

# Theatre Organ

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY



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May / June 2000



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Frederick MacArthur, organist  
Roger Voisin, conductor

Total time: 75:48 • [DDD] • CD only  
Ernest M. Skinner organ (Opus 308, 1921)  
of Old South Church, Boston, Massachusetts



Program: The Star-Spangled Banner • The Ride of the Valkyries - Wagner  
• Poème Héroïque, Dupré • 1812 Overture, Tchaikovsky - arr. Faxon • Carillon  
de Westminster, Vierne • March Triomphale Centenaire de Napoléon I,  
Vierne • Fanfare, Oliphant Chuckerbutty • Pomp & Circumstance No. 1, Opus  
39, Elgar • The Stars & Stripes Forever, Sousa • Auld Lang Syne - arrange-  
ments for brass, organ and timpani by George Faxon



Pro Organo CD 7045  
**TEUTONIC TITANICS**  
Mark Laubach  
organist

The Reuter (former E. M. Skinner)  
organ of St. John's Evangelical  
Lutheran Church,  
Allentown, Pennsylvania

Total time: 70:31 • [DDD] • CD ONLY

Program: Overture to "Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg" -  
Richard Wagner transcribed for organ solo by Edwin H. Lemare  
Sonata on the 94th Psalm - Julius Reubke  
Fantasia and Fugue on the Choral "Ad nos, ad salutarem undam" -  
Franz Liszt



Pro Organo CD 7116  
**SHADES OF  
GREEN**  
Dorothy Papadakos  
& Friends

Total time: 55:10 [DDD]  
Improvisations on the Great  
Organ of The Cathedral of St.  
John the Divine, New York City

Program: Come O Great Spirit (Organ  
Improv with Wind) Dorothy Papadakos •  
The Sacred Tree, by Dennis Yerry, Native America Flute, with organ  
Jesus Christ the Apple Tree, sung by Elizabeth Henreckson Farnum, with organ  
Cedars of Lebanon, played by Steve Gorn, clarinet, with organ  
Banyan at Bodh-Gaya, Pandit Ramesh Mishra, playing the Sarangi, with organ  
Carnauba, Raimundo Penaforte, vocal, percussion and acoustic guitar and  
John LaBarbera, acoustic guitar, with Dorothy Papadakos on piano  
Willow Weep for Me, Theresa Thomason, vocalist with jazz combo  
Shepherd Boy at Cotopaxi, Dorothy Papadakos live organ improvisation •  
Lucis Creator Optima, gentlemen's choir of St. John the Divine



Pro Organo CD7042  
**OPUS 190**

Frederick Hohman

Total time: 75:35 • [DDD fully digital]  
Recorded: September, 1995

Vintage repertoire played upon the  
Oldest Original and Intact 4-manual  
Ernest M. Skinner Pipe Organ (1912) at  
Grand Avenue Temple United Methodist  
Church, Kansas City, Missouri

Program: Ernest M. Skinner's Opus 190 Start-Up and Shut-Down Sounds •  
Horatio Parker, Festival Prelude • Walter Edward Howe, Hommage à Bonnet  
[1918] • Alfred Hollins, A Song of Sunshine [1913] • Gaston Dethier, Intermezzo  
[1910] • Gordon Balch Nevin, Will o' the Wisp • Felix Borowski, Sonata No. 1 for  
Organ • Powell Weaver, The Cuckoo - The Squirrel • Pietro Von, Speranza •  
Tchaikovsky, Yearning • Harry Rowe Shelley, Scherzo-Mosaic (Dragonflies) •  
Louis Vierne, from Organ Symphony No. 3: Adagio & Final

Pro Organo CD7018  
**LEMARE AFFAIR "II"**

Frederick Hohman

Total time: 72:21 [DDD] CD ONLY

Original Concert Works by Lemare & friends

The Mighty Kotschmar Memorial (Austin)  
Organ in Portland City Hall, Portland, Maine



Program: Fantaisie Fugue, Scherzo Fugue,  
Rhapsody, Marche Heroique and Concert  
Fantasia and Variations on "Hanover," Opus 4 - all by Edwin H. Lemare •  
"O Star of Eve" from Wagner's opera Tannhäuser - arr. Edwin Lemare • The  
Seraph's Strain and The Carillon - William Wolstenholme • Allegretto  
Grazioso and Morceau de Concert en forme de Valse - Alfred Hollins • The  
Question & The Answer - William Wolstenholme

Pro Organo CD 7084  
**THE SYMPHONIC  
ORGAN**

William K. Trafka

Total time: 74:11 [DDD] CD ONLY  
Orchestral and Organ Works  
Performed on the Grand Organ at  
St. Bartholomew's Church  
in New York City



Program:

Fanfare for the  
Common Man

by Aaron Copland (as arranged for Organ with  
Gong and Timpani by William K. Trafka)

Cantabile from Symphony for Organ in E-  
minor by Harold Friedell

Grande Pièce Symphonique, Op. 17 by César Franck  
Pictures at an Exhibition (complete) by Modest  
Mussorgsky (transcribed/performed by Wm. Trafka)



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# Theatre Organ

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May/June 2000 • Volume 42, Number 3

<http://www.atos.org>

PRESIDENT: Nelson Page

EDITOR: Vernon P. Bickel

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY: Michael Fellenzer

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Register Now for The  
**ATOS ANNUAL CONVENTION**  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin • July 27 to August 2, 2000



## President's Message

Part of what we do in ATOS is getting together every year for our annual convention. This year Dairyland Chapter is hosting what looks to be a "wiz bang" of a convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, this July 27th to August 2nd. I don't know about you, but I've never been to the city of Milwaukee, let alone to the State of Wisconsin, but let me tell you I'm thrilled to be able to go and meet our friends out there for the first time. The line up of artists and instruments is impressive and convention Chairperson Bill Campbell and his team have spent the last three years toiling to make this a convention to be remembered.

These annual gatherings are not only fun, but they also allow your Board of Directors to conduct the important business of the society and provide the membership with a chance to speak up and let their voices be heard at the annual meeting. The annual membership meeting this year will be conducted at the Pabst Theatre.

On a more somber note, it is with deep regret that we accepted the resignation of Board Member Shirley Obert upon the death of her husband Dick. Our hearts go out to Shirley at this most difficult time. Her friendship and contributions to the Board will be missed.

Nelson Page



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Chicago Stadium, Barton Console  
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# General Information

## New Name, Same Reliable Service

Those members with a sharp eye for detail have already noticed that the ATOS department that has been known as "Special Services" for a number of years, is now called "The ATOS Marketplace." The ATOS Board of Directors, at their mid-year meeting, voted to change the name of this department in order to eliminate any misunderstanding among members as to exactly what services are provided. The new name says it all. For a complete listing of the items, which are for sale to members, please look at page 44 in this issue.

## Annual Meeting

**To:** Members of the American Theatre Organ Society (ATOS)

**From:** Jack Moelmann,  
ATOS Secretary

**Subject:** Notice of Annual  
Membership Meeting

**Date:** JULY 29, 2000

The Annual Meeting of the members of the American Theatre Organ Society (ATOS) will be held at 6:30 p.m., July 29, 2000, at the Pabst Theatre, 144 E. Wells, Milwaukee, Wisconsin during the 2000 ATOS Annual Convention.

### Agenda:

- Approval of the 1999 Annual Membership Meeting Minutes as printed in the Theatre Organ Journal (Nov/Dec 1999)
- Presentation and acceptance of the Treasurer's Report
- Approval of the revised Articles of Incorporation
- Old Business: Report of Board Actions during the past year by the Secretary. Other status reports
- New Business
- Announcement of next Membership Meeting
- Adjournment

American Theatre Organ Society

Jack Moelmann, ATOS Secretary

## Important Notice

As Editor, I want to make certain that all members receive their copy of the journal during the first month of each issue. My goal is to have the journal in the mail by the 5th of each odd-numbered month. In order to accomplish this, everyone submitting material for publication must adhere to strict deadlines. In addition, material submitted for publication must be in an acceptable format.

In order to meet this publication schedule it is imperative that all material submitted for publication in THEATRE ORGAN, including all articles and photographs, all Chapter News, all special feature items, such as Closing Chord Obituaries, etc., reach me by the following deadlines:

- Material to be included in the January/February issue must be received by November 5th.
- Material to be included in the March/April issue must be received by January 5th.
- Material to be included in the May/June issue must be received by March 5th.
- Material to be included in the July/August issue must be received by May 5th.
- Material to be included in the September/October issue must be received by July 5th.

- Material to be included in the November/December issue must be received by September 5th.

It is highly recommended that all material submitted for publication in the journal is prepared using a word processing program, such as Word or Word Perfect. It is also strongly recommended that material be submitted via E-Mail. If you do not have access to a computer, be sure that your submitted material is typewritten. No hand-written material will be accepted. Photographs must be in sharp focus—either good color photos or black and white photos are acceptable. Be sure to label every photograph by attaching a "Post It" note on the back. Do not write on the back of the photograph. Digital photos must be at least 300 dpi.

Your cooperation and help in following the above guidelines will be greatly appreciated. Together we can make THEATRE ORGAN a world-class journal.

Vern Bickel

## PLEASE NOTE: New Editorial Address

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Every ATOS member has the opportunity to help keep the theatre pipe organ and its music alive and well by donating to the ATOS Endowment Fund. Most of us are not wealthy, so we cannot donate large sums to the ATOS Endowment Fund. However, if every ATOS member would make a commitment to donate an amount commensurate with his or her

financial situation in his or her estate plan, over the years, the fund would grow by leaps and bounds. Please ask yourself, "How committed am I to helping insure that the theatre pipe organ continues to be heard in this country? Have I made any arrangement in my estate plan to provide a donation to ATOS?"

In future issues, you will find further information about how you can become a part of a growing number of dedicated supporters of the theatre pipe organ and its music by making a donation to the ATOS Endowment Fund. For information regarding the ATOS Endowment Fund, please contact Steve Schnieders, 7321 Vine Street, St. Louis, MO 63143, 314/645-0552, SHS7321@aol.com.

## A Word From Our ATOS Archives/Library Curator

The ATOS Archives/Library is up and running out of the Theatre Historical Society offices above the York Theatre in Elmhurst, Illinois. The address is as follows for sending orders or if you

wish to donate any theatre organ related items:

**ATOS Archives/Library**  
**James Patak, Curator**  
152 York Road, Suite 200  
Elmhurst, IL 60126-2806

Many of you know that the ATOS has a vast collection of audio recordings, printed music, printed material and museum/research material available for your use. The ATOS Board of Directors has established the following policies:

1. No material may leave the ATOS Archives/Library collection.
2. Photo-copies of OUT OF PRINT music may be ordered from the Curator of the ATOS Archives/Library. You must also list the catalog number and title with the number of pages listed after the title.
3. The charge for copying OUT OF PRINT music/printed material is \$.75 per page, plus a shipping and handling charge of \$4.00 for each order shipped in the USA. The shipping and handling charge for orders shipped outside the USA is \$7.50.
4. Send a check or money order, made payable to ATOS Archives, for the full amount of the order.

Much the same applies to order cassette tapes of historic performances and OUT OF PRINT phonograph records, except the cost.

OUT OF PRINT phonograph records, VCR audiotapes, cassette tapes are \$15.00 each. Cassette recordings of 78rpm/45rpm records are \$5.00 each. Shipping and handling are as above.

If you are in need of an order form, you may send to the address above or send me e-mail at patak2@aol.com and I will see that you get one. The catalogs are listed on the ATOS Marketplace Order Form printed on the mailing cover of the THEATRE ORGAN journal. We will hopefully be able to provide a catalog in other formats in the near future.

Those people interested in donating theatre organ related material may also contact me by letter at the ATOS Archives/Library address or by e-mail as listed in the Journal. A fair market value will be assessed so that you may use the donation as a tax deduction.

*Jim Patak*

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## Call for Nominations

As provided in the ATOS by-laws, the Board of Directors appoints the ATOS Officers at its annual meeting. This year the Board of Directors will meet in Milwaukee, on July 25, 2000, as part of the Annual ATOS Convention.

Any/all candidates for these positions should submit their written resume and candidate statement to the current ATOS President, Nelson Page, no later than June 30, 2000. Copies of the submissions will be made for distribution to the Board of Directors for study prior to the Board meeting. Candidates for these positions will be expected to present themselves, at their own expense, to the Board for personal interview on the morning of July 25, 2000. Appointment will immediately follow the interview process. Successful candidates should be ready to assume the duties of the office at the end of the convention and be available to participate in the remainder of the Board meeting after appointment. Reimbursement of travel and hotel expenses will be paid by ATOS for those appointed at that time.

Officer position status at this time is:

**PRESIDENT:** available

*Incumbent will continue if appointed.*

**VICE-PRESIDENT:** available/vacant

*Term of office will expire at the end of the convention.*

**SECRETARY:** available

*Incumbent will continue if appointed.*

**TREASURER:** available

*Incumbent will continue if appointed.*

The candidates must have had continuous ATOS membership for at least the past two (2) years. The offices of the President and Vice President are subject to a term limit of three (3) years.

*Nelson E. Page, ATOS President*

## Pipe Piper Addendum

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**THE AMERICAN ORGANIST MAGAZINE**  
*Official Journal of the*

## AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

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# Members' Forum

Dear Editor:

I would like to respond to the letter in the March/April Member's Forum written by Gary Davies from Sugarcreek, Ohio. If you check your September/October issue of the Journal you will find eight pages devoted to the results of the Young Theatre Organist Competition for 1999. The information printed includes their background, where they are from, and the organ they played. It has been the policy of the Journal that my information on the Scholarship Program is printed in the July/August issue and the results of the Young Organist Competition is printed in the September/October issue. This involves a lot of time and research. I am sorry that you feel that there is not enough coverage. At the ATOS Annual Convention we have a convention reviewer. He reports on their cameo performance. This appears in the November/December issue of the Journal and is reported in the convention coverage.

Dorothy Van Steenkiste

Dear Editor,

I had the good fortune to have been a friend of Everett Nourse for more than 60 years. We spent many hours together, often recording at the San Francisco Fox Theatre, or my own Style D Wurlitzer, or the Oakland Fox Theatre. Our relationship was close enough that he might call me late at night to identify the tune he was playing over the phone, or, conversely, I might suggest that he use certain songs in an upcoming production. We enjoyed trying to top one another, and though living 50 miles apart, tried to get together for lunch when we could. It is with this background that I did the "Imagination" piece. Perhaps it may someday appear in the Journal.

Frank A. Bindt

(Editor's Note: Thank you for your contribution to THEATRE ORGAN. See article below.)



## IMAGINATION

Imagination is funny, it makes a cloudy day sunny . . .

Imagination, what a wonderful trait we humans possess. We may rack our minds forward and backward. We, as we wish, may become a CEO, a jet pilot, a steam locomotive engineer, or even a theatre organist. We are allowed the privilege of descending to the very depths of the ocean, traveling out to the ends of the earth, or going far beyond into the Cosmos.

Imagination. In 1932 a movie called *Just Imagine* was released starring a silly Swede named El Brendel. It purported to reveal to us the future, but nothing much happened, and, alas, there were no computers.

Imagination. In 1932, a friend and I, having naught to do, taught ourselves to talk backward. This, while not a huge accomplishment, did allow privacy when in a crowd. I would hate to attempt it is French!

Imagination. In 1932, a new radio program began on KPO in San Francisco. It was called *One Man's Family*. It became very popular, and enjoyed a run of many, many years.

Imagination. In 1932, a young man by the name of Everett Nourse was a year from graduating from UC Berkeley, and honing his talents on the theatre organ. He enjoyed 88 years here with us and became a legend of his own. It is from this point that I'd like to proceed.

Imagine, just for a moment, that an out-of-body experience allowed us to be transported to the GREAT MUSIC HALL beyond. Everett is here, surrounded by family and friends and preparing to play. The Wurlitzer of many ranks is serviced daily by trained technicians and is always in tip-top shape. The console, suffused in a rosy glow, is ready. Everett has spent hours at the setter board making up his combinations, and is ready to play.

At this point, he is surrounded by friends and peers, the great, near great, and the not so great. We find Dick Simonton (ATOS Founder) and Judd Walton (an early ATOS President) who seem to be in charge. In the crowd are Jesse, Eddie, Tiny James, Buddy Cole, W. Oliphant Chuckerbutty, Quentin MacLean, Floyd Wright, Jimmy Boyce, Reg Dixon, Jack Kirk, Erwin Yeo, Edwin Sawtelle and others too numerous to list. Even George came by, calling over his shoulder, "I'll be back for the Musette."

As Ev begins playing "Beautiful Lady" a mist envelops the scene, and it fades to white. Our privileged time has come to a close, and we must find our way back to reality. Our return to every day life is made all that much easier, knowing that we have many hours of Ev's recordings, which keep us close to him.



# Las Vegas: A New Theatre Organ Paradise

By Kahara Pavé  
President, Nevada Desert Lights ATOS Chapter



*View of the Barton Console from above.*

THE SAYING GOES, "If you're going to do it in Vegas, it has to be bigger than life, or don't do it." To say the least, IT HAS BEEN DONE. Albuquerque businessman, world traveler, and theatre organ enthusiast Phil Maloof has put "Fabulous Las Vegas" on the theatre organ map—not once, not twice, but three times! The crowning jewel of the Las Vegas scene is the famous Chicago Stadium Barton Organ console controlling the Maloof residence forty-four rank pipe organ.

The story begins around 1978, when the ever inquisitive "Uncle Phil," as he's lovingly known by his many friends, entered Bill Brown's 7th Street Organ Stop Pizza Restaurant in Phoenix, Arizona. (Note: Phil attended the New Mexico Military Academy with Bill Brown along with hotel mogul Baron Hilton.) Phil was totally overcome by the rich, lush sounds of the 7th Street organ. He HAD to have one! The search was on.

Not having any theatre organ savvy, Phil soon found himself the owner of tons of theatre organ stuff, of which nothing was playable, not to mention dealings with several unscrupulous organ builders who made Phil's life even more unbearable. The stories of botched attempts to install a theatre organ could fill a book by themselves.

Most people would have thrown in the towel and scrapped the project, but not Phil Maloof. After securing the famous Roxy Theatre Kimball Organ console and a qualified organ man to do the installation, theatre organ pipes were soon playing in the Ramada Classic Hotel in Albuquerque, a Maloof owned hotel. In 1986, ATOS Hall of Fame organist, Kay McAbee, was brought on as staff organist, a position he held for over ten years. In 1996, the hotel was sold, and the Roxy organ was dismantled and removed to safe storage by Kansas City organ man, Bob Maes, to await a new life.

Fate was not kind to another theatre organ in 1996. Bob Maes pulled the plug on the Granada Theatre in Kansas City; sealing the finish to the magnificent Barton Organ he had developed over the years. Just as arrangements were being made to remove the organ to an uncertain future, in walked Phil Maloof. Soon a deal was struck, and what you are about to read is theatre organ history.

Soon thereafter, in 1997, Bob Maes was brought to Las Vegas at the request of Phil to assist in locating a suitable home to house the Granada Barton Organ. Las Vegas was a logical place for Phil to build, since the Maloof family owns and





*Above: Solo Chamber / Maloof Residence  
Below: The grandest of them all starts taking shape.*

operates *The Fiesta*, one of the most popular casinos in Vegas. Finding a suitable residence to house a twenty-one rank theatre pipe organ was not easy, and it was decided to buy a home with enough land to design and build a dream organ room.

Rancho Bel Air is a quiet, gated neighborhood, just off

"The Strip." It was here that the right house and property were found. After the house was purchased, Bob Maes was brought in to design the new music room and install the twenty-one rank Barton theatre pipe organ. Keeping in mind chamber space, acoustics and the neighbors, the new music room was taking shape by the fall of 1997, and by October the first sounds were heard from the former Granada Barton. With larger chambers, it was only natural to enlarge the organ. Soon it boasted thirty-four ranks of carefully selected pipe work. The huge domed atmospheric ceiling and tile floors helped give the Barton a thrilling new sound in its new home. Normally, the story would end here, but this is only the beginning.

An unfortunate turn of events took place that, while tragic as it may be, was theatre organ history in the making. The closing of the Chicago Stadium and the horrible fire in 1997 that destroyed most of the Barton Organ while it was in storage in Phoenix, Arizona, brought about a situation that can only be called fantastic! Luckily, the fire spared the monstrous six-manual Barton console. Again, in walks Phil Maloof to breathe life into the largest theatre pipe organ console ever built.

Shortly after arriving in Las Vegas, the Stadium Barton Console was erected in the music room, kind of like a trophy on display. Upon inspection of the new treasure, Phil asked Bob Maes if it could be made to play again and if it could be hooked up to the current organ in the Maloof Music Room. The console was tired; beat up, and the years of paint were gone. Much of the ormolu was broken or lost, but it could be brought back to life, and yes, it could control the thirty-four ranks. Why not? It had 815 stops!

The task of rebuilding the famed console would require the skills and talents of many. The damaged lid and some back rail modifications were trusted to Ken Crome, Reno, Nevada. Tim Rickman of the Uniflex 2000 relay system was commissioned to do the stops and computer enlargements. Don Smith, a regular on Bob Maes' crew undertook the job of rebuilding the six keyboards. Maes and local Las Vegas artist and designer, Rebecca Conway, did the enormous task of refinishing the console. Rebecca has been with the project since the beginning. It was her treatment of the atmospheric ceiling and the marble columns in the music room that helps make this such a fabulous place. She also refinished the three-manual console and the band organ cases for Phil.

With over 800 stops to play with, it was again only natural to enlarge the organ. Let's say we add a few more ranks. A nine-rank classic division was added in an unenclosed area of the gallery, and a few more color ranks were added. Pedal extensions by Walker Technologies filled in the pedal divisions, and both an Allen Expander and Proteus unit were put on line. Tonal finishing has been an ongoing process. Minneapolis organ man Terry Kleven has played a major role in giving the organ that special sound we all love so much. Stop layouts were done by San Diego organ designer and concert artist, Chris Gorsuch—no easy job, to say the least. When the new stop tabs were ordered from Hesco, they asked, "How many consoles you guys doing, anyway???" I think they still don't believe that it was for just one console.





Right: 4/17 Wurlitzer from the Sheridan Theater (Chicago) soon to be installed in new addition to Maloof Residence.


Below Right: ATOS Hall of Fame Organist, Kay McAbee, at the restored Barton Console.

Below: Rebecca Conway starts the huge task of gilding and painting the Stadium Barton Console.

After six months, everything came together, and what a sight and sound it is! The Maloof Music Room has become one of the most talked about party rooms in Las Vegas. It's not uncommon for Las Vegas celebrities like Robert Goulet, Rich Little, Angie Dickinson and the McGuire Sisters to stop by at one of Phil's theatre organ



And it is not just Phil that is helping to showcase theatre pipe organs in Las Vegas. The Maloof family has installed the former Roxy Theatre Kimball from Albuquerque in a theatre restaurant setting, in the popular Fiesta Casino. This organ installation is truly fitting only in Las Vegas. Again, Bob Maes was in charge of making it happen, and all the stops were pulled out to make this last big theatre organ debut of the twentieth century a spectacular one. The Roxy Theatre Kimball will be featured nightly and for special parties and groups.

With the new millennium here, it looks like the lights in Las Vegas will be burning brightly for theatre organ buffs around the world for many years to come. 

parties. Always on hand to put the Barton through its paces is Maloof staff organist, Kay McAbee, and local organists Mark Hawn and Walt Strony. Concerts are planned for in the future, and the Music Room is host to many social functions, as well as to the Nevada Desert Lights ATOS Chapter.

As if all this were not enough, Phil is adding to the Music Room. Another 5,500 square foot hall is being constructed to house the 4/17 Wurlitzer from the Chicago Sheridan Theatre. Bob Maes again will be applying his many talents to the design of the new room and the organ. The organ will be enlarged to twenty-seven ranks, and the room will also house some of the artwork Phil has collected over the years.

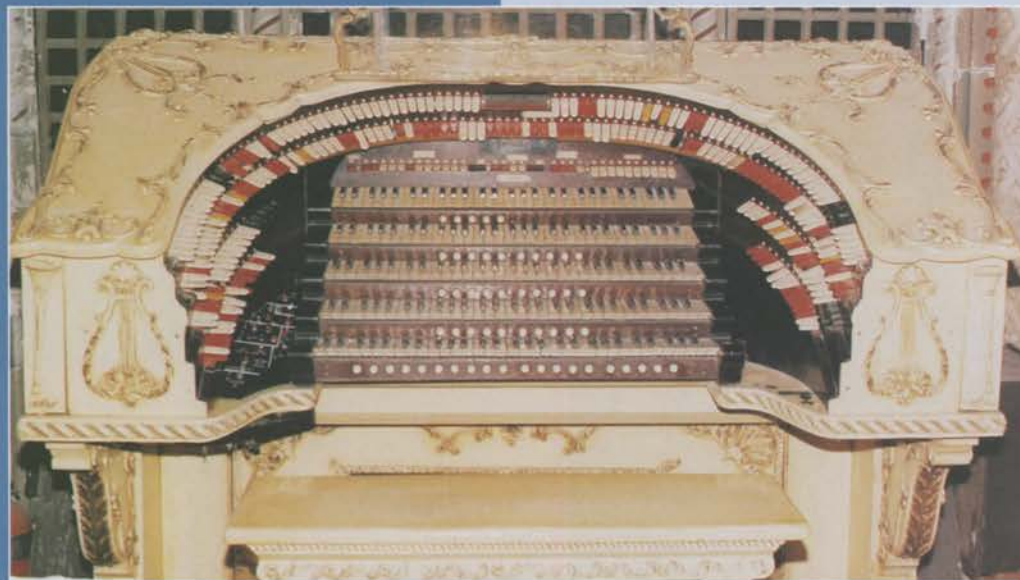




# The Saga of the Fred Hermes

# “Mighty Wurlitzer”

By Gary Hanson



Fred Hermes  
5/34 Wurlitzer

## This was not the first Wurlitzer for Fred.

In fact, it was his fourth instrument. It replaced another “special” 4/11 Wurlitzer originally installed in the Strand Theatre in Madison, WI. Later it was removed and installed in a church. Fred purchased this organ in 1949, for the unheard of price of \$300.00! (Well, the church had removed all of the percussions!) Since Fred sold this 4/11, it has seen a number of changes and additions. In fact,

it was used by Replica Records owned by Dr. Lawson in Montreal and then went to a pizza parlor in California.

## These things don't happen today!

Just imagine for sake of time comparison, that Wurlitzer built a 5/28 organ back in the “old days” of 1971—twenty-nine years ago from right now, the year 2000—and by the year 1986 the organ was no longer used and was in the way! Wanting more stage floor area, the owners of the theatre, lowered the organ down on its lift, and broke through a concrete wall to a room directly behind the lift. The organ console was then moved into this room and the hole in the concrete wall was filled in. This mighty console, but fifteen years old, was “entombed” never to play again!

Fourteen years later, a young (29 year old) insurance agent from Racine, Wisconsin contacted the owners of the theatre and persuaded them to sell this unused instrument for \$1,000.00. (The sale of the organ would then greatly reduce the personal property tax the theatre was paying on this unused and unplayable, but valuable instrument.)

While I changed the years to simply illustrate that what to us today would be “practically” a new organ was just what Fred Hermes was able to purchase. The years over which these changes occurred were of course different. This very special five-manual twenty-eight rank Wurlitzer was built in 1926 for the Michigan Theatre at a cost of \$75,000.00. By the year 1941 the organ was entombed in a basement storage room, and in 1955 at the ripe old age of “29 years”, the organ was sold to Fred Hermes of Racine. While this was not the largest Wurlitzer ever built, it was in fact the largest of the three, five-manual organs that Wurlitzer built. The two other five-manual organs were both 5/21's, and went to the Paradise, and the Marbro theatres in Chicago.

## Getting back to 1955.

At the insistence of the theatre management that the organ be out of the theatre in one week, the mighty Michigan Theatre Wurlitzer was removed in February 1956. The console proved to be a problem! It could NOT go back out through the same wall that had been removed and filled in. In addition, the lift was long gone and dismantled. Fred had to dismantle the console and take it out of the room through the doorway. Fred, along with three helpers worked 18-hour days, and within the week had this organ loaded into two semi-trailers and headed back to Wisconsin.

## The start of a continuing 40-year project!

Fred purchased a two-acre lot north of Racine, overlooking Lake Michigan, with a ravine on the side. By 1958 a new home for the organ was under construction. It was a very special kind of room also. Shaped like a “T” the vertical part of the T was a 30' x 60' “mini theatre”. The upper part of the “T” was comprised of six, 18' x 20' rooms.

Four of these rooms are organ chambers: Foundation, Main, Solo and Brass. One room became a two level relay room, the other room the blower room and storage area. The organ was basically reinstalled in the same configuration as it was in the theatre. To this day, it is playing on its original relay, the original wiring to the chambers and chests, and yes, the original cable to the console!

“MIGHTY WURLITZER” CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



# The Evolution of the

# Petersen Wurlitzer

By Gary Hanson



Petersen  
3/15 Wurlitzer

counter. The organ console was also somewhat "churchified" with changes in the original relay and loss of the combination action in the console. At this time the 2/7 Wurlitzer console from the Sheboygan Theatre became available. It had been used for only a few years in the second location of Milwaukee's Pipe Organ Pizza, and was ready to be reinstalled.

Shortly after the 2/6 was installed and playing in the Petersen home, a number of other Wurlitzer chests and pipe work became available. The enlarging process was beginning to start! The 2/6 grew into a 2/10 by 1997, and the highly unified two-manual console was proving to be short of stop space and inadequate for the enlarged specifications.

IT WAS BACK IN 1974 that Jim and Dorothy Petersen bought their first pipe organ and installed it in their home. The Wangerin 2/14 church organ did not satisfy their musical taste, and in 1976 they bought a 3/16 Möller. This organ was moved to two homes, but again it did not produce the satisfying sound that Jim hoped to achieve. Jim felt that a small Wurlitzer, because of its compact size but BIG sound, would be his final organ and one that would fit the musical bill.

## *The Wurlitzer Dream Begins*

This dream was realized in 1988, when the Petersen's purchased a six-rank Style D, Opus 861; shipped from the factory July 18, 1924 and originally installed in the Granada Hotel Ballroom in Chicago. It took nearly two years for a complete rebuilding of the organ. Rededication was held in August 1990.

Many changes occurred in the life of this little Wurlitzer. When the Granada Hotel remodeled the ballroom into a restaurant, the organ was sold and installed in a church, where it remained until about 1976. A previous owner purchased the organ from the church and had it stored in an unheated shed for fourteen years. The storage conditions were not kind, and the organ needed a complete rebuilding. Also during the period of church ownership, it lost its tuned percussions and toy

## *The North Avenue Roller Rink Closed*

Word came to the Petersen's that the 3/13 Wurlitzer in the Chicago roller rink was to be sold. The owners did not want to part out the organ, but wanted to sell it in its entirety. The three-manual console with that organ was just what Jim was looking for, but not another complete organ, much less the rink organ, which had specific ranks and pressures designed for roller-skating! After consulting with local friends, Jim decided to submit what ended up being the winning bid for the instrument. By the time the removal of the organ came about, Jim had "presold" many components. The blower went to the Organ Piper Pizza, along with the Tuba Horn. The 16' Wood Diaphone had come from the Grand Rapids Roaring 20's Pizza Parlor. After that organ went into the museum in Grand Rapids, they wanted to purchase back their wood Diaphone, thus Jim had a ready buyer for it, and it also went back to its "rightful home".

## *The Wurlitzer Organ Today*

This brings us up to the present time and convention. Within the past year Jim rebuilt the three-manual console, which in itself has an interesting history. It started out in the

PETERSEN WURLITZER CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



The organ has had six additional ranks added to the original specification. But getting back to this mammoth organ. While it was "only" 29 years old when Fred bought it, he immediately saw the need to re-leather all of the chests, and rebuild the combination action in the console. The console originally sat on the floor of this new "theatre" but later Fred excavated a pit, bought a Peter Clark organ lift, and now had the organ again "rise", just like it did originally. The rebuilding and reinstallation of this mammoth organ took five years to complete. This was now 1961!

### Thousands have heard the Hermes Wurlitzer!

The last time this organ was officially heard by an ATOS Convention was 1965. To the present time, DTOS Chapter meetings, annual Halloween programs, school groups, church and tour groups have been entertained on the Mighty Wurlitzer!

Since those early years, Fred has continued to work on this "mighty" beast and in addition has worked to turn the "mini" theatre into an authentic looking movie palace.

There is now a small balcony, complete with projection house, fully equipped to show 16 mm movies, an original lighting board, and a Brenograph machine to add to the nostalgic atmosphere.

When the Venetian Theatre in Racine was demolished, Fred came to the rescue of much of the ornate plaster interior. On a much-reduced scale, the Hermes Bijou has very much the look and feel of the Venetian Theatre. Side lighting, chandeliers and the plasterwork all add to complete this theatre.

Truly, Fred was an early "pioneer" in saving theatre organs, and also one of the founding members of what was then ATOE. When Fred started out his project, he had the creativity and imagination to truly create a proper atmosphere for his organ.

### Fred saved the Avalon Organ also!

In 1978, the owners of the Wurlitzer organ at the Avalon Theatre decided to sell the instrument. Rather than have the chapter lose an original installation instrument, Fred came to the rescue of this instrument and bought it. For nearly twenty years, along with his home organ, Fred continued to work on, and add to the Avalon instrument as well.

About a year ago, Fred decided to "downsize" his collection, and after a brief fund-raiser, the Dairyland chapter bought the Avalon organ.

Fred, with the extra time since he no longer owns the Avalon organ, has been continuing his home theatre renovations and continues daily maintenance on the Mighty Michigan Organ. Truly Fred has been a pioneer worker in the Dairyland Chapter, and with undiminished vigor continues on with his love of the theatre pipe organ!

State-Lake Theatre, then was sold in 1930 and reinstalled in the Trianon Ballroom in Chicago, ultimately ending up at the North Avenue Roller Rink.

Jim decided to change the configuration of his home to accommodate the larger three-manual console. What were a separate living and dining room and family room has been opened up and enlarged into a spacious organ studio. Heavy wall-to-wall carpeting also came out, and a new hardwood floor was installed to enhance the acoustics.

### The Petersen Specification

With the larger console, the Petersen organ has grown into a 3/15. The following is the rank analysis of the organ:

16' Tuba Horn	8' Viol Celeste (Kimball)
16' Diaphone/Open Diapason	8' English Post Horn (Gottfried)
16' Bourdon/ Flute	8' Violin (Kimball)
8' Vox Humana	8' Violin Celeste (Kimball)
8' Tibia Clausa	8' Clarinet
8' Concert Flute	8' Trumpet
8' Flute Celeste	8' Orchestral Oboe (prepared for)
8' VDO (Kimball)	

Original Wurlitzer percussions, traps and toy counter have been added to replace the missing components from the Granada organ.

The Petersen's love of the theatre organ is such that they frequently share their home and instrument with friends and for Dairyland Chapter events. The annual Dairyland Ice Cream Social is always held there and has grown so popular that one needs to make reservations to attend!

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# 45th Annual ATOS Convention 2000

Sponsored by Dairyland Chapter, Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
 July 27–August 2 • Master Time Table (Subject to Change)

DATE	MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING
Thursday, July 27	Registration Hilton Hotel	Registration Hilton Hotel Optional: Home Tours <b>Kay McAbee</b> – Hermes Residence 5/32 Wurlitzer <b>Russel Holmes</b> – Petersen Residence 3/12 Wurlitzer	Registration Hilton Hotel
Friday, July 28	Registration Hilton Hotel	Registration Free Time	Registration Get Acquainted No-Host Cocktail Party Hilton Hotel <hr/> <b>Walt Strony</b> Riverside Theatre 3/14 Wurlitzer <hr/> <i>Optional:</i> Jam Session #1 Piper Music Palace
Saturday, July 29	Young Theatre Organ Competition Concert Avalon Theatre 3/19 Wurlitzer	<b>Clark Wilson</b> Oriental Theatre 3/39 Kimball	Annual ATOS Membership Meeting Pabst Theater <hr/> Pabst Theater <b>Tom Hazleton</b> George Wright Allen <hr/> <i>Optional:</i> Jam Session #2–Piper Music Palace
Sunday, July 30	Members' Forum	<b>Simon Gledhill</b> Oriental Theatre 3/39 Kimball	No Host Cocktail Party and Banquet at Hilton Hotel
Monday, July 31	<b>Ron Rhode</b> Madison Civic Center 3/14 Barton	<b>Chris Elliot</b> Madison Civic Center 3/14 Barton	<b>Dave Wickerham</b> Avalon Theatre 3/19 Wurlitzer
Tuesday, August 1	<b>Richard Hills</b> Oriental Theatre 3/39 Kimball <hr/> Technical Seminars the Hilton Hotel	<b>Jelani Eddington</b> Riverside 3/14 Wurlitzer <hr/> Pipe Organ Owners Meeting ETONE Meeting	<b>Barry Baker</b> Riverside Theatre 3/14 Wurlitzer
Wednesday, August 2	Afterglow	<b>Ken Double</b> Al Ringling Theater 3/9 Barton Baraboo, Wisconsin, Lunch and tour of Circus World Museum	



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# The Sounds of Silent Movies

By Robert Gates,  
Associate Editor

## BITTER FRUIT FROM GRAPEVINE VIDEO, 1916 TO 1926;

Organists, Gaylord Carter  
and John Muri

The Grapevine web site is very inviting. Dozens of silent films are catalogued with brief outlines of the plots, and unlike the listings from many video sources, a distinction is made

between electronic and pipe organ accompaniment. Furthermore, the prices are reasonable. How can you go wrong?

Your order arrives a week or two later. You load up the VCR with Norma Talmage's *Children In The House*, and climb into the recliner. Even though the organist is not named at the beginning of the film or on the box, it's obviously Gaylord Carter. You can't mistake his style. And yes, he's playing the Sargent/Stark studio organ. No other instrument sounds quite like it.

You slip your chair back a notch as the screenplay continues.

But wait! What happened? Someone else is playing—and it's a different organ! It's John Muri performing selections from of his lovely setting for *Oliver Twist*. The movie goes on for a while, and just when you begin to relax once more there's *another* handoff. Carter interrupts Muri, right in mid measure!

Alas, this is the pattern in each of the five videos reviewed. The music shuttles back and forth between Carter and Muri throughout; sometimes the change relates to the action on the screen and sometimes it does not. Usually, one organist interrupts the other in mid-measure and sometimes the interruption starts in mid-measure. In *Children In The House*, for example, there are thirteen such transitions, to which must be added the seven abrupt theme changes where the organist remains the same. In addition, several of the Carter selections are afflicted with overactive tremulant and distortion.

Jack Hardy, the owner of Grapevine, was contacted by telephone. Although several different questions were asked, he would not elaborate upon a repeated response that the music, on tape, was selected as being appropriate to the action. Indeed, what more could be said?

### ALADDIN AND THE WONDERFUL LAMP, 1917

This oddity, made at the time when kiddie films were in vogue, is a version of the classic story in which children play all of the leading roles. Perhaps our forefathers found it nifty, but in the 21st century it just seems weird. Excellent picture quality; by far the best of the five in that regard, but the film has little to recommend it beyond that.

### CHILDREN IN THE HOUSE, 1916, with Norma Talmage

This is an adventure-romance, beginning with a husband willing to give up all for a dancer. The more

## Grapevine Video presents



Thomas Meighan

# Male and Female

(1919)  
Directed by  
Cecil B. DeMille



Gloria Swanson



the plot is stirred the thicker it becomes, ending eventually with fire, car chases and prison scenes. Although Talmadge stars as the deserted wife who eventually finds happiness, it is difficult to appreciate her work because of the very poor picture quality.

**THE LODGER, 1926,  
directed by Alfred Hitchcock**

Fortunately, the images in this video are clear enough that the plot can be followed. Based on a novel about Jack the Ripper, the story begins when a seventh "golden haired" girl is murdered. Soon a mysterious visitor (Ivor Novello) arrives to take a room where blonde mannequin Daisy (played by an actress known only as "June") lives. His dress and habits have so evil an aura that he is soon accused of the murders, but there is an appropriate nick-of-time resolution at the end.

This early Hitchcock contains many of the themes seen in his later work; suspicion cast everywhere, scenes of terrible deeds, dark mystery in the air and misunderstood key players. And his penchant for blonde actresses, which he maintained throughout his career, was never more clearly manifest than in this screenplay. All in all, this film is best suited to dyed-in-the-wool "Hitch" fans.

**MALE AND FEMALE, 1919,  
directed by Cecil B. DeMille**

This is a winning tale in which an accidental marooning on a desert island inverts the relationship between the wealthy and titled and their servants. Once the yachting party from Loam House become castaways, the normally diffident butler (Thomas Meighan) shows leadership qualities well beyond those of any of the toffs and soon achieves demigod status. A romance ignites between him and the oldest daughter of the house (Gloria Swanson) which continues until, eventually, the group is rescued and returns to England, where interactions become "normal"—at least for a while.

**THE SOCIAL SECRETARY, 1916,  
with Norma Talmadge**

Here is another amiable romp, co-authored by Anita Loos. Secretary Mayme (Talmadge) has a problem. So comely is she that all of her male bosses quickly propose marriage. This, of course, forces her to leave position after position to escape such unspeakable harassment. Finally, she has an idea. Pulling her hair back tightly and donning a pair of dark-rimmed glasses, she becomes so unattractive that when she takes a new position as social secretary in a Riverside Drive mansion, the young gentleman of the house will have none of her. As you would expect, her disguise is soon penetrated and complications unfold to maintain the momentum of the tale.

Actress Talmadge was one of a trio of sisters, Norma, Constance and Natalie, who made Hollywood headlines. Constance performed in many of D.W. Griffith's movies including *Intolerance*. Two streets were named after Norma,

Grapevine Video  
presents



**The Social Secretary  
(1916)  
Norma Talmadge**

and she is credited as the originator of the rite of preserving star footprints when she accidentally stepped in wet concrete in front of Graumann's Chinese Theater. Both women, according to one source, were married to George Jessel in the '30's, but the consensus view is that it was only Norma. The accompaniment for this film is the least trying of the group since one organist, Muri, plays most of the time. But there are interjections; the most quirky is when Carter takes over for all of nine seconds.

In Brief: Five films of variable quality accompanied unacceptably. Were it not for the music, *The Social Secretary* and *Male and Female* would be recommended.

From: Grapevine Video, P.O. Box 46161, Phoenix, Arizona 85063, (602) 973-3661. Prices range from \$9.95 (*Aladdin*) to \$19.95 (*Male and Female*).



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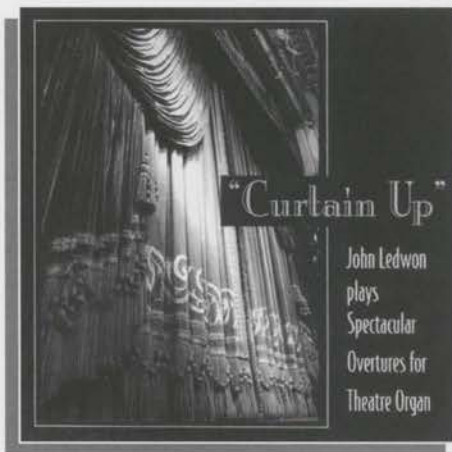
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### "CURTAIN UP"

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Since the completion of his magnificent residence 4/52 Wurlitzer John has released albums of Inspirational, Wedding, Broadway and Hollywood music. Now he's expanded into "Spectacular Overtures for Theatre Organ." As a longtime advocate for playing "modern" music this isn't as surprising as it may seem for each of his seven selections was in the "Top Ten" popular tunes of their day! All but one was written in the mid-nineteenth century and all have stood the test of time and continue to be "standards" in the concert repertoire. Indeed, most of these are forerunners of the Broadway musicals of our generation! Offenbach, Suppé and the others were the Gershwins and Berlins of their day. And most overtures, with a few exceptions, were a potpourri of the main themes from the musical comedy or drama that followed.

Pictured on the album's cover is the beautiful drapery and curtains of Windham's Theatre in London. (Another view of the entire stage, proscenium and

tiers of boxes, taken from the balcony, is on the album's back cover.) The excellent twelve pages of liner notes that accompany this 71½-minute CD contain fascinating comments about each of these selections which, though infrequently performed on theatre pipes, will be familiar to most organ buffs.

John opens with Offenbach's *Orpheus In The Underworld* overture and like Porter's "Begin The Beguine," it introduced the world to the saucy, naughty rhythm of the Can-Can. Offenbach composed over ninety operettas and since he was so busy music-wise and other-wise, he usually just told an assistant the order in which he wanted the melodies played and left the assistant to do the actual writing. (Somewhat like today's orchestrators—Robert Russell Bennett wrote the arrangements for most of the Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals!) However, *Orpheus*, which debuted in 1858, was an exception! As one musicologist put it, this overture was "... cobbled together instead by Carl Binder for a production in Vienna in 1860."

Surely Franz von Supé is one of Ledwon's favorite composers, for John plays three of his most famous overtures on this CD. And, it's worth noting these three (and Offenbach's *Orpheus*) were included in abridged versions on John's early LP recording, *Theatre Organ Overtures At The Plaza* (made on the 3/15 Wurlitzer, Opus 2123, in El Paso, TX). All of the selections on this CD are complete, for John has "orchestrated" them from the piano/conductor scores. Although Suppé was of Belgian heritage and raised in Italy, he attained his greatest success in Vienna where, before he was fully established as a composer and orchestra conductor, he sometimes had

to give Italian lessons to make ends meet!

*Poet And Peasant* is quite probably Suppé's most famous operetta as following its 1846 opening it was soon available in thirty-seven different arrangements for various instrumental combinations. This operetta was actually a comedy with songs but the overture was a guaranteed success as Suppé had used it twice before. *Beautiful Galatea* is next and its beautiful waltz surely is one of the finest ever written. Ledwon's liner notes quite accurately describe *Morning, Noon And Night In Vienna* as a series of grand entrances and fanfares. And it was so popular Suppé used it again, twice!

For a bit of variety in his "Overtures" program, John next plays two of the world's best loved orchestral (symphonic) tone poems. Surprisingly, symphonic poems are a rather recent musical form, which was developed by Franz Liszt in 1848. Ledwon's first one was written almost 100 years after the other music heard on this program. It's Albert Ketelbey's 1920 composition *In A Persian Market*. Its exotic Near East themes conjure up a vivid picture of a thriving bazaar. Did you know that lyrics were written for it? Well, kind of—some arrangements have voices occasionally shouting, "Bak sheesh, Allah, empshi."

Mussorgsky's wild and woolly *Night On Bare (Bald) Mountain* is the other dramatic tone poem. This piece of music, depicting a witch's Sabbath celebration on the eve of the Feast of St. John, was worked over several times by Mussorgsky. He first wrote it for a play, and then rewrote it for an opera, but it finally became an orchestral work. Interestingly, his friend Rimsky-Korsakov, who was a better-trained musician and orchestrator, and became his musical "executor"



after Mussorgsky's early death at 42, helped out by smoothing the rough spots in his compositions. It is Korsakov's arrangement we are most familiar with and that John uses on this disc.

To close out this album in grand style is surely the best-known overture of all time—Rossini's *William Tell*. It was the last opera he wrote and it opened in 1829. Hardly a week had passed before parts of the opera were being cut—as originally written it did last five hours! No one is quite sure why Rossini wrote practically nothing in the last forty years of his life but it's quite possible, since he had made enough money to enjoy the good life, he turned to his other lifelong passion—gourmet food. He once wrote, "Food, love, singing and cookery—those are the real four acts of that comic opera that is called life."

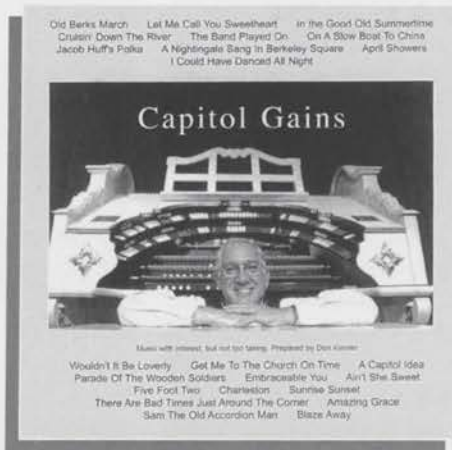
Little did he expect that a century later his last overture would contribute to the founding of a radio network let alone a cowboy hero for millions of kids! Yes, the *Lone Ranger* radio show debuted on Detroit's WXYZ in January, 1933, and within a year had expanded to include Chicago's WGN and New York's WOR—thus forming the Mutual Radio Network. By the time the radio show finally ended in 1955 the *Lone Ranger* was Hi-Hoing on television. What a success story for a one hundred year old opera about a Swiss farmer!

With fifty-two carefully chosen ranks, John has at his command a host of wonderful orchestral voices, and glorious ensembles, which are fully utilized throughout this album. It's a close-up recording with a touch of reverb. We've A-B'd these selections with orchestral recordings of the same compositions and find John has been completely faithful to the originals. If you think you hear tympani on the climaxes, John tells us there is synthesized tympani, which he uses here and there. To paraphrase a noted musicologist—"Overture lovers—Rejoice! Overture haters—Sorry!" This Compact Disc is \$20.00 (postpaid) from JBL Productions, 28933 Wagon Road, Agoura, CA 91301.

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## CAPITOL GAINS

Don Kinnier



The small print under the console photo says, "Music with interest, but not too taxing. Prepared by Don Kinnier." It's been almost twenty years since we first met Kinnier on that wonderful *Pipes Of Pan(damonium)* LP he recorded on the dandy 2/7 Wurlitzer in the Rahway (NJ) Theatre. No, don't expect to hear any Hydraulic Euphonium, Crowhorn or Tombozz on this new CD release, but Don's musical gifts and joyous outlook on life are still intact!

ATOS members who attended the 1992 Annual Convention in Philadelphia will certainly recall the great vaudeville show Kinnier and Company put on at the Keswick Theatre where Don was Master of Ceremonies, organist and half of the Weis and Heimers hilarious bell ringing team. This time Don is playing the 3/17 organ in York PA's Capitol Theatre. (Candy Carley played there during that convention's afterglow.) In the past eight years members of our Susquehanna Chapter have made lots of great improvements to what they affectionately call their "Magnificent Mongrel." It is true that this instrument has pipe work from at least six different organ builders and it IS one dog-gone great sounding organ!

Its complete specifications are included in the liner notes. In addition there are tongue-in-cheek warnings such as: "May Alter Gas Mileage. (If you are using this product while driving, DO NOT keep time with the gas or brake pedals)" and "Audio Hazard!!! (If you have a really cheap hi-fi, spring for something a little nicer. This baby has some big, bad bass and we wouldn't want you pickin' up black confetti and blamin'

us.)" The album also gives the fascinating details about the Strand-Capitol Performing Arts Center's history and the surprising number of organs, which have played, in those side-by-side theatres over the years.

We'll be quoting from Don's liner notes as they capture so well the disc's spirit of good music and good fun. "This is music that travels well in the car and behaves itself on your home stereo (it is completely housebroken). You can listen to it carefully, with your full attention and discover the subtleties of the instrument or just flip it on in the background for company. The material is eclectic enough that most everyone should find something they like, unless you're into heavy metal. Even then, the organ does weigh about six tons. Here's what you'll hear: two hundred years of music (not every year obviously) from 1799 to 1999."

This 58 minute CD opens with a march written by one of Sousa's friends (!)—it's Monroe Althouse's delightful *Old Berks March*—and continues with a waltz medley of "Let Me Call You Sweetheart," "In The Good Old Summertime," "Cruisin' Down The River" and "The Band Played On." As Don writes, "It's the Swan Boat on the lake, the band organ, and the brass ring, all rolled into one." Frank Loesser's dreamy "Slow Boat To China" is followed by a Kinnier original, "Jacob Huff's Polka," which is "The Red Baron at his Wurst. The grand festival of OomPah is guaranteed to knock the couch potatoes off the cushions."

About "A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square" Don writes, "Proof that real beauty doesn't know from bad times . . . one of the prettiest ballads ever written." And he suggests for "April Showers" that you "Sing along with this one. It'll do wonders for your outlook." After his six minute "My Fair Lady" medley is another Kinnier original (which he wrote at 9:17 p.m. 4/7/99, about twenty minutes before it was recorded!). It's his cheerful toe-tapper—"A Capitol Idea." A repeat from his first LP is "Parade Of The Wooden Soldiers" which still has "A quick series of unprepared, and certainly uncalled for, key changes . . . in the mid-section" as it says on the old LP's notes.

"How do you pick which Gershwin piece you're going to record? Yipe!" For this CD it's a sweetly endearing "Embraceable You." About the '20s medley

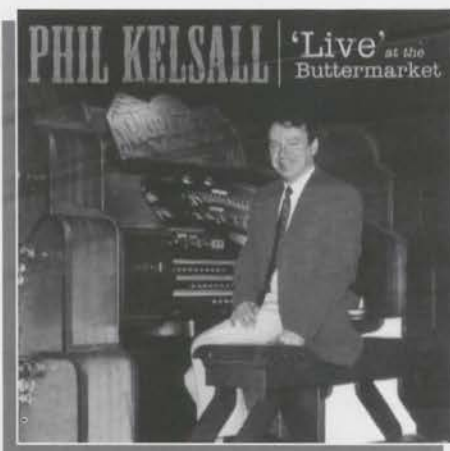


of "Ain't She Sweet," "Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue" and "Charleston" Don writes, "We almost had to use the resuscitator on the piano after this one. (Poor old thing.)" From *Fiddler On The Roof* is "Sunrise Sunset" followed by a 1939 Noel Coward tune—"Bad Times Just Around The Corner"—which Don plays more like "Good Times Are Coming!" If you wondered what Don might find from 1799, it's his beautiful version of "Amazing Grace." Closing this wonderfully nostalgic program is a rather subdued "Sam The Old Accordion Man" and a red-hot march, Abe Holtzman's "Blaze Away."

As the subtitle says, this album is "Music with interest, but not too taxing" and we highly recommend it to all who long for the good old days when you could hear some great tunes played on a marvelous theatre organ between the double feature. And, you'll be helping this organ (which is used constantly for concerts, vaudeville shows, and silent film presentations at the Capitol) to be enlarged and updated to provide many more years of entertainment. Compact disc only for \$17.00 (postpaid). Make your check payable to "Springmont Pipes" and send it to Capitol Gains CD, 2814 Belmont Avenue, West Lawn, PA 19609-01506.

## LIVE AT THE BUTTERMARKE

Phil Kelsall



In the past Phil Kelsall's theatre organ recordings have been made at Blackpool's Tower Ballroom, where he's been the resident organist since 1977, playing the Wurlitzer or an electronic organ. For a change this 59½-minute CD was made on a rather unusual Wurlitzer in Shrews-

bury's Buttermarket where he frequently performs concerts during his off-season tours. The historic Buttermarket was built in 1835 but in recent years was converted into an arts and entertainment center. The album's liner notes give a complete history of the building, the organ and the Shropshire Theatre Organ Trust which owns and maintains this instrument.

Nevertheless, to add a few facts about this organ, Wurlitzer Opus 2204, which was originally installed in the Ritz Theatre, Chatham in 1936. (Also see the review of the *Union Cinemas Ritz* book in this issue of the Journal.) During the brief heyday of the Ritz Cinema chain they bought both specially designed Compton and Wurlitzer organs. Most of the 77 Wurlitzers sent to the UK were actually assembled in a factory Wurlitzer established there in 1933. The Ritz chain bought a total of nine Wurlitzers—three were 3c/8 (UNN 1 Style), 2 were 3c/7 (UNN 2), and the final group of four (including Opus 2204) were 3/8 (UNN 3). All the style UNN 3s were painted gold, had the Wurlitzer name in raised letters on the music rack, were fully unified on all three manuals, and combination pistons 1 through 5 were Master Pistons on Double Touch! A few, including 2204, were also equipped with a "Pillar and Vase" type of illuminated surround. In its current home the organ has had some Blackpool style trick couplers added and a Technics electronic piano is playable from the console.

Although it has only eight ranks, the Buttermarket organ originally played into a 2300 seat theatre! The ranks are French Trumpet, Diaphonic Diapason, Tibia Clausa, Clarinet, Saxophone, Gamba and Gamba Celeste, and Flute. Shy this organ ain't! As Phil demonstrates with his opening 9½-minute medley of eleven international melodies, such as "I Love Paris," "Tulips Of Amsterdam," "Wonderful Copenhagen" and "Lady Of Spain." Phil plays medleys throughout this album (although some individual tunes are given separate track numbers!) but none are played in strict tempo—there's lots of variety in rhythms and tempos in each medley.

And there is a surprising, almost disorienting, juxtaposition of completely unrelated tunes as in Phil's second medley. It begins with Lahar's charming waltz, "You Are My Heart's Delight," fol-

lowed by "Fats" Waller's "Ain't Misbehavin'," Willie Nelson's "Crazy," a British favorite titled "The Blackpool Belle," Zez Confrey's dazzling "Dizzy Fingers" and concludes with a sobering "Nun's Chorus." Something of an exception is the next medley with a sensitive "Serenade In Blue" a brightly bouncing "Opus One" and an extended, constantly varying version of Duke Ellington's "It Don't Mean A Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)."

An 11½-minute medley of nine modern tunes is next beginning with Stevie Wonder's "I Just Called To Say I Love You" and ending with Kander & Ebb's "New York, New York." In between are three Beatles toe tappers and John Denver's "Annie's Song" among others. With an album total of 41 tunes we can't mention them all but most will be familiar to everyone. Next to closing is an 8½-minute medley of "Jealousy," "Magic Is The Moonlight," "El Cumbanchero" and what is one of Phil's stunning super spectacular sonic wonders—"Tico, Tico." His closing medley also contains a wide variety of old favorites including "Fascination," "We'll Meet Again," "Happy Feet," "Sweet Georgia Brown" and, of course, "I Do Like To Be Beside The Seaside."

Although this is a live recording, the audience isn't heard except for their applause at the end of each medley. The recording is quite close up and, in this very live room, the music is louder and crisper than Blackpool. And here Phil does give full reign to the visual aspects of his playing which aren't usually so noticeable on his CDs. He's truly a master showman! Cassettes sell for \$13.00 and CDs for \$21.00 (plus \$3.00 per order postage) from Organ Literature Foundation, 45 Norfolk Road, Braintree, MA 02184-5918.

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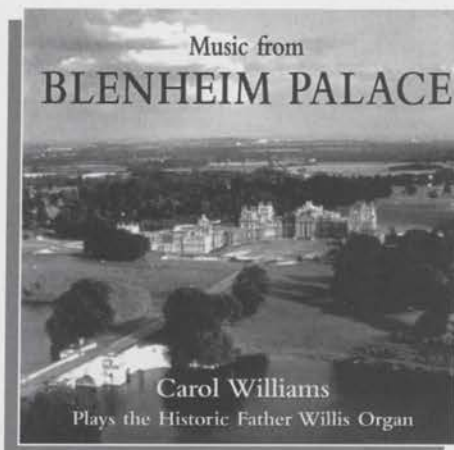
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## MUSIC FROM BLENHEIM PALACE

Carol Williams



Although *Fodor's Travel Guide* states, "... it isn't actually a palace at all, at least not in the sense that royalty lives in it..." they concede that it is England's only rival in stately beauty to Versailles! It was built as a gift from Queen Anne and the nation to General George Churchill (who became the first Duke of Marlborough) in appreciation of his 1704 victory over Louis XIV's army at the Battle of Blenheim. As this album's cover shows, it's sited on more than 2000 acres of magnificent greenery in the Thames Valley about seventy miles northwest of London. In 1891 the famous organ builder "Father" Willis installed the 4-manual, 52 rank organ heard on this new 74-minute compact disc.

In 1976 ATOS members on the Organ "Safari" to the UK heard this organ played by Alan Cornell. He was again featured at the console during the 1980 ATOS Silver Anniversary Convention. At last year's ATOS London Convention the current Palace organist, Thomas Trotter, played a recital on this historic organ. Fortunately for us, during a visit to her homeland last fall, Carol Williams (who is now organist at Garden City NY's Cathedral of the Incarnation) recorded this disc, which beautifully showcases this historic instrument.

Ms. Williams' first three selections are an interesting contrast in robust music from three different centuries. First is Chappel's *Song Of Praise* which was composed as the theme music for a BBC television program. Next is Purcell's 300-year-old *Trumpet Tune and Air*. This is followed by Lemmens' staccato *Fanfare* from the 19th century. Since Lemmens

was Charles-Marie Widor's teacher, it's inevitable that his student's *Toccata* would be next. For a complete change of pace Carol follows these blockbusters with the quiet and enchantingly romantic *Salut d'Amour* by Elgar. Jeremiah Clarke was of the next generation after Purcell who, during Clark's brief lifetime, was mistakenly credited with Carol's next piece, the oft-heard *Trumpet Voluntary*.

Ever daring in her program, Carol plays a brief but robust Sousa march, the rarely heard "Liberty Bell." Edwin Lemare was one of the most renowned concert organists of the twentieth century; his charming *Andantino* will be recognized as the 1930's pop hit "Moonlight And Roses" which was further desecrated by being played in the 1940 film *Tim Pan Alley!* Further blurring the line between pop and classic pieces is Fletcher's joyous *Festival Toccata* featuring the Willis organ's fantastic reeds. (Carol's liner notes mention Fletcher orchestrated the stage musical *Chu Chin Chow* which opened during WW I and was the UK's longest running hit musical until quite recently.) Whitlock's peaceful, refreshing *Folk Tune* and the *March* from Handel's *Occasional Oratorio* lead up to the nostalgic part of Carol's program.

From this organ's opening recital, May 18, 1891, Ms. Williams plays Edouard Silas' *Fantasia* which was written especially for that event. Note the wonderful Solo Tuba rank featured on this piece. Next are two melodies, which Sir Arthur Sullivan (of Gilbert and Sullivan fame) played on this organ as part of that program; Mendelssohn's *O For The Wings Of A Dove* and his own famous *The Lost Chord*. (Adelaide Ann Proctor, not Gilbert, wrote the well-known words.) To round out her program Carol's last five selections are a tribute to Sir Winston Churchill. Theatre (and concert) organist Nigel Ogden's exciting composition *England's Glory* is followed by Holst's *Jupiter* and the joyous march *In The News*. William Walton's dramatic *Spitfire Prelude* and Parry's stirring anthem *Jerusalem* complete the program.

All the selections on this disc beautifully show off this organ's magnificent voices and the clarity and warmth of the room's acoustics. The detailed liner notes contain full information about Blenheim Palace, the history and specifi-

cations of this organ (including a color photo of the console and casework) and fascinating details about each selection. Add to that the excellence of the recording and you have a truly memorable album! Compact disc is only \$18.00 (postpaid) from Melcot Music Promotions, 13 Trenton Street, Apt. 3, Jersey City, NJ 07306.

## COMES SUMMERTIME— Highlights From Riverside Summer Recitals 1998

Cherry Rhodes, Peter Stoltzfus,  
James Abbingtion, Timothy Smith  
and Peter Conte



Annually New York City's prestigious Riverside Church presents a series of summer recitals featuring the world's finest classical organists. This 2-CD set (totaling 130 minutes) contains excerpts from the five concerts presented there in 1998. The organ, of course, is the marvelous five-manual Aeolian-Skinner organ (a rebuild of the earlier Hook and Hastings), which the legendary Virgil Fox designed and debuted in 1955, and on which Fox recorded so many notable, best selling albums.

It's of interest to note that since his tenure the organ has continued to be "... refined, amended and augmented ... until it reached the status of New York City's second largest pipe organ..." with 146 speaking stops, 206 ranks, and 12,044 pipes. (The liner notes contain the organ's complete specifications.) Perhaps of even greater importance is the change made during 1995 in the acoustical environment "... provided by sealing the Guastavino tiles and walls in the galleries and rear five bays."



The eighteen pages of liner notes contain detailed biographies of each of the five artists but, sadly, little information about their selections. Cherry Rhodes is the first artist to be heard. Since 1975 she's been Adjunct Professor of Organ at UCLA and has been featured in concerts on the best-known classical organs in the U.S. She opens with Joseph Bonnet's rather mystical *Deuxieme Legend* and continues with a skittish *Impromptu* by Louis Vierne written in the mid 1920s. *Revelations Of St. John The Divine* written for her in 1984 by Larry King combines some of the organ voices with various electronic taped sounds. She closes her section with Beethoven's brief, diaphanous *Scherzo (For A Musical Clock)* and D'Antalfy-Zsiross' rather aggressively playful *Sportive Fauns*.

Peter Stoltzfus is organist at Plymouth Church Of The Pilgrims in Brooklyn, NY and plays all four movements of Charles Widor's *Symphony No. 7* written in the mid-1880s. James Abbington, who for many years was Minister Of Music and Organist at Hartford Memorial Baptist Church in Detroit, presents Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's *Impromptu No. 3* and a three-part *Suite No. 1* by the noted modern composer Ulysses Kay. Since 1992 the next artist, Timothy Smith, has been Director of Music and Organist at Riverside Church. His opening selection is Edward Elgar's rousing *Pomp And Circumstance No. 1* (this is

the *Land Of Hope And Glory* one) which was written in 1901. He continues with two movements of J. S. Bach's *Concerto In A Minor* (after Vivaldi). His other pieces are Widor's *Andante Sostenudo* (from the *Gothic 9th Symphony*) and Petr Eben's *Moto Ostinado*.

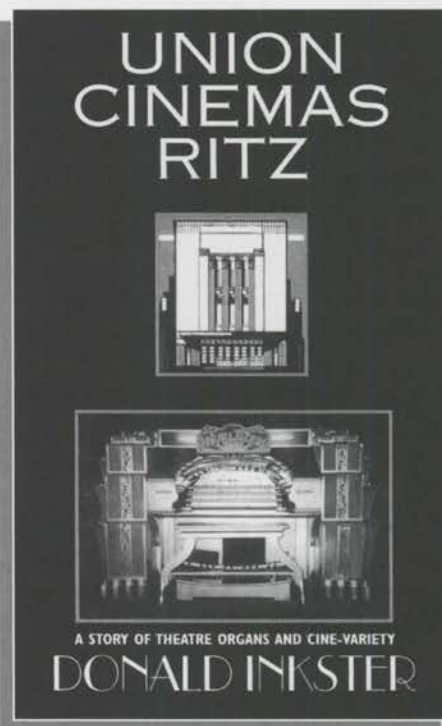
The final organist is Peter Richard Conte who, since Keith Chapman's untimely death in 1989, has been the organist at the magnificent Wanamaker organ in Lord & Taylor's Philadelphia store. Dukas' famous *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* which musicologist Jim Svedja calls "... one of the most dazzlingly inventive tone poems in music history" is heard first and then, in a stunning contrast, is Richard Wagner's emotional *Liebested*. Concluding Conte's section, and the album, is an abbreviated but delightful "Dance Of The Hours" from Ponchelli's most famous opera *La Gioconda*.

The new acoustics of the Riverside Church richly enhance this magnificent instrument, which is captured in all its stunning glory on this release. But, since all the selections were recorded at live concerts, there is vigorous applause at the end of each piece and, on a few occasions, the usual cough or two during quiet sections of the music. This 2-CE set is \$32.95 (plus \$3.99 postage and NY residents should add their sales tax) from JAV Recordings, 43 Wellington Court, Brooklyn, NY 11230.

## BOOK REVIEW

### UNION CINEMAS RITZ

Donald Inkster



In the final issue of the *Console Magazine* (July, 1984) British editor Ian Dalglish wrote that he had planned to write a history of the Union Cinemas similar to his previously published articles about the UK's ABC, Gaumont-British and Odeon chains. Fortunately,

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for organ buffs and theatre historians, this new volume by Donald Inkster not only fills that gap but also provides an incredibly detailed story of Union Cinema's phenomenally rapid growth between 1928 and 1937, its "Cine-Variety" format of entertainment, and its sudden collapse and absorption by the ABC chain.

Like many movie moguls of the Roaring 20s era, David Bernhard (1861-1937) started out buying up a few small groups of theatres and by 1935 was acquiring larger chains and building new cinemas at an astounding rate. Inkster chronologically describes each new theatre in great detail; its location and architect, color and material schemes for both the exterior and interior, and even the seating, projection and sound equipment. He writes that Bernhard announced the company would "... build a modern cinema in every town where one did not already exist, taking the name Ritz whenever possible, with Regal as a second choice."

Inkster discusses the Union Cinema philosophies and policies which set them apart from other theatre chains; but refrains from offering his own opinion of these policies, some of which undoubtedly contributed to Union's downfall. They tried to secure control of all the cinemas in a given town and, if another chain planned a new theatre in a community, Union would try to open one there first! They established a Cine-

Variety policy of fifty percent films and fifty percent live entertainment throughout their chain. Union's opening ceremonies were always lavish affairs with the mayor and other guests, along with stage or film stars whenever possible.

Theatre organs, most with illuminated surrounds, were prominently featured in almost all their cinemas and rather than have a resident organist their large staff of organists were constantly rotating. Inkster describes how they developed radio programs, such as the *Radio Rodeo*, which were broadcast live from their theatres. These broadcasts featured the various stage acts playing a theatre at that time and often starred a major personality such as Gracie Fields. In fact, sometimes three well-known organists (such as Harold Ramsay, Sidney Torch and Robinson Cleaver) would appear together and alternate between the organ and two grand pianos!

One of the particular joys of this volume is the great amount of biographical material Inkster presents about each of the many organists employed by Union Cinemas. Particular attention is given Harold Ramsay (1902-1976) who was hired early in 1936 as Musical Director for the chain and soon had charge of all the live entertainment for the approximately 200 theatres Union owned or controlled. And that was in addition to his own appearances, broadcasts, and recordings! It's of interest to note that

Ramsay, who lived over half his life in Canada, was a star organist in the U.S. during the late '20s when he toured for the Paramount Publix chain. He was named to the ATOS Hall of Fame in 1989.

There is so much information packed into this volume's 167 pages we can only hint at the wealth of material it contains. There are some brief discussions of the chains' finances but once again the author wisely presents just the facts without comment. Two appendices have the stop layouts Ramsay designed for several models of Compton organs used by Union but little is said about the three Wurlitzer models built especially for Union. (See the review of Phil Kelsall's *Live At The Buttermarket* CD in this issue for more information about Opus 2204, a 3/8 Style UNN3 which was installed in the Ritz, Chatham in 1936.)

This softbound 6" x 9" book also boasts thirty-six sharp photographs of some of the Union organs and artists and there are eight newspaper advertisements reproduced. One minor regret is this superb volume lacks an index listing the organs and Union Theatres. However, there is an index of every personality (organist, artist, company directors, etc.) mentioned but it is alphabetical by the individual's first name! The book is \$38.00 (plus 3.00 per order postage) from Organ Literature Foundation, 45 Norfolk Road, Braintree MA 02184-5918. 🎵

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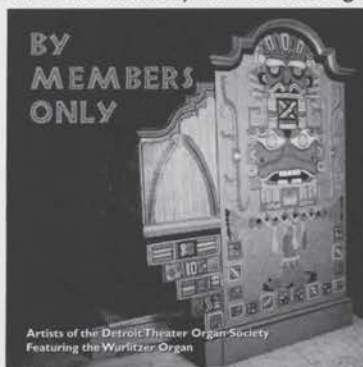
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The Rudolph Wurlitzer Company built many four manual organs -- from a mere ten or eleven ranks, to the giant 58 rank instrument in Radio City Music Hall. This same company built to Jesse Crawford's specification the Paramount Special 4-36 which was copied four times at Fox Theatres in Brooklyn, Detroit, St. Louis, and San Francisco. BUT, Wurlitzer built three, and three only, five manual theatre organs. Chicago had the distinction of being home to two of these five-rankers -- at the now-demolished Marbro and Paradise and Theatres (18 and 21 ranks, respectively). However, by far the largest of these five manual organs is the 28 rank instrument that was formerly installed in the Michigan Theatre in Detroit. Fred Hermes of Racine, Wisconsin now has this organ installed in his lakeside home.

Fred Hermes has long been active as a theatre organ enthusiast. Prior to

1949 Fred had a two-manual Wurlitzer Model E, which had been augmented to nine ranks, installed in the basement of his insurance agency in downtown Racine. This instrument was later sold to Bill Liggett of Burlington, Wisconsin, and is still used in the ballroom known as the Royal Palm Inn. After removal of the two-manual Wurlitzer, a 4-11 Wurlitzer was obtained from a Madison, Wisconsin church which had acquired it from its original installation in the Strand Theatre in Madison. (Fred had to scrounge to obtain the requisite percussion and toycounter which had not been moved to the church.) This Wurlitzer was ultimately sold to a Chicago recording studio who subsequently sold it to Dr. Ray Lawson of Montreal, Quebec where it is an essential part of the Lawson 4-20 home installation (see Theatre Organ, vol. 3, no. 3).

Even with a four-manual organ play-

ing, Fred Hermes was not satisfied. On hearing that the 5-28 Wurlitzer could be obtained from the Michigan Theatre, Fred Hermes decided he would buy it, if he could. In September, 1955, he was able to purchase the organ. It was then removed in February, 1956 by Fred and three friends working eighteen hours a day. Dismantling required a week. The organ was transported to Racine by two vans.

The organ is presently housed in a room especially designed to accommodate it. The home, 150 feet from Lake Michigan, is built into the side of a hill, thus simplifying some of the excavation problems for a basement of this magnitude. The living portion of the house is on one floor, extending over the top of the organ studio. The main room in the basement, which will eventually seat over 200, complete with balcony, is 30 x 60 feet, by 17-1/2 feet high. Around the front and sides of the room is located six 10 x 20 foot rooms which house the 28 ranks of organ pipes and equipment. The pipes are installed in four chambers just as originally installed in the theatre -- foundation, main, orchestral, and brass. The relays, blower, and tremolo exhausts are in two additional rooms -- thus a gorgeous sound is developed without the distraction of chattering relays and chugging

theatre organ

ATOS was celebrating its 10th year when this article appeared in THEATRE ORGAN in the Summer of 1965.



Fred Hermes tuning in the Orchestral Chamber of his ex Michigan Theatre Wurlitzer. *Racine Bulletin Photo*

tremolos. The organ is almost noiseless when not being played.

The organ required about four years to recondition and reassemble, and today it is in fine playing condition. Work is still progressing in the main room, with the balcony presently under construction. The eventual goal is to transform this room into a miniature theatre, complete with a small-scale stage, an organ lift, and projection booth. Although Fred has done the major portion of the rebuilding and reassembly of the 30-ton monster, help has been obtained from William Olle, Charles Spencer, Hugh Burdick, Thomas Rench, Edward Petersen, William Brygger, Peter Charnon, Charles Conrad, Ralph Pater, Charles Steinke, and his son, Fred, Jr.

Even with 28 ranks playing, Fred has extensive plans for improving the Michigan Theatre Wurlitzer. Plans have been made to install twelve additional ranks -- Tibia Plena, Voix Celeste, Unda Maris, Quintadena Celeste, Vox Humana, French Horn, Flute Celeste, Gemshorn, Lieblich Flute, Cor Anglais, Style "D" Trumpet, and 4' Octave. Also pedal additions are planned for the Quintadena, Oboe Horn, Solo String, Post Horn, Clarinet, and

Metal Diaphone -- a sixteen foot extension of the Viola is now installed. Since the installation of the five-manual Wurlitzer, Fred Hermes' home has been a virtual mecca for the present theatre organ greats -- Tom Sheen, John Seng, John Muri, Pearl White, and Kay McAbee are numbered among its players and admirers. Any one who has had the privilege of hearing and playing the 5-28 will acknowledge that Fred Hermes has done the theatre organ world an enormous service in preserving this magnificent instrument.

Summer '65



SUMMARY OF 5/28 MICHIGAN THEATRE WURLITZER, OPUS 1351

Now owned by Fred Hermes, Jr., Racine, Wisconsin

FOUNDATION CHAMBER

Ranks	Compass	Pipes
Vox Humana	8-4	61
Gamba	8-4	73
Gamba Celeste	8-4	73
Tibia Clausa	16-2	97
Diaphonic Diapason	16-4	85
Harmonic Flute	4-2	61

MAIN CHAMBER

Tuba Horn	16-4	85
Open Diapason	8-4	73
Horn Diapason	8	61
Clarinet	8	61
Krumet	8	61
Viol d'Orchestra	8-4	73
Viol d'Orchestra Celeste	8-4	73
Salicional	16-8	73
Concert Flute	16-2	97
Dulciana	8	61
Marimba Harp		

ORCHESTRAL CHAMBER

Solo Tibia Clausa	8-4	73
Solo String	8	61
Solo String Celeste	8	61
Orchestral Oboe	8	61
Oboe Horn	8	61
Brass Saxophone	8	61
Brass Trumpet	8	61
Kinura	8	61
Quintadena	8	61
Solo Vox Humana	8-4	61
Chrysoglott		

UNENCLOSED

Ranks	Compass	Pipes
Master Xylophone		
Solo Bass Drum		

BRASS CHAMBER

English Horn	8	61
Tuba Mirabilis	16-4	85
Piano (Mandolin Attachment)		
Marimba Harp		
Xylophone		
Glockenspiel		
Sleigh Bells		
Cathedral Chimes		
Bass Drum		
Kettle Drum		
Crash Cymbal		
Snare Drum		
Solo Snare Drum		
Cymbals		
Tambourine		
Castanets		
Chinese Block		
Tom Tom		
Sand Block		
Horses Hoofs		
Fire Gong		
Bird I		
Bird II		
Auto Horn		
Surf Effect		
Siren		
Doorbell		
Boat Whistle		

TREMULANTS

Main, Tuba, Foundation, Diapason, Vox Humana, Solo Vox Humana, Tibia, Solo Tibia, Brass, Orchestra.

COUPLERS

PEDAL

Accomp to Pedal 8  
Great to Pedal 8  
Bombarde to Pedal 8  
Solo to Pedal 8

ACCOMPANIMENT

Accomp to Accomp 4  
Solo to Accomp 8  
Solo to Accomp 8, 2nd Tch.  
Solo to Accomp 8, Pizz

GREAT

Great to Great 16  
Great to Great 4  
Solo to Great 16  
Solo to Great 8  
Solo to Great 8, 2nd Tch.

BOMBARDE

Great to Bombarde 8  
Great to Bombarde 4  
Solo to Bombarde 16  
Solo to Bombarde 8

SCLO

Accomp. to Solo 8

Fred Hermes Jr. entertains ATOE members to climax a wonderful Convention. *Trimmier Photo.*



Talented Kay McAbee does an outstanding job at the Hermes WurliTzer. *Trimmier Photo.*





# ORGAN-IZING POPULAR MUSIC

by  
**AL HERMANN'S**

## Major and Minor Chords

Last time I explained how to find all twelve major chords by playing any note + 4 keys + 3 keys.



With one simple exercise you can now accomplish three things:

1. Learn to play all 12 major chords and how they sound.
2. Develop necessary coordination between both hands and left foot.
3. Pedal practice.

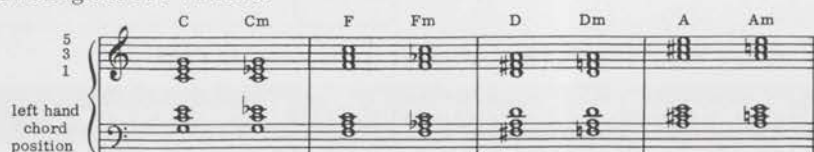
The left hand accompaniment chord should be played between the 2 F's near middle C. In chords containing an F—use the low F. The left foot alternates the 1st and 5th of each chord.

Begin with the C major chord in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time:

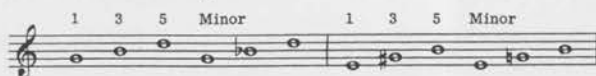


Repeat 4 times and then play the G Chord the same way. Continue practicing all 12 major chords the same way. Always listen—they should all sound the same. Learn two or three each day and repeat many times.

When you can find and play all the Major chords easily, change each one to Minor by lowering the 3rd  $\frac{1}{2}$  tone.



As you can see in the above examples, in the left hand accompaniment chords, the 3rd may be on top, in the middle, or on the bottom. By playing 1 - 3 - 5 with the right hand, it will be easy to find the 3rd of each chord and lower it  $\frac{1}{2}$  tone. If it is a natural, make it a flat. If it is sharp, make it natural.



As you review each Major chord in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time, change it to Minor and practice it the same way.



Listen as you practice and notice the difference in the sound of the minor chords.

## Journal of American Organbuilding

Quarterly Publication  
of the American Institute  
of Organbuilders

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

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

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We recently announced advertising rate changes that were to take effect this spring. We are acutely aware of the disruptive nature our poor production schedule has had on our advertisers. Because we recognize the importance of offering value, we are postponing the rate increase until this fall so that we may have an opportunity to show you we are on-track with coming issues.

We are sincerely sorry for any inconveniences that we have caused. Please know that we have a renewed commitment to getting each issue out on time.

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**Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust**  
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**Piping Hot Recording Company**  
England, 01494-580034  
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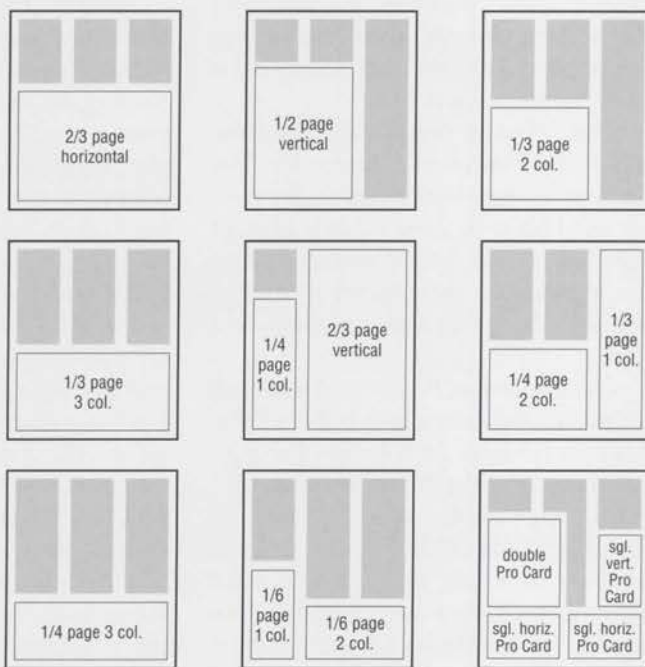
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# Chapter News

**ATTENTION ALL CHAPTER CORRESPONDENTS:** All Chapter News items are to be sent to Vern Bickel, Editor, THEATRE ORGAN, at 785 Palomino Court, San Marcos, CA 92069-2102, or by FAX at 760/471-9194 or by e-mail at vernpb@concentric.net. E-mail submissions are preferred using either Word or Word Perfect. All electronic photographs must be no less than 300 dpi. Regular e-mail photos will not be accepted. If you do not have the capability to send photos in 300 dpi, please send them via Priority U.S. Mail. The deadline for receiving Chapter News items for the September/October issue is July 5th.

## **CEDAR RAPIDS AREA**

Ray Frischkorn, President, 319/364-6300

**Cedar Rapids, Iowa.** The CRATOS Holiday party-membership meeting, held on January 16th, was a memorable event. Darren Ferreter, a member of our Board of Directors, is the manager of the Marriott Corporation Coe College Dining Service here in Cedar Rapids. He arranged for a catered array of food for the party along with dessert treats provided by other members. All attendees had a fine afternoon, which was held at the elegant Clarke Alumni House on the Coe College campus.

The February membership meeting was at the Paramount Theatre For The Performing Arts from noon to five p.m. on the 13th with open console most of that time at the 3/12 Wurlitzer. During the afternoon a short business meeting was held along with a social-refreshment time.

Our Chairman, Ray Frischkorn, took a vanload of theatre organ buffs to Pella, Iowa on February 24th for the Bob Ralston concert at the Pella Opera House.

In the most recent issue of THEATRE ORGAN I mentioned the artists with whom we have contracted for concerts. Tickets are now (late February) on sale for Hector Olivera's concert on May 7th. Checks and cash started coming in even before tickets were available! We look forward to a great, well-attended return engagement.

Future concert artists scheduled to perform, either at the Paramount's Wurlitzer or the Iowa Theatre Building's Barton, through 2001 are: Scott Foppiano, David Wickerham, Simon Gledhill, Barry Baker and Dennis James. We look

forward with anticipation to having all of the above artists perform for us. We know CRATOS has its work cut out for it in preparation for a schedule of this magnitude. With the officers, directors and membership we have, we are confident we can and will meet all challenges!

*George K. Baldwin*

## **CENTRAL FLORIDA**

David Braun, President, 941/957-4266

**Tampa, Florida.** Bill and Becky Shrive again opened their home for our January meeting. Their 2/4 Robert-Morton was in excellent form as was our guest artist, Tom Williscroft. Tom is a past president and former volunteer organist at the Tampa Theatre. A meeting in their home is always well attended. Our members are more than eager to get their turn at open console.

Pinellas Park was the site of our January meeting. The few ranks we have up and playing are literally "music to our ears" as it has been such a long wait due to one thing or another. The meeting was devoted to our coming Annual ATOS Convention bid. We lost our original secretary and treasurer because of illness. Fortunately, we were able to have those positions filled at this meeting. After much discussion, the membership voted to go ahead and submit our convention bid to ATOS.

Our members are keeping busy, especially Rosa Rio. Rosa again drew a large crowd to the Tampa Theatre to hear her accompany the silent movie, *The Thief Of Baghdad*, starring Douglas Fairbanks, Senior. It was wonderful to see so many young people in the audience.

*Peg Mayer*

## **CENTRAL INDIANA**

Carlton Smith, President, 317/638-4918

**Indianapolis, Indiana.** Manual High School was the site of a February 6th concert by artist David Peckham of New York. Although this was his first visit to our concert venue, we certainly hope it will not be the last! His concert included many selections of popular music as well as a few classical numbers. Mr. Peckham is a well-trained classical organist who has made the transition to being a fine theatre organist as well. His concert showed the technical expertise of his many years of training as well as the creativity of his theatre organ style. All in attendance enjoyed his concert immensely.

The following week, February 13th, our regular chapter meeting was held at Warren Performing Arts Center. During the business meeting Carlton Smith reported on the work being done at the Warren and Hedback Theatre installations as well as the plans for the upcoming installation at the Walker Theatre. At the conclusion of the meeting Bill Tandy of Kokomo, always a favorite, was introduced as the artist of the day. Bill is a local favorite dance keyboard musician

## **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**

The Galaxy Theatre  
7000 Boulevard East  
Guttenberg, NJ 07093-4818

### **Bob Maney, Vice President**

229 Ellen Avenue  
State College, PA 16801-6306

### **Doris Erbe, Director**

4942 Hummelsheim Avenue  
St. Louis, MO 63123-4711

### **Jim Patak, Archives Curator**

152 York Road, Suite 200  
Elmhurst, IL 60126-2806

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

*Doris Erbe, Chapter Relations*



and his program included many familiar tunes, up beat and enjoyable.

Sunday, March 12th, brought us to the beautiful Paramount Theatre in downtown Anderson, Indiana. After a surprise—and highly unwelcome—six inches of snow Saturday night (this followed a week of near summer temperatures!) the roads on Sunday were clearing and the sun was out. Those hardy folks who attended thoroughly enjoyed the program presented by our own multi-talented Warren York. Appropriately his program had a Spring theme throughout including, "It Might As Well Be Spring," "Spring Is Here," "When The Red, Red Robin," "Rockin' Robin," "Tiptoe Through The Tulips" as well as other familiar tunes and a salute to St. Patrick's Day. All had a good time! Upcoming concerts and club meeting dates were announced, as well as progress updates on club projects.

Louise Eddington

## CUMBERLAND VALLEY

Robert Eyer, Jr., President,  
717/264-7886: eyerr@cvn.net

Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. About 30 chapter members and friends gathered at the Dillsburg home of long-term member Steve Eppley on a Sunday in late February for an afternoon of theatre organ enjoyment at his 2/16 Möller. Steve opened the festivities with some familiar standards while demonstrating the voices of the organ and its newly installed record/playback feature. Open console followed with Mike Cosey, Bob Carbaugh, Bob Eyer, Jr., and Ivan Spahr. Chamber tours were of special interest to those wondering how home installations can fit an entire pipe organ into such relatively small spaces. The organ was in top form, having been expertly tuned and regulated for the occasion by members Mark Cooley and John McBride.

Bob Maney

## DAIRYLAND

Gary Hanson, President, 414/529-1177

Racine/Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Our "January Thaw" social was held on the 16th at the Racine home of Marilyn Stulken-Rench. The instrument in her home is a 2/3 Kilgen Petite Ensemble, installed by her husband, Tom, who is an organ builder. Marilyn played music from the recent Christmas season. Open console and refreshments followed.

FRED WOLFGRAM



Dave Wickerham, left, on his last night at the Organ Piper, with owner Gary Hanson.

The Valentine Day social was held February 13th at the home of Bob and Gene Leutner of Racine. Bob played "love music" on his three-manual Rodgers 360. Married couples were asked how they met and the best answer won a prize. Other prizes were awarded and then we had open console and refreshments.

Thanks to Clint Lehnhoff we now have a website. It was created primarily to provide members with information about the 2000 ATOS Annual Convention, which will be held in Milwaukee in July. The website can be found at: <http://theatreorgans.com/dtos/index.htm>.

It is with bittersweet emotions that we announce that Dave Wickerham has resigned as a staff organist at Milwaukee's Organ Piper Pizza after almost ten years tenure. He and his family are moving to Las Vegas, where he will be a staff organist, along with Walt Strony, at Roxy's Pipe Organ Pizzeria. Dave made many friends in the ten years he was here, not only because of his great talent, but also because of his charming personality. This was evidenced in the fact that on the night of his farewell party the weatherman predicted the worst snowstorm of the season and still many people came from far and wide to wish Dave well. The move should be a big boost to Dave's career, but the Milwaukee area theatre organ enthusiasts will miss him very much!

Sandy Knuth

## EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

Hank Lysaght, President, 781/235-9009

New Bedford, Massachusetts. A new millennium and a new artist, Carol Williams, began our Babson public con-

cert series on January 8th. She is an English import and now lives in the New York City area. This very talented performer is adept at both classical and unit instruments and is the holder of several diplomas, prizes and memberships in England's prestigious Royal Academy of Music (an associate), a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists and a Fellow of Trinity College, London. She also holds an Artist Diploma after studies with Thomas Murray at Yale University. Miss Williams also studied theatre organ with the late Eric Spruce, so her credentials are impressive.

Carol opened and closed her program on a classical note with Bach's *Tocatta in D Minor* to begin and Widor's famous *Tocatta* from the 5th Symphony as a closer to show her "serious" side and what a unit organ can accomplish with tremors off and in professional hands (and feet). The balance of her program was definitely in the popular vein with some jazz, marches, Broadway musicals and some "finger busters" to equal the best of theatre organ greats. Her double pedaling was a joy to watch and hear. All in all it was a fine musical evening and to have a female organist was a rather rare event.

Our annual meeting was held on January 9th when the past year's treasurer's and secretary's reports are given followed by the usual open console with "home-grown" talent at our Wurlitzer.

February 6th, after a few announcements, once again the talents of some of our members at the organ, with their various styles, made for good listening. With St. Valentine's Day close by Bill Forbush included "Lover" and "My Romance" appropriately.

Silent movie night was on February 12th with member, Chad Weirick, doing an excellent accompaniment to *Son Of The Sheik* with Rudolph Valentino and Vilma Banky. Chad followed the action like an old time silent organist as well as giving his audience a few solo selections. He received a very deserved long applause for his efforts. Our movie night attracts a largely different group from those attending a concert night, with some coming for both. Chad invited a number of children from the Wellesley School System and they seemed to enjoy the program and, hopefully, some will continue an interest in our favorite musical instrument.



The efforts of our Board of Directors and Steering Committee are now concentrating on "New England's Millennial Pipes" as EMCATOS is sponsoring the ATOS Regional Convention 2000 on November 3-4-5, and afterglow on the 6th. We hold Chapter Number One's charter from 1956, yet this is our first try and we have a fine group of artists, five Wurlitzers (two in theatres) and six concerts to offer.

*Stanley C. Garniss*

## GARDEN STATE

Cathy Martin, President, 973/256-5480

**Trenton, New Jersey.** On January 30th, 2000, an important budget meeting, followed by open console, was held at Trinity Methodist Church in Clifton, New Jersey. The congregation had generously offered us the church facilities and the use of their Wurlitzer Pipe Organ. This church is especially interesting to our chapter because installed in the church is a 2/6 Wurlitzer with a horseshoe style console. This organ was installed in 1930.

At the conclusion of the budget meeting President Cathy Martin gave the members a list of our chapter achievements over the last three years. Garden State now owns five donated theatre pipe organs, all being restored to playing condition. We have seven restoration/maintenance crews in operation with a combined average of approximately 175 work-hours per week. Several organs are

almost complete. With this happy news, members wandered upstairs to the Sanctuary where the 2/6 Wurlitzer is still in its original location. Coffee and dessert made the afternoon enjoyable.

Sunday, February 20th at 3 p.m., was concert time and our members were anxious to hear Greg Owen, the young theatre organist perform for us. The concert was held at the home of Bob and Cathy Martin in Little Falls, New Jersey, which has a 3/24 Griffith Beach theatre pipe organ.

Greg Owen is a talented, enthusiastic young artist who developed a love for theatre pipe organ in his early years by playing on all the pipe organs he could find in New Jersey, especially the Asbury Park Kilgen and the great organ in Ocean Grove Auditorium. Greg, at ease with the large organ, began his concert with an interesting, light and difficult selection. Remarks were heard that some of his beautiful registrations were never heard before on that organ. Greg's lively music and big happy smile made the afternoon pass quickly. It was an excellent concert enjoyed by every one. Thanks to our hosts, Bob and Cathy Martin.

*Jinny Vanore*

## HUDSON-MOHAWK

Frank Hackert, President, 518/355-4523

**Schenectady, New York.** The winter of 1999-2000 cast a wet blanket of snow over the Hudson-Mohawk Chapter's



*David Lester at Goldie.*

scheduled January free noontime concert on the 25th of the month. Artist David Lester produced a wonderful program featuring his special nostalgic "TV Cowboy" medley in addition to some other great theatre organ music. However, the audience was understandably small due to the blizzard raging outside Proctor's Theatre, Schenectady New York. Those stalwart fans that braved the horrible weather enjoyed a wonderful concert. Thanks to David for performing so splendidly under such adverse weather conditions.

The February 22nd noon concert featured the keyboard artistry of A. C. Tunningley in *A Touch Of Vaudeville* starring chanteuse Jean Foster as Torch Song Diva *Bubbles LaRue*. The vaudeville-style show spotlighted *Goldie*, the theatre's 3/18 Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ, in-

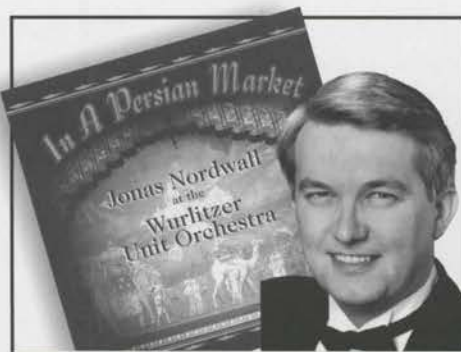
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A.C. Tunningley and Bubbles La Rue.

stalled in 1931, as well as a sing-a-long and silent movie. All at this fast paced, well-produced, exuberant entertainment had much fun. Videos of these and previous chapter-produced noon concerts are shown weekly on all regional public access cable channels thus expanding the genre to a larger audience.

Both winter chapter meetings featured videos as a focal point. The January 24th meeting, held at Proctor's Theatre, was hosted by member David Lester and featured the showing of a video on spectacular theatres of the past; and the February 21st meeting, also at Proctor's Theatre, utilized a video and live demo on organ registration presented by Carl Hackert. Open console and refreshments concluded each evening.

Norene Grose

## JESSE CRAWFORD CHAPTER

Steve Plaggemeyer, President,  
406/248-3171

**Billings, Montana.** The annual corporate meeting, with the election of officers and the celebration of Jesse Crawford's 104th birthday, was held in Billings, Montana on Sunday, December 5, 1999. Crawford was born in Woodland, California on December 2, 1895. President Steve Plaggemeyer surprised us with a special "photo-cake." Nelson Cahill brought champagne and we toasted Jess' 104th and sang "Happy Birthday!"

We are negotiating with the Al Bedoo Shriners to install our chapter organ in their Billings auditorium. Stage remodeling plans include dressing rooms

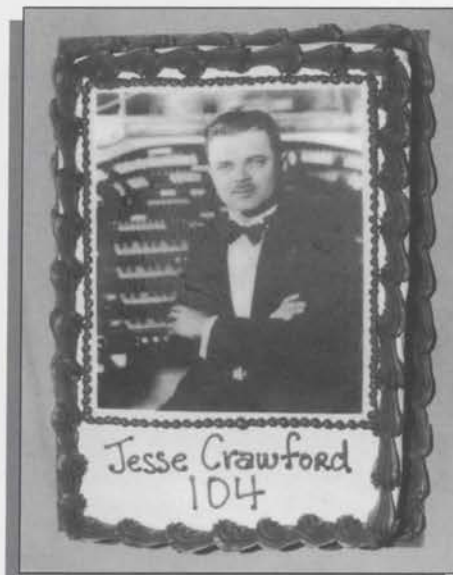


Jesse Crawford Chapter members at the Bay Theatre in Seal Beach during the Wurlitzer Weekend II: Charlie Malone, Dick Loderhose, Ralph Beaudry and Dr. Ed Mullins.

and organ chambers with room for future expansion. We own the 2/4 Robert-Morton, originally installed in the Cozy Theatre in Billings by Balcolm and Vaughan of Seattle in the '20s.

The radio script for the *Jesse Crawford Organ Concert Program Number 9*, November 20, 1949, was the addendum for the Winter 1999-2000 issue of our journal, *The Poet*. Crawford related his meeting of composer Victor Herbert:

"I'll never forget the time I met Victor Herbert, Mike. (Announcer) It happened on Broadway in 1922, and was one of the biggest thrills of my life. I'd admired him for years from a distance, usually about 3,000 miles, and finally I



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104th Birthday Cake.

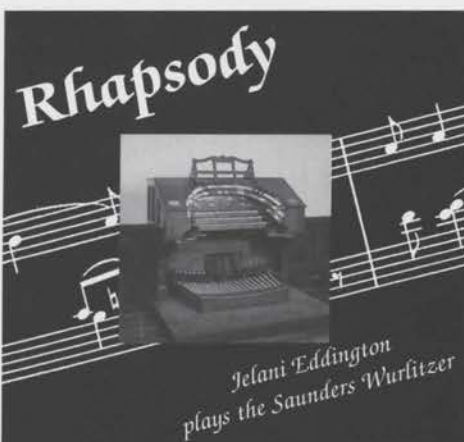
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2000 Jesse Crawford Chapter officers: Steve Plaggemeyer, holding chapter mascot "Amy," Bertie Newton and Dr. Ed Mullins.

was actually introduced to the man who, at the time, dwarfed all of New York. It was an exciting moment." Crawford then played "When You're Away" from Victor Herbert's *The Only Girl*. They discussed the Hammond Organ classes at Steinway and Sons, where you got sixteen two-hour lessons for just \$52.00. Crawford's pupils could rent a Hammond Spinet Model Organ at a cost of just \$25.00 a month. The announcer commented, "You really like your new job as 'Professor' Crawford?" to which Jess replied, "I certainly do." Crawford was billed as "Professor Crawford" in February 1913, when he began his first position as organist at the Gem Theatre in Billings, Montana.

Several chapter members participated in the *Wurlitzer Weekend II*, January 22-23, 2000, sponsored by the Los Angeles and Orange County Theatre Organ Societies. They were Ralph Beaudry, Charlie Malone, Jim Melander and Dr. Ed Mullins. Chapter member, Dick Loderhose, hosted one venue presenting the 4/32 Wurlitzer at the Bay Theatre, Seal Beach. This instrument was originally Jesse Crawford's organ in the New York Paramount studio.

Dr. Edward J. Mullins

## JOLIET AREA

Jim Stemke, President  
847/534-1343

Joliet, Illinois. Another year has passed and JATOE had another successful year. Our membership is increasing with persons from around these United States. This is a wonderful feeling. We have received a number of donations with matching funds from associated companies. All of these funds are going directly to rebuild the Barton Grande at the Rialto Square Theatre in Joliet, Illinois.

During the year we were entertained at our socials by John Giacchi, Dave Wickerham at the JATOE Appreciation Day provided by the Rialto Management, Warren York, Russell Holmes at the Hawaiian Pig Roast, and Jack Moelmann. We are certainly fortunate that the Rialto Theatre provides us with the space and time to have our get-togethers. This is a wonderful facility.

Our *RialtoFest* and *Pipe Organ Extravaganza 4* were both a fine success. The artistry of Martin Ellis and Barry Baker at the Long Center was superb. The POE 4 at the Rialto Theatre with Jonas Nordwall, Tom Hazleton, Walt Strony, Tony Fenelon, Larry Dalton and other acts played to a sold out house. We again thank Joy Collins of *Beautiful Sound* for providing us with the Allen and Steinway instruments thereby making the program a success.

The 4/27 Rialto Barton Grande is playing superbly with the help of Brant Duddy, Terry Kleven, Bob Swaney, Jim Gruber, Jim Stemke, Roland Frase, Chuck Bennett of *Artisan*, and others. We are continuing with the restoration and hopefully are getting near the end. We are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel.

Jim Patak

## LOS ANGELES

Irv Eilers, President, 323/254-0987

Los Angeles, California. Thanks to all the people that attended *Wurlitzer Weekend II*. It wouldn't be any fun if no one came, and it seemed like everybody had a good time. Thanks to Don Near and the Orange County Theatre Organ Society for their cooperation as co-sponsors. And thanks to Dick Loderhose, owner of the magnificent New York Paramount Studio Wurlitzer in the Bay Theatre, Seal Beach. And last, but not least, thanks to all the artists and technicians that made the weekend possible and complete.

"*Wurlitzer Weekend 2001—A Theatre Organ Odyssey*" will be a three day event beginning on Friday evening, January 19, 2001, and will conclude on Sunday afternoon, January 21, with lots of goodies in between! So mark those dates and stay tuned for more details to follow!

*Gee Dad, It's A Wurlitzer*, the hour-long radio show of theatre organ music unique to Los Angeles, which aired on KPCC-FM each week for almost twenty years, hosted by a succession of able theatre organ aficionados, came to a sudden end in March. Management of the Pasadena City College public radio station KPCC-FM, has been assumed by the Minnesota Public Radio Corporation which recently announced a change in format to an "all news all talk" format and numerous musical and comedy format programs have been cancelled.

*Gee Dad It's A Wurlitzer* was the brainchild of radio announcer Hal Sanguinetti, who, while hosting a general music show, played a Gaylord Carter recording. There was an immediate audience response of phone calls and letters, prompting the incorporation of theater organ music as a regular feature and then a full hour time slot. Hal has since

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moved to Phoenix and Bob Ralston of Lawrence Welk renown has been the host for the past four years. For the closing show, Bob played a selection from each of the top twelve albums (one album per artist), which had been selected by audience vote. The artists/albums played in sequence, with the top number one vote getter being the final tune of the evening, were: 12) Dave Wickham, *Steppin' Out at the Rialto*; 11) Bill Vlasak, *Slow Boat to China*; 10) Lyn Larsen, *Paradise*; 9) Rob Richards, *Just Rob*; 8) Bob Ralston, *It's Beginning to Look A Lot Like Christmas* (Bob substituted a cut from his new album due out in May); 7) Jelani Eddington, *Discovering the Unit Orchestra*; 6) Ron Rhode, *This Will Make You Whistle*; 5) Lew Williams, *Rhapsody in Blue*; 4) Charley Balogh, *Spectacular*; 3) Barry Baker, *For the Very First Time*; 2) Simon Gledhill, *California, Here I Come*; and, number one: *George Wright Plays the Mighty Wurlitzer Pipe Organ*.

Audience response helped create *Gee Dad, It's A Wurlitzer* and that faithful Los Angeles area audience will miss hearing theatre organ music each Sunday evening. We can only hope that the program may be able to find a new home soon.

Wayne Flottman

## MANASOTA

Charles Pierson, President, 941/924-0674

Sarasota, Florida. Work on the installation of our Wurlitzer into Grace Baptist Church has reached the halfway point. Fifteen ranks are installed and playable in the solo chamber. Through the magic of MIDI, that chamber has been played including operation of the swell shades. Norman Arnold has all the regulators installed and wound in the main chamber. A four rank chest is in

place. At the shop, Bob Chute, Bob Alexander, John Hegener and Frank George have the double stop rail wired. The four keyboards have been wired to the static state driver boards.

The February meeting at Grace Baptist featured Dave Henderson at the Allen as well as showing the capabilities of his two Roland keyboards. At Kings Gate, Dr. Ketch Morrell was our host in March. Ronnie Gicka, our teen-age member, and Frank Schertle and Dave Cogswell played the three-manual Allen theatre organ.

Carl Walker

## METROLINA

John Apple, President, 704/567-1066

Charlotte, North Carolina. With many thanks to Michael Johnston, we are pleased to announce the creation of an MTOS website. It is up and running, and well worth a visit. Because we have not had a meeting to vote on the prospect of buying a domain name, the URL (Universal Resource Locator) is long. We are being given free space by Jerrell Kautz on his most excellent site, [Theatreorgans.com](http://Theatreorgans.com). Our URL is [www.theatreorgans.com/nc/metrolina](http://www.theatreorgans.com/nc/metrolina).

The MTOS website provides a history of our group, and a bit of history on

the theatre organ itself. The front page leads with "What's a Theatre Organ?" Pictures and recordings abound—of theatres, and especially theatre organs. The special appeal of great melodies and harmonies, particularly when well played on a theatre instrument, is set forth in words and recorded accompaniment (real, mp3, & wav).

An online membership form is there as well as one to be printed on paper, and there is much additional information. But it is not possible to pay dues on line at present because of the high charges from card processors. This may change later this year. A substantial subsection of the site is devoted to the Charlotte's Carolina Theatre, and is accessible from the MTOS home page. It provides many pictures showing exterior and interior views in the historical context. The entire site is searchable, in case you don't find links for something you're looking for. In this section you will find a virtual tour available, with grand effect. More than a hundred pictures are shown, accompanied by over an hour of vintage theatre organ music. The tour shows the house as it was during its several phases of evolution: vaudeville, silent film, talkies; concerts (the first performance of the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra was



Don Macdonald with Tam.



Some members of the Metrolina Chapter.



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held at the theatre in 1932); Cinerama glory; the exclusive Carolinas showing of *Sound of Music*, which played for more than a year to more people than actually lived here; B movie infamy after fans defected in multitudes to the vast wasteland of television.

The Wurlitzer organ, which opened with the theatre in 1927, was a Style F. We found only one original picture that barely shows the console. On the site, pictures of other Style F Wurlitzers are used to show close ups of tabs and buttons. The console held two manuals and pedals in horseshoe fashion, controlling eight ranks of pipes. The voices included: Tuba, Open Diapason, Tibia Clausa, Violin, Violin Celeste, Clarinet, Concert Flute, Vox Humana. All of these were available at various pitches, allowing the organist to create innumerable varieties of sound. In addition there were



*David Nelms and Grande Kilgen Console.*

many percussions and special effects such as Chimes, Xylophone, Glockenspiel, Sleigh Bells, Drums, Cymbal, Castanets, Auto Horn, Steamboat Whistle Siren, Door Bell.

The first organist at the theatre was Fae Wilcox. It was quite unusual in those days to find a young female organist (outside a small town church). The Paramount organization, which was running the theatre at the time, even paid for her to study with Jesse Crawford in New York. Unfortunately no recordings were made and we are unable to hear what this remarkable person was able to do, or what the organ sounded like in the theatre.

The Wurlitzer was removed with the brutalization of the auditorium for Cinerama. There was a plan to have it installed in the high school auditorium in Brevard, but it was vandalized in storage. You will find more about this, and many

other theatre organ subjects, by visiting our new website, [www.theatreorgans.com/nc/metrolina](http://www.theatreorgans.com/nc/metrolina).

On Sunday afternoon, February 6th, MTOS members gathered at the home of David Bieri on the west shore of Lake Norman, approximately 40 miles north of Charlotte. It was a beautiful sunny day, unusually warm for February, and there was a great view of the lake through still-barren trees. Don MacDonald was the principle performer on David's two-manual Allen and he gave it a fine workout.

Don displayed several styles through his arrangements, with some emphasis on Scottish and English tunes. At one point he even pulled on his trusty tam-o-shanter (see photo) to go with a rousing reel. As always, Don's playing was enthusiastically received.

After a pause for refreshments provided by our gracious host, John Apple explored the Allen's more classical voices playing music by Bach and other composers. The organ responded well to his professional touch. It was altogether a most rewarding afternoon.

David Nelms, a charter member of MTOS, served as host for our meeting of March 5th. He opened his pipe organ shop in Charlotte for our members, gave us the "royal" tour, and answered all questions about organ building and maintenance. He also presented us with his typical feast of refreshments that included hot pizza and wines.

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David displayed his work on the console of a Kilgen 3/9 to be returned to the Grande Theatre in Wausau, Wisconsin. MTOS member Scott Foppiano and Tom Hazleton made changes to the original six rank specification, adding three more ranks, MIDI, and more pistons. David has made some shining additions to the console—handmade Kilgen plates and decorative scrolls. The organ should be playable in time for a side trip during the Milwaukee convention this year. Although David's shop handles church organs (including the giant Möller at Calvary), he says he would love to do more theatre organ work. We agree!

Our newest member, Larry Jones of Piedmont Music Center, demonstrated a Rodgers he found in a residence in Florida. This 25-year-old Rodgers has three manuals and the electronic equivalent of ten ranks. Larry explained the history of the Custom 340, discussed its technical features, and explained that he was tweaking it for installation in the nearby town of Shelby at the Rogers Theatre (coincidence!). The Rogers Theatre never had a pipe organ, and the folks in Shelby are really excited to get their 1000 seat theatre restored. Larry will be installing the Rodgers in the Rogers Theatre, and that will be the first organ installation in a theatre around here in over 72 years!

Don Macdonald gave a 45-minute program of varied music and light commentary, and then took requests for another half hour. Members Bill Gay and Mike Kamps also entertained us for a few numbers on the Rodgers.

*Bobby Ray and Michael Johnston*

## MOTOR CITY

Tom Hurst, President, 248/477-6660

**Detroit, Michigan.** Restoration work continues at the Redford Theatre. Our members are working on many projects, including the installation of a new Masonite stage floor. The theatre is returning to its original beauty with all the painting being done by Donald Martin, George McCann and Charlie Mack. Our organ is in excellent condition thanks to our President, Thomas Hurst, David Ambory and Charlie Mack.

A new Steering Committee has been formed with George McCann as Chairman. Much progress has been made over the last several meetings. The commit-



RAY VAN STEENKISTE

*Steering Committee, from left, Dorothy Van Steenkiste, Stuart Grigg, Michael Hauser, Tom Hurst, Charlie Mack, Allen FitzGerald, David Martin, standing, George McCann and Gregg Bellamy.*

tee has discussed the great success the organization has had in the past, and is brainstorming to develop a plan for the future of MCTOS. Members of the committee are: George McCann, Chairman, Stuart Grigg, Gregg Bellamy, Michael Hauser, Tom Hurst, Charlie Mack, David Martin, Allen FitzGerald, Brian Carmody, David Calendine, Wil Walther, and Dorothy Van Steenkiste.

On a happy note, we are pleased to announce the marriage of two of our young couples: Michele Jeanine Esper and Kenneth Leslie Martin and Christine Ambory and David Nelson Gregory.

On a sad note, we are sorry to announce the death of two long-time members of our society that were dedicated to the restoration of the theatre organ and the theatre—Robert I. Mills and Earl Wilson.

Our bi-weekly movie series continues. The following artists have been playing the overtures and intermissions since January: Ron Reseigh, Scott Foppiano, Gus Borman, Brian Carmody, Jennifer M. Canda, Steven Ball, Dave Calendine, John Lauter, and Lance Luce.

Our programs continue with the 1925 silent film *The Phantom Of The Opera* accompanied by Tony O'Brien at the Barton theatre pipe organ on Saturday, October 14th. Lance Luce and Pierre Fracalanza will be featured in our gigantic Christmas Show on Saturday, December 9th.

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.

*Dorothy Van Steenkiste*

## NEW YORK

David Kopp, Chairman, 973/305-1255

**New York, New York.** On Saturday morning, February 5th, New York Chapter members gathered for our first activity of the new year, an open console session at the Lafayette Theatre in Suffern, New York, and a mini-concert by organist Bernie Anderson. Members took turns playing the 2/11 Ben Hall Memorial Wurlitzer and enjoyed the company of their fellow theatre organ enthusiasts over coffee and refreshments. The morning's activities were topped off by a delightful mini-concert by Bernie Anderson who serves as one of the house organists at the Lafayette. Bernie demonstrated both his talent and the resources of the Wurlitzer in his forty-minute program that featured the complete musical score from *South Pacific* in addition to a variety of other popular selections. Thanks to crew members Bruce Courter and Dave Kopp, the Ben Hall Wurlitzer was in fine tune. The Lafayette is one of the last remaining single screen movie houses in the New York area, and the Wurlitzer is featured on Friday and Saturday evenings before the 8 p.m. show.

The New York Chapter Board of Directors met in January to elect officers and plan the schedule of activities for the coming year. Re-elected to serve another term were Dave Kopp, Chairman; Chris Broadwell, Vice-Chairman; Tom Stehle, Secretary and Bob Welch, Treasurer. Concerts at New York Military Academy, Long Island University and Chaminade High School were planned for the spring months.

*Tom Stehle*





Bill Horn played the Wersi organ in the home of Evan and Teddy Santistevan for North Texas in January.

## NORTH TEXAS

Donald Peterson, President,  
972/517-2562

Dallas/Ft. Worth, Texas. In the category of significant late breaking news, our chapter has just received word that one of the foundations, to which we had applied for funds, has granted us funding. President Don Peterson reports that this will go a long way toward financing the projected installation of a chapter organ in the Dallas Inwood Theatre and that we can expect to get started on this project in the very near future. The award letter praised the chapter on the clarity and completeness of our proposal and



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Bill Flynt and the Blue Diamond Trio and organist Helen Thomas entertained NTC in February. Taking a bow are John Weeks, Bill Chamberlain, Helen Thomas and Bill Flynt.

request for funding. We have sent similar request proposals to other foundations that may provide additional funding for the projected installation.

Don Peterson also reports that he is meeting with representatives of KAAM radio with the hope of establishing a weekly or monthly organ program that will feature our chapter Robert-Morton in the Lakewood Theater. This would be partly live (with an audience) and partly from recordings. This station has a format of "oldies" that include music of the last sixty years, and has a large following. Don has also set up a preliminary meeting with representatives of the Dallas Majestic Theatre to discuss the possibility of returning an organ to this vintage theatre. The Majestic was saved from the usual fate of downtown theatres and was beautifully restored in the late '70s. It is now a civic auditorium and is used for various stage presentations. This meeting will be a follow-up to earlier conversations regarding a theatre pipe organ for the Majestic.

Our Robert-Morton in the Lakewood Theatre continues to perform well and is

getting continuing use for silent movie accompaniment, weddings and other uses by the theatre. On February 20th, we held our regular February meeting and election of officers in the Lakewood Theatre and followed the meeting with music using our chapter's 3/8 Robert-Morton. Program chairman, Don Reasons, billed the program as *Dolls And Guys*. Unfortunately, however, the "dolls" became one doll, diminutive organist Helen Thomas. The other "doll," Elaine Jones, had to withdraw from performance due to a painful muscle spasm and the affects from prescribed medication meant to relieve the pain. We were sorry that we were denied the performance by Elaine, but were delighted to hear from Helen Thomas, who played a string of our favorite selections.

The featured "guys" turned out to be a solo performance by Don Reasons, followed by a surprise performance by *The Blue Diamond Trio*, led by organist Bill Flynt playing the Robert-Morton. The other two members of the trio were saxophonist, Bill Chamberlain, and John Weeks on the drums. This group has been playing together for some time and has worked up arrangements that feature the members both in ensemble and sharing the melody line between the keyboard and the saxophone. Their repertoire included big-band standards and other pop standards, all suitable to dancing. This is appropriate since their primary audiences are seniors who want to dance to the old familiar music, which this trio plays beautifully. Bill Flynt is proficient on all keyboard instruments and has been playing this Robert-Morton ever since it was first installed in the Lakewood Theatre about fifteen years ago by the North Texas Chapter.



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Playing with the trio, Bill usually uses a synthesizer keyboard but his playing on the Robert-Morton was wonderfully supportive, using the rich organ tones to augment the ensemble.

The audience was delighted with the program and demonstrated this with their enthusiastic applause. As usual, following the program, open-console players kept the organ music flowing. The number of guests who came forward to play the Robert-Morton for their first time delighted us. This usually results in signing up new members.

In January, not usually a meeting month, we were treated to an unexpected treat. Members Evan and Teddy Santistevan invited us to a special meeting in their new home to hear and play their prized Wersi electronic organ. This was the first time for our chapter members to be in their home since they moved here from Colorado just a couple of years ago. For the occasion, the Santistevans flew in their favorite organist and Wersi specialist, Bill Horn. Bill is an internationally known entertainer, keyboard artist and educator. Bill has been entertaining international audiences ever since he represented the Arp Synthesizer Company, followed by the Wersi Organ Company from Germany. With Wersi, he concertized in Europe (in addition to his busy teaching and performing schedule here in the U.S.)

For the North Texas Chapter, Bill turned out to be a fascinating performer and accomplished musician on the Wersi. He augmented his superb keyboard performance with delightful facial expressions and body language that was a hit with this audience of pipe lovers. In addition to his inimitable take on standards and novelties, he gave exciting interpretations of big band and familiar melodies that were especially well received. Bill,

please come back anytime! Soon! Thanks to the Santistevans for inviting us and providing such a wonderful treat.

*Irving Light*



*Don Wallin entertained guests at Puget Sound Chapter's Valentine's Day party.*

## PUGET SOUND

Marilyn Schrum, President

**Seattle, Washington.** It was "Pizza & Pipes" all over again when nearly ninety Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society members gathered at Haller Lake Community Club for a Valentine's Day event. Don Wallin was the featured organist, providing lots of music for folks as they enjoyed catered pizza, drinks and veggie trays. Members reminisced as Russ Evans showed film footage taken at various Puget Sound Chapter programs and ATOS Conventions during the 1960s and '70s. The day's entertainment was topped off in a grand way by Don Wallin's experienced accompaniment to a Laurel & Hardy silent film on the chapter's 3/8 pipe organ.

As is usual at chapter events at the Haller Lake Clubhouse, decorations by Ellen Sullivan added a truly festive quality to the party.

Members look forward to a spring and summer with a number of enjoyable events.

*Jo Ann Evans*

## RIVER CITY

Gregory A. Johnson, President,  
402/753-2486

**Omaha, Nebraska.** The chapter's January 16th meeting found us back at Durand's Sky Ranch Airport, not in the chapter's Barton theatre organ studio, but in Bill and Maurine's home—we were contending with furnace problems in the studio. Vice President Lynn Lee chaired a short business meeting, and then he introduced our guest artist, member Jim Ross. Besides being a talented young musician, Jim is a high school teacher in western Iowa, and has started a small business as an antique dealer on the side. To his delight, Jim encounters lots of old sheet music, an extra benefit of his business, and that set the theme for his concert: *Music So Old That Nobody Would Remember It.* (But, we DID remember!) His selections, ranging from "Can't Help Loving That Man Of Mine" to "It's Been A Long, Long Time" conjured up memories of the Big Band Era, the celebrated orchestra leaders and their vocalists. Jim closed his program with songs and organ stylings reminiscent of famous British organist Reginald Dixon and Blackpool's Tower Ballroom Wurlitzer: "Sundown" and "Toot, Toot, Tootsie Goodbye." Jim Ross' renditions of Reginald Dixon's toe-tapping dance rhythms were so insistent that we nearly rolled-up the rug and danced. The Durand's home boasts a three-manual Allen Digital Computer Organ with many voices, and Jim matched lush registrations to each tune.

Shirley and Paul Kanka invited us to their home for our chapter's February 20th meeting. The Kanka's living room boasts two side-by-side spinet organs, a Baldwin and a Hammond. Our guest artist for the day was member Maurine Durand, and she offered a sing-along

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Jim Ross at the Allen console.

TOM JEFFERY



Maurine Durand offered a sing-along with a love theme for Valentine's Day.

TOM JEFFERY

program. Since this meeting closely followed Valentine's Day, Paul Kanka used his computer skills to assemble and print an impressive sing-along booklet of lyrics with a love theme. Be advised that River City members aren't a bashful bunch, so we belted-out old favorites like "Frankie And Johnny Were Lovers," "My Sweetheart's The Man In The Moon," and "Love's Old Sweet Song." Following Maurine's program, Paul Kanka, Jim Boston and Jeanne Mehuron entertained us during open console. Afterwards, we headed to a nearby restaurant for a wives' night out dinner.

Bob Markworth reported on his Kimball theatre organ home installation, which uses the Rickman digital control system. A Rickman engineer is scheduled to hook-up the computer in April, and the organ should be playing soon!

Tom Jeffery

## SAN DIEGO

Frank Y. Hinkle, President,  
619/460-1020, fhinkle2@juno.com

**San Diego, California.** On January 23rd, approximately 55 members traveled to Fullerton, California to enjoy the final performance of the *Wurlitzer Weekend II*

presented by the Los Angeles and Orange County Theatre Organ Societies. This was an incredible program performed on the 4/35 Wurlitzer installed in the Plummer Auditorium. The guest artist was Mr. Lyn Larsen at the Organ, accompanied by the Jack Bethards Band. It was obvious to all that Lyn and Jack are not only friends but have great respect for each other's talents. The good-natured banter between them and the audience made for a fun-filled afternoon. This was a "once in a lifetime" program and we were thrilled and entertained by these great musicians. After dinner, at the Home Town Buffet in Anaheim, we all returned to our homes very much enriched by this experience.

On the 12th of February, The Theatre Organ Society of San Diego presented our Silent Film Night at Trinity Church, Spring Valley. Our own member, Gregg Breed, provided not only the music but arranged the entire score, drawing from great Russian composers, to accompany the showing of *The Eagle*, starring Rudolph Valentino. For most of us this was the first chance to see this actor and we were entranced by his really great talent. The program opened with the short feature *You're Darn Tootin'* with Laurel and Hardy. I've seen this film before but still roar with laughter at their antics. This was a very enjoyable evening and I want to thank Greg for the months of hard work that went into getting the music just right. I also want to thank the Technical Crew, Russ Peck and Joe Forand. It takes many people to make a presentation run smoothly and I want them to know that they are greatly appreciated.

If your travel plans include San Diego, please contact us. We would love to have you join in our future programs.

Frank Y. Hinkle

## SOONER STATE

Joyce Hatchett, President, 918/743-1854

**Tulsa, Oklahoma.** Sooner State's January meeting, scheduled to be held at Tulsa's German American Society Center and featuring their 2/12 Geneva pipe organ, fell victim to the weather. It's not often that we have to cancel a meeting, but a heavy snowfall, complete with icy streets, made it necessary.

February found us back on track, however, this time at the home of Phil



Sooner State's president, Joyce Hatchett, at work on Tulsa's Central High School Kilgen.

and Laura Judkins for music on their 3/11 mostly Wicks theatre pipe organ. Following our brief annual business meeting (postponed from January) Phil climbed onto the bench. He told us some of the history of the instrument, including that it was one of the few that Wicks had built that had a pneumatic relay, and he was still using it!

Phil began the music, showing off lots of the capabilities of the organ. We heard a real low-down "George Wright dirty" raucous "The Lady Is A Tramp" with plenty of Kinura, some old-time standards, and two of Tulsa's Central High School marches. He closed with "O Great Spirit," the Central High School hymn.

We did have a report on the Central High School Kilgen project. Things are progressing well, according to crew chief Sam Collier and Central Foundation chairman Garvin Berry.

Open console time was lots of fun! Wayne Barrington started things off, followed by Charlie Brewer, Sam Collier, Julius Chapin and Bonnie Duncan. Sam had left his song list on the music rack, but Vivian Williams, who was next, said she couldn't use it because "you have printed it upside down!" Joyce Hatchett played, and then our child-star Kenneth Pierce. Guest Joel Erickson was last, surprising us theatre organ enthusiasts with an exciting performance of Bach's *Tocatta And Fugue in D Minor*. He told us he had been trained as a classical organist. We hope to hear more from him.

Wayne Barrington reports for the crew that while the auditorium at Tulsa Technology Center was closed during December and January, they were able to use that time to do some work on our chapter





Sooner State members: Laquite Kimes, front left, Audrene Orendorff, front right, Sam Collier, back left, and Jim Rappenecker, back right, are some of those who have put in many hours of work on Tulsa's Central High School Kilgen restoration.

owned Robert-Morton. The necessary re-leathering on the Tibia is completed, and they are finishing up on its re-wiring.

We have also had a report from John McConnel about his Orpheum Theatre in Okmulgee. The console of the Robert-Morton has been refinished in white, the stop rails have been extended and an additional stop rail has been added. John has purchased 350 syndynes for the stop tabs. They are also refurbishing the interior of the theatre, including the big job of painting the proscenium. We are looking forward to the day when we can hear the organ play.

Dorothy Smith

## SOUTHERN JERSEY

Joseph Rementer, President,  
856/694-1471

**Franklinville, New Jersey.** Just before Christmas, 1999, the Broadway Theatre, Pitman, New Jersey, was the stage for the Pitman Hobo Band Concert and a big surprise for the residents of Pitman was the pouring forth of the Broadway Theatre Kimball Pipe Organ during intermission. Ciphers were nonexistent! Much had been accomplished. Ernie Wirth demonstrated this with a medley of Christmas songs with registration changes by Joe Rementer. The audience and especially the band were surprised and pleased with what they heard. The brass rail near the console was polished to its original 1926 luster, the Kimball Console was polished, and the organ spotlight was lit for the first time in many years to highlight the console. Much more has to be done,

but this is a great beginning.

Snow and ice cancelled our January 2000 meeting, but it did not stop our slate of officers for the new millennium from jumping into their jobs. The membership unanimously elected Joseph Rementer, President, Harry Bellangy, Vice-President, Karl Keller, Treasurer, and Mary Brook, Secretary.

On February 20, 2000, SJTOS met DTOS for their open house at John Dickinson High School. Bob Dilworth led a small group of high school students on a tour of the chambers and other interesting areas of the fabulous Dickinson 66 rank Kimball. Refreshments were available, provided by DTOS members, for the entire open house during which many enjoyed open console utilizing the many diversities of the Dickinson Kimball. At 5 o'clock, around twenty music enthusiasts from the combined societies traveled to the Kirkwood Kitchen Restaurant to enjoy a splendid meal to round off a pleasant, social and productive day.

Mary Brook

## VALLEY OF THE SUN

John Bittner, President, 480/802-9709

**Phoenix, Arizona.** At the First Christian Church Fellowship Hall on November 14th, Ron Rhode announced that he would not be an organist that day, but a teacher. He then presented a condensed class on organ registration. Ron used a variety of tunes to demonstrate different ranks and combinations. At the end of the "class," he gave us Romberg's "One Kiss" and a Judy Garland hit, "Swing Mr. Charlie."

We enjoyed a special treat at the Orpheum Theatre on November 28th. Walter Strony and Tom Hazleton performed on the Wurlitzer and the Allen George Wright IV Digital Organ, with an appearance by pianist Dayton Fowler Grafman. The organists took turns at both instruments, sometimes on solo numbers, sometimes accompanying each other. We heard music of Duke Ellington and George Gershwin, and several show tunes. Walter, Tom and Dayton brought the program to a close with a grand Christmas medley that featured all three instruments. The audience sang along to their encore, "God Bless America."

We did not have a business meeting in December, but instead gathered at the Beatitudes Care Center for some holiday


music presented by Lew Williams. The organ is a 2/5 Hall installed by our chapter crew chief Tom Fizzell. Chapter members and residents of the Care Center filed the room, and refreshments were provided by the Beatitudes. Lew played many songs of the season and a few requests from the audience. He gave us a "short course in musical appreciation" with Bach's *Fugue in D Major* ("sounds like a dog chasing its tail") and "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" (did you catch the counter-melody of "Home On The Range"?). We ended the day with a sing-a-long.

Chapter members also participated in an open console party at Jud Murphy's home in December. Jud has a 2/7 Aeolian pipe organ. Several people who may be reluctant to play when there is a "professional artist" in the room enjoyed sharing their talents that day.

On January 16th, we had a get-acquainted meeting at the home of newly elected Chapter President, John Bittner. Concerned that there might not be enough chairs for the large group that showed up, John announced, "Those of you who play the organ are obligated to come sit on the bench and play so someone else can have a seat." John has a three-manual Allen 965 digital theatre organ, and several members did participate in open console. It was a relaxed afternoon, with everyone introducing themselves and sharing theatre organ experiences.

Chapter member Johnny Harris was guest entertainer for the day at First Christian Church Fellowship Hall on February 20th. With his musical talent and comedic wit, Johnny is always a delight to listen to. He presented a variety of music, including some Simon and Garfunkel tunes of the '60s, a medley of Irish favorites, and a selection of real oldies, such as "Side By Side" and "Ain't We Got Fun." He also played a few audience requests. It was a fun afternoon.

The Orpheum Theatre Foundation has presented four films in a classic film series, the most recent on March 5th—the 1920 *The Mark Of Zorro*. While not ATOS Chapter functions, these films do present the Wurlitzer to the public, and our chapter has been recognized at each program. Ron Rhode has provided musical accompaniment for the films.

Madeline LiVolsi 



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# The Wurlitzer That Made Hi-Fi

By Ralph Beaudry,  
Associate Editor



Hermes  
5/34 Wurlitzer

*(Editor's Note: Those members fortunate enough to be able to attend the ATOS Annual Convention pre-glow home tours will have the opportunity to see and hear one of only three five-manual organs built by the Wurlitzer Company in their North Tonawanda factory. The following article chronicles the history of these unique instruments, and how one of them contributed to the resurgence of the popularity of the theatre pipe organ, the rise of the high fidelity recording industry, and even the founding of ATOS.)*

THE WURLITZER COMPANY BUILT only three five-manual organs—all of which are alive and well and still playing! The first was Opus 1351, a 5/28 organ installed in Detroit's Michigan Theatre in 1926. This organ was reinstalled in Fred Hermes home in Racine, WI, back in 1946, and will be featured, with Kay McAbee at the console, during this year's ATOS Annual Convention in Milwaukee, WI, from July 27th through August 2nd.

A second five-manual organ, Opus 1587, with just twenty-one ranks, opened in Chicago's 3,980 seat Marbro Theatre in 1927. In the early '60s it was reinstalled in Byron Carlson's Minneapolis, MN home. It remained there until 1982, when he sold it to the Ocean State Performing Arts Center (formerly the Loew's State Theatre) in Providence, RI, where it now is played frequently.

The third organ, Opus 1942, also a 5/21, was installed in 1929, only three blocks from the Marbro Theatre, in Chicago's 3,600 seat Paradise Theatre. The theatre's name was taken

from the adjacent Paradise Ballroom. In fact, the builders of the Marbro theatre (the Marks Brothers) had wanted to use the Paradise name for their theatre, but since the Paradise Ballroom owners had planned to build their own theatre—which was actually completed by the Balaban and Katz chain—the Marks Brothers simply condensed their name to Marbro. However, they went bankrupt a few years later so B&K operated both theatres from 1932 until each one closed and was demolished. The Paradise went first in 1956, while the Marbro lasted until 1963.

The rebirth of the theatre pipe organ movement began shortly after the end of World War II. Many organ buffs had begun removing unused organs from their original theatre homes. A Los Angeles man, Richard Vaughn, had become an organ buff after buying one of the then popular Hammond electric organs. But, craving a real pipe organ for his home, in 1946 he bought Opus 1732, a Style F with three-manuals and eight ranks, which had been used at the 1939-40 Golden





*The EX Paradise/Richard Vaughn console as it looked when first installed in Bill Brown's Phoenix, Arizona home.*

Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island in San Francisco Bay. Even that didn't quench his thirst, so he began a nationwide search for an even larger organ. His bid for the near mint-condition Paradise Theatre organ in Chicago was accepted and in the late '40s he began installing it in his home in the Baldwin Hills area of Los Angeles.

Over the years, the original Paradise Theatre organ console shell had suffered some damage so Vaughn had the entire console redesigned with matched split grain Philippine mahogany. In his basement he built two side-by-side chambers, each one measuring 14' x 14' x 14'. The organ spoke into a four-foot wide, two story tall mixing chamber and the sound came out through two six-foot high and nine-foot wide grills into his 25' by 35' studio. Installation was completed in 1951.

One day Vaughn heard some organ transcriptions being played on KFAC radio. He called the station and, when he found out it was George Wright at the New York Paramount Theatre, he immediately called the theatre, talked with Wright (who was already planning to return to California) and invited him to come by and try out the organ.

In 1951, Wright returned to California, liked the organ, and a recording contract was signed. About this time Ampex (a leading manufacturer of recording equipment) developed a new system utilizing three microphones and tapes and recorders that had three-track recording capability. Vaughn utilized this three-channel system, before there was a way to

produce LP records in stereo, when he started recording Wright for his newly organized company—High Fidelity Recordings, Inc.

Although interest in theatre organs certainly had tapered off in the late '30s and early '40s, it never disappeared completely and Jesse Crawford, Eddie Dunstedter, Gaylord Carter and others had kept the torch burning with personal appearances and recordings. With the advent of LPs in the late '40s many of their old 78 rpm records were converted to the new format. Around the country some buffs revived the long dormant instruments in theatres or removed them for installation in their homes. By the time Vaughn was ready to release his first Hi-Fi recordings the theatre organ revival was well under way. So much so that Richard Simonton sent out invitations to organists and organ fans everywhere to meet in his Toluca Lake home and establish an organization to coordinate and encourage the promotion of theatre organs and their music.

On February 8, 1955, they met and agreed to become the American Association of Theatre Organ Enthusiasts (later shortened to American Theatre Organ Enthusiasts and still later modified to American Theatre Organ Society.) This group became the original Charter Members and they elected the first officers, set up an Executive Committee to write their by-laws, and publish a journal. Richard Vaughn was one of this group and was elected to be part of the Executive Committee. He later was elected to serve two terms on the Board of Direc-





*The Wurlitzer Company's 5-manual console, as installed at their De Kalb, Illinois Factory.*

tors. Since installation of the organ in the Simonton downstairs Bijou Theatre had not yet started, the entertainment for the evening consisted of listening to tapes of Vaughn's first two Hi-Fi recordings.

The astounding growth of high fidelity equipment (amplifiers and speakers, in particular) throughout the '50s is no doubt due, at least in part, to George Wright's remarkable series of recordings that he made on Vaughn's 5/21 Wurlitzer. In fact, you couldn't attend a Hi-Fi show anywhere in the country and not experience almost every manufacturer demonstrating the superiority of his equipment with these Hi-Fi recordings. Within a few years Vaughn claimed the first two albums each sold more than a million copies. Before George's contract with Hi-Fi ended in 1959, material for more than fourteen releases had been recorded.

George Wright was not the only artist to record the Vaughn 5/21 organ. Don Baker recorded the organ for his Capital album titled *Organ Moods For Listening*. About the same time, Gordon Kibbee's *Mighty Wurlitzer Pipe Organ* album came out on the Starlite label. (His later album, *South Pacific and Oklahoma*, which showed the five-manual console on the cover, was actually recorded on the Lorin Whitney Robert-Morton organ in Glendale.) It's also believed that Bruce Prince Joseph made some classical recordings of the organ and that the instrument was also broadcast, but we've been unable to confirm either of those items.

On May 10th, 1957, Vaughn and Hi-Fi Records sponsored a stunning promotional concert when they presented George Wright playing the Shrine Auditorium Möller for a crowd of over 5,000. We've taken the title for this article (and much of the factual information) from a story in the Spring, 1959, issue of *THEATRE ORGAN* Journal. That article also announced that Vaughn was going to expand his Wurlitzer by buying the Denver Civic Auditorium 4/35 Wurlitzer (a four-manual Special, Opus 0154, installed in 1918) to add to the 5/21 and move the organ into a new, larger studio. Alas, that never happened and the Denver organ was broken up for parts and its console now controls the beautiful Wurlitzer organ at San Sylmar's Nethercutt Collection.

In 1962, Vaughn sold the organ to Bill Brown and it was moved to Phoenix. Now installed in Bill Brown's home, and enlarged to thirty-four ranks, it has been a feature attraction at the frequent Phoenix Regional Conventions and both Lyn Larsen and Ron Rhode have recorded it.

In the interest of historical accuracy it should be mentioned that there have been four other five-manual Wurlitzers built—none of which came from North Tonawanda! Since 1954, the Organ Loft Restaurant in Salt Lake City has had a five-manual Wurlitzer, which was built by the late Larry Bray from the twin console Staten Island Paramount Wurlitzer (Opus 2129). The two consoles were combined into one five-manual keydesk, pipe work from other organs has been added, and it plays today





Above: The Bruce Williams Zaccagnino 5-manual console in Flemington, NJ.

Right: The EX Marbro/Byron Carlson 5-manual Wurlitzer after being installed in the Ocean State Performing Arts Center in Providence, RI.



Above: Replica of the Paradise Theatre Wurlitzer Organ Console at the Sanfilippo residence in Barrington Hills, IL.

as a 5/32. Over the years, Gus Farney and others made LP recordings on this organ.

Another five-manual Wurlitzer was actually custom built by the Wurlitzer Company, long after they had gone out of the pipe organ business! It was built to be a showcase memorial to their near seventy-five years of organ building. It had a sample of every rank, both theatre and classical, ever built in their North Tonawanda factory. They built a new five-manual console and the organ debuted in 1978 at their headquarters in De Kalb, IL. Unfortunately it existed for only five years because their business ran into financial trouble. The organ was put up for sale in 1983, and is believed to have been broken up for parts shortly thereafter.

In the early 1980s Gorsuch Enterprises in San Diego, CA built a five manual console for organist Weldon Flanagan to install on his residence organ in Plano, TX. Unfortunately, lightning struck his home and Flanagan disposed of the organ. The console was obtained by Bruce Williams Zaccagnino, who installed it on his now 5/37 Northlandz American Music Hall organ in Flemington, NJ, where it is playing today.

The last five-manual Wurlitzer, with eighty ranks of pipes, was designed by the late Dave Junchen for the magnificent Sanfilippo Victorian Palace in Barrington Hills, IL. The inaugural concert on this, the world's largest theatre organ, was held on July 10, 1993. Lyn Larsen and others have made a series of CD recordings on this unique instrument. This organ also boasts two important "connections" with the Paradise Theatre Wurlitzer. First is the colorful peacock scrim, which covers the organ's chambers. It is a near copy of the Paradise

Theatre's magnificent main curtain. Even more impressive is the Ken Crome built console, which is an exact duplicate of the original ornate Paradise Theatre Wurlitzer organ console—complete with cherubs and busts of Liszt and Tchaikovsky!

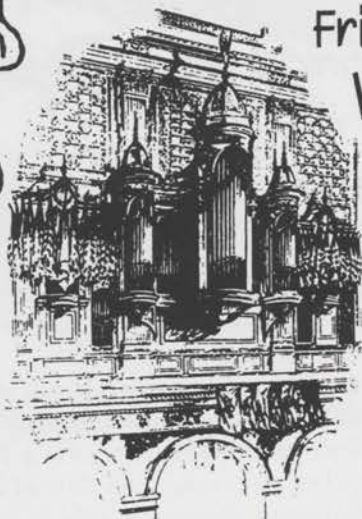
The Hi-Fi recordings George Wright made more than forty years ago on the Vaughn 5/21 Wurlitzer live on. Recently Banda's *Original Masters Series* released on one CD a digital version of the first two albums of the famous Hi-Fi Records series—#701 *George Wright Plays The Mighty Wurlitzer Pipe Organ* and #702 *George Wright Encores*. Both of these were recorded in the early 1950's. When these recordings were first issued, George Wright remarked, "I signed up with High Fidelity instead of a major record label for two good reasons. I'm allowed to choose the selections I record and they are perfectionists in the field of reproducing sound with startling realism. In short, I want to record things I like to play and I want them to sound right."

We are all deeply indebted to Richard Vaughn for having the foresight and skill to obtain one of the finest organs ever built by Wurlitzer, record it with the finest state of the art equipment, showcase the artistry of George Wright, and get nationwide distribution for his Hi-Fi albums. The theatre organ revival has now lasted almost fifty years—well over three times longer than the original "Theatre Organ Golden Age" in the teens and twenties. Without a doubt the Richard Vaughn 5/21 organ WAS the Wurlitzer That Made Hi-Fi.

(Thanks to Chris Gorsuch, Gordon Kibbee, Ron Mitchell, Stephen Ross and various publications of the *Theatre Historical Society* for assistance in preparing this article.)



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# An Acre of Seats in a Palace of Splendor

By Steve Levin, Associate Editor

Note: From time to time this feature will depart from its usual format of individual theatre profiles to survey more general topics. This is the first of them.

## Department of Good Timing

As we all know, or should, the theatre organ was conceived when Robert Hope-Jones called at North Tonawanda and managed to sell his foundering organ company, and himself, to Wurlitzer. What drove Hope-Jones to this particular suitor we

do not know; perhaps he was intrigued by Wurlitzer's vast experience in the entertainment business, a field in which he had not enjoyed much success. It remains one of the great accidents of chance that an invention, a sponsor capable of developing and marketing it, and a market for it, all came together at roughly the same time.

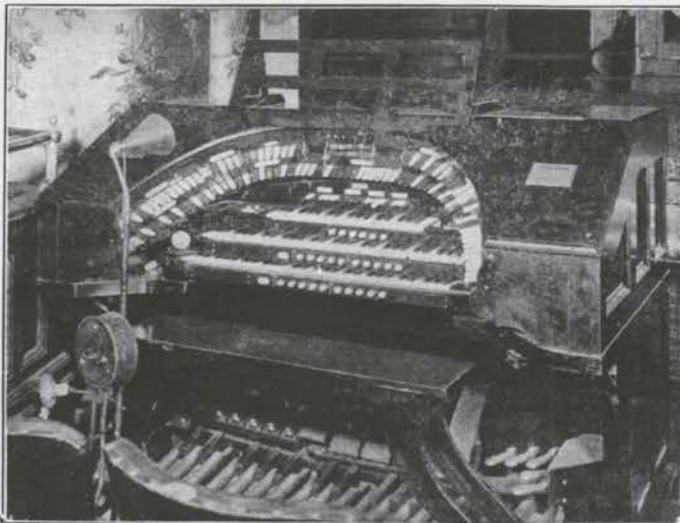
Wurlitzer's Organ Department took years to become profitable, and without the movie theatre sales it certainly would have folded, but Farny Wurlitzer, Hope-Jones's initial contact and staunchest supporter, never claimed to have seen into the future. Addressing this organization in 1964, he was perfectly clear on the matter: "Our thinking in the early days, when we took the business over, was the church field, which he had been working with largely, hotels and theatres. We didn't realize that the large movie theatres were coming."

Indeed, Wurlitzer's first three large organs, not counting five built to fulfill contacts made by Hope-Jones before receivership, went to legitimate theatres. These were 3/13 straight solo Style 6s for the Cort in Chicago and the Cort and Century in New York City. Years later, Farny learned that these purchases were not motivated so much by genuine enthusiasm for the Unit Orchestra as by its very real potential to replace live orchestras, a threat used to settle some hash with the Musicians' Union. The Chicago organ, the first Wurlitzer ever installed in a theatre, remained in service for several decades, but the two New York organs, their jobs done, were quickly removed.

Meanwhile, with movie theatres becoming larger and their audiences more sophisticated, exhibitors were coming to realize that the organ was the most effective medium for accompanying silent films, and some of them found the revolutionary new Wurlitzer far more suitable than the churchy instruments offered by established builders. We know now they were correct, but this wasn't so clear-cut at the time: by the end of 1916, Wurlitzer had shipped 118 organs, while Möller, the most aggressive of the old firms at the time, had built about 130 for theatres. But the tide was turning: Wurlitzer's next hundred sales were matched by about sixty by Möller, and it continued ever thus.

VITAGRAPH THEATRE

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Oddly enough, this trend was slow to reach New York, the acknowledged capital of the show business. Broadway's first significant film-accompanying Wurlitzer went into the Vitagraph in 1914 (the theatre, known earlier as the Lyric and Criterion, was the smaller of the two in Oscar Hammerstein's 1895 Olympia complex; the organ itself was the old Century Style 6 pulled from storage and enlarged), but it would be the last for quite a while: the Strand (1914), Rialto (1916) and Rivoli (1917) all had Austins; the Capitol (1919) an Estey. Perhaps as fallout from the Cort and Century experiment, large Wurlitzers would not reappear until 1922, when the Rialto's Austin was replaced by a Style 260; two years later, another Style 260 went into the Rivoli. The Strand and Capitol enlarged and altered their old organs, but stayed with them.

Wurlitzer's earlier successes were in the hinterlands. By the time the Capitol opened, six four-manual Wurlitzers had been installed in theatres in Pittsburgh, Denver, Chicago, San Francisco, Portland and Seattle, and an unusual four-manual had been built for Denver's Civic Auditorium. Back in New York, Loew's State (1921) opened with a Möller, replaced in 1925 by a larger Möller. Finally, in 1926, New York got a Wurlitzer of the first water: the Paramount's incomparable 4/36; in the meantime, Wurlitzer had built six four-manual Style 285s for places other than New York.

Wurlitzer labored mightily to establish its type of organ as "The World's Greatest Achievement in Music for Theatres," and most of the competition agreed: the few builders not striving to imitate Wurlitzer should have been. Even Möller finally came around, but too late to gain much headway; Austin and Skinner never really did. It is to Wurlitzer's everlasting credit that it defined the "theatre organ" as something very specific, not just any organ that happened to be in a theatre. We've enjoyed that distinction ever since.



*Opposite: The Century console was returned to factory for the addition of a second stop rail and various controls. Note the odd side-mount piano levers.*

*Above right: Two of Wurlitzer's early triumphs were nearly opposite each other on Denver's Curtis Street. The Paris had a 3/13 Style 6 (1913), the Isis a 4/28 Special (1915). The Civic Auditorium was not far off.*

*Right: Style 6 evolved into the Style 35, which in turn evolved into the Style 260. The Isis organ and the four similar units which followed it were precursors of the Style 285.*

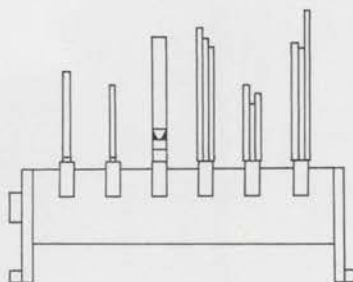


# Preview of Coming Attractions



The Eastern Massachusetts Chapter's Mighty 4/18 Wurlitzer will be one of the many organs featured during "New England's Millennial Pipes," the ATOS Regional Convention 2000. The convention will be hosted by the Eastern Massachusetts Chapter on November 3, 4, 5, 2000. Details in the July/August issue of THEATRE ORGAN.

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