward songs, and selections from *Mary Poppins*. This spring the academy will be honoring one of its alumni, Johnny Mandel, class of 1944, designating him Alumnus of Distinction. In recognition of this, Paul played a beautiful arrangement of Johnny's Oscar winning, "The Shadow of Your Smile." In response to a standing ovation and demand for an encore, Paul closed the afternoon program appropriately with "That's All." Thanks to the efforts of NYMA organ crew members Bob Welch and Tom Stehle, the big Möller was in fine tune.

The following Sunday, May 2, found us back for still more theatre organ music, this time at Long Island University in Brooklyn, where organist Barry Baker performed a splendid program on the 4/26 LIU/Brooklyn Paramount Mighty Wurlitzer. The former 4,500-seat movie palace, which now serves as LIU's basketball arena, provides an exciting and unique acoustical setting for this magnificent Wurlitzer, and Barry used both the organ and the room fully, yet judiciously. Highlights included a medley of Gershwin favorites, selections by Cole Porter, a superb orchestral transcription of the first movement of Mozart's Symphony #40, and a beautiful springtime medley including

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**NEW YORK cont.**

"Spring Is Here" and "Younger Than Springtime." Just as at previous concerts, the audience called for more, and Barry responded with an encore. Thanks to LIU crew chief Warren Laliberte assisted by Keith Gramlich, Margie Plows and Tom Stehle, the Mightiest of Wurlitzer's was concert ready and performed splendidly. *Tom Stehle*



*Don Reasons accompanied "Classical Brass Etc." on the Robert-Morton, Lakewood Theatre during the May meeting.*

**NORTH TEXAS**

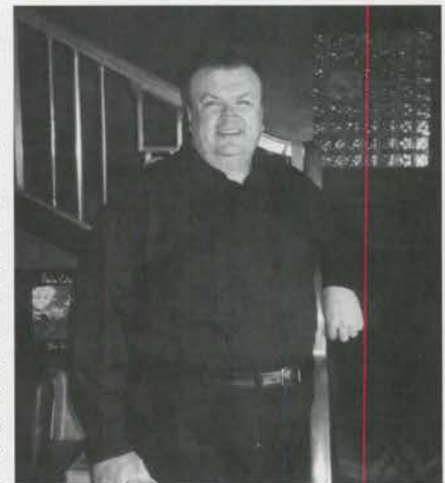
Donald Peterson: 972/517-2562

**Dallas/Ft. Worth, Texas.** In preparation for our April Chapter meeting in the Lakewood Theatre, a concerted effort by members of the organ crew has resulted in the correction of most problem areas. A major task was the elimination of many dead notes that were causing consternation for the crew and organists alike. The underlying cause was found and at least 100 dead notes were corrected, reports President Don Peterson. Most remaining issues with the new electronic relay were also cleared. A final careful tuning and adjustment resulted in a very sweet sounding Robert Morton for our April meeting.

Emboldened by the glowing reports from the organ crew, Don Reasons planned a rather ambitious program for the April meeting. This included a concert by chapter organist, Danny Ray, followed by a concert appearance of a brass quintet, "Classical Brass Etc.," accompanied by Don Reasons playing the Robert-Morton. His accompaniment was more a light fill-in than as a sixth member of the ensemble. Don planned this to exhibit the ability of the theatre pipe organ as an accompaniment instrument as well as a

traditional solo concert instrument. The success of this format could be gauged by the extended applause for both segments of the program. The organ crew that had worked so diligently over the last year to bring the Robert-Morton to this advanced level of function and sound shared this.

Advanced publicity for the April concert was successful in attracting an audience of about 200 to the Lakewood for our chapter meeting. At least half of these were not NTC members, which seems to show that we have an ample resource for our chapter to grow as we continue to provide quality programs on our newly refurbished Robert-Morton. At our meeting, we acquired two new members and three renewals.



*Danny Ray played a concert for North Texas in May.*

Don Reasons is now planning a comparable concert program for our next meeting in June, also planned for the Lakewood. He plans to again split the program between the solo organ and an instrumental group. We believe that this will expand our appeal and exposure as we work to build our audience for the theatre pipes. As for the organ crew, President Peterson reports that they are ready to add the capture action capability in time for the June meeting, a function that we dearly need to complete the console functions. They also plan to completely refurbish the tuned percussions and traps by then.

Work on putting a chapter organ into the Dallas Inwood Theatre is on hold until we have the work on our Robert-Morton in the Lakewood Theatre completed. Those who have volunteered to work on the Inwood project, are doing yeoman's work on the Lakewood as they wait, impatiently, to begin the Inwood installation. In the mean time, we continue to gain new experience by members so that we may be able to keep up two theatre organ installations when the projects are completed. *Irving Light*

**NOR-CAL**

Fred Cordes:

**Oakland, California.** This year's Morton Madness took place on April 10. There were members of Nor-Cal, Sierra, Sequoia and an intrepid handful from LATOS as well, giving us a sort of mini-convention. After an unusually cold and quite wet winter, we enjoyed the lovely spring afternoon at Hartzell's Barn near Lodi for the first of two concerts on 3/15 Robert-Morton theatre organs. Both concerts were beautifully played by Clark Wilson and were tailored to fit the different acoustics of each organ. The Hartzell venue gives one an intimate studio sound, and the dinner room at Kautz Ironstone Winery near Murphys is more open, with more of a theatre sound as a result. Each of Clark's programs was different from the other, but both were made up of delightful mixtures of Broadway shows,

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movies, radio, transcriptions and popular music of the mid-20th Century. The drive between Hartzell's and the winery was scenic, with orchards in bloom and daffodils along the roadside between Murphys and the winery. There was time for a winery tour, enjoying the gardens, the Gold Rush Museum and doing some wine tasting before having a delicious dinner and settling back for Clark's second marvelous concert.

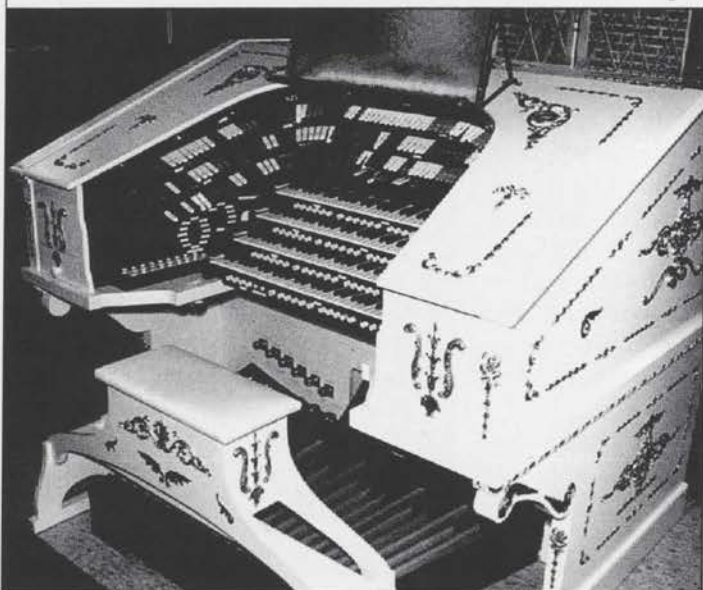
On May 2, John Giacchi played a wonderful concert for Nor-Cal at the Castro Theatre in San Francisco that was very enjoyable. His program was drawn from most of the same sources and periods as Clark's, but none of the pieces were the same. It was fun to hear John's registration for pieces we'd heard others play in the past, and to watch his technique. The theatre's Wurlitzer pipe organ, owned by the Taylor family, has had a Tuba Mirabilis on 25 inches of wind added recently. The organ sounds better than ever, and Dick Taylor is wearing a smile that covers his face.

*Evelyn Woodworth*



*John Giacchi at the Castro organ.*

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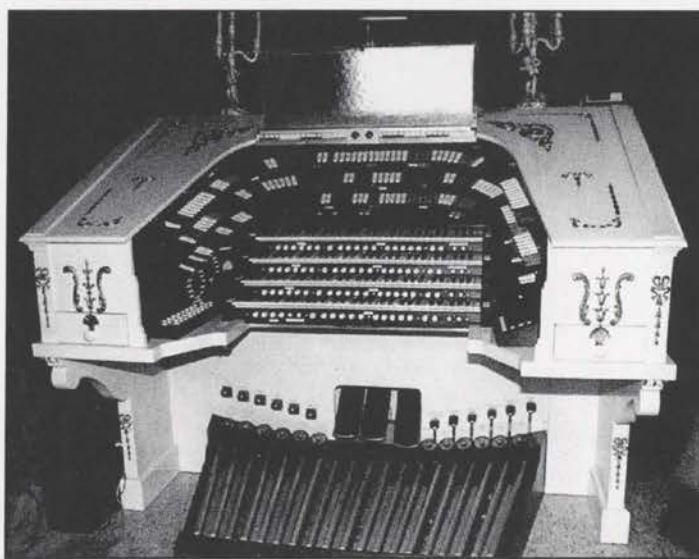
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## PUGET SOUND

Marilyn Schrum:

**Seattle, Washington.** John Giacchi, one of a number of outstanding young Australian theatre organists, included a concert for Puget Sound Chapter in his recent U.S. tour. The home of the spectacular Leif & Bonnie Johnson (formerly Dick Wilcox) 4/48 Wurlitzer was the venue. Well over 300 appreciative theatre organ aficionados were in the audience.

John, unlike many of his American counterparts, did not cut his musical teeth in a pizza parlor. He presents an entirely different type of program than what many concert-goers are used to. John feels the theatre organ is best suited for music of its era, the 20s, 30s and 40s. His program represented a wide variety of composers, with many styles of music, including works of Friml, Gus Kahn, Franz Von Supp, to name a few. Harry Warren is another of John's favorite composers and the crowd was treated to some delightful Warren music.

John was near the end of a month-long tour which included venues across the entire U.S. PSTOS looks forward to a return visit in the future.

*Jo Ann Evans*



*The interior of the Johnson's listening room. George Perks photo*

## QUAD CITIES

Helen Alexander: 309/797-5485

**Moline, Illinois.** "They thought it had played its last note." When the Quad City chapter needed help, Riverboat Development Authority listened to our grant request and provided our chapter with a grant to repair the Wicks organ console.

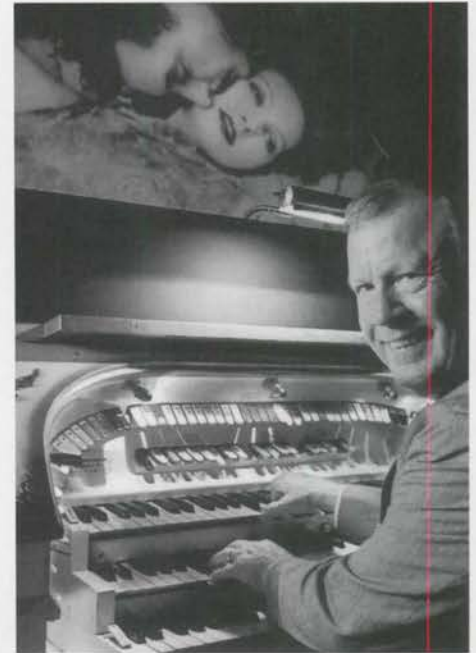
We are in the midst of doing this at the present time. Our members have been busy, responding to our call for washing, cleaning and other duties. We decided to install new carpeting on the console lift, and surrounding area of the organ, donated by our members.

The Capitol Theatre is now being used for other performances. A mishap occurred when the piano was moved tearing out the cable to the organ. The idea of a piano playing through an organ! How could this be?

We are very grateful to RDA for understanding the importance of preserving this unique theatre organ.

*At left: John Giacchi seated at the console of the Johnson 4/48 Wurlitzer.*

*George Perks photo*



*Phil Herbst. ZLR, Inc. photo*

They are helping our organization present this gift of music to over 300,000 people in our area - all nationalities and generations.

Our Wicks theatre organ is now the only Wicks theatre organ still in its original location in the entire world. We must preserve it for its historical value, as well as its great music.

RDA also supported our efforts by having a picture of our member, Phil Herbst, at the console of the Wicks, in their advertising program. A full-page picture appeared in the newspaper and another in their folder about Better Living.

Over the years, we have been very fortunate in having the great talents

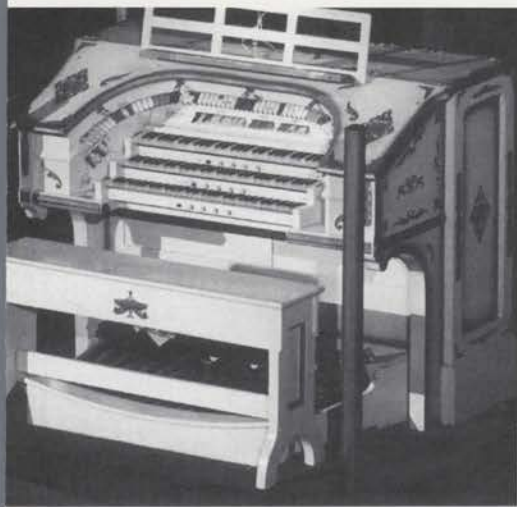
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*This 3/12 Wicks theatre pipe organ opened the Capitol Theatre, Davenport, Iowa, in 1928. Maintained by The Quad City Chapter in the newly restored Capitol Celebrity Theatre featuring Country/Western - Variety Shows.*

of many theatre organists at our console. Bob Ralston, Walt Strony, Father Miller, Hector Olivera, Gaylord Carter, Stan Kann, Tom Hazleton, Lee Maloney, Ron Rhodes, Dave Wick-erham, Lee Erwin, Tom Wibbels, Jack Moelmann, Bill Vlasak, Melissa Ambrose, and others. These artists have made our Wicks theatre organ sound wonderful and we are anxious to get our organ ready for a fall concert. Our audience has missed these great shows and fine performers.

The Capitol Theatre in Davenport, Iowa, is now a part of Scott Community College. They are busy preserving the building with crews tuckpointing the exterior walls. Everyone is aware of how important this theatre and theatre organ are to our future and to the community.

We are planning ahead to keep our Wicks organ in its very best condition, and grateful that others appreciate what we are doing. This organ will outlast all of us, and never play its last note; to this historical legacy we are committed.

To the artists who have endeared themselves to our audiences and our organization, we look forward to many more years of concerts with their great talents and friendships.

*Helen Alexander*

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## RIVER CITY

Gregory Johnson: 402/264-5655

**Omaha, Nebraska.** George Rice hosted our March 21 chapter meeting in Bellevue, Nebraska, at the Bellevue Little Theatre (ex-Roxy) and also was our guest artist. The theatre boasts a Wurlitzer Style 150, Opus 1935, 2/5 organ, originally installed in the York Theatre, York, Nebraska, in 1928. The organ also served a Glenville Lutheran Church congregation before migrating to the Roxy theatre in 1969. The Roxy was originally built for movies and has no traditional stage house with fly loft. The Bellevue Little Theatre Company bought the Roxy in 1978 and uses it as a venue for live theatre. Over the last decade, this all-volunteer theatre company has accomplished over \$130,000 in renovations, including new stage lighting, new sound equipment, new seating (244 in all), an expanded stage, and new dressing rooms. The organ console rolls into storage space, to the right of the proscenium, when not needed for a stage production. George Rice's program was a pot-pourri of march music, classical selec-

tions and schmaltzy (but lovely) pop tunes. While opening with a march written by Joyce Alldred, George presented a slide show featuring the Lancastrain Theatre Organ Trust's Wurlitzer at the Granada Studios Tour in Manchester, England. Among other tunes his program included "When Your Old Wedding Ring Was New" and Boellman's "Suite Gothique." We offer our sincere thanks to George Rice and the Bellevue Little Theatre company for their generous hospitality.



*Doug Kroger's program theme was linked to New York City's New Amsterdam and Ziegfeld Theatres, and the Ziegfeld Follies. Tom Jeffery photo*

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*George Rice at the Bellevue Little Theatre's 2/5 Wurlitzer. Tom Jeffery photo*

For our April 18 meeting, we returned to the chapter's Barton organ at Duran's Sky Ranch Airport. President Greg Johnson conducted a short business meeting, with status reports presented on area theatre organs. Our guest artist was Doug Kroger, and the theme of his program was Great Musical Theatre of the

## RIVER CITY cont.

early 1900s. It included legendary artists and songs, forever linked with the Ziegfeld Follies and the New Amsterdam and Ziegfeld Theatres in New York. Doug opened with "By the Light of the Silvery Moon" (Ziegfeld Follies of 1909), using the Xylophone. Ruth Etting (from David City, Nebraska) appeared in *Simple Simon* (1930), singing "Ten Cents a Dance." Nebraska Public Television recently aired a program devoted to Ruth Etting's Broadway career, videotaped on the stage of David City's historical Opera House. Goggle-eyed Eddie Cantor appeared in the 1928 production, *Whoopee*, with his famous song, "Makin' Whoopee." After announcing, "That's enough Ziegfeld for today," Doug closed his program with songs from George Wright's recently-released Banda CD recording, *Paramount Organ Premier* playing them in the "George Wright style." We adjourned to a local restaurant for a "wives day off" meal. Tom Jeffery

## SEQUOIA

Dave Hartman: 209/564-2297

**Fresno California.** Although there are at least four theatre pipe organs in public places around the area's major population center, Sequoia's most successful venue continues to be the Hanford Fox Theatre to the south of Fresno. This 1,100-seat atmospheric jewel houses the chapter's Wurlitzer 2/10 Style 216. This rare and small, but commanding solo instrument has seen much use in the past year for silent movie presentations. The two most recent shows featured Dennis James accompanying *The Mark of Zorro*, and Robert Israel backing Buster Keaton's *The General*. While we have been fortunate to enjoy all-solo concerts by some major artists in the



Dennis James (left) accompanied "The Mark of Zorro" starring Douglas Fairbanks, Jr; Robert Israel, "The General" starring Buster Keaton.

past, silent movies with pipe organ accompaniment have proven to be the only consistent draw: The most recent show turned a tidy profit.

The April chapter meeting at the Visalia home of George and Annabelle Pope provided the usual "slice of Disneyland" for all the guests. The music room is filled with a varied collection of antiques and memorabilia. The Pope's beautiful 2/8 Wurlitzer is the focal point of this room, and several members took turns playing it. Adjoining the music room is a lengthy garage housing George's prized vintage automobile collection. Later in the day, the group walked across the way to the large barn containing the Pope's fully operational carousel and dozens of restored collectibles.

May's morning meeting was at Rik and Adena Richards' home north of Fresno. The featured artist at their three-manual Conn was Ron Titus, who had been asked to play a program of "Old Favorites and Requests." Ron, who is an unpredictable and inherently funny performer, is well known for his off-the-wall and self-deprecating humor. After host Rik Richards introduced

him, Ron strolled up to the console to applause, sat down, began picking at the stop rail, and as the greeting applause died down, he mumbled; "... Don't know why you're applauding ... I'm not gonna play anything worth listening to anyway." He then totally disproved this statement by delivering his usual mix of interesting registration, surprising chord progressions, sleaze, gospel, humor, and even some moments of true inspiration. He

crammed a lot of variety into an hour and a half and extracted many new sounds not previously heard from this instrument.

Following this entertaining and largely impromptu concert, there was an outdoor potluck on the park-like area adjacent to the house. The gathering turned into an all-day event, with the last die-hards leaving at 6:00 p.m.

Work is progressing nicely on the restoration of the uniquely far-Eastern interior of the Visalia Fox Theatre. As of this writing, the 1,200 seats are still out for painting and recovering, but the auditorium has been freed of the dividing walls that cut up the room. The proscenium arch and organ grilles (the Main pagoda and Solo "jug") have been cleaned and repaired, and the walls and ceiling are much closer to their original appearance than they were a year ago. The entire project is moving forward, and there are plans for the Tulare County Symphony to perform there sometime in the coming months. There may be something happening within the walls of the Fox involving multiple keyboards before the turn of the

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century. The chapter board is working on details of this with a certain well-known entity. It is too early to be more specific, but this one-of-a-kind movie palace seems to have a bright future as a performing arts center in the years ahead.

Ron Musselman



Ron Titus at the Sequoia Chapter meeting at Rik & Adena Richards Conn 653.

## SIERRA

Craig A. Peterson: 916/682-9699

**Sacramento, California.** Clark Wilson demonstrated that he is a Morton Master by his performance at the "Very Late March Morton Madness" (on April 10). The Robert-Morton instruments Clark played are very different. The first, at the Hartzell's Blue Barn, was built in 1921 when Morton was making a gentler, sweeter instrument. It is certainly one

of the oldest Mortons still playing. The instrument at the Kautz Winery was built in 1927 when Robert Morton was making "fire breathers" (which became more and more raucous as the 20s moved along - Warnors Fresno, Music Hall Seattle, the legendary New York/New Jersey Loew's 4/23s - Ed). Nevertheless, Clark gave us a delightful selection of ballads, show tunes, marches and orchestral transcriptions at both venues. He found fire when needed at Hartzell's and sweetness when desired at Kautz. Clark received well-deserved standing ovations for both concerts. We all had a great day. Thanks, Clark, and come back to Northern California soon.

Dave Hooper returned to the ATOS 3/16 Wurlitzer at the Towe Auto Museum in May when he accompanied two Harold Lloyd films: *Hot Water* and *Safety Last*.

Prior to the films, Dave played several selections for us ending with a beautiful *South Pacific* medley. Then, Dave again demonstrated that he does an excellent job of accompanying silent films and also received a well-deserved standing ovation. Harold Lloyd conclusively demonstrated that one should not take an uncaged turkey on a trolley, but climbing buildings in Los Angeles can be fine (?).

June was the first of two Sierra Chapter picnics at Dan Gates home. The beautiful home surrounds the very large central music room into which the 4/22 Wurlitzer/Kimball speaks. After Dan opened his wonderful instrument, several persons enjoyed the open console. We thank Dan and his family for their graceful hospitality and hope we can return again.

June was also the completion of the spring 1999 series of public concerts

on the ATOS Wurlitzer at the Towe Auto Museum. Chapter members Jim Brown, Bill Gardner, Bert Kuntz, Dave Sauer and Richard Unger presented concerts every other Sunday afternoon to share our passion for the theatre organ with many new folks.

Pete McCluer

## SOONER STATE

Joyce Hatchett: 918/743-1854

**Tulsa, Oklahoma.** The featured organist for Sooner State's March meeting was John Hickman. John began the music on our 3/13 Robert-Morton, at Tulsa Technology Center's Broken Arrow campus, with, appropriately, a couple of Irish songs, and then launched into a "Programme of John's Favourites." He played lots of popular standards, show tunes, a gospel song, and to demonstrate "open harmony," he played a few bars of "Aura Lee." Six people later played at open console, and Carolyn Craft accompanied her husband Paul as he sang a magnificent "the Holy City."

April found us once again at Tulsa Technology Center, this time with Carolyn Craft on the bench of our Robert-Morton. Her program had lots of jolly music, starting with Cole Porter's "It's DeLovely" and including "Makin' Whoopee." She also played for Paul while he sang "Get On The Happy Side of Living."

She started "Twelfth Street Rag," and we looked up to see her feet off the pedals and a live tuba player, guest Dr. Milt Olsen, being pushed onto the stage in a chair, tooting the oompah-pah part. For added fun, without missing a beat, Carolyn and Joyce Hatchett cleverly picked up the melody each playing an accordion! Paul Craft doubled on the tambourine, as well as a whistle! They



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## SOONER STATE cont.

also played "Beer Barrel Polka" before Carolyn returned to the organ for her closer. Five people played at open console.

We were delighted with two excellent articles that appeared in the *Tulsa World* on March 22, featuring small-town theatres in Oklahoma. We especially enjoyed the mention of the Miami (Oklahoma) Coleman Theatre Beautiful and its restored pipe organ, and a front-page story of our John McConnel's Orpheum Theatre in Okmulgee, which included a short account of the organ he is installing.

We were also delighted to have Carolyn Craft play our beast at the National Vocational Technology Honor Society Induction Ceremony, on April 27. She played "walk in" music: state songs and some patriotic songs, and "This is My Country" for a processional. She heard many favorable comments.

We are making progress with our Memorial Trumpet fund, and have (sadly) added two more names of members to be remembered. Bill Gillespie and his wife Marian died two days apart, Bill on March 15, and Marion on March 17, 1999. They are two more enthusiasts we shall miss.

Then, we lost another member with the death of Louis Chalupsky on April 21. Services were held in Tulsa on April 23, and we extend our condolences to his family. *Dorothy Smith*

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*Sooner State Chapter enjoyed an extra treat at their April meeting: (left to right) Carolyn Craft (accordion); guest Dr. Milt Olsen (when you play the tuba your face doesn't show!); Paul Craft (tambourine); and Joyce Hatchett (accordion).*

*Mel Sutter photo*

## SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY

Joseph Rementer: 856/694-1471

**Franklinville, New Jersey.** On February 21, SJTOS met at John Dickinson High School, Wilmington, Delaware, with the Dickinson Theatre Organ Society for their annual open house and open console. In addition to open console, we were able to visit the chambers and workshop, with access to the chambers required climbing ladders in restricted spaces.

SJTOS and Dickinson Theatre Organ Society members enjoyed open console. Presidents Joe Rementer and Bob Dilworth hosted a scrumptious dinner at the Kirkwood Kitchen Restaurant along with 28 members of the combined societies enjoying friendship and discussions of pipe organ music and artists.

SJTOS again ventured to Allen Organ Company in Macungie, Pennsylvania, with 21 of our chapter members and 50 members of Delaware Valley Theatre Organ Society along with members of surrounding chapters. We then spent some time prior to the concert renewing acquaintances with many of our fellow enthusiasts.

Rudy Lucente welcomed all of us to the Allen facility and introduced our artist for the day, Candi Carley-Roth. The ever-predictable Candi brought with her the usual bag of

tricks and humor for which she is so well known and loved. She presented a thoroughly entertaining concert putting the George Wright Signature Series 319 four manual theatre organ through its paces.

After Candi's concert, there was time for open console in the museum area and in Octave Hall. Perhaps one of the highlights of the day occurred when Candi sat down at the console of the three manual theatre organ in Octave Hall and started to play "Stars and Stripes Forever." Rudy Lucente then joined her on the four manual

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Allen classic organ. They played a duet using the two instruments separately and ultimately together; truly a memorable performance.

Around 5:00 p.m., we traveled down the road to the Bear Swamp Diner for a delicious dinner. We thank the Delaware Valley Theatre Organ Society for their invitation to join them and the Allen Organ Company for hosting us at their facility. Thanks to Harry Linn, Al Derr, Candi Carley-Roth and Rudy Lucente for being such gracious hosts. *Mary Brook*

## WESTERN RESERVE

Janice M. Kast: 216/531-4214

**Cleveland, Ohio.** Western Reserve Chapter's February 14 social was hosted by the Graves Piano & Organ Co. of North Olmsted, Ohio. Pete Schneider presented the Hammond 926 an instrument with a dual personality capable of both playing the classic literature and producing the more traditional "Hammond sound." The highlight to Pete's performance was his demonstration of the organ's ability to play from a pre-recorded disk he actually "accompanied himself" at the piano!

Over 40 members and friends met at our "home base," Cleveland Grays Armory where Jim Cutler entertained for our March 21 social gathering. The 3/15 Wurlitzer shined under his capable hands (and feet) during a variety of standards and favorites. Open console and snacks completed the afternoon's fun.

On Sunday, April 18, chapter members Don & Carol Frerichs hosted a spring social at their enchanting home, which features a Rodgers 340. Although there was no scheduled artist, the afternoon was filled with music as we all shared the bench for open console time.

Western Reserve Chapter presented George Krejci and Euclid Beach Night II to an audience of over 900 in a concert on Saturday April 24 at the restored downtown Cleveland Grays Armory. The 3/15 Wurlitzer was surrounded by a collection of signs, photos and extraordinary memorabilia from Euclid Beach Park, a local amusement park that closed in 1969 all shared by a group known as the Euclid Beach Nuts. From atop the



Artist George Krejci and family at the Grays Armory 3/15 Wurlitzer with "Laughing Sal" in the background.

organ bench, George orchestrated a guided tour down memory lane: "Stardust" & "When You Wish Upon a Star" drifted out from under lights salvaged from the Rocket Ship ride. A Western medley took us for a ride on the Kiddie Carousel as would-be cowboys and a "Sleepy Hollow Choo-Choo" (with apologies to our friends in Chattanooga) skirted us past the park's more haunted hideaways. After intermission, the purists welcomed the accompaniment to Buster Keaton's *One Week* and the irrepressible sing-along. George concluded with a tribute to the late artist, Fr. Jim Miller, another Cleveland favorite. As if the artist, the instrument, and the park mementos weren't enough, our

efforts were rewarded by a half-page review in Cleveland's major newspaper, *The Plain Dealer*. *Jim Shepherd*

## YUMA

Edwin Thurmond:

**Yuma, Arizona.** After the dedication of our Allen 317 Theatre Organ, given by Walt Strony in February 1998, we had a series of programs featuring our member Bob Stewart, who performed for us on four occasions during the summer months.

Many of our members are winter visitors who return to their various homes during the summer. However, our membership is growing and we hope to have many more during the coming year.

Starting in October, we had W. C. Field from El Segundo, California, who gave us a great musical program, followed by playing an accompaniment for a Laurel and Hardy silent movie, which everyone enjoyed very much. We hope to have a return engagement with him in the fall.

In November, we had artist Aaron Tyler, from Wyoming and Yuma, who used to be in a road show as part of Grand Ole Opry. Aaron gave a fine musical performance, accompanied by a drummer, followed by a program of country music accompanied by the drummer and a steel guitarist. The finale was a performance by the Gila Mountain Methodist Church choir, marching down the aisle singing "Turn Your Radio On," to a standing ovation.

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## YUMA cont.

Corky Thurmond, President; Walter Strony; Barbara Mignery, Secretary; and Bill Brown.

In December, we rounded out the year with Don Story from Tucson, Arizona, giving us a great program of old music, which everyone enjoyed very much.

January 1999 opened the year with Walter Strony returning to Yuma to perform on the first anniversary of the installation of the organ with a beautiful concert, using the expander for a great demonstration playing a variety of tunes.

For February, our local organist Bob Stewart performed for us again with music from the 30s and 40s.

For our closing program of the season, in March, Patti Simon and Dick Kroeckel gave us a wonderful finale. It was awesome to hear what those two artists can get out of an organ and piano, with ballads and ragtime music.

We were happy to have Bill Brown from Phoenix attend both Walt Strony's concert and also the one by Patti and Dick. A plaque was given to Bill by the club in token of appreciation of the support he has given us in the last ten years.

We hope to be able to start our programs again in the fall, when we have some great artists scheduled. This will depend on the finish of the renovations being carried out by the city of Yuma on the old theatre. We are looking forward to a continuation of our progress.

Barbara Mignery

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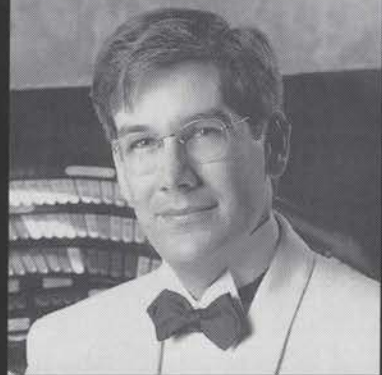


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# Theatre Organ

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

December 1996

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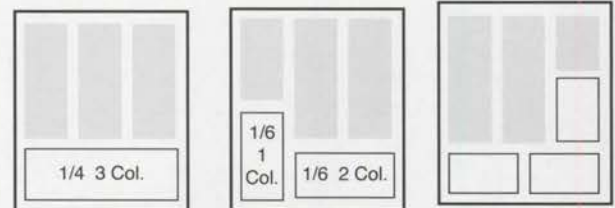
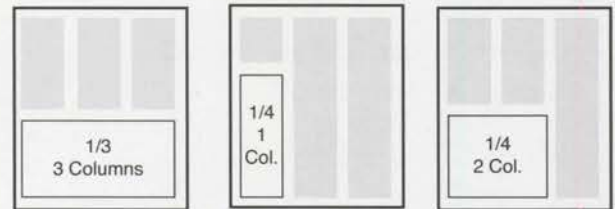
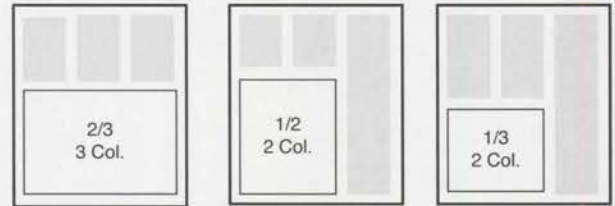
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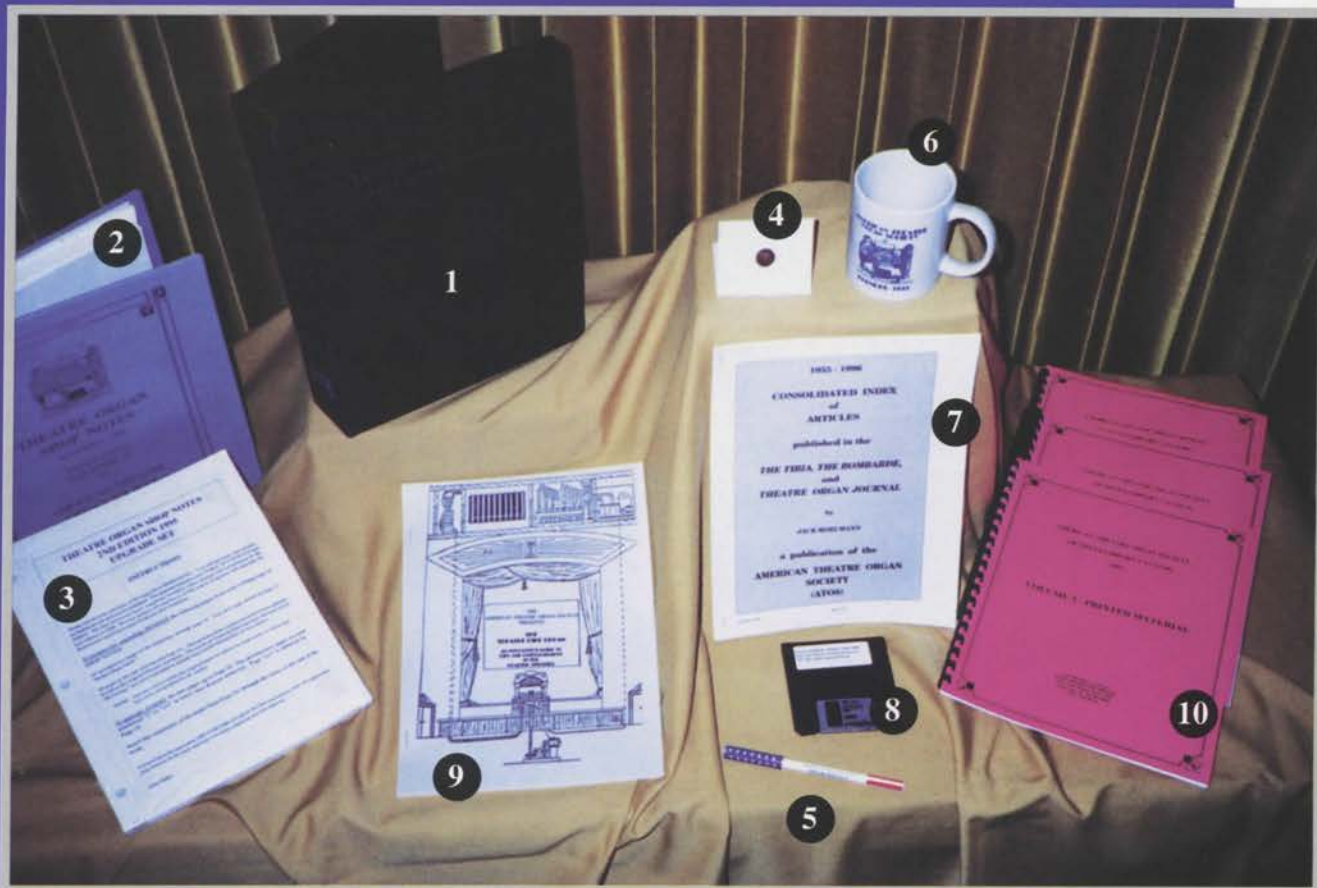
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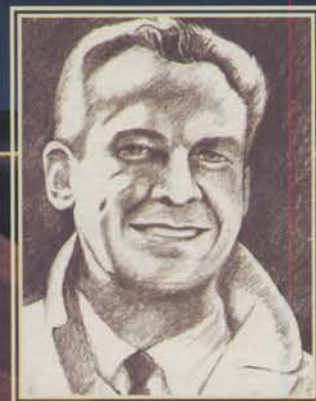
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