

# Theatre Organ

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY



November



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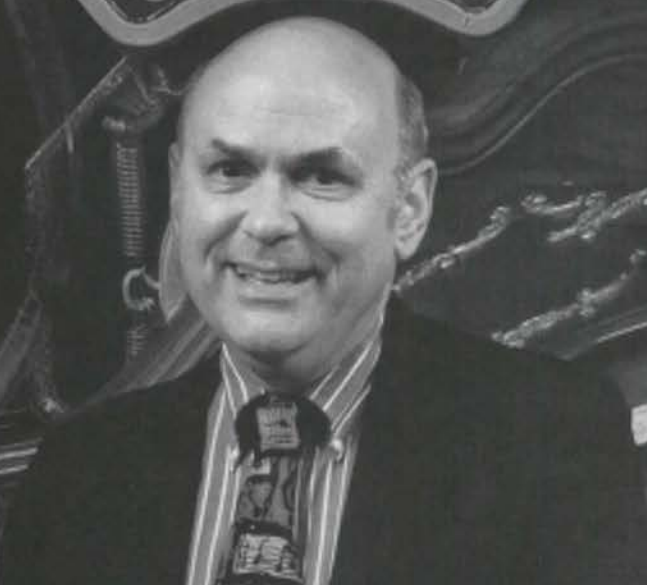
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# ORGAN

# ON THE AIR

## Larry Kass at the Mighty Wurlitzer



### 1. *On the Air in New York...*

Manhattan Merry Go Round (1936) Herman/Haenschen  
It Had To Be You (1924) Kahn/Jones  
My Melancholy Baby (1912) Norton/Burnett  
'S Wonderful (1927) Gershwin/Gershwin  
Just One Of Those Things (1935) Porter

### 2. *On the Air in Chicago...*

Smile Darn Ya Smile (1931) O'Flynn/Meskill/Rich  
I Cried For You (1923) Freed/Arnheim/Lyman  
It All Depends On You (1926) DeSylva/Brown/Henderson  
I'm Nobody's Baby (1921) Davis/Ager/Santley  
You're My Everything (1931) Dixon/Young/Warren

### 3. *On the Air in St. Louis...*

Meet Me In St. Louis, Louis (1904) Sterling/Mills  
I Can't Give You Anything But Love (1928) Fields/McHugh  
Stay As Sweet As You Are (1934) Gordon/Revel  
With My Eyes Wide Open (1934) Gordon/Revel  
Night And Day (1932) Porter

### 4. *On the Air in Los Angeles...*

California, Here I Come (1924) Jolson/DeSylva/Meyer  
Avalon (1920) DeSylva/Jolson/Rose  
Breezin' Along With The Breeze (1926) Gillespie/Simon/Whiting  
Ramona (1927) Gilbert/Wayne  
Say It Isn't So (1932) Berlin

### 5. *Paul Whiteman's Greatest Hit!*

When Day Is Done (1926) DeSylva/Katscher

### 6. *A Classic By Erno Rapee...*

Charmaine (1927) Rapee/Pollack

### 7. *Jimmy McHugh On The Air...*

I Feel A Song Comin' On (1935) Fields/Oppenheim/McHugh  
Doin' The New Low Down (1928) Fields/McHugh  
Don't Blame Me (1933) Fields/McHugh  
Exactly Like You (1930) Fields/McHugh  
I'm In The Mood For Love (1935) Fields/McHugh  
On The Sunny Side Of The Street (1930) Fields/McHugh

### 8. *Vernon Duke On The Air...*

April In Paris (1932) Harburg/Duke  
Taking A Chance On Love (1940) LaTouche/Fetter/Duke  
Autumn In New York (1935) Duke  
What Is There To Say? (1934) Harburg/Duke  
I Can't Get Started (1936) Gershwin/Duke

### 9. *Harold Arlen On The Air...*

I've Got The World On A String (1933) Kohler/Arlen  
Let's Fall In Love (1934) Kohler/Arlen  
Get Happy (1929) Kohler/Arlen  
Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea (1930) Kohler/Arlen  
Stormy Weather (1933) Kohler/Arlen  
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# Theatre Organ

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Hollywood, California El Capitan Theatre and its 4/37 Wurlitzer.

PHOTO BY EL CAPITAN THEATRE CO.

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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1999 • VOLUME 41, NUMBER 6

PRESIDENT: NELSON PAGE  
EDITOR: THOMAS L. DeLAY  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY: MICHAEL FELLENER

<http://www.atos.org>

## FEATURES

RENAISSANCE OF THE EL CAPITAN THEATRE Restoration Project Information.....	9
CONVENTION '99 - LONDON, ENGLAND.....	22
1999 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING.....	40
THE WURLITZER AT THE FOX, SAN FRANCISCO <i>Tibia</i> Reprint, Summer 1956.....	42
THE ONCE PROUD PIPE ORGAN, PART II <i>by William H. Barger</i> .....	46
A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT <i>by George Andersen</i> .....	50

## DEPARTMENTS

GENERAL INFORMATION.....	5
MEMBER'S FORUM.....	7
THE SOUNDS OF SILENT MOVIES <i>by Robert Gates</i> .....	54
ORGANizing POPULAR MUSIC <i>by Al Hermanns</i> .....	56
"AN ACRE OF SEATS IN A PALACE OF SPENDOR" <i>by Steve Levin</i> .....	58
FOR THE RECORDS <i>Ralph Beaudry, Editor</i> .....	60
CLOSING CHORD.....	68
CHAPTER NOTES.....	70
CLASSIFIED ADS.....	86

## President's Message



Normally I am never short on things to talk about, but in this instance I've got to admit I'm kind of nervous about doing this. Since being appointed ATOS President, there have been lots of people to see, plenty of meetings to attend, the occasional shared cigar and one rather surreal moment in Wichita. Aside from the deluge of e-mail, I have taken it all in stride. Composing this, my first President's

Message, has loomed larger than life, and truth be told I have put it off more times than I care to admit. I never want to forget to recognize a good deed. Never do I want to mix up someone's name with somebody else's. Not to remember to thank someone who has contributed, or OOP's, maybe even to neglect to mention an upcoming event. There are lots of things that can go wrong with this so I have decided not to let it bother me. Instead I choose to remember the dedicated leadership that Harry Heth provided us with these last three years. I will also not forget the eight years of service that Alden Stockebrand gave to ATOS as its most capable treasurer. Compared to these fellas, I am the new kid on the block. Half way through this, I am sure there are those that will ask who the heck is "Nelson Page" anyway. Simple. I'm the guy who is going to be on the other end of the phone when you have a problem. Aside from anything else, we are here for you, yes YOU! Along with the ATOS Board of Directors, we are attempting to provide interesting programs and projects that we can all participate in. Most recently the wonderful Regional Convention held in Wichita, Kansas, allowed us all to meet and share our common love of theatre organ. Isn't that what this is all about? Yes, I want to be informative, but it is also important for you to know that I have a pulse.

Recently a special little Wurlitzer near and very dear to me wound up bobbing around in twelve feet of flood waters in a theatre in Bound Brook, New Jersey. We all know theatre pipe organs are the world's greatest divining rods. In this case, Garden State Chapter labored for two years to restore and install this little gem only for it to suffer a cruel fate. Tragedies of this nature have occurred all over the country too many times before, as they will most certainly happen again. Compared to the human suffering and loss that disasters like these bring with them, some bits of metal, wood and leather shouldn't matter by comparison ... but they do, because that is who we are.

On behalf of all your friends on the board and staff of the American Theatre Organ Society, let's all have a safe and healthy holiday season. A new century awaits - let's make it exceptional.

*Nelson*



# General Information

## HELP NEEDED We Need Your Input!

Small, Large, and all Chapters in between...We are trying to put together a few guidelines on "How to present the theatre organ to the younger generation."

These youngsters are our future in preserving these wonderful organs. Several chapters have been promoting the organ by having elementary children visit various theatres or home installations and presenting very informative performances. They have also shown youngsters what our organs can do.

I would appreciate it, if you could share with me your ideas about how you are educating, or would like to educate, your youngsters.

Some possible topics to relate to me: special programs or performances, hands on activities, what age groups?

Where do you get these youngsters? How do you advertise, or promote these educational activities? How often do you have such programs?

Please send me a copy of your guidelines, fliers, promotional brochures, etc.

Please send me any feedback information from the youngsters or those who supervise them. What handouts do you give the youngsters? Any videos on this subject? Are there any books or material already written and published specifically on the above topics? Please send me titles, authors, publishers, names and addresses.

With all of this information, we should be able to combine all of our efforts into a book, which would be helpful to chapters, large or small.

This way we could pick and choose the direction our chapters would take for the education of the younger generation.

It is imperative to begin NOW to tell the world that there are many more musical instruments than are currently being played on MTV.

All Instruments are important!

Music in itself is important in people's lives, whether you play or listen.

It helps round our personalities, etc. Since our educators are cutting back on programs in many capacities, such as music, instrumental and voice, we have to help our youngsters get this education through other sources.

With your help we can make a difference. Thank you very much.

*Connie Purkey, Education Director*  
564 E 4050 So. Apt 9 J  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84107  
Phone: 801-265-9794  
E-mail: purkeygal@aol.com

## Attention All Chapters:

If you are not already doing so, we would appreciate your sending a copy of your chapter newsletter by U.S. Mail, NOT e-mail, to the following:

### **Nelson Page, President**

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Having these newsletters will keep us abreast of your chapter activities. Thank you for your cooperation.

*Doris Erbe, Chapter Relations*



In reference to the item "Attention Artists, Managers, Composers, and Authors" in the November/December 1997 issue of THEATRE ORGAN. The following is for sale:

"Tiny" James and Everett Nourse. "Farewell To The Fox," 70-minute CD; 4/36 Wurlitzer; San Francisco Fox Theatre. Selections include: Wunderbar, Cuddle Up A Little Closer, and My Blue Heaven. (Also refer to the February 1999 *International News*; page 1, "The Smithsonian Project" for additional details whereby the sale of 100 of these CD's will benefit the ATOS Smithsonian Project.) \$20 postpaid (\$22 outside USA); California residents only add \$1.65 sales tax for each CD ordered; check or money order only; no credit cards or COD's. F&A Enterprises, P.O. Box 940, Alameda, CA 94501.

## New Chapters:

We are very pleased to announce that ATOS has gained three new chapters: Central Minnesota Otter Tail Chapter, Nevada Desert Lights Chapter, and South Mississippi Gold Coast Chapter.

We appreciate your dedication and efforts to preserve theatre pipe organ as an art form. The officers and directors of ATOS extend their best wishes to each of these new chapters and are, of course, available to assist you at all times. *Doris Erbe, Chapter Relations*

## Here's Your Chance to Own Theatre Organ History

Many duplicate phonograph records have been donated through the years to the ATOS Archives/Library collection. These surplus recordings are now being offered to members through an auction by mail. The 345 items that have been listed on the mailing covers of THEATRE ORGAN are just a partial listing of the great number of recordings available.

Many of the recordings available will never be reissued. This is your opportunity to obtain recordings of famous theatre organists, as well as recordings of lesser-known theatre organists. A number of the recordings feature artists who are no longer living.

*cont. next page*



### General Information cont.

Others feature theatre pipe organs, and venues, which are no longer in existence. Many recordings are of great historical significance to the serious theatre organ enthusiast.

For a complete listing of all surplus recordings that are available for sale, please write to: ATOS Special Services, 785 Palomino Court, San Marcos, CA 92069-2102.

## Opening of Nominations for 2000 Election of Directors

It is time to nominate candidates to fill three (3) positions as ATOS Directors for the term of July 2000 through June of 2003. All ATOS members who have maintained continuous membership in good standing for at least the last two years are eligible for nomination and may nominate themselves or be nominated by another member in good standing, in which case, written consent of the nominee is mandatory and must be received before the nominee's name can be placed on the ballot.

A nominee need have no special talent or experience in pipe organ technology or musicianship; however, nominees should have a demonstrated interest in ATOS and have the time to work toward the goals and growth of the society. While there are certain benefits enjoyed by Directors, one of which is the reimbursement of certain meeting related expenses, there are also responsibilities. Along with a willingness to participate in the administrative affairs of the society, it is most important that Directors faithfully attend both Board and Committee meetings.

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

The Board is currently taking action on several exciting programs that should increase public awareness of ATOS and set a course for the future. This is a great time to become involved in the work of ATOS.

### **Procedure To Be Observed in the Nomination Process is as Follows:**

1. Each nominee shall furnish a statement, not to exceed one hundred fifty (150) words, including personal data, work and theatre organ experience, a short platform statement, an evening/weekend telephone number, and a passport size photo. Statements exceeding the one hundred fifty (150) word limit will disqualify the candidate.

2. All candidates must have their statements and photos sent by Certified Return Receipt mail to the ATOS Nominating Chairman, 1247 Peden, Houston, TX 77006-1130 and be postmarked not later than February 29, 2000.

3. This year we will use a separate mailing of ballots and resumés of the

candidates. While this method is costly, we hope that it will encourage you to vote for the candidates of your choice, thus demonstrating your interest in and support of ATOS and its objectives.

4. If you have questions, please contact the Nominating Committee Chairman, Harry Heth, 1247 Peden, Houston, TX 77006-1130, phone 713/527-8096, fax 713/527-9182, or e-mail Tibvox@aol.com.

### **Counting Words**

1. Name and state do not count.
2. Hyphenated words count as one (1) (Vice-President, two-term...).
3. Articles and prepositions count (the organ caretaker = three (3) words, an avid lover of theatre organ = six (6) words.
4. ATOS = one (1) word, MCTOS = one (1) word. American Theatre Organ Society = four (4) words.
5. Abbreviations count as one (1) word (Asst., Mrs.).
6. Numbers count as a word (26 = one (1) word, 5 = one (1) word.

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# Member's Forum

Dear Editor:

There is a great concern over the future of the organ. Note I do not say theatre pipe organ, as this is a concern of both houses. Anyone who follows the "List Servers" has seen the many postings on the topic. The TPO remains a special interest group of the pipe organ community. It has both segregated itself from and been treated as an unwelcome relative by the organ community at large, not much different than the electronic organ. My own taste in music brought me to the TPO over the classical organ because of the orchestral music. I enjoy the popular songs, but my love remains the transcriptions that are played.

It is to this part of the population that I think we must start to cultivate. Thomas Murray did a wonderful CD at Yale of transcriptions that helped to reawaken interest in the form of organ music. It would be my hope that we could attract the young organist who might have an interest in symphonic music as well as Bach. Our audience could be expanded to include the symphony support group. We might find a home for our old organs or even find new construction to fill new concert halls as they are built in the future.

I would encourage you to work closer with your local American Guild of Organist chapters. Contact organ music teachers with the idea that their students might benefit from playing the transcriptions of Lemare and others on an instrument more suited to orchestral music. While I hope that the American Theatre Organ Society and her sister groups never die out, I envision us becoming part of the organ community at large in order to survive.

Respectfully,  
Buddy Boyd  
President,  
Piedmont Theatre Organ Society  
President,  
Free State Theatre Organ Society

Dear Editor:

Last night, as I watched "The End" flashing at the finish of an AMC movie I was seized in a moment of deja vu recalling those "Ends" I experienced at Shea's Buffalo many years ago when those great gold plush curtains cued to close and the organ swelled into it all picking up the key of the movie score and organluding the occasion, be it a trailer for next Friday's attraction or whatever.

It occurred to me that something could be accomplished on TV, perhaps with American Movie Classics, that would provide an occasion for theatre organ to be heard again as it once was in conjunction with movie palace presentations; not accompaniment to a silent, but upgrade to the day and age when Big Bands played the palaces about the country and such dressing of screenfare was customary.

Perhaps, with electronic wizardry, "The End" appearing on that film could be duplicated for the purpose of the "picture" pulling back as the curtain closes and the organlude commences ... pulling back to full proscenium to catch the immensity of the action of that gorgeous curtain closing.

How would the Oakland Paramount do for a model? Then, of course, the scene would zoom back to the picture ... and TV would take over for the next move.

Perhaps the event could be some kind of nostalgia showcase. The menu of stops on the organ would have to be carefully planned to produce that singularly delicious sound that is theatre organ alone and that would be proper for the telecast.

Consider that when stereophonic sound raised its head on the scene ... it was the pipe organ that shook the rafter to get public attention. Today's TV is equipped with both stereo and surround features and theatre organ could have its day again!

Bill Casazza  
Lake Worth, Florida

Dear Editor:

I have been a member of ATOS (Pine Tree Chapter) for a short time, having stumbled on information that the organization existed. Organs have fascinated me for some 60 years.

Letters in the Journal concerning aging of members, and the need for recruiting new ones have especially interested me as they obviously have others. There seems to be no easy way to recruit members. Certainly, visitors need to be welcome. Chapter officers could ask the present members how they learned about ATOS, and why they joined. Perhaps some pattern of ideas would be revealed. Some of the Journal letter writers seem to be at a loss for finding new people who may be interested.

I have some ideas, which may be useful. My career in public schools and interest in music, especially big bands, made me very much "tuned-in" when I learned, about 1980, that the school music curricula had been changed to "jazz." I leaned that the definition of jazz meant all big band music and other standards (which is, of course, theatre organ music). I had a few words with some music teachers, some of whom were not happy with the change, about the definition of jazz. But I was pleased when I heard "Opus One," "String of Pearls," "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" and others being rehearsed and performed by students. Now, the changeover is complete and there is statewide competition among schools with jazz bands, jazz choruses and dancers. College have continued this interest with regular jazz festivals and performances. There has been a renewed

*cont. next page*

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### Member's Forum cont.

interest in ballroom dancing among older generations and big bands are everywhere. Studios to teach ballroom dancing are being advertised.

These former (and present) students represent a whole generation of people who would greatly enjoy theatre organ music if they knew about it. Many music teachers and directors in secondary schools and colleges probably do not know about theatre organs. They may be happy to come to meetings and welcome the opportunity to add a unique dimension to their programs. They may want to bring students to listen and play and perhaps schedule joint performances. Invitations addressed to students could create interest, perhaps through articles in school newspapers. It seems to me that this is a great untapped source for new ATOS members. I hope that this information may be helpful.

Sincerely,  
Burt Hinckley

Southern California

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# Renaissance of The El Capitan Theatre



Photo Credit: GARY KRUEGER ©El Capitan Theatre Company. All Rights Reserved.

*A glittering new marquee announces the reopening of the famous El Capitan Theatre on Hollywood Boulevard, in Los Angeles.*

In a joint effort between Pacific Theatres and Buena Vista Pictures Distribution, Inc., the venerable El Capitan Theatre (formerly the Paramount) on Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles has been completely restored as a showcase for first-run motion pictures.

After a painstaking two-year restoration, under the supervision of the National Parks Service and the guidance of design architect Joseph J. Musil, the building has undergone a complete renaissance.

Boasting a patron seating capacity of approximately 1,100 (evenly split between the downstairs auditorium and the balcony), audiences view 35mm and 70mm motion pictures projected onto a 42' x 20' screen in a historic atmosphere the likes of which

have not been seen in over half a century. The only auditorium of this kind in Los Angeles to ever be restored as a picture palace, the El Capitan features state-of-the-art projection equipment and display, as well as THX and Cinema Digital Sound capabilities.

Originally built as a legitimate playhouse, the El Capitan was designed by renowned theatre architect G. Albert Lansburgh (interior), and Morgan, Walls & Clements (exterior), and built by prominent Los Angeles developer Charles E. Toberman. The theatre opened to live performances May 3, 1926, with "Charlot's Revue," a song-and-dance variety show starring Jack Buchanan, Gertrude Lawrence and Beatrice Lillie.

By the late 1930s however, the El Capitan felt the economic effects of the

Depression, showcasing fewer and fewer productions. This period saw a cycle of experimentation with entertainment. In an effort to boost attendance to the theatre, revues, road shows and benefits were the main lure. Despite these efforts, however, the El Capitan was faltering. When Orson Welles was unable to locate a theatre owner willing to risk screening *Citizen Kane* in 1941, he turned to the El Capitan for the world premiere of his first feature film, foretelling the theatre's future.

Soon, stage circuit promoters Fanchon & Marco convinced Paramount Hollywood Theatre Corporation to refurbish the El Capitan as a movie house. Thus, the theatre closed in 1941, and was reborn on March 18, 1942 as the Paramount Theatre. Its inaugural



film presentation was Cecil B. DeMille's Technicolor feature *Reap the Wild Wind*, starring Ray Milland, John Wayne, Paulette Goddard and Raymond Massey.

Over the next four decades, the theatre attracted audiences with such classic motion pictures as *Incendiary Blonde* starring Betty Hutton, *Sunset Blvd.* starring Gloria Swanson, *War and Peace* with Audrey Hepburn and Henry Fonda, *Gigi*, *Vertigo*, *Cimarron* and *The Music Man*, among many others.

The theatre's management also changed several times, and by the end of the 1980s, the Paramount had become rundown. Like most of the picture palaces built between 1925-1930, the Paramount seemed destined to be lost to ravages of age. However, in 1989, Buena Vista Pictures Distribution, Inc. and Pacific Theatres initiated a restoration project that would return the theatre to its early elegance.

Under the guidance of the National Parks Service, the ensuing two-year restoration process included removal of over 30 tons of asbestos, and recruitment of 30 subcontractors and 200 artisans of every talent to bring the theatre back to its original magnificence.

## About The El Capitan

The genesis of this renaissance began inauspiciously enough with the 1902 arrival in Los Angeles of Charles E. Toberman, a native Texan who would become one of Hollywood's great real estate developers. A savvy businessman, Toberman started his first land development business in 1907, and by the time he was 49, had developed and subdivided parts of Hollywood, the Fairfax area, North Hollywood, West Hollywood and a portion of Beverly Hills, making him a millionaire many times over. His building development projects included the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, the Max Factor Building and the Hollywood Masonic Temple.

In 1924 or 1925, through Toberman's Hollywood Improvement Company, renowned theatre architect G. Albert Lansburgh of San Francisco, and the firm of Morgan, Walls & Clements of Los Angeles, were com-

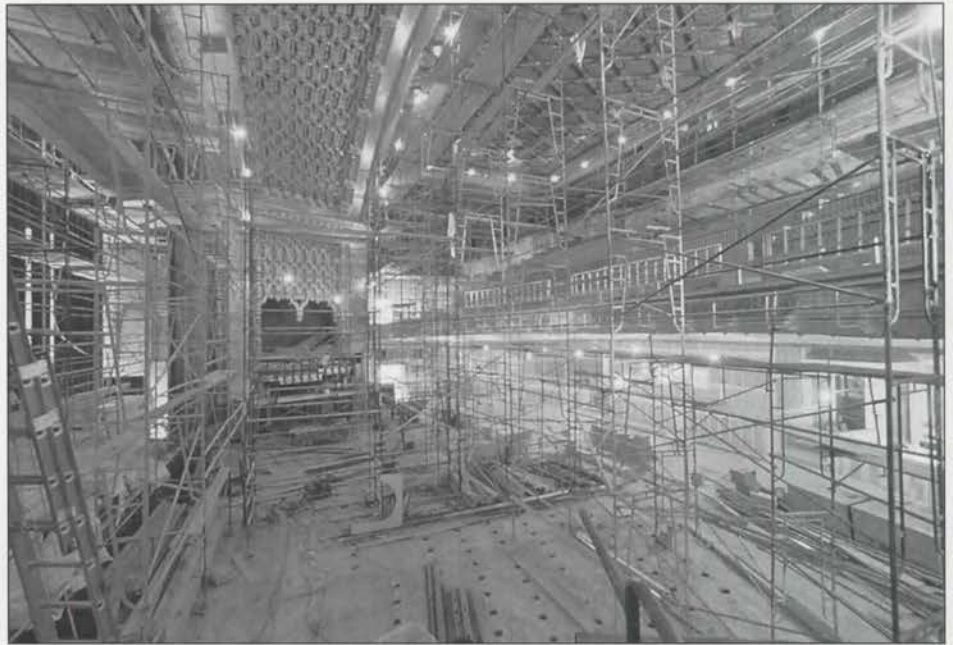


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*Over a painstaking 2-year process, Pacific Theatres and Buena Vista Pictures Distribution, Inc. restored the El Capitan Theatre (formerly the Paramount) on Hollywood Boulevard to its original elegance, including restoration and preservation of the unique and elaborate cast plaster details and decorations within the theatre auditorium. Originally built as a legitimate stage house in 1926, the playhouse was remodeled in 1942 and became the Paramount Theatre, a motion picture palace. The El Capitan reopened in June, 1991.*

missioned to draw up plans for a new legitimate stage theatre in Hollywood, to be named the El Capitan.

Lansburgh, considered the dean of American theatre architecture, had previously designed San Francisco's Golden Gate Theatre (1921) and the Warfield (1922), among many others throughout the country. He would later design the Warner's Western Theatre in 1931 - later renamed The Wiltern.

Simultaneously, Edward D. Smith, a veteran East Coast showman and producer from Boston, who served as general manager for the Schubert Organization, was making the trek to California to oversee construction and management of the Biltmore Theatre in downtown Los Angeles, for the Erlanger theatre empire. Before the El Capitan was completed in 1926, Smith leased the property for a then staggering \$5,000 per month.

Noted interior decorator John B. Smeraldi, whose work also includes the Biltmore Hotel and Theatre in Los Angeles, and the Miami Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables, Florida, among many others, was awarded the interior design responsibilities for the El

Capitan.

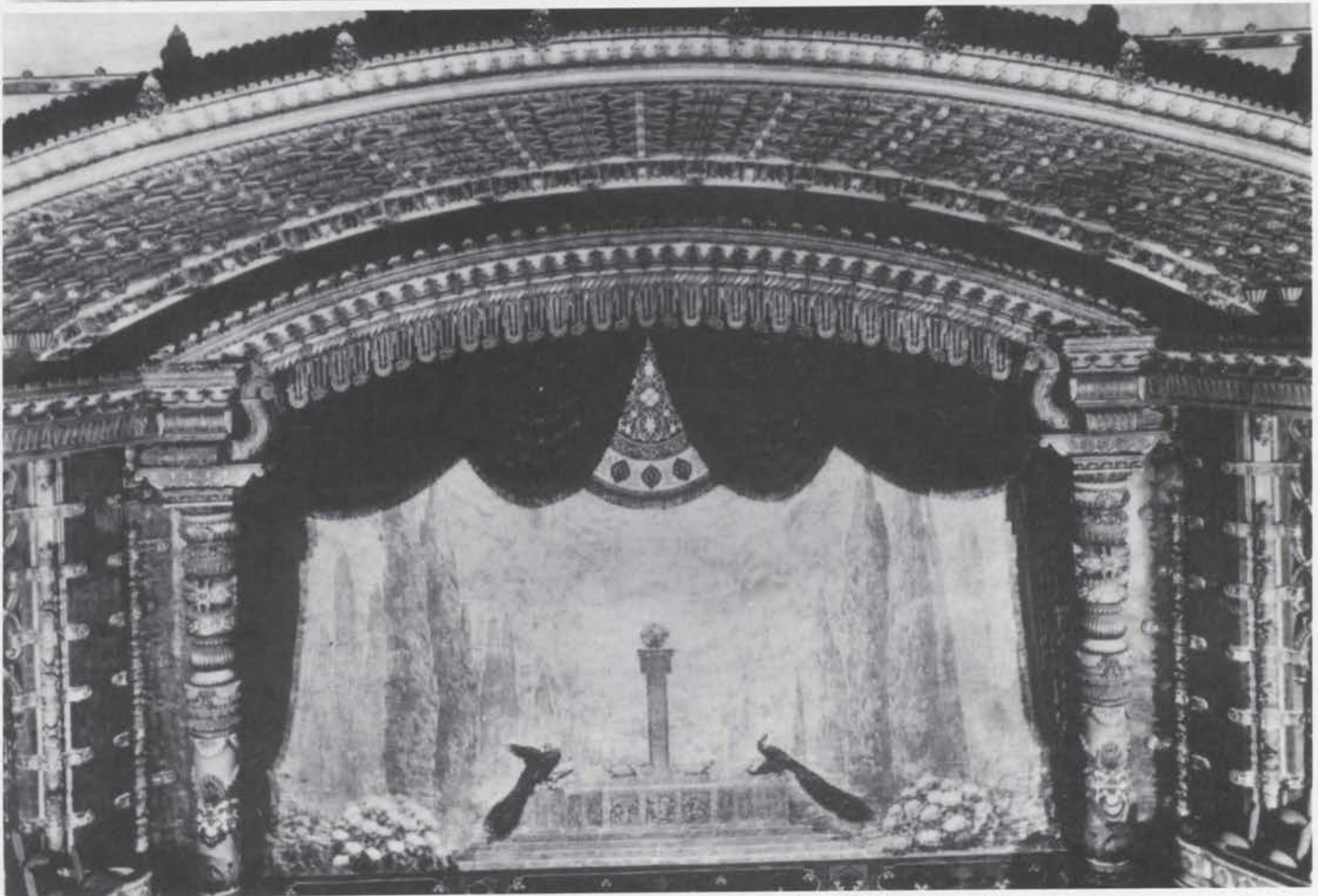
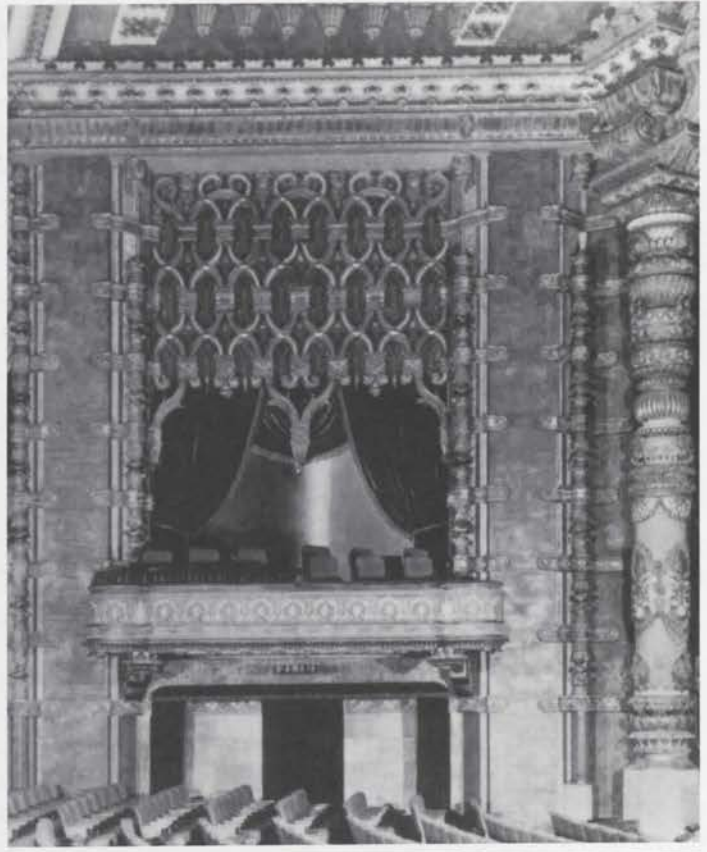
Together, these pioneers collaborated on what was described as a six-story class A steel and concrete structure decorated along Spanish renaissance lines - the El Capitan Theatre.

Celebrating its official grand opening May 3, 1926, with a stage production of "Charlot's Revue of 1926," staged by London producer André Charlot, the theatre was cause for much public celebration.

As was the theatre design custom of the day, the architects of the El Capitan sought to impress theatergoers with an elaborately decorated lobby and auditorium, aiming to create a showplace with all the trappings of the rich - but accessible to the general public. It was all part of the performance.

A tour of the El Capitan Theatre at this time would have revealed that the box office foyer (designed by architects Morgan, Walls and Clements) carried through the same motif used on the exterior of the building. Three box office windows were built into the right/west side of the room, with elaborate and intricately designed wrought iron decorations around the windows, over the entrance doors and





*The El Capitan Theatre on Hollywood Boulevard was constructed in 1926 as a legitimate stage theatre. Designed by Morgan, Walls & Clements (exterior, top left) and renowned theatre architect G. Albert Lansburgh (interior, top right and bottom), the theatre was later (1942) renamed the Paramount and given a modern streamlined look.*

Photos courtesy of B'hend & Kaufmann Archives and Los Angeles Historic Theatre Foundation. ©The El Capitan Theatre Company. All Rights Reserved.



around poster cases. The elaborately decorated ceiling was about 20 feet high.

Moving into the lobby, which was comparatively subdued in design, the walls were of stone finish while the ceiling boasted fanciful stenciled designs. A stairway to one side led to the mezzanine level, while four pairs of doors opened to the rear of the orchestra promenade.

The architectural elements of the rear orchestra promenade were also stone-finished walls, with simpler ceiling ornaments. Stairways at either end descended to a general lounge and rest rooms. The mezzanine foyer above was a spacious area complete with checkroom and more rest room facilities. The walls were decorated to simulate cut stone and the ceiling was of a slight barrel vault.

The basement lounges were decorated in a Gothic style, with wood paneling and an ornamented ceiling. Overstuffed furniture, area rugs and other furnishings accented the room, as defined by legitimate theatre interior design fashion of the day.

Originally, patrons could look into the auditorium from the foyer to allow for standing room, but within several years of the theatre's opening, an ornamented castmetal and leaded glass partition was installed on top of the existing standee wall behind the orchestra seating area for reasons of soundproofing. Doors were also added at the head of each aisle.

The auditorium, designed by architect G. Albert Lansburgh in an East Indian style (believed to be the only time he used this concept in a theatre) boasted a proscenium, ornate opera boxes and organ grilles ornamented with elaborate cast plaster decorations. Although space for a pipe organ was provided, one was never installed.

The decorative scheme, with much glazed gold metal leaf and brilliant color combinations (primarily blue and green), was carried out under the direction of John B. Smeraldi. The asbestos fire safety curtain was covered in silver metal leaf and painted with a beautiful garden scene showing a fountain, peacocks, hydrangeas and cypress trees.

Seating of 1,500 patrons in the the-

atre was on two levels: an orchestra floor 20 rows deep, and the balcony with a loge section three rows deep and upper balcony of 11 rows. Box seating on either side of the proscenium was provided a few steps below the loge level, each containing 12 movable chairs.

The proscenium overdrapes and box drapes were in red and brown cut velvet, trimmed with fringe and tassels. The house curtain was of gold satin, with brilliantly colored embroidered panels and border.

Over the next 15 years, more than 120 live productions were mounted at the El Capitan including *No, No Nanette* starring Taylor Holmes; *Irene*, starring Dale Winter; *Abie's Irish Rose*, starring George Sidney and Charlie Murray; *Ah Wilderness* with Will Rogers; and Cole Porter's *Anything Goes* starring George Murphy and Shirley Ross, among many others. In 1941, Edward Everett Horton and Marjorie Lord starred in *Springtime For Henry*, which was to be the last live drama to play the El Capitan.

Toward the end of the Great Depression, legitimate shows were a waning form of entertainment. As audiences for stage shows began to dwindle in the 1930s, attendance at movie palaces increased proportionately. During their peak years, movie palaces drew full houses three or four times a day, and in 1941, it was determined that the El Capitan would be converted to a motion picture theatre.

The brother and sister producing team of Fanchon Wolff Simon and Marco Wolff (Franchon & Marco, Inc.) convinced Paramount Hollywood Theatre Corporation, who by this time had taken over the lease of the El Capitan, to assign 50% of its lease to them. They closed the theatre and did extensive renovations.

When the theatre re-opened March 18, 1942, as the Paramount Theatre, it was strikingly obvious that a great deal of work had been done. The exterior face above the entrance now contained a brightly-lit marquee, and the box office foyer was extensively updated, resulting in a modern streamlined look that included much neon decoration. A lowered ceiling was installed in the box office foyer, while new show-

cases and an island box office obscured all original architectural details.

Major changes that occurred in the auditorium were corrugated plaster or fiberglass covering the walls and ceiling forward of the balcony. Swaged contour drapes framed the new proscenium opening. The orchestra floor was extended into the stage area, and a motion picture screen was installed.

## About The Restoration

In the summer of 1987, the availability of the old Paramount Theatre on Hollywood Boulevard came to the attention of Buena Vista Pictures Distribution, Inc. After their success redesigning the old Crest Theatre in Westwood, the company had been keeping an eye open for another venue with the potential for restoration.

"The Crest Theatre project is a spectacular success," Dick Cook, president of Buena Vista Pictures Distribution says. "It's a Disney dream come true. But there was another place, right in Hollywood, that I knew we could turn into a movie palace of the highest order - the Paramount."

Pacific Theatres held the lease to the Paramount Theatre and Buena Vista Pictures Distribution approached the entertainment exhibitor with the idea for a joint venture that would begin with remodeling.

Dick Cook telephoned theatre designer Joseph J. Musil, with whom he had successfully collaborated on the Crest Theatre project, and asked him to start thinking about design concepts for the Paramount.

Musil, an architectural designer specializing in lavish and exotic period interiors and atmospheric environments, achieved wide recognition for his masterful work in the design business. A graduate of the Chouinard Art School (now CalArts), specializing in set design for motion pictures, Musil also studied set design for grand opera and interior design at the Brera Academy of Fine Arts in Milan, Italy, before achieving his reputation as creator of some of California's more exotic commercial environments.

Upon learning of the decision to remodel the Paramount Theatre, Musil immediately turned his studio in Long





*The 1942 transformation of the El Capitan Theatre in Hollywood from a legitimate stage theatre to a movie theatre, and renamed the Paramount, included a complete renovation, including a modern streamlined facade (top) and an interior cloak concealing the ornately decorated auditorium (above) originally designed by renowned theatre architect G. Albert Lansburgh.*

Photos courtesy of B'hend & Kaufmann Archives and Los Angeles Historic Theatre Foundation.  
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Beach, California into a theatre workshop where he created a model reproduction of the El Capitan at quarter inch scale.

An early concept for the renovation of the building included a plan to create a twin screen theatre, which was approved by the Community Redevelopment Agency. However, further analysis by Buena Vista revealed that the optics in the proposed upstairs cinema would have been of poor viewing quality.

At the same time, it was discovered that between the auditorium attic and the corrugated asbestos plaster shell that had been suspended below the original (in the 1942 modernization) was a good bit of Lansburgh's original interior. "I felt like an archaeologist in Egypt pulling back the last seal of the ancient Pyramid to find treasures," recalls Hillsman Wright, Chairman of the Los Angeles Historic Theatre Foundation. "The ceiling was virtually the same as when they walled it in during the 1942 renovation."

With the exciting discovery of the original vaulted ceiling in the theatre, the preservation community of Hollywood quickly nominated the interior of the building for landmark status. Buena Vista Pictures Distribution, Inc. and Pacific Theatres then made an extraordinary announcement: a complete restoration of the venerable theatre would commence, and the twin screen concept abandoned.

The building had long been listed as contributing to the historic character of the Hollywood district, and now with a similar designation for the interior, the preserved El Capitan would become a living, breathing link to the golden age of Hollywood.

"It was an especially noteworthy decision to completely restore the theatre," acknowledges restoration architect Martin Weil, "because nobody in Los Angeles had ever taken one of the old picture palaces and restored it as a picture palace. The Wiltern Theatre was restored, but it serves as a performing arts center. Another theatre downtown was restored, but it serves as a church.

"With the extraordinary technology and energy that goes into making films



today, it makes sense to create the best possible environment to showcase the product," observes Dick Cook. "It's not enough to offer our customers a great movie, there has to be great places to show our product. The possibilities at the Paramount seemed unlimited."

## Restoration Begins with Demolition and Cleaning

Demolition of the interior shell of the theatre began in December 1989, with asbestos abatement. To the amazement of all, the dismantling revealed far more of the original theatre architecture than anyone could have imagined or hoped for, as well as souvenirs such as ticket stubs dating back to the 1940s.

"Preservation always starts with cleaning," says J. Ronald Reed, the building materials conservator who was responsible for overseeing the work of the various craftsmen assigned to this project. "First, we had to remove a film of nicotine and smoke that had built up over the years. The major discipline was to restore the surfaces, not to improve or change them. We remodeled and resculpted the decorations and then we color matched all the historic pieces. Our challenge was to always be faithful to the historic integrity of the theatre."

Down came the elaborate wall drapery. Down came the plaster "improvements." By the Secretary of the Interior's standards, as administered by the National Park Service, the preservationists protected all of the original details that were in the theatre. This did not necessarily include having to reconstruct all the things that were missing, but as part of their grand efforts, the restoration team chose to do just that.

Over the next two years, no stone was left unturned in an effort to not only restore the elaborate decorations throughout the theatre, but to also protect the integrity of the original architecture.

"In the lobby, there was terrazzo on the floor, the walls were covered with mirrors, there was a drop ceiling suspended by wires from the original ceiling and it looked awful," remembers

Martin Weil. "The challenge was to have the plaster ceiling repaired and repainted so that one couldn't tell that it had been smashed. Our success at this was a great achievement."

"Buena Vista has been very sensitive to the preservation community, and they've gone to great trouble to do a first class museum-grade restoration of an extremely impressive theatre," notes Hillsman Wright. "For example, they maintained the integrity of the original stage house. It would have been much easier to run the new ventilation system back through the stage house, but they felt it would compromise the possibility of using that area sometime in the future."

*"The El Capitan is  
an attraction unto itself.  
This is definitely a  
destination theatre."*

One of the biggest challenges for the restoration team was to replicate the painted surfaces within the theatre. "We did a lot of reconstruction of painted surfaces that had entirely disappeared," says restoration architect Martin Weil. "We have brought them back to what they would have looked like. For example, in the outer lobby, all the cast stonework was tinted. We have now brought that back so we can see what the various tinted finishes looked like. It's all completely new, but it matches what was done originally. In some cases we've got original painted details that have been preserved, and in others we've done a lot of repair work. Then in other areas where pieces were completely missing, or we had just a little bit of evidence, it's been completely reconstructed.

Among the elements of the theatre design that were intentionally not restored to the original 1926 blueprint was the wall between the lobby and auditorium. When the theatre was originally built, a half wall existed in that space. Then a few years later a glass wall was added for reasons of sound. "We chose not to go back to the earliest arrangement because we need-

ed a theatre that was soundproof," notes Martin Weil. "This wall has been treated as a modern element, with contemporary murals applied to it. The other walls in the lobby have been restored to the way they would have looked in the 1920s. But the actual wall between the theatre and the lobby has been done in a contemporary style so that patrons will be made aware of the difference between the original and the new." The doors leading into the theatre are also in a modern design. And throughout the theatre, all the areas that are painted purple, are areas that were not there originally.

"So what we've got in the theatre are many original details, which have been preserved, as well as details that we have reconstructed," continues Weil. "To make a distinction between the new and old, we have chosen to decorate these in a different manner. One of the difficult problems was to introduce modern elements so that they work well with the historic architectural details, and yet allow the viewer to understand the difference between them."

Presentation of the product is also an important philosophy that is being discovered. "Presentation is really a science and it has been largely lost and forgotten," notes Joseph Musil. "Two curtains before the movie always meant that you were in a deluxe theatre in the 1930s and 40s. They felt that this gave the theatre class, because neighborhood theatres generally only had one curtain. At the El Capitan, I put in three stage curtains because I wanted a socko dramatic effect. At first patrons are overwhelmed by the theatre. I didn't want them to be let down. Multiple curtains enhance the possibility of the unlimited. They fulfill the audience's need to be thrilled."

"During the 1920s and 30s, people didn't just go to a movie, they went to the theatre," observes Milt Moritz of Pacific Theatres. "The last two generations have grown up during a period where all new theatres are multi-plexes. The El Capitan is an attraction unto itself and people will definitely go out of their way to go to this particular theatre, even if they have to pass three theatres playing the same film. This is definitely a destination theatre."



### Auditorium Ceiling

96% of the ceiling is original and has been restored by using museum level conservation techniques. First, the ceiling was carefully cleaned to remove a thick encrustation of soot. During this process, paint stabilization techniques were used to prevent the historic paints from flaking from the surfaces. Mr. Juan Sequeira-Salas, of Restoration Studio, supervised restoration of broken plaster decoration and the stabilization of deteriorated paint coatings, while a team headed by J. Ronald Reed completed painting of missing areas to return the ceiling to its original elegance.

### Entry Foyer Ceiling

80% of the restored ceiling is original. This gilded and hand painted ceiling had more than 68 holes punched through the plaster to permit suspension of a drop ceiling.

The original ceiling is of primary importance. Very few examples of this

style of decorative ceiling exist in the United States or Europe. The ceiling is styled after the gilded ceilings of the Venetian Renaissance era that inspired the baroque gilded ceilings of Italy, France and Spain.

### Proscenium Ceiling, Fan Arch & Balcony Walls

75% of this area is original; however, later period remodeling had caused major damage. Holes the size of doorways penetrated the cornice molding and coffered ceiling. The fan arch was missing as well as the corner bead columns. The opera box interiors remained intact, but the balcony faces had been sawed off. Under the direction of J. Ronald Reed, a plaster staff shop was established at the job site. Replication of the missing plaster decorations required more than two dozen molds and two months to complete the ceiling restoration. An additional seventeen molds and two months were required to complete the

cornice, fan arch and opera box wall.

In-painting of the architectural finishes was directed by J. Ronald Reed, Conservator, and reviewed and approved by Preservation Architect Martin E. Weil, AIA.

### Stencil Art Entry Lobby Ceiling

This stencil art ceiling was badly damaged and contained asbestos. J. Ronald Reed carefully surveyed the ceiling and with the assistance of Juan Sequeira-Salas, a complete record of the stencil art patterns and colors was accurately documented. The ceiling was removed and fragments were stored by the general contractor, Mr. Glen May of Turner Construction.

A team of specialists headed by Juan Sequeira-Salas and Kathy Rienwald under the direction of J. Ronald Reed have faithfully restored the ceiling. Assisting was Robin Hill, who has carefully recreated missing patterns from the historic photographs.



Photo credit: GARY KRUEGER ©El Capitan Theatre Company. All Rights Reserved.

*The magnificent and ornate interior of the El Capitan Theatre (formerly the Paramount) on Hollywood Boulevard has been completely restored to its original elegance. Built in 1926, as a legitimate stage house, the El Capitan was remodeled as a motion picture palace in 1942. After a painstaking 2-year restoration process by Pacific Theatres and Buena Vista Pictures Distribution, Inc., the unique and elaborate cast plaster details, decorations and opera boxes on either side of the proscenium have been returned to their original elegance.*



# The Mighty Wurlitzer of the El Capitan Theatre, Hollywood

The former San Francisco Fox Theatre 4/36 Wurlitzer (now 4/37 with added Flute Celeste) had a very successful grand opening in early summer 1999. The meticulously restored Wurlitzer was installed as well as restored by G. M. Buck Pipe Organs, Inc. of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Charter ATOS member Gordon Kibbee served as a consultant on the project along with William Schutz. Previously, George Buck had been involved with the move of the large 3-manual Wurlitzer from a restaurant to a museum in Grand Rapids. He was also heavily involved with "The Mightiest" Wurlitzer installed in what was then the company's headquarters in DeKalb, Illinois.

Richard Cook, chairman of The Walt Disney Motion Pictures Group, developed the idea of placing a Wurlitzer in the El Capitan. While one of the company road shows was on tour, Mr. Cook heard the electric effect of a Wurlitzer organ, *live*, in a theatre. The rest is now history. In a press release on the subject (July/August 1999, page 24), Mr. Cook stated, "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 home in Hollywood."

Theatre organ aficionados over the world can take heart in a person of vision such as Mr. Cook. A *very public* venue such as the El Capitan shall provide an outlet for the theatre organ to expose thousands of people each year to the theatre organ.

Understandably, the organ bears little resemblance to its days in the 4700 seat San Francisco Fox. The instrument today has a very intimate, yet BIG sound in the El Capitan. Without a doubt, it has a fine Wurlitzer sound which the organ crew is continuing to perfect. They have a marvelous product at hand!

Prior to the acquisition by the Disney company, the organ saw a couple of decades installed in the La Canada/Flintridge, California home of former theatre organist and state legislator, Frank Lanterman. Lanterman was directly responsible for the Wurlitzer production of the rare style 216, 10-rank Wurlitzer. These wonderful English Horn equipped organs were all installed in Southern California Fox/West Coast Theatres - excepting one single organ to the Fox Senator Theatre in Oakland, California.

The organ was moved directly from the San Francisco FOX to the Lanterman home with its studio addition. Much of this effort was done by Bob Rhodes and Richard S. Villemin. Both men were involved with the organ's 1963 removal from the FOX, under the direction of the late Buster Rosser. The removal was a monumental task, and was accomplished with great expertise by this crew with no

damage to the instrument or humans - save for one tired crew member tripping over a 32' Diaphone on the doomed theatre's stage floor!

With the passing of Frank Lanterman and later his brother Lloyd, the organ's ownership was assumed by the City of Glendale, California. The organ was removed from the historic Lanterman home by Edward Millington Stout III, and his company. From Glendale, the organ went to the Disney company.

The Disney company and its associates are to be commended in the strongest manner for their efforts and foresight to install this historic Wurlitzer in the El Capitan. It is hoped this year for ATOS President Nelson Page to present a commendation to the company and its visionaries. Through the efforts of Mr. Cook, Ed Collins, and Kevin Frawley, this truly Mighty Wurlitzer is open for the public to rediscover. In one summer show witnessed, over 800 school children were treated to the Mighty Wurlitzer, the stage show, and the current Disney release. Think of it; 800 kids who have likely never heard a theatre organ, let alone in a theatre! Here, this company of vision had accomplished in one morning what we in ATOS have tried to keep alive for years - and this was but one show!

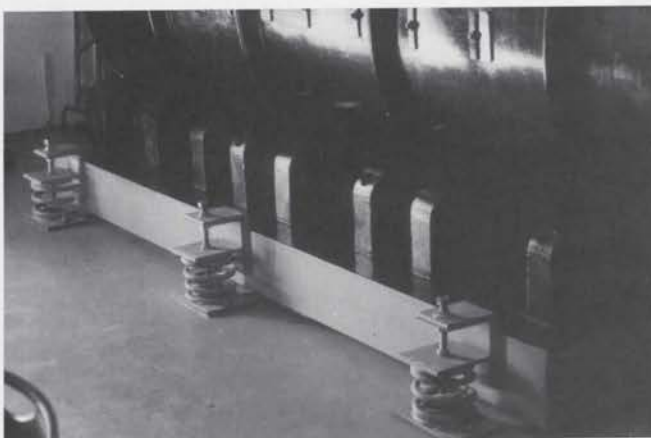
Walt Disney  
would be proud.



# The Blower Room



50 h.p. blower with spring shock mounts to eliminate vibration. Note steel strap plate for reducing or eliminating lateral movement in a major earthquake.

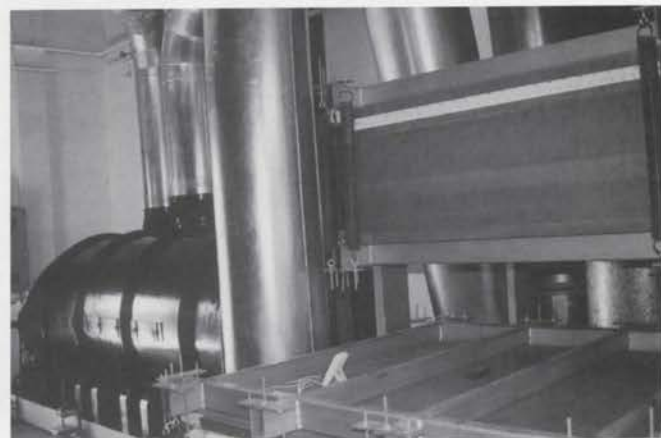


Shock-mounts

50 h.p. 900 RPM motor



Orgoblo #22619 50 h.p.,  
 4000 C.F.M. @ 15", 2000 C.F.M. @ 25"

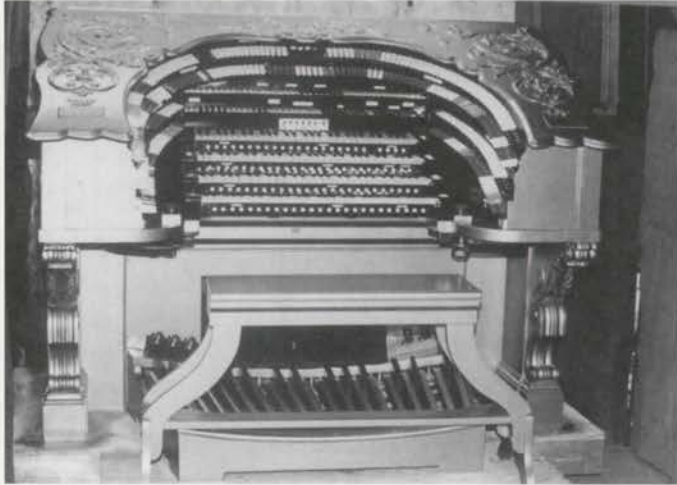


Static Reservoirs





## Rebuild of the Console



*Storage of organ components  
in Grand Rapids, Michigan*



*George Buck, Frank Thomas, and Roger Colby's son Brad*



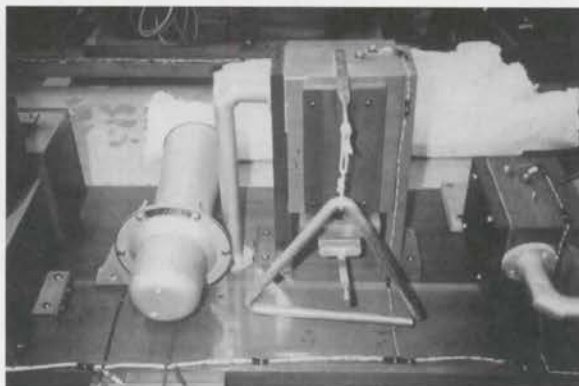
*Polishing pipes*



*Installing new primary valves*



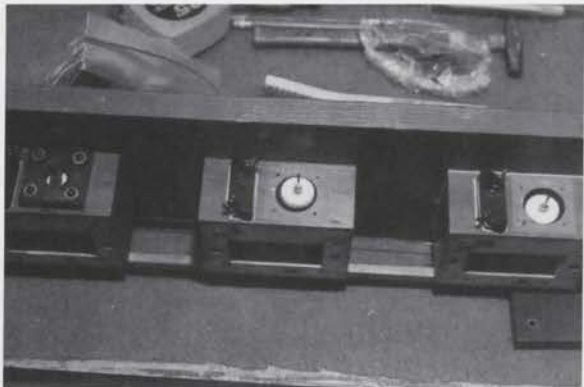
*Trap/effects assembly  
(above and at right)*



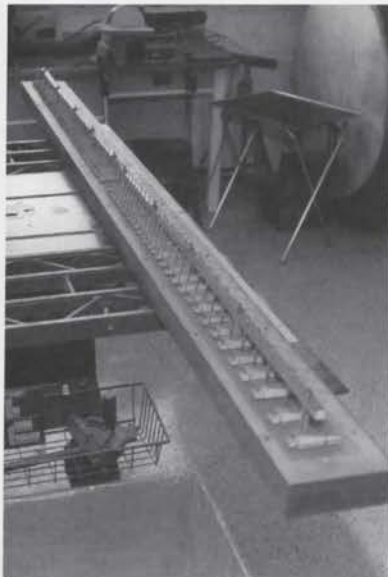
*Erection room shot of Main chest, showing  
Concert Flute, Horn Diapason, Tuba*

ALL PHOTOS: GEORGE BUCK CO.





*Bourdon offset chest primaries and valves*



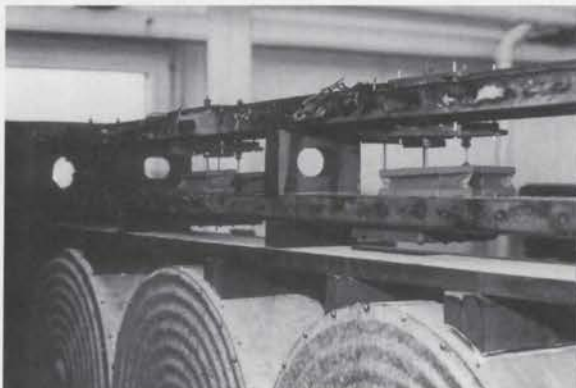
*Restored pallet/toeboard*



*Restored Sleigh Bells*



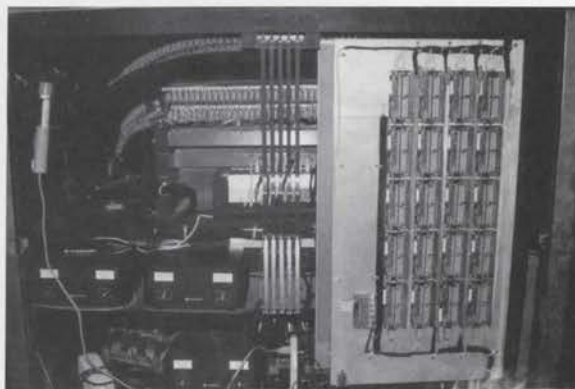
*Tympani after restoration*



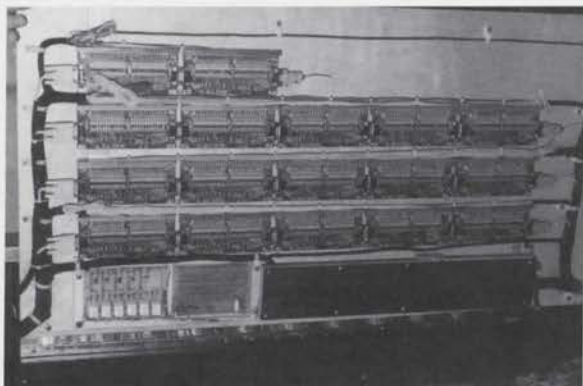
*Tympani action before restoration*



*DC power supplies in console*



*Above: Interior of console after rebuild*



*Portion of the relay*



*6-rank chest in process of restoration*



## The Installation

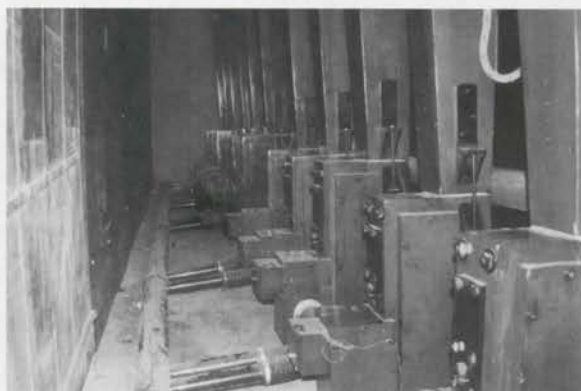


Magnificent former San Francisco Fox Theatre now 4/37 Wurlitzer console.

Below: Custom bas-relief work from the organ's too short tenure in the San Francisco Fox Theatre



At left: Orchestral Chamber 25" Tuba Mirabilis (to 16'), 15" English Horn (to 16'), 25" Tibia Clausa (to 16').



At left: 32' Diaphone back stage vibrators/resonator bases.



Highly polished brass of the 8' Saxophone; Solo Chamber.



Restored regulators



Solo Chamber: (left to right) Orchestral Oboe, Oboe Horn, Solo String, Tibia Clausa, Vox Humana, Saxophone, Solo String Celeste, Quintadena, French Horn, Trumpet. Swell shades are to left of Oboe.





*Orchestral chamber 16' English Horn.*



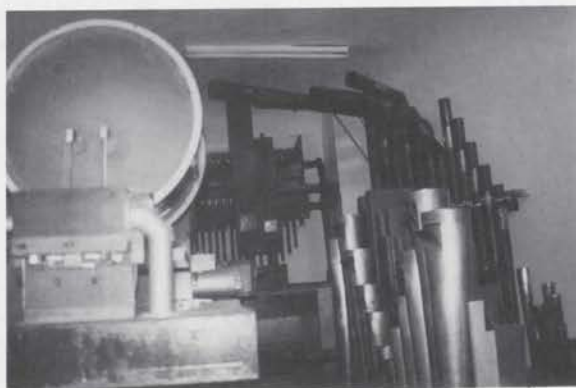
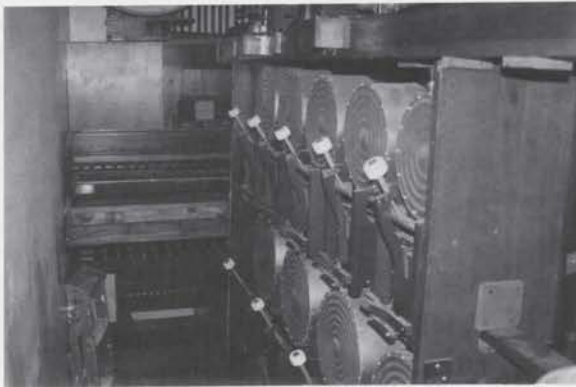
*Above: Looking up to the grid. Note the steel binding on the 32' Diaphones. This is a feature to prevent damage or injury from these huge pipes should a major earthquake strike the Los Angeles area.*

*At right (top to bottom):*

- *Relay in Solo chamber.*
- *Foundation Chamber Tibia Clausa, Gamba, Gamba Celeste, 4' Harmonic Flute, 15" Solo Trumpet. Also in this chamber: Musette, Clarinet, 25" Diaphonic Diapason, 16' Clarinet to right rear.*
- *Foundation Chamber. Boots of 16' Clarinet top, left Musette, Clarinet.*
- *Tops of the 16' English Horn resonators. Orchestral Chamber*



*Below: Tuned Tympani in the Orchestral chamber.  
Bottom: Orchestral Chamber offset Tuba Mirabilis and 16' Solo String.  
Note the 2-note "boat whistle" at center. Shutters are below.*





# CONVENTION '99 LONDON ENGLAND

## The Convention With a Difference

JULY 3-8, 1999

SPONSORED BY THE LONDON & SOUTH OF ENGLAND CHAPTERS

### ATOS Convention Notes

By Don Bickel, LATOS Member

PRE-GLOW: SATURDAY, JULY 3

For our first concert, we traveled to the midlands near Birmingham, north of London. Here, Nigel Ogden opened the Pre-Glow playing the Compton 3/10 installed in Saint Martin's Girls' School. He played a concert of light music, some classics, several familiar numbers, and ended with selections from *Annie Get Your Gun*. The organ leans toward the classical sound; however, the tibias have a lovely sound with fuller tremulant. We also heard the Melotone found on many Compton theatre organs. Although a bit different from the familiar Wurlitzer sound, this organ has magnificent orchestral sounds. Nigel's concert was beautifully done. (Note: Nigel Ogden has been the host of a weekly national radio broadcast in England featuring all organ music for over twenty years.)

Then we traveled to the National Motorcycle Museum where we had ample time to tour the many rooms of motorcycles. After a social hour, we enjoyed a great dinner in the lovely large room which houses the former Buddy Cole 3/26 Wurlitzer. The basic organ was a 260 Wurlitzer with Morton ranks added by Buddy Cole. The console was built for this room, and has many coats of Mercedes paint. The stop rail is the original one. Chris McPhee gave an outstanding performance featuring many numbers familiar to the American delegation. His concert included selections from musicals and familiar numbers with some new arrangements. Chris has a beautiful style that all theatre organ lovers enjoy listening to.



- Arriving at St. Martin's School (top left) for Preview opener.
- BBC personality Nigel Ogden (left) introducing his concert at the Solihull 3/10 Compton.
- Chris McPhee (above) played the Buddy Cole Wurlitzer at the National Motorcycle Museum.
- The Motorcycle Museum, Birmingham, (below) seemed an unlikely venue for a Wurlitzer concert.
- The new Granada-style console of the 3/26 Buddy Cole Wurlitzer/Robert-Morton (below right). FW Pratt photos







Former Gaumont State Theatre Kilburn 4/16 Wurlitzer.  
Tom Hurst photo



Ron Reeseigh, 1998 Over-All Winner.  
Tom Hurst photo



Heather Novak, Junior Winner  
Ray Van Steenkiste photo



Elizabeth Hanton, Intermediate Winner  
Ray Van Steenkiste photo



Sean Henderson, Senior Winner and  
Over-All Winner. Ray Van Steenkiste photo



Richard Hills (above) at the Kilburn 4/16 Wurlitzer which  
was made famous by Sidney Torch's recordings.  
Now a Bingo Hall, the old Gaumont State Theatre (right)  
still retains its theatrical ambiance. FW Pratt photos

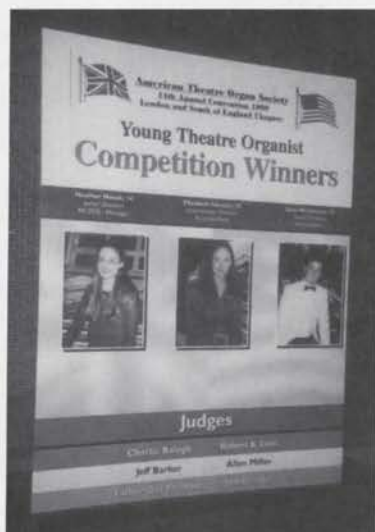


## SUNDAY, JULY 4

The morning found us in the Gaumont State Kilburn Theatre. Although this theatre has been changed into a Bingo Hall, it still has the 4/16 Wurlitzer that was installed in 1937. Richard Hills did not surprise us when he gave a superb concert of some novelty tunes, selections from musicals, and some old songs, which we all love to hear. He called us back after intermission with a rousing British March. Other selections included a lively rendition of "Brazil," soft ballads, a waltz, and an overture. It is exciting to see young people taking up the art of theatre organ playing so we will be able to hear these wonderful instruments for many years to come.

The afternoon found us at the BBC where we heard Bill Davis perform on the BBC 4/34 Compton organ. His selections included music by Strauss, a polka, English compositions, and other classical selections. He also played some Leroy Anderson numbers and a Sousa march for the Americans.

Late afternoon, we enjoyed a concert by Ron Reeseigh, 1998 Young Organist of the Year. He performed on the 3/17 Woking Wurlitzer. Following Ron's concert, the Young Organist winners for the three divisions performed. The Junior Winner was Heather Novak, the Intermediate Winner, Elizabeth Hanton; and the Senior Winner, Sean Henderson.





## Young Organists



- (Above) L to R, Back: Sean Henderson, Senior Winner; Elizabeth Hanton, Intermediate Winner; Paul Forte, Hobbyist Winner; Ron Reseigh, Overall Winner 1998; Front: Heather Novak, Junior Winner. David Ambory photo
- (Right) Elizabeth Hanton (Australia), Ron Reseigh and Heather Novak (Motor City TOS). Ray Van Steenkiste photo

Young organists (below) receiving their awards from President Harry Heth:

- (top) Heather Novak David Ambory photo
- (middle) Elizabeth Hanton
- (bottom) Sean Henderson. Ray Van Steenkiste photos



Elizabeth Hanton, Sean Henderson, Dorothy Van Steenkiste (Competition Chairman), and Heather Novak. Ray Van Steenkiste photo



Paul Forte, Hobbyist Winner, Harry Heth and Dorothy Van Steenkiste. Ray Van Steenkiste photo

## MONDAY, JULY 5

We traveled to the rural area of Abingdon where we heard 83-year-old Dr. Arnold Loxam play the 4/10+ Melotone Compton. Arnold has played for BBC and for dances for many years and gave us a rousing concert with much rhythm, humor, and British style playing. He also played some great swing selections on the piano. The organ has a fast tremulant that is a bit shallower than that of the usual Wurlitzer. Arnold is quite a showman and a great musician.

We then traveled to the Blenheim Palace where Winston Churchill was born. We had time to tour the magnificent palace, stop to have some lunch, then we heard Thomas Trotter play the wonderful Henry Willis 52 stop organ installed in the palace library. Thomas played a variety of classical numbers with beauty and accuracy. We left with wonderful memories of the beautiful palace and the good organ music.



Veteran performer Dr. Arnold Loxam at the 4/10 Compton organ in Abingdon Town Hall. FW Pratt photo



Delegates turned tourist in the quaint streets of Abingdon. FW Pratt photo





Outside Blenheim Palace, Britain's largest stately home, conventioners await closing time and their promised concert. FW Pratt photo

The 4/52 Father Willis organ (left) in Blenheim Palace's library was played in concert by Thomas Trotter. Chris Andrews photo

## TUESDAY, JULY 6

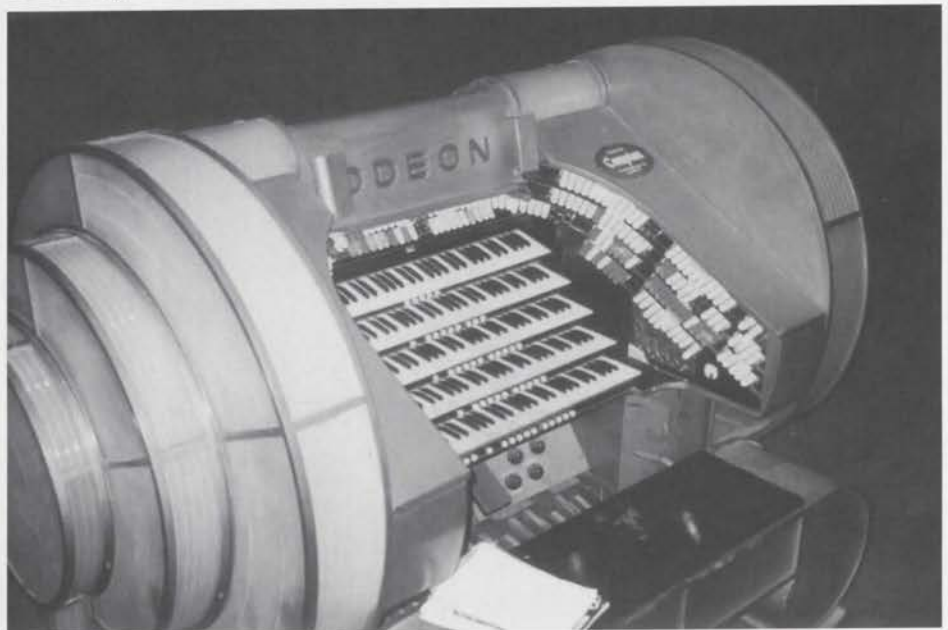
In the morning, we traveled a short distance to the Odeon Theatre in Leicester Square in London. Here, we heard David McKenzie play the 5/17 Compton with Melotone. This organ has a surround with the lights that change colors. The bench also has lights in it – some say it keeps the organist warm. The theatre has been renovated and is beautiful. The organ sounds similar to the Wurlitzer and David gave us an enjoyable concert of some familiar numbers and some English numbers.



David Ambory photo



Thomas Trotter, Blenheim Palace organist.  
Mary Reseigh photo



"The Duchess," at the Odeon, rose again from the pit in full technicolor splendor for the ATOS. The Odeon (left), Leicester Square London, Britain's largest cinema, was completely refurbished in 1998. FW Pratt photos



Tuesday afternoon

In the afternoon, the coaches took us to St. Albans Organ Museum where we heard John Mann, Michael Maine, and Michael Wooldridge play the 3/10 Wurlitzer, the 3/6 Rutt, and the 3/6 Compton Clayhall organs. It was an interesting experience to hear three accomplished organists play these three great old instruments.

### WEDNESDAY, JULY 7

We journeyed south and west of London to Southampton to see and hear the largest Comptons ever built. The Town Crier and his wife greeted us. In the Guildhall, we found both the classical 50 rank organ and the 30 rank theatre organ – one on each side, in front. David Shepherd played both organs with music ranging from the traditional theatre favorites to classical numbers – depending on which organ he was playing. This was another great concert with a variety of music performed for our pleasure.

The afternoon found us back at the Woking 3/17 Wurlitzer. This instrument had been installed in the Granada Welling in Southeast London and is the chapter's own organ. Here, our emcee, Len Rawle, gave an outstanding performance. Because of time limitations, he played continuously without announcements. This Wurlitzer has a beautiful sound and attracts more people into the hall (now renamed Wurlitzer Hall) than any other activity. It is used for concerts and to accompany ballroom dancing.

The evening found us aboard a cruise ship where we enjoyed a lovely dinner. Entertainment was provided by Russell Holmes on the piano and by Byron Jones on the Wersi organ. For some reason, the cruise ship would not "work," so we moved to a tour ship for the cruise along the Thames River in London to see the sights at night. This was an enjoyable way to end the official convention.



John Mann (top) jokes with his ATOS audience at St. Albans Organ Museum's 3/10 Wurlitzer. The Spurdens-Rutt console (above) at St. Albans, with its illuminated surround was a novelty for visiting Americans. FW Pratt photos

Michael Wooldridge (top) and Michael Maine (above) played the Clayhall organs. Michael Candy photos



Having run his bell, Southampton's Town Crier bellowed a formal welcome to ATOS. FW Pratt photo





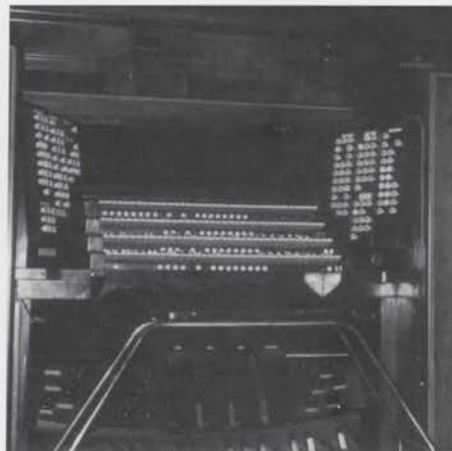
After the Southampton Guildhall concert the parking sign said it all: no time to tour the historic ocean liner docks. FW Pratt photo



Compton theatre console, Guildhall, Southampton



ATOS conventioners arrive at the Woking Leisure Center, home of the host chapter's 3/16 Wurlitzer. FW Pratt photo



Classical console of Compton organ; Guildhall Southampton. Don Bickel photo

Len Rawle and Marian Ritchie (right) at the 3/16 Wurlitzer in Woking Leisure Center.



David Shepherd at the theatre console of the 4/50 double Compton organ. FW Pratt photo

Nick Martin (right) in fine form at Turner's 3/1 ex-Paramount, Newcastle, Wurlitzer. FW Pratt photo



## AFTER-GLOW THURSDAY, JULY 8

This day we had the opportunity to tour South Midlands and East Anglia. Two similar organs and installations were enjoyed. Our first stop was at Turners where we enjoyed a concert by Nicholas Martin on the 3/19 Wurlitzer. The organ was amplified which was not necessary. Nicholas is a showman at the organ and the organ is only one of many points of interest at Turners. The Musical Merry-Go-Round and many reproducing music machines make this a place that draws many people for an evening of entertainment.

Later in the day, we moved on to the Cushing Museum where we enjoyed seeing many old steam engines, trucks and farm equipment. We also saw and heard a number of reproducing music machines, a Merry-Go-Round, and the Thursford Wurlitzer. After dinner, Robert Wolfe entertained us with a concert on the Wurlitzer.

The organists in these two locations are showmen as well as organists. The organ is only part of the entertainment available at these two locations where many people come to enjoy an evening of fun and music. The organs are used regularly and the people come from some distance to hear them. It is good to know that these beautiful Wurlitzers are still being used regularly today.



Robert Wolfe was in fine form at the Thursford 3/19 Wurlitzer; dazzling as always, but so modest on the microphone. FW Pratt photo



## THE FOLLOW-ON FRIDAY, JULY 9

Those who attended the "Follow-On" traveled from London to Manchester for a fabulous weekend. The Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust sponsored this experience.

After settling in our hotel, we enjoyed dinner, then had a back stage tour through the Granada Studios. We also enjoyed a great concert by Kevin Morgan on their 4/14 Wurlitzer. The organ has a great sound and Kevin entertained us with a number of familiar numbers.

## SATURDAY, JULY 10

Our first stop of the day was at Stockport Town Hall where Nigel Ogden performed beautifully on the 4/20 Wurlitzer, recently installed in this beautiful Town Hall. Nigel gave us a wonderful concert on the marvelous Wurlitzer.

We enjoyed a good lunch and headed on to the Chorley Town Hall where Joyce Allred entertained us at the 3/7 Compton. Her concert was a delightful stop for the early afternoon.

The highlight of the day for most of us was the famous Tower Ballroom. Here you find the beauty of a castle, paintings on the ceilings, gold leaf, and crystal chandeliers. A large dance floor is surrounded with tables and chairs to sit and have a snack while watching the dancers. Two balconies are available for observers. The organs used to accompany ballroom dancing are on the stage at one end. The Yamaha was playing when we arrived, and soon the magnificent 3/14 Wurlitzer took over and we were surrounded by the wonderful sound of the theatre organ playing for ballroom dancers of all ages. This experience cannot be described – you had to be there!

After a leisurely afternoon of enjoyment in the Tower Ballroom, we traveled to the Imperial Hotel in Blackpool for dinner. Then we returned to the hotel.

## SUNDAY, JULY 11

Our coaches took us to the Ossett Town Hall where Doreen Chadwick performed magnificently on the 3/13 Compton/Christie organ. Her concert was delightful, with a variety of music.

She seemed surprised that the Americans enjoyed her music. This was another very enjoyable concert.

We then moved on to the Ritz Ballroom where Michael Wooldridge performed on the 3/10 Wurlitzer. Again, it was great to see people dancing to the sound of a beautiful Wurlitzer with wonderful music that was enjoyed by all.

We returned to the hotel, went back to the Granada Studio for a fish and chips dinner, then again heard the

organ when two organists gave brief concerts, then those who wished had a chance for open console on the 4/14 Wurlitzer.

For those who were not able to attend this weekend, you missed a marvelous experience.

The theatre organ enthusiasts in England are to be commended for their work in preserving theatre organs and in seeing that they are used so often for concerts, ballroom dancing and entertainment.



Welcome to St. Martin's School. Don Bickel photo



Bus Captin, Jeffrey Mackenzie - Host with the mostest!

Elaine Whitehouse and Barbara Carnochan (below) served tea at St. Martin's School. Ray Van Steenkiste photos



A friendly welcoming committee: Judith Rawle, Len Rawle and Veronica Trot. Ray Van Steenkiste photos





## Impressions of A Convention With A Difference

By Frank W. Pratt, Ontario, Canada

Too many early mornings, too many late nights, too many long rides, too many CDs on offer and – can it be? – too many organs: I wouldn't have missed it for the world! England clearly is a land awash in theatre organs, modest to spectacular; even some in their original venues. It's also a country knee-deep in skilled performers young and once young; the younger ones mostly products of the Young Organist of the Year programme.

London's lush Forum Hotel provided an elegant, upmarket backdrop for our comings and goings and the coach transportation was top notch (almost: air-conditioned coaches will reach Britain one day).

Overall, the London and South of England Chapter did ATOS proud, hosting the 44<sup>th</sup> annual gathering. Convention Chairman, popular recording artist Len Rawle, turned out to be a witty and articulate presenter at each concert, to whom ATOS President Harry Heth wisely deferred once he had declared the gathering officially open.

The Preview set the tone, with a tour through the beautiful English countryside to hear two fine transplanted organs and two accomplished artists. Our convoy of coaches took us to the Birmingham area for concerts by Nigel Ogden (affable BBC National Radio host of "The Organist Entertains" for over twenty years) and the young conductor Sir Thomas Beecham.

That evening came our introduction to the chapter's own organ, a lovingly restored Wurlitzer, now a 3/16, in a busy leisure centre in the town of Woking in suburban London's southerly stockbroker belt. Young Organist Winner Ron Reseigh demonstrated the organ's resources and the 1999 Young Organist finalists bravely took over the Granada-style console before an audience of organists by the hundred.

Monday's coaches bore us back into the countryside to be welcomed by the Mayoress of Abingdon, a picturesque

town just begging to be photographed. Like many English towns, the civic auditorium boasts a fine organ, this time a transplanted 4/10 Compton cinema instrument. Played by the popular 83-year-old veteran Arnold Loxam, it sounded marvelous. In his bouncy style, Dr. Arnold varied his lively concert with piano selections (uncannily reminiscent of the late Charlie Kunz) and hilarious stories, again from the days of live radio.

A Monday afternoon coach convoy took us across country to the outskirts of Oxford and England's grandest stately home, Blenheim Palace, birthplace of Churchill. A fringe benefit was an hour loose in the acres of parkland and gardens, plus a guided tour of the historic palace's gorgeous interior. After closing time, we were welcomed by the Palace Administrator and politely herded into the Long Library for a concert on the 1891 4/52 tracker organ built by the famed Father Willis; after a century a fine instrument to see and hear. The classical performer was Thomas Trotter, city organist of Birmingham, whose rendition of *Elgar's Pomp and Circumstance #1* brought tingles up the spine.

Tuesday morning promised to be a convention highlight: a return to my wartime haunt, Britain's largest cinema in the heart of the West End theatre

Len Rawle, Convention Chairman and the Clayhall Compton 3/6. Michael Candy photo

The acoustics of the Church of St. John Vianney (below), Clayhall, enhanced the little 3/6 Compton to Chicago Stadium proportions. FW Pratt photo

district, the opulent 3000-seat Odeon, Leicester Square. Opened in 1937, Odeon's art deco flagship spent 1998 being refurbished, and what a masterful job! Where James Bell and Gerald Shaw held audiences spellbound in days of yore, be-kilted young Donald MacKenzie now presides at the one-of-a-kind 5-manual Compton. What a thrill it was to see the multi-colour lighted console rise majestically from the pit as of old and hear the big sound gush forth from under the stage – not to mention the unique Compton Melotone stops which produced a decidedly mixed reaction among the American first timers. It was a fine concert in all respects.

Tuesday afternoon was upon us and we split in half for concerts in two remote smaller venues. At a modern Catholic church in Clayhall, east of London, two young Michaels, Maine and Wooldridge, entertained us from the balcony switching back and forth between a small (3/6) Compton with a huge sound, and an electronic organ used largely for embellishments. The





incredible acoustics, however, transformed this hard-walled auditorium into the old Chicago Stadium – just close your eyes and it was the big Barton reborn. A couple of robust songs by Michael Maine added spice to the show.

The afternoon's other venue was St. Albans Organ Museum, north of the capital, where in a modest space, two cinema organs vie for attention with a grand piano, five band organs and a player-violin. John Mann, who is part comedian-of-the-old-school and part organist, entertained on the 3/10 Wurlitzer and the contrasting 3/6 Spurden-Rutt. The large DeCapo band organ also gave a good account of itself. The tireless curator, John Walker, presents a comprehensive programme here to the public every Sunday.

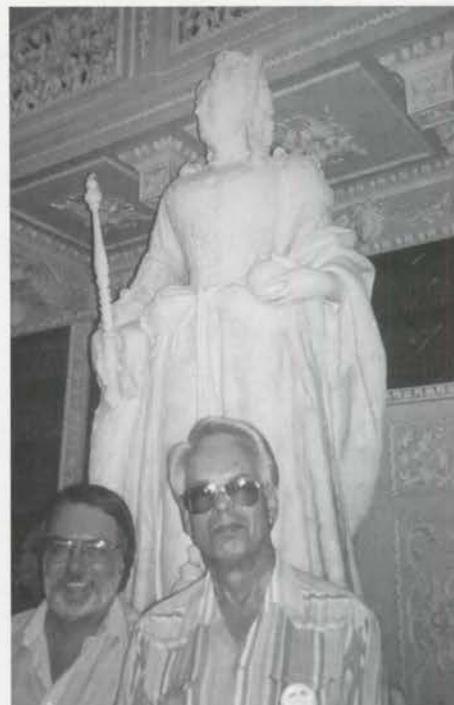
On Wednesday morning we made our way through Surrey and Hampshire to the south coast. Here the colorful Town Crier of Southampton rang his bell and bellowed a formal greeting to the ATOS, as did the mayor in a gentler voice, inside the Guildhall. The attraction in this enormous hall was a unique Compton double organ: 50 ranks in all, with a 4-manual theatre console at the left of the stage and a 4-manual classical console opposite. In seven chambers across the top of the proscenium, only the colour reeds are shared. Unfortunately, Douglas Reeve of the Brighton Dome Christie had to cancel at the eleventh hour, so David Shepherd bravely played appropriate music from both consoles. This remarkable double instrument, while well worth the trip and powerful enough to alert ships at sea, was widely considered to be a bit raucous. The concert was enjoyed from informal table seating, rather than rows of seats.

Meanwhile Len Rawle scooted cross-country to get a few practice licks in at his chapter's Woking Wurlitzer ahead of the coaches. Once back at the Leisure Centre, we soon learned that our genial host is indeed a polished performer in his own right. Len has a string of recording and concert successes behind him (having a 4-manual Wurlitzer once played by Jesse Crawford in your living room doesn't hurt, of course). This was one of the more relaxed and enjoyable afternoons

on our schedule, while anticipating the evening's dinner cruise on the Thames.

This was the one event that didn't quite turn out as planned, although it was no fault of the chapter. Dinner on board M.V. "Symphony" was delightful but the chatter level confined the dinner music by Russell Holmes (piano) and Byron Jones, "The Welsh Wizard," (Wersi) to the first few tables. Only the odd bass burp from the Wersi reached my table. Moreover, engine trouble kept the boat securely moored at the pier (my hastily grabbed window seat offered an unparalleled close up view of the dock pilings throughout dinner). To make amends, a sister ship turned up later for a scenic sail through history by night (ironically, passing within shouting distance of one famous Wurlitzer we would not hear, Quentin McLain's ex-Trocadero organ, beyond the chapter's jurisdiction). Returning to the Thames Embankment fittingly concluded the convention proper.

Everyone appeared to linger on for the Thursday Afterglow, which took us to commercial installations of two identical Wurlitzers, one in Northampton and one in the remote reaches of East Anglia, near the North Sea. It would be unfair to call the two artists Reginald Dixon clones, but they do play very much in the renowned Blackpool style. Nicholas Martin at Turner's Musical Merry-Go-Round and Robert Wolfe at the Thursford Collection are both highly accomplished young musicians, spellbinding entertainers and masters of showmanship, with stacks of recordings to their credit. Each employed a novel feature which drew a lot of attention: large projection TV screens to either side of the console with live-action close-ups of the manual keyboards from above, so their fingers could be followed. At both venues, it was interesting to look around and note more eyes glued to the screens than to the console. At both places, working carousels and band organs help the Wurlitzers to make them extremely popular spots. At Thursford, nonegenarian proprietor George Cushing, who assembled a spectacular collection of preserved steam engines as well, was on hand to make us welcome.



Dan Bellomy, Harry Heth and Her Majesty at Blenheim Palace Library. Bill Brown photo



Ever-subtle Jack O'Neill. "Mr. Stealth" is off to the next venue.



Sean Henderson, recipient of \$1,000 scholarship from Paul Fleming. Ray Van Steenkiste photo





**Top to Bottom:**

- Turners Musical Merry-Go-Round 3/19 Wurlitzer. Nicholas Martin, Organist. Tom Hurst photo
- Decap dance organ, Thurston Museum.
- Len Clark, "The Great One" Carlo Curley, Dan Bellomy, and Don McKenzie. Bill Brown photo

**At right:**

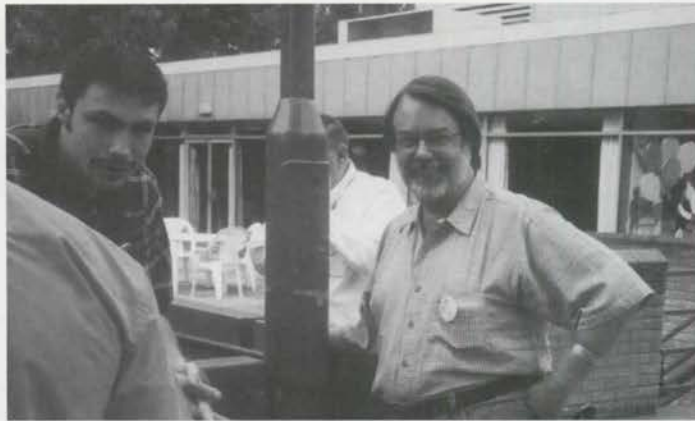
- Nor-Call members Jack O'Neil, Richard Quigley, Marian Ritchie, and Jack Gustafson.



**Top to bottom:**

- Harry Heth and Chris McPhee. Bill Brown photo
- Donald McKenzie and Ron Reseigh. Ray Van Steenkiste photo
- Andrew and Heather Novak arriving in London. Ray Van Steenkiste photo
- Heather Novak, Arnold Loxam and Elizabeth Hanton. Ray Van Steenkiste photo





Top to bottom:

- "Ted" Lloyd and Mrs. Eileen Hopkins at the River Thames dinner cruise. Lloyd photo
- Catherine Drummond, Svanhild Johannessen, John Johannessen (Norway), Sean Henderson.
- Jack Gustafson at the LeFleur (Hammond) Thurston Museum.
- Board Members - Vern Bickel, Dorothy Van Steenkiste, Connie Purkey and Harry Heth, President. Ray Van Steenkiste photos

Top to bottom:

- Ron Reeseigh and Dan Bellomy. Ray Van Steenkiste photo
- St. Albans Organ Museum 3/10 Wurlitzer, 3/6 Rutt. Tom Hurst photo
- Paul Roberts (English organist) and New York Chapter members Tom Stehle and Bob Welch. Lowell Sanders photo
- Bill Brown and Harry Heth compare notes on "the convention so far" as they board MV "Symphony" for the dinner cruise. FW Pratt photo







**Top to Bottom:**

- Motor City Group at Blenheim Palace - Tom Hurst, Ray Van Steenkiste, Michele Ambory, Dorothy Van Steenkiste, Mary Reseigh.
- Blenheim Palace. David Ambory photos
- Inside Blenheim Palace. Ray Van Steenkiste photo
- St. Martin's School, Organist Nigel Ogden. Ray Van Steenkiste photo

**Top to Bottom:**

- The busses.
- Michele Ambory, Heather Novak, Andrew Novak, and David Ambory at Westminster Abbey.
- On the dinner cruise.
- Closing of Convention, Len Rawle. Ray Van Steenkiste photos





## The LTOT Weekend

While not all could be accommodated at the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust's add-on gala weekend, the first several dozen to register were in for a succession of extraordinary treats. Many booking in at the Victoria and Albert Hotel were, in fact, new faces. Meticulously organized by David Alldred, things got under way in style with a magnificent feast at the hotel that set the tone for what was to follow. No early night would follow the long trek from London, though: at 10:00 p.m. we were herded across the street to tour the Granada TV studios and hear a short concert on the ex-Gaumont Manchester 4/14 Wurlitzer made famous in the golden age by Stanley Tudor. It was played in its new Granada TV Studio location by Kevin Morgan, who unaccountably had not seen fit to dress up for the occasion, nor did he turn around to speak or acknowledge applause. This organ did sound marvelous, however, in its "baronial hall" location and the console is splendidly displayed as it rises into its own special stage setting.

Saturday we had yet another early breakfast and went on to nearby Stockport where the LTOT has found a magnificent home for its pride and joy, the ex-Paramount/Odeon Manchester 4/20 Wurlitzer (the only Publix #1 in

Britain), recently removed from the Free Trade Hall. In the colorfully decorated ballroom of the town hall, the organ chambers occupy the balcony and the beautifully restored console adjoins the stage. Welcomed by one more mayoress, we were treated to arguably the best sound-feast to date – and with only half of the ranks playing so far! It was Nigel Ogden time again, and he did the LTOT proud indeed.

Afterward it did seem a bid odd, though, for several hundred theatre organ players and aficionados to be munching away at lunch in the presence of one of England's finest Wurlitzers while it sat there, beautiful but mute. Some quiet lunch music would have been nice. The chambers were on view too, as were some historic Hope-Jones artifacts.

After an hour ride to the town of Chorley we were treated to a tiny lady with a big personality who seemed totally unfazed by having such a tough act to follow as the Stockport Wurlitzer. Joyce Alldred (wife of David) very capably showed off the town hall's 3/7 Compton and drew a very warm applause. At the console with its colorful illuminated surround, Joyce made a pretty picture on stage.

Blackpool was the next stop. At the famous Tower Ballroom where one R. Dixon held forth since 1937, John Bowdler (no mean hand at the Wurlitzer) was literally pounding out

dance rhythms on a white Yamaha but on the turn of the hour the unmistakable sounds of the renowned 3/14 Wurlitzer joined in, reverberating around the vast space, though no console could be seen. Then up it rose at mid-stage and John introduced the ballroom's chief organist (of four), Phil Kelsall. From then on it was Wurlitzer all the way.

The Tower Ballroom, rising over three floors above a huge dance floor, is a magnificent baroque temple to the ancient British sport of ballroom dancing, with the organs alternating hourly from mid-morning to late evening. All too soon, we were whisked up the seaside promenade to the venerable Imperial Hotel for another fine banquet with impeccable British service. Afterward, a surprise was in store as we invaded the nearby Winter Garden complex, long home to two Wurlitzers. We toured the Empress Ballroom, whose organ, made famous by Horace Finch, has gone to BBC Manchester. Then came a hastily arranged visit to the Opera House, cobwebbed for a daily horror show and uncleaned after the last show. But from under the built-over orchestra pit suddenly came the muffled but undoubted music of yet another Wurlitzer. Recorded? No, up from the pit creaked a 3-manual ivory console, showing its years, but played very nicely by its blue-coated but unnamed keeper, not showing his



The Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust's special weekend visit to the New Publix One installation at Stockport Town Hall. The delegates consisted of 150 Americans, several Australians and Canadians. The photograph shows organist Nigel Ogden with the Mayor of Stockport, Councillor Ingrid Shaw. LTOT/JBC Photography





Nigel Ogden (above) shows off the refinished 4/20 Wurlitzer console to the Mayor of Stockport. FW Pratt photo



The Town Hall in Ossett, Yorkshire, was yet another with a fine organ, as these travel-weary organ fans would soon learn. FW Pratt photo



At right: Table seating provided a comfortable ambience for Nigel Ogden's concert in Stockport's decorous Town Hall Ballroom. FW Pratt photos



Kevin Morgan, at the Granada TV Studios' 4/14 Wurlitzer (ex-Gaumont, Manchester), got the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust weekend off to a rousing start. FW Pratt photo



Phil Kelsall could only be seen from a distance at the Tower Ballroom's 3/14 Wurlitzer in Blackpool as he kept dancers on their toes with his rhythmic tunes. FW Pratt photo



Stockport Town Hall. The Worshipful Mayor and the Mayor Console and Councilor, Ingrad Shaw and Mr. Dennis Shaw with Heather Novak. Ray Van Steenkiste photo



Diminutive Joyce Allred is almost eclipsed by the massive illuminated console of the 3/9 Compton (ex-Grand, Southport) in Chorley Town Hall. FW Pratt photo



Blackpool Ballroom. Tom Hurst photo



years at all. In his capable hands, in fact, the organ showed no sign of not having been tuned in living memory, and gave a good account of itself.

The last day of the LTOT Weekend took us on an exceptionally scenic two-hour ride across the Pennines, the "backbone of England," into Yorkshire and the town of Ossett, where the town hall boasts a much-recorded 3/13 Compton (with a few Christie ranks). The artiste, another diminutive lady with a matching modest voice, was Doreen Chadwick. Were we in for a surprise! Not only is she a superb energetic musician but she knows how to tailor her programme for her audience. A rousing, jazzy American Patrol brought every American to attention, clamoring for more. Sadly, the North American custom of encores has never taken hold in Britain. Almost as an after thought to her thank yous, Doreen mentioned that she would turn 84 the following day.

Another tough act to follow, but in a

return bout Michael Wooldridge bravely did his best at the 3/10 Wurlitzer in the Ritz cinema-turned-ballroom in Brighouse, Yorkshire. By that time, however, the long drives and longer hours had taken their toll and Michael's billowing smoke and dancing lights just weren't enough to keep his audience as attentive as they might have been.

The scene for LTOT's grand finale was, to say the least, dramatic. The final dinner took place in the middle of London's Baker Street. Opposite 221B in fact: on the preserved set of Granada TV's world-famous *Sherlock Holmes* series starring the late Jeremy Brett. As a nightcap to remember, young Kevin Grunell and Len Rawle played us out with mini-concerts at the ex-Gaumont 4/14 Wurlitzer. Then, eight intrepid volunteers tried their hand during an open console session.

Speaking from experience, that is life on the edge: ten seconds prep time and up you go into the spotlight,

before an audience of the world's severest critics. No wonder you forget to turn around to acknowledge applause.

Monday's last breakfast at the Victoria and Albert was a time for new friends to part for another year at least. ATOS '99 had been billed as "A convention With a Difference" and the event, plus the LTOT Weekend, lived up to its promise. It was well planned and smoothly executed, with no visible signs of inner turmoil or strife. Thanks to hard-working Len Rawle, Veronica Trott, David Alldred, and the many artists, and all those who helped them.

Was there a down side? Not much of one. We missed the workshops, and the demonstration rooms, and a tour of Southampton's historic ocean liner docks would have been welcome. There was some duplication of programming too, but overall the verdict was clear: one hell of a convention!

Milwaukee, anyone? See you there!



Phil Kelsall. Gordon Crook photo



An informal mini-concert by Kevin Grunell at the Granada Studios' Wurlitzer brought the LTOT Weekend to a fine finish. FW Pratt photo



Paul Greenwood, Opera House, Blackpool. Robert Dubelbeis photo

Below: After nine straight days and nights of organs and buses, not even Michael Wooldridge's music, smoke, and dancing lights could keep ATOS President Harry Heth (left) and others at full alert at the Ritz Ballroom, Brighouse. FW Pratt photo

Below: Granada Studio Manchester. Ray Van Steenkiste photo



36 • NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1999







Top - left to right:  
 • Mr. and Mrs. David Alldred.  
 • Doreen Chadwick, Ossett Town Hall.  
 • Imperial Hotel Dinner, Blackpool.



At right:  
 Dave Ambory, Michele Ambory, Heather Novak, Dorothy Van Steenkiste, Ray Van Steenkiste and Tom Hurst.  
 Ray Van Steenkiste photos



## Our Trip to England

By Dorothy Van Steenkiste

We had a wonderful time and were treated royally. The London chapter was truly dedicated to showing us a great time. We really enjoyed seeing not only the organs and hearing the music played by the artists, but it was wonderful seeing the various buildings in which the organs were installed. A group of us from Motor City attended and shared a lot of fun and adventure. There were long bus rides that were made fun by our bus captain, Jeffrey Mackenzie. He was a walking encyclopedia and a bit of a comedian. The first trip to Europe for all of us was exciting. Cars on the "wrong side" of the road - it took a while to get used to it. The countryside is beautiful and, of course, the architecture in England is very beautiful. London is a very, very busy place with thousands of people in town day and night. They fed us well and in such elegant style. The fact that the London chapter is part of the American Theatre Organ Society was made very clear by

the displays at all the concerts. One thing very noticeable was the cleanliness of the streets, restrooms, buildings, etc. During intermissions at concerts, we were served tea, coffee and cookies.

ATOS can be very proud of the young artists that represented us at this convention. They performed beautifully. Budgie Groom, who has charge of the Young Organist Competition in London, made sure that they were taken to practice and also fed. It was exciting driving around town with her. There are a lot of young people in London. The young adults got together and made life-long friendships with the promise of meeting again at future conventions.

Our visits to St. Martin's School, the National Motor Cycle Museum, BBC Concert Hall, Woking Leisure Centre, Abingdon, Blenheim Palace, the Odeon in Leicester Square, St. Albans Organ Museum, the Guildhall in Southampton, the dinner cruise, Turners Musical Merry-Go-Round and Thursford will never be forgotten.

The trip to Manchester was won-

derful. We had a light buffet at Birmingham Post House, visited the Granada, went back stage to the Granada Studios plus a visit to the famous "Street." We also went to Stockport Town Hall, Chorley Town Hall and Blackpool Tower and had afternoon tea in the Tower ballroom dancing to the famous 3/14 Wurlitzer. After dinner at the Imperial Hotel in Blackpool, we returned to Manchester. Our final day took us to Ossett Town Hall, the Post House Hotel for lunch, and then on to the Ritz Ballroom, Brighouse and a return to Granada Studios where we had dinner in the Stables Restaurant.

Our group returned to London and took a one-day trip to Paris. It was fun. At home, we met one Saturday night at the theatre and compared pictures and events. A trip is made fun when you are with friends and also treated so royally by friends in another ATOS chapter. Many thanks to Len and Judith Rawle and Veronica Trott and their committee members and also David Alldred and his committee members for making our stay so mem-



# CONVENTION '99

## LONDON, ENGLAND

orable.

### At the Centre of Things

By Len Rawle

After a year of intensive planning it is time to sit back and reflect on our efforts at providing a varied programme which, it was hoped might help broaden the musical interests of our overseas cousins. I am happy to say it turned out to be a job well done, thanks to a highly motivated and substantial supportive team.

Whilst the ATOS Convention committee was but four in number, myself, my wife Judith as Vice-chairman, Veronica Trott as Secretary and Mike Clemence as Treasurer, we ultimately involved almost 200 people. During the preceding year, our sub-committee had steadily built up the contacts necessary to ensure sufficient organs, various meals, coaches, which could reach venues within the requirements of the dreaded tac-o-graph, and appropriate central London hotel accommodation. Once the basic plan had been agreed upon, both here and by the ATOS board in the USA, various teams of helpers and assistants emerged to assist us create a success at each venue. These ranged from cordon blue chefs, car park attendants, coach captains, organ tuners, town criers, mayors, theatre management, museum volunteers, BBC officials, volunteer stage crews, palace officials, hotel staff, members and officials of fellow UK theatre organ groups, and of course, our concert organists and young musicians.

It turned out to be a mammoth undertaking with absolutely everyone pulling together in the interest of spreading worldwide, the word and understanding of the UK theatre organ scene.

It is great for all that were concerned in the planning and organizing to have received so many kind words of thanks and praise. We had a great time delivering our objective of some-

thing fresh at every turn, in what we set out to be "The Convention With A Difference."

Most of the conventions have been held in differing states of the USA and we know them to be wonderful affairs, the numbers of instruments and top line organists are in keeping with the 250M population. With a tradition of fewer and much smaller instruments, the UK convention was inevitably going to be seen as quite different. We therefore deliberately set out to present UK artists who could best exploit the very demanding (mainly smaller) organs we have over here and without exception, they all performed magnificently. There were even standing ovations.

Hopefully, we shall be seen to have acquitted ourselves well. It was an honor to have had the opportunity of conducting such an operation for fellow enthusiasts and I would like to thank them all for making the convention the one-off occasion that it turned out to be for organizers and visitors alike.

We had a good mix of members, ranging from the majority who enjoy experiencing as many different organs and organ presentations as possible, to organ owners, and even a few 'techno-freaks' who like mostly to make a study of extraneous noise and tremulant speeds. There even turned out to be amazement at some of the unique developments of the John Compton Organ Company. Their double touch stop canceling, 32' cube bass, automatic piston setter, manual sustainer, electrostatic Melotone and mechanical Solo Cello units never having been imported into America.

Having had a period in the UK when almost all of the Compton

Melotone units had become virtually unusable, it seemed that every effort was made to make any number as playable as possible for our visitors. 1930s electronic devices are difficult to find spares for so the end result it has to be admitted were variable, none the less, fascinating (especially to the occupants of the coach designated 'Tuba,' who have all returned home having taken the Melotone to heart. They are now studying original drawings and plan to introduce an authentic copy onto every Wurlitzer in the USA!)

As I hope you will have gathered, there was a lot of fun to be had, lots of new friends to be made, and many experiences to reflect on, even for those of us in the UK who have seen it all before. We hope that above all, organ music in general was the winner, whatever each individual's main interest. We hope that everyone had an informative and enjoyable time here in the UK.

The UK Convention seemed naturally to illustrate the need for our main board to consider raising the status of all members by making them "International," as opposed to "National" members.

Why did we all do it? Partly out of a sense of duty towards contributing something to ATOS, but more because it is great music, which is fun to share with others. Thanks again to all who came.

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# 1999 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING of the AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY (ATOS)

(Held during the Wichita Regional Convention)

Hyatt Hotel - Eagle Ballroom • Wichita, Kansas • September 4, 1999; 9:00 A.M.

The Annual Meeting of the ATOS Membership was called to order by President Harry Heth. He noted that the Meeting would be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, and that Joy Stephens would serve as the Parliamentarian. A quorum was present (50 or more Members) to conduct the business given in the notice of the Meeting.

The Officers and Board of Directors and staff were introduced (not necessarily in this order) and present for the meeting: Harry Heth, President; Bob Maney, Vice President; Jack Moelmann, Secretary; Alden Stockebrand, Treasurer; Steve Schnieders, newly appointed Treasurer; and Nelson Page, President-elect. Board Members present: Vern Bickel, Brant Duddy, Doris Erbe, Shirley Obert, Donna Parker, Connie Purkey, and Dorothy Van Steenkiste. Staff members/Committee Chairs present: Tom DeLay, Joy Stephens, Michael Fellenzer, Fern Siemens, Jim Patak, Tim Needler, Mike Kinerk, Dave Kelzenberg, and Jeff Weiler. Directors Ed Burnett and John Ledwon were absent.

The Executive Committee was introduced which included the President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer as well as Vern Bickel and Doris Erbe.

Comments were made by the THEATRE ORGAN Journal Editor, Tom DeLay, and by the editor of the *ATOS International News* Editor, Harry Heth.

Motion to approve the minutes of the last Annual Membership Meeting (1998) as published in the Nov./Dec. 1998 issue of the THEATRE ORGAN Journal:

Motion by Gus Franklin, and Second by Rudy Frey - Unanimous.

Treasurer's Report - Alden Stockebrand: It was noted that a complete audit of the ATOS financial records was made and would be made available upon request.

As of the end of the fiscal year, June 30, 1999:

Cash in banks: \$68,158  
Other Assets: \$51,400  
Endowment Fund: \$172,940  
Investment Fund: \$457,114  
Total Assets: \$749,613  
Liabilities: —00—

Motion to approve the Treasurer's report: Wayne Zimmerman, Second by Joe Lucky - Unanimous.

Secretary, Jack Moelmann, provided a report on the actions taken by the Board of Directors during the past year.

The Board met by telephone conference call in November 1998 to reschedule the annual Board of Directors Meeting from June 1999 in New Jersey to just prior to the 1999 Regional Convention, in Wichita, Kansas.

A postcard vote was held for the Board to vote on the proposed 2000 Annual Convention to be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and hosted by the Dairyland Chapter and it was approved with Bill Campbell being the Convention Chairman.

The following actions were taken during the Board of Directors Meeting held September 1-2, 1999 just prior to the Wichita Regional Convention:

Because of changes required to bring the ATOS Articles of Incorporation in line with changes with the Bylaws and statement of purpose, a new set of Articles of Incorporation were approved and will be filed with the State of California.

The following Officers were appointed for the next year:

President: Nelson Page  
Vice President: Bob Maney  
Secretary: Jack Moelmann  
Treasurer: Steve Schnieders

Harry Heth was thanked for serving as President for the past three years.

Alden Stockebrand was thanked for serving as the Treasurer for the past eight years.

In addition to the President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer being members of the Executive Committee, Doris Erbe and Vern Bickel were also appointed to the Executive Committee for the next year.

Harry Heth was appointed to serve as the Chairman of the next Board of Directors Election Nominating Committee with Fern Siemens serving as the election teller.

Three new Chapters were approved:  
Nevada Desert Lights  
Central Minnesota Otter Tail  
South Mississippi Gold Coast

The following were appointed to the ATOS Endowment Fund Board of Trustees:

Ed Burnett - Chairman  
Shirley Obert - Recording Secretary  
Steve Schnieders - Treasurer

Alden Stockebrand  
Dick Kline

The following committees were established:

American Guild of Organists  
(AGO) Liaison  
Archives/Library  
Awards and Recognition  
Bylaws  
Chapter Relations  
Convention Planning  
David L. Junchen Scholarship  
Education  
Endowment Fund  
Inner-City Youth Program  
Membership  
Nominating  
Organist Competitions  
Organist Scholarships  
Publications Review  
Restoration and Preservation  
Smithsonian Organ Project  
Special Services  
Technical  
Towe Auto Museum  
Special Interest Groups:  
Electronic Organ Owners (ETONES)  
Pipe Organ Owners  
Computer Networks  
Young Theatre Organ Enthusiasts  
(YTOE)

An Award of Special Merit was approved for the Disney Organization for their work in the installation and presentation of the theatre organ.

The following Bylaw items were changed to read:

Section 4.2 NUMBER AND QUALIFICATION OF DIRECTIONS

a. Elected Directors. Any member at least 21 years of age who has been a member of the Society for two continuous years immediately preceding the date nominations are closed may be a candidate and, if elected, serve as a Director of the Society. There shall be nine Directors who serve by reason of election, herein referred to as the Elected Directors. They shall have full voting rights on all matters before the Board.

Section 5.2 SELECTION AND TERM OF OFFICERS. Any member at least 21 years of age who has been a member of the Society for two continuous years immediately preceding nomination, may be a candidate and, if elected, serve as an Officer of the Society. The Officers of the Society, except such Officers as may be appointed



in accordance with the provisions of Section 5.3 or Section 5.5, shall be elected or appointed annually by the Board of Directors. Neither the President nor Vice President may serve for more than three terms of one year each.

The Board accepted the proposal for the San Diego Chapter to hold the Regional Convention in 2002 from November 2 to December 1 with Vern Bickel being the Convention Chairman.

The Endowment Fund is providing a \$2,000 grant to the St. Louis Chapter for work on chambers and console of the St. Louis Fox Lobby Organ (a Chapter organ) to conform with the ATOS restoration and preservation guidelines.

All new members were accepted into ATOS.

\$10,000 was allocated for funding a reprint of the Shop Notes up to 100 copies.

\$2000 was allocated for the printing of the list of excess organ recordings available by auction through the Special Services Department.

The Secretary was allocated up to \$1200 for obtaining a new computer processor with an option to buy.

The Treasurer was allocated up to \$600 to buy a multi-function laser printer with an option to buy.

Effective immediately, Vern Bickel will assume the responsibility of Associate Editor in charge of Chapter Notes and the Closing Chord sections of the Journal.

The Associate Editor is allocated up to \$3500 to procure a complete computer system to support the THEATRE ORGAN Journal.

The Advertising rates were increased 15 percent. The pro-card was increased from \$110 to \$130 per year. A double pro-card will be offered at \$350 per year. These changes will become effective on January 1, 2000.

**Policy:** Photographs and biographical information of the newly elected Directors and appointed Officers shall be published in the THEATRE ORGAN Journal immediately following those individual's respective election or appointment.

**Policy:** A group photograph of the Board of Directors shall be published in the THEATRE ORGAN Journal immediately following the Annual Convention.

**Revised Policy:** The ATOS membership list or any mailing list from any ATOS subgroup will be made available on a computer disk to not-for-profit organ related organizations at no charge. Said lists will be made available to any other organization for a charge of \$250 subject to the prior approval of the ATOS President. The ATOS membership list will be provided to ATOS members, for personal use, on computer disk for \$25 or as a printout for \$25.

The Executive Secretary's monthly contract amount was raised from \$1,750 to \$1,850.

The David L. Juncheon Wurlitzer Book Project was allocated \$1,500 for the production of photos and further research on the project. Additional funding may be required but will require more detailed planning.

The Advertising Manager's Contract was revised for the upcoming year to change the commission paid based on the dollar amount of advertising obtained. The revised schedule is:

- 10% for the first \$15,000 of sales
- 15% for the next \$15,000 of sales
- 20% for sales over \$30,000

The THEATRE ORGAN Journal Editor's contract will be renewed for the coming year with no changes.

Jim Patak of the Joliet, Illinois Area Chapter was appointed as the Curator of the ATOS Archives and Library located in Elmhurst, Illinois.

An audit of the ATOS financial records will

be accomplished prior to the turnover to the newly appointed Treasurer.

A mid-year Board of Directors meeting has been scheduled for the weekend of January 29, 2000 to be held in St. Louis, Missouri.

The annual meeting of ATOS Board of Directors and the Annual Membership Meeting will be held in conjunction with the Annual Convention to be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in July 2000.

**New Business:**

Comments from the floor included the status of membership, the future of the Volume 4 of the Juncheon Encyclopedia, what music will be played on the theatre organ in the future, the organ project in Lexington, Kentucky, the ATOS web page, and the status of the Smithsonian Organ Project.

Nelson Page announced that as of the meeting \$40,888 had been collected toward the goal of \$50,000 which would be matched by ATOS to get the required \$100,000 needed to start and complete the project. Comments were also made concerning the project by Brant Duddy who gave details on the installation and construction required at the Smithsonian. *(Note: Throughout the Regional Convention, a total of \$13,379.63 was collected from those present giving a total of \$54,267.63 obtained throughout the year. With the ATOS matching funds of \$50,000, this gave a grand total of \$104,267.63 for the project. This amount results in having the project fully funded, and was announced at the Convention Banquet.)*

Nelson Page, the President-Elect, made some closing comments concerning the upcoming year.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 AM by a motion from Jim Koller and second by Dave Stephens - Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,  
JACK MOELMANN, Secretary

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REPRINTED FROM TIBIA, SUMMER 1956

Imagine yourself among the five thousand leading San Francisco citizens and celebrities gathering at Ninth and Market Streets to participate in the opening of the magnificent Fox Theatre built and furnished at a cost of nearly five million dollars. You enter the lobby through solid brass doors, and exchange your invitation for a dedication program with a yellow, blue, and green cover design of the front of the theatre and the announcement, "Fox Theatre, San Francisco, Dedicated to California, Friday June 28, 1929."

You pass into the main lobby. You're awe-struck by the magnificence of the decor and furnishings - the rug on the floor, 79 feet long and 39 feet wide placed there at a cost of \$39,000, the exquisite vases brought over from the courts of the Czars at \$3000 each, the Louis XIV architecture designed from Sixteenth Century splendor. You gaze slowly upwards to the domed roof 75 feet overhead, the whole illuminated to bring out the walnut paneling and the gold trim of the ornate columns and scroll work. Over the heads of the invited celebrities you see the grand staircase of imported Italian marble, richly carpeted, and then you become aware of subdued organ music of the richly decorated lobby organ built by Möller at a cost of \$15,000.

The show begins with overtures by the U. S. Army Band of the Presidio of San Francisco followed by selections by a thirty-eight-piece theatre orchestra - under the baton of the late Walt Roesner. You anxiously await that part of the program where the "World's largest orchestral organ" takes over the spotlight with Jamie Erickson at the console. What an organ! What a console! After that thrilling experience, you settle down for the stage show including a presentation of famous Hollywood stars. Master of Ceremonies - Will Rogers.

Comfortably seated, you read in the golden tasseled brochure: "Into the life of San Francisco and all California, comes the Fox Theatre, art institute of amusements, as an addition to the artistic and pleasure-loving life of this great metropolis. You enter the wide swinging doors of this great Castle of Splendor, and behold the silent magic of life's mirror, the Screen, in creations of its finest magicians ... the thousand-throated organ, now whispering in gentle melody, now reverberating in mighty thunder ... the orchestra, trained musicians with fingers the soul of genius, in caprice of syncopation, in mysteries and moods of exquisite harmony ... a myriad of multi-colored lights ... architectural beauties ... soft miles of carpeted wonder in lounge and foyer, in lobby and orchestra, in loge and balcony ... Aladdin-like elevators that gently whisk you to balcony, and back again ... the vast magnificence of the palace of a King ... the swift and silent service of minute men, couriers of ushering attention. No King, nor Emperor, nor Croesus could command more! The Fox Theatre, latest link in the ever-growing chain of Fox West Coast Theatres ... dedicated to California, for your everlasting enjoyment!"

Gentle reader, you have participated in the scene of the opening night of this fabulous theatre, seating 4651 and described as the largest west of the Mississippi. Built through the cooperation of the Bank of America, and leased to the Fox West Coast Theatres just at the time of the 1929 market crash, which resulted in the loss of many fortunes including that of William Fox, the theatre has shared good times and bad with the rest of the movie palaces throughout the country. But at the night of the opening, few probably could foresee the future, and the opening program was notable by the pomp

and splendor and the personalities involved.

The theatre is enormous - 212 feet from screen to projectors; stage 75 feet wide, 43 feet deep, 110 feet from floor to dome; main balcony supporting truss has a depth of 20 feet, is 145 feet long and weighs 160 tons - the fulcrum girder is 110 feet long, weighs 70 tons, and was installed in one piece; height, ten stories. There is a 39-seat private theatre on the 9th floor for theatre executives' use, together with a suite of offices.

## The Organ

The four-manual, 349-stop console is located in the center of the theatre at the rear of the orchestra platform on its own independent elevator. 36 ranks! Only four other Wurlitzers of such size are to be found in the United States:

*Opus 1458 Paramount, N. Y. (1926)*

*Opus 1894 Fox, Detroit (1928)*

*Opus 1904, Fox, Brooklyn, N. Y. (1928)*

*Opus 1997 Fox, St. Louis (1928)*

**Pipe Work (the specifications).** The organ is laid out in five chambers under expression, with percussion instruments in the open on each side of the theatre and the 32-foot octave of the Diaphone in the open behind the proscenium arch. The Main and Foundation are on the left side while Orchestral, Solo, and Percussion are on the right. There are 2' extensions (the three Tibia Clausa, the Concert Flute, the Lieblich Flute, and the Viol D'Orchestre), and eleven 16' extensions (Tuba Mirabilis, English Horn, Diaphonic Diapason, the three Tibia Clausa, Horn Diapason, Solo String @ 25", Bourdon, Clarinet, Tuba Horn). The 32' Diaphone is a real bulb shaker and extremely effective in the theatre. A ventil control switch is provided at the console to disconnect the stop tablet against accidental use.

*(continued next page)*



**The Relay** - Contains fourteen relay trays and seven switch stacks containing 354 individual switches. There are three relay trays for the Great, two for the Accompaniment, one for Accompaniment second touch, one for Great second touch, one for Great couplers, one for Pedal, one for Pedal Pizzicato, two for Bombarde, and two for the Solo. It is interesting to note the number of contacts required for the various manuals: Pedal, 37; Pedal Pizzicato, 6; Accompaniment, 57; Accompaniment second touch, 20; Great, 92; Great Second touch, 4; Great Coupler, 4; Bombarde, 40; and Solo, 52. The cable from the relays to the switch stacks contains nearly 18,000 wires! There are also two sostenuto trays, and two separate pizzicato relay trays for the Great and Accompaniment, as well as the shutter coupler control, sostenuto switches, and so on.

**The Blower Room** - Contains two 50 h.p. Spencer Orgoblo's with direct-mounted generators of 50-Amp capacity and are numbered one and two; one, a standby in case of emergency. The blowers are rated at 4000 CFM at 15" wind 2500 CFM at 25". Gate valves are provided in each of the two airlines from each blower to shut off the line to the idle blower to prevent air blowing back.

**The Main Console** - The top of the four-manual console is flat, without the high checks usually found on the large organs. The embossing is elaborate with designs carried on all surfaces except the back which is plain. The effect is elegant. There are six swell pedals - general swell and one for each of the five chambers and a crescendo pedal. There are five non-reversible piano-type pedals for Sforzando Organ, Sforzando snare drum, cymbal, bass drum, thunder Tibia, 32' Diaphone, Tuba Mirabilis and one toe piston to operate a signal to the operator's booth. The pedal organ has seven stops on the front board under the Second Touch nameplate which are actually a special Tibia Clausa Pizzicato section operating on first touch. There are three 16' Tibia stops, three 8' Tibia stops and one Tibia ensemble stop which fires all six of the

stops just listed. These are operated through the pedal pizzicato relay mentioned previously. There are several "Ensemble" stops on the console, which operate all of the named functions at the given pitch. For instance, on the Solo Bolster, there is a String Ensemble stop, which controls separate switches for the following ranks: Viol D'Orchestre, Viol Celeste, Salicional, Gamba, Gamba Celeste, Solo String #1, and Solo String #2. The 25" Solo String in the Solo Chamber is not included; however, there are ensemble switches for the Tibias, Voxes, Chrysoglotts, etc., on the organ controlled by their respective stops. Hence, the larger number of switches in the relay room than there are stops. The sound effects are controlled by pushbuttons mounted on two panels, one on each side and under the manual shelf, which swing out for use.

It would appear that only 34 of the 36 ranks are available on the Great. Actually, there are 34 ranks drawn at 8' pitch and one rank (the Harmonic Flute) drawn at 4' pitch for a total of 35. (Recall that the String stop tablet draws two ranks.) The English Horn is not available on the Great, being the only rank deleted on this manual.

There are 17 tremolos controlled by 13 stop tablets. The Orchestral tremolo stop controls 2; the Foundation, 2; the Main, 2; the Solo, 2 - these in addition to the singly controlled tremolos for the Vox Humana, Tibia Clausa, Tuba, etc. The Diaphonic Diapason in the Foundation Chamber is without a tremolo entirely which lends considerable stability to the tone of the organ when included in combination.

The three Tibia Clausa are always in the following order - Orchestral, Foundation, Solo; the four Vox Humana: Orchestral, Foundation, Solo, Main. The Solo String No. 1 and No. 2 are always drawn together as a two-rank stop. This is not to be confused with the 25" Solo String in the Solo Chamber which is the third solo string in the organ. It will be remembered that Solo String No. 1 and No. 2 are in the Solo and Orchestral Chamber respectively. There are two Brass Trumpet stops - Solo Trumpet and Trumpet, the former being the brass trumpet in the Foundation

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Chamber, and the Trumpet the brass trumpet in the Solo Chamber. The Sleigh Bell is drawn only on the Solo manual. The piano has only one Mandolin stop, on the Accompaniment, and it affects all manuals, as is usual on all Wurlitzers.

The second-touch pizzicato and tremolo stop tablets are mounted in two rows on the front board and are not the usual short front board stop tablets, but are of regular length. The bottom row is recessed to prevent interference with playing the solo manual; the top row is recessed an-



other inch or so still further back. There are five swell pedal position indicators mounted in the center of the top bolster, one each for the Orchestral, Foundation, Solo, Main, and General swell pedals. The Sostenuento ventils switches are located in the left key check of the Accompaniment and Great manuals. The round inlaid chamber indicators over each stop are engraved to indicate the various chambers as follows: Orchestral, a red dot; Foundation, a black ring; Solo, a black dot; Main, no engraving; Percussions, two concentric circles; unenclosed percussion, Solo side, black dot and circle; Main side, no engraving.

The Piano, an upright Wurlitzer of 88 notes, has an electro-vacuum action with four stages of vacuum which varies the piano's volume as the swell pedal is operated, accomplished by having wires to each of the four stages connected into the general swell pedal contacts at appropriate intervals. Each stage allows a progressively greater or lesser amount of air at atmospheric pressure to be admitted to the vacuum line in a simple muffler box installed in the base of the piano case. The more air admitted to the vacuum line, the lower the vacuum, and the softer the piano plays. This is a standard feature on [later] Wurlitzers. The General Swell Pedal has the piano sustaining control button on the upper right hand corner. The mandolin attachment is simply a small wooden rod, hinged on each end of the piano, to which are attached leather fingers, each of which has a small metal clip on the end. The hinged arrangement allows one of the fingers to drop into place in front of each piano hammer, resulting in the metal clip on the end of each finger being struck by the piano hammer and in turn striking the piano wire and pro-

ducing the peculiar metallic twang so common to this attachment. Its position is controlled by a small pneumatic mounted inside the piano case, and controlled by the Mandolin stop of the Accompaniment manual bolster.

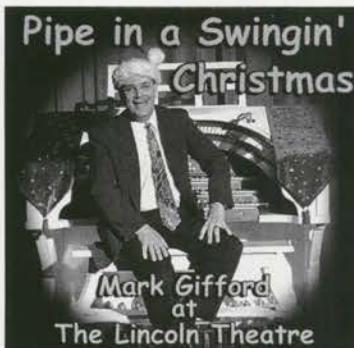
Located in the console interior are the combination action chests, with an on and off magnet and a primary pneumatic for each stop, as well as the pneumatics controlling the stop action itself on the bolsters. There are two main bolsters containing the two top rows of stops, with an auxiliary double bolster on each side which contains the two bottom rows of stop tablets. The Auxiliary bolster completely disconnects from the console wind supply by means of a set of two connection blocks for the lead tubing. A latch arrangement locks them to a wind-tight position. Were it not for this arrangement, it would be nearly impossible to service these stops when necessary. The Crescendo Patch Board, also located in the back of the console, is constructed in two hinged units due to the large number of stops which can be operated by the crescendo pedal. This unit makes it possible to "plug in" whichever stops are wanted in any sequence as the Crescendo pedal is depressed.

**The Stage Console** - is just a shell containing four manuals, pedals, combination pistons and one swell pedal, a general. The stops are dummies. The only actually operating parts on the stage console are the manuals and pedals, combination pistons, and the one swell pedal and a disconnect switch which operates a series of switches in the relay room to completely disconnect these functions from the main console.

Many organists have passed their

fingers over the manuals with varying degrees of success. Some simply gave up after trying it once, others carried on for years. Never really coming into its own, as did the Paramount Theatre organ of New York, it nevertheless has enjoyed the handling of several really fine and extremely talented organists. Following Jamie Erickson (who played for the opening week only) were Doc Wilson who played the organ with the orchestra until 1941 and Mel Hertz who played the Saturday Night Sings from 1933 until 1941; George Wright 1941 to late 1944; and Everett Nourse who took over when George left for New York. There also have been other short-term substitute organists from time to time. The organ was never featured as a solo spot until George Wright's time, except for the opening week, being used almost exclusively for fill-in spots and to accompany Saturday night sings! A really big change, made by George Wright when he started as featured organist, was the removal of the heavy drapes hanging in the organ screens on each side of the theatre which greatly stifled the organ's highs. Remaining is only a very thin gauze curtain of gold thread with an overlaid design. Quite transparent and of lightweight, it is practically of no hindrance to the sound egress from the chambers.

Everett Nourse still remains as staff organist whenever the instrument is used. The writer and Bob Jacobus of Vallejo have endeavored to maintain the organ in the best, possible condition. Recent maintenance activities have resulted in the replacement of all dead magnets, over 100 being required throughout the relay room, console and chambers! Mechanically, the organ is in very good condition, and tuning remains the one big maintenance job.



### **Pipe In A Swingin' Christmas Mark Gifford at the Lincoln Theatre**

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Please take a moment to verify their accuracy.  
Send any changes to: [felenzer@atos.org](mailto:felenzer@atos.org)





# International ATOS NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
AMERICAN THEATRE  
ORGAN SOCIETY

Unexpected delays affecting the timely production of Theatre Organ once again required the insertion of ATOS International News in the center of the journal. AIN will resume as a separate publication in February—watch for the next issue!

## FROM BILL WORLEY, OCTOBER, 1999

Unfortunately, the unique 2+9 Christie/Blackett & Howden theatre pipe organ now installed in the Coburg City Hall (circa 1922), has still not been officially opened by TOSA Victorian Division despite the instrument having been playing for some time. This has been the result of protracted building works associated with a "Civic Centre Re-Development" of the City Hall and nearby precincts. This work is now all but completed and will finally result in an excellent venue, and a fitting home of this rare organ.

The Blakett & Howden was demonstrated to delegates at the last TOSA National Convention held during Easter this year. The 'concert' featured organists Gail Dibben, David Johnston, and Glenn Maus and the organ acquitted itself very well in its new, quite reverberant home, although some work still remained to be done and final tonal finishing is yet to be completed.

We have been assured that bookings for the Main Hall will recommence in January 2000, and steps are now being taken to arrange for the official "commissioning" of the instrument in late February 2000, a sort of 25th "Anniversary" of the organ's opening at Cinema North in Reservoir on February 23rd, 1975. Organists for this grand event are as yet unknown.

## SPECIAL AGO/COTOS EVENT!!

This past Monday (Oct 11, 1999) Patty Immell played the Central Ohio Theatre Organ Society (COTOS) 3/16 Wurlitzer (nee RKO Palace, Columbus) for a joint AGO/COTOS meeting. Also, by special arrangement with the school administration she had performed earlier in the day for a very appreciative crowd of about 150 high school students.

Patty performed a wide range of musical selections from heavy classical (she studied with Dr. Wilbur Held at Ohio State University when she earned her Masters In Organ Performance) to the Beatles (she always plays one Lennon/McCartney piece in for me!). Patty had served at several performance stints at the Robert Morton in the (Columbus) Ohio Theatre.

During the Open Console time, several AGO members braved their way to the console where they played (horrors) music appropriate for Theatre Organ. AGO and COTOS members interacted very well.

Ron Kenreich, AGO Dean, commented that the organ worked sooo well!

I hope next year's joint meeting will be held at a classical site (perhaps an Austin Organ with a walk-in Universal Chest!)

Stan Krider

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 6

<http://www.ATOS.org>

DECEMBER 1999

## CONCERT ANNOUNCEMENT

Date: 11/09/1999 6:43:16 AM CST,  
From Allen Walker: Hello all!

The Eastern Massachusetts Chapter of the ATOS announces that Ken Double will not be able to play our scheduled concert on January 8, 2000. In his place, Carol Williams will play. [We hope to present Ken on some other occasion.]

Regards, Allen Walker, EMCATOS

## CINCINNATI'S EMERY THEATRE

An article in the Columbus Dispatch on October 21, 1999, relates this information about the building in which the Emery Theatre is housed:

Kroger to help renovate Emery Theatre (Headline)

CINCINNATI (AP) Kroger plans to invest \$1.6 million in the development of the building that houses the Emery Theatre.

The company announced this week that it will become a limited partner in Emery Center Apartments, which will lease the building from the University of Cincinnati. The investment by the nation's largest grocery chain will go toward. The first phase of the project which will create 62 apartments on the site. The second phase will rehabilitate the Emery, home of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra from 1909 to 1937.

The first phase of the project will cost about \$10 million, with the university providing \$2.8 million, the Cincinnati Development fund \$2.6 million, the city of Cincinnati \$1.5 million, and the Cincinnati Equity fund 41 million in addition to Kroger's contribution. The second phase, also costing about \$10 million, will be aided by \$2.2 million in private gifts. Construction is to begin this fall.

Stan Krider

## UPDATE ON THE ROARING TWENTIES

From Dwight Thomas: I thought I might provide an update and directions about the Roaring 20's down here in Ellenton, Florida.

The organ left the Crome Organ Co in Reno on Monday, October 18 and arrived on Friday, October 22. Kenny and a crew of 4 others have been working 10-12 hour days to get the organ installed. As of this past Friday (Oct. 30), most of the 16' pipework has been installed, along with the main windchests and swell shades. Some components of the new Rickman computer have also been installed. The installation should be finished in about 2-3 weeks. A soft opening is planned for the end of November, but may be pushed into December, with the Grand Opening scheduled for some time in February. Visitors may want to call the business office ahead of time to find out the

latest information about the opening timetable. The office phone is (941) 723-1733.

Directions: Traveling south, take I-75 to exit 43, which is the Ellenton exit. Turn left (traveling east), past two stoplights. The restaurant is about 1 mile east of the I-75 interchange, on the left hand side.

## THEATRE ORGAN MUSIC FROM AUSTRALIA

Hi members,

I have had a couple of requests on how to get this FM program which is broadcast for Perth, Australia. Theatre Organ Time (TOT) is an hour program of GOOD theatre organ music which can be heard live on Friday evenings in the USA. Times are 9 to 10 PM EST, 8 to 9 PM CST, 7 to 8 PM MST and 6 to 7 PM PST. The program is a live broadcast which is played at 10 to 11 AM on Saturday morning in Perth.

For those who have REAL PLAYER just aim your browser to: <http://www.inf.net.au/~duo/> and you'll go directly to Theatre Organ Time.

For those who don't have REAL PLAYER you can follow the above and download a free copy of REAL PLAYER from the web site.

The only comments I would make is (1) have a fast modem and (2) GOOD stereo speakers on your computer. The better the speakers, the better the sound.

Any questions? Feel free to contact me via e-mail: [kwkeller@juno.com](mailto:kwkeller@juno.com)

Karl W. Keller

## MUCH APPLAUSE IN MADISON

The Madison, Wisconsin Civic Center was a scary place, all in good fun, with many in the audience dressed in their finest disguises in celebration of Halloween. They were in tune with the entertainment of the evening, which ranged from the joyously ridiculous to the gripingly horrific.

Pre show music on the Grande Barton with guest organist Clark Wilson at the keyboard was well received and led into four acts of vaudeville. The stage presentation was tied together by snippets of organ music appropriate to the performances, as was the post intermission prize drawings, which are really in good fun.

Clark showed most every corner of the organ in his support of the classic Lon Chaney *Phantom of the Opera*, along with a wide range of literature. The sizeable audience was glued to their seats and responded to the "Finis" title with a lasting ovation. How often does one experience such enthusiasm at the close of a movie?

The organ worked well. A number of organists and card carrying enthusiasts were in attendance, including Gary Hanson of the Organ Piper Music Palace, Ken Paske, mayor



of Markesan, Wisconsin and a regular organist at that Barton, and Brett Valiant, brilliant young organist of Wichita, Kansas.

Next "Duck Soup Cinema" program will be a Buster Keaton festival on March 25th. See "Duck Soup Cinema" under the series tab on the web: <http://www.madcivic.org/index.html>  
Best to all, William A. Hansen

### **SHEAS BUFFALO**

Yes...the Shea's organ is up and running!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The organ was re-installed and is being played prior to the classic film series held in the theatre. It was also featured with a short silent at the gala "curtain Up" festival which opens theatre season here in Buffalo.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

Clark Wilson

April -2000

SHEA's BUFFALO THEATRE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

From Joseph McCabe.

### **THE STOCKPORT WURLITZER**

Beloved Brethren .... (harumpphh) Well here I am once more seated in front of the keys of the trusty COMPAQ PRESSARIO lap-top to share with you the JOYOUS TIDINGS that in STOCKPORT TOWN HALL, we have a MAJOR NEW THEATRE ORGAN VENUE. The four manual, twenty rank Publix #1 Wurlitzer was premiered last Friday evening in its new home by Australia's splendid Tony Fenelon and our own Nigel Ogden.

The Wurlitzer was originally supplied for the Paramount Theatre in Manchester and it was opened in 1930, on the same day as the Hindenburg Airship Disaster. Following 43 years of service in the Paramount, later Odeon, Manchester, the organ was declared redundant so far as the cinema was concerned, and thanks to the foresight of certain individuals, the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust was born—to step in should just such an eventuality occur.

The organ found its new home in Manchester's Free Trade Hall, and it was opened in a major public concert in 1977 (I think it was Easter Sunday—but I am getting old, senile and forgetful) – what I do remember was a glorious public event with much applause, a letter from Her Majesty, the Queen, wishing the "Queen Wurlitzer" every success, and there was much hope for the future. It seemed that the organ had it made in the shade—a superb venue and much opportunity for use.

However, as a casual bystander, it seems to me that the Free Trade Hall was not the greatest success for the LTOT. It was a huge venue, and even two or three hundred people at a concert were completely lost! Moreover, access to the Hall was, I gather, something of a nightmare—and I shudder to speculate what the costs of presenting a concert would have been.

So when the Halle Orchestra announced that they were moving to a new purpose built venue, this may well have been the miracle that the LTOT needed. Some miracle huh? The LTOT technical team, under the superb Eric Halsall probably never dreamed that they would be moving the organ AGAIN!!!! some twenty years later. But it was true, the organ had to go.

Various venues were mentioned, including

the Hulme Hippodrome and others, but suddenly the name STOCKPORT TOWN HALL was mentioned and the rest is history.

Last Friday was my first PASTORAL VISIT to STOCKPORT TOWN HALL, and my first impression of the building was "WOW!" It is very impressive building—with a clock tower.... Entrance to the Hall was via a sort of side door—which opens into an attractive foyer—which in turn leads into an exceedingly beautiful hall, gorgeously decorated in many colours, with plaster fruit and leaves providing an interesting decor. It is also a very huge room, elegant in the extreme. I would estimate (Vicar's guess) that there were in the region of a thousand seats set out for the opening concert. A quick look around revealed a stage in the liturgical east and the chambers are at the liturgical west end. (Hmm ... a west gallery organ!) There is a fully licensed bar (which I thought may well come in useful—as indeed it did!) (Diet Coke™, you understand!)

The Hall was packed on this occasion with Civic Dignitaries. There was also a goodly number of well known faces from the UK theatre organ scene. As soon as I arrived the first persons I met were David Shepherd and Simon Gledhill, and in the evening I also spotted Trevor Bolshaw, Len Rawle, Frank Hare, John Smallwood, Joyce Alldred and many many other familiar and friendly faces.

The opening formalities were to me (sentimental fool that I am), very touching. I thought of John Potter IN GLORY—looking down on the occasion with great satisfaction. The last time the organ was opened, he was "in charge". Without a doubt the angels in heaven rejoiced with him. The Mayor of Stockport was invited onto the stage. She was a genial lassie methought, with bags of personality—she announced that when she was made Mayor, she was delighted to discover that the highlight of her Year of Office was to be the opening of the Wurlitzer.

The formalities over, the first artiste was announced—our own Nigel Ogden. The strains of the Wurlitzer flooded the room with sound. The chambers are at the rear of the building and so for a moment all heads (including mine!) turned.

The sound is BIG! In fact it is huge! There is a degree of reverberation in the hall, though it was difficult to judge how much with so many bodies filling the space. It is known to be quite loud—and I suspect that it may need a degree of taming. The reeds in particular seemed very potent indeed; but another feature was a very good strong pedal! There is no doubt, that the Stockport Wurlitzer is an entirely new sound. I suspect that Nigel Ogden was doing his darndest to make the Wurlitzer sound somewhat reminiscent of Blackpool Tower's 3/14 special. Perhaps there is a hint of that, but I think not. This Publix #1 is made of classy stuff! Having said that, I think that the tremors could do with some regulation—a more "American" sound would be very nice (but I admit that this is a matter of personal preference). I gather that a new post horn has been installed, to replace the 1947 rank (which replaced the second of two Vox Humanas).

If all heads turned at the sound of the

Wurlitzer, then they swiftly turned back as the newly refurbished console rose slowly and majestically from the depths with Nigel on board.

Let me be the first to congratulate the LTOT on line! The console is STUNNING! The top rail of stops has been filled in, and I gather that the action is now fully electric. It is just SO magnificent. Nigel Ogden started off with a tribute to "The Great Little Army" of workers who had done so much work. In a programme lasting an hour, and including a demonstration of a wide range of sounds, Nigel did his utmost (most successfully in an Improvisation on "Three Blind Mice") to reveal that Stockport now have a most versatile organ of which they should be proud. The hour shot by, and Nigel left his audience wanting "MORE!!"

A lengthy interval then followed, and an opportunity to have a look at the console in the pit! Wow! it goes down a long way!

Following the Interval came Tony Fenelon from Australia. He brought the console up with "Waltzing Matilda" and again, it was a musical "tour de force" as we heard such as Buddy Cole's "Sassy Brass"; a sublime "Petite Waltz" demonstrated the organ's play-back mechanism as Tony went over to the (rather heavily over-amplified grand piano) I could go on and on, but suffice it to say that the whole evening was just pure THEATRE ORGAN JOY!!!!!!

I noticed that the Wurlitzer was less well behaved for Tony than it was for Nigel. In fact there was a significant number of ciphers—including a very naughty one at the end of the show—computer related, we are told!

A trip into the chambers with Eric Halsall showed the expected high standard of workmanship and beautifully cleaned and restored Wurlitzer pipework.

So then, what shall we say? I shall be a regular visitor to Stockport. I suspect that whilst comparisons are odious, the LTOT has just about the best theatre organ in preservation in the land of UK! (I admit that I haven't heard them all, but I did hear the comments of others.)

When it has settled in a little more and all the bugs are out of the system, and perhaps when it has been tamed a little (so far as the volume is concerned) and perhaps when we have got those tremors doing what a Wurlitzer tremulant should do(!) it will leave all the others behind!

So I am well pleased! The LTOT have done a terrific job and they deserve our highest praise. A toast to them all!

Quentin (*Rev. Quentin Bellamy*)

### **RADIO CITY VIRTUAL TOUR**

Quite a site! Like the movies on the computer screen. Having speakers makes a big difference.

The Radio City Music Hall website has been updated and includes a spectacular section in IPIX 360 that places you, the viewer in various places in the Music Hall, including the effect of actually standing next to the organ console and looking out at the audience. <http://www.radiocity.com/index1.html>

I enjoyed this updated site very much, and I'll be revisiting it often.

From Nancy Scott



## URLS

**Pictures of renovated movie palaces**  
<http://www.conradschmitt.com>  
**Compton List Website**  
<http://www.zyworld.com/IvorBuckingham>  
**Los Angeles Theatre Organ Society**  
<http://www.latos.org>  
**Kentucky's Mighty Wurlitzer Project**  
<http://www.members.aol.com/kmwtop>  
**Eastern Massachusetts Chapter**  
<http://www.emcatos.com>  
**Carol Williams (and her CDs)**  
<http://www.organ.co.uk/index2.html>  
**Oregon Chapter**  
<http://www.theatreorgans.com/oregon/oratos>  
**TOSA (Vic)**  
<http://www.vicnet.net.au/~organ>  
**Sierra Chapter**  
<http://www.rietz.com/sierra>  
**UN-official Sheas Wurlli Organ Page**  
<http://www.theatreorgans.com/ny/buffalo/ea/sheas/sheas.htm>  
**Programs of Shea's Corporation theatres and a 1923 Wurlitzer security pass:**  
<http://www.ap.buffalo.edu/~jmmccabe>  
**JAV Recordings**  
<http://www.greatorgancds.com>  
**Building Pipe Trays**  
<http://theatreorgans.com/wi/Waukeshacrat.es.html>  
**Spencer Blowers**  
<http://barton.theatreorgans.com/orgoblo.htm>

## NEW ATOS MEMBERS

The following names represent new members to ATOS from July, to November 29, 1999. Welcome to the wonderful world of Theatre Organ.

Ryan Albashian, David Alldred, Brent Arnold, Steven Asimow, Lauren Austin, Harvey Bailey, Alberta Baker, Derek Becker, Frederick Becker, Robert Bendekovitz, Roy Bertelli, B Wayne Blake, James Bolton, Fred Boska, David & Lis Bruce, Earl & Constance Buell, Lilian Burbank, P Reid Carythers, Thomas Charlton, William Christl, Herb Cihla, Reg Clark, John Clifford, Luman Coal, Dave Colvin PMB #31, Helen Cook, Rodney Coombs, Betty Crowe, Myron Dahle, Jack De Long, Byrne Desmond, Richard Doyle, David Farnham, James Fischer, Jacob & Eleanor Fix, Glen & Ardis Fleming, Creed Freeman Jr, Christa Funke, Peter M Gamble, E Pelham Gaut Jr, Paul Giles, Greg Glen, Brian Graham, J P Graney, Paul Grepps III, John Grune, Charles & Betty Habisohn, Robert & Mary Haengi, John Hanna, Larry Hedlund, Brian Heinlein, Jim & Carol Hitz, Ross Howard, James Hulsey, David JaFolla, John H James Jr, Larry Jenkins, Neil Jensen, Christopher Johnston, Charles & Geraldine Kamischke, Richard Kearly Jr, William Kelley, Kenneth Kropinack, William & Kathryn Kwinn, Bev Lambert, Richard Lane, Jeff Lee, William D Lee, Charles Leeper, Kevan Lesch, Daisy Lesley, Bill Lewis, R E Lindsay, George Losinger, Michael Lucking, Jani Sue MacLennan, John Mahood, Donald Malcolm, David B Marshall, D K Mason, Randy & Jo Ann Mather, Winifred Meeker, James Milroy, John F Minch, Mr & Mrs Jack Mintz, Ben Model, Mr & Mrs Donald Montgomery, Robert J Moore, Keith Morgan,

Gregory Mueller, Karen Nahra, Stanley Newton, Nancy Nohl, Bonnie O'Bannon, Mike Ohman, Gregory & Linda Palma, Herbert Parks, J Michael Petway, Christopher Rae, Mrs L C Ramp, Richard Robbins, George & Nancy Rohrer, Kevin Rose, Peter Rushton, George Russell, Joan Sachs, John W Schwartzzenberg, Robert Seeley, William Sherwood, Charles Shipman, Eric Shoemaker, Sydney Simpson, William Sinkey, Jeanine Stahlberg, David Stent, Diane Straight, Melvin Sutter, Carl Tauch, Bernie Thompson, Leon Tilbury, G Turner, Lester Turoczi, Robert & Sharon Vargas, Gerry Varner, Cal Wade, Diane Walker, Chas & Jane Walsh, John B Weeks, Jack Whitting, David Wilks, John C Wilson, Joan Winter, Charles & Ramey Wolf, Dennis Jon Wolfgang, H J Zivnak.

## CALENDAR —

### SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Be sure to get your concert dates in promptly and include, venue, street address, telephone contact, date, time, and artist.

#### ■ ARIZONA

**Organ Stop Pizza**, 1149 E Southern Ave, Mesa, AZ (602)-813-5700, (4/74+ W) Winter organ hours, 4:30pm - 9:00 pm, Fri-Sat until 10:00pm; Charlie Balogh, Sat, Sun, Mon, Wed; Lew Williams, Tue, Thu, Fri. Summer organ hours, 5:30 till closing; Charlie Balogh, Sat, Sun, Mon; Lew Williams, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri

#### ■ CALIFORNIA (NORTH)

**Towe Auto Museum**, ATOS Wurlitzer, 2200 Front St, Sacramento, CA 95818, (916) 442-6802, (3/16W) Sun concerts, 2pm: Dec 19, Dave Sauer

**Bella Roma Pizza**, 440 Alhambra Ave, Martinez, CA, (510)228-4935, (3/16W) Tue, Wed, Thu, Sun, 6:00pm - 9:00pm; Fri - Sat, 6:00pm - 10:00pm; Tue, Wed, Sat, Dave Moreno; Thu, Fri, Sun, Kevin King  
**Castro Theatre**, 429 Castro, San Francisco, CA, (415)621-6120, (4/21W) Intermissions played nightly by David Hegarty or Bill McCoy

**Berkeley Community Theatre**, 1930 Alston Way, Berkeley, CA, (510)632-9177, (4/33 W) All concerts at Sun, 2:30pm; Jan 23, Jonas Nordwall; Mar 19, Barry Baker; Jun 4, Clark Wilson

**Paramount Theatre**, 2025 Broadway, Oakland, CA, (510)465-6400, (4/27W) Movie Overtures, 7:30pm, Jim Riggs,

**Grand Lake Theatre**, 3200 Grand Ave, Oakland, CA, (510)465-7586, (3/14W) Intermissions: Fri, Warren Lubich; Sat, Ann Tanner; Sun, Don Reynolds

**Stanford Theatre**, 221 University Ave, Palo Alto, CA, (650)324-3700, (3/21W) Organ played before and after the 7:30 movie; Bill Taylor, and guest artists

**Towne Theatre**, 1433 The Alameda, San Jose, CA, (408)287-1433, (3/16W) Sun, 4:30pm, Organ Solo Overtures, Bob Vaughn, Warren Lubich, Jack Gustafson; 5:00pm Silent Film Classics, short

## ATOS CONVENTIONS

### 2000 ANNUAL:

July 27 - August 2, Milwaukee, WI

### 2000 REGIONAL:

Chapters invited to apply.

subjects, Bob Vaughn

**Johnson's Alexander Valley Winery**, 8333 Hwy 128, Healdsburg, CA (707)433-2319, (3/10RM) Daily in tasting room from 10:00am to 5:00pm

**Kautz Vineyards and Winery**, 1894 Six Mile Rd, Murphys, CA, (3/15 RM) Winery tours, theatre pipe organ

#### ■ CALIFORNIA (SOUTH)

**Orange County & LATOS**, Wurlitzer Weekend, 310/217-9202 Sat & Sun, Jan 22 & 23, Dan Bellomy, Lew Williams, Chris Gorsuch, Lyn Larsen with Jack Bethards Big Band

**El Capitan Theatre**, 6838 Hollywood Blvd, Los Angeles, CA, (800)DISNEY6, (4/37W) Organ played for weekend intermissions  
**Arlington Theatre**, 1317 State St, Santa Barbara, CA, (805)898-1948, (4/27RM) Sat, Jan 8, 12:00 noon, Robert Israel; Sat, Apr 8, 12:00 noon, Paul Roberts; Sat, Apr 15, 8:00pm, Organ with symphony orchestra; Sun, Apr 16, 3:00pm, Organ with symphony orchestra

**Spreckels Organ Summer Festival**, Balboa Park, San Diego, CA, (619)702-8138, (4/72 Austin) Monday nights at 8:00pm, free admission

**Trinity Presbyterian Church**, 3092 Kenwood, Spring Valley, CA, (619) 715-9009 (4/23W) Sat, Feb 12, 7:00pm, Greg Breed, *The Eagle*; Sun, Mar 12, 3:00pm, Bob Salisbury

#### ■ DELAWARE

**Dickinson High School**, 1801 Milltown Rd, Wilmington, DE, (302)995-2603, (3/66K) All concerts Sat, 8:00pm; Fri, Sat, Sun, Dec 10, 11, 12, 8:00pm, David Peckham, *The Nutcracker Ballet*; Jan 22, Bob Ralston; Mar 4, Chris Elliott; Apr 15, Jonas Nordwall; Jun 3, Neil Jensen

#### ■ FLORIDA

**Tampa Theatre**, 711 Franklin Street Mall, Tampa FL, (813)274-8982, (3/12 W) Silent Movie, *The Thief of Bagdad*, Sun, Feb 20, 3:00pm, Rosa Rio

**The Kirk Of Dunedin**, 2686 Bayshore Blvd, Dunedin, FL 34698, (813)733-5475, <[www.kirkorgan.com](http://www.kirkorgan.com)>, (4/100H) Fri, Jan 14, 8:00pm, Philadelphia Organ Quartet, (Peter Conte, Colin Howland, Michael Stairs, Rudy Lucente); Sat, Jan 15, 2:00pm, Philadelphia Organ Quartet; Thu, Jan 20, 8:00pm, Terry Charles; Fri, Jan 21, 8:00pm, Terry Charles; Sat, Jan 22, 2:00pm, Terry Charles; Wed, Feb 9, 2:00pm, Nicholas Martin; Thu, Feb 10, 8:00pm, Nicholas Martin; Fri, Feb 11, 8:00pm, Nicholas Martin; Sat, Feb 12, 2:00pm, Nicholas Martin; Thu, Mar 9, 8:00pm, Terry Charles;



**ATOS NEWS**

Newsletter of the American Theatre Organ Society,  
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*HARRY HETH, EDITOR*  
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E-mail: tibvox@aol.com.

All matters pertaining to membership or change of  
address must be sent to: Michael Fellenzer,  
ATOS Membership Office,  
P.O. Box 551081, Indianapolis, IN 46205-5581  
E-mail: fellenzer@ATOS.org

ATOS Membership Office  
P.O. Box 551081,  
Indianapolis, IN 46205-5581

Fri, Mar 10, 8:00pm, Terry Charles; Sat,  
Mar 10, 8:00pm, Terry Charles; Sun, Mar  
11, 2:00pm, Terry Charles; Thu, Apr 13,  
8:00pm, Heath Wooster; Fri, Apr 14,  
8:00pm, Heath Wooster; Sat, Apr 15,  
2:00pm, Heath Wooster; Thu, May 11,  
8:00pm, Terry Charles; Fri, May 12,  
8:00pm, Terry Charles; Sat, May 13,  
2:00pm, Terry Charles; Fri, Jun 30,  
8:00pm, Terry Charles; Sat, Jul 1, 2:00pm,  
Terry Charles

**■ IOWA**

**Union Sunday School**, Clermont, IA, (319)  
423-7171, (2/27 K) Sun Apr 30, 2:30pm,  
Jack Moelmann

**■ INDIANA**

**Paramount Theatre**, 1124 Meridian Plaza,  
Anderson, IN, (800)523-4658 (3/12 Page)  
Fri, Feb 4, 7:30pm, Ken Double, *Mark of  
Zorro*; Sun, Feb 27, 2:00pm, Clark Wilson;  
Sun, Mar 19, 2:00pm, Michael Britt  
**Embassy Theatre**, 121 W Jefferson, Ft.  
Wayne, IN, (219)424-5665, (4/17 Page)  
Sun, Mar 5, 2:30pm, Jonas Nordwall  
**Manual High School**, 2405 Madison Av,  
Indianapolis, IN., (317)356-3561, (3/26W)  
Sun, Feb 6, 2:30pm, David Peckham  
**Warren Center**, 9450 E 18th St,  
Indianapolis, IN, (317)898-9722, (3/18B)  
Sun, Apr 30, 2:30pm, Dan Bellomy; Sun,  
Jun 11, 2:30pm, Ron Rhode  
**Long Center**, 111 N 6th, Lafayette, IN,  
(765)742-5664, (3/21W) Sat, Feb 5,  
8:00pm, David Peckham, *Mark of Zorro*;  
Sat, Apr 29, 8:00pm, Dan Bellomy; Sat,  
Jun 10, 8:00pm, Ken Double

**■ MASSACHUSETTS**

**Knight Auditorium**, Babson College,  
Welleley Ave, Wellesley Hills, MA,  
(617)244-9447, (4/18W) Sat, Jan 8,  
7:30pm, Carol Williams

**■ MICHIGAN**

**Michigan Theatre**, 603 E Liberty, Ann  
Arbor, MI (616) 668-8397, (III/13 B) Fri  
& Sat intermissions (times vary) John  
Lauter, Henry Aldridge, Steven Ball,  
Newton Bates, Wade Bray and  
Fr. Andrew Rogers  
**Redford Theatre**, 17360 Lahser Rd,  
Detroit, MI, (313)531-4407, (3/10B)  
Movie Overtures, Fridays at 7:30pm and  
Saturdays at 1:30pm & 7:30pm Dec 17 &  
18, Ron Reseigh; Sat, Dec 11 8:00pm,  
Tony O'Brien, Christmas Concert; Sat, Apr  
8, 8:00pm, Barry Baker; Sat, May 6,

8:00pm, John Lauter; Sat, Oct 14, 8:00pm,  
Tony O'Brien, Silent Movie; Sat, Dec 9,  
8:00pm, Lance Luce & Pierre Fracalanza  
**Baldwin Theatre**, 415 S Lafayette, Royal  
Oak, MI, (248)541-6430 Sat, Dec 18,  
8:00pm, Lance Luce; Sun, Dec 19,  
2:00pm, Lance Luce  
**Grand Ledge Opera House**, 121 S Bridge  
St, Grand Ledge, MI, (888) 333-POPS,  
(III/20 Barton-hybrid) Sun, Apr 16,  
3:00pm, Ron Rhode "The Rhode Show"  
**Public Museum of Grand Rapids**, 272  
Pearl St NW Grand Rapids, MI, (616)459-  
4253, (3/30W) Tours by appt, and ATOS  
guests welcome to hear organ @ Thurs  
noon weekly story time slides program,  
during school year. Organ played Sundays  
9:00am to 5:00pm  
**The Mole Hole**, 150 W. Michigan Ave,  
Marshall, MI, (616)781-5923, (II/6  
Barton-Kimball) Organ daily, Scott Smith,  
recorded artist.

**■ MINNESOTA**

**Sheldon Theatre**, 443 W Third St, Red  
Wing, MN, (651)385-3667 or (800)899-  
5759, (2/11 Kilgen) Fri, Jan 14, 7.30pm,  
*Birth of A Nation* (D.W. Griffith).

**■ NEW JERSEY**

**Galaxy Theatre**, 7000 Boulevard E,  
Guttenberg, NJ (201)854-6540, (3/12 K)  
Fri, Sat evenings before and after evening  
shows; (Lobby, 2/6 M) Sun afternoon  
before matinee; Jeff Barker

**■ NEW YORK**

**Auditorium Center**, 875 E Main,  
Rochester, NY, (716)544-6595, (4/22W)  
Sat, Dec 4, 8:00pm, Clark Wilson; Sun,  
Jan 16, 2:30pm, Russell Holmes; Sun, Feb  
6, 2:30pm, Ralph Ringstad; Sat, Mar 18,  
8:00pm, Tony O'Brien; Sat, Apr 15,  
8:00pm, Simon Gledhill; Sat, May 13,  
8:00pm, Tom Hazleton  
**Proctor's Theatre**, 432 State St,  
Schenectady, NY, 518/346-6204, (3/18W)  
Fri Dec 24, noon, Special holiday concert  
various artists; Tue, Jan 25, noon, David  
Lester; Tue, Feb 22, noon, Avery Tunningley;  
Tue, April 25, noon, Al Moser and Ruby  
McGrory; Tue, May 23, noon, Jinny Vanore;  
Tue, June 13, noon, Robert Frederick  
**Lafayette Theatre**, Lafayette Ave, Suffern,  
(914)357-6030, (2/10W) Sat, 7:30, Movie  
overtures

**■ OKLAHOMA**

**Coleman Theatre**, 103 N Main St, Miami,

OK (918) 540-2425, (3/10 W) Sat, Apr 1,  
Lyn Larsen

**■ PENNSYLVANIA**

**Grand Court of Lord & Taylor**, 13th &  
Market, Philadelphia, PA (6/469 Hybrid)  
Organ daily except Sunday, 11:15am-  
12noon, 5:15-6pm  
**Sunnybrook Ballroom**, East High Street,  
Pottstown, PA, (610)326-6400, (3/14US)  
Organ plays for Sunday Brunch  
**Longwood Gardens**, Kennett Square, PA  
(610)388-1000, (4/146 Aeolian) Sun,  
2:30pm, Pipe Organ Concert Series

**■ TEXAS**

**Sunland Park Mall**, I-10 & Sunland Park  
Dr, El Paso, TX, (3/15W) Mon, Wed, Fri,  
12:30pm - 1:00pm; Tue, Thu, Sat, 6:30pm -  
7:00pm; Sun, 3:30pm - 4:30pm

**■ VIRGINIA**

**Byrd Theatre**, 2908 W. Carey, Richmond, VA,  
(4/17 W) Sat 7:15 & 9:30 pm, intermission

**■ WASHINGTON**

**Mt Baker Theatre**, 106 N Commercial,  
Bellingham, WA (2/12W) Second Sun  
monthly, 2:00pm, Open console

**■ WISCONSIN**

**Organ Piper Pizza**, 4353 S. 108th St.,  
Greenfield (Milwaukee), WI. (414)529-  
1177, (3/27 W/K) Organ hours, 5:30pm -  
9:00pm, Tue, Wed, Thu, Sun, 5:00pm -  
10:15pm, Fri, & Sat; Barry Baker - Sun, Tue,  
Wed; Dave Wickerham - Thu, Fri, Sat

**■ CANADA**

**Casa Loma**, 1 Austin Terrace, Toronto, ON,  
(416)323-1304, (4/18W) Mon, Dec 13,  
8:00pm, Ron Reseigh; Mon, Mar 27,  
8:00pm, Clark Wilson *Wings*; Tue, Apr 11,  
8:00pm, Simon Gledhill; Mon, May 8,  
8:00pm, Fr Andrew Rogers

**■ UNITED KINGDOM**

**The North East Theatre Organ  
Association**, High Street, Howden-le-Wear,  
Crook, Co. Durham, England, (0)1388  
763247, (3/12 W) Concerts Sat 7.00pm, Sun  
2.30pm; Sat, Dec 18 & Sun, Dec 19, Joyce  
and David Alldred  
**The New Ritz Ballroom**, Brighouse, W  
Yorkshire, (01484)513879, (3/8W) All  
concerts, Sun, 2:30pm Dec 12, Keith  
Beckingham



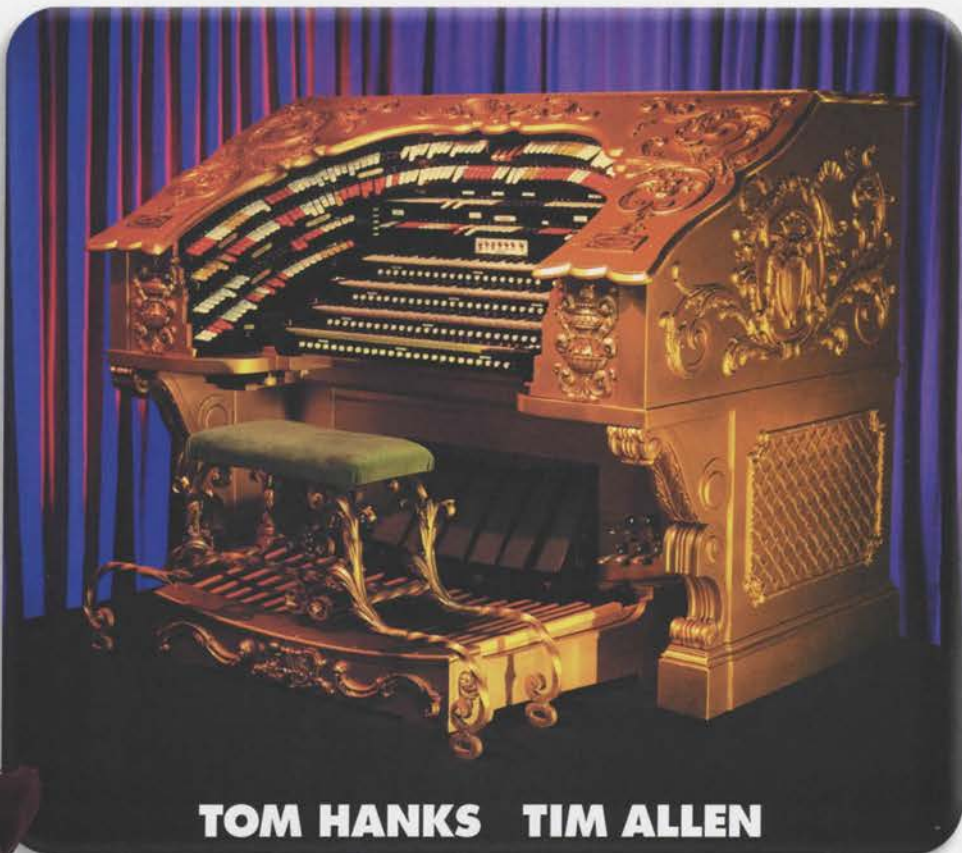
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# THE ONCE PROUD PIPE ORGAN!

## PART II

By William H. Barger

Barger & Nix Organs - McDonald, Tennessee

### *The Return of the Wurlitzer to Carpenter Center (Loew's Richmond) Richmond, Virginia*

In reading the article "The Once Proud Pipe Organ!" by Ray Brubacher that appeared on pages 20 and following of the May/June THEATRE ORGAN, I wish to add the following comments.

Much of Mr. Brubacher's article brought back many fond memories to me. In 1960 when I was a senior in high school, I went to Richmond to visit relatives. Tommy Landrum met me at the Byrd Theatre and showed me the organ. This was the first live, breathing theatre organ I had ever seen, and the experience dramatically changed my life and led to my becoming an organbuilder.

Throughout our business existence, we have installed three theatre organs. The first of these three was a 6-rank Wurlitzer in a residence here in Chattanooga. (Our location in McDonald is suburban Chattanooga.) The second of these was the instrument in the Carpenter Center in Richmond, Virginia. The third theatre organ is in my residence.

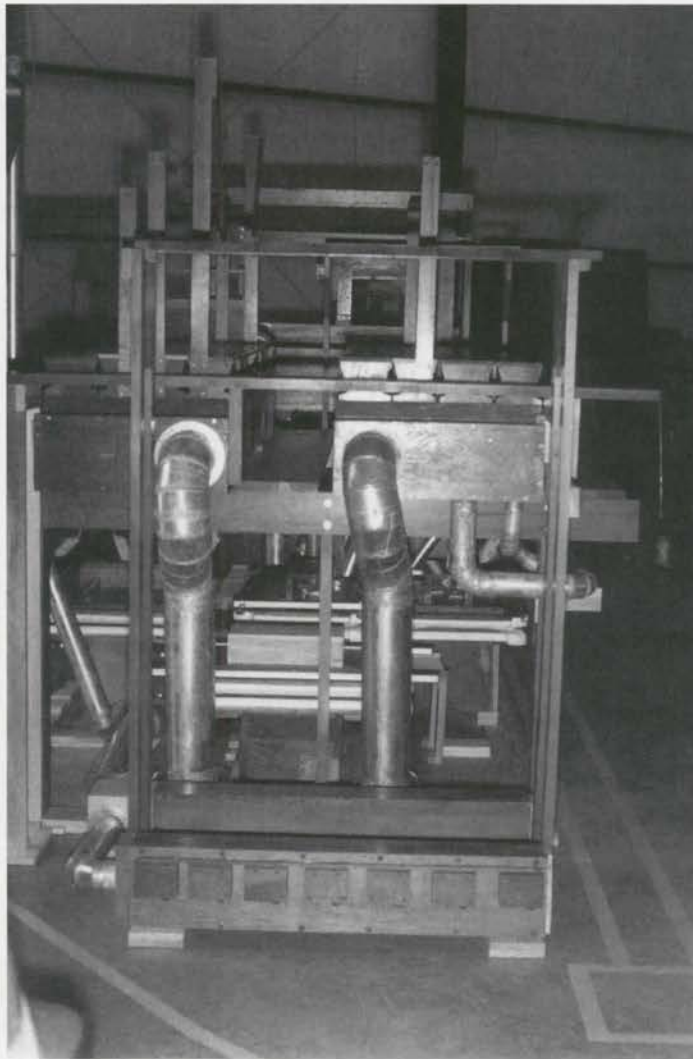
We first became involved in the Carpenter Center project when Mr. Roy Davis of McMinnville, Tennessee, called us and asked us to meet with Mr. Nick Pitt who was in McMinnville investigating the possibility of returning the style 240 Wurlitzer which Roy Davis had to the theatre. This, of course, was the same organ that was installed when the theatre was built. Nick Pitt told me at that meeting of all the problems that he and Fred Berger had experienced with the

other instrument that was partially installed in the theatre at that time. He also told me that they were interested in returning the original organ to the theatre only if it could be professional-

Since Nick and Fred and the other persons associated with the project in Richmond had already done a great deal of work towards the switching system and console, it was decided that they would execute and furnish that part of the project.

The entire instrument was brought to our facilities here in McDonald where every part was completely and properly rebuilt. All of the various parts of the organ were wired to cables according to wiring specifications furnished by Fred Berger so that the electrical system would be a plug-in operation during the installation. During this process, we worked with both Fred and Nick, and the final new unit specification for the instrument was a product of all of our efforts. Nick had played the original organ and knew how the sound was likely to be in the building. Fred had his ultra-sharp engineer's eye out for everything, and his close attention to details kept everything truly in order. We, of course, had experience in designing and building organs, and we were able to make suggestions that improved the flexibility of the scheme.

Working from drawings of the chambers, we completely laid out the organ on new floor frames and building frames. The original building frames had been lost during all of the times the organ had been moved. In the process, we increased the number of reservoirs so that utility wind was available for the appropriate



*Carpenter Center Main Chamber.  
Diaphonic Diapason and Horn Diapason Offset Chests.*

ly rebuilt and installed.

After seeing our work, including the residence installation of the Wurlitzer here in Chattanooga, we were hired by the Carpenter Center to completely rebuild the style 240 Wurlitzer and reinstall it in the theatre.

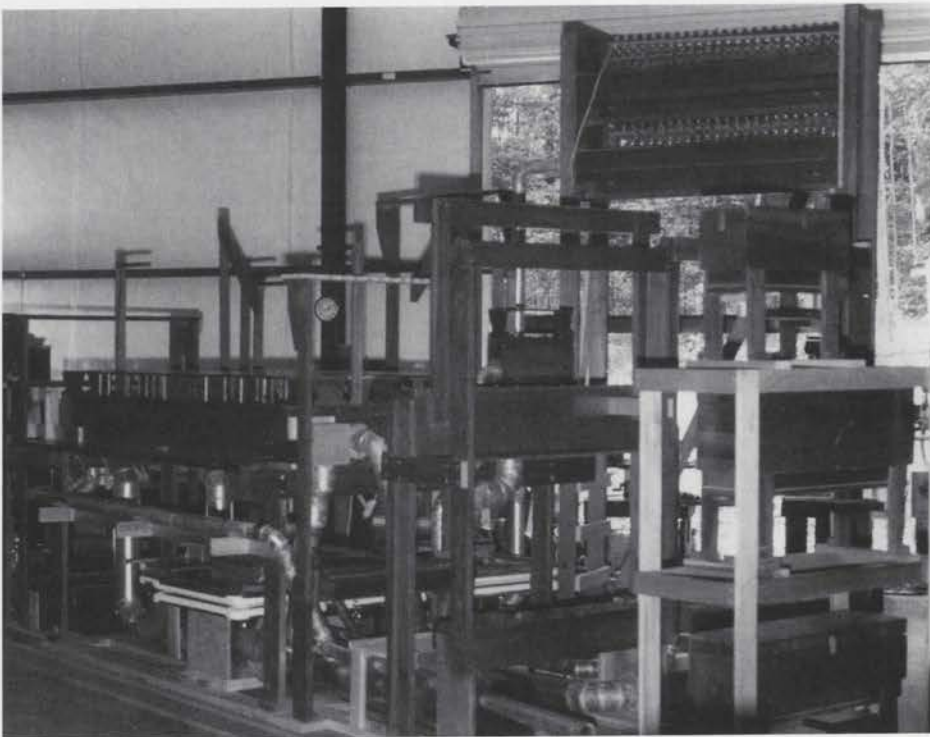




*Carpenter Center Main Chamber.  
Bourdon/Flute and String Offset Chests.*



*Carpenter Center Main Chamber.*

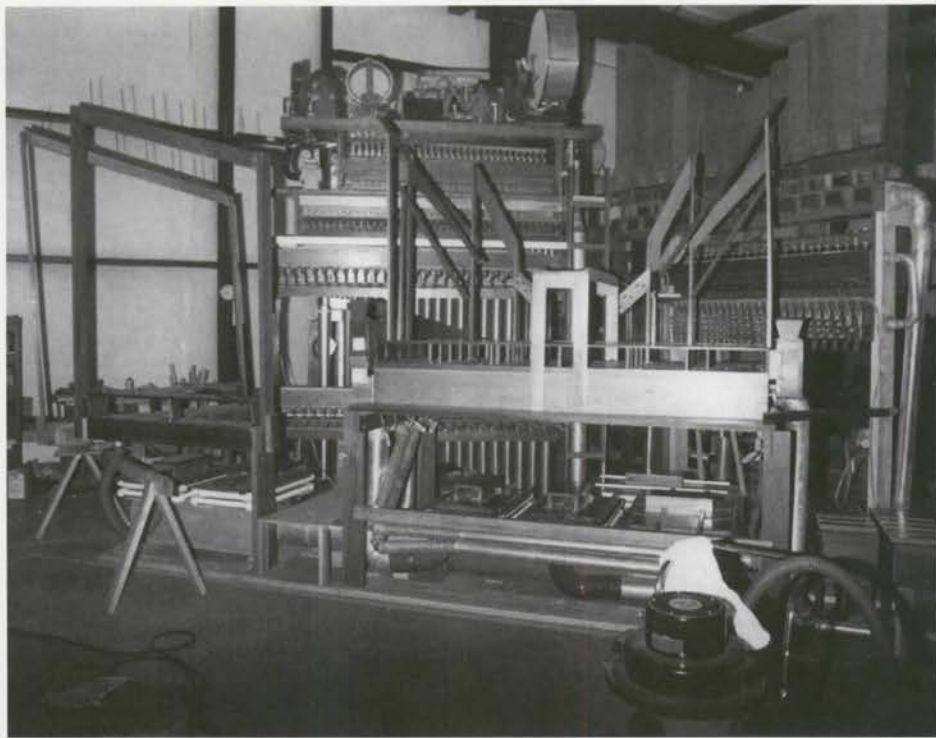


*Carpenter Center Main Chamber. (Tremulants in Blower Room next door).*

offset chests and separate utility wind was available for the percussions. We also provided separate reservoirs for some of the ranks that needed to have their own tremulants.

In the process of doing this new layout, we were able to make the instrument much more accessible for service than the original layouts allowed. Particularly, access into the Solo Chamber was really bad in the original layout. Wurlitzer had placed half of the 16' Tuba directly in front of the chamber door. You had to move pipes to get into the chamber. The chambers in this theatre are triangular, and the layout for the instrument was difficult due to this shape. Particularly, since Wurlitzer was working from architect's drawings instead of the completed rooms, it is not surprising that they elected to be "safe rather than sorry" about not pushing the layout of the instrument. On the other hand, we had





*Carpenter Center Solo Chamber.*



*Carpenter Center Solo Chamber (rear view.)*

the actual dimensions of existing rooms to work from, and we were able to lay out the instrument so that it has maximum access for the sound to get out through the shutters into the auditorium and so that it is easy to get into the instrument to tune and service it. As the instrument presently stands, it is easy to walk into either chamber and do anything that may be required without having to take anything apart to get to something else.

On all three of the theatre instruments we have had a hand in design-

ing, we have planned a much better winding scheme than Wurlitzer provided originally. The original factory winding was adequate – barely adequate in some cases, but adequate – for the original unification schemes that were built into the organs. However, when you add many additional pitches and, particularly, couplers to the unification scheme, the wind consumption figures may increase to two and one-half times as much. In laying out the new scheme for the reservoirs and conductor work, we accounted for

all of this by providing significantly more capacity as required. This organ was originally blown by a seven and one-half horsepower blower. Now, it requires a fifteen-horsepower blower. When a full organ chord is held – ten notes in the manual plus two in the pedal – the current consumption on the blower motor is within a couple of percent of the rated consumption on the fifteen horsepower motor.

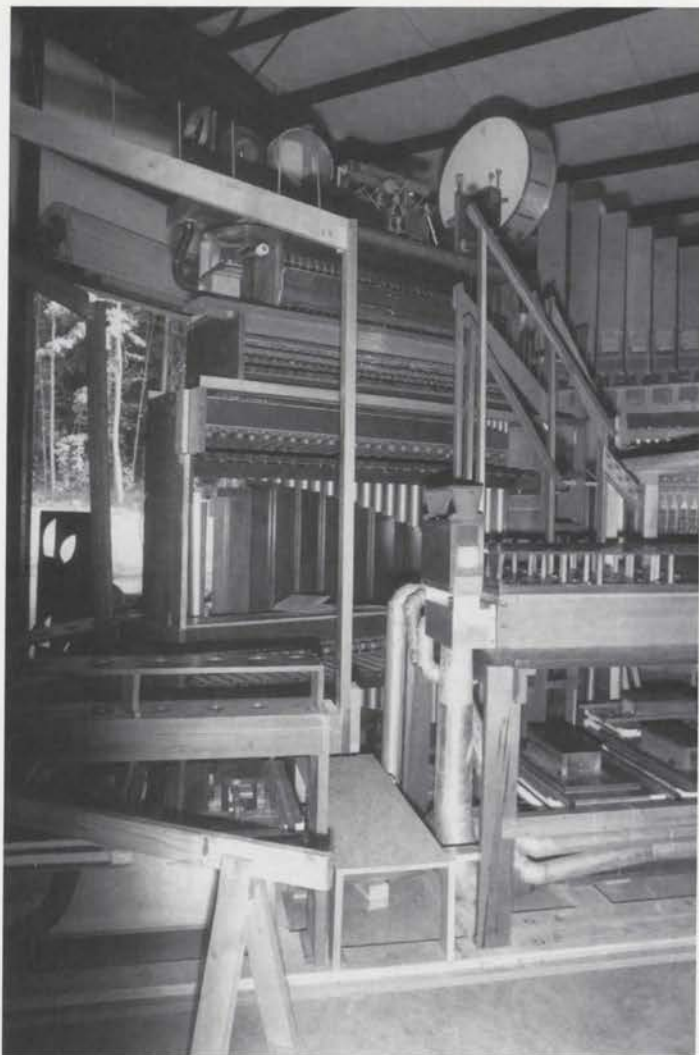
We also made all new air conductors for the instrument. The new conductor work is all traditional galvanized iron ductwork with all the seams soldered. We do not use sewer pipe in our organs for conductor work – after all, it's an organ, not a sewer system...

All of the pipes in the instrument were sent to A.R. Schopp's Sons, Inc., in Alliance, Ohio. We worked with Bob Schopp on the reed pipes and Bruce Snyder, the head flue pipe voicer at Schopp's, on the flue pipes in setting up what the reinstalled instrument was to be. Throughout all of this, we attempted to return everything to where it had been originally.

The actual installation of the instrument back into the theatre took approximately three weeks. We ran into one snag with the blower. According to what we could learn from Dave Junchen and his Spencer Orgoblo records, this particular machine seemingly had a DC motor originally. Apparently, when the AC motor was installed, the RPM's were reduced slightly. The result was that, although we had a bare fifteen inches of pressure with a dead static test with the blower not connected to the winding system, we only had about thirteen inches of wind when the entire system was attached to the machine. Nick Pitt got out his trusty HB engineering drafting pencil and designed a new shaft and bearing assembly for the blower fans. This new shaft is turned by a new motor mounted off to the side, which is belted over to the shaft with the pulleys arranged to produce the proper RPM's. Once this problem was corrected, we had more than fifteen inches of pressure in the system even if you turn on the full organ and put your elbow on the keyboards.

Once we had the wind pressure problem repaired, Mr. Nix and I did the





*Carpenter Center Solo Chamber.*

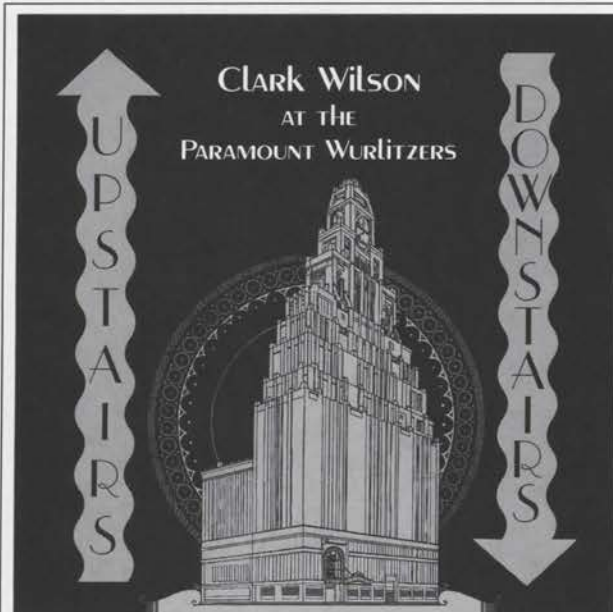
tonal finishing on the instrument. After our careful preparations at Schopp's, this only required a couple of days. Right at the end of that time, Eddie Weaver came to the theatre to see the instrument. He was absolutely thrilled with the results which all of us had achieved. I had set some sort of

temporary combinations on the pistons just to test out everything to see how it was going together, and Eddie insisted that these combinations be left for him to look over in preparation for the opening concert. He used many of these combinations during the program without even revising them. I suppose that all of this proves that skilled professional persons do, indeed, think alike.

The shutters in the Carpenter Center are not the original Wurlitzer shutters. We were initially concerned about this, and we went to the Byrd Theatre and measured the decibel levels of many different sounds with the shutters fully open and fully closed. Even though the shutters at the Carpenter Center do not reduce the sound to as low a level as Wurlitzer shutters would, the actual decibel difference between fully closed and fully open is the same as with Wurlitzer shutters. The final result is that the Carpenter Center organ has the same amount of expression that one would expect from any other factory Wurlitzer installation – this is a significantly greater amount of expression than that which is achieved with see-through shutters which are popular in pizza restaurant installations.

The Carpenter Center instrument is very successful. With the thinner shutters, which open to 90° and no grille cloth in between the pipes and the auditorium, the sound is big and rich. The properly voiced pipes have colorful and pretty sounds, and all of these sounds have direct access to the listeners. The full organ is exciting and sufficient as it exists. There are plans for adding a Post Horn, which will cap off the ensemble wonderfully.

This information is provided to fill in the details that were missing in the original article. Our experience of working with Nick and Fred was totally satisfactory and fulfilling in every way. Both of these gentlemen are extremely competent engineers and know a lot about organs, to boot. We enjoyed working with them in designing all of the details involved with the restoration and installation of the instrument. The facility of our planning was certainly demonstrated in the fact that, aside from the blower problem, we were able to install the instrument into the building in only three weeks.



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# A River Runs Through It

By George Andersen

It's a great title for a movie, but when it becomes reality, the effects are devastating. Two years ago in July, more than twenty volunteers helped pack and move Wurlitzer Opus #1914 from its original home at the Pascack Theatre in Westwood, New Jersey. The organ was donated to the Garden State Theatre Organ Society to make room for two additional screens. Since then, the volunteers have been lovingly restoring the instrument in preparation for its installation in its new home, the Brook Theatre in Bound Brook, New Jersey. Yes, THAT Bound Brook.

This quiet township gained international notoriety in the early morning hours of September 17, 1999 when a record shattering rainfall hit central New Jersey spawned by Hurricane Floyd. Some areas received over thirteen inches of rain in one day. The runoff flowed down streets and highways. The water was passed along from community to community. It flowed down the many streams, brooks, and tributaries that feed the Millstone River and the two branches of the Raritan River. It seemed that the rain would never stop, but stop it did. It stopped where those three rivers come together and form the Raritan River for its trip to the Atlantic Ocean. It stopped because the Raritan River is rather narrow through the valley. That's why the town that sprung up there is named Bound Brook. When the water had no where to go but up, up it went. It didn't stop going up until it was forty-four feet up, fifteen feet above flood level.

The Brook Theatre is located on Hamilton Street, one half block up the street from Main Street. On the other side of Main Street are the railroad tracks and the river.

The Brook is a 900-seat 1927 vaudeville house with a full fly stage, four floors of dressing rooms, and a spacious lobby. It's not terribly ornate and perhaps a little shopworn, but her inner beauty is still there. Besides, it is one of the few proscenium theatres still standing in New Jersey that hasn't been divided into a multiplex. In fact, it is similar in size to the Pascack Theatre, the original home

of our Wurlitzer. The only thing the Brook lacked was an organ. The original two-manual, four-rank, one-chamber Wurlitzer had been removed from the theatre years ago.

Roberts Theatres operated the Brook as an art film house, whose audience was very receptive to the idea of a pipe organ. When we approached Roberts about installing a pipe organ in the Brook Theatre, they welcomed us with open arms and warm hospitality. We were warned that the area flooded occasionally, but the water had never reached the auditorium even in a 100-year flood. We devised a plan that would keep the blowers at auditorium level and safe from basement floods. Furthermore, there is community support for turning the Brook Theatre into the Somerset County Performing Arts Center, which held promise of resources for restoring the theatre to its former glory. We wanted to make sure that our Wurlitzer was part of that glory.

For the last two years, the crew broke for dinner during our weekly work night at Tony's Pizzeria, directly across from the theatre. Our waiter, Jeff, told us that he and his neighbors were trying to leave their homes late Thursday, but were blocked by water on the lower surrounding streets. Then at 3:00 a.m., the water started to recede. Thinking the worst was over, everyone returned to his or her homes. At 7:30 a.m., Jeff was awakened in his newly finished basement apartment by a commotion in the street. He ran outside to find the water coming up the street rapidly. By the time he woke his family, the water had reached the bottom of the stairs to the house. The roads were blocked by water and they soon found the water creeping over the porch. When they were rescued by boat at 9:30 a.m., they had to stand on the porch railing to stay out of the flood. The water had reached three feet into the first floor of the house. They weren't alone: over 800 Bound Brook residents had to be rescued by boat from their homes.

Meanwhile, back at the theatre, the water rose in the



Carole Rustako, Joe Vanore and Bob Martin clean the console. Water reached above the top of posters. Tony Rustako photo



Joe Vanore carts out pipes for cleaning. Tony Rustako photo



outer lobby. Before it came up to the level of the main lobby floor, it reached around the parking lot and flowed into the alley leading to the stage door. At some point the stage door gave way and the water rushed across the stage, burst through a wall separating the screen from backstage, and flooded the auditorium. When the river crested, the water almost touched the marquee, the main lobby had three feet of water, the auditorium filled with ten feet of water and the stage was covered with six feet of water.

The disaster could not have hit at a worse time. The newly refinished console was on display in the lobby. Backstage, the five-rank main chest had been completely inspected, re-gasketed, and pronounced ready for installation in the Main chamber. The pipework, which had been carefully cleaned, inspected and repaired by the crew, was carefully stored in pipe trays stacked backstage.

As a result of the flood, telephone service throughout Northern New Jersey was completely disrupted and was not restored until Monday morning. That included cell phones. I couldn't communicate with any of the crew and the only information I had was the constant replaying of the news reports of the flooded buildings burning in Bound Brook. When the cameras finally panned to show the theatre, I saw that the theatre was flooded.

Frustrated from the lack of communications and despite admonitions that many roads in the Bound Brook area were still flooded and closed, my wife, Denise, and I drove towards the theatre on Saturday afternoon. We found the entire downtown area under the protection of the National Guard. Special passes were required to get into the area. We were able to meet with the theatre manager and the theatre's insurance adjuster and together we entered the theatre for the first time after the flood.

Tears had come to my eyes the month before when the refinished console was moved back into the building. It was a beautiful sight. This Saturday I again had tears in my eyes, but for a totally different reason. The platform the console was sitting on had floated up and dumped the console unceremoniously into the water. We saw the battered, soaked console tipped over in the mud. The gold leaf on the ormolu was washed off leaving just a ghost of the elegant decorations. The top half of the console had

floated across the lobby and the newly releathered combination action sat in the muck. The hide glue had softened and the pneumatics were scattered about the lobby mixed with the candy and popcorn.

We saw the upended candy stand and the couches that had floated like barges in the lobby. We found the remains of the Gulbransen Premier electronic organ that had been donated to us. The Gulbransen was in the lobby with an open invitation to the general public to try it, and we had many takers who became new friends. The organ had been submerged right up to the upper manual and was a ruined muddy mess.

We entered the auditorium with great trepidation only to find two feet of water still standing in the front of the auditorium. The Allen MDC-15 that we used for intermission music pending installation of the pipe organ was floating on its back in the water.

Crewmember Coralie Romano, who played intermission on the Allen every Saturday, will never have the opportunity on that instrument again. On this trip we weren't able to get backstage to see the condition of the pipework and chests, but the six-foot water line on the screen told its own story. The water soaked the bottom few feet of the tapestries hanging between the columns on the walls. The high water mark also painted a stark picture just below the chamber grille, but the water prevented us from getting to the chamber to see if water had reached inside. A few dead fish were even lying in the muck inside the theatre. Other shop owners reported turtles splashing behind counters.

The force of the water rushing across the stage had knocked over the pipes and trays and eventually the whole mess floated in the six feet of water. Some of the parts were washed down the basement stairs. When the water receded, the pipe trays made rather efficient bathtubs, insuring that the pipes had a long swim in the filthy water. The blowers were located on the floor of the auditorium and also had a long dunk in the ten feet of water there. A soft patina of the characteristic slimy, slippery silt that clung onto every surface was grim evidence of what the water touched.

On subsequent visits, the crew pulled together to try and rescue as much of the organ as we could, which was



The National Guard was posted to protect downtown Bound Brook. They remained in place for a week. Denise Andersen photo



Saturday evening, the water still covered the front of the auditorium. The high water mark on the wall shows it came within 6" of the chamber



not much. The metal flue pipes stored backstage and the chests that were already mounted in the Solo chamber are about all that will survive from Opus #1914. The Wurlitzer Tibia has become an interesting kit of small wooden parts well mixed with the parts of the Concert Flute. It looks like a sort of combination jigsaw puzzle and airplane kit. At first glance, it seemed as if the five rank chest, which was sitting on sawhorses backstage, was just where we left it. The best I can say is that a five rank Wurlitzer chest makes an impressive submarine. If it did float, it landed back on the sawhorses as if nothing had changed. Unfortunately, that chest will never make music again. When we touched it, most of the guts simply



The backstage workroom flooded to the top of the shelving. The newly re-leathered regulator just fell apart. George Andersen photo

fell on the floor. The bottom boards, which were not attached at the time of the flood, were badly warped by the time we found them. Did I mention the mud, which was everywhere and in and on everything?

The crew set to washing pipes, and found that the boot of each reed pipe still contained its full measure of slime water. I didn't have to warn the workers not to try blowing in the pipes for fear of ruining them. When we found the tremas hiding under the toppled theatre speakers behind the screen, we could hear lots of water sloshing around inside each one.

Pieces of the tremas simply fell off as we moved them to safer storage. They had been in water much too long.

At a chapter business meeting at the Rahway Theatre on Saturday, September 25, I had the sad duty to report the conditions at the theatre and of the organ. The members took up a collection to help the citizens of Bound Brook. Universal support was voiced to do what was necessary to save what was left of the instrument and, if practical, to get another theatre pipe organ playing at the Brook Theatre as soon as possible.

Wurlitzer Opus 1914 will never be heard again as a complete instrument, but once the building is repaired and refurbished, GSTOS will be there with another instrument to serve the community of Bound Brook. We can't abandon them now. The flood was a so-called "500-year event," so hopefully it won't happen again for a long, long time. If we had just another month, the chests and pipes would have been in the chamber, and safe from damage. The Arts Center Board of Directors is discussing plans to make the building flood-proof and the State of New Jersey is planning to start work on a major flood control project in the area this spring, so we believe that the Brook Theatre is still a good place to be.

So, if any chapters out there have the makings of a similar instrument, please contact the Garden State Theatre Organ Society or me. We must have an instrument to play in the once, and soon to be once more, magnificent Brook Theatre. We need a five rank chest, a console (can we hope for three manuals?), and replacements for all the pipework that can't be salvaged, the Tibia and the Concert Flute, among others.

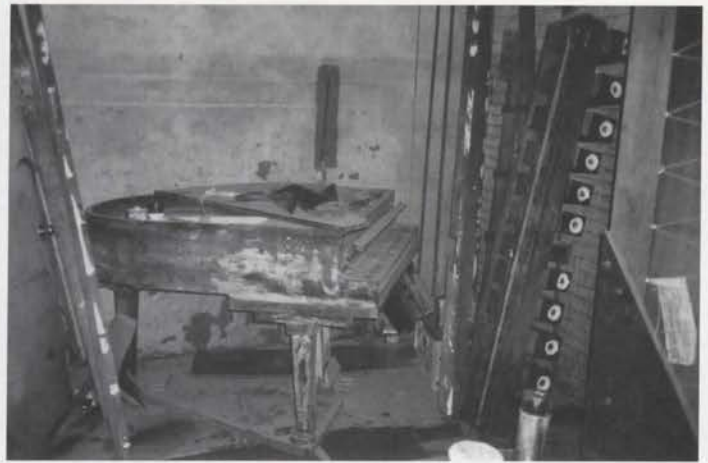
We learned several lessons from our experience at the Brook. First, make sure every crewmember has a current Tetanus booster shot. Organ crews are always working in less than ideal circumstances, and the crewmember's lives are more important than any instrument. Second, make sure your instrument is insured and properly documented. Standard policies do not cover flood damage, but Federal Flood insurance is not

that expensive. We have submitted our claim, and I'm sure I will be explaining for a long time why the Tibia can't simply be glued back together overnight. Hopefully we will get enough money to help us get the project started again. Lastly, know your local politicians, officials, police and firemen: you may need them some day. It sure helped us gain access to the building to save what we could.

Thank you to Bob Roberts, owner of the Roberts Theatres, Gary Heckle, the General Manager, and Michele Kein, the Theatre Manager. Their kind support never faltered even during the flood. Our sympathy goes to the residents and business owners of Bound Brook, many of whom lost everything. I will never forget driving past block after block of houses with the residents carting all of their ruined belongings to the curb for removal by an endless stream of bucket loaders and dump trucks. Thanks to the Bound Brook Police, Fire Department, Rescue Squad, the American Red Cross, the New Jersey National Guard, FEMA, and the other public and private agencies who helped the residents and businesses of Bound Brook in this crisis.

I can't imagine getting through this crisis without Joe Vanore, who has been my co-crew chief for many years with this Wurlitzer, and who was its curator before I ever knew it existed. Joe has given tirelessly thanks to his love of theatre organ. Thanks to my faithful and dedicated crew who never complained about the conditions in the muck, or the level of exhaustion to which I pushed them. Brook crew members include Denise Anderson, Cal and Barbara Bacon, Eric Bovie, Richard Dorris, Paul Jacyk, Roland Kurek, Bill Londell (wrong time to join a crew Bill!), Joe and Gini Martin, Fran Monte, Coralie Romano, Tony and Carole Rustako, Bob and Bobbi Schoenfeld (Bob refinished the console), Jack Springer, and Joe and Jinny Vanore. Many more have helped when we needed them. Thanks also to Bob Martin, husband to our Chapter President Cathy, who didn't ask if we needed help, he just showed up and pitched in.





Clockwise from top left:

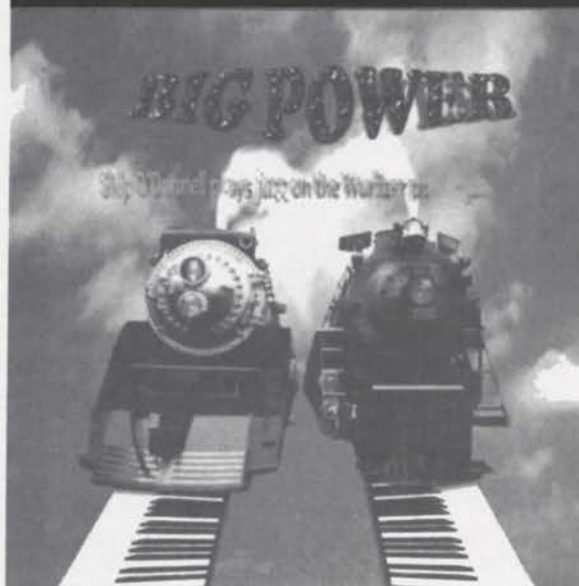
- Pipe trays held the water for days until we were able to gain access backstage. Tony Rustako photo
- The Wurlitzer grand piano and Diaphone chest have seen better days. Tony Rustako photo
- Denise Andersen and the insurance adjuster examine the stop rail where it landed. The pneumatics fell out when we lifted it. George Andersen photo
- The Allen we used for intermissions has seen better days. The water reached six feet up the screen. George Andersen photo

Finally, thanks to all the GSTOS and ATOS members who offered help, storage space, concern, or sympathy during this struggle. Wait just a little longer, a Wurlitzer will be playing at the Brook.

Paul Jacyk, our Vice-President has updated our website almost daily through the crisis with the latest information and pictures. The URL is [www.gstos.org](http://www.gstos.org). You can reach us by email at [brook@theatreorgan.com](mailto:brook@theatreorgan.com) or by phone at 201/670-6660.

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# The Sounds of Silent Movies

By Robert Gates

## THE THANHOUSER CLASSICS, 1911 TO 1916

Organist, Andrew Crow

This series of thirteen silent films, released in the mid-90s, comes packaged in three volumes; "The Early Years," "Under The Mutual Banner" and "Edwin Thanhouser Returns." The first two will be reviewed here, while the third will be treated at a later date.

Edwin Thanhouser, a stage actor turned theatre director, founded the company bearing his name in New Rochelle, New York, in 1909. His films were nicely crafted, sold very well, and in the eight-year life of the firm over 1000 titles were produced. Unfortunately, Thanhouser decided to destroy all of the material in the company archives because he felt the movies were out-of-date and of no interest. Consequently, the films reproduced in this series were supplied from sources such as the Library of Congress and the British Film Institute. The prints used are not all of the same quality. Although the majority are fine, some are infected with "nitrate blight" and some have missing sequences, but never to the degree that the plot becomes obscured. All of these works were transferred to VCR format at the original speed of 18 frames per second.

Organist Crow provides appropriate settings for each of these films, his original music reflecting the mood of the screenplay more than the action. Tuneful strains are heard during pacific times, but when the going gets rough the organ's sounds become atonal and angular, with a gruff posthorn hurling imprecations at the Fates. The 3/18 Wurlitzer, formerly in Uncle Milt's Pizza Parlor in Vancouver, Washington sounds fine. Crow changes registrations constantly, and we hear many attractive small combinations including tuned percussions



### Thanhouser Classics Volume I The Early Years (1910 to 1912)

and effects. Synchronization is not exact on those occasions when it is attempted. The miking is relatively close but some reverberation is evident.

#### VOLUME I, THE EARLY YEARS (1911)

These five films illustrate what the industry was producing in its kindergarten days. The works are short, averaging thirteen minutes, and feature Good and Evil in combat. Meanies never win – either they change their tune or perish in the last minute of the film. Title cards usually outline the action to follow. There are no subtleties in the plots and sentimentality abounds, all of this properly attuned to contemporary taste.

Movie studios did not consider the screen actors themselves to be interesting to the 1911 public, and no credits were given to them or to any of the crew. As a result, some of the people involved have never been identified. Archivists have been able to name a few by appearance matching.

*Only in the Way* is the tale of a child who runs away to rescue her "Grandma" from an old age home. It "stars" Marie Eline, the "Thanhouser



### Thanhouser Classics Volume II Under the Mutual Banner (1912 to 1914)

Kid" (or "Kidlet" in another source). Nine-years-old at the time this film was made, she would be featured in fourteen productions before retiring from films forever when she was twelve.

*Get Rich Quick*, with Harry Benham and Marguerite Snow, depicts an investment scheme which eventually turns sour. The money pours in at first, allowing the wife to purchase a massive Egret-plumed hat and the couple to move to a townhouse with servants galore. But the fraud goes sour and class actions begin. Among those bilked are a poor widow and her little daughter (Marie Eline), whose plight is such as to turn the hard heart of the schemer to mush and have him impoverish himself in order to make restitution.

*The Coffin Ship* presents Marguerite Snow as the daughter of a well-to-do shipbuilder who secretly married a ship captain disliked by her father. The screenplay dramatizes the circumstances (including a shipwreck) which cause the father's attitude to make a complete about-face.

*Cinderella* gives us the well-known tale with a print that is as good as anything from the 'teens. The fairy godmother is more godmother than fairy,



an elderly lady who uses a walking stick for a wand and seems a wee bit confused at times. Cinderella is the comely Florence LaBadie who was, by contemporary account, the most popular screen actress of that year. Unfortunately, her career ended in 1917 when she was killed in a car accident. She was only 29.

*Dr. Jeckyl and Mr. Hyde* is the last film of this group. A simple dramatization of Stevenson's novel, it brings us James Cruze as Jeckyl and sharing the Hyde role with another player, Harry Benham. Cruze, as readers of this column will recall, was first an actor, then a talented director, notably of *The Covered Wagon* and *Old Ironsides*. His career path began, however, in a medicine show where he hawked "snake oil." Not a bad start for one in his profession.

In Brief: Worthy "oldies" with attractive organ backgrounds. From Thanhouse Co. Film Preservation, Inc., 705 N.W. Albemarle Terrace, Portland, OR 97210; tco@teleport.com; \$24.95.

## VOLUME II, UNDER THE MUTUAL BANNER (1912 AND 1914)

In 1912 Edwin Thanhouse sold his studio to Mutual but continued to work there for a few months. This second volume contains films of greater sophistication than those in the first as the industry reached grade school. Acting has improved as has the cam-

era work and lighting. The market for screen dramas was larger than ever. It was estimated then that five million Americans attended movies every day.

*The Cry of The Children*, with Marie Eline, Ethel Wright and James Cruze, is a two-reel film of the lives of a mill-worker (Cruze) and his family. The title is from the Elizabeth Barrett Browning poem, and the poem is quoted in the inter-scene cards. This is a hard-hitting social drama, showing the total contrast between the lives of factory workers and the owner. Although Browning was addressing the plight of children in the mines, this workplace is a mill. The hands, after years of poverty, strike against their punitively low wages. Starvation eventually brings them back to their jobs, but it is too late for little daughter Alice (Eline), who dies of overwork and malnutrition.

*Petticoat Camp* provides a welcome change of mood. Several husbands and wives go on a camping trip, but the wives become fed up when they, as a last straw, are forced to clean the catch of the day. They decamp to a neighboring island leaving a note signed, "Your ex-slaves." Eventually, all are reunited, but the balance of power has changed forever. This timely film was released in November 1912, the same month in which women in Arizona, Kansas, and Wisconsin were "granted" the vote.

*The Star of Bethlehem*, distributed in December of 1912, depicts the journey of the Magi to Bethlehem. The mood is

solemn and Andrew Crow's restrained, multicolored music works wonderfully.

*The Decoy*, 1914, is the tale of a country lass (Muriel Ostriche, the "Moxie Girl," featured in 126 movies between 1912 and 1921) who visits relatives in the city. Little does she know that she has fallen in with cardsharps who palm aces at every opportunity and dupe her into involvement. Of course she exposes the scam, and marries one of the victims at the end.

*A Dogs Love*, 1914, stars a brand new Thanhouse Kidlet, five-year-old Helen Badgley. She and her beloved pal Shep, the Thanhouse Collie, leave no tear un-jerked when she is killed by a motorcar and the faithful dog brings flowers to her grave every day. So that we, the audience, will not be too overcome, a final scene shows girl and dog (Shirley Temple and Lassie?) reunited as she tell us; "Don't cry, it's only make believe."

In Brief: Some fine films of the mid-teens, felicitously accompanied. From Thanhouse, Inc., price and address above.

# Lyn Larsen plays Jerry Herman

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The notes may not be the same, but the keys are. (Ab = G#, etc.) Whenever a series of 7<sup>th</sup> chords occur in a song, the 7<sup>th</sup> should always move downward 1/2 tone to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the next chord. At the same time, the 3<sup>rd</sup> can move downward to the 7<sup>th</sup> of the next chord.

First learn to find the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of all 7<sup>th</sup> chords. Then practice moving downward chromatically as shown here:

F#7 B7 E7 A7 D7 G7 C7 C7 F7 Bb7 Eb7 Ab7 Db7 Gb7

The next step is to add the pedal bass note. By alternating the root of one chord with the flat 5<sup>th</sup> of the next chord, the entire accompaniment moves downward chromatically in open harmony.

B7 E7-5 A7 D7-5 G7 G7-5 C7 F7-5 Bb7 Eb7-5

A good example of how this can be applied in songs occurs in measures 9 to 12 in "Put On A Happy Face" in F.

Bb E7-5 A7 D7-5 G7 C7-5 Fmaj7 F7

Here we have a series of five 7<sup>th</sup> chords following the circle of 5<sup>ths</sup>. Whenever the chord is indicated with a -5, play only the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> with the left hand and the flat 5<sup>th</sup> on the pedal. Each part continues downward to the nearest note in the next chord.

This is really easier than changing the whole chord and jumping around to the root of each chord on the pedals.

Examine all the music you like to play and apply all of this wherever you find two or more 7<sup>th</sup> chords in a row.

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COMPANY**

The end has finally arrived. After as many as a dozen prospective "Last Day" prophecies, on September 30, 1999 we heard the last lingering tones from Milt's wonderful 3/18 Wurlitzer. Bob Rusczyk was the organist for the session, which was not widely advertised, as it seemed more like an anti-climax.

The venue will surely be missed, especially by those of us in the Columbia Organ Club, who have considered this our "home base" since we were conceived there over five years ago. In that time, we have enjoyed monthly open consoles, storage place for our archives, room for board meetings, and best of all, a marvelous venue in which to present such noted organists as Chris Elliott, Jelani Eddington, Lew Williams, and Charlie Balogh, to say nothing of our own well known Jonas Nordwall, Donna Parker and other worthy local artists.



N. Claude V. NEUFFER

**A VERY SPECIAL "THANK YOU" TO MILT**  
FOR THE MANY HOURS SPENT ENJOYING HIS VERY DELICIOUS PIZZA AND FANTASTIC LIVE PIPE ORGAN MUSIC  
*from our many local talented artists, including Milt's daughter, Wendy.*



# “An Acre of Seats in a Palace of Splendor”

## Tennessee

Knoxville, Tennessee

Opened: October 1, 1928

Architect: Graven & Mayger

Capacity: 1996 (Now 1539)

Organ: Wurlitzer 3/14, Balaban 2, Op. 1930

Mayger & Graven, distinguished alumni of the Rapp & Rapp office, won contracts from Publix Theatres for two theatres in the South: this and the Alabama in Birmingham. Both were designed in Spanish-Moorish style, and while there is a strong “family” resemblance, the theatres are quite different and share few details in common. (The box offices are an exception: they are virtually identical.)

The Alabama’s auditorium is conventional in shape, but the Tennessee’s is elliptical and notably wider than it is deep. Also unusual is the upper level of seating, only ten rows deep, and more like a mezzanine loge than a true balcony.

Unlike many theatres in the Publix circuit and others, the Tennessee never closed its doors during the Depression. Its first closing, for reseating, came late in 1966. The theatre reopened on Christmas Day and remained a first-run house until November 1977. Three managements came and went between then and 1981, when Dick Broadcasting purchased the theatre and the office building which stands in front of it. In 1996, Dick Broadcasting gave the theatre to the Historic Tennessee Theatre Foundation, which then contracted AC Entertainment, a local enterprise, to manage and book the house. Among its tenants are the Knoxville Symphony and Knoxville Opera Company. A renovation, including expansion of the stage and cosmetic restoration of the public areas, is presently under consideration.

The Balaban 2 was a late version of the popular and successful Style 240. The Tennessee’s was played first by Jean Wilson and most memorably by Billy Barnes, house organist between 1937 and 1942. Still in place, it is used before all movie presentations.

*Steve Levin*

Visit the Tennessee online at  
[Tennesseetheatre.com](http://Tennesseetheatre.com)

For membership, back issue publications,  
Photo availability, research and  
Museum hours information, contact:

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*(Note our new and simpler web address)*







*Opposite:* Set behind an office block, the Tennessee has a lobby half a block long. Only three of the five large chandeliers are visible here.

*Above and right:* The architects did a fine job of creating a successful auditorium within the constraints of the site. They wisely adopted the principle of emphasizing what cannot be concealed by mirroring the shape in the huge dome. Note how much of the perimeter is illuminated by the lower lighting cove. The cove-lit proscenium is a treatment the architects took with them when they left Rapp & Rapp.

Photos: Terry Helgesen Collection, THSA.





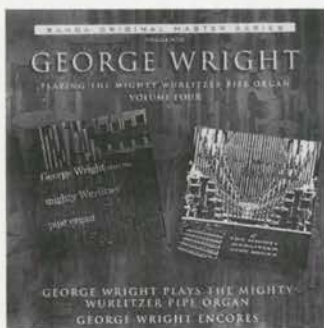
# For The RECORDS

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*

## George Wright Banda Original Master Series, Vol. 4

By Ron Musselman



In recent years, it has been gratifying to see Banda start up and continue their digital re-release of George Wright's classic HiFi Records, recordings that did so much to save the theatre organ from certain death by the 1960s. Since Mr. Wright's unfortunate passing last year, the future will see the emergence of a wealth of re-releases of his extensive recorded legacy. Now, Banda has issued Volume 4 of its Original Master Series, another double album CD. This time, they have gone right back to the beginning where George literally exploded onto the national scene. This disc contains his first HiFi LP, "George Wright Plays the Mighty Wurlitzer Pipe Organ," and the follow up "George Wright Encores." Each of these records sold 1,000,000 copies.

If the reviewer can be permitted a few personal memo-

ries, let's go back to the late 50s when I was a pre-teen in Oildale, California. Our family had just purchased its first HiFi, a big brass-trimmed, solid maple Packard Bell console. The initial "software" for this imposing piece of cabinetry consisted of three albums picked up by my mother from the local supermarket record rack. Two of them were banjo/sax/kazoo cheapies, but the 3<sup>rd</sup> would make a lasting impression: "Hymns That Live - George Wright, Pipe Organ." The variety of sounds, his use of chords, the assertive English Horn, and the newfound sensation of power mesmerized me. The liner notes said this was "... a less-spectacular side of his artistry (!)." That Christmas, "George Wright Plays the Mighty Wurlitzer Pipe Organ" appeared under the tree with my name on it, and it proved to be a whole new set of miracles. When the title "Boogie" was spotted on the jacket, I remember thinking; "on a pipe organ? Impossible!" But he really nailed it. There were so many outstanding things in this record, such as that velvety, cooing Tibia Clausa solo near the end of "Jalousie." I can still remember how beautiful it sounded on the first hearing, nearly 40 years ago.

As was the case with all the HiFi Records, this material was recorded on the 5-manual, 21

rank Rich Vaughn Wurlitzer in Southern California. The first thing that record buyers heard in 1955 as their record player tone arms descended into the opening cut of "George Wright Plays the Mighty Wurlitzer" was the symphonic sweep of "Jalousie." With many contrasts in registration and tempo changes, it was a good example of the "imaginatively orchestral" aspect of George's approach to the instrument. The atmospheric "Ebb Tide" utilizes sounds and patterns suggesting an evening ocean beach setting and a haunting oboe solo. There are several subtle but intriguing things appearing in the last 30". George then moves on to something with a Latin flavor, "Caminito," complete with castanets. Near the end, there is an untremmed sequence of about 10 notes, some of the most ethereal sounds ever made on any instrument. In a 2<sup>nd</sup> Latin tune, "Brazil," we hear some irresistibly catchy rhythms with several little points of interest: His attention to musical detail was phenomenal. The aforementioned impossibility, "Boogie," was written by Wright and delivered with absolute control with no lags or gaps, a prime specimen of his infallible sense of timing.

A quiet but outstanding moment is found in "Stella by Starlight," a dreamy after-midnight ballad with orchestral strings. In the sultry "Love For Sale," the intro sports a beguine tempo with a snarling post horn solo then alternates between big band and beguine tempos. "Dancing Tambourine" features the famous speeded up melody track to give a Hammond-like brilliance and sparkle. Of course, this set includes the trademark "Stars and Strips Forever."

"Encores" opens with "Slaughter on 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue," one of George's most amazing efforts. It boasts a dazzling array of registration and mood changes. There is a memorable passage with realistic strings leading into a solo on a single tiny reed, eventually reaching the point where a phrase keeps repeating, each time at a faster tempo. It is an astounding performance. "Tumbling Tumbleweeds" is an old-West motif, with tack-piano accompaniment and an appearance by imitative strings. Wright often liked playing appropriate contemporary pop pieces, and "Encores" features the delightful "Brazilian Sleigh Bells" by pop-orchestra great Percy Faith. It has more of George's superb rhythm percussions and nice utilization of the piano. In "Silver Moon," a traditional ballad in waltz-time, there are some definite Jesse Crawford touches. This album featured an abundance of percussion, and "Anna" is another pretty melody dressed up in it, with some nice colors resulting. "Sentimental Journey" with its big, brassy intro, is anything but sentimental. It does have a couple of milder moments, but it is hammered home with an incisive GW ending.

He plays Les Baxter's "Quiet Village." After the intro, spooky voxes sneak into this mood piece, then a reed solo, some flavoring with the keen VDO's, followed by a diapason and other simple but effective solos. Real birdcalls are heard throughout. "Village" finishes with a 3-note Clarinet solo, capped by a giant gong. "Petite Waltz" has a crisp piano solo and some distinctive, very cleanly played reed passages. Catch the nearly buried but very functional harp-like glissando going into the close. In



"Crazy Rondo," an adaptation from Mozart, George again uses the speeded-up track for an ear-tickling effect.

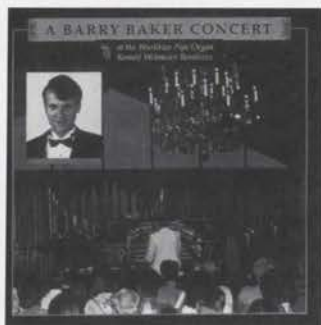
These two albums combined into a remarkable package marking the theatre pipe organ's entrance into the "big time." It will be noted that this volume is all in Mono, but the quality is very good, and our advice is to focus on the performances, and you'll never think about format. There are a couple of dropouts, and one cut has noticeable hiss, but it must be remembered that everything came from 45-year-old masters. Much credit goes to mastering engineer Bill Lightner for his heroic efforts during many hours spent in restoring these landmark performances.

A bonus in Volume 4 is on the disc label and jewel box; a picture of George posed beside the console of the 5/21 Vaughn Wurlitzer. The lanky 6-footer faces the camera with a big smile. His right hand is in the pocket of his coat, but the long fingers of that colossal left hand are visible. He was built to play the theatre pipe organ.

In the credits are some tongue-in-cheek listings that continue a tradition of the Wright sense of humor from some of his earlier CDs. Two of these are Guy Melondy and Jocelyn McNeil. We'll let the reader figure them out.

It goes without saying that this CD is a **Must Have**. This is truly groundbreaking, history-making stuff. Even if you own the original vinyl LPs, this re-issue will show a level of detail and presence the HiFi Records simply did not have. Available on CD. \$20 postpaid. Order from BANDA, P.O. Box 1620, Agora Hills, CA 91376-1620.

## A Barry Baker Concert



Since the release of his first album (Journal, July 1995) Barry Baker has been one of the busiest of our concert artists. He's crisscrossed the U.S. several times, played a lengthy concert tour of the British Isles and the Land Down Under, and in between, entertained the pizza chompers at Milwaukee's highly successful Organ Pipe Music Palace! In his "spare" time he's squeezed in some concert dates on the organ where it all began, so to speak, the distinctive, immaculate Ron Wehmeier residence 4/33 Wurlitzer on which his debut album was recorded.

Excerpting from Barry's liner notes "... three-quarters of this album's material was never intended to be more than extemporaneous playing, mostly with an audience present, and all arranged during the performance. It was music tailored to the mood of the moment - and recorded in a single 'take.' In addition to these 'live' performances, I have included several selections from spontaneous recording sessions which contain the same flavor as the concert material in that they, too, were each recorded in the first take."

If you're one of the few who haven't heard Barry at an ATOS Convention, in concert at your local venue, or on his first recording, this 71-minute album will introduce you to a young man whose command of the Wurlitzer, fresh and stylish musical thinking, fascinating registrations, and broad choice

of material may well leave you breathless! Repeat playings will reveal new musical "gems" each time. Although it wasn't planned, the album's tune list features three of the 110 finest and most lasting popular melodies of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century according to the Smithsonian's Collection of American Popular Songs; we've marked these with an asterisk after their titles.

Barry kicks off his program with Steve Allen's right-on "This Could Be the Start of Something (Big, Grand, Wonderful - take your pick!)" The first song Barry learned to play on a theatre organ - "Tenderly," follows that all too rarely heard toe-tapper "You Came a Long Way from St. Louis." Note the silvery, chirping Tibia here and there - it's a rare Murray Harris redwood set! (Joan Crawford, who started as a Charleston dancer in the silents, "sings" this gorgeous ballad in 1953's rather dismal *Torch Song* (actually she doesn't - it's India Adams who dubbed her singing in the film.)

Time for a "classic" and it's Barry's transcription of Francis Poulenc's brief, zany, rather demented piano piece, "Presto in B-flat." Although Alfred Newman wrote the Oscar winning score for the film, it was Sammy Fain who wrote the Oscar winning title song for "Love Is a Many Splendored Thing!" Before Harold Arlen started his song writing career he was a silent movie pianist; Barry's next sunny, fun-filled tune is Arlen's "I've Got the World on a String" which Lena Horn introduced in an early 30s Cotton Club show.

Gershwin's "How Long Has This Been Going On\*," originally taken at a brisk temp in 1928's *Rosalie*, didn't become a hit until a decade later when Peggy Lee and Benny Goodman slowed it down to the relaxed tempo Barry uses for

his arrangement. 1999 is the centenary of Duke Ellington's birth - most critics consider him one of the top five, if not the best, composer of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century! Barry gives three of his finest melodies (out of his over 1,000 published works) separate, sumptuous arrangements that do each one full justice. "I Got It Bad and That Ain't Good\*" features some truly unusual solo voices and a marvelous Style D Trumpet with "Satin Doll" has a tasty piano intro and simply super untremmed brass. For "In a Sentimental Mood" Barry displays all the sensuality, syncopation and pathos that permeates all the Duke's ballads.

Rodgers and Hart's "Blue Moon" features wonderful tibia combinations. (Yes, this melody was originally titled "Prayer" and was written for Jean Harlow, however, when she dropped out of the film *Hollywood Party*, it was cut. But, for a night club scene in 1934's *Manhattan Melodrama*, new lyrics were written and the song became "The Bad in Every Man." Since everyone loved the melody but felt the lyrics weren't "commercial," Hart asked if they wanted something really corny and trite like "Blue Moon." They did! That's how the song finally became a hit, but it's reported, Hart hated it.)

Barry tells us that in order to create authentic South American rhythms (which are very intricate, and cannot be played with only the left hand and left foot), the percussive rhythms were pre-recorded into the organ's computer relay, then "Cumana" (a song about Venezuela) was played along with the overlaid track ... it's the album's only tune done this way. The next two melodies are ballads written by Ron Wehmeier's professional songwriter father, Elmer. "Our Serenade" combines a slightly



Latin and Jesse Crawford flavor, while "I Was a Fool" has been recorded by Johnny Mathis.

Gershwin's "It Ain't Necessarily So" is next; an almost completely different arrangement appears on Barry's first album! Barry confesses he "routinely improvises elements of a song because that's what I enjoy doing in a live performance." Barry's next selection was an audience request which Barry honored on the spot "with no preconceived framework whatsoever." It's an inspired arrangement, with alternate tremos on and tremos off passages of "Amazing Grace." If you want a first class tear jerker, that's next with "The Thrill is Gone." It starts with delicious restrained voices and builds to an emotional climax.

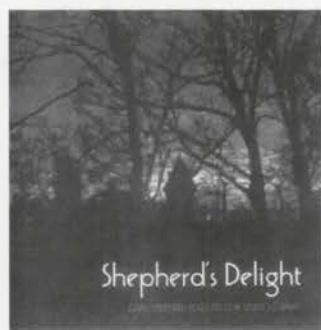
If you've heard Barry play his blockbuster, rough edged version of "How High the Moon" live, you'll find this album's arrangement just a tad slower and more refined. No, he doesn't have a "Doghouse" string bass; it's the enclosed 8' Pedal Pizzicato Tibia! J. Fred Coats was almost 90-years-old when he died a few years ago but the dozens of songs he wrote throughout his lengthy career include Barry's dreamy, introspective version of "You Go to My Head\*." The finale is a ripsnorter right out of the 20s - try catching your breath in the double and triple timing at the end of "Last Night on the Back Porch (I Loved Her Best of All.)"

This NOT a recording to play for "background music." As is true of most of the fine theatre organ recordings coming out today, this beautifully voiced and regulated organ and the consummate musicianship of the artist are deserving of close attention. Specifically note Barry's separate use of the Main and Solo swell pedals,

some hold-your-breath ritards, the phrasing and syncopation similar to a few of our finest vocalists, and some fascinating reharmonizations which give the selections a sparkling freshness. You'll be doing yourself a favor by adding this album to your collection to enjoy over and over again - it's a **Must Have!**

Thanks to Barry for additional information used in this review that is not in the album's liner notes. The cassette version has all the selections and same liner notes as the CD. Cassettes are \$14.00 and CDs are \$20.00 (both postpaid - checks and money orders only) from Barry Baker Productions, 3200 S. 76<sup>th</sup> Street #3, Milwaukee, WI 53219-3703.

### Shepherd's Delight DAVID SHEPHERD



It's been a while since David Shepherd's last review in the Journal (Nov. 1991) but in that time he has completed his "new" Holbeach studio organ. New is in quotes as the now completed 3/21 instrument has been in the works for some 19 years! In fact one side of Simon Gledhill's 1988 *In Concert* cassette was recorded on it when it was just a 3/9 and the difference between the then and now sound is substantial. It's interesting to note the organ has a Compton console and 10 Compton ranks - plus a completely refurbished Melotone - as well as carefully selected Kimball, Wurlitzer and Christie pipe work. With its skillful tonal regulation and voicing

the organ has a magnificent, completely satisfying one-of-a-kind sound.

Yes, David is one of the very few artists fortunate to have his own organ and on this 72-minute CD he beautifully demonstrates all its myriad tonal delights. In reviewing some of David's earlier recordings (Journal, June 1972 and May 1986) Stu Green remarked "Everything he does is beautifully crafted, performances are flawless ... (he) presents a tastefully selected list of tunes ... carefully polished gems and baubles." This new release exhibits all those attributes in abundance.

Although we've reviewed some "archival" albums of organs with Melotones, this is the first modern recording to feature one in perfect condition. David uses it superbly in both solos and ensembles. Briefly, a Melotone is an early electronic tone generating system, similar to a Hammond, which uses large (about 10") tone wheels, amplifier and speaker to produce pitches from 16' to 1' and some tuned percussions. Since only about 50 Melotones were built by Compton, this is a rare opportunity to hear how versatile and useful they can be.

In the excellent 12 pages of liner notes (which includes a color photo of the organ console and the specifications) David gives some fascinating details about many of the 27 selections played and states that he "... especially wanted to arrange some items to showcase particular aspects of the organ, and to illustrate that, with 21 ranks of pipework, it's certainly not necessary to put everything in the window at once." AMEN! He opens with a melodic march, "A.B.C. Parade," which doesn't salute our TV network but rather the Associated British Cinemas which, from the mid-20s until

quite recently, was the largest chain of theatres in the UK - and they regularly featured live organists at most of their venues until the 70s!

After the delicate, breezy "Voices of Spring" David plays four great tunes from Richard Adler and Jerry Ross' 1950 hit musical *Pajama Game* which one critic quite accurately called "... a deliriously, daffy delight." The four are about a Dictaphone duet ("Hey There"), a haunted hacienda ("Hernando's Hideaway"), a sizzling sensation ("Steam Heat") and a little love song ("Small Talk.") British organist Andrew Fenner composed dozens of novelty tunes and David features his slightly mischievous "Gremlin in The Galley."

Franz Lehar started out as a military bandleader but, before his death in 1948, he had even composed music for some films! In Lehar's lovely "Frasquita Serenade" David prominently features the hauntingly lyrical Melotone and follows that with the Big Band Duo of a jazzy "Basin Street Bounce" and a cheery "Undecided." Despite the title, Robert Farnon's theatrical "A Star is Born" was NOT written for either the Garland or Streisand films with that title!

"My Blue Heaven," "Tenderly," and "Bye, Bye Blues" precede the wistfully romantic "Serenade For My Lady." It's great to once again hear that almost forgotten but wonderfully danceable novelty "Dansero." A Jerome Kern Quartet includes "Look For the Silver Lining," "She Didn't Say Yes," "All the Things You Are," and "I Won't Dance." All were featured in various films but only the last is from one of the nine scores Kern specifically wrote for the movies. A rather dramatic, romantic ballad, "Answer me (My Love)" precedes a charming swinger titled



"Transatlantic Lullaby."

Organist Stanley Willey composed "Poodle in The Park;" he can be heard playing it on the Ritz Belfast Compton organ on his archival, but recently released, *Fascinating Rhythm* cassette (Journal, May 1996). David plays a right-on duplication using his Tuba rank, which came from the Belfast organ. A delightful Doubly Foolish medley has the bouncy "My Foolish Heart" and a big band oddity "These Foolish Things;" an oddity, for Jack Strachey wrote it specifically for a 1936 British musical revue but it crossed the Atlantic to become a solid stateside big band hit!

Next to closing, David plays a surprisingly spirited and quite dramatic "Ballet" from Claude Debussy's *Petite Suite*. With tongue firmly in cheek (we're sure) David closes with "Istanbul" which is the goofiest Near East music you'll ever run across! Overall this album is a satisfying reprise of some long-time, but rarely heard favorites along with a pleasing sprinkling of a few "new" pieces – all played on a warm, mellow organ which never assaults the ears despite its 21 ranks. It's one of the most satisfying recordings of a home installation that you'll find anywhere.

#### Highly Recommended!

Compact disc only for \$20.00 (postpaid, air mail). US\$ checks are accepted or you can charge to your VISA or MasterCard account (be sure to include you expiration date) from Cinema Organ Society, 13 Norton Street, Elland, West York, HX5 0LU, UK.

## Home And Away RUSSELL HOLMES



In the few years since he was named overall winner of the 1994 ATOS Young Organists Competition, Russell has become an international organ star and this is his fourth recording! To showcase his talents this time, he's playing two organs on opposite sides of the globe. One is the Wyton House 3/18 Wurlitzer in England (where his *Rolling 'Round the World* cassette was recorded – see the January 1997 Journal) and the other is an equally bright and brassy 3/20 Wurlitzer (Opus 1728 – originally a late 20s Style F in Perth's Regent/Metro Theatre – it's been moved and greatly enlarged) located in the Karrinyup Community Centre in Western Australia.

Russell has divided his program between the two organs by alternating his tracks between the two. In listening to this CD one might not even notice the somewhat subtle differences between the two instruments although the Karrinyup organ seems to be in a slightly larger room and, perhaps, the Wyton House organ has a slightly sharper Post Horn. (The album's liner notes identify which organ is heard on each track but only the sharpest of ears may find that of interest.) Both organs are complimentary to Russell's crisp playing style and each is beautifully recorded.

Russell opens with one of Harry Woods's wonderfully bouncy novelties "Me Too" and

continues with Bagley's robust "National Emblem March." Walter Donaldson's "Carolina in The Morning" was a 1920s hit tune for Al Jolson and the following piece, "Druid's Prayer," is more a sweetly sweeping salon-type waltz than it is religious! Another 20s novelty delight, "A Cup of Coffee, a Sandwich and You," is followed by a nicely varied 12-1/2 minute medley of Irving Berlin tunes which features four numbers from Astaire-Rogers films, the rarely played "I Left My Heart at the Stage Door Canteen" and "This is The Army, Mr. Jones," and the Universal Entertainment Anthem "There's No Business Like Show Business."

Today, we usually associate lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II with Richard Rodgers. Actually, his lyric writing career began in 1920 and in 1928, he wrote the words for Russell's next selection, which one critic called "a hot torch psalm" – with Sigmund Romberg's music it's "Lover, Come Back to Me" from *The New Moon*. (That show is not about astronomy but navigation for its title is the name of a sailing vessel!) Paul Whiteman's first hit record (in 1920) was "Whispering." Russell's arrangement starts with a brassy shout but quickly simmers down into a rhythmic ballad embellished by a rickety piano.

Lionel Bart's most successful musical show is *Oliver*. It opened in London in 1960, achieved over 2,600 performances in its first-run, crossed the Atlantic to become New York's longest running British musical (up to that time!) and then became that rarity; a Hollywood film that was faithful to the stage version! Russell plays a 12-minute six-tune medley of its hits. A recent revival of *Oliver* in London broke the Paladium's house record for long runs in July

1997 but would you believe Bart started his career by writing rock and roll songs for Tommy Steele's Cavemen?)

Lyn Larsen's composition "There's a Place in My Heart for You" receives a lovely tibia-laden arrangement. Russell's next two tunes return us to the 20s with Youman's rousing "Hallelujah" and the Latin-flavored novelty "On a Little Balcony in Spain." His arrangement of "Hooray for Hollywood" features the combination of Wyton House Post Horn with sizzling strings that could easily strip your socks off! "Isn't It Heavenly?" has some neat tibia passages here and there and is followed by Russell's excellent orchestral arrangement of Franz von Suppe's "Light Cavalry Overture." (Of the 30 or so operettas Suppe wrote, none are in production today but their wonderful overtures remain concert hall favorites around the world.)

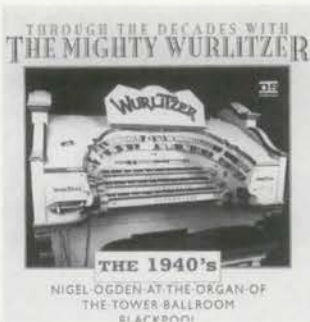
Russell closes his delightful different 72-1/2 minute CD with another nostalgic favorite, "When Day is Done" which, after a rather somber first chorus, gets a more 20ish up-tempo beat in its final choruses. It's good cheerful listening throughout. Well done, Russell! Compact disc only for \$20.00 (postpaid) from Jack Moelmann, P.O. Box 25165, Scott AFB, IL 62225-0165.

## Through The Decades – The 1940s

NIGEL OGDEN

The two "missing" volumes of the *Through the Decades with The Mighty Wurlitzer* series are now released and we'll review the 60s disc in the next issue. (Although we thought these would conclude the series, we've been informed Nigel is now planning albums for both the 80s and 90s – stay tuned!) As before, this CD features Nigel Ogden at the very versa-





tile 3/14 Blackpool Tower Ballroom Wurlitzer.

Of course, during the first half of the 40s virtually the entire world was engaged in the Second Great War but, even so, there was a surprisingly large amount of wonderful music written. With the Axis defeated in 1945 the world pretty much returned to what might be called "normal." Radio was the major form of entertainment – almost every home had a least one radio (TV screens didn't begin flickering until the end of the 40s) and *Amos and Andy*, *Fibber McGee and Molly*, Jack Benny, Bing Crosby and Bob Hope were the top-rated shows. Feature length cartoon musicals in Technicolor (*Pinocchio*, *Dumbo*, and *Fantasia*) were hits at movie theatres; on Broadway *Tobacco Road* finally closed after 3,180 performances, and the future stars Carol Channing, Marlon Brando, Gene Kelly, and Danny Kaye made their stage debuts. Perhaps of greatest importance to theatre organ buffs, the LP record arrived in June 1948, and the Renaissance of theatre organ music was at hand!

For this 77-minute CD Nigel has selected a rather surprising 43 tunes which were hits in the 1940s; some of them you'll find on any retrospective list of 40s tunes, a number of them may surprise you and a few (since some were hits only in England) may be a bit puzzling – but, each one is a listening delight. The "Garrison Theatre March" is a cheerful, light-hearted opener and the first medley has "Red Roses for a

Blue Lady," "Tangerine," and "Our Love Affair." (Victor Schertzinger composed "Tangerine" and, though he's not well known, he began his career in 1916 composing scores to accompany silent films and wrote this number for 1942s *The Fleets In.*)

Vivian Ellis, one of the UK's best known composers of musicals (in the same class as Noel Coward and Ivor Novello) receives a 7-minute medley of eight tunes from this 1947 cheery operetta *Bless the Bride*. Nigel combines the wartime favorite "A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square" with lesser known "Room 504" for both songs have lyrics by Eric Maschwitz. Leroy Anderson wrote dozens of descriptive novelties for the Boston Pops in the 40s and we hear his charming "Serenata." Jimmy Van Husan wrote "Nancy (with the Laughing Face)" for Frank Sinatra to sing to his daughter, but surprisingly the lyrics were written by TV's Sergeant Bilko, of all people – yes, Phil Silvers!

Some of the other delights from the 40s are David Raskin's "Laura," Robert Farnon's lively "Portrait of a Lady," Jerome Kern's Academy Award winning "The Last Time I Saw Paris," the Inkspot's great hit "I Don't Want to Set the World on Fire," and the wartime treasures "The White Cliffs of Dover," and "Coming in on a Wing and a Prayer." In 1942 Van Husen's "classic" "Moonlight Becomes You" was heard in the Crosby-Hope-Lamour epic *Road to Morocco* while Harry Warren's lush "Serenade in Blue" was played by the Miller band in *Orchestra Wives*.

Next to closing is one of the most dramatic melodies ever written for a movie. It's Richard Addinsell's "Warsaw Concerto" from the film *Dangerous Moonlight* (*Suicide Squadron*) which is the story of a refugee

Polish concert pianist who becomes a bomber pilot in the RAF. For their finale Nigel and the Wurlitzer Unit Orchestra tip their hats to the great Glenn Miller band with an 8-1/2 minute medley of seven Miller classics including "American Patrol," "At Last," "I Know Why (And So Do You)" and "In the Mood."

While we haven't mentioned all the titles, the album is in every way a beautifully recorded and delightfully nostalgic concert. Compact disc only for \$20.00 (postpaid – US\$ checks are OK) from LTOT, 21 New Hall Road, Jericho, Bury BL9 7TQ, UK.

### That's All NINE ORGANISTS



"That's All from the Compton Cinema Organ at the Davenport Theatre, Stockport" is the full title of this 78-minute compact disc which features music played by nine organists on one of the dwindling number of original theatre organ installations in the UK. The Davenport, a 1,750-seat "streamline moderne" theatre, opened in June 1937, with Compton A405 – a 3 manual, 7+ rank Melotone, under-the-stage installation. This organ has been quite accurately described by Joyce Alldred (who presided at its console for 17 years) as "... the lovely little Compton with a huge character."

Just short of the theatre's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, in March 1997, the theatre closed. In his letter announcing the release of this

"final" album Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust's Chairman Don Hyde describes how this recording was made. "The CD was recorded at the Davenport while it was being knocked down around our ears, so to speak. The theatre closed on Sunday night, (and) we had negotiated the purchase of the organ over the weekend. By 10:00 a.m. Monday the seats had been removed and half the wiring had been cut. We had to do a quick tune of the organ and bring the recording crew in. The recording was done in one day; the following day we started to remove the organ. By Thursday it was removed and in storage. A week later the demolition crew had moved in..."

Remarkably, even before completing their ex-Manchester Free Trade Hall Wurlitzer's installation in Stockport's Town Hall, the LTOT had negotiations underway to find a new home for the Davenport Compton! Such is the spirit and dedication of Manchester's organ buffs! Although the excellent eight pages of liner notes accompanying this album have the complete story of the theatre and organ a little explanation is in order for readers unfamiliar with Compton organs. This six unit organ has a Tromba (rather like a Style D Trumpet), Diapason, Krumet, String (and its Celeste – which are counted as one unit) and both a fully unified Tibia and Flute for a 7 rank total.

In reviewing Concert Record's LP (CR-0026) of Ron Curtis playing this very Compton (Journal, June 1968) Stu Green wrote "The Compton people seem to have solved the dilemma of the small organ design... (with) a limited number of voices (they have achieved) both solo instruments and a good ensemble sound." Yes, this organ may be



small in ranks but it comes on like gangbusters; particularly in the "last day" stripped and empty house recordings on this disc. But we hasten to add that there are also some "archival" tracks when the theatre was in its prime and in one case also had an audience. This organ has a Melotone but it's been inoperative for many years and the top manual, unlike the usual practice on smaller organs, is NOT a coupler manual but has its own stops. (Those interested in its stop layout will find a complete listing in the LTOT's Vox Lancastrian, Spring 1999 issue.)

Joyce Alldred, who was resident organist at the Davenport from 1966 until 1983, opens the disc with Jack Strachey's bright and brassy "Theatreland" and then, to show off the mellow sounds, plays "In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning." Her rhythmic medley is "It's Foolish But It's Fun" and Ray Henderson's "Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue." She closes her section with another, and better known Strachey tune, "These Foolish Things." Michael Holmes is next (since he was the last organist to play the organ in public) and he presents a third Strachey melody, "A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square" and a joyous march-like "Golden Mile."

Up to this point the organ has been heard in the empty room with no reverberation added. The next two artists were recorded while the theatre was in operation. The late Ronald Curtis is next with three selections from his LP recording (circa 1966) that we mentioned earlier. It's fascinating to note the warm, yet striking, presence of the Compton. The Curtis selections are a delightfully jazzy "Love Is," a slightly jazzy rendition of Jerome Kern's "A Fine Romance," and an appropriately subdued "The Party's Over" from Jule Styne's

1956 Broadway musical *Bells Are Ringing*. We fully agree with Stu's evaluation that "both instrument and artist are excellent."

While we don't know its date, the next 15 minutes are from a live concert by Simon Gledhill. His complete mastery of the Compton's 7 ranks is outstanding in Johnny Green's "Body and Soul," the wispy novelty "Will of The Wisp," and the variety of registrations and sparkling ideas displayed in his 5-tune *Cole Porter Potpourri*.

Returning to the "last day" recordings, Nigel Ogden presents a Bert Kaempfert's musical Glitter Gulch description of "Las Vegas." Lehar's cheerful "Waltz" is from 1909's *Count of Luxembourg*. Next are two medleys played by Charles Brown' another organist who frequently played for the public before the theatre's closing. First is a Foxtrot Medley of "The Old Fashioned Way," an unlisted "Heartaches" (can you still hear Elmo Tanner whistling this tune with Ted Weems' orchestra?) and a bouncy novelty, "Me and My Teddy Bear." Charles continues with two Harry Woods tunes which may be unfamiliar to most; "Just As Long as the World Goes Round" and "When Somebody Thinks You're Wonderful." (Woods is surely better known for songs about Red, Red Robins and Four Leaf Clovers but he also wrote Richard Hill's sensational console raiser at the Oakland Paramount last year, "Let's All Go Riding on a Rainbow.")

British born, but a longtime US resident, organist Jeff Barker is heard playing three up tempo tunes he recorded some years ago while visiting his home town of Manchester. Jeff plays "I've Got a Feeling I'm Falling," "Yesterday I heard it Rain," and the cheerfully ricky-tick "When You're

Counting the Stars Alone."

Joanne Godley, one of LTOT's prominent young organists, plays Eric Coates wonderfully descriptive "London By Night" and then it's Kevin Grunnell's turn at the Compton. We've reviewed Kevin's albums on the Granadaland's Wurlitzer but, having a Compton installed in his home, he's completely comfortable on the Davenport organ playing Robert Farnon's delightful "Out of Town," Haymes' "That's All," and a waltz medley of "I'll See You Again," "Til We Meet Again," and "Now is The Hour." Nigel Ogden returns to close out the disc with a tremos off, full organ "The Day Thou Gavest."

As the liner notes state, "this is a nostalgia record and souvenir of a wonderful theatre and organ." It's also a fascinating example of the remarkable tonal variety to be found in a well-specified small organ. This is certainly a bit different but a completely enjoyable nostalgic recording. And, its sales will help raise the funds needed to install it in a new home! We recommend it! Cassettes are \$12.00 and CDs are \$20.0 (both postpaid and US\$ checks are OK) from LTOT, 21 New Hall Road, Jericho, Bury BL9 7TQ, UK.

### Private Wurlitzer Theatre Organ Concert ORGAN ROLLS



This fascinating two CD set is subtitled "An Evening at the Home of Cecil B. DeMille" and pictured on the album's cover

is DeMille's unique Wurlitzer organ. Although the 12-page booklet accompanying this set gives a great deal of information about the organ, its rolls and player unit, and how these recordings were made, we'll add some interesting additional information to fill out that background material. Cecil Blount DeMille (1881-1959) made his Broadway acting debut in 1900. In 1913 he joined vaudeville musician Jesse Lasky and glove maker Samuel Goldwyn to form a motion picture company which soon became Paramount Pictures.

Owning the rights to a popular novel, they traveled to California, found a barn on a Hollywood farm (now the corner of Selma and Vine) for their studio and filmed their first feature, a six-reeler, *The Squaw Man*. Thus it can be claimed that DeMille founded the Hollywood film industry! DeMille's startling ability to artfully combine sin and salvation in his films made them sure-fire box office successes and throughout his lengthy career (lasting until the early 50s) DeMille produced and directed 70 epic films including the silent classic *King of Kings* which premiered at the 1927 grand opening of Grauman's Chinese Theatre.

In the early 20s, DeMille bought the Paradise Ranch in Little Tujunga Canyon (it's now Lakeview Terrace overlooking the 210 Fwy and Hansen Dam) in the northeast corner of the San Fernando Valley. For his home musical entertainment (like so many successful men of his time) DeMille purchased a Wurlitzer pipe organ. Opus 0716, which the Walton Wurlitzer List describes as a "Special," was installed in 1923 and a roll player was added in 1925. The organ had a typical 2 manual console, 7 ranks of pipes, traps, and percussions. In 1959 the organ (minus its



traps and some percussions) was reinstalled in San Fernando's First Presbyterian Church where it remained until 1968 when organbuilders Les and Olive Pepiot bought it (except for the console which went to a member of the church) to install in their Van Nuys home.

The organ's seven ranks (on 8" of wind) were Vox, Concert Flute, Salicional, Viola d'Amour, Open Diapason, Oboe Horn, and Viol d'Amour Celeste. In the late 80s, the Papiots, rather than install it, decided to donate the instrument to ATOS. The three string ranks were deemed unsuitable for the planned installation in the large room of the Towe Museum in Sacramento, California, and are now in John Ledwon's residence 4/52 Wurlitzer (Journal, July 1999). The balance of the organ (4 ranks, chestwork and other parts) became the nucleus of the now 3/16 ATOS-owned Wurlitzer in the Towe Museum, premiered during the 1992 Sierra Regional Convention.

Although it's not the actual DeMille organ heard on these recordings, many of the rolls came from the DeMille roll library, which is now part of The Nethercutt Collection in San Sylmar, just a mile or so from the former DeMille Paradise Ranch. The organ heard on this album is a somewhat smaller instrument for it's a Wurlitzer Style 135 Hope-Jones Unit Orchestra (possibly Opus 0266, built in 1919.) Style 135's had a 2 manual piano console with 4 ranks of pipes, 4 tuned percussions and 17 traps. This particular organ, now in the music room of David Bowers' residence in New Hampshire, has been completely restored by Tim Westman and, to its original Trumpet, Salicional, Flute and Vox, has an added Clarinet and labial

(reedless) Saxophone for a total of 6 ranks, percussions, traps, piano and roll player.

This 153-minute (over 2-1/2 hours) two CD set features all light "pop" selections on the first disc - 35 in all. The 2<sup>nd</sup> disc contains nine full-length concert transcriptions. Not all the tunes are reproduced from original Wurlitzer rolls. There are some Wurlitzer rolls made in the North Tonawanda factory and some designed to be played on the Wurlitzer Mandolin PianOrchestra as well as rolls made by Link Piano & Organ in Binghamton, New York, Weber Maestro, and Bruder. The music, with only two or three exceptions, comes straight out of the 20s and this set truly is a nostalgic musical visit to the past.

Since recordings of organs being played by rolls are rare - only two albums have been reviewed in the Journal. We'll quote from Stu Green's review of one (*Bombarde*, Winter 1965). "All are played from hand punched rolls at a usually lickety split tempo which gives them a merry-go-round hurdy-gurdy aspect... to ears who don't know the furious tempo of the 20s first hand this collection is bound to sound peculiar... blame it on the tempo of the 20s." To which we must add that the rolls heard on this album were designed for piano console organs and orchestrons, with the piano almost dominating many of the tracks.

Disc one is labeled "A Collection of Fox Trots, Rags, Blues, Marches and Waltzes." What a varied collection it is! Opening with the rousing "Entrance of the Gladiators" we next hear Victor Herbert's "Ah! Sweet Mystery of Life" and then it's on to such gems as "Honey Boy," "Blue Goose Rag," and "Felix the Cat." About half the tunes will be familiar - these include "Japanese Sandman," "The

Stein Song," "Dance of the Blue Danube" (shades of Jesse Crawford), "Bye Bye Blues," and "Louise." Two surprises on this disc are "I'm in Love Again" (written by Cole Porter for 1924's *Greenwich Village Follies*) and the first piece Bronislau Kaper wrote for Hollywood the title song from the 1936 film *San Francisco*. "Piccolo Pete," "Sax-o-Doodle," "Tea for Two," and a Stephen Foster jumble called "Swanee Smiles" are among the other tunes leading up to a snappy "Fox Trail March" which ends the first disc.

In many ways, the 2<sup>nd</sup> disc contains the "meat and potatoes" of the kind of musical home entertainment DeMille heard. Five of this disc's nine tracks were recorded from DeMille's own collection of organ rolls. However, the opening item is not. Surprise! It's a 10-1/2 minute medley of eight tunes from the 1964 Academy Award winning score for Walt Disney's *Mary Poppins*. The first actual DeMille roll is a magnificent version of Jean Sibelius' 1899 symphonic tone poem "Finlandia." The other DeMille rolls are a 4-minute pleasant novelty waltz titled "Birds Chirping," a 10-minute Sousa March medley, a 6-1/2 minute arrangement of *Berlin Life Waltzes*, and seven minutes of selections from an operetta, the *Prince of Pilsen*.

Two rolls made for a Weber Maestro orchestron are the always exciting complete "William Tell Overture" and a near 9-minute group of tunes with varying rhythms and tempos titled simply "Potpourri - 1930." The set concludes with a generous selection of music from the *Gypsy Princess*. Yes, this set is almost exclusively music you might have heard if you had visited DeMille at his Paradise Ranch in the 1920s. In addition, we find it interesting that in researching the Style 135

organ heard on this recording we found that most of the 203 Style 135s Wurlitzer built between 1918 and 1925 were installed in theatres located in both large and small cities all across the country! In addition some other Wurlitzer models, and those of many other organbuilders, were quite similar to the Style 135s. So it's very possible some of our parents and grandparents heard this music either played live or by rolls at their local Bijou! \*

A big "thanks" for much of the historical and technical information in this review go to Tom DeLay, John Ledwon, David Moreno, Olive Pepiot, Bill Schlotter and, of course, Judd Walton's Wurlitzer List. This 153-minute, two CD set is \$24.00 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling from Bowers and Merena Galleries, Inc., P.O. Box 1224, Wolfeboro, NH 03894. They can accept the usual charge cards by phone at 603/569-5095, or fax at 603/569-5319, or e-mail to [dirdsales@bowersandmerena.com](mailto:dirdsales@bowersandmerena.com) \*Editor's Note: I try to stay out of the recording reviews unless asked. However, this CD represents an amazing period of the theatre organ's history. Ralph correctly notes the 203 piano console style 135 Wurlitzer organs. However, this does not (no fault of Ralph's) take into account the 30 style 1, 3 style 2, 38 style 105, 49 style 108, 5 style 109, 8 style 110, 1 style 125, 85 style 160, or 1 style A, 9 style L, 26 style V Wurlitzer piano console organs. These would range in size from 3-ranks to 8-ranks. With ALL Wurlitzer piano console style lumped together, this totals around 507 organs or nearly 1/4 of Wurlitzer's total theatre organ output of 2238. It is very likely these little organs were the units most familiar to the average movie/vaudeville patron. Fewer than six of these organs (of all styles) are known to exist in late 1999.

As a kid, the late Richard S.



Villemin fondly remembered hearing the style YO 2-rank Wurlitzer photoplayer in the Porterville, California, Crystal Theatre. While there was a human who hand-played the little machine, the fun was to hear the rolls played during the evening's "big show." Of course the Wurlitzer tubular pneumatic photoplayers are not included in the electro-pneumatic instrument list of 2238 organs. Many Wurlitzer photoplayers also were scaled to play Concert PianOrchestra rolls, as were some designed to only play home player piano style 88-note rolls. The editor owns such an instrument.

The incredible rolls scaled by Gustav Bruder (Weber Maestro) must be heard to be believed. The Wurlitzer heard on this CD set more than admirably handles the music – it is fabulous! If you love orchestrion music, this is for you! Do not expect to hear any sugary tibias. Hearing the fun Wurlitzer PianOrchestra rolls will pick a person out of the dumps very fast! It is very jolly music. The more serious Wurlitzer concert Organ rolls are a wonderful window to the past with these now extremely rare machines. Tom DeLay, Editor

## CD REVIEW

### Pipe In A Swingin' Christmas

MARK GIFFORD  
at the 3/15 Theatre Organ  
Lincoln Theatre, Belleville,  
Illinois

Mark Gifford is a name that is well known in the Midwest, where he is affiliated with the Rodgers Organ Company. Although he has not toured nationally as a theatre organist, he appears frequently at the 3/11 Barton organ of Springfield (Illinois) High School and is a firm favorite there. This CD is Mark's first recording, featuring some 24 tracks of traditional Christmas favorites clocking in at something over 65 minutes of music.

The Lincoln Theatre in Belleville, Illinois houses a 3-manual, 15-rank hybrid instrument that is played each weekend before the film, and is the only movie theatre within hundreds of miles to feature an organ on a regular basis. Tonally, the organ features a smooth ensemble (excellent string and vox humana ranks

being much in evidence) and possibly some digital percussions to augment the real ones. The recording effectively captures the sound of the organ in the room, close enough to hear tonal nuance and yet with plenty of room ambiance. These 15 ranks can really fill the house.

Mark approaches these well-known songs and carols in a straightforward and uncomplicated manner, alternating between ensemble combinations and solo stops. His arrangements of the traditional carols such as "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing," "Joy to the World," "Angels We Have Heard on High" and "Away In a Manger" remind one of the spacious treatments that Dick Leibert used to give these pieces in his Christmas programs at Radio City Music Hall. "We Three Kings" fea-

tures the organ's Chinese Gong several times throughout. The Chipmunk's "Christmas Song" features a "shout" stop probably not in the organ's regular complement of effects. "White Christmas" begins with a luscious strings and vox combination that really wafts through the room, while the tubular chimes make their appearance during "Silent Night." Mark's treatment of "Santa Claus is Coming to Town" might suggest that the old guy's doing a strip tease during his trip down the chimney!

This disc will be a welcome treat for Mark's many fans as well as a welcome document of a dandy organ in America's heartland. The CD insert notes feature two color photos of Mark at the console and pertinent information on the theatre and instrument.

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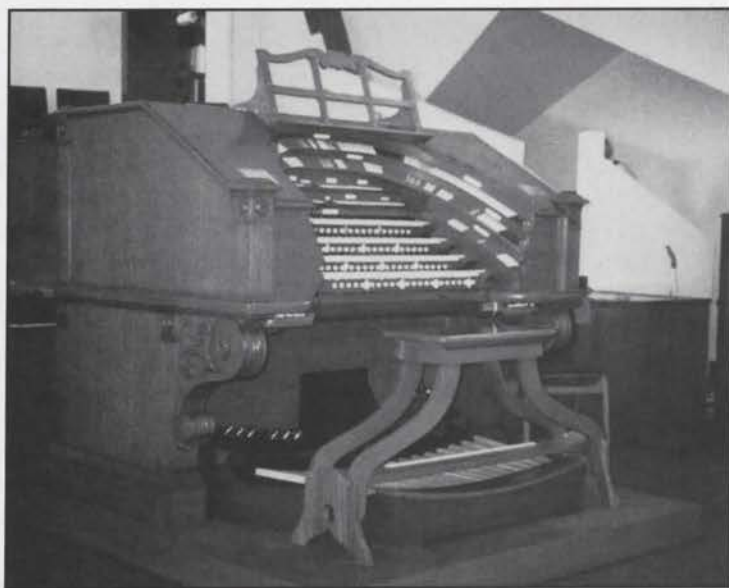
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# Closing Chord

## DONNA THELANER

ATOS lost a diligent worker and dedicated friend of theatre organ when Donna Thelaner died October 11, 1999, after a long, courageous battle with cancer.

Donna and her late husband, Les, fell in love with the theatre organ sound while skating to its music at a rink in their native Milwaukee, Wisconsin. They both loved theatre organ music and the ATOS movement.

They were workers in the North Texas Chapter and spent many hours helping with the restoration of the chapter's 3/8 Robert-Morton organ (now in the Lakewood Theatre in Dallas.)

They had dreams of having their own theatre organ and in 1986, bought a 2/6 Robert-Morton which they stored in every nook and cranny of their home while they looked forward to the day when they could hear it playing in their residence.

Donna took over the responsibilities of Chapter Secretary from veteran North Texas Chapter member and Secretary, Lorena McKee, when she died in 1985. These responsibilities included preparing and mailing the chapter newsletter, the *Keraulophone*, as well as the many aspects of keeping the chapter running that she learned from Lorena.

Donna was also a tireless worker for her church and her family of husband, five children and thirteen grandchildren; always ready to care for them and their many needs.

Even after the death of Les in 1995, Donna continued to attend the ATOS national conventions, which were a love and inspiration. She was already receiving treatment for her illness when she attended the last convention in Pasadena, taking part in every concert and every meeting. She had to walk a little slower and stop for an occasional breather in the shade, but she managed to have a great time.

Donna attended many of the theatre pipe organ events in Wichita, which she chronicled in the *Keraulophone*,

hoping that her enthusiasm would be contagious and increase the attendance at these events from North Texas.

Donna remained optimistic and cheerful throughout the trials of her treatment, attending all the North Texas events up until a couple of months ago.

We will all miss Donna for her help, friendliness and her great attitude.

*Irving Light*

## THELMA BARCLAY 1906-1999



Thelma Ursula Barclay, age 93, died September 1 in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Thelma served as an ATOS Board Member, as Youth Scholarship Chairman, and as Puget Sound Chapter President, Vice President and Secretary. Although her family moved Thelma to Arkansas about ten years ago following a stroke, she is fondly remembered by many longtime Organ Society members. A Jon Hahn article published May 12, 1980 in the *Seattle Post Intelligencer* tells it all:

Every time I hear Thelma Barclay, I want to roller skate. She plays the Mighty Wurlitzer theatre organ at Bellevue's Pizza & Pipes restaurant. And when she glides into a noon hour rendition of "Cruisin' Down The River," it brings back memories of the roller rink back home. Thelma, who looks like a cross between Diamond Lil and Ma Perkins, has memories that go much farther back. She played piano

accompaniment to Laurel & Hardy silent films at the Rose Bud Theatre back in Galesville, Wisconsin. "I got \$1 for each show. That was a lot of money back then. I remember having each one of those dollars spread out on top of the dresser." No one probably noticed the little black-haired Thelma, down in the piano pit of the darkened Rose Bud. Today, she's hard to miss, at center stage, every bit of her 5-foot-even frame bouncing in time to the music. It's like a scene out of *The Wizard of Oz* the tiny silver-haired lady in front of the garishly rococo organ. After teaching school as a young woman, she married Glen Barclay, a golf course superintendent and designer. His work brought them to Seattle in the late 1940s to help build the Sand Point and the Seattle Golf and Country Clubs. When her husband died suddenly, Thelma went to work full time, selling organs and pianos, so she could finish raising their two sons. Through it all, Thelma never stopped sharing her music with others, doing volunteer music therapy during and right after the war, and serving as staff pianist at the local U.S.O. in Madison, Wisconsin.

## CHARLES DANA EVANS, JR.

Charles Evans, Jr. died August 8 after a lengthy illness. The North Texas chapter lost a superlative organist, dear friend, and a charter member.

Charles was reared and educated in Oklahoma City and began studying piano at an early age. He began study of the organ while in high school. After two years of college, he began his professional career in 1939 just at the time the Hammond organ came on the scene. He toured the Midwest with a Hammond, playing engagements in hotels, restaurants and many other venues.

In 1941, Charles moved to Dallas where he began a 55-year career of entertainment and music education. He played with various dance orchestras and was featured entertainer at the Athletic Club and the Riviera Restaurant for many years. He played engagements at the several theatres along downtown's "theatre row" including the fabulous Palace Theatre. He was



staff organist for KRLD Radio and TV for 11 years. During this time he furthered his study of the classical organ with noted Dora Poteet at Southern Methodist University.

In the late fifties, he began extensive teaching and arranging and over the years taught dozens of people to play the organ. He played theatre organ concerts for the North Texas Chapter as well as entertaining members of the Dallas Organ Society and the several other organ clubs around the area.

Charles was one of the chapter organists who played intermission music on our chapter's Robert-Morton in the Lakewood Theatre beginning with its installation there in 1985. We are richer for knowing Charles Evans and for the pleasure of enjoying his special music. Charles will be fondly remembered by all who were touched by his friendship and music.

*Irving Light*

## JOAN COOK Wife, Mother, True Friend

The dearly loved lady who was Jim Cook's wife and John's mother has passed too suddenly from us. Mother of six children, she is best known to many in the pipe organ world through her talented youngest son, John. Mrs. Cook was stricken with a massive heart attack on August 12, as she and Jim and organist son John were entering Boston University's concert hall where John was about to perform. Joan was rushed to Beth Israel Hospital, where she was in intensive care for several days. The best efforts of her support team were to be of no avail; and this dear person passed from us on August 20.

Most of the readers of this Journal first came to know Joan and Jim Cook through the remarkable and continually developing artistry of their son John. As we watched John grow in stature and talent we could not fail to see the unfailing support and encouragement

which came from his parents affection for him and from their belief in him. As is true in most any loving family relationship, the center and life force of it nearly always springs from the mother. No mother was ever more totally supportive of her children than was Joan Cook.

But Joan's outpouring of selflessness and caring extended beyond her family to all who came into contact with her. There have been few others in EMCATOS history who have given their talents and energies more readily and more unstintingly than has Joan Cook. Cheerful, good-natured, always warm-hearted, Joan has left friends throughout the organ community who will cherish their memories of this lovely person.

The members and friends of Eastern Massachusetts Chapter join together, in extending our heartfelt sympathy to Jim and John and to all of the Cook family in the loss of their wife and mother. She will remain in our fondest memories. *Rita and Stu Hinchliffe*

*The American Theatre Organ Society  
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wish you all a  
Happy, Healthy, and Prosperous  
Year 2000!*



# CHAPTER NEWS

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1999

## CEDAR RAPIDS

Ray Frischkorn: 319/364-6300

**Cedar Rapids, Iowa.** For the first time ever, CRATOS had a summer spectacular! On August 15, at the Theatre Cedar Rapids (formerly the Iowa Theatre) Jonas Nordwall was the artist at the Rhinestone Barton. He was well received by an enthusiastic audience and gave a varied program, which appealed to all. We plan to make this an annual event which comes at a time when that organization is not using the facilities for the stage productions put on by its players.

Clark Wilson was the artist for our fall spectacular on October 17, at the Paramount Theatre for the performing arts. The Wurlitzer was also used the following morning when he did the programs for our annual Charlie Chaplin show for approximately 2,500 fifth graders from our local schools and those from surrounding areas. This program is sponsored in cooperation with the local school district personnel. There were two identical performances that morning to accommodate all the students since the Paramount has a seating capacity of 1,913.

Father Joe Roost from Williamsburg, Iowa played our membership program in September. We look forward to having him back again with his up-beat selections.

We will close out 1999 with a membership get together as well as the annual meeting for the election of officers and directors for the year 2000. With the usual busy festive season, CRATOS will have its annual holiday party in January as we have done in recent years.

CRATOS extends holiday greetings to the ATOS officers and directors as well as to all chapters.

*George K. Baldwin*

## CENTRAL FLORIDA

David Braun: 941/957-4266

**Tampa, Florida.** The summer months were busy for this chapter. Work on our 2/9 Wurlitzer located in the Pinellis Park Assembly Hall has moved along nicely. The dedicated crew, Dave Braun, Joseph Mayer, John Hobbs and Earl Wiltse, have put in many productive hours. They expect

to have a few ranks speaking at our September meeting. The project just received an anonymous, \$1000 donation, to be used toward the completion of the organ.

Another member, Rosa Rio, again filled the Tampa Theatre at the Wurlitzer accompanying two Buster Keaton silent motion pictures. This is overwhelming, as our winter visitors, the "Snow Birds," are not here. The Wurlitzer and Rosa are magnificent partners.

The club has six new members, and lots of business has been transacted. The big news is that Central Florida has put in a bid for the ATOS Annual Convention in the year 2001. We have the venues selected and most of the committee chairpersons in place. It is an exciting time to be a member of CFTOS.

*Peg Mayer*

## CENTRAL ILLINOIS

Father Gus L. Franklin: 217/585-1770



L to R: Leo Kikendall (Treasurer), Father Gus Franklin (President), Deacon Martha Bradley (Secretary), Keith Andrews (Vice-President).

**Springfield/Champaign-Urbana, Illinois.** Since our chapter was just recently chartered (July, 1998, in San Francisco), we are still very much involved in getting to know one another while having fun and music together. We are beginning to explore more effective ways to promote the two theatre pipe organs located in public gathering places in our area and to identify any local young organ students or potential ones. The rather time-consuming process of writing bylaws was completed; these were adopted at our first Annual Membership Meeting in April.

We continue to meet essentially monthly. In November, we returned to the Virginia Theatre (Champaign) for a thorough report by Chris Anderson on the

Cedar Rapids Regional Convention. House organist Warren York played a fine program on the 2/8 Wurlitzer (an original installation), the one restored by David Junchen when he was a freshman at the University of Illinois.

Our December meeting was hosted by Leo and Sally Kikendall (Springfield) who have a 2/5 Wicks pipe instrument in their home theatre. Father Gus Franklin played brief tributes to George Gershwin and to Ruth Lyons (a former WLW (Cincinnati) radio and TV personality). Jack Moelmann who played several seasonal numbers made a surprise appearance. On December 31, the 3/12 Barton in Springfield High School (originally from the Springfield Orpheum Theatre) was featured in a nearly two-hour program by Mark Gifford as a feature of Springfield's "First Night" festivities.

Our January, February, and March meetings featured electronic instruments. We were at Ken Lowrys (Carlinville) in January where Leo Kikendall and Mark Gifford entertained us on Ken's Technics FA1. Our February hosts were Jim and Marie Weber (Decatur) who have a Conn 651, which Jim demonstrated for us. He also had a surprise. Just two doors away, Dr and Mrs. Burton (who are not members of our chapter) welcomed us into their home for open console on their Allen MDS 312 theatre organ. Jim has an outdoor train setup that many wished to ride. So we returned to the Webers' in July for more music, train rides, and a potluck supper. In March, we gathered at the home of Keith and Lila Andrews in Chatham where Arthur Bass demonstrated the voices of their Conn 652 and Warren York entertained us for quite some time.

The St. Louis Chapter invited us, as well as local AGO chapter members, to join them at the Lincoln Theatre in Belleville in April to hear and play the recently built 3/15 Marlin Mackley theatre pipe organ. Stan Kann was present and treated us to several selections. Warren York and Father Gus Franklin also were among those who played for us before the open console time. Later in April, we had our first Annual



Membership Meeting at the home of Father Gus in Springfield. Our bylaws were adopted at that time, and after a few selections by our host, several members entertained us on the Allen MDS Th 3.

In May, Mark Gifford presented a fine, fun, and well-attended public program entitled "Broadway Bash Barton Style" on the Springfield High School 3/12 Barton. Our May chapter meeting was a party/picnic at Jack Moelmann's home in O'Fallon. Jack and Stan Kann presented a most entertaining program; guest accordionist Jay Landers also joined them. This was the first experience of Jack's wonderfully unique instrument for several of our members. For all who participated in this program it was, of course, another May "bash!"

*Martha J. Bradley, Secretary*

## CENTRAL INDIANA

Carlton B. Smith: 317/638-4918

**Indianapolis, Indiana.** On August 8, the Central Indiana Chapter met for its monthly get-together at Warren Central High School, Indianapolis. Dwight Thomas, who used to be a regular organist at the Paramount Music Palace, presented a delightful program. Dwight and Bill Vlasak will soon be relocating to Florida, where they will assume the musical duties at the new organ/pizza establishment which is the home of the former Paramount Music Palace Wurlitzer. They will be missed.

Over Labor Day weekend, about 25 of our members traveled to Wichita, Kansas, for the Regional Convention. It was a marvelous weekend, which also spotlighted two of our members: Ken Double, as emcee, and Jelani Eddington in a series of piano/organ duo concerts with David Harris.

Our September meeting was held in the Paramount Theatre Center in nearby Anderson. This theatre and the Page organ

lovingly restored by Carlton Smith are incredible! Just seeing the beautifully refurbished building and hearing the organ is a real treat. George Smith, music storeowner in Anderson, played for us.

The major news from our chapter is the recent acquisition of a 2/5 Wurlitzer from a home in nearby Hagerstown, Indiana. It will be installed in the historic Madam Walker Theatre on the west side of our city. We are excited at the prospect of having another venue available to bring theatre organ music to a wider base of listeners. We also have a committee working with the Warren Township Schools to set up an educational project with the school children in their district. *Louise Eddington*

## CHICAGOLAND

Dennis Scott:

**Chicago, Illinois.** The Chicagoland Theatre Organ Society has been hard at work this year planning many activities in the Chicagoland area.

Our July social was held at the studios of "The Beautiful Sound, Inc." in Countryside, Illinois. "The Beautiful Sound" is the Chicago area Allen organ dealership, and Joy Collins, owner, has generously offered to allow CTOS to make "The Beautiful Sound" our "clubhouse." Thank you, Joy!

Our guest artist for this July evening was the Dean of American Theatre Organists, Tom Hazleton! Tom entertained us, as only he can do so well, on the Allen George Wright "Signature Series" Model 319 Digital Computer Organ. Lee Maloney, Vice-President of Theatre Organ Sales at "The Beautiful Sound, Inc." has spent many hours in arranging the console and speakers to achieve the proper balance for the organ, and many more hours with Tom in voicing the instrument to be "Just Right." Tom also gave us a couple of numbers on the Allen model R-350 classical organ, one to honor the recently departed



July social at "The Beautiful Sound, Inc." the Chicago area Allen organ dealership.

JFK, Jr., and the other to honor Tom's mother who passed away the week before our social. Thank you, Tom, for making the effort to be with us so soon after your loss. Tom played for about an hour and it was over way too soon.

CTOS President Dennis Scott and Secretary Lee Maloney led the social by welcoming CTOS members, plus members of JATOE and CATOE who were also invited to join us. The studio was filled to capacity with over 70 people, and we can only call the evening a stunning success for us! We had 10 new members join CTOS on the spot! Open console was held afterwards with many people enjoying the magnificent 319. But the highlight of the open console session had to be Warren York on the 319 playing duets with Joy Collins on an older model 2 manual Allen. Both are fine organists and very versatile.

It was nice to see such a great turnout for CTOS. In June we had another social, with Lee Maloney at the Allen 319, and that got us off to a good start this summer. Attendance was up at this social, and we hope to continue that trend.

On August 8 we had our next social of 1999 at the home of Roland Frase in Roselle, Illinois. His instrument is a Kimball 3/7 with MIDI and Z-Tronics relay that was the original organ in the Hoosier Theatre in Whiting, Indiana.

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## CHICAGOLAND cont.

Roland has done a very nice job of installing this instrument, but it is not yet fully completed. According to the stop rail Roland has plans to add a lot of ranks. This will be an interesting installation to follow. The pipes are installed in chambers that extend from the basement to the rafters. With the extra space of the basement to soak up the sound, the instrument gives just the right volume to the listening room. A very creative solution to a large organ in a smaller environment.



3/7 Kimball in the home of Roland Frase.

We had about 30 people in attendance for this social, which pretty well filled Roland's music room. Roland was the featured player, with open console played by a number of others including Richard Best, Steve Margison, and Dennis Scott. Roland retired the week before this social, so this was a double celebration. We all wish Roland many happy years of retirement. We expect him to spend those years finishing his Kimball and continuing his productive association with JATOE.

September 12 found CTOS members and guests learning more about theatre organ registration and usage. Sunday, October 24 featured local Music Pro Judy Matarelli at the keys of not only the Allen organs, but flying across the tops of the Steinway piano as well. She even brought one of her old partners out from retirement and gave us a few piano/organ duets!

Our club has hit the Internet! Thanks to the efforts of Treasurer/Membership Chairman Steve Margison, we can be found at <http://www.organman.com/cots> to find out about upcoming events and read more about our club's history. This looks like a terrific year for CTOS!

*Lee Maloney*

## CUMBERLAND VALLEY

Robert Eyer, Jr.: 717/264-7886 / [Eyerr@cvn.net](mailto:Eyerr@cvn.net)

**Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.** On a Sunday afternoon in late August, about 70 chapter members and friends gathered at Chambersburg's Capitol Theatre for an afternoon of music at the newly expanded Möller. Bob Eyer, Jr. demonstrated each of the organ's five new ranks of pipes, and then presented about 30 minutes of his outstanding arrangements of popular music. Following a potluck food break for dinner, several of the chapter's organists played nonstop during an open console period that extended well into the evening. Participants also had the opportunity to tour the historic theatre, which in recent months has enjoyed tens of thousands of dollars worth of renovations to the interior.

*Bob Maney*

## DAIRYLAND

Corey E. Olsen: 414/646-8647

**Racine/Milwaukee, Wisconsin.** Our annual Ice Cream Social was once again held at the home of Jim and Dorothy Petersen of Menomonee Falls on May 23. The console is a 3-manual Wurlitzer, which was just recently installed in the home. The console is originally from the Trianon Ballroom in Chicago and was later moved to the North Avenue Roller Rink in suburban Chicago. The former living room, family room, and dining room were completely remodeled to now become one large "music room," complete with a new oak floor.



Joel Gary after his program on Petersen's Wurlitzer. Sandy Knuth photo

The guest organist was Joel Gary from Grand Rapids, Michigan. He entertained us for an hour with theatre organ music, show tunes, and some numbers he plays in church.

This event always draws a large crowd so the overflow was seated in the lower

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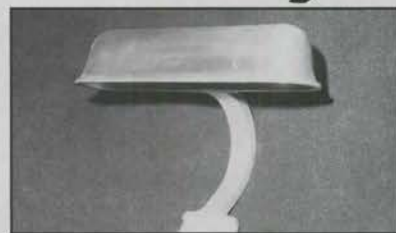
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level where a closed circuit TV was set up. Following the program open console began and the ice cream was served. There were so many organists present that open console time was limited to five minutes per person. Even well-known organist Barry Baker was present and brought along his girlfriend from New Zealand, and she is also an organist. This installation will be featured as part of the pre-glow of the ATOS Annual Convention 2000.

A spring concert was held June 20 at the Racine Theatre Guild, where they have a 2/7 Wurlitzer. This was the first concert there in nearly 15 years. The artist was Bill Tandy, who is self-taught and got interested in the theatre pipe organ in 1975 after hearing one at the Hub Roller Rink in Norridge, Illinois.

In July we had a summer social in Richfield at the lovely home of Al Nethery. Al was the artist on his recently acquired 3-manual Allen organ. He demonstrated the many features and sounds the instrument has as he played the program for us.

Bill Campbell, chairman of the ATOS Annual Convention in 2000, was also present and gave us an update on convention plans. Open console and a "brat fry" supper followed.

Our annual picnic was held at the summer home of Jack Moelmann on Lake Geneva on August 22. We spent the afternoon taking boat rides on the lake, having Jack entertain us on his Hammond, watching an old TV program where Stan Kann was a hilarious guest, and enjoying the pot luck meal.

*Sandy Knuth*

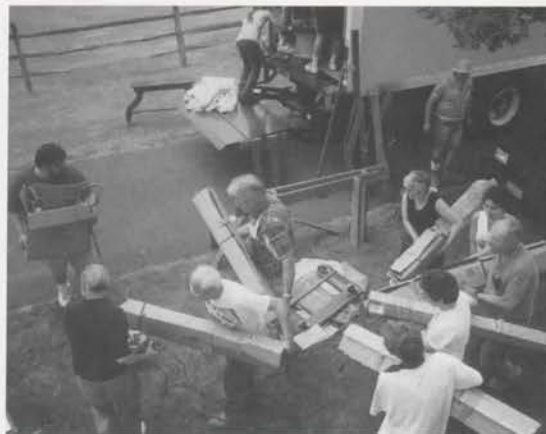
## GARDEN STATE

Cathy Martin: 973/256-5480

**Trenton, New Jersey.** July was a great month for working and summer picnicking. Back in April GSTOS received a wonderful donation. We now have five donated theatre pipe organs, in Jersey City, Bound Brook (see "A River Runs Through It" elsewhere in this journal), Newark, West New York and Rahway.

Saturday July 10 was the moving date for our latest donation. It is the 3/10 Wurlitzer pipe organ which had been installed March 1934 in the famous Rainbow Room on the 70th floor of the RCA Building in Rockefeller Center, New York City. This organ has a Chinese modern case with the stop tabs arranged in two straight lines across the front of the console. This has been the third time the Rainbow Room Wurlitzer has been moved. The first removal was made to accommodate the air conditioners that needed the space. It was placed in a unique home in New York City. It later traveled to Pennsylvania where it remained for several years.

On July 10 in the early hours of the morning, twenty-five Garden State members arrived and began the arduous job of removing the Rainbow Room pipe organ. The complete move from Pennsylvania to the Rahway Senior Citizen Center, a renovated large post office building, totaled about thirteen hours of hard work. Anyone who has ever moved an organ will surely know what is involved. All the dedicated members worked together and a very successful move of the organ was accom-



GSTOS members moving bottom boards of the 5-rank Main chest from the famous Rainbow Room Wurlitzer. Cal Bacon photo

plished. A great thank you goes to all.

On Sunday July 18, all GSTOS members were invited to our annual picnic held this year at Bob and Cathy Martin's lovely waterfront cottage on Lake Hopatcong, New Jersey. The only requirements were to bring your own lawn chair and food to share. Needless to say, all of our hard working crewmembers took advantage to recuperate from work. Though the day was at least 90 degrees, everyone relaxed, enjoyed food and drink and shoptalk. Some tried boating and swimming. Others interested in open console, traveled back and forth across the lake in Bob Martin's power boat to the home of Peter Panos who graciously invited all to try out his fine 2/7 Robert-Morton. Most members remained at the picnic until dark. It was a wonderful day. Thank you Martins!

On Aug. 28 Garden State and New York Chapter members once again joined in a

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**GARDEN STATE cont.**

traditional yearly organ crawl. This year we visited three theatres all closely located on the Jersey Palisades overlooking New York City. Members started the day at the Galaxy Triplex in Guttenberg. Owner Nelson Page greeted all to his theatre, which is divided into three with the largest containing a 3/12 Kimball Theatre pipe organ. An "open your eyes" assortment of breakfast treats were offered in the lobby while house organist Jeff Barker played background music on the lobby's 2/6 Möller pipe organ. Members were then entertained with mini-concerts by three of our outstanding organists, Jeff Barker, Ralph Ringstad, and Al DeLuca. Following the concerts, members walked several blocks to the Mayfair Theatre Triplex in West New York, and were welcomed by Andrew Dai, owner. The largest theatre contains our chapter's 3/4 Kilgen theatre pipe organ and members all had a chance to play this great little organ with a BIG sound, which filled the theatre. Lunch followed with everyone eating on his or her own.

The last visit looked forward to, was the tour of the Loew's Theatre on Journal Square in Jersey City, New Jersey. This theatre had been acclaimed the finest theatre in New Jersey. Thankfully, it is slowly being restored to its former beauty by the Friends of the Loews, and Garden State who is installing our donated 4/23 Wonder Morton theatre pipe organ there.

When members arrived, they were welcomed with refreshments then groups formed and started a tour of the building led by Patty Giordan as a guide. She has worked and donated five years to this theatre and knows every mile of the great building. Thank you Patty and Colin Egan Director of Loew's Jersey Project of Restoration.

Entering the huge auditorium which



New Jersey and New York members listening to Bob Balfour (cap) explain the Wonder Morton console in Lowe's Journal Square, New Jersey. Joe Vanore photo

years ago held about 3,000 seats, we now walked following paths on the floor clogged with piled up boxes of new seats. This was an experience for all! All members just gazed at the enormous white Morton console stored by a sidewall.

The tour included climbing stairs up to the restored projection booth, about six or seven stories above the lobby. It was well worth it. Peering through the portholes down to the stage was a breath-taking experience.

We left the building realizing how much restoration has been accomplished by the Friends of the Loew's. The organ crew with Bob Martin as crew chief has made great progress. Our members were impressed at the enthusiasm of all who had donated their services and talents to this great theatre and organ. Our special thanks for a most interesting day was given to Nelson Page, Andrew Dai, the Friends of the Loews, Bob Balfour, and Bob Martin and especially to Paul Jacyk Vice-President and Program Chairman. *Jinny Vanore*

**JESSE CRAWFORD**

Steve Plaggemeyer: 406/248-3171

**Billings, Montana.** Six Jesse Crawford Chapter members were delegates to the ATOS Convention '99 hosted by the

London and South of England Chapter in London, July 4-7. The high point of the convention was on Wednesday, July 9, at the Woking Leisure Centre when Convention Chairman Len Rawle played the final concert on the chapter's 3/17 Wurlitzer. Len's concert was over sixty-five minutes of organ playing, without interruption for applause or announcements. His performance was superb and included "A Broken Rosary" using Jesse Crawford's personal copy of the music that was given to him by George Wright.



Len Rawle, ATOS Convention '99 Chairman, at London Chapter's 3/17 Wurlitzer, holding Jesse Crawford's personal sheet music of "A Broken Rosary" that George Wright gave him in August of 1978. Note Len's Caricature on music rack. Ed Mullins photo

Crawford recorded this piece in April 1933, on the 4/21 Wurlitzer at the New Empire Theatre, Leicester Square, London, for His Master's Voice, HMV B4434 *My Love Song - A Broken Rosary*. Crawford was engaged at the Empire for four weeks beginning April 14, 1933. He also did his famous 15-minute radio broadcast for BBC on April 24, 1933. The music was inscribed: "For Len Rawle by way of George Wright August 1978." The Empire Wurlitzer is now installed in Len Rawle's home in Chorley Wood.

Rawle was given a well-deserved standing ovation at the end of this hour of musi-

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cal magic. His encore was "Chattanooga Choo-Choo" complete with steam locomotive effect and all the bells and whistles. Len closed the program with "I'll See You in My Dreams." Program Chairperson Veronica Trott presented Len with a framed caricature of himself.



Crawford chapter member Jörg Joachim Riehle at Berlin, Germany Music Instrument Museum 4/16 Wurlitzer, originally in the von Siemens mansion. Organ and museum located beneath Berlin's Philharmonic Hall. Ed Mullins photo

Secretary/Treasurer Dr. Ed Mullins visited chapter member Jörg Joachim Riehle whilst in Berlin, Germany. Riehle is organist at the Musikinstrumenten Museum, which is located beneath the Philharmonie (Philharmonic Hall). He conducted a tour on July 17 that concluded with a half-hour mini-concert at the 4/16 Wurlitzer, Opus 2064, originally installed in the residence of Herr Werner Ferdinand von Siemens, in Berlin-Lankwitz in 1928. Siemens was the German electronics magnate. Jörg opened his concert with Friedrich Hollaender's "Ich bin von Kopf bis Fuss auf Leibe eingestellt" from "Der Blaue Engel" ("From my Head to my Feet, I'm Made for Love"). *The Blue Angel* was the first German sound film (1930 UFA) that starred Marlene Dietrich and Emil Jannings. The English version is "Falling in Love Again (Can't Help It)." Riehle played it in the

style of famous German organist Gerhard Gregor. His program also included "King Kong March" and "My Love Song" which was the flip side of Crawford's "A Broken Rosary" HMV recording. Ed Mullins

## JOLIET AREA

Jim Stemke: 847/534-9511

**Joliet, Illinois.** We had a fine turnout for our January 24 social/business meeting with Jack Moelmann providing us with a great program. Music from *South Pacific*, an inspirational medley and patriotic music were some of the highlights.

We followed this social with Warren York on March 21. Warren needs no introduction, as he is a member and newly elected to the Board of Directors. We always have open console at our socials and have quite a few members playing. Warren always does a great job.

John Giacchi presented a fine program for us on April 11 and joined our Rialtofest/Extravaganza program in November.

The Rialto Square Management wanted to honor JATOE for the various contributions and the continuous work being done on the Barton Grande to make this instrument one of the finest in the country. This honor was bestowed upon us on May 23. We received a plaque from Tom Mahalik, General Manager; and David Hacker, Chairman of the Board, paying tribute to our members. Dave Wickerham then presented one of his finest programs for those attending, with refreshments following in the Rotunda. This was a special day.

The Rialto Barton Grande is becoming one of the finer theatre organs with the constant restoration taking place. Our new Orchestral Oboe was delivered in mid-August and added along with the recent purchase of an Open Diapason. The organ will have 3 ranks of Diapasons to enhance the richness of the overall ensemble.

Several 2' top octave chests were installed to improve the upper harmonics. The 4/21 will be playing 27 ranks in the near future.

We had a Hawaiian pig-roast in September with Russell Holmes as our featured artist.

Be sure to look into our double CD set produced from the Pipe Organ Extravaganza 3. All proceeds go into the continuing restoration of the Barton Grande that is playing an important roll at the Rialto Square Theatre in Joliet, Illinois. The organ is being used for the many tours through the historic theatre and also for pre-shows and intermissions during the year.

Jim Patak

## LONDON & SOUTH OF ENGLAND

Jim C. Bruce:

Chris McPhee from Australia was our guest young organist at the Convention. Chris then went on to play at Woking with a variety of enjoyable music. Chris's visit to Britain ended with a concert at the Barry Memorial Hall, Wales.

Len Rawle has been our regular organist for the last few months at Northolt. All members have enjoyed Len's selection of music.

On 8 August David Lowe entertained us on the State Kilburn Wurlitzer. David's choice of music included a selection of tunes from *Beauty and The Beast*, and Cole Porter, which made for a very pleasant morning of music.

Peter Haywood was due to play for us at Woking, but unfortunately broke his wrist. Dr. Arnold Loxam came and gave us a wonderful evening of music. Arnold included a novelty number "In a Clock Store."

Our next concert is at the Barry Memorial Hall, where Allen Kirrow will be at the console of the Christie organ.

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## MANASOTA

Charles Pierson: 941/924-0674

**Sarasota, Florida.** Our September meeting was in the Charles Ringling mansion music room on the campus of The University of South Florida/New College in Sarasota. Bob Alexander and Dave Cogswell played on the restored 3/42 1926 Aeolian residence pipe organ. Open console followed.

In October, we returned to Dr. Ketch Morrell's Allen theatre organ in the Kingsgagge clubhouse. Teenagers Ronnie Gicka and Robert Vargas demonstrated their talents. Rosa Rio was at the Aeolian on the USF campus in November.

Work on the chapter's Wurlitzer Style 260+ pipe organ installation is proceeding. The Solo chamber is filled to capacity with chests and regulators. Norman Arnold, Vernon Blanch, Bob Alexander and Bob Chute, Frank and Yvonne George are spending many hours each week on this project.

Carl C. Walker

## MOTOR CITY

Thomas Hurst: 248/477-6660

**Detroit, Michigan.** The Motor City chapter continues its busy schedule. In May, we had Jack Moelmann accompanying the silent movie *The General*. Jack not only provides a wonderful accompaniment but also gives audiences the entertainment they want and deserve. The chapter also surprised Ray and Dorothy Van Steenkiste with a reception for their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.



Jack Moelmann, who accompanied *The General* at the Redford Theatre, and Tom Wilson, producer of radio program *Somewhere in Time*. Ray Van Steenkiste photo

During the summer, our own George McCann continued with his restoration program. The Redford Theatre is looking more and more like 1928. We are indebted to George and Donald Martin for their work on intricate designs and also stage props for our various programs. Without them, our gem would have continued in a drab gray. We love what has done to bring our home back to its original splendor.

Motor City was very excited about Ron Reseigh and Heather Novak appearing in concert in the UK. We are very proud of our young people.

In October, Scott Foppiano presented *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. The crowd loved both the movie and Scott. It was a tribute to timeless movies, music and talented organists.

We also had the following organists play overtures and intermissions for our regular bi-weekly movie series: Newton



Scott Foppiano accompanied *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* at the Redford Theatre. Ray Van Steenkiste photo

Bates, Gus Borman, Steven Ball, Brian Carmody, Sharron Patterson, Tony O'Brien, Lance Luce, Gil Francis, Jennifer M. Candea and Scott Foppiano. We also had another big school program on October 29.

Our Christmas show December 11 will feature Tony O'Brien. His artistry always thrills audiences. We continue our bi-weekly series of classic movies. In addition, we hosted the Redford War Memorial Show for Veteran's Day and the Redford Harmony Club barbershop variety show. Both of these efforts attest to the need for our theatre to continue as an outlet for those groups that might not otherwise be able to reach the greater Detroit area.

For further information be sure to visit the website of MCTOS and the Redford Theatre at:

<http://theatreorgans.com/mi/redford> or call 313/537-2560. Brian Carmody

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## NORTH TEXAS

Donald Peterson: 972/517-2562

**Dallas/Ft. Worth, Texas.** The August meeting of the North Texas Chapter was held in the Lakewood Theatre, home of our chapter Robert-Morton. Our publicity chairman, Jeannette Crumpler was able to outdo her past efforts and was successful in getting more advance publicity for this meeting than ever before. In addition to spot announcements on four local radio stations, she got a full column, plus picture spreads in four local publications. This publicity, added to NTC members spreading the word and bringing friends, resulted in around 450 in attendance to hear the Robert-Morton and to see the silent movie.

Don Reasons, program chairman, split the program into two parts. Bill Hanson played the organ for the first half, and our own Rick Matthews accompanied Buster Keaton in *Cops*, for the second half. Bill Hanson had been scheduled to play in July, but was prevented from this goal by the inopportune failure of the organ relay. Fortunately, Bill was able to work his schedule to allow his performance at the August meeting. The centerpiece of his program was a love story told in song titles, all familiar enough to allow the audience to see the progress of the story. He encored his performance with two crowd pleasers; "Climb Every Mountain" and "Tico-Tico."

After a brief intermission, Rick Matthews took the console and played a couple of rousing theatre organ staples

before lowering the console to accompaniment level and played a brief prelude as the movie began. The audience quickly became engrossed with Buster Keaton's antics on the screen and soon forgot about the accompanist cueing the action on the screen. To his credit, Rick stayed with music that was unspecific in title or era and this greatly helped him to do his job of promoting the screen action. Rick's performance was awarded a standing ovation.

The Robert-Morton played beautifully and without a hitch. Thanks to the hard working organ crew it was in perfect tune and stayed that way even with tremors-off segments. Many hours were spent in debugging the July relay failure and fixing the problems. They also returned the rebuilt tuned percussion instruments to the chambers in time for this performance. Many hands worked on this. Bravo to crew chief, Earl "Mac" MacDonald, and our profound thanks to all of you.

The theatre continues to get bookings that include the Robert-Morton. Recently, the Turtle Creek Choral (a men's chorus) presented a marathon performance from 6:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. the next day, with admission prices of up to \$25. There were capacity audiences many times during the continuous performance. The marathon was planned and executed to win a place in the *Guinness Book of World Records*. North Texas chapter organist, Danny Ray, accompanied the chorale's extended performance on the Robert-Morton. What a tour de force!

The Saturday before our August meeting, the Lakewood Theatre was the scene of a wedding. Don Reasons was engaged to play the Robert-Morton for the ceremony and reception. The theatre manager planned a silent movie performance with pipe organ accompaniment and showed *The Phantom of The Opera* for the Halloween Show. We are pleased to see the theatre management making such good use of the organ. All exposure of the multi-faceted uses of the Robert-Morton helps us in the promotion of the theatre organ. Chapter officers are planning special programs that will involve younger people and Dallas school members.

The proposal to put a chapter owned organ into the Dallas Inwood Theatre is continuing. Chapter representatives met with the theatre operating company and will follow up with a meeting in the theatre with the management to go over installation plans. So far, all meetings have been favorable and it is expected that we may be able to begin chapter plans for the installation soon.

Several of our chapter members were invited to an anniversary celebration in the Dallas Majestic Theatre, the last remaining of the "downtown theatre row" movie palaces. This theatre was saved by county purchase of the building and completely renovated about 18 years ago. It is now used for traveling shows, local presentations and the ballet. At the anniversary meeting, thoughts were again raised about putting a theatre organ back into the

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## NORTH TEXAS cont.

Majestic. Each time the subject comes up, it seems to gain support. Funds would have to be raised for the purchase and installation of a suitable instrument. Shortly after the Majestic was renovated, our chapter made a proposal to put a chapter owned theatre organ into the theatre but no action was ever taken on our proposal. At the time the ballet was the principle tenant and they had no interest in the organ project. Different management is now in place and they are doing more progressive things. This won't happen overnight, but we are excited about the potential. *Irving Light*

## OHIO VALLEY

Jan Peek: 606/334-3824

**Cincinnati, Ohio.** During the spring meeting it was decided to invite our neighboring chapters to Emery Theatre to share a day and the Emery Theatre Mighty Wurlitzer with us. An invitation was extended to the Indianapolis and Columbus chapters to join us on July 25. Since this was well received, most of the attendees decided to make a weekend excursion of it. Ron Wehmeier invited our chapter and our guests to hear and see his well-known installation on July 24. The attendees at Wehmeier's were privileged to hear a program by Barry Baker. He performed a varied and enjoyable selection of melodies, with a description of the history of each tune before it was played. Barry received a rousing applause. Open console and refreshments followed immediately after.

On Sunday before coming to the Emery, the group made the trip to the Billmire residence to see and hear Dr. Dave's Robert-Morton theatre pipe organ. It was reported that it was a wonderful time. Immediately after the Billmire concert, the group went to the Emery. Of course, it was one of the hottest days this summer and the air conditioning in the Emery had a hard time keeping up. But this did not deter from the

fun. Ice cold drinks and a delicious meal was enjoyed by all while our visiting chapters were offered first crack at open console. It was non-stop pipe organ music all afternoon, with many artists providing beautiful music of many types. When our guests were ready to depart for home they gave a well appreciated round of applause and a big thank you for the afternoon. Many were surprised how well the Emery Theatre sounded acoustically and how well the Wurlitzer performed.

In preparing for a visit such as this, the organ crew spent much time in a lot of areas. There was work done in the percussion chamber, which was very evident. The piano was not doing well so many dead notes were resolved, and tuning was an ongoing effort due to the high humidity in the theatre. But it all came together and one cannot give enough thanks to the crew and volunteers that made this all possible. Having neighboring chapters over for an afternoon such as this was a first for the Ohio Valley Chapter and it was very enjoyable. *Joseph L. Hollmann*

## PUGET SOUND

Marilyn Schrum:

**Seattle, Washington.** The autumn sun shone brightly on One Big Weekend Opus VI, as folks from both Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society and Columbia River Organ Club gathered near Tacoma to begin three days of great music and fun. Day #1 featured a Pre-Glow event, with Walt Strony playing a brand new Allen 4-manual George Wright Signature Series theatre organ at the Anacortes home of Dusan Mrak. The bus was full and the weather perfect as we traveled north through tulip country to the lovely Mrak studio on Lake Campbell. Walt played his usual outstanding concert to a very appreciative audience, and it was great to welcome him back to PSTOS after several years.

Day #2 began early as buses loaded for



Dusan Mrak, proud new owner of the Allen George Wright 4-manual organ with Walt Strony and Jerry van der Pol, local Allen dealer.



Don Feely at the Robert-Morton in St. Columban Church, Yelm, Washington.

a trip to the country town of Yelm to hear Portland's Don Feely perform on the 3-manual Robert-Morton in St. Columban Church. Owned by Father Terrence, the organ is installed in the church social hall. Don played a varied program of both popular and classical music. The organ awaits completion of its combination action, so Don's expertise was put to the test - he passed with flying colors! After enjoying an outstanding lunch prepared by the Altar Society, the buses were again on the way, this time to Kent and the unique home of Jack and Mary Lou Becvar. Their Wurlitzer has just been upgraded with a 3-manual console, beautifully restored. Eric Shoemaker was the performer, and his program emphasized music incorporating the piano. Eric, still in his 20s, has only recently branched away from jazz piano to include theatre organ playing, and was a featured organist at Tacoma Pizza & Pipes before the fire. Eric has a great beginning

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The Wurlitzer-in-Progress at Hokum Hall. Dick Kroeckel and Patti Simon (at right) with the Johnson Wurlitzer.

and we certainly encourage him to continue expanding his repertoire.

The Saturday lineup was topped off with an evening visit to the West Seattle venue, Hokum Hall. This small vaudeville house is nurtured by the amazing Hokum W. Jeebs, one of the most talented musicians around. His background includes Holland America Cruises, Walt Disney World, Tokyo Disneyland, Vancouver Comedy Festival, and more. The Hokum Hall Players presented a highly entertaining variety show, and it was the "sleeper" of the entire weekend! An unexpected surprise to the group was the stunning white Wurlitzer console gracing the front of the auditorium. A brand new addition, which is not yet "ready for prime time," it will be added to the program in early winter. Many folks are planning a return visit. Check out [www.hokumhall.org](http://www.hokumhall.org) before your next visit to Seattle.

On day #3, PSTOS members Bill & Nita Masterman invited all attendees to enjoy their outstanding collection of roll-playing automatic musical instruments. Bill is a master craftsman, has restored a number of old instruments, and built his own orchestrion complete with organ pipes, percussions, and piano. Every room of the home boasts its own unique instrument ... or two. Several have a functioning accordion mounted on the wall above. This is a must-see collection for anyone interested in music!

The final event of the weekend featured the well-known Patti Simon-Dick Kroeckel Duo at the Wilcox/Johnson 4/48 Wurlitzer and grand piano. A full house enjoyed a very well rehearsed program of ragtime and pop music. Patti was right at home playing to her hometown audience of family and friends. It was a true homecoming for her, and a top-class event.

### QUAD CITIES

Helen Alexander: 309/797-5485

**Moline, Illinois.** "When it rains, it pours!" has a new meaning for our members. The Capitol Theatre has been having water problems on the roof and building exterior walls. Tuckpointing has been going on all summer, and finally is finished. The organ chambers had a lot of loose masonry falling into the pipes. Our members, along with Anthony LaMourt, our curator, proceeded to remove all the pipes from the chambers to the stage and wash and dry each pipe by hand. The professional painters came and sealed the interior walls of the chambers, and all the pipes then went back upstairs to their proper place. What a great job done by our members.

While we were working, people came into the stage area to see all the pipes lying on sheets drying. They found it hard to believe that these metal and wooden pipes could produce such beautiful sounds.

Upon completion of our present project,



Barb Christiansen and Ted Alexander drying metal pipes.

Del Menke (below) cleaning wooden pipes.

Helen Alexander photos



we will once again be presenting shows, and playing for the special shows booked into the Capitol Theatre. It is nice to know the public has missed our organ shows.

In November, the organ provided accompaniment for the Jugglers.

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**QUAD CITIES cont.**

the Capitol Theatre. They are planning special "Silent Movie Nites" for the students, and looking forward to great times, popcorn, and the laughter that accompany these films. Most important of all though, will be the music of our theatre organ.

The general public will also be waiting for their fun nights. It seems to bring out the child in all of us. So many people come into the theatre, and you'll hear them saying, "Yeah, I was in here when I was a kid."

Past president Arthur Felts invited our chapter to his home in October. Lee Maloney was the guest artist. What a great day of friendship, plus Lee Maloney, plus homemade pies with ice cream. Could you ask for anything more?

We are very proud to know that we will be bringing our Wicks theatre organ into the future in its best possible condition to play for years to come. Our members are patiently waiting to resume Saturday morning practice hours. Special classes on registration are being planned, "Movie Nites," and best of all, concerts. We have missed these special performances, our guest artists, and the "After Glow" parties. So, here's to our future, and the pleasure it will bring everyone to once again hear the magical sound of our beautiful Wicks being played at the Capitol Theatre in Davenport, Iowa.

We acknowledge Riverboat Development Authority and Scott County Regional Authority for their continued support.

*Helen Alexander*



The old marquee down - Fargo Theatre. At right: The new Fargo Theatre marquee and (right below) the art modern organ grille in the Fargo Theatre.



**RED RIVER**

Faye Crume:

**Fargo, North Dakota.** The Fargo Theatre closed May 1998 for a major renovation. A grand closing event was held May 1 for an auction of original artwork interspersed with the last sounds of the Mighty Wurlitzer for several months. Awarding of the first Fargo Theatre "ABBY Awards" was included for service "Above and Beyond" to Lance Johnson and the Red River Chapter. Later in May, Lance and a volunteer crew removed the organ for refurbishing at Johnson Organ Co. The new four manual solid-state console will eventually control 21 ranks. The new console shell is in the style of the Radio City Music Hall Wurlitzer console, but in high-gloss black finish.

In a high-noon ceremony one Wednesday in June 1998, the Fargo Theatre marquee was taken down. The new sign, a replica, was put up in December and lit in



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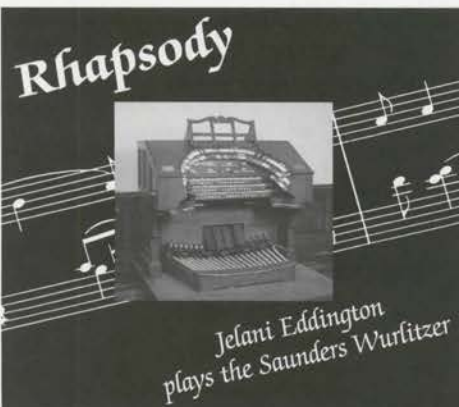
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We appreciate your continued support and understanding and look forward to working with you in the future. Please feel free to contact me with any questions, comments or concerns.

Best regards,  
*Michael Fellenzer, Advertising Manager*



a special New Year's Eve blaze of glory.

The grand re-opening week of events began March 20, 1999. Red River Chapter presented music and movies with the Wurlitzer on March 22. Lloyd Collins, Gene Struble, Lance Johnson, Tyler Engberg, and David Knudtsen each played a few numbers. Lance and David also scored the movies. In the audience were ATOS members from great distances: Freeman Andress and Tom Crenier from Alabama, Larry Donaldson from Georgia, and Madeline LiVolsi from Arizona. On their way home, the travelers also visited the Fergus Theatre in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, to hear the 3/10 Wurlitzer and have a tour with Executive Director Rebecca Petersen. The Fergus Falls area has now formed its own chapter.

The massive project to completely renovate the Fargo Theatre has paid off in many ways: from the "oohs and aahs" of patrons, to receiving special awards from the Fargo Heritage Society for 1999.

October 29 and 30 we presented *Phantom of The Opera* and the Fargo Theatre Big Band All Stars. Rob Richards will be in concert December 11. Chapter members will begin playing the free noon Christmas concerts on December 13. *Sonia Carlson*

## RIVER CITY

Gregory Johnson: 402/264-5655

**Omaha, Nebraska.** For our July chapter meeting member Lois Thomsen invited us back to the Nye Retirement Center in Fremont, Nebraska, where she resides. Lois, a talented artist with a vast musical repertoire, entertains Nye Square residents every afternoon on her Hammond Regent organ. Opening the program with duets, Lois Thomsen (organ) and friend Marian Anderson (piano) offered a medley of old favorites ranging from "Twilight Time" to "Let the Rest of The World Go By." Then Bonita Jensen, of Lincoln, Nebraska,



Lynn Lee reported that the organ workshop he attended in Fort Collins, Colorado, was fast-paced, well organized, and very enjoyable.

Tom Jeffery photo

played "If Ever I Would Leave You" and "Misty." For something completely different, Lois' sons, Ron and Charlie, teamed up to sing an a cappella rendition of "Ode to the Little Shack Out Back." They got the words and music from an old phonograph record. Mildred Emery demonstrated her Yamaha keyboard, which has four octaves and 99 voices, and then played "My Wild Irish Rose" and "Whispering" on the Hammond theatre organ. Jeanne Mehuron started her set at the Hammond with a medley including old favorites like "Strike Up the Band" and "Stormy Weather" complete with thunder - it's so realistic that you want to find shelter from the storm. With Jeanne (on organ) playing "Pennsylvania Polka" and Greg Johnson (on piano) playing "Bill Bailey" we were treated to a dueling duet. This enjoyable afternoon, with about 80 members and residents in attendance, was concluded with the always-popular sing-along.

We returned to our studio at Durand's Sky Ranch Airport for the August meeting. Our Vice-President, Lynn Lee, presented a detailed report on the organ workshop that he attended at Colorado State University in July. The workshop sessions, conducted by Ron Rhode and Rosa Rio, included such topics as: introduction to the theatre organ,

theatre organ registration, arranging a song, use of second touch, accompanying a silent film, and theatre organ hints and kinks. Two evening concerts on the University's 3/19 Wurlitzer were open to the general public. They included Rosa Rio cueing the silent film, *Mark of Zorro*, and Patty Simon (on organ) and Dick Kroeckel (on piano) playing solos and duets. Lynn Lee described with workshop as fast-paced, well organized, and very enjoyable.

Our chapter's organ studio is very unusual, being adjacent to Bill Durand's airplane hanger and his private landing field. In fact, our organ's relay, switch and blower share hanger space with Bill's airplane. On this occasion Charles C. Shipman, one of our members from Fremont, Nebraska, flew his Piper Comanche to the meeting and probably beat us all home on his return trip.

*Ed Martin and Tom Jeffery*

## SAN DIEGO

John Dapolito:

**San Diego, California.** On August 22 the Theatre Organ Society of San Diego joined with Organ Stop Club of San Diego in a dual concert at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Spring Valley. Our recently completed 4/22 Wurlitzer, tonally finished by Chris Gorsuch and a George Wright Signature 319 Allen were featured.

Tom Hazleton and Lyn Larsen played each organ alternately and in duets. As expected these two artists superbly performed a wide variety of popular and light classical music and ended with "God Bless America" with the audience joining in singing. We thank Wayne and Cheryl Seppala, owners of Organ Stop, for allowing us to use the Allen organ and for their financial assistance.

Chris Gorsuch was chosen to perform our premiere concerts on September 11 and Chris played his own arrangements and



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## SAN DIEGO cont.

paid tribute to George Wright by playing three of George's arrangements; "Love For Sale," "Tea for Two" and "There's a Small Hotel." The latter featured the style D trumpet that Chris had voiced to sound exactly like the one in George Wright's studio organ. In addition he played a well chosen variety of ballads, show tunes, marches and a transcription of "In a Monastery Garden" ending with Mozart's "Overture to the Marriage of Figaro." His encores were a fine performance of "Dizzy Fingers" and "Amazing Grace."

We plan to complete the addition of two more ranks in the near future to bring the total to 24. Now that our organ is up and running, we will have concerts almost every month.



Top to bottom:  
Tom Hazleton, Chris Gorsuch, Lyn Larsen



San Diego Chapter's rebuilt 4/20 Wurlitzer console (nee Arden Pizza & Pipes) Sacramento and Strand Theatre, Madison, Wisconsin.

## SIERRA

Craig Peterson: 916/682-9699

**Sacramento, California.** Sierra Chapter held a joint picnic in July with Nor-Cal Chapter at the Johnson Winery. Tom Johnson has installed a 3/10 Robert-Morton in his tasting room. Iced tea, not wine, was the beverage of the day since a California July heat wave was in full force. Several members of each chapter enjoyed open console. A special guest was Bill Langford. Bill played for many years at Ye Olde Pizza Joynt and also at Cap'n's Galley, both in the Bay Area. It was great to hear Bill again.

Jack Gustafson was our August artist on the chapter's 3/13 George Seaver Wurlitzer at the Fair Oaks Clubhouse. In addition to concerts, Jack plays silent films at the Towne Theatre in San Jose, California. He gave us a concert of old favorites, which the audience requested and thoroughly enjoyed. We hope to have Jack back in the future.

September was a silent film with the theatre organ master from Paramount Theatre in Oakland, Jim Riggs. The film was *The Black Pirate* with Douglas Fairbanks, Sr. The program was held at the Towe Auto Museum with the ATOS 3/16 Wurlitzer. Jim presented a wonderful score played so that organ did not dominate the film. But, if you intentionally listened to the Wurlitzer, the score was with the action. Prior to the film, Jim presented a special selection titled, *Swing Oriental*.

Pete McCluer

## ATOS CLASSIFIEDS GET RESULTS

## SOONER STATE

Joyce Hatchett: 918/743-1854

**Tulsa, Oklahoma.** Sooner State's July meeting was a delightful tour of Tulsa's early day theatre organ, played by Phil Judkins on our 3/13 Robert-Morton at the Broken Arrow campus of Tulsa Technology Center.



Julius Chapin plays the 3/13 Robert-Morton for Sooner State Chapter during open console.

Our program started in a darkened auditorium with a voice (later identified as Wayne Barrington's) announcing through the loudspeaker, "Imagine you're at the console of the organ in the Ritz Theatre in downtown Tulsa..." The lights came on, and the music began! Phil opened with a rousing "Everything's Coming Up Roses," then continued with music that included tributes to the Wurlitzer which had been housed in Tulsa's Coliseum (that burned to the ground in 1952); the Central High School 4/45 Kilgen; the 4/11 Robert-Morton from the Rialto Theatre (where Phil learned to play, and which is now being installed in the Orpheum Theatre in Okmulgee by John McConnel). Phil also played some songs popular during his army days and from the Big Band era. "Didn't We, Girl" was a toast to the team who had helped him with his home installation; and a lovely "Serenade" from Sigmund Romberg's *The Student Prince* was also included. Seven people played at open console.

We returned to Tulsa Technology Center for our August meeting. Since many of our members were out of town with summer activities, entertainment this time was extended open console. We heard lots of good music from Sam Collier, Julius Chapin, and Carolyn Craft. Carolyn's daughter Gina sang a couple of lovely gospel songs, as well as a duet with her father, Paul.



Another guest was Lonnie Rex, who had played our organ long ago when it was installed in the American Christian College. He told a delightful tale of being asked to play "How Great Thou Art" for a funeral, but was told it was "way too loud!" He ended up playing the entire service on "One Flute," with one finger. He did play a magnificent version for us at this meeting, complete with "angel wings" flying throughout as part of the accompaniment.

We also heard music from Irma Lile, who included her usual Latin rhythm selections as well as an ambitious "Flight of the Bumblebee." John Hickman played from his repertoire of popular standards, and then Bonnie Duncan played some pop standards. Carolyn Craft, with Paul and Gina singing, closed our meeting with two stirring gospel selections. It just proves that open console can be lots of fun!

*Dorothy Smith*

## SOUTH JERSEY

Joseph Rementer: 856/694-1471

**Franklinville, New Jersey.** SJTOS met on May 8 at the Broadway Theatre, Pitman, New Jersey. President Joe Rementer, Dave Park and Harold Ware had a sound sample presentation of the various ranks of the 3/8 Kimball and percussion using the pin junction board of the chambers.

Then Joe Rementer introduced to the membership the two new owners/managers of the Broadway Theatre, Dan Munyon and Charles Kern. Dan and Charles gave a brief overview of their plans



L to R: Joe Rementer, Charles Kern, Harry Bellangy, and Charles Kern. Alex Fell photo

for the Broadway.

In June, SJTOS met at Cinnaminson High School, Cinnaminson, New Jersey, to experience the James Carter Memorial Wurlitzer. President Joe Rementer and Harry Bellangy spoke about the restoration progress of the Cinnaminson Wurlitzer and progress is continuing as planned. Many members experienced open console and later 34 members and friends enjoyed dinner at Hathaways.

Thirty-seven members enjoyed our annual Olde Fashioned Backyard BBQ on August 29 at Joe and Theresa Rementer's home. Members enjoyed the delicious food and socializing with their friends. Many members enjoyed open console on Rementer's Rodgers and Candi Carley-Roth played the closing numbers to round off a very pleasant social event.

*Mary Brook*

## ST. LOUIS

Jim Ryan: 314/892-0754

**St. Louis, Missouri.** Our May meeting was held at the Rodgers Organ & Steinway Piano Gallery with our host and artist, Mark Gifford. Mark showed us the latest musical offerings from Rodgers. Some of us expected to see the 360 Theatre model, however he chose to play the program on a new classic instrument. In showing us what a Rodgers Classic style system could do, we had a potpourri of musical selections, both classic and theatre. With a digital environment, the Rodgers system can do a personality switch. Mark's selection of music was a crowd pleaser and surprised most of us as we heard some wonderful theatre organ sounds coming from this classical organ console.

June found us at our annual summer

BBQ/Picnic at the home of Wallace and Elsa Dittrich located high on the bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River. It was a beautiful day for a picnic, and the Dittrichs have a beautiful yard and view. The crowd enjoyed the camaraderie, the food and the music. We are grateful to Jerry Roberts for providing a new Hammond organ for the day. Many of our members sat down to play, and found an old friend. Then after a while they found all of the new stuff and had a great time.

Stan Kann is back at the Fabulous St. Louis Fox Theatre. One of his responsibilities is playing a short concert for the tour groups every Thursday and Saturday morning. It is an opportunity to see the theatre and hear Stan at the 4/36 Mighty Wurlitzer originally installed in 1929!

In August, our members again volunteered for the local PBS membership drive. This is a good way to get the word out about theatre organ, get a free meal, and have some fun.

August also found us at the Lincoln Theatre for the Bob Ralston concert. Any one who missed this concert missed the very reason for the existence of our organization. Bob had a great program, including some local dancing talent. It was great! Stan Kann was emcee for the concert and he kept the crowd laughing with his stories. Thanks to everyone who made this day a wonderful success.

Twenty plus people from SLTOS journeyed to the College of the Ozarks at Point Lookout, Missouri over the Labor Day weekend to play and hear the 3/16 Wurlitzer organ in the college's performing arts center. This instrument was originally installed in RKO-Keith's Theatre in Flushing, New York in October of 1928. In

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### ST. LOUIS cont.

1969, RKO donated the instrument to the School of the Ozarks, mostly due to the intervention of Ozarks native, the late Burt Buhrman. The organ has quite a history, one far too involved to get into here, but it is again playing due to the work done by Marlin Mackley of the St. Louis area and a crew of students from the college. It still needs lots of tender loving care, but Marlin is teaching the students and guiding them through a series of workshops so they can continue the renovation when Marlin returns to St. Louis.

Sarah Klinefelter, Chairman of the school's Division of Performing and Professional Arts, has been the coordinator of renovations from the college. She is one of the most delightful people to talk with, and she exudes excitement about the organ. Without Sarah, that instrument would probably still be sitting covered, with the lift down, and the campus and the rest of the world would not even know of its existence.

Although the college's organ was the main reason to travel to the area, the college is only about three miles from Branson, Missouri. We saw two shows, shared meals, slept in the college's motel on campus, listened to some fun music played by several of our members who do not often play for us, shopped a bit, and got to know each other a bit better. I have heard nothing but positive comments from everyone involved.

The St. Louis Chapter is planning the Millennium Extravaganza for spring of 2000. Further information will soon be sent

to chapters for inclusion in your local newsletter.

*Jim Ryan*

### WESTERN RESERVE

Janice Kast: 216/531-4214

**Cleveland, Ohio.** Western Reserve Chapters May 16 social at the home of members Vito and Maggie Falcone featured Jim Cutler at the Kawai SR7. Jim and Maggie also treated us to several duets. Open console was especially enjoyable with three electronic organs and a piano all participating.

On June 13, the sun shone brightly on the home of members Pete and Pat Surso, where we met for a delightful afternoon cookout. Following a brief business meeting, we turned our attention to the backyard grill and to open console at the Hammond organ. The combination was a smorgasbord of delight.

Summer is the season for movie series, and extravagant theatres are the place for pipes. Several chapter members enhanced two Ohio venues with their keyboard artistry. Maggie Falcone and Don Frerichs were two of the featured artists at the Mansfield Renaissance Theatre's Summer Organ Concert Series. Jim Cutler, Maggie Falcone, Don Frerichs, Charles Merhar, Dick Niskala, Tim Rasper, Jim Stanton, and George Steffy all performed interludes at the Cleveland Palace Theatres Kimball for films ranging from classics like *Frankenstein* to modern blockbusters including *Titanic*.

The "Friends of the Kilgen" invited us to enjoy the July 11 afternoon at the Canton Palace Theatre, graced by its original 1926

3/11 Kilgen. This is one of three atmospheric theatres designed by architect John Ebersson remaining in Ohio. (And all three have theatre pipe organs!) Resident organist Bob Beck treated us to selections including "Old Cape Cod" and "The Trolley Song" before unleashing open console. Meanwhile George Downs hosted a guided tour of the theatre, backstage, and dressing rooms.

Driving from Cleveland through Amish country in autumn weather is like driving back in time. It was even better when the September 19 destination was the home of Dorothy Steiner and her 3/16 Wurlitzer. Through a long history of growth and refinement, this instrument has evolved into a wonderful instrument, and Dorothy's artistry has evolved into musical beauty. Of course, munchies galore and open console time completed the afternoons festivities.

*Jim Shepherd*

## The American Organist Magazine

*Official Journal of the*

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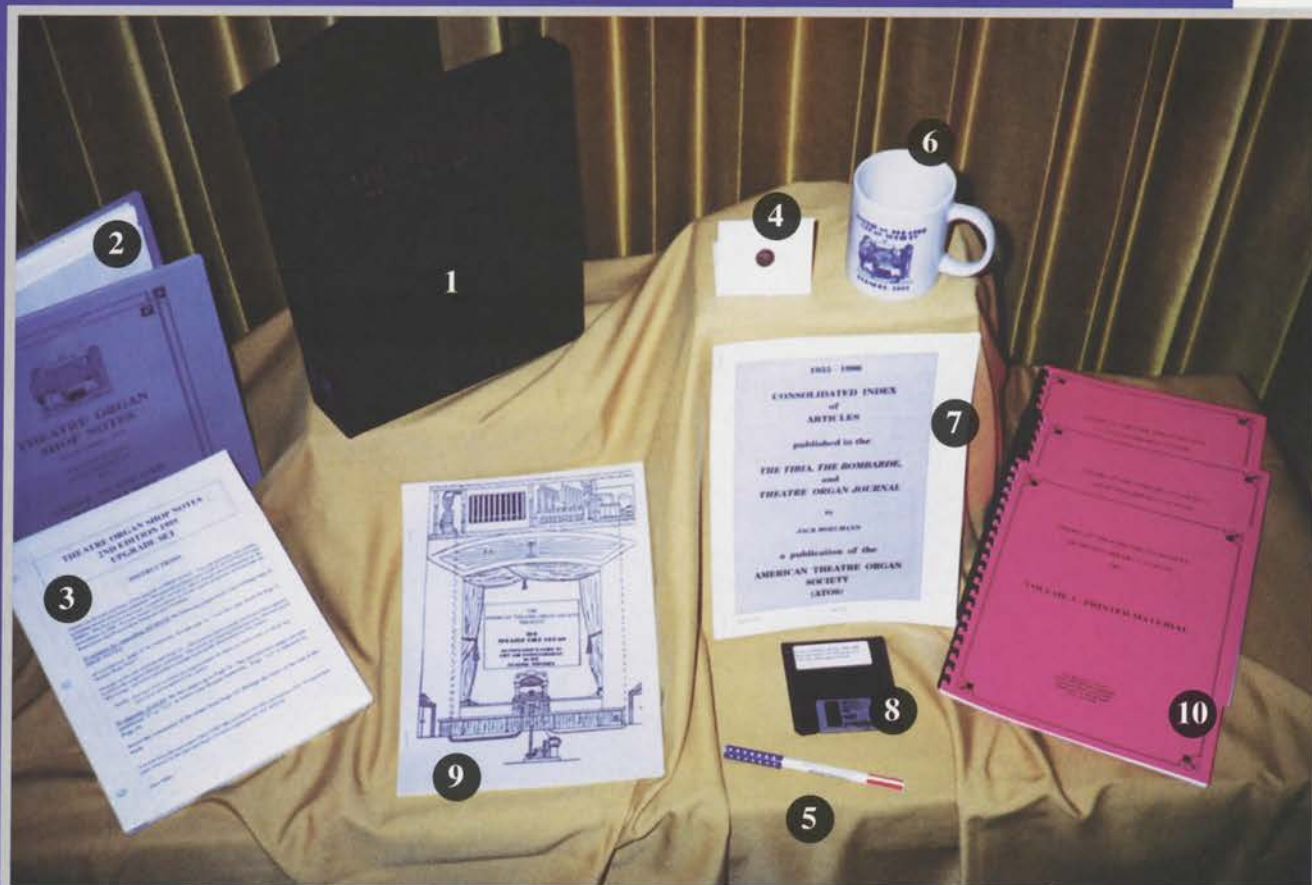
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*Wayne Tilschner, Concert Coordinator, Orlando Chapter ATOS*

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