

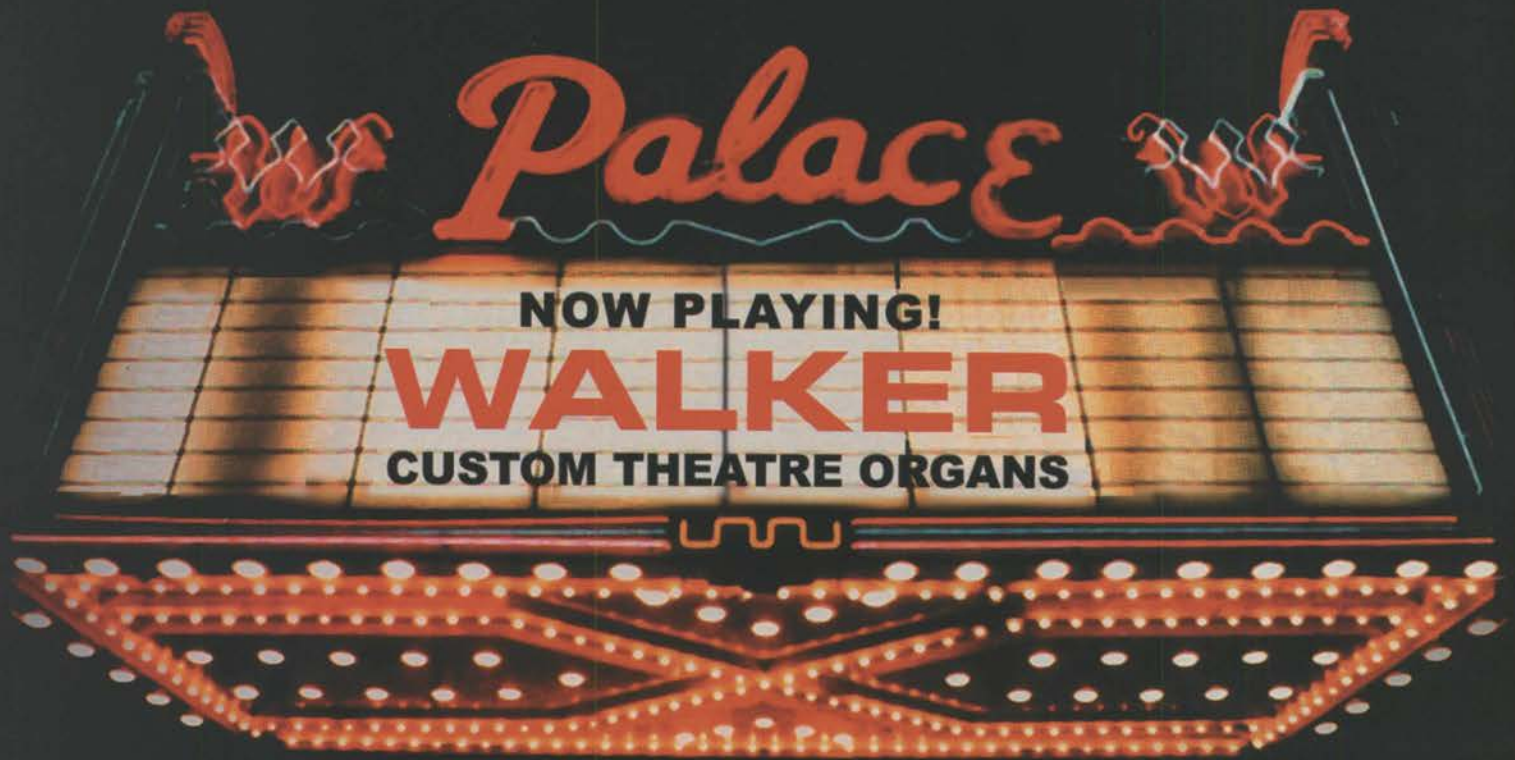
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JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY



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President's Message



The advertisement used to read, "What becomes a legend most?" I guess after recent events we have to ask the question, "What becomes of Legends?" As we recently mourned the loss of the great Lee Erwin, we are

now confronted with the passing of the fabled Gaylord Carter. I can't claim to have ever had the pleasure of meeting either of these gentlemen but I did hear them play, and oh how they played! But more than anything else Lee and Gaylord represented a living history, a continuous line linking the golden age of theatre organ to the present. This was a remarkable thing when you consider that up to recently, when illness slowed these guys down, they had been actively concertizing, performing and accompanying silent films uninterrupted since the 1920s. They epitomized the term showman and they will be terribly missed.

And now they are all gone . . . the greats and the near greats who performed in dark theatres all across the country when theatre organs weren't a hobby or a curiosity but actively used to accompany silent films. Before films learned to speak the only way that audiences knew how to see and enjoy their movies was with the live sound that only a theatre organ can produce. Theatre organs went from theatres to radio and then became part of a wonderful revival spurring renewed interest in this wonderful art form. We have now come almost full circle, our icons are no longer a part of our present but now belong to our collective past. We now pass the torch . . . but to whom?

Nelson Page

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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2001

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The Wonderful Wyton House Duo

Original Article by Ted Crampton



The Wyton House 3/20 Wurlitzer and piano.



The Wyton House 4/16 Compton and Bechstein grand piano.

For the theatre pipe organ enthusiast a trip to the United Kingdom is incomplete if he or she does not visit the Wonderful Wyton House duo. Yes, the music room of this English country home is the location of two theatre pipe organs—lovingly restored and professionally maintained by Peter and Ilse Palmer!

Across the Atlantic, the gently rolling countryside of North Cambridgeshire has always been home to Peter Palmer. Before his retirement his main livelihood was that of owning and managing a substantial farming business. His youthful enthusiasm for the movie theatre, and particularly the theatre organ that formed an integral part of its program 60 or so years ago, spilled over into his later years. With the increase in the popularity of television and the decline in movie going, Peter's buildings started filling up with surplus pipe organs.

Thus it was in the early 1960s that Peter decided to build a large concert room on his property, with the specific purpose of installing a theatre pipe organ. His choice fell on an 11-rank Compton organ, which formerly entertained the patrons at the Astoria Theatre, Southend on Sea—a popular seaside resort and a favorite with London's residents. Organs were popular

attractions in the Southend theatres where several were installed.

The Astoria was a 'super cinema' seating 2,750 and was built on a grand scale. Edward A. Stone and Tommy Somerford designed the theatre. At the time of its opening it was one of the four largest theatre stages in the UK. Incidentally, it was also the first British cinema to be equipped with germ-proof pay boxes. It was opened on July 15, 1935 with a lavish program of entertainment on a scale unknown today. Some 2,500 waited in line, many for more than seven hours, to ensure a seat. Outside, the building was a riot of color and foliage, while inside the subtle blending of rose, brown and gold fleck was highlighted by a profusion of floral decoration. One of the



Wyton House concert hall.



Wyton House courtyard gate and music building.



Wyton House complex.

stunning features of this new cinema was its rising orchestra pit, and as The Astoria Grand Orchestra, under the direction of the famous Jan Dodowsky, rose slowly into view that evening reports tell how the roar of the crowd could be heard in the street. The orchestra accompanied *The Black Pearl* ballet. There was a Newsreel and a main and 'B' movie and then Guy Hindell brought up the huge four-manual console, complete with its illuminated surround. Many popular resident organists followed him.

The Astoria became the Odeon in 1944, at a time when only those cinemas screening the latest films were able to attract the public, but the death-knell finally sounded for the Compton in the mid 1950s when TV made its presence felt and cinema audiences began to drop off drastically. At this point the organ fell into virtual disuse, until 1970 when the cinema was temporarily closed for 'twinning' and the instrument became the property of organ builder Gerald Carrington of Great Mundon.

In 1971 the organ was purchased by Peter Palmer and removed to Wyton House. As part of the concert room, two huge chambers had been incorporated to house the Compton's pipe work—now increased to 16 ranks. A Bechstein grand piano from an Ipswich theatre was also made playable from the console.

Sadly, the resulting instrument did not come up to Peter's exacting tonal standards and for the next decade Peter's efforts were dedicated to its improvement. This was largely achieved by April 1983, when Robin Richmond gave the first public concert in the 120-seat music room.

Throughout Peter's efforts to preserve and promote his favorite instrument, he has had the staunch support of his wife Ilse and it was with her wholehearted encouragement that Peter decided to install a Wurlitzer organ at the opposite end of the room to the Compton. And he chose a high quality instrument, indeed!

In 1937 the industrial town of Luton, some 30 miles north of London, was prospering and thus resulted in the building of the 2,090-seat Ritz Theatre. Like the Astoria, Southend on Sea, its opening on October 11, 1937 was a lavish affair. There was a personal appearance of two film stars, who were appearing in one of the subsequent movies, a Newsreel and a splendid stage show with a dance troupe. Other stage acts followed and then one of the leading organ stars of the day—H. Robinson Cleaver—rose out of the orchestra pit at the three-manual console of the Wurlitzer organ, complete with its spectacular illuminated surround—one of the prettiest illuminated surrounds ever manufactured.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23



Above: *The Compton upon arrival at Wyton House.*

Right: *The music room chandelier rescued by Peter Palmer from a theatre.*



THE WONDERFUL WYTON HOUSE DUO

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

The Ritz Theatre continued to provide enjoyable stage and movie entertainment for the next 34 years, before converting to Bingo use. Many celebrated organists appeared in the console spotlight, but the organ's farewell concert took place in 1974 and the Ritz finally closed its doors. Just prior to its hasty removal George Blackmore and David Shepherd recorded the organ on an LP appropriately entitled *Goodbye*.

With the Wurlitzer safely removed to Wyton House, the construction of two huge chambers, each measuring 25' by 15'—an organ builder's dream—were completed. The organ was completely inspected and Peter decided to enlarge the organ's original 8 ranks to 18—a massive undertaking, as anyone who has tackled it will know! The resultant sound it produced did not, like that originally from the Compton, meet with Peter's critical approval and it was not until the arrival of Chris Booth, a professional organ builder specializing in the restoration and installation of Wurlitzer instruments, that things began to improve. Much work was undertaken within the chambers, including the re-routing of the wind supply to chests and tremulants, the relocation of some of the pipe ranks, major re-wiring of electric cables throughout the instrument and the installation of a larger blower.

All this work resulted in a much superior sounding organ and Simon Gledhill and Nigel Ogden opened it with a public concert on September 2, 1995. More recently, two more ranks—bringing the total to 20—have been added as well as the installation of a separate blower for each chamber. The result is a most spectacular instrument by any standards. Public concerts are held regularly by organists of the highest quality, including several from America, namely Walt Strony, Barry Baker, John Seng and Trent Sims. Carlo Curley, Warren Lubich, John Ledwon, Clark Wilson and others have made

social visits. Peter and Ilse are particularly keen to encourage younger organists and many have enjoyed their welcome hospitality.

The Wurlitzer has made regular appearances on the popular weekly BBC Radio 2 program *The Organist Entertains* and two excellent CDs have been made by Russell Holmes on the Wurlitzer and Kevin Morgan on the Compton. These are available at ATOS Conventions or from the organists.

Decades of hard work by Peter, Ilse, Chris Booth, and pipe maker and voicer Duncan Booth (no relation) have resulted in two memorable instruments maintained to the highest standards and all enthusiasts owe them a great debt of gratitude for ensuring that the sound of the theatre pipe organ that we love so much can continue to be enjoyed by future generations.

The music room at Wyton House is a joy to behold! As you enter, your feet immediately sink into the luxurious royal purple carpet and your eyes are drawn upward to the massive chandelier suspended in the center of the room. This impressive lighting fixture was rescued from a theatre and painstakingly restored by Peter. The 30-foot high gabled ceiling, a room size that holds 120 concertgoers, and spacious organ chambers all combine to produce phenomenal acoustics. The gold painted Compton console, with its original sunray music rack, sits on a raised platform at one end of the room, while the Wurlitzer console, resplendent in its illuminated surround, sits on a raised platform at the opposite end of the room. Looking out of the music room, through sliding glass doors, you see an extensive patio complete with reflecting pool and flowerbeds. Beyond that is the view of the courtyard and the Palmer's country home. One cannot imagine a more appropriate setting for listening to the magnificent sounds of TWO theatre pipe organs!

Compton 4/16, Opus 293

(Astoria Theatre, Southend on Sea)

SOLO CHAMBER	PIPES	WIND PRESSURE
8' Trumpet	61	10 inches
16' Tuba	65	15 inches
8' French Horn	61	10 inches
16' Tibia Clausa	97	12 inches
8' Krumet	61	10 inches
8' Clarinet	61	10 inches
8' Concert	61	10 inches
8' Solo String	61	10 inches
8' Vox Humana	73	10 inches
Vibraphone	49 notes	
Toy Counter		

MAIN CHAMBER	PIPES	WIND PRESSURE
16' Diapason	85	10 inches
8' Tibia Clausa	73	10 inches
16' Stopped Flute	97	10 inches
8' Cello	73	10 inches
8' Strings (2 ranks)	146	10 inches
8' Vox Humana	73	10 inches
Xylophone	42 notes	
Glockenspeil	42 notes	
Chimes		

Bechstein grand piano playable from console
Total number of pipes = 1,168



Two views of the Wyton House main Wurlitzer chamber.

Wurlitzer 3/20, Opus 2210

(Ritz Theatre, Luton)

SOLO CHAMBER	PIPES	WIND PRESSURE
8' English Horn	61	12 inches
16' French Trumpet	73	10 inches
8' Tuba Horn	73	15 inches
16' Tibia Clausa	97	10 inches
8' Brass Saxophone	61	10 inches
8' Kinura	61	10 inches
8' Oboe Horn	61	10 inches
8' Solo String	61	10 inches
8' Solo String Celeste	61	10 inches
4' Horn Diapason	49	10 inches
Marimba	49 notes	
Xylophone	37 notes	
Glockenspeil	30 notes	
Chimes	18 notes	
Toy Counter		

MAIN CHAMBER	PIPES	WIND PRESSURE
16' Open Diapason	85	10 inches
8' Tibia Clausa	73	10 inches
16' Concert Flute	97	10 inches
8' Gamba	73	10 inches
8' Gamba Celeste	61	10 inches
8' Vox Humana	61	6 inches
8' Orchestral Oboe	61	10 inches
8' Quintadena	61	10 inches
8' Clarinet	61	10 inches
4' Salicional	49	10 inches
Vibraphone	49 notes	

Upright piano playable from the console.
Total number of pipes = 1,340



BANDA



GEORGE WRIGHT "A TRIBUTE TO JESSE CRAWFORD"

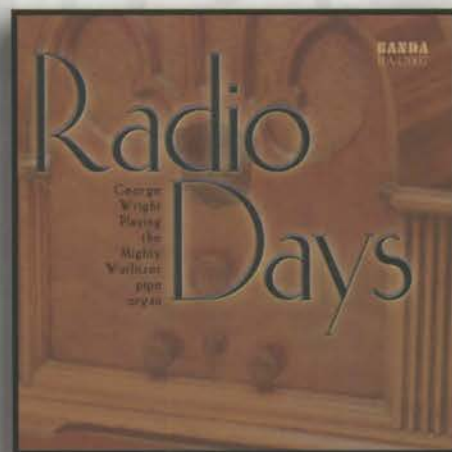
This is George's classic recording in which he plays his famous Pasadena studio organ in a salute to his friend and mentor – Jesse Crawford. These classic recordings are taken from Mr. Wright's own archives of the material recorded in the 1960's.

Selections include: I'm Confessin' (That I Love You) • Pale Moon • What Are You Waiting For Marry? • So Beats My Heart For You • Moonlight On The River • I Love To Hear You Singing • High Hat • Hawaiian Sandman • Tiptoe Thru The Tulips, With Me • How Am I To Know • The Perfect Song • When The Organ Played At Twilight.

GEORGE WRIGHT "RADIO DAYS Vol. 1"

Much of George Wright's career was devoted to work on the radio. Starting in San Francisco, in the early 1040's moving on to New York and then to Los Angeles where he had his own radio show for many years. With this CD, BANDA will present a series of these radio shows which were recorded on various instruments including his own Pasadena studio organ, the former wurlitzer of the San Francisco Paramount Theater (heard in this recording) and several electronic instruments which were in his own home studio.

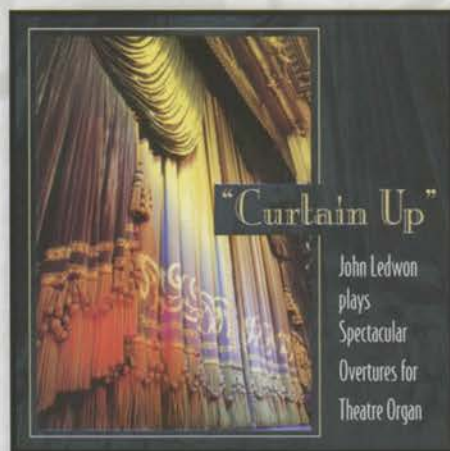
Selections include: Introduction G. Wright • From This Moment On • Someone To Watch Over Me • Pavane • I wanna Be Loved By You • La Plus Que Leats • What Are You Doing The Rest Of Your Life • One Fine Day • Piccalino • Jealousy • Stars In My Eyes • I Get A Kick Out Of You • To A Water Lily • Falling In Love With Love • White Christmas • I'll See You Again.



JOHN LEDWON "CURTAIN UP"

This recording features Mr. Ledwon playing seven spectacular overtures on his 4/53 Wurlitzer organ.

Selections Include: Orpheus in The Underworld • Poet and Peasant • Beautiful Galathea • Morning, Noon and Night in Vienna • In A Persian Market • Night On Bald Mountain • William Tell Overture.



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Front Cover: Wyton House Duo—
4/16 Compton and 3/20 Wurlitzer.

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Category "B":

Scholarships are available to organ students studying with professional organ teachers.

For information and application forms, contact:

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503/642-7009
donna.parker@webtv.net

NOMINATIONS ARE NOW BEING ACCEPTED

It is once again time to send in your nominations for **Organist of the Year, Hall of Fame and Honorary Member**. Please include a one-page letter describing the accomplishments of the person being nominated to receive an award. Nominations must be postmarked by March 31, 2001. Send them to Donna Parker, P.O. Box 6103, Aloha, OR 97997-0103. Questions? Call 503/642-7009 or e-mail to: donna.parker@webtv.net.

ATOS ENDOWMENT FUND GRANT MONEY IS AVAILABLE

Is your Chapter planning to engage in a project or program which will have a lasting impact on the preservation or presentation of the theatre pipe organ as a historically American instrument and musical art form or a project or program of particular historical or scholarly merit? Grant money from the interest earned by the ATOS Endowment Fund is available to assist Chapters with these projects or programs, and such Chapters are encouraged to submit an application

for a grant to the ATOS Endowment Fund Board of Trustees. Now is the time for your Chapter representative to send for a grant application form so that the completed application may be postmarked by the deadline—April 1, 2001.

The ATOS Endowment Fund Board of Trustees will review all completed applications so returned. The recommendation of that group will then be reviewed by your ATOS Board of Directors, which makes the final decision. At its Annual Meeting in Milwaukee, July 2000, your Board of Directors approved over \$11,000 in grants to ATOS Chapters engaged in such projects and programs.

Please request your grant application form from the new chair of the ATOS Endowment Fund Board of Trustees, Fr. Gus L. Franklin (Vice-President of ATOS). He may be contacted by mail at 6508 Willow Springs Road, Springfield, IL 62707-9500, by e-mail at franklin@atos.org, by telephone at 217/585-1770, or by FAX at 217/585-0835.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION IS PRINTED ON THE MAILING COVER OF EACH ISSUE OF THEATRE ORGAN

Important information for members is to be found printed on the mailing cover of each issue of THEATRE ORGAN. Before you discard the mailing cover, please look at it carefully. Advance Notice: The ATOS Marketplace Order Form as well as the ATOS Annual Convention Registration Form and the Convention Hotel Registration Form will be printed on the March/April mailing cover.


The ATOS Archives/Library Has Moved

The ATOS Archives/Library has been moved to the Rialto Square Building in Joliet, Illinois. This new location provides adequate space to house our

collection in a climate-controlled environment. There will now be enough space to access every item in the collection and to give the Curator ample room to catalog and maintain the collection. Please make note of this new address:

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ANNOUNCING A PRICE INCREASE FOR ATOS MARKETPLACE ITEMS

Due to the increase in postage rates it is necessary to raise the prices of most of the items listed for sale from the ATOS Marketplace. However, we will honor the prices listed on the ATOS Marketplace Order Form, as printed on the mailing cover of the November/December issue of THEATRE ORGAN, through the month of January. If you are interested in purchasing any of the items that we have for sale, now is the time to send in your order and get them at the lower price. 

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Members' Forum

Dear Editor:

I've known LATOS member and concert artist Chris Elliott since his first concert at the age of 15. Recently I had the chance to once again hear Chris at UCLA's Royce Hall, where he played its famous Skinner Organ. The program was sponsored by UCLA Performing Arts and UCLA Film & Television Archive, and also supported by The Ahmanson Foundation.

From the time Chris walked out on stage and greeted us and thanked us for being there, until the last note, followed by a roar of rousing applause, his audience was wonderfully entertained in a joyful and fully satisfying manner. His opening overture was "Orpheus in the Underworld." On the "mighty Skinner," that was quite a dazzling production in itself.

Following that, Chris accompanied a Harold Lloyd western comedy short. It was hilarious; I had never seen it and almost fell out of my chair laughing—definitely one of Lloyd's best. The feature film, accompanied by Chris, was the rollicking silent swashbuckler *The Mark of Zorro*, starring Douglas Fairbanks as Don Diego, who returns from his studies in Spain to find his homeland oppressed by a tyrant. Donning black mask and costume, Diego transforms himself into Zorro, the people's hero, who proceeds to make things right with some nifty swordsmanship and Olympics-qualifying gymnastic tricks, with a little romance tucked in, you know.

Chris Elliott's credentials in both classic organ literature and theatre organ performance and composing are much too lengthy to list here; suffice to say that Gaylord Carter is proud to claim Chris as his protégé. After the concert, I had a chance to say hello to Chris and his parents in the lobby. I correspond with them, but seeing them is even better. A night to remember! When you have a chance, don't pass up the opportunity to hear this exceptional and gifted young artist, Chris Elliott.

Avis Schmill, North Hollywood, California



Dear Editor:

On page 51 of the November/December 2000 issue of THEATRE ORGAN, there appears a review by Silent Film Review editor Robert Gates of two recent videotape issues, the first being *The Vicar of Wakefield* and the second being *Sparrows*. On both films, I provided the musical accompaniment.

I am indebted to Mr. Gates for his very kind remarks regarding my performances on these tapes in addition to two other tapes he reviewed in the September/October 2000 issue. Mr. Gates states that my accompaniment for *Sparrows* differs greatly from my work in the three Thanhouser videos. It should be because the Thanhouser films were recorded in the fall of 1999. My score for *Sparrows* was recorded some 26 years ago for a private film collector. When I recorded for this collector, I had no idea that it would ever appear on commercial videotape. The recording was made on the 2/8 Wurlitzer in Frederick, Maryland's Tivoli Theatre. The Tivoli is now the

Weinberg Center for the Arts and I am still playing the fully restored instrument for a very successful silent film series each year.

Needless to say in the words of the late Queen Victoria, "We are not amused" that this recording is on the market without my first having been informed that it was to be released and at least being given the chance to preview it. I would like to think that over the span of a quarter century, my silent film accompaniment techniques have improved and that whatever is on the Kino International video release is not representative of my recent work.

Having to find out about events such as the above by reading the magazine makes me appreciate people like Ned Thanhouser and Woody Wise, both of whom entered into professional agreements with me for the release of the Thanhouser volumes and the Wurlitzer Factory Tour tape.

Sincerely,

Ray Brubacher, Olney, Maryland



To the ATOS Board of Directors:

Honorary Member—

I express my sincere appreciation and humble thanks for the honor bestowed upon me this year. As I told Donna Parker, it was like receiving an Academy Award without knowing you were nominated. I congratulate the Board for keeping their little secret.

I cannot emphasize too much that while I totally endorse and support the efforts to encourage young organists, theatre organ in general has a much more serious problem that needs to be addressed and that is the shortage of young people interested in restoration.

I see this problem as a sign of our times, not just as something we as an organization haven't done. Our technology has advanced to the point where virtually no consumer item can be repaired. In most cases, a person with technical inclination can't even figure out how something works, how to take it apart, and if he or she gets that far, repair and reassembly is often impossible. Most of us who possess technical skills learned them at an early age, often by tinkering. By fixing, and sometimes breaking things, we learned which end of the screwdriver or soldering iron to pick up. Maybe we watched dad work on the car or on a toaster or lamp or fix the plumbing. Gone is the car you can fix yourself. A radio may only have one chip inside, a clock only a blob of black epoxy. If it doesn't work, you throw it away.

Expect this learned condition from the present generation and those in the future. If there is no way to develop diagnostic and repair skills, nobody will have any. Our favorite "toy" is from an age where things could be fixed. Even the newer technologies being applied can generally be fixed. But there are far

too many theatre organs that have only been patched and are still living on their original, deteriorating materials. Those of us working as technicians today, many of whom are younger than I, are from the "Mr. Fix-It" generation. We have already lost some key technicians, and if you start to look at who is climbing up into organ chambers, you will realize that ladders and arthritis don't mix well. The eyes go first, then the joints. I don't remember what goes next. If we don't do something soon, in ten years we will have lots of organists ready to play organs that are falling apart with nobody to put them back together.

I have not yet given in to the worry some people have that there will be nobody to listen. Good music will always be appreciated. We just have to be able to make it and present it.

The remedy is not going to be as simple as showing someone

younger how to recover a pneumatic. It can't be quite so simple as giving out awards. We need to worry about how basic skills are going to be learned or even appreciated.

The David L. Junchen Scholarship Award takes but a tiny step in that direction. It enables us to expose someone already having some of the skills to a gathering of others possessing those skills. We may have to establish some sort of school for pipe organ tinkering.

Allen Miller, Glastonbury, Connecticut

**Opinions expressed in this column are those of the correspondents and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editors or the policies of ATOS or THEATRE ORGAN. Letters concerning all aspects of the theatre organ are welcome. Unless clearly marked "not for publication" letters may be published in whole or in part.* ♪

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BILL BLUNK

John W. "Bill" Blunk, 76 of Wilsonville, died October 3 in Tualatin, Oregon. Bill was born March 27, 1924, in Terre Haute, Indiana to John and Ethel Blunk. He learned to play musical instruments at an early age. He attended Indiana Teacher's College and graduated from the Chicago Musical College. He taught piano and organ and could tune both. He worked for a time as a tuner for the Steinway Piano Company and told of a time when he tuned the piano for Artur Rubenstein at a concert. Mr. Rubenstein was so thrilled with his work that he gave him a big bear hug, literally lifting the much larger man clear off the floor!

Bill and his mother moved to Oregon in the mid-1950s to be near his sister's family. He established and operated the Blu-C Skating Rink in the old Naval Gym at the Astoria Airport. There he installed and played a large pipe organ consisting of three smaller organs—from the Liberty Theatre in Astoria, the Oak's Park Rink and the Sellwood Ballroom in Portland. He later installed a 5/24 Marr & Colton pipe organ, formerly from the Rochester Theatre in New York, into his Viking Roller Rink also in Astoria. He built and installed a pipe organ at Calvary Episcopal Church in Seaside. He played the calliope as an Astoria clown, taught piano and organ lessons, played for a local dance band and played for many fundraising events.

After moving to Portland, he installed his Mar & Colton in an abandoned building in North Portland, then later in the Sherwood Theatre. He played the organ for the Portland Beavers, the Winterhawks and the Portland Trailblazers. He also played at the Portland Airport, the Oaks Skating Rink, the Organ Grinder in Portland and at Uncle Milt's Pipes And Pizza in Vancouver. During this time, he also worked as a pipe organ service and repairman.

Upon retirement, Bill continued playing for weddings, funerals, senior centers and nursing homes. An early member of ATOS, he was also one of the founding members of CROC and in 1994 he donated his Marr & Colton organ to the club in the hope of seeing it installed locally so that it could be enjoyed by all.

Bill is survived by a sister, Katherine Gilmore, of Terre Haute and many nieces and nephews. A memorial service was held October 28 at the Tualatin Durham Senior Retirement Center in Tualatin, Oregon.

Shirley Clausen

LEROY NORMAN LEWIS

It is with great sadness that I must report the passing of Leroy Lewis on October 28 from cancer.

Those of us who remember the New Jersey shore in the 1960s will recall Leroy as one of the greatest of organ showmen. One of his many achievements was the installation of the

3/13 Wurlitzer (ex Fabian, Hoboken, New Jersey) in the Surf City Hotel on Long Beach Island, New Jersey. He accomplished this with the assistance of Ted Campbell who was his lifetime companion. The Surf City organ was one of the first organs to be installed behind glass windows so that the patrons could see the mechanism.

It was here that I first met Leroy. It was 1964 and I was on a trip from England with a group of fellow organ buffs. Leroy was actually performing at the Lighthouse Inn that year but the hotel owner, George Bowles, prevailed upon him to come down and show us the organ. This he did and what wonderful sounds he got out of it. After we had all had a go at the console Leroy asked me if I would be interested in playing a summer season at the hotel as assistant to house organist Frank Albanese. I said I would, Leroy spoke with Mr. Bowles and I got the job. It was 1964 and green cards were easy to get back then! The rest, as they say, is history.

Leroy and Ted were also responsible for the installation of the organ in the El Panama Hilton in Panama. Hotel owner John Doyle wanted Leroy to play there and had him install the organ from the Warner Theatre in Atlantic City. This was a 3/28 Wurlitzer. Leroy played there for about four years in the early '60s.

Upon returning to the United States Leroy divided his time between summer seasons on Long Beach Island and winters in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. For these engagements he played a highly customized Hammond B-3 complete with xylophone, glockenspiel, piano and full theatre organ traps. This was installed by Ted in the Lighthouse Inn and it really was a wonderful creation. By this time I had acquired my own electric organ and was playing one of the other lounges on Long Beach Island so I was the "competition" so to speak. I remember we used to try and outdo each other with more and more complicated versions of "Nola." I think it is safe to say Leroy won! As time went on the B-3 was replaced with a Hammond X-66, also highly customized by Ted. All this was done before the advent of "keyboards" and MIDI's. Everything had to be hard wired and this required a custom built relay, which Ted made from scratch. Some years later Leroy gave me that very relay and it is now running the piano attachment at the Galaxy Theatre in New Jersey. Ted did good work!

Leroy was a master musician par excellence. He could literally play anything in any key and he had a prodigious memory so he seldom performed with music. I remember he used to amaze us by playing in big keys like C# and F#. When I asked him how he was able to do this so effortlessly he replied, "It's easy, they all stick up!" It was astounding how he could hear a piece of music just once, go over to the organ, and immediately play a sophisticated arrangement of it. He certainly had a unique gift.

Because of his great popularity on Long Beach Island most of the other restaurants and bars installed electric organs of

their own which gave work to a lot of other organists, myself included. The locals used to refer to it as "Organ Island" and it was all due to Leroy.

Leroy was a good friend with the organists at Radio City Music Hall, especially Ray Bohr. Because of this association he played the Music Hall organ on many occasions although, surprisingly, he never joined the staff there. He also spoke very fondly of the Center Theatre organ, the console of which is now at Berkeley Civic Center in California.

In recent years Leroy moved to Orlando, Florida, where he enjoyed semi-retirement. This gave him the time to design a state of the art keyboard setup using a multitude of synthesizers all controlled from a B-3000 console. This was to be the last instrument that Ted Campbell would build for him; sadly, Ted died a couple of years ago.

Not only was Leroy a marvelous musician he was also a very caring and loving person. I can't begin to count the many kindnesses he has done for me over the years. It was always a pleasure to visit his home. He was such a gracious host. He invited me down on several occasions and I always had a good time. He gave great dinner parties and kept open house for all his friends, who were many. The best treat of all was when he would sit down to play. His music was always fresh and entertaining. There was a wonderful sparkle to his playing and always that mischievous twinkle in his eye. I think I shall miss that most of all.

Good-bye Old Friend. You gave so much pleasure to so many people. We all loved you and we will miss you.

Jeff Barker

LEE ERWIN

Lee Erwin, organist and composer, passed away at age 92 on September 21 at his home in Greenwich Village, New York. Lee was born in 1908 in Huntsville, Alabama. His mother was a church organist but he did not have his first church job until after he graduated from the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. By then he was an experienced theatre organist, having started his career as a high school student.

In 1930 Mr. Erwin went to Paris to study with the French organist Andr Marchal. He also took composition classes with Nadia Boulanger and spent his Sunday mornings first hearing Marchal perform an early Mass and then taking the subway across Paris to hear Olivier Messiaen play at Trinity Church.

Lee returned to Cincinnati in 1932. He became the chief organist for the famous *Moon River* program—a midnight show, which originated at WLW in Cincinnati. For a time he was on the NBC radio network. In 1945, Lee joined the CBS Music Department in New York, where he became organist, composer and arranger for the various Arthur Godfrey shows and played periodic stints on virtually every soap opera originating in New York. He was known by millions of Americans as a featured organist on both radio and television for more than 30 years.

To thousands of movie fans, Lee Erwin is known for his

extraordinary presentations of old films with new musical settings. He composed brand new scores for many of Hollywood's movie masterpieces of the silent era—giving them new life as he accompanied each film, playing his own scores on the theatre pipe organs remaining in the big "movie palaces" across the nation. This new career began in 1967, when the New York Theatre Organ Society commissioned him to write a musical score for the legendary Gloria Swanson film, *Queen Kelly*.

He composed new scores for more than 70 films—all of the Keaton and Chaplin films, the D. W. Griffith masterpieces, the Valentino classics, many early Hitchcock silents, the Langdon and Lloyd comedies, all the films of Douglas Fairbanks, Lon Chaney, Erich von Stoheim, Mary Pickford, Greta Garbo, Lillian Gish and many others.

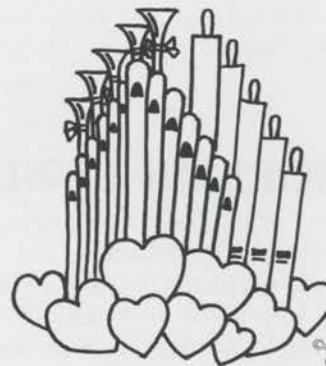
In 1979, Mr. Erwin toured the United States with the Silent Clowns, a festival of films featuring the "Best of Keaton, Chaplin, Langdon and Lloyd" playing a total of 441 performances in ten cities. In addition to silent film shows, Lee played numerous concert programs, both popular and classical, each year. Those programs were tremendously successful, attracting an audience, which viewed the pipe organ as a contemporary, new sound rather than an ancient relic of the past.

But as one of the genre's few practitioners, even at the age of 91, Lee still seemed to be in demand everywhere. Lee had lost count of the number of scores he had composed. He had recorded some of them for the BBC and for both theatrical and home video releases.

"One thing I never do," Lee said in a 1990 interview, "is use recognizable classical themes. In the old days, organists would use themes from Tchaikovsky, Brahms and Grieg, and, of course, nobody wrote better storm music than Beethoven. But in those days, recordings were not so prevalent, and the audiences did not know this music as well. Today, when you play music that's known, the audience begins to think, 'Oh, he's playing the *Moonlight Sonata*,' and it detracts from the film. . . . When people see (silent films) on the big screen, with a good score and in a theatre full of people, they become enthusiastic. They realize that those films were a new art form. It wasn't theatre. It wasn't people talking. It was telling stories with motion pictures."

Lee is survived by his partner, Donald T. Schwing; a brother, Joseph Erwin of Trion, North Carolina; and two sisters, Sarah Hix of Huntsville, Alabama and Mary Edwards of St. Louis, Missouri.

Lovingly Submitted, *The Family*



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LEE ERWIN

July 15, 1908–September 21, 2000

Lee Erwin, best known to ATOS members as a composer and performer of harmonically sophisticated silent film scores, died at his home in Greenwich Village on September 21. He was 92. His passing was noted and his work honored across the country by The New York Times, The Associated Press and the popular NPR evening news program *All Things Considered*.

Although Lee was prominent in the theatre organ community for silent film playing, the majority of his work was actually spent as a broadcast musician. In this realm he was active as organist, pianist, composer and arranger. His musical contributions to the popular midnight radio program *Moon River*, airing over WLW Cincinnati, served as a stepping stone for a move to CBS in New York, where he appeared both on radio and television, most visibly on the *Arthur Godfrey Show*. Some of his greatest musical challenges came in this position, where Arthur Godfrey would give Lee an idea for a song—which had to be composed for the next day's broadcast! Several of these tunes were recorded by other artists and hit the charts. In addition to musical work on the Godfrey show, he assumed the role of "Moneybags Erwin" to facilitate a bit of on-going comedy between himself and the show's renowned host.

Unlike most early self-trained theatre organists, Lee was the product of classical musical education. After graduating from the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music in 1930, he moved to France to study with the famous Parisian organist/improvisateur André Marchal and composer Nadia Boulanger. These experiences were clearly reflected in his compositions, colored as they are by a distinctly French harmonic vocabulary.

Perhaps it was this training that led to Lee's very serious approach to music making in the realm of silent film. He felt strongly that film music should be original composition—that the use of familiar, commonplace tunes too often elicited an audience response quite apart from the on-screen drama, and thus more detracting than supportive. As silent film experienced a revival, connoisseurs recognized Lee's approach to film work as the highest expression of that art form.

Lee's return to the theatre organ was occasioned in 1967 when ATOS commissioned a new score to Gloria Swanson's last silent film, *Queen Kelly*. After a premier performance at the Beacon Theatre in Manhattan, Lee and Miss Swanson toured the United States with a program of personal reminiscence, songs accompanied by Lee at the organ, and a screening of the film. The success of this tour, coupled to renewed interest in theatre organs in general and silent films in particular, resulted in increased demand for Lee's accompanimental work. Over the next thirty years, he composed new scores for more than 70 silent films and played regularly all across the country until declining health prevented further performances at the age of 90.

A great amount of Lee's music is preserved. Famous films of the silent era, which have been restored for theatrical re-release often contain an Erwin score. This includes the large body of Buster Keaton silent comedies restored by the Rohauer Col-

lection, which are exhibited throughout the world, and feature music Lee recorded on the Wurlitzer pipe organ formerly installed in Carnegie Hall Cinema. For broadcast in the United Kingdom, the BBC recorded many Erwin film scores. Angel records recorded two long-playing albums of silent film music Lee had arranged into suites and recorded on the Wurlitzer organ in the Richard Kline studio in Thurmont, Maryland. But it was his live performances that introduced silent film to new and highly receptive audiences. Seated in the darkness, Lee exploited the theatre organ's orchestral nature, his elegant music bringing screen images to life in venues ranging from restored movie palaces to high school gymnasiums. Even the massive sanctuary of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine was transformed into a giant cinema for multiple silent film events, with Lee playing his scores on the famous Aeolian-Skinner organ. (On occasion, he could also be found playing for the Sunday evening Vesper improvisation series).

Lee served as an ATOS director and was twice honored by the society as Organist of the Year. Always maintaining a keen interest in modern music and compositional techniques, Lee taught electronic music at Lehman College in New York.

Everyone has certain experiences that strongly define their lives. One of the strongest life-defining experiences came for me at age 16, when I first heard Lee perform his score for the Valentino classic, *The Eagle*, at the Capitol Theatre in Davenport, Iowa. I was held spellbound by the suave music, and by how it subtly carried and advanced the screen drama. No one missed spoken dialogue at all. The performance made me completely fascinated in composing silent film music, and presenting the theatre organ to fulfill its original purpose. It was later a great privilege for me to study with Lee in New York. His attitudes towards the arts and lessons on life continue to have a profound influence on me and many others.

Lee Erwin was a gentleman every bit as elegant and refined as his music.

Jeff Weiler

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Our History—Our Heritage

Gems From THEATRE ORGAN 30 Years Ago

The following article was published in the Volume 12, Number 3 (June 1970) issue of theatre organ. It is being reprinted here as a tribute to the late Lee Erwin.

Portrait of LEE ERWIN Theatre Organist

Story by Lloyd E. Klos

Photos, Lee Erwin Collection

One of the nicest fellows in the business of perpetuating the glorious heritage of the theatre organ, is Lee Erwin of New York City. The writer first met Mr. Erwin in the Detroit Fox Theater during the 1967 ATOS Convention, and was immediately impressed by his warmth and geniality. His subsequent visit to Rochester to perform at the Auditorium Theatre Wurlitzer strengthened this impression.

Lee Erwin was born in Huntsville, Alabama. "One of my first remembrances was listening to music. My mother was the organist of a very small church; she was probably the only member of the congregation who could play. When I was three or four, I was given a toy piano for Christmas. It must have been a better-than-average toy, because it was exactly in tune, and it had a keyboard of almost four octaves.

"Although I couldn't possibly have known at that time that I was gifted with absolute pitch, I realize now that I was demonstrating it regularly by reproducing accurately any group of notes which I heard. So, I found that I could automatically play on my toy piano almost anything I heard my mother play on her big piano. When I started to school, I also started formal music lessons, taking piano from Miss Bessie Pettus, a remarkable lady, who still teaches a few selected students in Huntsville.

"As a kid, I haunted the two movie houses in Huntsville. The Lyric Theatre had a Photoplayer (Ben Hall's research has established that it was a Style L Wurlitzer Pipe Organ-Orchestra). The organist, George Hatch, couldn't read

a note of music (he played everything in one of three keys—E major, B major or F sharp major), but he did a terrific job of improvising music for a film.

"The Grand Theatre originally had a piano, and a lady piano player, but they finally installed a small pipe organ. After a time, I was given permission to play the supper show in both theatres any time I wanted to, but without pay, of course. It did give me the opportunity to attend both theatres without admission—a real prize for a



Lee plays the 4/60 Moller in Loew's Temple Theatre in Birmingham, Alabama. This was his first big-time theatre position.



In 1930 at the age of 18, Lee Erwin was playing the 4/19 Wurlitzer in the Alabama Theatre.

twelve-year-old boy who was already hooked on the theatre organ.

"I can't remember any of those old films except that Douglas Fairbanks in "Robin Hood" stands out sharply, probably because I *didn't* play the organ. The theatre hired an orchestra for this picture and I was the only kid in town who could both read music and struggle successfully with a clarinet. So, for "Robin Hood", I became Lee Erwin, clarinetist—not good, but brave!"

In high school, Lee won a state piano contest which rewarded him with a scholarship to the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. While at the Conservatory, in which he studied under Parvin Titus, he helped defray expenses by playing organ in the neighborhood theatres, seven nights a week, for \$20 a week.

After three years at the conservatory, he left school to accept his first big-time theatre position—assistant organist on the 4/60 Moller in Loew's Temple Theatre in Birmingham, Ala. The Temple was a "presentation house" with first-run films sharing equal billing with big-time vaudeville. Each performance featured a solo organ spot, one in which the organist could even program a straight performance of a Bach Prelude and Fugue if he wanted to do so. And, the audience listened!

"The chief organist, Joseph Stoves, was a genuine artist, not a retreaded piano player. He really knew classical and popular music, and his improvisations were marvelous. Even his first 'cold' performance of a silent film (a new one each week) was nearly always a masterpiece.

"From his examples, I learned, in an unforgettable way, that an organist should never use current popular music, or even well-known classical selections as accompaniment for a serious film. Any familiar piece of music already has preconceived connotations for any audience, and therefore, draws too much attention to the organ, at the expense of the film. For him, each film had to have a new, completely original score which he improvised on the spot.

"It was a lesson which very few organists learned, probably because many of them simply weren't capable. Of course, there were books of cue music to fit any given situation, except usually it didn't really fit. During my short time at the Temple, one film, "The Big Parade" ran without vaudeville for many weeks. It had a complete orchestra-and-organ score of its own, and made use of live sound effects, by having stage hands simulate battle scenes with hundreds of sound-producing gadgets, including real guns."

Lee Erwin had plenty of time between theatre performances. For loafing? Not exactly. He took on pianist and organist chores for radio stations WRBC and WAPI. He assumed the organist position at First Methodist Church, and in his odd moments, he began to compose.

In 1930, Lee went to Paris to study for two years under such greats as Andre Marchal (Lee was his first American student), Nadia Boulanger, Mlle. Grandjany and Jean Verd. In 1931, Lee was appointed assistant organist at the American Cathedral in Paris. He then returned to Birmingham and the organist's position in the Alabama Theatre.

There is a most interesting story behind the continued use of the organ and orchestra in this theatre after the talkies arrived. It began with a letter, dated April 1, 1929, written by Charles G. Branham, the theatre's manager, and addressed to Bert Hollowell, conductor of the Alabama Theatre Orchestra, and posted on the back-stage bulletin board:

Dear Mr. Hollowell:

Due to possible change of policy, which will be definitely decided within the next few days, you will accept this as a four-weeks' notice, according to the terms of the contract between yourself as conductor for the Alabama orchestra, and the Alabama Theatre.

*Yours very truly,
Charles G. Branham*

According to Lee Erwin, this "four weeks' notice" (written on All Fools' day, remember), was extended for about two years after the talkies came in. The orchestra and organ continued until 1931, possibly 1932, with a stage show policy. "As that all came to an end, musicians were given their final four weeks' notice. Like many theatres, the management wanted to keep the organ on as a special attraction, but the union said, 'no orchestra, no organ!'"

"So, for a short time, I was transferred to a special booth in the balcony of the theatre with two phonograph turntables to synchronize records with the newsreel and a few other things which did not have a sound track. One of the most difficult things to do was to find a recording of popular music which did not contain a vocal solo."



Lee posed with the DeVore Sisters in Cincinnati's WLW in 1935 where the famous "Moon River" broadcasts emanated. Notice the marked resemblance to classical organist, Virgil Fox.

In 1932, Lee went back to Cincinnati, this time as organist in the RKO Albee Theatre. A faded clipping has this to say about the youthful organist: "Despite his classical background, young Erwin is particularly deft in the interpretation of popular songs upon the organ. The heaviest number he has essayed in his current engagement has been 'The Rhapsody in Blue'".

Lee says, "The Albee Theatre was one of the last houses in Cincinnati to maintain the use of both organ and orchestra. About once a month, we did a very special number which featured the combined resources of organ and orchestra. The RKO chain at that time was experimenting with the idea of

doing away with the traditional vaudeville-pit band type of music and changing it to the new, modern, big-band sound. It was great fun, and I got my first experience writing orchestrations for a large orchestra. But, it was obviously too expensive, so it did not last very long."

One item Lee Erwin treasures is a check statement, dated September 30, 1932, crediting him with \$80 for a week's accompaniment of Madame Schumann-Heink. As a very old lady, she was on a vaudeville tour just to make money, and Lee says, "she was simply a wonderful person, but it was sad to see her doing four-a-day vaudeville with five performances on Saturdays and Sundays."

Another clipping from "The Billboard" reviews the bill at the Albee on December 19, 1932. The entertainment on stage, apparently had slipped into the doldrums since the four Marx Brothers' appearance six weeks previously. However, things picked up with Horace Heidt and his Californians. "Lee Erwin, organist, rapidly gaining in popularity here, drew powerful applause with his playing and song-coaxing."

The year 1933 marked the start of a major segment in Lee Erwin's career. He became staff organist at Cincinnati's WLW, and launched his 11-year stint on the famous "Moon River" program. The station had not one, not two, but THREE Wurlitzers in use constantly during those days. Lee also worked on such programs as "Singin' Sam, The Barbasol Man" with Harry Frankel; and "Boy's Town."

For a short time in 1934, he was organist at the Paramount Theatre in Cincinnati. A news item of April 12, 1934, had this to say: "Lee Erwin, popular young organist, will be at the console of that instrument at the Paramount on Sunday when the organ interlude returns to its former place in the programs of the Peebles Corner theatre. Appropriately, Erwin has arranged a medley of holiday melodies under the title of "The Easter Parade," to be illustrated by attractive song slides. Cincinnati theatre-goers will remember Erwin for his organ interludes at the Albee Theatre a few years ago.

"Manager Joe Goetz of the Paramount announces that the organ will be featured for a limited time only, to test the public reaction to this type of entertainment. The booking of Erwin follows many requests by Paramount patrons for the resumption of these musical periods."

In 1935, Lee directed "Lee Erwin's Musical Troupe," which was aired on WCKY, Sunday evenings. The half-

hour variety show demonstrated Lee's marked versatility as conductor and arranger.

In 1941, he was granted a pilot's license and it wasn't long before he was flying his own plane about the country.

However, his big forte during this period was the "Moon River Show." It was a seven-nights-a-week program, featuring poetry, songs by the DeVore Sisters trio, and of course, quiet music by Lee Erwin at the Wurlitzer. Vocalists who went on to fame and fortune include Betty and Rosemary Clooney, and Doris Day.



Lee Erwin and Gloria Swanson were the big names on New York's Beacon Theatre marquee on May 8, 1967.

In 1956, Lee recorded 16 songs, which he had frequently played on that show, an album entitled "Moon River Music." It was done on ATOS member E. Jay Quinby's home organ in Summit, New Jersey.

Incidentally, to clear up a misconception, Henry Mancini's hit song "Moon River," popularized by singer Andy Williams, was not composed until 1961. It is an interesting coincidence that Lee Erwin accompanied the Williams Brothers quartet at WLW when Andy, the youngest member, was an unknown high school kid.

In 1944, Lee moved to New York where he became staff organist (electronics, now), arranger and composer for CBS. "When I first went to work for CBS, there were at least a dozen organists on the staff. One of our assignments was to do stand-by work, which meant sitting in a studio with the organ turned on, ready to play if a program from the west coast failed to come through because of technical difficulties, or if any remote broadcast from a hotel, restaurant, etc. did not come through properly. No recordings were permitted by any of the networks in those days.

"It was a favorite trick of engineers to treat all newcomers to the gag that the station had gone off the air, and let the organist play a 30-minute pro-

gram to a dead microphone. After several such instances, the real thing happened one night. After the network had 'dead air' for about two minutes, and the engineer began to turn green, I finally got the idea that I should actually play. We almost got fired, but no engineer tried that trick again!"

In 1945-46, he served as organist on weekends at the RKO Madison, RKO Richmond Hill, Brooklyn Fox and the Academy of Music until increased work on the Godfrey shows made outside work impossible.

The Godfrey shows — "Arthur Godfrey Time," "Arthur Godfrey's Talent

Scouts" and "The Arthur Godfrey Show" provided plenty of work for Lee Erwin. He served as arranger, composer and organist, and wrote hit songs such as "Dance Me Loose," "Hello, Sunshine," "There Ought to Be a Society" and "Go Now." These were sung by Arthur Godfrey and "all the little Godfreys" — Janette Davis, Julius LaRosa, Bill Lawrence, Marion Marlowe, Frank Parker, Johnny Nash, LuAnn Simms, Carmel Quinn, Pat Boone, The Chordettes, The Mariners and the McGuire Sisters.

"There are many anecdotes concerning the Godfrey years, but I suppose the one which was the most dramatic, was the Julius LaRosa incident, when Arthur Godfrey introduced his singer with the immortal words 'Julius will now sing his swan song on this program.' I am sure that every member of the orchestra played a few wrong notes during that vocal accompaniment that morning.

"Naturally, the one question I still hear is 'What's Arthur Godfrey really like?' I can always say, truthfully, that he has always been great as far as I'm concerned. Other members of the cast might not make the same statement. Not long ago, I received a note from Arthur, apologizing for not giving us a

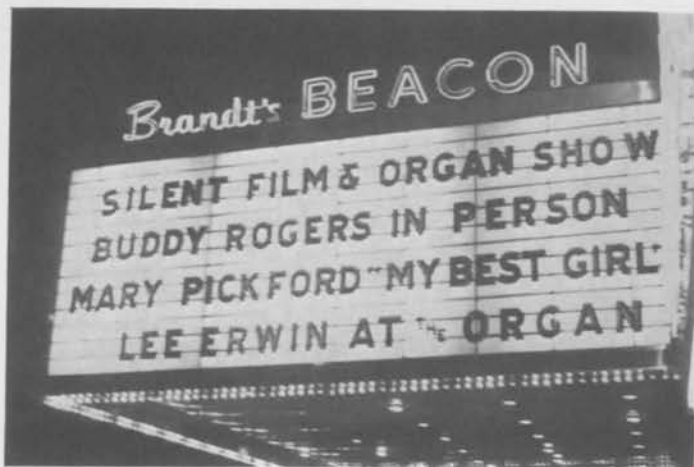
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Buddy Rogers' and Lee Erwin's names adorned the Beacon marquee on February 24, 1969. Lee wrote the music for this picture.

big plug on the air for a recent silent film show. His girl apparently didn't give him the information in time."

Since leaving the Godfrey show in 1966, Lee has been a freelancer, with many musical activities.

In 1967, after being commissioned by the New York Chapter ATOS to compose a new organ score for the Gloria Swanson silent picture "Queen Kelly," he joined Miss Swanson in a gala sell-out of this classic film on May 8, 1967 at Manhattan's Beacon Theatre.

This effort was so successful that the New York Chapter commissioned him to write another score, this time for the Rudolph Valentino film "The Eagle," which was performed at the Beacon and the Academy of Music.

The Academy presentation was reviewed by Allen Hughes of the New York Times staff, who wrote: "Waves of magnificent sound rolled through the Academy of Music Theatre last night . . . Lee Erwin was the organist, and he was excellent . . . The nationwide theatre organ revival is resulting in the establishment of a concert circuit which includes Rochester, Detroit, San Francisco and Dunedin in Florida . . . If all goes well, the sound of the theatre organs may again be heard regularly throughout the land."

Next came Lee Erwin's scores in 1969 for "My Best Girl" with Mary Pickford and Buddy Rogers, and "Irene" with Colleen Moore and George K. Arthur.

Lee has made several recordings, embracing all the major labels, while serving as organist, arranger and conductor. His most recent recording is "Sounds of the Silents" on Concert Recording Label, and is highly recommended. He is a member of the music department of Lehman College in New York, serving as instructor in electronic music composition.

Though he was not directly involved in the sequence, he was once mentioned offhandedly in Chester Gould's "Dick

Tracy" comic strip. It seems that a broad-shouldered vocalist named "Tonsils" was having trouble learning a song "The Rainbow Turned Muddy." "Aw, Dude," he said to his manager, "why doncha have L'Erwin write a new tune? This one's too hard!" With two pistols aimed at him, "Tonsils" did not have to utilize our subject's talents!

While playing a full week's run of the Valentino film "The Eagle" on the Woody Wise Grande Barton organ in the Virginia Theatre in Alexandria in October 1969, Lee made a guest appearance on the Ed Walker-Willard Scott show, an NBC program, in Washington. Ed Walker asked, "Lee, you were with Arthur Godfrey radio and television programs for years; you are a composer and now you are teaching electronic music in New York. Out of



A group of happy people pose in Detroit's Redford Theatre, March 4, 1969 on occasion of Lee Erwin's accompaniment of the silent film "Irene". They are, left to right, Lee Erwin; ATOS President, Al Mason; actress Colleen Moore; and master of ceremonies, Ben M. Hall. Miss Moore starred in the film.

all the things you have done what has been your real ambition?"

Lee replied, "Come to think of it, I'm finally doing the one thing which I always wanted to do more than anything else — playing a theatre organ in a theatre. Radio and television shows were wonderful; they kept organists going for a good many years, but how wonderful it is to be playing in front of a real live audience!"

The writer asked Lee Erwin to expound his ideas on the theatre organ's revival, and he willingly complied as follows:

"I have compared notes with other organists who have had equally fortunate opportunities to work extensively with the theatre organ. There is general agreement that we all realize, more than ever, that Hope-Jones and his fellow pioneers were developing a truly unique musical instrument. Thanks to the ATOS, that instrument has been saved from becoming a museum curiosity, and as more and more instruments come back to active playing life, more and more people are hearing — and understanding — that great theatre organ sound.

"The most significant thing to me is the magnetic attraction which the theatre organ has for young people — both young audiences and young performers. To them, the theatre organ is as modern as the Moog Synthesizer; both have tremendous resources to be explored and exploited.

"The older, more 'classical' branch of the pipe organ family seems to be sailing a steady course back to the middle ages, possibly even to oblivion. It is my firm conviction that the keyboard instrument of the future will derive from the theatre organ, applying the flexibility and playing facilities of the theatre organ to a new design and construction, using contemporary tech-

nology and materials, to meet the needs of contemporary musicians."

And so, we come to the end of this narrative, but certainly not to the end of the Lee Erwin story. We believe that there are many years ahead for this fellow in his efforts to perpetuate the renaissance of the theatre organ. All of us who love the big sound of the king of instruments, wish him continued success in his efforts. □

New England's Millennial Pipes

ATOS Regional Convention 2000

By Vern Bickel

NEW ENGLAND'S MILLENNIAL PIPES ATOS Regional Convention 2000, sponsored by the Eastern Massachusetts ATOS Chapter, was a spectacular success! Thanks to Bob Evans, Convention Chairman and the many dedicated convention workers, everyone who attended this year's regional convention experienced absolutely the finest theatre pipe organ programs anywhere.

It must be reported that the cordial hospitality of the folks in New England could not have been warmer or more sincere. They welcomed everyone with friendly cordiality—eager to share with others the theatre organ treasures in their part of the country.

FRIDAY EVENING

The first program featured the Shanklin Conference Center's 4/34 Wurlitzer, played by Ron Rhode. The instant you enter this venue you immediately are aware that you are in no ordinary theatre pipe organ music room. From the meticulously gilded and painted moldings, the magnificent floral-patterned carpeting, the eye-appealing theatrical lighting effects, the comfortable chairs to the spectacular white and gold Wurlitzer console—everything proclaims perfection! It is rare in today's world to find the attention to detail found in the Shanklin Conference Center. Garrett and Sarah Shanklin have achieved the ultimate in a theatre pipe organ installation. Not only is the visual impact stunning, but the sound of this instrument is electrifying. The tonal regulation by Allen Miller makes this instrument one of the very best theatre pipe organs in the world.

Ron is truly a master at this console, having recorded his latest CD on the Shanklin Conference Center organ. As always, he presented a skillfully played program that featured a wide range of music—all well suited to the theatre pipe organ. Because he is so familiar with this instrument he was able to effectively demonstrate the vast tonal resources of the Shanklin organ. His outstanding musicianship met with overwhelming audience approval.

You will hear more of the Shanklin Conference Center Wurlitzer in the future. An instrument of this stature will become the standard by which others will be measured. We extend a heartfelt "Thank You" to Garrett and Sarah Shanklin for the restoration and installation of their 4/34 Wurlitzer, and for their gracious hospitality in sharing this magnificent instrument with all of us.

SATURDAY MORNING

Saturday morning found us at the Providence Performing Arts Center. This opulent movie palace, formerly the Loew's

State Theatre, has been fully restored to its grand splendor. Fitting perfectly into the décor is the white and gold 5/21 Wurlitzer console, originally installed in Chicago's Marbro Theatre.

Walt Strony took command of the giant console and certainly did not disappoint his early morning audience. Although not everything was functioning properly on the console, he skillfully worked around the obstacles and demonstrated his mastery of hand registration. Walt is a genius at presenting the tonal resources of the instruments he plays. In this case, he had plenty of solo voices at his disposal and he used them to great advantage. His program included two numbers that were especially well received—a toccata on "Anything Goes" and a dazzling rendition of "In The Mood."

SATURDAY, MIDDAY

Because of the limited space at the Phipps Marine, Machine and Pipe Organ Works, conventioners were divided into two groups. Half of the group attended a concert by David Peckham at the Phipps' venue while the other half had lunch at the New Bedford Whaling Museum. Following the concert, the groups exchanged places so everyone ended up with a tasty lunch and the opportunity to participate in the "Phipps Experience."

Unique, unusual, intimate—these are words that have been used to describe the Phipps 4/32 Wurlitzer installation. It is certainly a "one of a kind" theatre pipe organ venue. Housed in amongst the machinery and offices of this industrial building is the organ. Most pipe work is located in the chambers; however, there are some exposed ranks. This instrument speaks with authority, but although the listening area is small, the instrument is enjoyable.

David Peckham's solid musical training and background were most evident as he presented a fun-filled program. He obviously was having a great time and his enthusiasm and joy at the console was transmitted to those present. The audience clearly loved him and had a whale of a time listening to a theatre pipe organ in a most unusual setting.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Our next stop was the New Bedford Zeiterion Theatre, a vaudeville house built in 1923. This theatre is now a performing arts center serving much of Southeastern New England. The theatre is elegant with a most impressive crystal chandelier. There is not a bad seat in the house.

The organ in this venue is a 2/9 Wurlitzer and what an instrument it is! The sound is phenomenal—much better

than many instruments of larger size. The tonal regulation and balance make this the "perfect" 9-rank Wurlitzer.

Ron Reseigh, the ATOS Young Organist Competition winner for 1998 was the featured artist for the afternoon. His program showcased many very well known pop standards, film music, and music of American composers. Ron adeptly presented the full tonal resources of the organ in a most enjoyable concert.

SATURDAY EVENING

Arriving at Babson College in Wellesely, we were immediately ushered into Knight Auditorium, where we were served a scrumptious and bountiful catered dinner. This portion of the day gave many in attendance the opportunity to socialize, renew old acquaintances and meet new friends.

The evening's program featured Jelani Eddington at the 4/18 Wurlitzer. This instrument is owned by the Eastern Massachusetts Chapter and is well maintained and used often for concerts and silent films.

Jelani's superb musicianship is a joy to behold. His arrangements, registrations and technical agility combine to make his concerts outstanding events. He was in top form and presented a breath taking musical extravaganza. His *West Side Story* medley was just one of the many highlights in a masterfully played program. The two standing ovations were well deserved!

SUNDAY MORNING

The final program of this fast-paced convention found us once again at the Shanklin Conference Center. As the organ console slowly revolves into concert position on its brightly colored carpeted platform, the reflection of the spotlight on the console is almost blinding. This is theatre at its best!

Tom Hazleton is one of the most gifted and versatile organists in the world. His selection of music for this concert ranged from classical compositions to jazz—all done with great flair and dazzling artistry. In addition to showing off the marvelous voices of the organ, I believe it is safe to say that he found suitable compositions in which to bring into play all of the exposed tuned percussions and traps along the front wall of the auditorium. The Trumpet-en-Chamade is a hair-parting rank that instantly commands your attention. The entire program was extremely well received by a grateful audience.

MONDAY

The members who remained for the Afterglow were up early on Monday morning, ready to board the busses, which would take them to central New Hampshire. Following a two-hour ride, the busses stopped for a guide and we all enjoyed a bus tour in the White Mountains. The morning dawned clear and cold, but by the time we arrived in the White Mountains it was overcast and snowing. Some brave folks went for a short sight seeing walk in the snow, but most of the group remained in the warm and cozy busses.

After the tour in the mountains, we were transported to the town of Lincoln, New Hampshire where we boarded the

Hobo Railroad's Café Lafayette Dinner Train for a trip to Plymouth, New Hampshire. The train is made up of restored dining and railroad cars and a special gourmet luncheon was served as we traveled through the picturesque countryside. This adventure was well worth the cost and gave those of us from other parts of the country a taste of New England with captivating views of the lovely countryside.

All of the venues in this convention were first-rate. The instruments were concert ready and beautifully voiced and balanced. Not enough thanks and appreciation can be given to Allen Miller, Don Phipps, Ken Duffie and others for the hours and hours of technical work they performed on these instruments. Hank Lysaght, President of the Eastern Massachusetts ATOS Chapter and the chapter members who worked so hard to make this convention a success must be thanked for giving us a week-end we will fondly remember for years to come.

One of the great benefits of attending any ATOS Convention is the camaraderie and socialization that takes place among the participants. Such interaction requires that all of the conventioners be housed in a single hotel. Unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond the control of the local chapter the group was divided among four different hotels. In my opinion this situation was the only negative in a weekend filled with many positive experiences.

If you were unable to attend New England's Millennial Pipes ATOS Regional Convention 2000 you missed a truly outstanding event in the world of theatre organ. Should you travel to this historic part of the country be sure to plan your visit so that you may experience as many of the theatre organ venues listed above as possible.

More convention coverage continues on page 30.



**Plan to Attend this Year's
ANNUAL
ATOS CONVENTION
IN
INDIANAPOLIS
INDIANA
August 18 through 22**

The Sounds of Silent Movies

By Robert Gates, Associate Editor

FOUR AND ONE-QUARTER FILMS FEATURING JOHN MURI

Organist John Muri, who celebrated his 94th birthday last October, is one of the greats in his profession. His aptitude for music was apparent early in life when he found he could play, by ear, tunes he heard from automatic instruments accompanying silent films. His serious studies of the theatre organ began when he was seventeen, first with Claude B. Ball and then Arthur Dunham. He was appointed to the Indiana Theatre in East Chicago, where he played six days a week until the mid '30s, when he became music director for two Indiana radio stations.

His second career, teaching English at the secondary school level, was equally successful. He received a scroll for "Outstanding Contributions" from the National Council of Teachers of English in 1958 and became Chairman of the Gavit High School English Department in 1965.

Despite his involvement in academe, he gave many organ concerts, which featured the works of classical as well as popular composers. One time, in the '70s, he provided seven concerts in a ten-day period without repeating any of the selections. He has written some 70 articles for the THEATRE ORGAN, and in 1977 was named Organist of the Year by the ATOS. He is, of course, a member of the Theatre Organists' Hall of Fame.

Identifying the organs that Muri used for the films reviewed here has been complicated by contradictions between well-intended sources. One instrument that is known to have been used is the hybrid in the Michigan residence of Roger and Sue Mumbue. Now a 4/39, it had fewer ranks in the '70s when some eighteen films were recorded by Muri for Blackhawk. Its two chambers open into a 50-ft by 30-ft room, giving the sound some spaciousness, but not what one would obtain in an auditorium setting.

OLIVER TWIST (1922), with Jackie Coogan and Lon Chaney

Once again, the silver TV screen brings us a drama of opposites, pure, attractive eight-year-old Oliver (Coogan) in conflict with hideous, stooped, evil Fagin (Chaney). Although Oliver's fortunes take a few upturns, they seem steadily to worsen as the Dickens' saga continues, but our miniature hero meets every challenge with pluck and the elfin charm that made him an instant star in the title role of "The Kid." An orphan, he is outplaced from a country workhouse when, commenting on the meal, he dares to say,

"Please, sir, I want some more." His new post as an undertaker's apprentice does not appeal to him (he is priceless dressed as a miniature of his master, following two paces behind), so he runs away to London where he falls in with a ragged band of pickpockets, all reporting to the malicious Fagan. More adventures lie in wait for him here.

Arrested for seeming to rob a wealthy Mr. Brownlow, he is exonerated and taken into Brownlow's house, but is recaptured by Bill Sykes, a vicious member of the gang. Much more excitement follows, however, you will have to buy the video (or read the book) to see what happens next.

Muri's music works wonderfully in this screenplay. The sound is theatre-sized and the motifs are transmuted in marvelous ways. Synchronization is near perfect, and there are no pauses in the waterfall of melody except during title cards or blanks on the screen.

Picture quality is fine, and the two principal actors are just right. Coogan, especially, gives a disciplined performance of a quality rarely encountered in the '20s or in decades following.

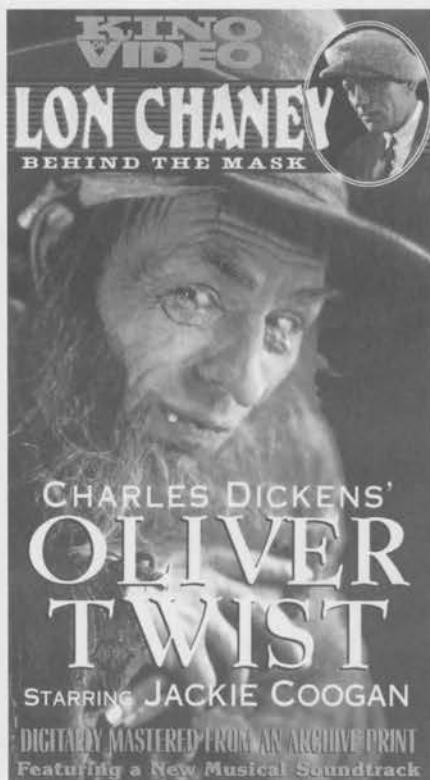
In Brief: Charles Dickens would have been delighted!

From Kino International Corp., 333 W 39th St., New York, NY 10018; (800) 562-3330; \$24.95 plus postage.

TILLIE'S PUNCTURED ROMANCE (1914), with Marie Dressler, Charlie Chaplin and Mabel Normand, directed by Mack Sennett

This one should have been subtitled "Falls A-Poppin'." Slapstick with a capital SLAP, it never misses a chance to have its characters belt each other and trip over anything that could possibly cause a spill. This "entertainment" continues to the end of the movie when the vigorously maladroit Keystone Kops make their appearance.

Overweight Tillie (Dressler) is courted for her money by an



individual identified only as “a stranger” (Chaplin) who, unusually, is costumed more like a dandy than a tramp. She leaves the farm to go with him to the city, where they encounter “the girl he left behind him” (Normand). Things happen at a dizzy pace. Tillie inherits millions then loses them when a presumed-dead uncle returns and, as you would expect, Chaplain’s amatory attitude reflects her fortunes. We then arrive at an ending as frantic as one could possibly want to avoid.

Consistent with her porcine persona, Dressler hams up her part unremittingly. She probably continued to overact in this manner, because her popularity sank below visibility in the late ’20s. Talkies, however, were her salvation—she won a large following for her portrayal of “Tugboat Annie” in 1933. Chaplain behaves just as you would expect, although this reviewer was startled when he was shown delivering a heavy slap to the side of a little newsboy’s head. (One reference states that the newsboy was a six-year-old Milton Berle, but the resemblance is not persuasive). Normand’s work is much better crafted. Although she takes part in the acrobatics, she is able to maintain an attractive dignity.

Muri’s playing is fun at first, when he takes “Ruben, Ruben” through many permutations during the scenes on the farm. At the end, however, when the Kops appear, his music becomes (appropriately) frenetic and the registration features a loud, high-pressure Posthorn. Both this stop and the lack of “big” sound, argue that this film was recorded in the Mumbroe residence.

Picture quality varies. The clarity in most of the scenes is up to modern standards, but blurry segments are spliced in, especially near the end. Much appears to be missing; as a result many of the comic turns are hard to understand.

This cassette also contains a short early comedy, *Mabel’s Married Life*, to which a different style of accompaniment is provided by Gaylord Carter.

In Brief: Typical Sennett.

From Kino International, address above; \$19.95 plus postage.

Cornwall) he hopes to marry. Now in college with many of the high-school crowd, he is disappointed to find that her attitude has not changed. Whatever he tries to do, either to support himself or to impress the girl, turns out badly, but when he learns that she is held captive, he saves her with a display of athleticism that only true love could evoke.

John Muri’s music fits perfectly. It was probably recorded on the Mumbroe instrument.

In brief: College was never this much fun!

From Kino International, address above; \$29.95 plus postage.

THE BALLOONATIC (1923), with Buster Keaton and Phyllis Haver

This 22-minute film has Keaton, through circumstances tangled but always logical, situated on top of a balloon sailing unguided through the air. Climbing down into the gondola, he finds a loaded shotgun, which he aims at a few suspended decoy ducks, but, of course, hits the balloon instead. Now downed in the wilds, he meets a girl camper and does everything he can to impress her with his survivalist skills. Needless to say, his abilities fall far short of the mark in ways that only Keaton could invent.

Seven Chances, also starring Keaton, is the main feature of this cassette. It is accompanied by Robert Israel.

In Brief: Laughter on land, on sea (river, actually) and in the air.

From Kino International, address above; \$29.95 plus postage.

THE AFFAIRS OF ANATOL (1921), with Gloria Swanson and Wallace Reid, directed by C. B. DeMille

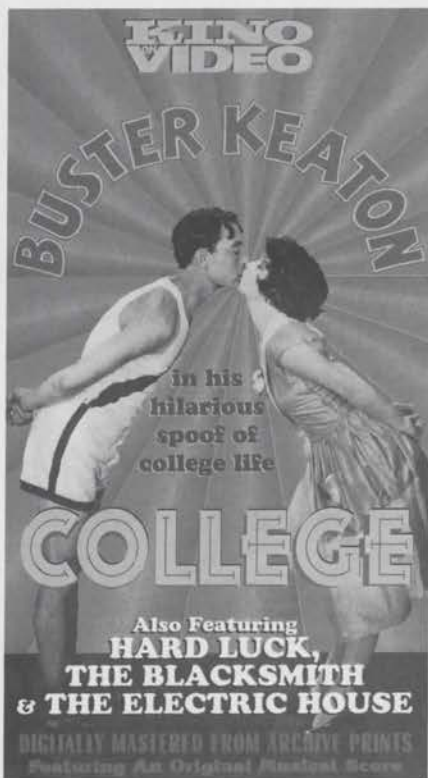
Although Grapevine Video’s habit of accompanying films with spliced-in snippets recorded by Muri and Gaylord Carter was deplored in the May/June 2000 issue of the *THEATRE ORGAN*, the work in this film was done with taste. All of the music is by Muri on an instrument that sounds like the one used for *Oliver Twist*. The selections usually fit the action, and the transitions between them are generally unobtrusive.

This is a charming romantic comedy in which wealthy Anatol DeWitt-Spencer (Reid) has developed a habit of “saving” pretty, troubled women to the displeasure of his wife Vivian (Swanson), whom we first see *en chemise* in her dressing room, spouting annoying baby-talk. His first opportunity comes through a chance meeting with his eighth-grade sweetheart, who is reportedly “on the down grade.” Our savior does his best to educate the girl, but she dumps him for a wealthy older man who is a veritable cornucopia of jewelry. Liaisons with two other women also end badly, and Anatol must seek reconciliation with his wife.

The picture is presented with so much contrast that it can be difficult to appreciate a setting. When Anatol looks into a darkened bedroom and recoils in fear, close attention is necessary before we discover that the source of his concern is a leopard tied to the bed.

In Brief: Entertaining film, nice music.

From Grapevine Video, P.O. Box 46161, Phoenix, AZ 85063, (602) 973-3661; \$16.70 postpaid.



COLLEGE (1927), with Buster Keaton

Possibly the most creative of all of the silent comedians, Buster Keaton has left us an unparalleled legacy of silent films. *College* is a good example of his work. Always in good taste and funny as the dickens, this film never (well, almost never) shows someone being abused other than, of course, Keaton himself.

Graduating from high school, his valedictory speech on the “Curse of Athletics” is badly received, especially by the girl (Anne

For the Records

Ralph Beaudry, Associate Editor

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

JOURNEY INTO MELODY

John Giacchi



This is John Giacchi's third recording since he won the Senior Division title in 1990's ATOS Young Organist Competition. (See the Journal reviews of *Night Moods* in November 1991 and *Beyond The Blue Horizon* in March 1997.) John is the first Australian organist to be a featured artist at an ATOS Convention (playing Ft. Wayne's Embassy Theatre for the 1997 Indianapolis Convention.) In addition to other dates on his U.S. concert tour last fall, John was featured on the magnificent Wurlitzers in Fullerton's Plummer Auditorium, Berkeley's Community Theatre and San Sylmar's Nethercutt collection. On his new 70-minute CD John is heard at the wonderful 4/29 Wurlitzer in Adelaide's Capri Theatre. Details about that organ can be found in the album's excellent 12 pages of liner notes and in our review of the Capri organ's videotape (*A Pipe Dream Comes True* in the September 1998 Journal).

After a *Star Wars* type fanfare John sails into Irving Berlin's "We Saw the Sea" with robust, indeed, red-blooded registrations. However, throughout the balance of this album John takes full advantage of this instrument's many exquisite, indeed subtle, voices and com-

binations for John is truly taking the listener on a "Journey into Melody." And that exquisite Robert Farnon composition is his second selection. A 15-minute medley from Rudolph Friml's *Rosemarie* is next. This popular operetta opened on Broadway in 1924 and was an immediate success despite having a murder in its plot! With a radically changed plot line Hollywood filmed it three times; the first, a 1928 silent, starred Joan Crawford; the second in 1936 (with Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald) surprisingly dropped many of the original songs, although, for the third version in 1954, the then 75-year old Friml wrote three new numbers! John is using the George Wright arrangement heard on Banda's Rialto Theatre CD. An A-B comparison demonstrates John has very successfully adapted the score to a much larger organ. The selections are "The Mounties," "Rose Marie," "The Door of Her Dreams," "Indian Love Call" and "Totem Tom-Tom." It's stunning!

Although Friml's *Rose Marie* was the highest grossing Broadway musical (until *Oklahoma* 20 years later!) Romberg's *Student Prince* had the longest run of any show in the 1920s (608 performances). From that melodic score John plays the serenely beautiful "Serenade." In delightful contrast is Sidney Torch's original composition "Shooting Star" which he wrote for the New Century Orchestra in 1947. John's very informative liner notes tell us Ronald Hanmer's "Pastorale" was meant "... to evoke the peaceful English countryside with its green rolling hills, cuckoos and tolling church bells ... (but) found its way to Sydney, Down Under where it was used to introduce Australia's ... radio serial *Blue Hills*." And it truly does sound just right for the Outback!

John's second medley is a refreshing surprise! It's 14 minutes of seven tunes whose lyrics were written by Gus Kahn (1886-1941). While a few composers

(notably Berlin and Porter) wrote their own lyrics, most worked with a lyric writing "professional." Many considered Kahn the second best songwriter in the business (Berlin being number one) and in 1951 Warner Brothers released his film-biography, *I'll See You in My Dreams*, with Danny Thomas as Gus Kahn. Although he started writing for Tin Pan Alley and Broadway, Kahn moved to Hollywood in the early 1930s and his lyrics were sung in over 40 films! John's medley samples Kahn's career from his 1922 hit "My Buddy" (music by Walter Donaldson) to the title song from the 1936 film *San Francisco* (scored by Bronislau Kaper). The other titles are "Flying Down to Rio," "Makin' Whoopee," "You Stepped Out of a Dream," "Orchids in the Moonlight" and "Love Me or Leave Me." Each is given a full arrangement with lots of variety in registration, rhythm and tempo and you'll hear brief touches of Kahn's "Liza" and "The Carioca," too.

Many will be surprised again by the next tune, "Blue Twilight," for Jesse Crawford penned this jazzy/bluesy piece in 1952! It's one of only about two dozen songs Jesse is known to have written and came after his studies with modern music guru Joseph Schillinger who so completely changed Jesse's musical style. Mrs. Harvey (Idabelle) Firestone, wife of the tire magnet, wrote "In My Garden" and John thoughtfully includes the words to this song in his liner notes. This beautiful music was heard weekly on radio (and later TV) from 1928 to 1954 as one of the themes for the *Voice of Firestone* broadcasts. Franz von Suppe was just starting his musical career in 1846 when he wrote his still popular "Poet and Peasant Overture." John's thrilling orchestral arrangement does it full justice. As an "encore" John plays Billy Mayerl's charming "Ladybird Lullaby" and his liner notes tell us this piece "... displays some of the instrument's quiet voices. The interplay between the

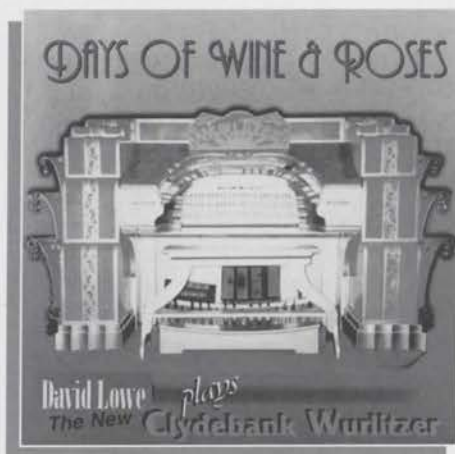
wonderful strings and Vox Humana, Harp and Chrysoglott and Harmonic Tuba bring this recording to a spine tinging close."

Indeed it does and the programming, arrangements, registrations, liner notes, artist, organ, and recording well deserve our Very Highest Recommendation! Compact disc only for \$22.00 postpaid. Please make checks payable to John Giacchi and mail to Don Near, 9700 Chapman Avenue, Garden Grove, CA 92841.

DAYS OF WINE AND ROSES

David Lowe

Dan Bellomy, Guest Reviewer



A first for the instrument and a second for the artist!! David Lowe's first CD was a first for both artist and instrument—the instrument being the Tywyn Wurlitzer in Wales lovingly cared for by its owner John Smallwood. *Days of Wine and Roses* is a first for the new Clydebank Town Hall Wurlitzer in Scotland and a second release for David! Those who enjoyed David's artistry in the Tywyn recording will certainly want to continue the pleasure in this latest effort.

The instrument is a 3/8 Wurlitzer—relatively small by U.S. standards, but an instrument with a "message" in spite of its size. One of the most interesting and rare sounds in this instrument is the French Trumpet, which David uses so effectively. It is probably the shining star of the eight ranks. While I might not personally enjoy the tonal finishing on some of the ranks, I do understand that with a small number of ranks and the room they will speak into, the philosophy of tonal finishing is somewhat different. Under many circumstances, it is difficult

to get the desired ensemble sound with only eight ranks available but David works his registration magic and manages some very nice combinations. The again unusual under-stage installation manages to fill the room for sure.

The music included in this recording is typical of the multifaceted talents of Mr. Lowe. It truly reflects David's ability to make just about any type of music sound good on a Wurlitzer! Opening the set is a lovely medley of music by Henry Mancini including "The Days of Wine and Roses," "Dear Heart" and "I Love You." Truly theatrical in arranging, David makes us feel the emotion of this music. A great bit of movie music is included in this set including "Georgy Girl," "Arthur's Theme," and others. The CD runs over 70-minutes and is chock full of pop tunes, melodies from musical theatre and some rather eclectic inclusions such as "City of Chester," "Rain Shadows," and "Autumn Too Soon." Closing the program is a tour de force selection from the Lerner and Loewe show *Paint Your Wagon*. I love it!

Although I enjoyed the pure musicality of just about every track on this recording, I sense that the order in which they were presented for the CD was not as David would have programmed. This is a part of the creative process and should be forever out of the hands of anyone other than the performer.

In listening to this production many times I feel sure that the instrument would have sounded even better had the mike placement been different. I have been in this particular room but it seems that some of the harshness of the sound could have been eliminated had the microphone not been so far away from the chambers. 'Nuff said.

Congratulations to the Scottish Cinema Organ Trust (affiliated with the Cinema Organ Society) on their new installation. All their hard work is certainly showcased in this production by one of Britain's finest players.

David Lowe is probably one of the finest musicians anywhere who has chosen the theatre pipe organ as their means of musical expression. It is as simple as that. Give this CD a listen—I know you will be musically pleased that you did!

Available on Compact Disc for \$20.00 or cassette for \$12.00 (both

prices include postage.) U.S. dollar checks made payable to Ian Macnaught are accepted or you can charge to your MasterCard or VISA account (be sure and include your account number, the name on the account and the expiration date). Mail orders should be sent to Ian Macnaught, 25 Inglewood Crescent, East Kilbride, Glasgow G75 8QD, Scotland. Charge sales can be made on-line on www.seraphproductions.com.


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Lyn Larsen



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Style 165 Special, was installed for the Grand Opening of the 1,600-seat Coleman Theatre in Miami—pronounced MiamiUH—Oklahoma on April 19, 1929. Although too late to accompany silent films, the organ was played from time to time until 1972 when it was removed for reinstallation at Hargis Ministries. When that plan fell through it went into storage. In 1989 the Coleman Estate donated their theatre to the City of Miami, which made it a performing arts center and began looking for the organ. They finally found it and so, after a near 25-year hiatus, Lyn Larsen played the organ's homecoming debut on May 11, 1996. (The organ's complete story, with photos, can be found in the Journal for November 1996.)

Three ranks have been added to the organ's original specification and it is now a 3/10 playing into the renamed Coleman Theatre Beautiful that now comfortably seats 700. Lyn has returned to play several concerts since the organ's reopening and, as a fundraiser for the ongoing restoration of the theatre, his April 1, 2000 program was recorded for this 70-minute CD. Lyn opens with Steve Allen's zippy console-raiser "This Could Be the Start of Something Big." Listeners will immediately realize this organ sounds much bigger and brighter than anyone might expect from just ten ranks! And throughout his concert Lyn beautifully exhibits its marvelous variety of voices and ensembles in a delightfully

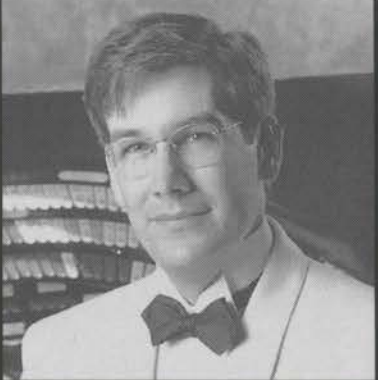
engaging and well-rounded program.

"Just in Time" is one of the tunes Jule Styne wrote for 1956's Broadway hit musical *Bells Are Ringing*, which starred Judy Holliday and Charlie Chaplin's son Sydney who enjoyed a very brief Broadway career! (In the 1960 film version Dean Martin played the male lead.) It's been a long time since we last heard that old pizzeria favorite "Baby Elephant Walk." Lyn's version is as charmingly cute as ever! That number comes from Henry Mancini's score for John Wayne's 1962 film *Hitari* which one critic described as having "... extraordinary footage of Africa and (its) animals brought to life by a fantastic musical score." Bob Nolan's cowboy tune "Tumbling Tumbleweeds" is followed by a Tibia and Vox laden version of Irving Gordon's "Unforgettable." Next, in an unusually relaxed tempo, is Felix Arndt's 1915 novelty "Nola" (which was his wife's name!).

A mellow, silky arrangement of "Moonglow" is next and Lyn inserts the rarely played verse between the choruses. That song appeared in Lew Leslie's London edition of *Blackbirds of 1934* but it reached its greatest popularity when film composer George Duning used it in his memorable score for the 1955 film *Picnic*. (In the film he combined it with his own "Love Theme" and both are often played as a medley.) Dave Brubeck's tricky rhythm "Take Five" precedes one of the lushest melodies ever

written; it's Earl Garner's "Misty" which he first recorded in 1954. Keeping in a sweetly swinging mood Lyn plays George Shearing's chirpy "Lullaby of Birdland." Recently organists have been including more Beatles tunes in their programs and Lyn does a superb, but brief, Beatles medley by wrapping a jaunty "When I'm 64" around their mellow ballad, "Michelle."

Since the Coleman has the only theatre organ playing in an Oklahoma theatre, nothing could be more appropriate for Lyn's Grand Finale than a 20-minute medley of most of the great Rodgers and Hammerstein's tunes from their 1943 hit show *Away We Go*. Surprised? That was the musical's title when their show had its tryout in New Haven. Audience reaction wasn't favorable, as something seemed to be missing. So they wrote a brand new number to try and give the show a boost for its Boston previews. That number, "Oklahoma," was so rousing they immediately renamed their musical and it held the longest running Broadway musical record (5 years and 9 months) for almost 20 years! Lyn's 10-tune medley includes such rarely played titles as "The Farmer and the Cowman" and "Poor Jud Is Dead" along with all the familiar favorites—and concludes with the entire audience joining in and singing a spine-tingling "Oklahoma." Nothing could top that except Lyn's exciting hand and hoof version of "Tiger Rag." WOW!!!



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This disc captures all the excitement of Lyn's live performance before a respectfully silent audience—except for their generous applause after each number (which is tastefully and quickly faded out). A few helpful spoken introductions are included at several points in the program. (Sharp eyes may note a minor numbering error in the liner note's track numbers but the selections are played in the order listed.) It's a thoroughly enjoyable program throughout, Lyn is obviously enjoying every moment of it, too, and purchase of this CD will help finance the ongoing restoration of the Coleman Theatre Beautiful. Very Highly Recommended! Compact disc only for \$20.00 to U.S. addresses, \$22.00 to Canadian addresses, and \$30.00 overseas (including postage.) All orders in U.S. funds, please. Make checks payable to Friends of the Coleman Theatre, P.O. Box 2, Miami, OK 74355.

DEFINITIVE

Jonas Nordwall



It's just a bit over 30 years ago that Jonas recorded his first theatre organ album on the Portland Oriental Wurlitzer. Although he's released only 15 solo albums since then, he's developed a style and technique that are uniquely his own. On this new 57-minute CD, played on the Allen Signature Series GW319EX, is a Jonas we haven't heard before since it's his personal tribute to a major influence on his career, the legendary George Wright. We'll quote excerpts from Jonas' excellent six pages of liner notes to explain the album's title and purpose.

"For George, the definitive performance must occur in an absolute dry acoustical setting. This was the ultimate

test of a person's musicianship, understanding of the instrument, and the quality of the instrument. This setting also clarified subtle, finite details that only true talent and instinct can create . . . Some 30 years later . . . (this) goal was achieved in his residence Hollywood Philharmonic Pipe Organ . . . When considering selections for this CD, I thought about carefully replicating some of George's arrangements . . . He always encouraged originality . . . While I may have compromised my personal promise not to copy George, I hope this has created an essence of his musical styles and tastes."

Since the first George Wright musical piece most of us ever heard was the opening selection on Hi-Fi 701, it's appropriate Jonas opens with an amazingly dead-on recreation of "Jalousie." Danish film composer/conductor Jacob Gade wrote this in 1925, Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops recorded it—it was their first million-selling album—and, when Vera Bloom wrote English words for it in 1938, the title became "Jealousy." (So, technically, both spellings are correct!) From Hi-Fi 702 Jonas next recreates a quite cheerful "Sentimental Journey" which was a 1944 hit for composer Les Brown (and His Band of Renown), and for his vocalist Doris Day—before she became a Hollywood star!

While sharp ears will detect some Jonas in the opening tunes, on his third tune, Richard Rodgers "Little Girl Blue" you'll note a bit more of Jonas than George. "Istanbul" (originally Byzantium and later Constantinople) is the ancient city where East meets West but this bouncy quasi-Oriental novelty always seems to have a Latin beat! "It Happened in Monterey" is Jonas at his ballad-best while "Galloping Comedians" confirms he has technique to burn (and he betters Wright's time by 10 seconds!). Berlin's "Cheek to Cheek," Jonas tells us, ". . . is a compilation of ideas recorded by . . . Ann Leaf and Jesse Crawford." One of this disc's major delights is a nine-minute medley of three contrasting Gershwin melodies. The first two, "Embraceable You" and "I Got Rhythm," are from 1930's Broadway hit musical *Girl Crazy* in which Ethel Merman made her debut. Of course, Merman sang "I Got Rhythm" but, in one of her few Broadway appearances, it was Gin-

ger Rogers who introduced "Embraceable You." The third melody, "The Man I Love," was tried out in, and then cut from, three different shows! Lady Mountbatten heard it at one of the tryouts and took the tune back to the UK where it became a hit before it was even published in the U.S.!

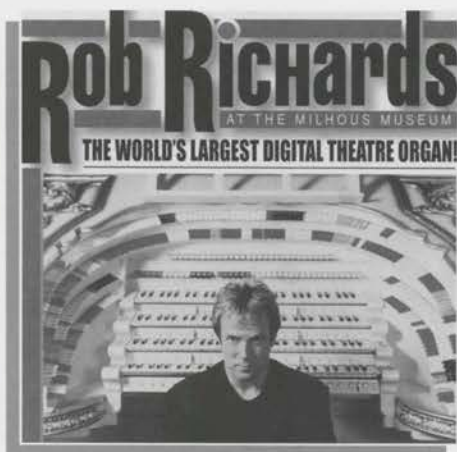
Both Jonas and George could be arrested for speeding when they feel like it but Jonas adds almost a minute to the timing on "Dizzy Fingers" because of his jazzy additions to the interlude. Did Wright ever record "Try to Remember?" (It's from history's longest running musical show *The Fantasticks* which is now in its 41st year at the tiny 149-seat Sullivan Street Playhouse in Greenwich Village where it opened on May 3, 1960.) No, not on a commercial recording; but we understand he did record it on one of the broadcast tapes for his San Francisco radio program during the 1960s! We're not sure he ever recorded the charming, impressionistic novelty "Dancing Butterfly." How about "Lullaby of the Leaves"? Probably on a transcription disc for radio play while he was at the New York Paramount!

Next to closing is Jonas' recreation of a French melody Mr. Wright played during his 1968 concert at the Howard Vollum organ in Portland. It is Yvain's emotional "My Man" which the famous French singer Mistinquet introduced in 1920's *Paris Qui Jazz*. Later Fanny Brice introduced it to the U.S. in Ziegfeld's *9 O'clock Follies*. The Grand Finale is a rousing version of Meredith Willson's "76 Trombones." Yes, this is an unusual program for Jonas Nordwall but it musically demonstrates his affection for and appreciation of the legacy left us by George Wright. It's a close-up studio recording of the Allen and has a sound quality quite similar to that of Wright's residence organ, with hints here and there of the famed Pasadena studio organ.

Compact disc only for \$15.00 (California residents add 8.25% sales tax) PLUS \$2.00 postage in the U.S., \$5.00 postage to Canada, and \$10.00 postage to overseas addresses. You can charge it to your MasterCard, VISA, AmEx or Discover accounts AND you can order on line at www.jnelson.com. Mail orders go to J. Nelson and Company, 4231 Park Blvd., Oakland, CA 94602.

ROB RICHARDS AT THE MILHOUS MUSEUM

Rob Richards



For several years comments about a new digital organ technology have been circulating among theatre organ buffs. At the Milwaukee ATOS Annual Convention last year the Walker Technical Company of Zionsville, Pennsylvania presented both a three and a four manual version of their new custom-built digital theatre organs. This new Rob Richards CD is the inaugural recording of a Walker and features the astonishing 4/80 Walker organ in Boca Raton, Florida's Milhous Museum.

The liner notes describe the Milhous organ as being "... the largest of its kind in the world ... utilizing the latest in digital reproduction techniques and custom designed computer software. Even the room ambiance is digitally generated ... From the most delicate celeste to the roar of the 32' Bombarde the equivalent of 80 ranks is stunningly articulated through 433 speakers with an aggregate total of over 10,000 watts of power." This 53-minute CD has 17 tracks of Rob Richards playing a wonderfully diverse range of popular titles on the Walker organ plus five "bonus tracks" played on several of the Milhous Museum's excellent orchestrions.

"Swanee" is Rob's spirited console-raiser. Gershwin wrote the music in 1919 but, since this was while he was still working on Tin Pan Alley, the lyrics are by Irving Caesar who later said that one-steps were then the rage and "It was sheer inspiration. We wrote 'Swanee' in about 15 minutes or less." But following one of Gershwin's best-known tunes is one of his most obscure! In 1929 Flo

Ziegfeld decided to produce a musical version of a popular novel (titled *East Is West*) starring comedian Ed Wynn. The Gershwin brothers had completed seven songs when Zeigfield changed his mind and put them to work on another musical. Rob plays the virtually unknown "In the Mandarin's Orchid Garden" and, thoughtfully, includes the song's charming lyrics in his excellent liner notes.

Richard Whiting's chipper, bouncy "Ain't We Got Fun," in a George Wright flavored arrangement, is next and then Rob goes where few have gone before! It's the original *Star Trek* television theme (written by Alexander Courage) combined with one of the subsequent movie themes. Regrettably Rob hasn't indicated composers for any of his tunes but we believe it is the majestic theme Jerry Goldsmith wrote for *Star Trek: The Movie* (and later was used as the theme for TV's *Star Trek: The Next Generation*). Leon Jessel's lighthearted march, "Parade of the Wooden Soldiers," is followed by the plaintive "What Are You Doing the Rest of Your Life?" which Michel Legrand wrote for the 1969 movie *The Happy Ending*.

Since the former San Francisco Fox Wurlitzer opened in Disney's El Capitan Theatre on Hollywood Boulevard, Rob has been one of the featured organists. So it's only natural he include a few of the hundreds of melodies written for Disney's live action and animated films over the past 60 years. First is the jazzy title tune of 1965's *That Darn Cat*. Written by the Sherman brothers during their most productive years with Disney, they later struck out on their own writing scores and scripts for other studios and even wrote two shows for Broadway! Just recently (though now in their 70s) they returned to Disney with five new tunes for *The Tigger Movie*. Rob plays the luscious, liting waltz "Pooh's Lullabee" and the ram-bunctious "Whoop-de-Dooper Bounce."

For a complete change of pace we next hear two fascinating melodies by Duke Ellington. First is "Prelude to a Kiss" and Rob's extensive liner notes tell us "The intro is played (digitally) on a rare Murray Harris redwood Tibia. I once owned these pipes ... they were in a crate under my bed for several years! What an incredibly lovely sound. There's a touch of Buddy Cole here, notably in the string/Chrysoglott and untremmed

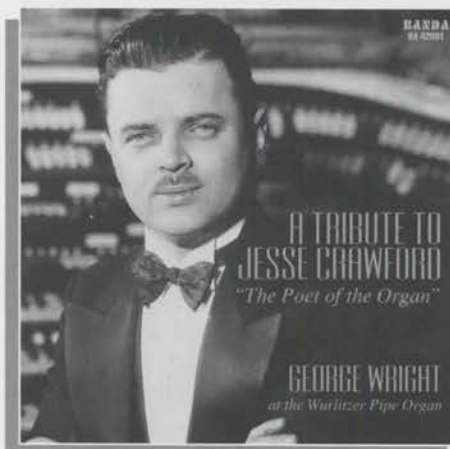
Diapason passages." And Rob describes Ellington's "Sloppy Joe" as a slow drag with a hint of ragtime. His two final selections are also from Disney. First is the Sonny Burk-Peggy Lee ballad "Bella Notte" from 1955's *Lady and the Tramp* and then "Topsy Turvy" from the recent animated film *Hunchback of Notre Dame* (which is currently trying out as a live stage show in Germany!). This number was composed by Alan Mencken and Stephen Schwartz, and should not be confused with the French musical of the same title now playing in Las Vegas!

Concluding our visit to the Milhous Museum are five tunes played on several of their orchestrions. In surprisingly real and quite orchestral arrangements are Nacio Herb Brown's "Singin' in the Rain" and "Doll Dance" (which many will recognize as "The Wedding of the Painted Doll"), Leroy Anderson's "Belle of the Ball" and "Cuckoo Waltz," and a trifle titled "Fox Waltz." Once again Rob Richards plays a thoroughly enjoyable program that is delightfully out of the ordinary. It's also a wonderfully entertaining introduction to the Walker organ and the other musical instruments in the Milhous Museum. Compact disc only for \$20.00 (postpaid) from Rob Richards, 13812 Ventura Blvd., Sherman Oaks, CA 91423.

A TRIBUTE TO JESSE CRAWFORD

George Wright

Stu Green, Guest Reviewer



As George points out in his jacket notes, it's not his intention to imitate the Poet of the Organ on this disc because he feels Crawford was unique and therefore inimitable. With all due respect to both George and his idol we beg to

disagree. We'll even go so far as to state, for all intents and purposes, George IS Crawford while this music is playing.

The precision with which he has recreated the aura of the 1920s, the tempos, registrations, nuance and taste of the late maestro are something to wonder at. For several evenings before writing these words we listened to many of the old 78 originals, sometimes played simultaneously with the Wright version (they time out remarkably well), sometimes switching from the old to the new and back again. Each playing brought us new respect for not only the unquestioned artistry of George Wright but also for the determination indicated by the results. George would be the first to admit that the blood, sweat and tears involved in his "Crawford" project sometimes made him wonder if he'd ever get the desired results. The tedious job of listening to the old 78s and copying down not only the notes (no trick for GW's sharp ear) but also the registration, tempo and that indefinable quality which relates to the spirit of Crawford's era; that he completed the task to his own satisfaction (and he's his own roughest critic) constitutes quite a feather in his cap and a priceless groove full of wonderful nostalgia.

Actually the selections may be divided into two general groups 1) definitive renditions for all times—standards, in effect, 2) tunes whose characteristics reflect the long gone "roaring '20s." In

the latter group are "Confessin'," "What Are You Waiting For, Mary?" "I Love to Hear You Singing," "High Hat," "Hawaiian Sandman" and "Tiptoe Through the Tulips." In the "Standards" class are "Pale Moon," "So Beats My Heart For You," "Moonlight on the River," "How Am I To Know," "The Perfect Song" and "When the Organ Played at Twilight." Note that the latter group consists of ballads, the field where Crawford knew no peer—thus his renditions were definitive and permanent. The former group is touched, to some extent, by the "ricky tick" of the '20s and thus cast off some of the glitter and tinsel of the era. We aren't going to take them apart for our usual phrase-by-phrase analysis. No need for that; we wouldn't know whether we'd be reviewing Crawford or Wright. To the old timers who remember, we can assure them that everything they recall from their old Victor recordings are here on the Wright disc, with the advantage of modern recording—even stereo, if you insist. To the fan who has come to know Crawford from his records of the past 20 years, we recommend this record as an introduction to a new and different Jesse Crawford—young, unschooled, self-taught and often flamboyant—playing in the style that would make him world famous. It's somewhat sobering to realize that George Wright has recreated a Crawford, which the late maestro could never have done for himself. His style changed completely after studying with a

teacher names Schillinger in the '30s. The teacher developed a smoother, more self-assured Crawford but removed that flamboyance and element of surprise found in his "Confessin'" and "Tiptoe" which George Wright has reproduced so flawlessly.

Editor's Note: This just released Banda CD is an exact duplicate—including its liner notes—of the notable Dot recording which the late Stu Green reviewed in the Summer 1965 issue of the ATOS BOMBARDE. It has been converted to digital from the original master analog tapes and the magnificent stereophonic sound of George Wright's 3/29 Pasadena Studio Organ is the sonic equal of today's finest recordings. Banda producer Terry Cutchall writes, "We have been a long time in collecting the master tapes for this project, but finally we found and restored the original program. As strange as it may be George had actually kept most of the original recorded material from those recordings and had them tucked away in his home. He never indicated to me that he still had them but, when he died and we packed up the house, there they were hiding in a closet near the organ console."

This 42-minute CD is available for \$20.00 (postpaid in the U.S. and Canada) and \$23.00 (postpaid via air mail to foreign addresses). MasterCard, VISA, personal checks and money orders should be sent to Banda, P.O. Box 1620, Agoura Hills, CA 91376-1620.

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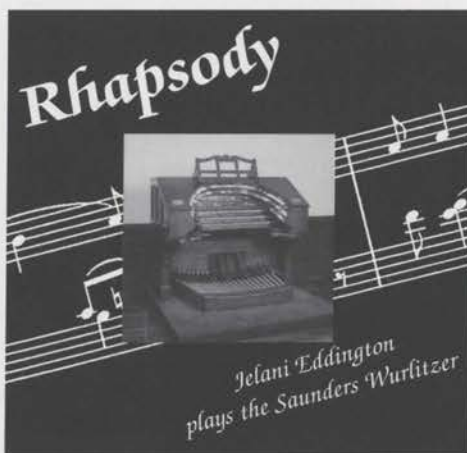


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RHAPSODY IN BLUE

Quentin Maclean

Lew Williams, Guest Reviewer



The name of Quentin Maclean (1896–1962) may not be well known to present day organ music lovers in the U.S. Though he recorded prolifically between 1927 and 1939 for Columbia at three different London cinemas, his discs were not widely circulated in North America. Several years ago the excellent British firm of Sterndale released a CD of some of his work from the Trocadero, Elephant & Castle 4/21 Wurlitzer, and now they've brought out a truly important collection: a three-CD set of almost all of the discs he recorded at the Regal, Marble Arch 4/36 Christie in 1929–30.

This organ, the largest cinema instrument ever built in Europe, is already familiar to fans of the organ playing of Sidney Torch. The instrument ran the gamut from quiet strings and flutes to fiery reeds, and was augmented with an excellent array of traps, percussions, and a 32-bell carillon, the only one ever installed in a cinema. Here it is played by the man who designed it, presided over it for two years, and who produced some of the most remarkable theatre organ recordings ever heard.

Maclean was no ordinary organist. A thoroughly trained classical musician who studied in Germany in his youth, he approached the theatre organ in an innovative way, registering his music exactly as an orchestrator would. He was particularly noted as a film accompanist. His organ technique was second to none, being an expert pianist, and his approach to theatre organ owed little, if anything, to any preexisting school of playing. And though he came from a background of the classics, he had the temperament and humor for the popular music field as well. His colleagues admired him for his easy command of every type of music, and many considered him the finest organist in England.

This compilation includes some 48 tracks that time out to just under three hours of music. The first two CDs present Maclean's organ solos, including several classics, pops of the day (both English and American), operetta, and salon music. Virtually every voice in the organ is explored at one time or another, with ensembles ranging from the quietest strings to full organ, frequently featuring the 32' pedal reed. The third CD features his work accompanying vocal soloists and the Regal Cinema Orchestra, an excellent group of 20–25 players under the baton of Emanuel Starkey. Columbia's engineers did a splendid job of capturing the organ and orchestra, and there is much detail to be heard. The original 78s were remastered using the CEDAR process, and any surface noise has been reduced to a quiet rustle in the background.

It is beyond the scope of this review to describe each title in detail, so we'll cover some of the most notable ones. In looking over Maclean's solo items, we find his most famous recordings. At the opening of "Rhapsody in Blue," he

cleverly imitates the rising clarinet glissando on the organ's slow siren, an effect that intrigues the listener from the start. The piano attachment carries the solo passages perfectly. The interpretation is so convincing, it is reported that Maclean was chided by one record buyer for not crediting the pianist on the recording! Liszt's "Second Hungarian Rhapsody" falls in the same category, and he blazes through the difficult piano passages with no effort whatsoever. His double-sided recordings of "The Ride of the Valkyries" and Widor's "Toccatina in F" was so popular that it remained in the Columbia catalog for some 14 years. Both of the "Wedding Marches" (Wagner and Mendelssohn) are heard and the concluding three chords of the latter really "take the roof off."

When Maclean turned his hand to the popular music of the day, the results were always interesting. In "On The Sunny Side of the Street," a rather polite rendering leads into a razzmatazz second chorus on Xylophones and Tuned Bird Whistles. "With a Song in My Heart" is decidedly cheerier than many other versions, with a light touch and chattering birds again. "Body and Soul" features a dramatic orchestral introduction and some of the Christie's distinctive color reeds.

The third disc, organ and orchestra, features selections from several film musicals of the day: *Broadway, Sally, Gold Diggers of Broadway, The Show of Shows* and *The King of Jazz*. All the arrangements are excellent, and the listener is always intrigued to hear how the organ is an integral part, weaving in and out and trading off solo lines with the other players. No "noodling along" here. Some may find the style of playing dated 70 years hence, but the kicky enthusiasm of the musicians is contagious. *The*

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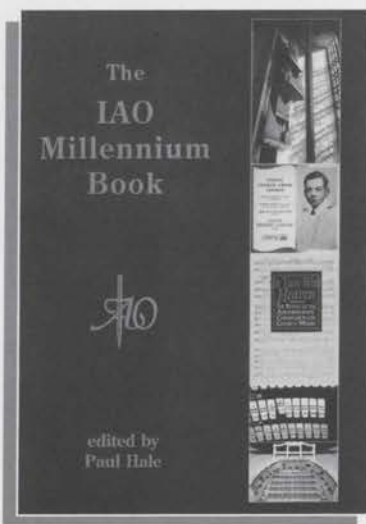
King of Jazz selection is noteworthy for being a Sydney Torch arrangement. The 22-year-old pianist had just joined the Regal Orchestra and would take over the organ bench a few years later. George Wright was quite fond of this recording, especially the elegant rendering of "It Happened in Monterey." The one classical offering by the orchestra and organ is a selection from Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffman* including the famous "Barcarolle."

Mention must be made of the excellent 66-page booklet that accompanies this set. Terry Hepworth's thoughtful, well-researched notes and photographs cover the cinema, music, organist, organ, orchestra, and even the carillon. An appendix features more detailed information on the organ, including working drawings, photographs, and complete console specifications. Almost a miniature encyclopedia, it's well worth the price of the whole set.

The set is highly recommended. Listeners who are looking for something new in organ playing may just find it here. This three-CD set (and 66-page booklet) is \$55.00 (plus \$3.00 per order postage) from Organ Literature Foundation, 45 Norfolk Road, Braintree, MA 02184-5918.

THE IAO MILLENNIUM BOOK

Paul Hale, Editor



This scholarly volume contains articles which cover a surprising range of subjects that surely will appeal to many serious students of pipe organs, organ literature and playing technique. It's a 7" x 9 1/2" 186-page soft bound volume


containing 13 articles by distinguished, well-qualified authors. Because this Incorporated Association of Organists (a British organization) publication was issued on the 250th anniversary of J. S. Bach's death, it's first two articles are devoted to understanding Bach as an organist and composer and how Bach's compositions have been performed in the 20th Century.

The eight essays in the second section of this book are devoted to a variety of subjects involving "The Organ and Its Music." Two of these articles may be of great interest to dedicated theatre organ enthusiasts. The first, by Patrick Burns (an organ builder with instruments in both the U.S. and U.K.) is both an appreciation for and a somewhat detailed analysis of the gigantic Atlantic City Convention Hall organ. His 21-page article also contains 21 photographs (some we've not seen before) and "...the most accurate and complete register lists of the seven-manual console to appear in print." These lists were prepared by Stephen D. Smith who is President of the ACCH Organ Society. Did you know one of the ranks is constructed of papier-mâché? It's listed here along with the couplers, percussions, Mixture Compositions, and Measurements of the Great Organ Principals! The details presented are almost mind-boggling but we'll add just one more example "... 218 (69%) of the 314 voices (449 ranks) are straight (ranks.)"

Another article will be of greatest interest to theatre organ players. Written by organist/historian Roy Bigham, it is titled, "Theatre Organ Playing: Some suggestions for achieving a good technique with particular reference to the art of registration." Its 16 pages (with three photographs) include a clearly drawn

console layout of stops and controls for the four-manual Wurlitzer formerly in the Tracadero Cinema, Elephant and Castle. Mr. Bingham starts with the assumption that the future of the theatre organ "... is dependent on a number of factors, one of which is that the sounds coming from the organ must be musically acceptable. In order to achieve this, good registration not only plays a major part, it is a must." (Ed note: Amen!) He then describes all the ranks one would expect to find on a large theatre organ, suggests how they should be used and how to combine them with other voices for optimum musical results. This section is invaluable for anyone truly serious about improving his or her theatre organ playing!

Two other articles in this volume may be of great interest to some theatre organ buffs. First is an essay by organist Thomas Murray explaining the direction in which he believes the romantic classical organ is going in the 21st Century. This is related to his recent recording of the new Schoenstein organ in Lincoln, Nebraska's First Plymouth Church (which was reviewed in the January 2000 Journal). The second is a fascinating history of pipe organ recordings in which Terry Hoyle details "The Rise and Rise of the Recording Industry" in both the U.K. and the U.S. He has packed an amazing wealth of dates and details into just ten pages.

Although this book is obviously not for everyone, and we've only indicated the articles of greatest interest to our readers, it is certainly a valuable addition to pipe organ literature. It's priced at \$26.00 (plus \$3.00 per order for postage) from Organ Literature Foundation, 45 Norfolk Road, Braintree, MA 02184-5918. 

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ATOS *Regional* *Convention 2000* By Allen Walker

FROM FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3 to Sunday, November 5, 2000, the Eastern Massachusetts Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society (EMCATOS) hosted the ATOS Regional Convention 2000: New England's Millennial Pipes. The convention was an enormous success. All of the organs were in great-sounding condition; all of the artists put on wonderful performances; all of the bus transportation worked well, and there was fine food at the banquet/concert on Saturday night. It was also exhausting. As the "official" photographer, I took about 400 pictures, some of which are here.

I have read and heard comments about how distinctly different sounds are disappearing in the theatre organ world, and how our remaining organs seem to be converging on a single "ideal" sound. At this convention we heard six concerts on five organs in a space of 40 hours. Each organ was completely different from all of the others, and had plenty of its own personality. This is despite the fact that Allen Miller had done tonal regulation and tuning of all five organs. Allen Miller has certainly listened and helped each organ to speak with its own voice. I would also like to mention that all of the artists frequently played with only some of the tremulants on, and with no tremulants on, all to good effect. Of course, the tuning of all of the organs was excellent, a necessary condition for good off-trem sound.

This convention was also a time to remember some greats who have passed away recently. Lee Erwin was remembered a few times, with pieces dedicated to him. Jelani played a Steve Allen song, and Tom Hazleton dedicated a song to Leroy Lewis.

The opening concert on Friday night was by Ron Rhode at the Shanklin Conference Center 4/34 Wurlitzer. This is definitely a world-class instrument, with a great variety of tone, and in impeccable condition. It started out to be a re-creation of the lost organ at the Boston Metropolitan Theatre; then the plan was enlarged to increase the subtlety and musicality of the instrument with a greater variety of colors. From the unenclosed 32' Contra-Bourdon to the deliciously delicate 4' Harmonic Flute, the instrument has something for every musical need. Ron gave a great concert that was ideal for a convention opener. It was heavy on more traditional TO music, and the crowd loved it.

The next morning, after getting up earlier than I would have wished, I found myself at the Providence Performing Arts Center with its 5/21 Wurlitzer. It is indeed a huge gorgeous palace of a theatre. After some announcements, the house lights dimmed; the organ started to play, and a spotlight illuminated the console rising from the orchestra pit, with Walt Strony in charge. Walt has played this instrument a number of times before, including at an earlier venue. He was able to use the resources of this instrument to great effect. Most of the theatre organs I get to hear these days are in venues much smaller than the big cinema palaces where I first fell in love

with TOs, and here was that "real" TO sound. The sound just rolled around the theatre and enveloped us. The Main and Solo chambers were so far apart they could be treated as two separate organs that could either contrast or collaborate. Walt was a master of these effects. He not only used contrasting voices from the two sides, he was able to play off the Tuba in the Solo with the Tuba Horn in the Main, and the Solo Tibia Clausa with the Main Tibia Clausa. And, with everything going, we were surrounded by a heavenly sound. I was glad to experience this sound again. Even though modern TO installations in smaller venues can be wonderful musical instruments, there is an unduplicatable magic in these huge original cinema palace installations.

We had trouble describing the next concert venue, the large and unusual instrument that our Don Phipps has put together at the Phipps Marine Machine Shop & Pipe Organ Works in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Is it a theatre? No. Is it a concert hall? No. What is it? We finally settled for calling it the "Phipps Marine Experience," and what an experience it is! The consensus is that it is indescribable, however, I will attempt the impossible. It's really a huge machine/carpentry shop, with about a 30-foot ceiling. There are three large pipe chambers at widely separated locations, plus three ranks of unenclosed pipes. All percussions (tuned and untuned) and toy counter are located on shelves here and there. The console (a Fox Special size!) is just sitting on the shop floor. The organ's permanent state is "under construction," so who knows what it might be like in a year or two? The listening experience is more like an in-chamber experience! The unenclosed ranks are worthy of mention. There is a Trumpet-en-Chamade 8' from Trivo, which the artist, David Peckham described as "armed and dangerous." There is a Fanfare Trumpet 16'-8' from Gottfried, which probably gives us a preview of the Last Trumpet. Finally, there is a Diaphonic Diapason 16'-4' which is stunning. In the higher range (pipe chest on a high shelf) it has an assertive but sweet sound. The pipes for the lower range are against one wall, and there is no trouble knowing when they are in use; even the most rabid TO enthusiast would agree that they are more than enough to support any combination. I think the people seated near them are still vibrating.

Even with all of the machinery moved out or to one side, this venue could only seat less than 160, so Dave played this concert twice. He played a wonderful concert; he is very inventive and is a fascinating musician. I definitely want to hear more of him. Dave played this instrument with restraint, for the most part only playing single notes on the loudest stops. I have heard this instrument played with the opposite of restraint; I got most of my hearing back after a week. Our convention chairman Bob Evans, whose head is quite shiny, told

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32



The console of the EMCATOS 4/18 Wurlitzer.



Jelani Eddington plays the 4/18 Wurlitzer in Knight Auditorium, Babson College after the Saturday night banquet.



At the Saturday evening banquet. On behalf of Eastern Massachusetts Chapter, Chapter President Hank Lysaght, center, receives award from ATOS President Nelson Page. Doris Erbe looks on.



The Saturday night banquet at Knight Auditorium, Babson College.



Dave Peckham acknowledges applause during the concert at the 4/32 Wurlitzer at the Phipps Marine "Experience."



Convention chair Bob Evans gives an announcement.



In the Phipps Marine "Experience," the audience has an intimate relationship with the Diaphone, against the back wall.



Allen Miller at the Shanklin Conference Center. Allen was responsible for regulating and tuning all of the convention organs.

VERN BICKEL



Tom Hazleton speaks to the audience at the Shanklin Conference Center.



Ron Reseigh plays the 2/9 Wurlitzer at the Zeiterion Theatre.



F. Garrett Shanklin



Ron Rhode, in the spotlight, acknowledges applause during his Shanklin Conference Center concert.

VERN BICKEL



Cafe Lafayette Dining Car—Hobo Railroad.



Walt Strony talks to a fan at the Providence Performing Arts Center after his concert.

me that he used to have a full head of hair until he went to a concert there.


The next venue was the Zeiterion Theatre in New Bedford Massachusetts, a typical small-city theatre (equivalent to a big neighborhood theatre in a big city). It originally had a 2/8 Style F Wurlitzer that after a journey has been re-installed with the addition of one rank. That rank started life as an Oboe, and has been rebuilt/revoiced into a sort of Trumpet/Post Horn. This 2/9 instrument has great balance and variety of sound, and the artist, Ron Reseigh managed to use this instrument very well in a very exciting performance. I was amazed at the lush sounds he coaxed out of the organ for ballads. Clearly, he was liking the instrument and finding new ways of using it. He played many ballads, as well as some works that normally would not be attempted on such a small instrument: "Semper Fidelis March," and the "Poet and Peasant Overture." Ron's performance on this instrument is an effective rebuttal to those who say that you need a large instrument to "do anything interesting." I certainly hope that Ron plays more full concerts, and comes to play my chapter's home organ at Babson College. I should add one comment on the Zeiterion organ: Through the miracle of an electronic relay, the Accompaniment manual can be split; the lower half plays the Accompaniment stops and the upper half plays the Accompaniment Second Touch stops. This can give some of the benefits of a third manual. This organ gets regular use a few times a week for public performances.

For Saturday evening, we had a banquet and concert at our chapter's home venue: Knight Auditorium at Babson College in Wellesley, Massachusetts. I live with our 4/18 Wurlitzer too closely to make fair comments on it, however I will say that I have never heard it sound better. I had the pleasure of hearing our artist for the evening, Jelani Eddington, rehearse on Thursday evening. Although we hear Jelani in concert playing so smoothly and making everything look effortless, there is a lot of hard work behind the presentation. He would play something, stop, play it differently, stop again, etc. Then, he would try a slightly different registration, then another. It was fasci-

nating hearing this convergence toward the excellence he presents. I had to fix one cipher on Thursday, but the organ behaved perfectly during the Saturday evening concert (usually it's the other way around).

Jelani's program was quite varied. He included many songs and medleys from the traditional TO repertoire and much more. My favorites were the two Leonard Bernstein ones: the "Overture to Candide," and selections from *West Side Story*. With the complex polytonalities of Bernstein's work one cannot fake it; one has to play it both accurately and with feeling. Jelani has mastered this. Every time I hear him I get the impression that he is still evolving; he seems to put more feeling into the music. His arrangements are deceptive in the sense that they are easy to follow, yet are built from very complex harmonies and counterpoint.

After not enough sleep, the concluding concert was Sunday morning at the Shanklin Conference Center 4/34 Wurlitzer. The artist was Tom Hazleton, who put on a stunning show for us. I liked having the experience of having this wonderful instrument played by two different and excellent artists. They managed to get rather different sounds from this organ. Tom played a program that included TO favorites, as well as some more classical type of pieces. I still don't know how he did it, but he managed to coax some great "straight" organ sounds out of this instrument. Although no one would confuse this instrument with a Baroque period organ, it does seem entirely suitable for music written since about 1850. Going from the sublime to the ???, Tom played some "down and dirty" music, making great use of what he called the "jinglies and janglies" the organ has. The toy counter certainly is a kid's dream! Tom is a consummate artist who seems able to do any style of music as if that were his specialty. His rendition of the song "Somewhere" (dedicated to the late Leroy Lewis) was especially moving.

I had a great time. I loved the opportunity to meet in person a number of folks I had only heard of, or had just known from e-mail. And, it was wonderful to hear six great artists on five great musical instruments. 



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

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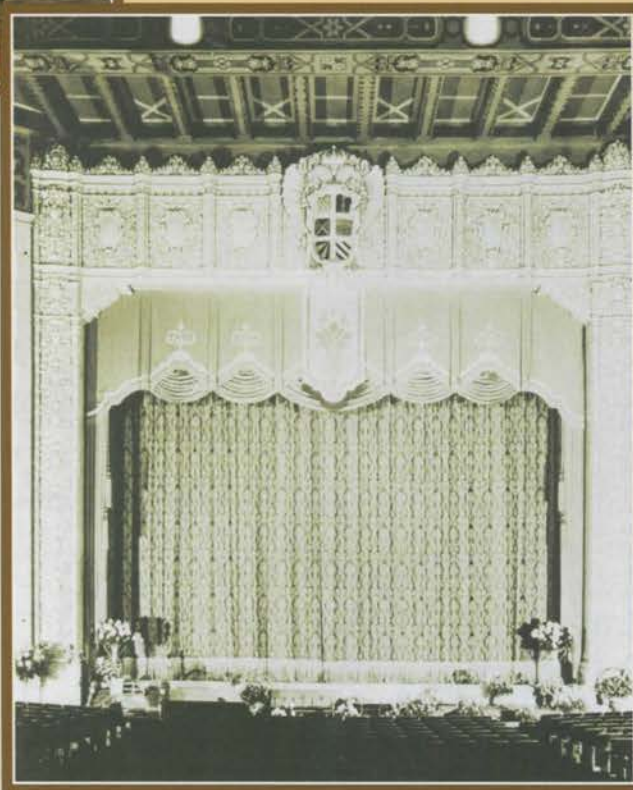
Left: The Kass Residence 3/19 Wurlitzer and piano today.

Below: Opening night at the Plaza Theatre, October 9, 1928! The historic picture displays the proscenium and elegant curtain. The Mighty Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ is in the orchestra pit on the left. The organ was on a hydraulic lift, and is surrounded by floral arrangements. The ceiling and shield display a Spanish motif.

On October 9, 1928, the Mighty Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ entertained the glittering opening night audience at the opulent Plaza Theatre in Kansas City, Missouri. First nighters were treated to a performance of *Street Angel*, starring Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrell. The movie was a talkie, and utilized the Movietone sound system. Designated as Opus 1949, the Wurlitzer was played during intermissions and before the movie. Despite a long period of silence during the Great Depression, the organ was maintained carefully. Finally, after a sojourn in the Russell Stover Auditorium in Kansas City, it was purchased and restored by Ronald F. Wehmeier and installed in his Cincinnati, Ohio home. A feature cover story about this instrument when it was in the Wehmeier residence, complete with photos and organ specifications, was published in Volume 20, Number 6 (December 1978/January 1979) issue of THEATRE ORGAN.

Larry Kass first learned about this organ when he read the feature article in the 1978 issue of the Journal. Somehow, eight years later, in 1986, he remembered the photos and the article and contacted Ron Wehmeier. He acquired the organ later that year. After building a special room for it, the organ was dedicated in May 1987. Ron was responsible for the design and installation of the entire instrument. For more information about this organ installation read the article entitled "The Plaza Wurlitzer Finds A New Home" which was published in Volume 32, Number 1 (January/February 1990) issue of THEATRE ORGAN.

This magnificent 3/19 Wurlitzer, in the Kass residence in Hinckley,



Ohio, has been recorded for all to hear and enjoy. Larry Kass has made seven CDs on this instrument. Information about these recordings may be obtained by writing to: Razzmatazz Productions, P.O. Box 401, Hinckley, OH 44233, or phoning toll-free 1-877-590-4849.

Pipe Analysis

RANK	AGE AND MAKE	ORIGIN	NO. OF PIPES
1. English Post Horn	'73 M. P. Möller	New	61
2. Brass Trumpet	'74 Bizik & Schopp	New	61
3. Tuba	'28 Wurlitzer	Plaza Theatre	73
4. Diaphonic Diapason	'28 Wurlitzer	Plaza Theatre	85
5. Open Diapason	'34 M. M. Möller	Church	61
6. Solo Tibia	'28 Wurlitzer	Theatre	97
7. Main Tibia	'28 Wurlitzer	Plaza Theatre	85
8. Clarinet	'28 Wurlitzer	Plaza Theatre	61
9. Kinura	'28 Wurlitzer	Plaza Theatre	61
10. Orchestral Oboe	'27 Wurlitzer	Proctors Theatre	61
11. Salicional	'27 Wurlitzer	WLW Radio Station	61
12. Salicional Celeste	'27 Wurlitzer	Theatre	61
13. Viole	'28 Wurlitzer	Plaza Theatre	73
14. Viole Celeste	'28 Wurlitzer	Plaza Theatre	73
15. Oboe Horn	'17 Skinner	Church	61
16. Quintadena	'26 Wurlitzer	Theatre	61
17. Lieblich Flute	'28 M. P. Möller	Church	61
18. Concert Flute	'28 Wurlitzer	Plaza Theatre	97
19. Vox Humana	'28 Wurlitzer	Plaza Theatre	61
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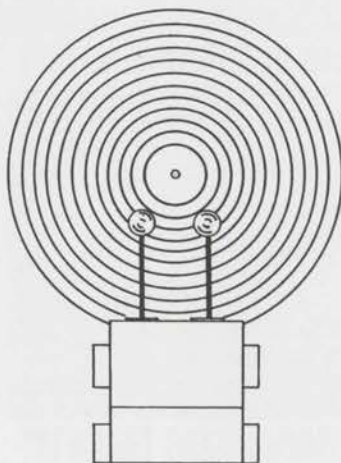
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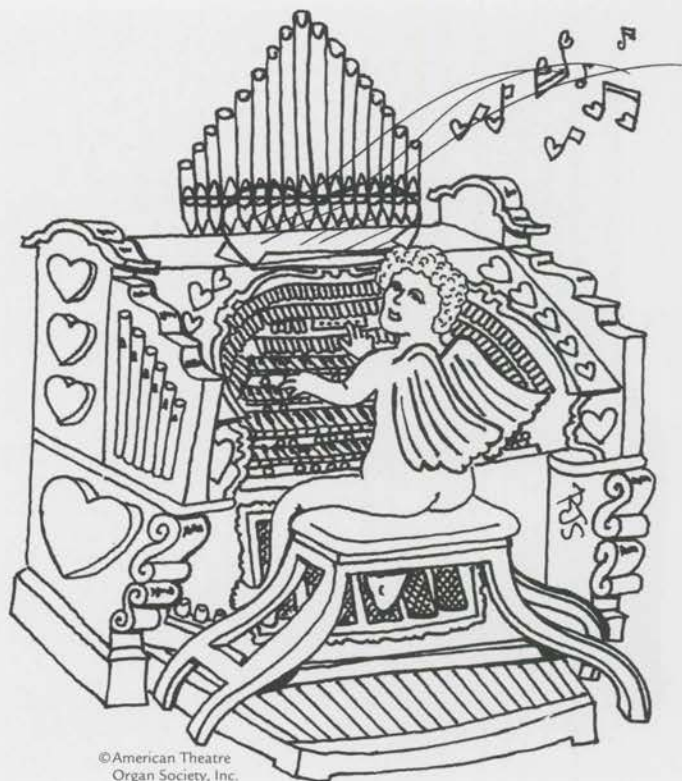
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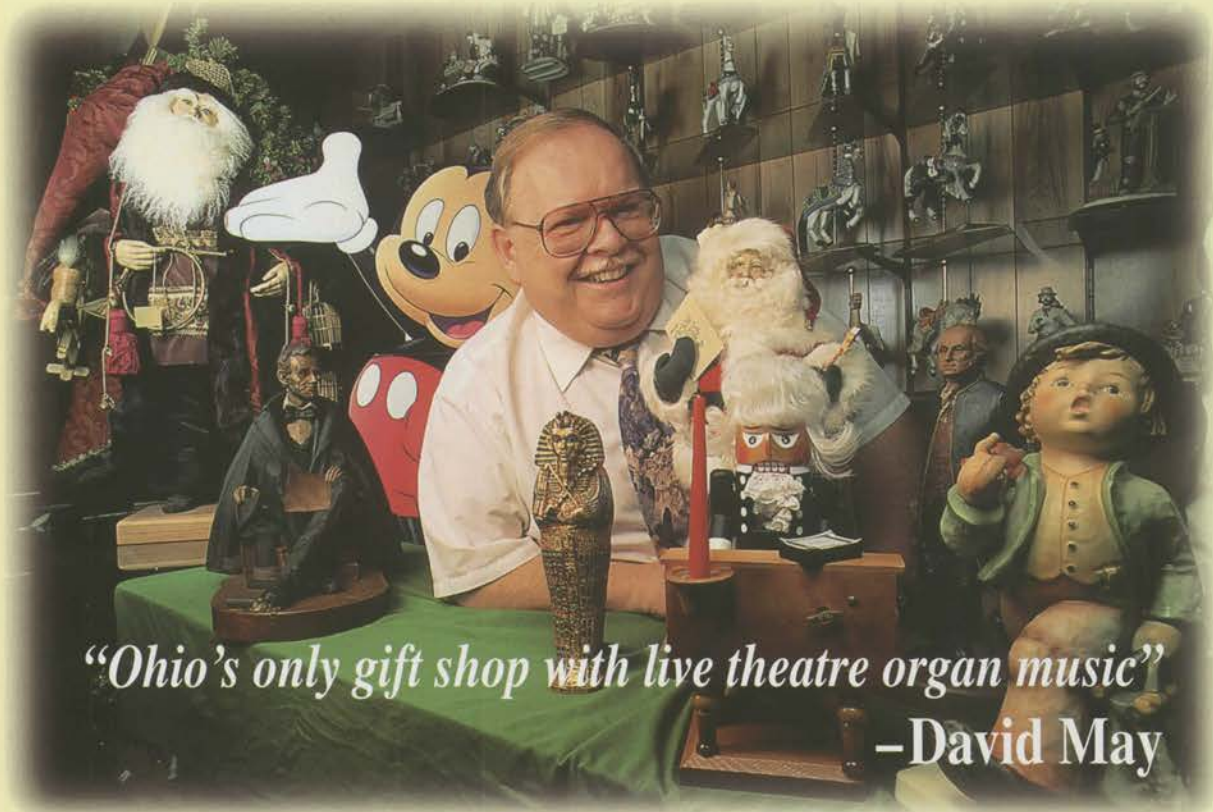
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	<u>SAT., 8/18/01</u>	<u>SUN., 8/19/01</u>	<u>MON., 8/20/01</u>	<u>TUE., 8/21/01</u>	<u>WED., 8/22-01</u>	<u>THUR., 8/23/01</u>
M O R N I N G	REGISTRATION 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.	SEMINAR: Tips on Writing for <i>Theatre Organ</i> – Vern Bickel 9:00 – 9:45	DAN BELLOMY Hedback Theatre 9:00 – 10:00 10:30 – 11:30	RON RHODE Paramount Theatre 9:30 – 11:30	DONNA PARKER St. John Church 9:00 – 10:00	AFTERGLOW Cincinnati All Day
		MEMBERS' FORUM 10:00 – 11:00	ROB RICHARDS Walker Theatre 9:00 – 10:00 10:30 – 11:30	LUNCH, Paramount Ballroom (Open Console)	ANNUAL MEETING 10:30 – 12 noon	
A F T E R N O O N		KEN DOUBLE Long Center—Laf. 2:00 – 3:00	WALTER STRONG Circle Theatre 2:00 – 4:00	JELANI EDDINGTON & DAVID HARRIS, Piano Embassy Theatre 3:00 – 5:00	MICHELLE NICOLLE & ATOS YOUNG ARTISTS Warren PAC 2:00 – 4:30	
	OPENING COCTAIL PARTY 4:00 – 6:00 Hyatt Ballroom	CLARK WILSON Long Center 3:30 – 4:30	ETONES Hyatt 4:30 – 5:30	COCKTAILS & DINNER Grand Wayne Center		
E V E N I N G	SIMON GLEDHILL Warren Performing Arts Center 8:00 – 10:00	SEMINARS Simon Gledhill 8:00 Clark Willson 9:00	DWIGHT THOMAS Manual High School 8:00 – 10:00 Jam Session afterward	JIM RIGGS Embassy Theatre 7:30 – 9:30	COCKTAILS AWARDS BANQUET Indiana Roof Ballroom 6:00 – 11:00 BILL TANDY	

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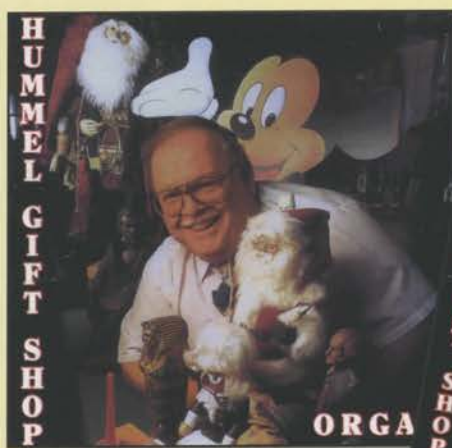
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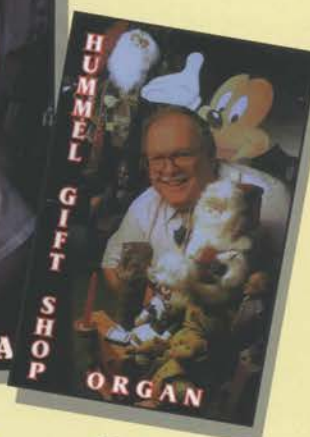
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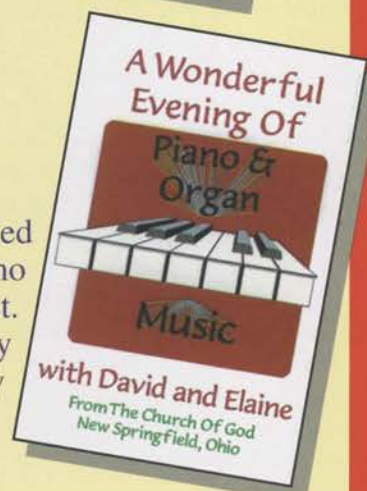


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An Acre of Seats in a Palace of Splendor

By Steve Levin, Associate Editor

FORVM, Los Angeles, California

Opened: May 15, 1924 • Architect: Edward J. Borgmeyer • Capacity: 1800
Organ: Kimball 4/37, KPO 6644

For reasons nobody has ever been able to unearth, Kimball's largest theatre unit was ordered in California, a state otherwise almost devoid of Kimballs, for a modest-sized neighborhood theatre that would have been perfectly well served by a large two-manual or small three-manual organ.

The Forum was built on Pico Boulevard, about four miles west of downtown, and a like distance south of the emerging theatre district on Hollywood Boulevard. Initially an independent, it was a Pantages house for a bit before coming under Warner Brothers control. National Screen Service records show it closing in October 1951. For some years it was a test facility for Cinerama; today, like so many other obsolete movie theatres, it serves as a church.

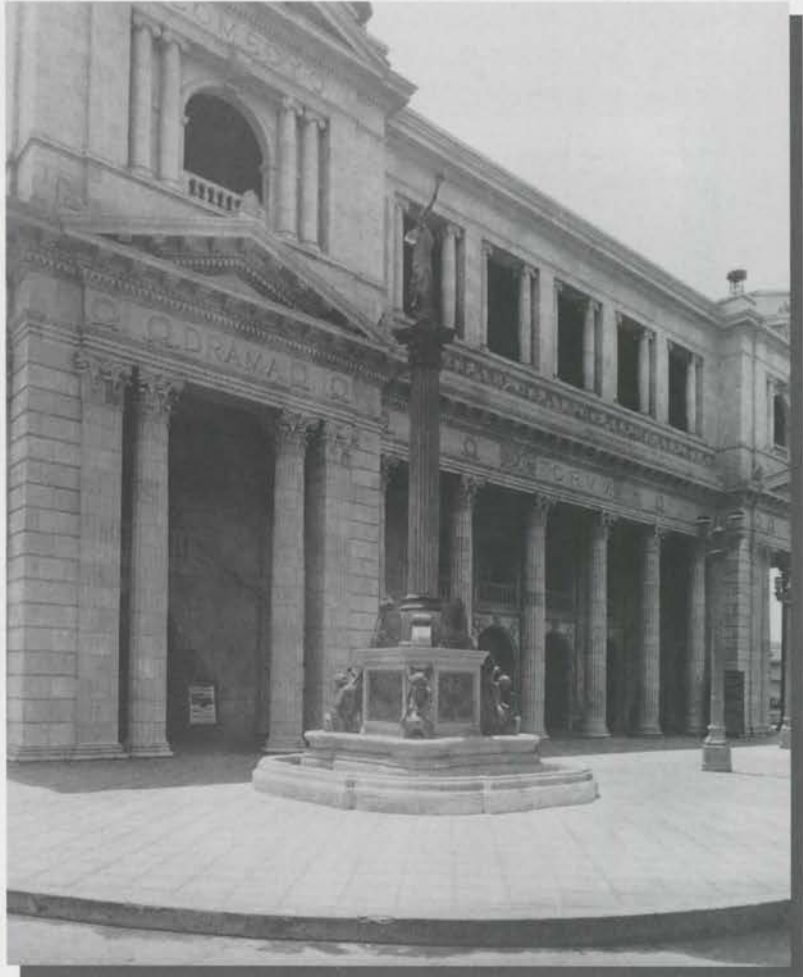
With three ranks voiced on 25", and very little to impede its egress, the big Kimball must have been overwhelming in a single-floor theatre seating less than 2000. Nine ranks were in an echo division at the right rear corner of the auditorium; an unusual, and probably unique, feature of this division was a second set of shutters which allowed it to be heard outside if desired. (See Junchen, vol. 1, for two spectacular photos of the organ being assembled on Kimball's shop floor.)

The organ remained in the Forum only seven years before being moved to the Warners' new Western (later Wiltern) Theatre at Wilshire and Western. After a decade of disuse it was revived in 1961-1962 by the Los Angeles Chapter of ATOE. The Wiltern Kimball was one of the major stations of the theatre organ renaissance until late 1979, when Pacific Theatres ordered its removal in anticipation (incorrect, as things turned out) of the theatre's demolition. At the time there was much talk of reinstalling the organ in the Hollywood Pantages, but nothing ever developed and it was ultimately sold. Alas, Kimball's biggest theatre organ is no more: it has recently been broken up.

Right: The Forum's classical terra cotta facade was initially devoid of a marquee; one was added later.

Opposite, top: The auditorium received a restrained semi-atmospheric treatment topped by a "floating" canopy.

Opposite, bottom: Parking was crucial in 1924 Los Angeles, and the Forum had more than plenty.

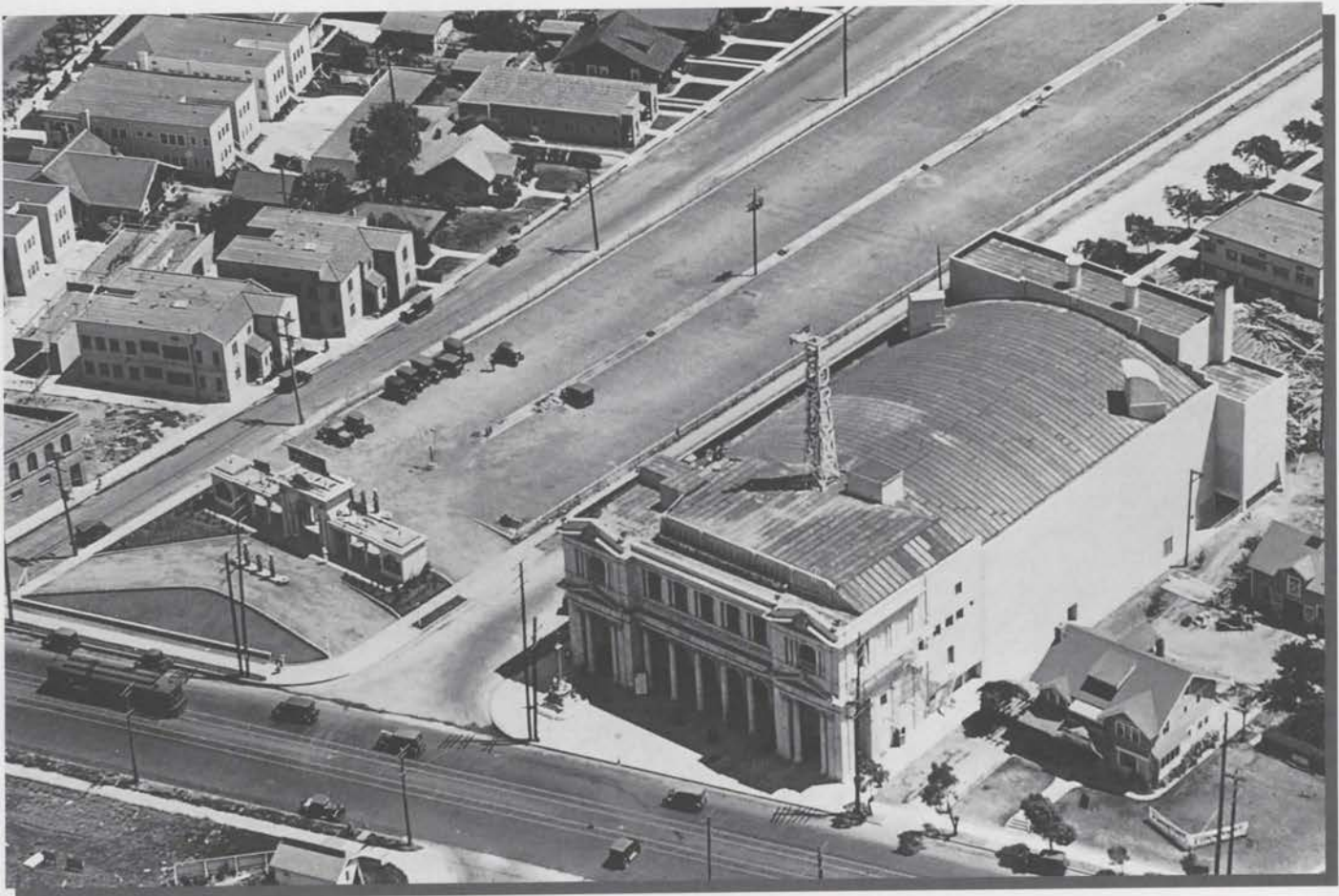
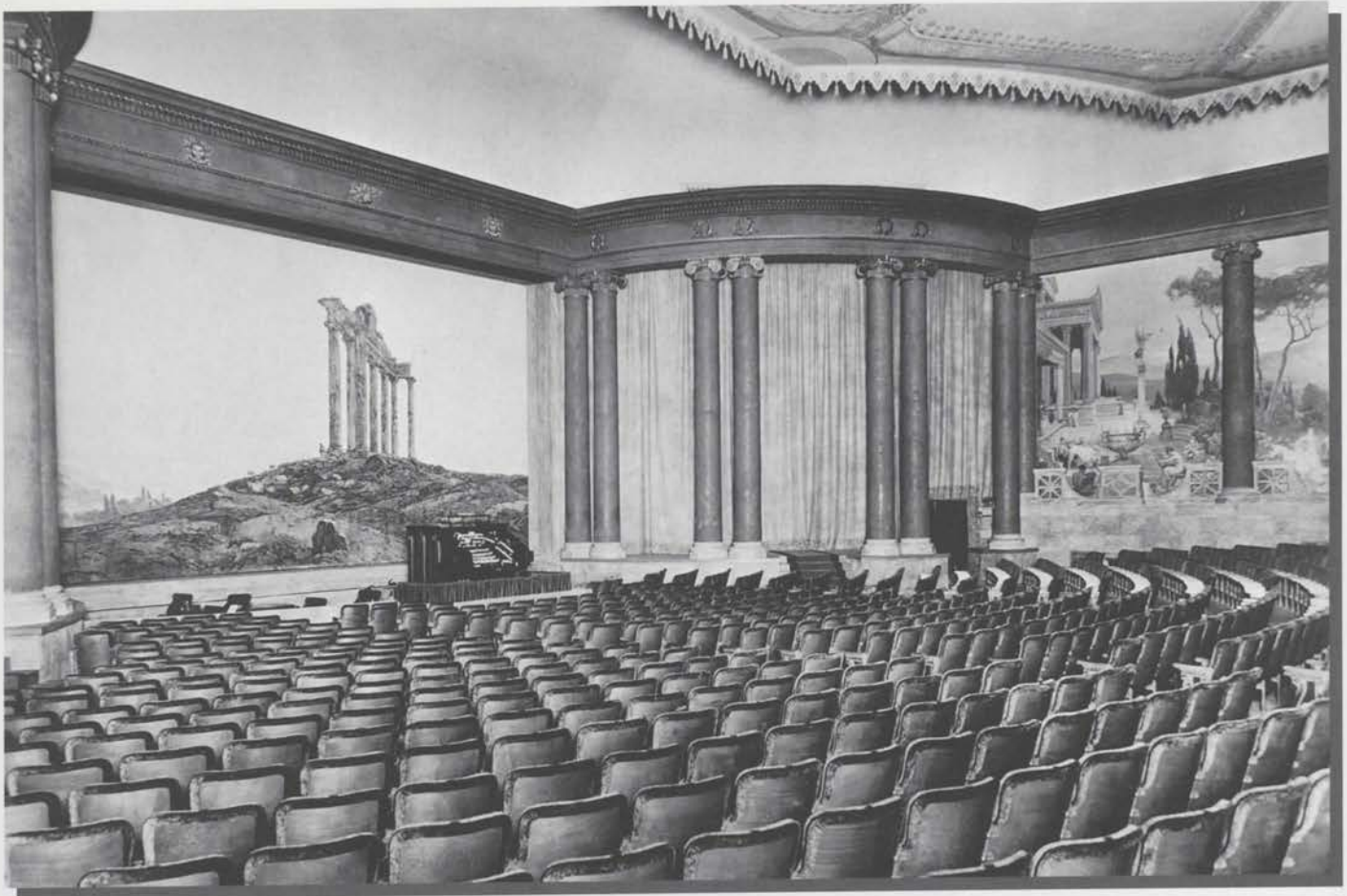


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FOLEY'S FOLLY!

By Mike Foley*

I'm 57 years old now and have moved and installed quite a few organs. I've come to know that people and personalities constitute the nucleus of most all these projects; whether they're volunteer or professional, projects involve people. More often it's the people that are remembered rather than the tasks at hand. I remember it was Carl Meshanic that insisted and verbally drove us to heave together and get all those stacks of relays into the basement. It was Phil Carpenter that came with great ideas about chamber layouts. Mark Peterson and Jeffrey Heck provided the extra push to get that thousand pound console up and into the truck on that rain-slick day. It's the people that push a project along, and in route we often get to meet newcomers . . . people that can even change our lives. . . .

Phil Stock entered my life one July day in 1963. I sold Allen organs in Hartford. I was in an office when I heard a booming voice say, "Where's Mike Foley?" I felt I should have stood at attention as this navy commander bellowed that he didn't want an Allen, he wanted a three-manual Wurlitzer and he'd been told I could find him one. Even by then, most of the best organs were gone and when I told him that, he countered with, "Blah, there's got to be something left out there!" He must live right because it was only a couple of months later when there was a letter on my desk from Chester Stoddard, then President of New England Theatres. They'd decided to close the Lynn Massachusetts Paramount and wanted to sell the organ . . . quick! Chester respected Wurlitzers and added that he wanted it to go to a good

home. I told Phil and within a few days he met with Stoddard, a fellow Yale grad, and signed the deal. It was a Bal 4, circa 1930, 3/19 in pristine condition. Even the French console was unblemished. The price? \$2500! The hook? It had to be out within six weeks.

Stock was a successful architect and had the contacts and resources to meet the deal. Roger Davis and I directed the pipe removal and unwiring process. I remember virtually removing the first pipe, a solo Tibia, when the manager yelled up the ladder chase to tell us President Kennedy was dead. Roger and I were also the driving forces behind its installation. Five years later it was playing in its augmented state (31-ranks) at Phil and Rosa's hilltop home in West Hartford, Connecticut.

I helped Phil install the organ in his house and during the 26 years he owned it, we became close friends. But time passed and by 1989 he decided it was time to simplify . . . starting with the Wurlitzer. He put out the word that the organ was available and, indeed, there were some rather interesting inquiries. He even got some hefty bids. He knew I was interested but not at the price he was asking. Someone offered \$40,000! Too rich for my blood . . . so I thought.

Nonetheless, we'd prepared our Tolland, Connecticut home for a fair sized organ installation and I continued to look. There were available organs sprinkled around the country, but I thought they were usually too much money for too little organ. Ed Gress, the organ builder, urged me to buy the Center Theatre's 4/34 that Bill Brown had available, but I simply didn't have room for such an



Mike Foley's 3/25 Wurlitzer at Tolland, Connecticut. View looking south across the Solo Chamber towards main (through door in background.)

TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY

instrument. Of the organs that did come along, there always seemed to be a reason not to buy them.

Inevitably, Phil Stock decided to move on his sale and called to offer me the organ one last time. I, in turn, called Dave Junchen and went down my list of instruments and the situations surrounding them. He pointed out that, all things considered, Phil's 31-ranker probably represented the best deal. Although it needed work, (there was some water damage) it had been well cared for over the years. This, plus the fact it was only 20 miles west from my house, made the decision easier.

I bought the organ on Friday, October 13, 1989. Friday the thirteenth! Ugh! What kind of an omen was that? Actually, the deal was sweetened by Phil's agreeing to let me pay him \$10,000 upon signing and removal and then \$10,000 a year for the next three years. I got a weekend job playing church organ. I did this for five years, made all the payments and had some left over to put toward repair and installation costs.

I owned an organ. Now I had to remove it. Something became imminently clear rather quickly . . . I didn't have any help. My concentrated effort on running my organ service business for the previous 20 years had cost me the contacts I needed. Even the people that were willing to help simply didn't want to make such a commitment. I couldn't blame them. This was going to be an enormous task. Most had families and other commitments that locked them out. It became obvious that if I wanted help, I was going to pay for it.

Enter my cousin Peter McKeever who had just retired as an army dentist and moved into the next town with his—count 'em—SIX sons! My prayers had been answered. Surely they'd all want to help. Forever the optimist, I envisioned our Saturday work sessions looking like Santa's workshop with each one displaying natural talent and finishing at least a chest a week. We'd have the organ up and operating in no time. Nothing could go wrong . . . go wrong . . . go wrong. I soon found out that Mike was heading out for an army officer career. Steve was in college, Dave was in college, Doug was too busy, Kevin simply wasn't interested, but Mark might help. Mark? Mark was barely 13-years old! How much help could a 13-year-old be?

A week later—there he stood. He'd brought a friend, Rob. I got the van and we started removing a 31-rank Wurlitzer. Was I nuts? These were kids I was bringing to

move my Brass Saxophones. Phil Stock didn't care, as long as I got it out without wrecking his house or organ . . . in that order. Trip after trip we made taking a load out each Saturday and Sunday. We unwired and de-piped it, removed the percussions and disconnected the blower. Sometimes the boys got a better offer and I was left to work alone. I agreed to pay them \$6 an hour plus breakfast and lunch at local restaurants. Man, could they ever eat!

Finally, one February day, we corralled all the strong bodies we could find plus we gathered all the trucks we could and removed the six manual chests plus the blower and relays. I recall we moved as fast as possible and made it to Tolland just as a bad winter storm settled in. We unloaded in the snow. It had been a long and arduous day. There, the last item, the relays sat all lined up and cable-

linked together like an army of wood boxes down my back lawn and getting heavier by the minute. They also refused to "slip" down the basement stairs and required lifting an end of each one to waist height to make them turn the corner. At that moment, I came very

Solo 8' Salicional offset. Concrete sealer attacked the chests. Before and after.

close to deciding to toss them, go electronic and get inside by the fire. But, they were in good shape plus I'd hoped to keep the original organ essentially intact. Electronics also represented added cost and installation time that I wasn't sure I had. It was then that Carl Meshanic displayed his D.I. best and "encouraged" us to pick up those #@&* relays and get moving. The relays made it but the walls



got pretty banged up. In May, I sent professional movers to pack and ship the console.

Then came the serious work sessions. Rob wasn't around a lot, but Mark decided to show up regularly. He was only thirteen but perhaps because he was still the only available help and since I needed him so much, he seemed to be maturing quickly. I should define "showing up." I went and picked him up—plus brought him home. Weekends were very full.

I knew the chamber equipment wasn't in the best shape. Phil's special-built underground concrete chamber/vault had leaked. It quickly became obvious that the water had taken a fair toll. In addition, the vault walls had been sealed with a pasty, white and thick sealer marketed specifically to help keep out moisture. The moisture evidently didn't care one bit as we found the sealer had festered off the wall surfaces and had dripped onto the offsets, saturating and permanently staining some.

We started with the 28 offsets. In most cases, every leather component had to be replaced including the gaskets. Lucky us, the dampness had rusted the magnet dags and almost every one of them had to be drilled out and replaced. When we first started on one of the 16' Tuba chests and opened it on the workbench, we were amazed to watch it virtually self-destruct in front of our eyes. It had lived on the vault floor and had been wet enough that every laminated glue seam disintegrated. All we had was a pile of lumber. Looking back, I wonder what ever held it in one piece in the chamber with the pressure of the pipes on top? We were able to re-glue all the pieces and create a truly "reborn" chest. The weeks turned to months.

Seasons melted into seasons and, after two years, Mark and I had created a good working relationship and environment. It certainly wasn't Santa's workshop but it served our needs. We had heat, hot water and plenty of light and, by then, a pile of rebuilt offsets, tremolos and percussions. Mark worked so hard and so well that I'd forgotten he wasn't a seasoned adult. We talked about all the things you do when you're deep into a reconditioning project. I don't have any kids and found myself thinking how lucky Peter and his wife were to have one like this. My wife kept the sandwiches and Cokes coming and we usually always had productive days. He started showing real interest in the work and I helped him and Rob create a one-note pipe organ for their eighth grade science project. Although he was obviously college material, I began wondering if there might inevitably be a place in our firm for him? It was during the Chrysoglott that things changed.

Mark's brother had bought a new and fast car. He took Mark, Rob and Kevin for a late night ride and showed 'em what it could do. It was 1:30 a.m. The speedometer, found in the tangled wreck, had jammed at 83 mph. Rob spent 32 days in a comma, Mark, was killed instantly. He was 15. I unplugged the glue pot and closed the chamber door. My life had been greatly spared the deaths of close friends or relatives. This time I understood. So did the hundreds of others that filled St. Catherine's Church.

Another season passed before I decided to start in again. Much had changed. Mark's siblings viewed the project differently in light of their brother's involvement and they too offered help. Kevin became my new right hand man. I actually got to know Mike through some company projects he handled while still being an army officer.

The ensuing two years saw the remaining equipment get reconditioned and the arrival of two new people that quickly became crucial to the project's completion. Phil Carpenter who is a magician with a 200-watt soldering iron and old galvanized wind line and Sherrill Collins who gave me a year of Saturdays wiring in all those old mechanical relays. Kevin and I started erecting equipment in the winter of 1994. The remainder of the chassis was installed, winded and wired by summer of 1996.

The pipes were all there but they were in rough shape. Perhaps it was the combination of age and the vault's dampness, but the metal was badly tarnished. A number of

them were dented and some of the wood was cracked. We spent the winter of 1996 cleaning, washing, shellacking and repacking stoppers. We didn't like the results from simply washing the metal so we used Ron Wehmeier's muriatic acid formula and cleaned each one with the acid and neutralized each with hot water. What a difference!

One of the more difficult moments was trying to determine which of the 31-ranks should be retained. We couldn't fit more than 25-ranks into the chamber—one six rank chest had to go. Back in '63 when he was installing the organ, Stock found yet another, Opus 1405, all releathered and partially installed in a local church. Again, his luck, he bought it for \$200. It was the circa 1926, 2/12 originally from the University Theatre in Cambridge Massachusetts and offered some nice extras. We kept the Solo 6-rank chest, the Tibia, Vox, Style D Trumpet, Violin and Violin Celeste.

The Lynn relays were still in good shape but they naturally couldn't provide switches for the added ranks. I wanted the additions spread throughout the spec and purchased some used Peterson diode matrix equipment and had that firm reconfigure it to reflect our needs. It's worked well and is only layered onto the Wurlitzer relay system.

How original is this organ? Aside from the wood basses of the 16' Diaphone, which Phil Stock had to sacrifice due to lack of space, everything is here. The Cambridge metal Diaphone is well placed and adds an excellent punch to the pedal. We elected not to install the Lynn 15" pressure Diapason or the VDO and its Celeste. The Cambridge 10" Diapason and its Violin and Celeste were substituted. The originals are carefully stored. The offsets, percussions, tremolos and reservoirs were all recovered. The manual chests continue to operate well on their original leather. The dampness at Stock's installation must have helped keep the leather strong as it actually remains tough and, as yet, there are no signs of trouble.

When we built our chambers in 1987, the plan was to create the now common, tremolo/reservoir "room" under the pipe chests, thereby having some assurance of the least possible ambient noise. But, when the excavator started work, he hit ledge about 6" below the surface. The house is built of stone and our well was within 10 feet of the construction site. This meant we couldn't blast to create the necessary basement for the noisemakers. Instead we went as high as we could and ended up with a chamber that's a total of 24' W x 30' D with a shed roof that slants from 22' above the stacked main chambers to 9' at the outer edge of the solo. Frankly, it's not ideal, but it was all the space we could get without significantly increasing the entire music-room/organ chamber project.

Our efforts to keep running noise as quiet as possible mandated heavily felting the interiors of all the organ's wood wind trunks as well as the interiors of the reservoirs themselves. Of the 12 tremolos, only 3 are in the chamber. The rest are isolated, but you're aware they're on. As such, it's doubtful this will ever be a recording organ. Then, the combination action is still the original setter-pins and I

find some organists also view this as a detriment. In its defense, I must say it works very well and offers that powerful ka-chunk sound that we oldies grew to like so much on George Wright's/Vaughn recording organ. I don't know how that noise can sound so right, but it does. In fact, the whole organ works well. The action is crisp and sharp. Those original relays, firing on only 9" pressure, give a snappy response (do I actually sense a better "feel" from them or am I just rationalizing?). The sound is quite smooth but the reeds impart the expected fire. Indeed, the three Tibias are special. The 16' pedal gives all that one would or could expect but, in this age of mega-organs, six or more big basses have become common and as such, I think we've come to wish all Wurlitzers were so blessed.

The 15-hp Spencer blower lives in the basement but is as far from the listening area as possible. We enclosed it in a concrete block room. Between that and the two heavily carpeted muffler boxes that intercept the main wind line before it gets to the chamber, we have a fairly quiet organ. It's certainly not silent at idle, but it is tolerable. I've come to realize, this is a wonderful Wurlitzer installation . . . by 1960 standards.

Over the years, I'd intentionally saved lots of galvanized metal line from other organ projects. We had well over a thousand feet in every size imaginable and used most all of it in this installation. It certainly makes for a beautiful appearance; however, I've come to realize there are two problems:

1. Our blower is an 1800-rpm, 3000-cfm machine that really packs air. The metal lines get hot, especially when the organ idles, such as during tuning. There have been winter days when the chambers have reached 90 degrees!

2. Despite the silenced blower impeller noise, the rush of wind passing through these metal lines adds to the chamber noise factor.

Phil Carpenter's one of the most talented organ men I've ever known. Among his many skills is an ability to re-solder old galvanized line quickly and beautifully. At

17, he was one of our first employees when we opened FBI in 1968. The pressures of raising a family made it necessary for him to leave us eight years later. I'd always hoped he'd someday return. He not only did the winding, he also helped me layout the chambers with the most efficient use of space. We intentionally raised the offsets permitting use of the re-claimed area underneath. In our limited space, this made an important difference. It's also much easier to service offsets at waist height. We had to stack the two Main four-rank chests. I still don't enjoy the awkwardness in reaching the underside of the upper one but we had no alternative.

By 1997 we had a playing organ. As time permits we've tried to hone and improve things as possible. We've done some concentrating on tremolo adjustment and have found good tremas can mask a lot of problems. We've done a fair amount of regulation during tuning sessions but it could use more.

A real boost was Jelani Eddington's practice visits while he was a law student at nearby Yale University. There's nothing like hearing the fruits of your labors as played by a professional organist. Jelani also played the first concert on September 12, 1999. Instrument, artist, weather and audience all seemed perfect. I think that hour and a half was one of the most special moments of our lives. Anyone who's tackled and won one of these projects knows how we felt.

So, it's over. The organ's bought, paid for, in and running. The project's basically done but, thankfully, the people are forever in our lives. By the way, Phil Carpenter did rejoin Foley-Baker and as head of field operations continues to guide us through some of our largest projects. Another bonus was Mark's brother Mike, who I'm happy to say, got badly bitten by "the bug" and now runs our Long Island branch. All of us had our lives change in some way because of this project and the people. I think we'll forever be friends and I know we'll always enjoy this Mighty Wurlitzer. Please feel free to come and see it.

CHAMBER ANALYSIS

MAIN CHAMBER

1. Concert Flute	16-2	trem#1-10" AA
2. Clarinet	8	trem#1-10"
3. Violin	8-2	trem#1-10"
4. Violin Celeste	8-4	trem#1-10"
5. Tibia	8-4	trem#2-15"
6. Diaphonic Diapason	16-4	trem#3-10"
7. Tuba	16-8	trem#4-15"
8. Vox Humana	8	trem#5-6"
Harp/Marimba		

EXPOSED

chryso-glott/vibraphone
xylo
chimes
glock
all traps/toys
sleigh bells

SOLO CHAMBER

9. Salicional Celeste	8	trem#6-10"
10. Orchestral Oboe	8	trem#6-10"
11. Salicional	8	trem#6-10"
12. Horn Diapason	8	trem#6-10"
13. Quintadena	8	trem#6-10"
14. Tibia	16-2	trem#7-15"
15. Krumet	8	trem#8-10"
16. Oboe Horn	8	trem#8-10"
17. Post Horn	8	no trem-15"
18. Brass Trumpet	8	trem#8-10"
19. Brass Sax	8	trem#8-10"
20. Tibia (small scale)	8	trem#9-10"
21. Style D Trumpet	8	trem#10-10"
22. Vox Humana	8	trem#11-6"
23. Gamba	8	trem#12-10"
24. Gamba Celeste	8	trem#12-10"
25. Kinura	8	trem#12-10"



Mark McKeever made so much possible.

Multi Chamber, noise muffler boxes, special built by Mitch Nagel and Carl Meshanic for quelling Blower noise. 12" wind line goes to all reservoirs. Curtain valves shuts off air to organ without turning blower off.



Good Friday, 1993. Erecting the solo manual chests. From left, Carl Meshanic, Mark Peterson, Mike McKeever, Mitch Nagel and Don Siler.



Jelani Eddington's dedication program, September, 1999.



Sherrill Collins just starting to wire the Relays.



**Mike Foley is general manager of Foley-Baker, Inc., a pipe organ service firm based in Bolton, Connecticut.*

Chapter News

ATTENTION ALL CHAPTER CORRESPONDENTS: The deadline for receiving Chapter News items for the May/June issue is March 5, 2001. If possible, send all text via e-mail in Word or Word Perfect. Be sure to include the name and telephone number of your chapter president, as well as the name of the principal city of operation for your chapter. You are reminded that it is the ATOS Board of Directors' Policy that your article not include a list of titles of the music played at programs, or a list of menu items served at chapter functions. Because there is so much variation in the quality of electronic photos, it is requested that all photos be sent to the editor via postal service.

CENTRAL FLORIDA

Bob Davidson, President, 727/392-7518

Tampa, Florida. In September, the Tampa Theatre was the setting for our first meeting after summer vacations. As usual, we had a good turnout of members and guests. After a short business meeting our past president, David Braun, played a memorable program on the 3/12 Wurlitzer. His pedal work when playing Sousa Marches is truly amazing. Open console was taken advantage of by many members.

Joe and Peg Mayer hosted our October meeting. Our President, Bob Davidson, entertained with a delightful program of oldies and some music new to us such as "Arlene" by Eddie Weaver and arranged by Eddie's daughter, Jody. He made the Conn 652 sound as good as it ever could!

The Tampa Theatre presented our famous member, Rosa Rio, on the last Sunday in October. When Rosa was introduced, the lights went low. A recording of the late Virgil Fox playing Bach's *Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor* sounded as the organ rose out of the mists, bathed in an eerie red light. The announcer said, "Here is Rosa!" Alas, there was no Rosa on the organ bench. As the patrons shouted Rosa's name, six pallbearers emerged from the far side of the stage bearing a coffin. The music continued as the coffin was lowered, opened and out popped Rosa! She moved slowly toward the organ bench. The crowd went wild! They were not disappointed. After treating them to a few selections from the *Phantom of the Opera*, Rosa accompanied the 1922 German horror film *Nosferantu*

in her wonderfully fantastic style. A standing ovation—once again. It was a smashing success all around. John Otterson, Bob Baker and Richard Gleason were the producers of the opening skit with the help of the Tampa Theatre Management. Seven hundred or more people were lucky enough to attend. We eagerly await Rosa's return with another spirited performance.

Peg Mayer

CENTRAL INDIANA

Thomas A. Nichols, President
317/313-4634

Indianapolis, Indiana. On August 27, Ken Double joined forces with local vocalist Jacque Wagaman for a pair of very well attended concerts at the Hedback Theatre to benefit the organ fund there. It was an exciting concert, including Ken's usual dynamic stylings, Jacque's wonderful renditions of familiar songs from the musical theatre repertoire and even audience participation! A good time was definitely had by all!

Our September chapter meeting took us on a very rainy September 10 to the beautiful Anderson Paramount Theatre where we enjoyed the musical offerings from longtime member Bob Goldstine at the Page organ and Mahlon Houlihan at the piano.

On September 21 and 23 we were thrilled to hear the Indiana Public Radio broadcast of the monthly show, *Indiana Backstage*, featuring our own Jelani Eddington playing the 3/18 Barton at the Warren Performing Arts Center, Indianapolis. The hour-long program's featured performance was interspersed

with interview segments, which gave Jelani an opportunity to explain what a theatre pipe organ actually is and how it differs from a church organ. What a wonderful opportunity to bring theatre organ music to a new audience! Thanks to station WBST-FM for hosting this, to Jelani for giving his time, to chapter member Jason Young for setting it up and to all who helped make it possible.

On October 1, John Giacchi from Australia played our fall opener concert at the Warren PAC. John, as you may remember, was the Senior Division winner of the Young Organists' Competition in 1990. His concert was fresh and invigorating and showed the results of much preparation. Included were familiar tunes and a few not so well known to most, played flawlessly and excitingly. He found new and different sounds in the Barton, which previous artists have missed; the concert was very well received by those present!

October also brought several non-chapter theatre organ concerts to our area. On the 8th, Stan Kann and Ralph Wolf appeared at the Embassy Theatre (Fort Wayne); on the 15th, Bill Tandy played a concert at the Anderson Paramount Theatre, and on the 27th, Clark Wilson accompanied the silent film, *Phantom of the Opera* (the Lon Chaney version) at the Long Center for the Performing Arts (Lafayette).

On a more disheartening note, we recently discovered significant vandalism damage to the Main chamber of the Manual High School Wurlitzer. The situation has been turned over to the police, school principal and insurance company and, in the capable hands of Carlton Smith and other willing workers, it will be correctable but it brings to bear serious questions about organs placed in such locations.

On October 28 and 29, a group of about 65 (including our members and about 20 from Illinois and elsewhere) departed on an enjoyable weekend bus trip to Ohio. Included in the itinerary were: the Betty Polsley residence, Urbana (open console at the 3/14 Wurlitzer); the Karl Saunders residence, Zanesville (3/31 Wurlitzer: private concert by Jelani Eddington); the Tom Hamilton residence, Columbus (open console on the Allen GW4) a tour of the Bunn-Minnick pipe organ company

(Columbus); and the Ohio Theatre, Columbus (public concert by Simon Gledhill on the 4/33 Robert-Morton). It was a wonderful, music-filled trip!

See you in Indy as we "Hit the High Notes" together in August '01!

Louise Eddington

CENTRAL MINNESOTA OTTER TAIL

Richard Baker, President
218/736-3006
rbaksr@prtcl.com

Fergus Falls, Minnesota. The Mighty Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ dedication honoring Dr. Richard Baker, Geneva Eschweiler and Lance Johnson was held the evening of September 30, 2000 at the Center for the Arts in Fergus Falls. Dr. Baker was recognized for his leadership in A Center for Arts' capital campaign and for his continuing efforts to promote the theatre organ in Fergus Falls, especially through the local ATOS Chapter. Geneva Eschweiler was recognized for the lifelong contribution to music and the performing arts in Fergus Falls. She has influ-

enced many students to continue these studies and interest in music, including Dr. Baker and Lance Johnson. Lance Johnson was recognized for his work to preserve and restore the mighty Wurlitzer pipe organ and for his devotion to educate and entertain audiences of all

the local ATOS Chapter were extremely pleased with the organ dedication, enjoyed the workshops and also the mini-concerts for the students.

Berta Baker

RICH BAKER



Donna Parker and member Si Melby in his "hot rod."

RICH BAKER



Donna Parker at the Center for the Arts, Fergus Falls.

ages. He is especially recognized for his original film scores for many silent movies.

During her visit to Fergus Falls, Donna Parker, guest organist for the dedication, gave mini-concerts for two groups of students and also a workshop for organists and future theatre organists. Local chapter members enjoyed accompanying her on sightseeing and shopping trips throughout the area. Donna also accompanied the Laurel and Hardy silent film, *That's My Wife*. Thank you so much, Donna!

Also in the program was an original choral piece commissioned by Ms. Eschweiler and performed by over 80 voices. "Singers to Come" was composed by David Evan Thomas from Minneapolis, Minnesota who was in attendance for the premier performance of the work. An informal reception to celebrate the honorees was held after the dedication.

Members at the October meeting of

CUMBERLAND VALLEY

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

Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. The fourth annual "Capitol Concert Band" concert in mid-October at the Capitol Theatre in Chambersburg once again featured Bob Eyer, Jr. at the chapter's Möller theatre pipe organ. This popular event, attended by over 500 people, included marches, overtures and music from the Broadway stage played by over 50 talented professional musicians from the tri-state area. Bob entertained with a 30-minute organ pre-show and accompanied the band on several numbers, including an Irving Berlin tribute and the Saint Saëns *Organ Concerto*.

The following weekend about 20 chapter members and friends traveled to one of the country's premier home installations, the Dick Kline Wurlitzer in Thurmont, Maryland. As always, Dick was a most gracious host and made all feel welcome in his beautiful home. Bob Eyer, Jr. demonstrated the resources of the organ and played a mini-concert, which then was followed by open console.

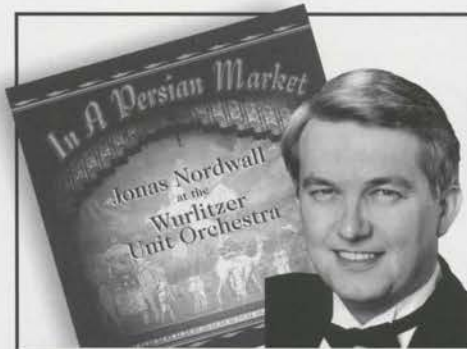
In other news, because of continued strong financial support from members and others, the chapter's treasury had sufficient funds for the purchase of a much-needed 16' pedal voice, an electronic Peterson Diaphone, for the Möller. Installed in late September by organ crew chief Mark Cooley and member John McBride, the new voice is virtually indistinguishable from the "real thing" and has brought a thrilling depth and weight to the ensemble. Those attending the "Capitol Concert Band" event were the first to experience this exciting addition.

Bob Maney

DAIRYLAND

Gary Hanson, President, 414/529-1177

Racine/Milwaukee, Wisconsin. We kicked off the fall season with a social on Sunday, September 24 at the rural Cedar Grove home of John and Sandy Knuth. The organ is a 2/11 Wangerin, which



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was built in Milwaukee. It was originally installed in 1927 in the church in Cedarburg where Sandy is the organist. When the church got a new tracker pipe organ she was given the old pipe organ. Over 600 pipes are installed in an addition to their home with the action in the lower level and the pipes speaking directly into

RICH BAKER



Sandy Knuth in the organ chamber of her home.

the living room where the console is located, creating a marvelous, unique sound.

Sandy played an hour-long program of half secular and half sacred music. A brief history of the organ was given and the DTOS members who are helping to maintain the organ were thanked. Open console and a potluck supper followed.

We had a "Halloween Spooktacular" on Sunday, October 29 at the Racine home of Fred Hermes. His "Basement Bijou" was decorated for the season and costumes were optional. Fred showed the 1925 haunted house murder mystery film *The Cat and the Canary* on his giant movie screen. He accompanied the silent movie on his five-manual Wurlitzer. Refreshments and open console followed.

Sandy Knuth

DELAWARE VALLEY

Al Derr, President
215/362-9220, derr@ece.vill.edu

Pottstown, Pennsylvania. A nice crowd filed into Penn State's Sutherland Auditorium the afternoon of August 17. They had come for a screening of Charlie Chaplin's *The Gold Rush* with organ accompaniment provided by TOSDV member Wayne Zimmerman at the

Rodgers console. Wayne did a superb job accompanying the action with appropriate music seamlessly integrated into the action for a great theatre organ experience! After the movie, Professor Moylan Mills of Penn State discussed the silent film era and the career of Charlie Chaplin. He wants to do it again in the spring of 2001 with another movie. We are counting on it!!!

On the evening of Saturday, October 14, member Vincent Kling threw a benefit party for TOSDV. Member Paul Richardson donated his services to play and entertain for the evening. In addition two excellent club dancers who demonstrated several dance styles from the period of our members' youth entertained us. To cap off the evening, Vince brought in pyrotechnic professionals and treated us to a 20-minute fireworks show. TOSDV expresses sincere thanks to Mr. Vincent Kling for this wonderful and successful event.

An invitation to a Sunnybrook Brunch was issued by a neighboring TOS for Sunday, October 22. A number of TOSDV members attended. House organist George Bateman entertained for a while and then during the last hour they had open console permitting several of the better players from the several clubs present to try their hands and feet at the console of the 3/13 US Pipe Organ. In addition we all partook of Sunnybrook's great brunch offerings.

Progress continues at the Keswick as a brand new EMUTEK relay and additional ranks are serviced and installed. Work is also progressing at the Colonial in Phoenixville as we prepare to install the 2/14 Wurlitzer in the original chambers. More progress reports in future articles.

Margaret Rotunno

EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

Hank Lysaght, President, 781/235-9009

Wellesley, Massachusetts. South Eastern New England Theatre Organ Society (SENETOS) invited our chapter for a joint meeting on September 17 at the Zeiterion Theatre, New Bedford, Massachusetts. After a brief announcement by both groups, a talk and slides were presented by Bob Evans and Don Phipps of our upcoming regional convention's venues as well as some of the Milwaukee annual convention venues.

Guest organist was EMCATOS member, Bob Love, who played a fine program at the 2/9 Wurlitzer. This original installation sounded larger with his registrations and the instrument was in fine voice. It is a rather rare occasion to have the pleasure of meeting in an organ-equipped theatre and we all had a wonderful time.

Our first social of the fall season was at our usual Babson "home" on October 8. We had English visitors, Mark Sayer and his wife, among those present. Mark had a few sessions at our Wurlitzer console as did members Bob Legon and Bill Forbush. An interesting portion of Bill's presentation was having us guess the college or university when he played their official song. We were up to the challenge, however, and this encouraged him to continue.

Juan Cardona, Jr. ably accompanied the silent movie *The Beloved Rogue* at Babson on October 28. The film, starring John Barrymore, had plenty of action for our organist to follow which he did like a veteran. He played a selection or two before and at the conclusion with the audience responding by a standing ovation and much applause. Mr. Cardona and his family are very active members in the Connecticut Valley Chapter of ATOS, but are no strangers to us despite the distances involved.

Our organ was in good regulation and tuned for Jelani Eddington's concert during our regional. Incidentally, Jelani is

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coaching Juan in theatre organ stylings and it shows in even more professionalism at the console. Were that there were more of their general age group to master the "king of instruments," whether theatre or classical and it is up to all of us interested in this grandest of musical instruments to encourage our youngsters in its pursuit.

Stanley C. Garniss

GARDEN STATE

Cathy Martin, President
973/256-5480, cmartinx@aol.com

Trenton, New Jersey. The month of September found Garden State members back from vacations and taking up their business and social activities. September also begins another year for our Garden State Chapter with installation of officers for September 2000 to 2002.

On Saturday September 23, the installation of our elected officers took place in the home of Bob and Cathy Martin. Introduced were President Cathy Martin; Vice-President Paul Jacyk and Secretary/Treasurer Fran Monti. All members were delighted that our outstanding President was elected for another term. Energetic Vice-President/Program Chairman Paul Jacyk will continue his second term and Fran Monti will be our new Secretary/Treasurer. We all look forward to an exciting year.

This inauguration became a wonderful celebration with members enjoying a buffet luncheon. President Cathy held a

short meeting telling the members that several pipe organs are coming on line. This was followed by a very entertaining mini-concert given by Barry Leshner from Pennsylvania. The remainder of the afternoon was open console time with many of our talented organists performing. The highlight of the day was Ashley Miller who was coaxed to play. Hearing his first wonderful chords, the room became silent. All members leaned forward to hear and with shouts of "more" Ashley entertained with several great selections. Every organist who wished to tried out the 3/24 Griffith Beach Theatre Pipe Organ. Music continued well into the night. Many thanks to Bob and Cathy Martin who are always so generous with their pipe organ.

The Month of October found our chapter members attending two interesting programs. The first event was held October 22 at the Sunnybrook Ballroom and Restaurant in Pottstown, Pennsylvania and many members of Garden State, South New Jersey and Delaware Valley Chapters gathered to renew friendships and enjoy good food. This restaurant is well known for its special Sunday buffet served from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in its famous ballroom. This large ballroom and stage was very popular in the '30s and '40s when people flocked there to dance to the music of the famous big bands. Curious diners can still see the names of bandleaders who signed on the walls back stage. The professional organ-

ists George Bateman and Glen Eshbach played the 3/14 United States Theatre Organ and entertained the diners during the meals. A special open console followed with organists from all the chapters enjoying the pipe organ.

Our GSTOS Chapter extended an invitation to the members of the Empire State Theatre and Musical Instruments Museum to visit New Jersey and tour our various venues, theatres and homes. All contain theatre pipe organs. A three-day weekend was selected. The festival began Friday October 27 at Northlandz, famous for its "World Renowned HO Scale Model Rail Road." Another attraction was its 5/37 Marr and Colton hybrid played by professional organists. That evening was spent at the home of Bob and Cathy Martin where the Syracuse group enjoyed a buffet dinner and a concert by Ralph Ringstad. He performed on the 3/24 Griffith Beach theatre pipe organ. Members of the group joined in open console and declared the day a wonderful start for music and fun.

On Saturday, Nelson Page, owner of the Galaxy Theatre and the current President of ATOS extended a big welcome. A mini-concert was presented on the 2/6 Möller lobby organ and the 3/12 Kimball in the main theatre. Jeff Barker, house organist, demonstrated and conducted a tour. Open console followed.

The next location was the mammoth Loew's Jersey City Theatre, which has

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been undergoing restoration for five years or more. Deep in the basement Crew Chief Bob Martin and crew have been renewing old organ parts and pipes on the large 4/23 Robert-Morton. The console in the 3,000-seat auditorium is calmly waiting renewal. Hopefully this large Morton will play in the near future. The beautiful gold leafed theatre will open in all its glory in a few more years. Syracuse members are already making plans to return for the opening concert.

Leaving Loew's Jersey Theatre all arrived at the large famous Newark Symphony Hall. In 1920 a large Griffith Beach pipe organ was installed. The original organ lost its console years ago and the pipes waited quietly until GSTOS Chapter in 1998 began the slow process of installing a three-manual console and a modern relay to the pipes. The organ and relay were connected to the fifteen ranks of pipes and for the first time after a 50-year wait played for our guests and members. This was an exciting experience! Open console followed. The remainder of the day was spent at the home of George Pasquaye, owner of a 2/11 Wurlitzer with piano.

On Sunday October 29 the group visited the Park Theatre, a performing arts theatre center and enjoyed hearing the 3/20 Orchestral Möller pipe organ. A short visit to the home of Joe and Jinny Vanore with a 2/3 Estey theatre pipe organ with toys and piano was a happy lunch break before going to close by

Lafayette Theatre, in Suffern, New York. A wonderful concert by Barry Baker on the original Ben Hall organ, now a 2/11 Wurlitzer, was the finale to the GSTOS Festival. Happiness was name of the game.

Jinny Vanore

GREAT PLAINS

Larry Pickering, President
316/269-3735

Wichita, Kansas. ATOS Chapter and visiting members declared the fall, 2000 Wichita Pops Double Concert Weekend with Rob Richards and pianist Ralph Wolf a delightful success. Rob was featured at the Wichita Wurlitzer (the former New York Paramount Wurlitzer) at Century II Center on October 21. The program was titled "Direct from Disney, Hollywood's Rob Richards" and Rob did a terrific job of entertaining the audience of 500 plus. Michael and Karen Coup hosted a reception in Rob's honor at their home, the Little River Studio, and many took the opportunity to greet Rob and meet Ralph Wolf, anticipating the duo concert the next day. That event, part of a continuing series of "double concert weekends," was another musical delight. AMICA members—theatre organ enthusiasts Bob and Gloria Johnson, Columbia, Missouri, commented, "Rob and Ralph brought some of our favorite tunes to life with great understanding and sensitivity. Their effort produced the happiest, most emotion packed and absolutely best music suitable for

RICHARD HARRIS



Rob Richards and Ralph Wolf performing at the Little River Studio Wurlitzer and piano in the home of Mike and Karen Coup.

RICHARD HARRIS



Rob Richards performing at the New York Paramount Wichita Wurlitzer, Century II Convention Center.

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general consumption. Interpreters of the music, such as Ralph, are disappearing." ATOS members from California, Colorado, Texas, Kansas City and Missouri were glad they made the trip. Rob (and possibly Ralph) will return to Wichita in January to make a compact disc for release in 2001.

The Chapter hosted a holiday gathering at Dr. Dean Burnett's in Halstead, Kansas on December 3 with Brett Valiant at the console of the Kimball, including a carol sing-a-long and shared desserts. Brett will make his Wichita Wurlitzer debut, accompanying *Peter Pan* (1924), at the next Wichita Pops event, Silent Movie Night, on March 10 at 8 p.m. The 29th Pops season will conclude with a Double Concert Weekend May 5-6 with the dynamic pairing of Jelani Eddington at the Wichita Wurlitzer and David Harris at the Steinway on Saturday at 8 p.m. at Century II. The Coups will host an artist-to-be-announced at the Little River Studio Miller Wurlitzer on Sunday at 1 p.m. For information call 316/838-3127 or email: wtopops@aol.com.

Karen Coup

HUDSON-MOHAWK

Frank Hackert, President, 518/355-4523

Schenectady, New York. The 2000-01 season of the Hudson-Mohawk Chapter officially commenced with the



David Lester at Goldie.

annual banquet on the stage of Proctor's Theatre, Schenectady, New York on September 25. Over 70 chapter members and guests attended the catered affair. Volunteer artists entertained during dinner performing on *Goldie*, the theatre's magnificent Wurlitzer pipe organ. The 2000-01 Chapter officers were officially announced and the new season schedule



Ned Spain at Goldie.

made available for member perusal. Activities planned for the upcoming season include an evening of roller skating fun with organ music provided by John Wiesner; periodic updates of technical enhancements to *Goldie*; a holiday party at the home of member John Van Laak; and technical meetings/open console at Proctor's Theatre. The returning officers are: Frank Hackert—Chair; Lucy Del Grosso—Vice-Chair; Maude Dunlap—Secretary and Fred Haupt—Treasurer. Many thanks to the returning officers for agreeing to extend their service for another year.

The free noon-time concert series offered by Proctor's Theatre and the Hudson-Mohawk Chapter at Proctor's Theatre continue to provide an artistic and fun-filled afternoon of theatre organ music for the community once each month. The season opener on September 26 featured area favorite Ned Spain in an all request program. This format is a continued crowd-pleaser. On October 24 David Lester brought his own brand of artistic talents for the second program of the season. Both artists are exceptional performers and continue the tradition of excellence associated with this series.

October 29 saw members traveling to Hoosick Falls to the studio of Robert Waller for a musical Halloween party. Members braved an atypical, cold snowy day to enjoy good food and music. Special thanks to our host Bob Waller, to David Lester and John Van Laak for the piano duet and to Karen Russell for the pumpkin cake. All were real "treats."

Norene Grose



Jörg Joachim Riehle at the 4/16 von Siemens Wurlitzer in the Berlin Music Instrument Museum.

JESSE CRAWFORD

Steve Plaggemeyer, President

406/248-3171

Billings, Montana. Robert F. Vaughn, a Charter Member of ATOS and the Jesse Crawford Chapter, retired from the active silent movie accompaniment circuit in January. He has relocated to Bakersfield to be near his son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren. Bob celebrated his 89th birthday August 11, 2000 and would be happy to hear from members. Write to: Robert F. Vaughn, 3201 Columbus Street, No. 325, Bakersfield, CA 93306-2775, Telephone 661/872-5640.

It is sad to report that chapter mascot Amy died on June 6. The cute little mixed-breed "poma-Poo" (Pomeranian-poodle) was 15. She was a very friendly and loveable little dog who livened up the Jesse Crawford birthday celebrations trying to get to the cakes.

German member, Jörg Joachim Riehle, played a concert in Berlin on August 26, 2000 on the 4/16 Wurlitzer Kino-Orgel installed in the Musikinstrumenten-Museum. The "Lange Nacht der Museen" (Long Night at the Museums) started at 11:45 p.m. Billed as "Wurlitzer Live" melodies and "evergreens" (perhaps an idiom for Oldies) was followed at 12:15 a.m. by a Jazz band ensemble in the Folklore-Saal by the Berlin National Music Academie (Landesmusikakademie) until 1:15 a.m.

Riehle's half-hour concert consisted of old favorites from silent and sound films from America and Germany. He opened and closed with two Max Steiner compositions.

Chapter headquarters has moved to a new location. It allowed storage of the chapter's 2/4 Robert-Morton pipe organ. So, we moved the organ saving rental

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

expense. The new address is: Jesse Crawford Theatre Organ Society, 813 Grand Avenue, Billings, MT 59102-3491, Telephone 406/259-5555

Dr. Edward J. Mullins

JOLIET AREA

Jim Sternke, President, 847/534-9511

Joliet, Illinois. The Rialto Theatre management has been very aware of the work JATOE is doing for the 4/27 Barton Grande organ. They again had a JATOE Appreciation Day for our members on May 7, 2000. They provided cocktails and hor d'oeuvres for all of us present. Warren York entertained us. Many members played open console afterwards.

Rocky Mountain Excursion

The call, "All Aboard" on May 25 launched JATOE's departure from Chicago to Denver on Amtrak's "California Zephyr." The fortunate participants of this excursion were treated to six fulfilled days of beautiful scenery, great food and fabulous theatre organ music. We wish to thank Dr. Dee Williams for being our gracious host during our four days in the Denver area.

On our first day we enjoyed a luncheon with Rosa Rio; heard Professor Robert Cavarre on the Colorado State University 3/37 Cassavant and were treated to Lew Williams on the 3/68 Marcussen in the First United Methodist Church in Ft. Collins. In the evening we were dazzled with a concert by Rosa Rio

and Lew Williams on the 3/25 Wurlitzer in the Lori Auditorium of Colorado State University.

Day two began with an early bus trip to Kiowa to hear (since deceased) Joel Kremer perform on his 4/36 Wurlitzer home installation. What a music room and organ! We then traveled to Colorado Springs to hear the artistry of Bob Lilly on the 3/20 Wurlitzer in the Mount St. Francis Convent. We enjoyed hearing Bob, seeing a silent movie and an open console session. Back on the bus, we toured the "Garden of the Gods," and then proceeded to our evening's entertainment. At the Flying W Ranch we were impressed by a very enjoyable chuck wagon dinner and show. It wasn't theatre organ, but the guitar pickin' was second to none!

Our third day began with artist and host Bob Castle playing the 3/22 Wurlitzer, originally in the Chicago Nortown Theatre, now installed in the Englewood residence of the late Dr. Bruce Belshaw. If we could have scraped together \$1.2 million this organ and house would have been ours! Our next destination was the Searle residence in Denver, where we enjoyed the artistry of JATOE member Warren York playing the 3/18 Wurlitzer. We had time in the evening to try to catch up on rest or to ride around Denver in a taxi with Barbara and Leroy Petry!

Our last day in Denver began early at the Denver Paramount enjoying the per-

formance of young artist Vincent Mirandi playing the 4/28 Wurlitzer Publix. This was indeed a treat! Following his show, we had a great time on the dual consoles in an open console session before we ventured up to the Silver Plum narrow gauge railroad for some final sightseeing! At the end of the day we stumbled back into Denver's Union Station for our train home. Once settled, we enjoyed time to relax and reminisce about this enjoyable excursion! With the combination of the Rocky Mountains, blue sky, fresh air and exceptional music... what more could you ask for?

Annual Benefit

On September 17, at the Rialto Theatre in Joliet, Michael Cierski, Warren York and surprise guest John Giacchi entertained JATOE members and guests during our fourth Annual Fall Benefit, this year, "Octoberfest." With the artistry of these organists our 4/27 Barton Grande sang beautifully. This annual event to raise funds for restoration, rank purchase and improvement was again an enjoyable success! We thank those who have contributed funds, labor and their support to our efforts to renovate a world-class instrument that resides in a historic, and one of the most beautiful, remaining theatres.

The Rialto Barton Grande is playing very well and was shown off when TV Station WGN filmed the theatre, volunteers and the organ for showing throughout

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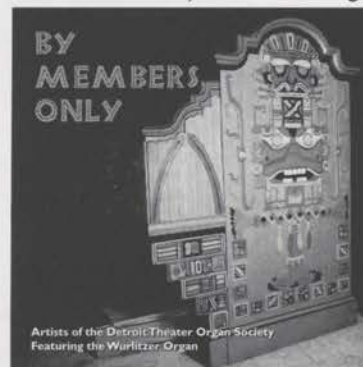
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the country on the morning and noon-time news programs. Our own Jim Patak was at the console for that event.

Upcoming Events

December 3: We look forward to the annual JATOE Christmas Dinner and Concert, featuring Mark Gifford of Springfield, Illinois at the Rialto Barton Grande.

April 27-29, 2001: RIALTOFEST WEEKEND

We invite you to join us for the three-day "Rialtofest Weekend" that includes "Pipe Organ Extravaganza V." On April 28, "POE Five" will feature Peter Conte, Jelani Eddington, John Giacchi, Chris Gorsuch, Ron Rhode and the DePaul University Wind, Brass and Percussion Ensemble. Please consult the THEATRE ORGAN and our website (www.jatoe.org) for full details of the weekend's activities! Make your reservations early, as this will once again be a sell-out! You won't want to miss this weekend or the EXTRAVAGANZA!!!

Jody Baker and Jim Patak

KANSAS CITY

Warren Sunkel, President, 913/268-1428

Kansas City, Missouri. For those of you who do not know, we have a 4/27 Robert-Morton installed in the Art Deco Music Hall here in Kansas City. Our biggest accomplishment this year has been the birth of our first CD. The name of the CD is *Music Music Music* with Ron Rhode at the console. It will be released sometime in January of 2001. Please contact Ron Rhode at azroxy@home.com or myself for more information.

We have also made some additions to the Robert-Morton this year. Our newly installed Proteus 2000 gives us some mid-range midi sounds like piano and

vibes, which enhances the instrument very nicely.

Our Ron Rhode concert this past summer was a great success and enjoyed by all. Another chapter-sponsored program was presented on November 19 with a young organist from the Chicago area named Mike Cierski. Our annual Christmas bash and potluck was held on December 17 with Mark Hawn at the console.

Please, if you are in the area give us a call. We would love to show you the Robert-Morton at the Music Hall.

Karl Stratemeyer

LONDON AND SOUTH OF ENGLAND

Jim C. Bruce, President

Concert at the State Theatre Kilburn
October 8 at 11:00 a.m.

Organist Len Rawle

Len Rawle has had a long association with pipe organs and our chapter. Like his father, Les, he installed a pipe organ in his purpose-built home. His instrument is the famous 4/25 Wurlitzer from



Len Rawle at the State Theatre, Kilburn.

the Empire Leicester Square. He devotes a large part of his life to the preservation and promotion of the theatre organ and is a stalwart officer in our chapter. Len is a very busy international organist and

will shortly be off on one of his many playing tours to Australia.

It was a beautiful autumn Sunday morning in London when over 150 people came to the famous State Theatre Kilburn for our scheduled October concert. The 4/16 Wurlitzer, still in its original theatre, was in good voice having been tuned by Len and his father on the previous Friday.

Len started his concert with his signature tune and then went into a rousing march selection before calming things down with a pair of serenades. The Glen Miller big band sounds he created from the Wurlitzer were superb and greatly appreciated by the audience with prolonged applause. We were treated to a wide range of music. In a humorous vein, after having just had two very successful cataract operations on his eyes, Len played a selection of songs with 'eye' or 'I' in the title. This went down very well with the audience. All too soon it was time for the interval.

During the interval Len had so many requests from the audience that he virtually threw away his planned programme for the second half and played through the requests almost non stop. Many of these were pieces for which he is well known and of course he had to include the one piece he is most famous for which he calls "The Train." Alas it was soon time for him to bring his concert to a close, but although time was getting late, the audience would not let him go without an encore.

Once again Len had demonstrated the versatile and creative nature of this Wurlitzer like no one else could. Everyone left the venue with wonderful memories of a concert full of unique tones and effects coupled with superb musicianship.

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Woking Carnival

In order to promote the society's 3/16 Wurlitzer installed in the Leisure Centre, chapter members who live local to Woking again took part in the Woking Carnival. As usual Bernard Baldwin, committee member and tireless worker for our chapter, organised our carnival float. It consisted of a trailer towed behind his car complete with home made scale model Wurlitzer console, as well as a suitably dressed 'scale model organist.' The float was all decked out with bunting, and had society logos at the front and genuine organ pipes at the rear. The recorded theatre organ music playing from hidden speakers was quite a hit in the parade through the streets. The Photograph shows the Woking members with their 'Carnival Float.'



Woking Carnival Float.

Young Organist of the Year Competition, Sunday October 15 at 2:30 p.m., Woking Leisure Centre

There were only four entrants for the competition this year. They all assembled on Saturday, the day before the competition, for one hour's practice and since some were from distant parts of the country they and an adult member of their family were provided with accommodation for Saturday night. This year there were two set pieces to choose from, "Liberty Bell" or "Washington Post" plus as usual, a free choice.

The contestants were: Adam Evans, from Redditch, Worcestershire, aged 14; Darryl Evans, from Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales, aged 14; Thomas Horton, from Halesworth, Suffolk, aged 17 and Ben Snowdon, from Cardiff, South Wales, aged 18. The Judges for the competition were: Chairman Paul Kirner, David Redfern, Eddie Ruhier and David Thomas.

Before a pleasingly large audience, on

the Sunday afternoon, the Master of Ceremonies, Mr. Richard Cole, skillfully handled the competition. Richard is the curator of the Mechanical Music Museum at Brentford and an organist in his own right. The first half of the proceedings consisted of all the contestants playing their free choice and then in reverse order their chosen set piece. It was obvious immediately that the judges were going to have a tough time deciding on a winner. While they retired to a private room for their deliberations the rest of us had a tea break.

Immediately after the interval, while the judges were still deliberating, the previous year's winner, Matthew Bason, played a wonderful half-hour concert. Since winning the 1999 competition he has gone from strength to strength and has played many concerts throughout the country. He has also been appointed deputy organist at Ashorne Hall, which boasts a fine Compton, with a Wurlitzer still under installation.

It was then time for the judges to deliver their verdict. The Chairman, Paul Kirner, told the audience what a difficult task it has been to decide on a winner and also gave the contestants some general advice. The results were then announced.

1st Prize went to Thomas Horton from Suffolk.



Thomas Horton, Young Organist of the Year.

2nd Prize went to Adam Evans from Worcestershire.

3rd Prize went to Darryl Evans from South Wales.

The Christie Cup, awarded to the contestant who in the opinion of the judges shows the most promise for future improvement and potential, went to Adam Evans. The Dean Herrick Memorial Trophy, awarded to the young organist from the previous year's competition who in the opinion of the committee has made the most progress or contribution to the theatre organ in the past 12 months, went to Matthew Bason. Matthew then handed over the chain of office to this year's winner, Thomas Horton, who then closed the proceedings by once again playing his free choice to a very appreciative audience.

Technical News

In the New Year our technical team will descend on the Memorial Hall Barry to install an electronic relay system on the society's 4/14 Christie organ. The original relays have for some years been a source of trouble and unreliability, so it was decided to replace them with the same system which we successfully installed on the society's Wurlitzer in the Woking Leisure Centre. The method employed is a simple digital multiplex

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system, which does not involve a micro-processor, therefore eliminating the possibility of the dreaded 'crash' to which computer systems are so prone. The original relays will be retained and hopefully displayed as an historical artifact.

Ian Ridley

LOS ANGELES

Irv Eilers, President, 323/254-0987

Los Angeles, California. LATOS had planned to have a gala dedication of the new Avery Johnson four-manual console in Sexson Auditorium on Sunday afternoon, October 22. Alas, it was not to be. As we all know, or at least should know, in the world of organ building, restoration and updates, things don't always proceed as planned. In 1999, Avery Johnson, a LATOS charter member, donated funds to enable LATOS to purchase a lovely reproduction French style console built for a custom electronic organ. All that would be needed was to buy a new computer, program it and plug it in. LATOS had hoped to be able to use it for Wurlitzer Weekend II last year. Not so! Modifications to the stop rail, rewiring and hinging the top to swing up were required. The Program Director received assurance that all would be ready for the October date and Ron Rhode, one of Avery's favorite organists, would be the ideal artist to do the honors. Three weeks before the event it became apparent that there were problems. The computer was not yet delivered and the technician was not available to do the programming. Fortunately, the three-manual console was still intact and it had not been moved to its new home in South Pasadena High School. As all

good professional entertainers know, "The Show Must Go On."

After the apologies to Avery and the audience, Ron took over the program playing a great program featuring many songs from the first half of the 20th Century. Ron related the story of how he came to play "The Teddy Bear's Picnic" in grade school when his teacher discovered he could play the piano better than she could. So when it was time to play the games with musical accompaniment Ron had to play the piano and didn't get to play the games. He accommodated his audience by adding a couple of requests. Ron understands the delays involved in organ building, having spent four years installing his own home organ. He also explained that the Sexson Auditorium organ is very easy for him to play because it is almost identical to his own 23-rank organ.

If there are no further unforeseen delays the attendees at Wurlitzer Weekend 2001, A Theatre Organ Odyssey will probably see the new console played.

Wayne Flottman

MANASOTA

Vince Messing, President, 941/627-5096

Sarasota, Florida. Our November meeting was the occasion for the celebration of our ninth birthday. We enjoyed a fine Sunday afternoon dinner in the Music Room of the former Charles Ringling mansion on the Sarasota campus of the University of South Florida/New College. There, chapter member Bob Baker brought the 1926 Aeolian 3/43 pipe organ to life in its original surroundings. The restoration and maintenance of the Aeolian is a continuing chapter project.

An ongoing project is completion of the restoration and installation of the chapter's 1926 Wurlitzer located in Grace Baptist Church on Bee Ridge Road in Sarasota. All percussions and toy counter elements are ready for final adjustment. Voicing will soon commence in anticipation of our initial paid admission concert in April of 2001. "Technician of the Year" Norman Arnold and Allen Miller have performed miracles in fitting 32 ranks into two chambers. Actually, there is a smaller third chamber dedicated to percussions. It requires a slender person indeed to navigate into the furthest recesses of any one of the chambers.

The December meeting was at Grace Baptist when Bill Brusica played for the enjoyment of the chapter. Also in December we enjoyed an open house at the Pierson's richly decorated home and grounds. There, Chuck's mostly Hinners pipe organ was exercised. Back to Grace Baptist in January, Warren York, visiting from Illinois, played. In February, we expect to hear the duo of George Wesner and Fred Davies.

Carl Walker

MOTOR CITY

David Ambory, President, 810/792-5899

Detroit, Michigan. The result of attending many meetings of various advocacy groups for the arts and cultural affairs for several years and partnering with them has resulted in receiving a \$150,000.00 Arts, Cultural and Quality of Life Grant from the State Budget Office of Michigan for new seats in our auditorium. It took years of making contacts and assuring our State Senators and Representatives that we were a stable and active non-profit corporation. We have received several smaller grants but this was the largest.

Our chapter is busy making the arrangements for a fund drive to raise more money, as the total cost of the entire project will be well over \$350,000.00. The Chairman of our seat committee is David Martin. There is a lot of preparation necessary before the seats can be installed. Seats have to be removed and the floor has to be resurfaced. The committee has been working hard to complete all arrangements.

Meanwhile, our members Dave Calendine, George McCann, Will Walther

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Peggy Grimshaw,
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Halloween.

and Dorothy Van Steenkiste attended the Arts and Culture meeting in Lansing at the Lansing Center called "Tools For Tomorrow." The 21st Century has arrived and with it comes a host of opportunities and challenges for everyone involved in the arts. In this meeting we explored some of the issues we'll be facing along with resources and "tools" for succeeding in a rapidly changing world.

Times are exciting at the Redford. Everyone is joining in to promote our theatre and the Barton Theatre Organ. We find that we are drawing more younger adults and they are enjoying their first experience at hearing a theatre organ. We have joined with "Detroit 300" to help celebrate the 300th anniversary of the founding of Detroit during the year 2001. We also joined with other 501(c)(3) organizations in sponsoring Proposal "A" on the election ballot. This proposal, if it passes, will release funding to organizations like ours.

Our programs continue. The movie *The Hunt For Red October* was shown with organists Tony O'Brien, Scott Foppiano and Gus Borman at the console of the Barton.

October 14 we featured the 1925 silent film classic *The Phantom Of The Opera*, starring Lon Chaney and Mary Philbin. Live accompaniment by Tony O'Brien at the Barton Theatre Pipe Organ and Deborah Frontczak, Soprano, brought the house down. What a thrilling evening.

Some of our patrons entered the theatre dressed in attire that resembled Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy when we featured *Sons of the Desert and Way Out West*.

Dave Calendine was the organist for the evening.

The movie *Young Frankenstein* drew a large crowd of patrons dressed in costumes for Halloween. Jennifer M. Candea was the organist for the evening. Prizes

were given out to those in costume.

We noticed a lot of parents with school children attended the movie *Mr. Smith Goes To Washington*, starring James Stewart, Jean Arthur and Claude Rains. Newton Bates was the organist for the evening. It is nice to see families attending the programs at the Redford together.

Our new flyers are being prepared for the spring series. Our theatre will be closed down for the month of May and part of June for the installation of seats. We are looking forward to our concert April 14 featuring Rob Richards direct from Disney's El Capitan Theatre in Hollywood.

Our member, Tom Wilson and his assistant Alison Harris, continue with their organ program "Somewhere In Time" every Wednesday at 6 p.m. on Station WDTR-FM 90.9. Artists that were heard during October were Tom Gnaster, Bill Vlasak, Clark Wilson,

Charlie Balogh and Tony O'Brien.

Restoration work continues on the Redford Theatre. George McCann, Charlie Mack and Dave Calendine are working on the ceiling under the balcony. Michael Hauser and George McCann are also painting the star's dressing room.

Our annual meeting and dinner was held November 5 at which all the candidates for board positions were presented. Following dinner the meeting was called to order. Our President, Tom Hurst, reviewed the year. Committee members then gave their reports. Results of the election were finalized and the new board members were announced. They are: Michael Hauser, David Calendine and George McCann. At the following board meeting on Monday the following officers were elected: President—David Ambory; Vice-President—Oren Walther; Secretary—Elaine Mundt; Treasurer—Bob Weil and Treasurer (Redford Operating)—Enid Martin. Dr. David Bogorad and Tom FitzGerald were appointed to fill two vacant board positions for one year. An Executive Committee was also formed of the officers and two board members.

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.

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- You Made Me Love You



*Rob Richards at the Long Island University/
Brooklyn Paramount 4/26 Wurlitzer.*



*Bernie Anderson at the Chaminade
High School 3/15 Austin/Morton.*

NEW YORK

David Kopp, Chairman, 973/305-1255

New York, New York. The fall theatre organ concert season got under way in New York on Sunday, September 24 with an excellent performance by Rob Richards at the Long Island University/Brooklyn Paramount 4/26 Mighty Wurlitzer. Rob treated the audience to a wide selection of music associated mostly with his hometown, Hollywood. He performed several medleys of movie themes that spanned decades of Hollywood history. Rob demonstrated his talent at orchestration on the big Wurlitzer. A medley of Disney tunes—it is amazing how many there are—closed the delightful afternoon of theatre organ music. Thanks to LIU crew chief Warren Laliberte along with Margie Plows and Tom Stehle the Wurlitzer was in top form.

The New York Chapter joined forces with the Nassau and Queens AGO Chapters on Sunday, October 15 in celebrating the AGO's national "Pipes Spectacular" day. The afternoon of pipe organ concerts started with an excellent theatre program performed by Bernie Anderson on the 3/15 Austin/Morton theatre organ at Chaminade High School in Mineola, Long Island. Following a short opening medley of theatre organ tunes, Bernie accompanied two hilarious silent comedies—Buster Keaton in *The Blacksmith* and the Laurel and Hardy classic, *Big Business*, along with an old fashioned sing-along to song slides. The enthusiastic singing, applause and comments of the audience of mostly AGO members, accustomed to hearing the pipe organ only in classical and liturgical settings, indicated how much they enjoyed the theatre organ and Bernie Anderson's delightful program and out-

standing musical talent. Thanks to the efforts of the Chaminade organ crew, Brother Robert Lahey, Ken Ladner and Bob Atkins, the organ was in fine tune and performed flawlessly.

On Sunday, October 29, the New York Chapter presented ATOS "Organist Of The Year," Barry Baker, in concert on the NYTOS 2/11 Ben Hall Memorial Wurlitzer at the Lafayette Theatre in Suffern, New York. His extraordinary musical talent and his remarkable ability to perform such creative and intricate arrangements on the two-manual Wurlitzer enthralled the audience. A wonderful variety of music made for a memorable afternoon of theatre organ at its best. Special thanks to Al Venturini for making his theatre available to us and to crew members Bruce Courter, Rusty King, Dave Kopp and Bob Raymond, Jr. for seeing to it that the organ was in perfect tune and concert ready.

Meanwhile, at the Bardavon in Poughkeepsie, Juan Cardona, Jr. has been delighting audiences by playing the NYTOS 2/9 Wurlitzer before the theatre's classic film series this fall and audiences at the Middletown Paramount have been treated to pre-show performances by Rolf Krohn and Larry Hazard on our 3/11 mighty Wurlitzer.

Tom Stehle

NORTH TEXAS

Donald Peterson, President
972/517-2562, dpete1@jcpennney.com

Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas. North Texas has apparently set a North Texas Chapter record for the youngest paid member with the signing of five-year old Alex Dowidchuck. Alex was one of the children who recently were given a tour of the chapter organ in the Lakewood

Theatre, including the console and pipe chambers. The children were entertained with several spirited tunes to which they marched and danced. All were especially interested in the workings of the console keys and stops and the sounds they produced. Young Alex was treated to a seat at the console where he was thrilled with the sounds he could produce from the organ. He seemed to be especially intrigued by the experience, prompting his mother to send in dues for his chapter membership. President, Don Peterson, says that you have to get them when they're young!

The musical program for our October meeting in the Lakewood Theatre began with a solo performance by organist Bob Goodwin playing the North Texas Chapter's Robert-Morton organ. Bob played a program of songs taken primarily from the era of the Big Bands. In his rehearsal playing, Bob was delighted with the sound and capability of our rebuilt Robert-Morton and his enthusiasm was reflected in his concert performance. Both Bob and the organ never



*Bob Goodwin played for North Texas
Chapter in October.*



*Miss Sandra Kaye with Don Reasons and
Rodrigo Villanueva (drums).*

sounded better. Though Bob is a splendid theatre organist with a long list of topnotch engagements, he spends much of his time today playing the piano and church organ. With his performance for our chapter, it is obvious that Mr. Goodwin knows and loves the theatre organ and we look forward to hearing him again—and soon!

Program Chairman, Don Reasons, firmly believes in the versatility of the theatre pipe organ and takes every opportunity to demonstrate the musical applications of our favorite instrument. He has teamed the organ with silent movies, a big band, a small combo and with vocalists in the programs that he has arranged—all with great success and audience approval. For our October chapter meeting he showed how splendidly the organ served as accompaniment for a cabaret jazz singer, Dallas vocalist Sandra Kaye, who he frequently appears with as piano accompanist. Miss Kaye brought with her percussionist Rodrigo Villanueva to provide the desired punctuation for her jazz stylings. Her performance was enthusiastically received and Sandra graciously returned for an encore presentation. Mr. Reasons can be assured that he proved his premise—the theatre organ can provide splendid ensemble for what is usually performed in a more intimate venue. Bravo! Bob Goodwin teamed up with Rodrigo on a rousing program finale.

The organ crew continues to find ways to improve the Robert-Morton and we all look forward to the programs in the Lakewood Theatre and the exciting theatre organ music. Thanks to Earl (Mac) McDonald, Don Peterson, Rick Mathews, Bob Acker, et al. We appreciate your dedication and inspired work on our chapter organ.

Irving Light



Plummer Auditorium's Wurlitzer slave console.

ORANGE COUNTY

Don Near, Chairman, 714/539-8944

Fullerton, California. Our semiannual Potluck and Open Console was held on August 19 at Plummer Auditorium in Fullerton on the wonderful 4/37 Wurlitzer. Things went very well for a number of talented members until the 'blower bag' gave way and there was suddenly no wind pressure. It was fixed with a new bag the following Monday. Fortunately most everyone had played at least once.

On display for the first time was our new slave console to be used with a live orchestra or band from the orchestra pit while accompanying stage plays. Built by Bob Trousdale, it can control the entire organ from the slave's two manuals and pedal by way of a small MIDI cable remotely attached to the main console. It is the size of a spinet electronic and can be easily taken apart and stored in a cabinet when not in use. As many as 48 general pistons can be set up in advance to change the stops on the organ. The ingenious collapsible metal frame was designed and built by member Randy Bergum, bench courtesy of Robert-Morton, pedal board by Yamaha, keyboards by Korg, music rack by Wurlitzer, control electronics by Trousdale.

Another wonderful piece of metal

fabrication by Randy Bergum is the collapsible 13' by 17' rear projection screen frame, which holds the screen absolutely still and flat. Silent films are shown on this screen via LCD video projector. Randy additionally built a complete set of aluminum hands with black powder coated finish for the four-faced Plummer Auditorium Tower Clock when painters accidentally destroyed the plastic 'South' hands this summer.

The Plummer organ now has a new 3-rank Mixture (183 pipes) giving this Wurlitzer a better ability when more classical literature is to be played. OCTOS member Steuart Goodwin, a professional organ builder, spent many volunteer hours voicing this stop.

The afternoon of September 10 brought folks out in droves to hear



John Giacchi, Organist

youthful Australian artist John Giacchi in his first concert of a five-week American tour. It was a sellout audience. The most glowing superlatives were heard from concertgoers to describe this young man's playing—his selection of music, how it was performed technically, and the organ registrations that cemented all that beauty together. During the second half, John performed his very first silent film accompaniment to the Laurel & Hardy movie *Angora Love*. He had been sent a videotape copy of the movie to work with while still in Australia, and his scoring of this film was superb with just the right music to match the mood, and absolutely flawless quick-action cues. John earned two standing ovations and two encores.



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Besides being a consummate musician, John Giacchi is a very down-to-earth guy and as nice as can be. He stood out in the lobby talking to patrons and signing his CD jackets prior to the first half, during the 'interval' and again after his concert was completed. This seems to be normal behavior for artists from Australia and England, and it certainly allows more patrons to get their CDs and programs autographed.

OCTOS looks forward on November 12 to the return of Tom Hazleton to Plummer Auditorium and another sell-out crowd. Following enhancements and painstaking voicing, this original installation Wurlitzer is now one of the finest in the country and deserves the best artists to perform on it.

Jack Darr

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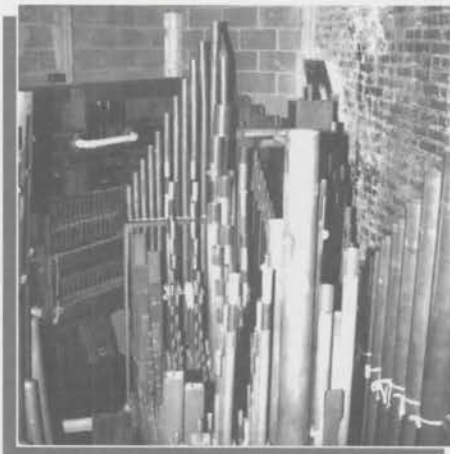
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PIEDMONT

Ernest N. Boyd, Jr., President
71213.1275@CompuServe.com

Greensboro/Durham, North Carolina. Year 2000 was a busy year for the society. In the spring we presented Ron Rhode at the Paramount Theatre in Bristol, Tennessee/Virginia. This past October we had Walter Strony, also in Bristol. The organ is a 3/11 Wurlitzer that is now augmented with six electronic sampled ranks. The chambers are too small for the additional pipes. After the first of the year the console will be fitted with new stop rails made by Chet Rataski, organ crew chief.

The new three-manual console for



Main Chamber.



Solo Chamber.



Walt Strony preparing for his concert.

the Williams High School project came back to North Carolina after the addition of a third partial rail was made by Chet Rataski. The decorations and finishing were decided on and mounting of the stop tabs will all be taking place over the next nine months.

The Carolina Theatre's (Greensboro) Robert-Morton is speaking from the Uniflex relay. Movie patrons are treated to music after the show. A replacement three-manual Smith console is being prepared for installation by Christmas 2001.

Remaining this year are the annual fund raiser concert at the Carolina Theatre in Lumberton the weekend after Thanksgiving and a special show in Bristol with Tom Hazleton and the East Tennessee Children's Choir in mid December.

Buddy Boyd

PUGET SOUND

Barbara Graham, President
206/525-7859
bxgraham@email.msn.com

Seattle, Washington. "One Big Weekend—Opus VII," a weekend event co-sponsored by Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society and Columbia River Organ Club, took place in the Portland-Salem area of Oregon the weekend of September 22. Twenty-six Puget Sound Chapter members made the trip to Portland and were treated to an outstanding three days.

An organized open console session on the 3/24 Kimball at Cleveland High School on Friday evening began the festivities. Many thanks to the Oregon ATOS Chapter whose cooperation made this event possible.

Participants were bused to the various events and on Saturday morning everyone was taken to Portland's famous Oaks Park Roller Rink. There, Keith Fortune and Gary Russell each put the four-manual instrument through its paces. An unenclosed instrument, suspended from the ceiling of the huge building, presents special challenges to the organist.

On Saturday afternoon, John and Mary Jo Olsen welcomed the group to their lovely home to hear Jelani Eddington present a mini-concert on their 2/11 Wurlitzer. The weather was marvelous and the spectacular view of Mt. Hood from their living room added to the enjoyment.

A social event at the headquarters motel on Saturday evening, with members performing on a grand piano and a new Hammond organ, offered an opportunity for sharing and getting acquainted. A number of members played and CROC had organized some interesting games as icebreakers.

Sunday morning saw Donna Parker performing on CROC's Devtronix instrument at the Hollywood Theatre. Donna's playing is always flawless and her choice of music very enjoyable.

On Sunday afternoon participants were transported to Salem, some 20 miles south of Portland, to the Elsinore Theatre. Here, Jelani Eddington performed the grand finale concert on the beautifully restored and installed Wurlitzer. Jelani performed for a truly appreciative audience.

Once again, the annual "One Big Weekend" event was a total success. Puget Sound Chapter expressed much appreciation to all the hard workers of Columbia River Organ Club for a job well done!

Jo Ann Evans

RIVER CITY

Greg Johnson, President, 402/753-2486

Omaha, Nebraska. Our September 17 meeting was held in the organ studio at Durand's Sky Ranch Airport with Vice-President Lynn Lee chairing a short business meeting in the absence of the President, Greg Johnson. It included a lively discussion of methods to interest young people in the theatre organ.

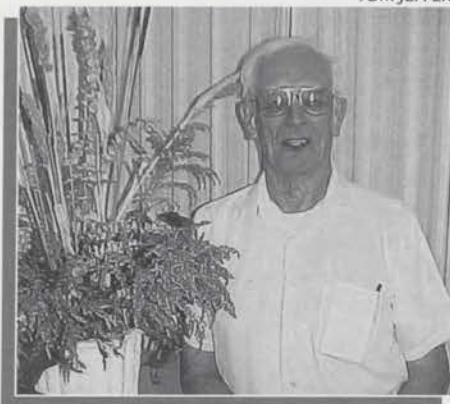
TOM JEFFERY



Slate of performers, from left, Warner Moss, Maurine Durand, Larry Poffenberger, Bob Markworth, George Rice and Lynn Lee.

George Rice, guest artist for the day, offered a fascinating history, in capsule form, of the theatre organ, its evolution from "church organs," its inventor, Robert Hope-Jones and his relationship with the Wurlitzer Company. Rice illus-

TOM JEFFERY



If you want to know about Omaha's magnificent movie palaces and their theatre organs, George Rice is the man to ask!

trated his presentation with slides taken over his many years of involvement with several theatre organs in the Omaha metro area, concentrating on the 3/13 Wurlitzer in Omaha's Orpheum Theatre. In one of his visits to Great Britain, George Rice shot color slides of St. John's Anglican Church in Liverpool, as the church was being razed for a shopping mall. The significance is that St. John's was the church where Hope-Jones moved the organ console out into the churchyard to try out his electro-pneumatic control system. For doing this, Hope-Jones lost his job at the church! George Rice has been involved, continuously, in restoration, repair and maintenance efforts on the Omaha Orpheum Theatre's Wurlitzer, since 1963, long before the theatre closed as a movie house in 1971. The Orpheum Theatre has been a thriving performing arts center since 1975.

Durand's Sky Ranch Airport was the site of our October 22 gathering, with Vice-President Lynn Lee chairing the meeting. We were informed that the chapter has located a rank of clarinet pipe work to augment our chapter's Barton Organ, with purchase negotiations in a preliminary state. Today's program was offered by a slate of chapter members—Bob Markworth, Larry Poffenberger, George Rice, Maurine Durand and Warner Moss. Lynn Lee closed the program with an organ piece not often heard these days—"The Lost Chord." Lynn read the beautiful lyrics to us before playing the selection. Open console followed and many members gathered for a "wives night out meal" at a local restaurant.

Tom Jeffery

ST. LOUIS

Jim Ryan, President, 314/892-0754

St. Louis, Missouri. We were graciously welcomed to Jack Moelmann's house on August 20. Jack entertained us with many selections on his three-manual Rodgers theatre organ. We all enjoyed the whistles and lights that went off all around the room as he played. Animals would play the drums and move to the music. This was the first tour of his home for some of us and we really enjoyed seeing all of the amazing electronics and other innovations in his home.

Jack finished his program with his trademark "Tribute to America," a medley of patriotic music with accompanying slides and a short movie of military scenes. The program ended with the

CHARLOTTE IRWIN



David Bartz at his 3/11 Allen theatre organ.

CHARLOTTE IRWIN



A small part of Jack Moelmann's music room.

National Anthem and our American flag coming down at the end. Everyone was invited to play the organ when he finished his program. Refreshments, conversation, and tours of the house ended the afternoon.

All that went to the home of JoAnn and David Bartz enjoyed a delightful mid September Sunday afternoon. David entertained us on his new Allen 3/11 theatre organ with a wonderful program including of a variety of show tunes.

After the program many of the guests entertained during open console on this beautiful new Allen organ. We all enjoyed the delicious food that JoAnn prepared for us. I think everyone would agree that an additional highlight of the afternoon was seeing the train display in the Bartz's basement. It was the best set-up that many of us have ever seen, including professional model train displays for the public. David has spent years creating the HO gauge miniature world in his basement. Perhaps next time we are invited to their home, David will have installed a tiny organ in the miniature movie theatre!

Charlotte Irwin

SOONER STATE

Joyce Hatchett, President, 918/743-1854

Tulsa, Oklahoma. Sooner State's September meeting was an all day Saturday trip to the Coleman Theatre Beautiful in Miami, Oklahoma, for open console on their 2/10 Wurlitzer. We heard music from Joyce Hatchett, Dick Deaver, Bonnie Duncan, Lee Lomas, Dorothy Smith, "Buzz" Newton, Phil Judkins and Vernon Jackson, as well as a couple of songs from Sylvia Story. There was everything from popular standards to Broadway show tunes to patriotic numbers, all thoroughly enjoyed by those who made the trip. The Tibias were pretty, the Post Horn was bombastic, and the Chrysoglott was tinkly. The organ is a challenge to register but fascinating to play. We give special thanks to theatre manager Jerold Graham for making it all possible.

We returned to Tulsa Technology Center's Broken Arrow campus for our October meeting with Sam Collier playing the mini-concert on our 3/13 Robert-Morton. His song titles "told a story" he said and indeed they did—love

stories from past years. His music is always delightful to hear and this was no exception. Four persons played at open console.

We were encouraged to have three little children present at this meeting who toured the chambers at intermission time, as is our custom, and who were quite excited to see the insides of a real pipe organ! We have voted to add MIDI capabilities to the organ and are looking forward to having it available in the near future.

Work is progressing on Tulsa's Central High School 4/45 Kilgen. Crew chief Sam Collier reports that it is now 90% playable, with leathering on several more bottom boards in process. They were overjoyed to discover that 8 of the 12 boards on the "big chest in chamber number two" had already been done and that they would only have to do the remaining four. Workers on the project include Sam, Laquita Kimes, Jim Rappenecker, Fred Rixe and Phil Judkins. Carolyn Craft has also helped but she is sidelined temporarily while she recovers from a broken right wrist!

Dorothy Smith

SOUTHERN JERSEY

Joseph Rementer, President
856/694-1471

Franklinville, New Jersey. On September 24, 2000 at 2 p.m., 17 members of SJTOS met at the Countryside Meadows High Rise, Egg Harbor City, New Jersey, home of our past treasurer, Bernine Ettmueller, along with 14 members of the high rise. President Joe Rementer called for a moment of silence for Meredith Weathers, a faithful member of SJTOS for many years who passed away this past summer. Ernie and Ginger Wurth entertained the membership with many favorite songs.

After the meeting many of the members had an enjoyable dinner at the Galloway Township diner.

Restoration progress on the Kimball at the Broadway Pitman Theatre continues according to schedule. Ernie Wurth played the Kimball during intermission at one of the recent variety shows.

On October 22, 2000, 52 members of a multi-chapter group enjoyed a wonderful brunch at Sunnybrook Ballroom in Pottstown, Pennsylvania. George Bateman and Glenn Eshbach, house organists, serenaded the group on Sunnybrook's fabulous U.S. Pipe Organ theatre organ. Open console was enjoyed by many of the different chapter members rounding off a very pleasant social and musical event.

Mary Brook

PHOTOS BY ALEX FELL



Ernie and Ginger Wurth entertained SJTOS.



Ernie Wurth entertained on the Broadway Kimball.

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AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ORGANBUILDERS

CONVENTION 2000

By Tom Hurst

AS THE RECIPIENT of the David L. Junchen Technical Scholarship this year, I had the distinct privilege of attending the 2000 AIO convention held in Colorado Springs.

AIO stands for the American Institute Of Organbuilders. This professional association is made up of pipe organ builders, organ maintenance technicians, and others involved in allied professions supporting the pipe organ industry. AIO's objective is to advance the science and practice of pipe organ building through discussion, inquiry, research, experiment and other means, and to disseminate knowledge regarding pipe organ building through lectures, publications and exchange of information. AIO provides for three levels of membership; Regular membership (requirements include full-time North American builders and maintenance technicians with at least five years experience), Associate membership (requirements include being a full-time apprentice with less than five years in the profession), and Affiliate membership (for non full-time builders or maintenance technicians as well as non-North American builders and persons in allied professions).

This year's convention was held from Sunday, October 8 through Wednesday, October 11. Thursday, October 12 was an extra day much like an ATOS Afterglow where conventioners were given the choice of visiting additional organ venues or visiting some of nature's most spectacular sites.

Getting to Colorado Springs seemed to be a major challenge. This was my first experience traveling via Northwest Airlines and I must say despite all the delays and mad dashes to make connecting flights, I did eventually get to Colorado Springs on Saturday evening. There I was met with temperatures in the low 40's and a fresh blanket of snow covering the foothills and mountains.

DAY 1 Sunday was the first official day of the convention. It began with a trip to the registration desk followed by a late afternoon concert by organist Dame Gillian Weir at the 51 rank Letourneau organ located in the First Christian Church. The organ was initially installed in 1995 with the final addition of the Positiv division

being completed this year. It has mechanical key action but electric stop action with a 32-level Peterson solid-state combination action. The organ with its very brilliant mixtures and the concert by Dame Gillian Weir were both very enjoyable. It was interesting to watch her pedal technique which included an additional flip of her foot prior to hitting the desired pedal in order to keep her long flowing dress out of the way. Upon arrival back at the Double Tree Hotel, our convention headquarters, a buffet dinner was served.



Letourneau Organ at First Christian Church

DAY 2 Monday was a travel day with scheduled afternoon trips to the United States Air Force Academy Cadet Chapel and to Broadmoor Church. The morning was devoted to meetings and lectures. The AIO conducted the first part of their Annual Membership Meeting. This was followed by an in depth slide presentation by Michael Freisen entitled "A History Of Colorado Organbuilding". In preparation for our trip later that afternoon, the next lecture consisted of a very detailed panel presentation on the USAF Academy Cadet Protestant Chapel Organ. The presentation was called "Making Pipes Fly: The Air Force Academy Chapel Organ" and was presented by Michel Friesen, John Seest and John Grunow. One bit of interesting information was that Walter Holtkamp Sr. was commissioned to design the



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organ but being that this involved a government contract his organ company was not allowed to bid on the job. Bids were received from Schantz, Wicks and Möller. Möller was eventually awarded the contract to supply the organs for both the Protestant chapel and the Catholic Chapel even though theirs was not the lowest bid. The installation of the organs was completed in 1963.

After lunch we boarded our motor coaches for the short scenic trip to the Air Force Academy Cadet Chapel. The Air Force Academy sits on a sprawling tract of land in the foothills of the mountains. Its central campus consists of many modern buildings all of which are dominated by the unusual architecture of the Cadet Chapel which consists of seventeen tetrahedrons that soar over 150 feet into the Colorado sky. The Chapel is divided into three sections; the upper level is the Protestant Chapel which can seat up to 1200 people, the lower level consists of the Catholic Chapel which can seat up to 500 people and the Jewish Chapel that



USAF Academy Cadet Chapel

can seat up to 100 people. Upon entering the Protestant Chapel one is immediately impressed by the combination of stained glass and aluminum tetrahedrons that converge 99 feet above the terrazzo floor.

The Möller organ is totally free standing on several levels in the rear balcony of the chapel. Special heat reflective glass is used behind the organ in an attempt to protect the instrument from the effects of the sun and heat. The organ consists of 83 ranks distributed across five divisions; Positiv, Great, Swell, Trompetas, and Pedal. It is controlled by a 3 manual console. Prior to the concert, members of the AIO were allowed up into the balcony to inspect the instrument up close. Chapel organist Dr. Joseph Galema presented an excellent program that



*USAF Academy Protestant Chapel
Moller Organ*

demonstrated all the resources of the organ. The instrument is nicely balanced from the soft flutes and celestes all the way up to full organ. What I found interesting is the entire instrument, including the 32' Bombarde and horizontal Trompeta, is voiced on only 3 inches (H₂O) wind pressure. Needless to say this magnitude of wind pressure is totally for-

eign to theatre organ. While the sound of the organ was perfectly adequate for the building I could not help but think that a couple more inches of wind pressure on certain ranks would have greatly enhanced the instrument's GPC (Goose Pimple Coefficient).

From the Cadet Chapel we again boarded our motor coaches for the trip to Broadmoor Church just down the street from our hotel. The church's unusual architecture is very much in the spirit of a



Broadmoor Church Organ

Frank Lloyd Wright design. The sanctuary conveys a very homey atmosphere and the organ is installed in the rear balcony. The original Casavant instrument was installed in 1962. Over the years it has been rebuilt and enlarged several times to its present size of 50 ranks. Again we were invited up into the balcony to inspect the instrument prior to the concert. Organist Thomas Brown presented an excellent program that included two pieces we had heard earlier at the Cadet Chapel. This allowed for a comparison of organs and organists. To be honest I was not expecting much due to the smaller intimate size of the sanctuary and the large size of the organ but much to my surprise the instrument sounded wonderful in the room. It is a perfect example of what can be achieved through careful voicing of the instrument to match the room. Monday's activities concluded with a Tex-Mex Buffet dinner served at the hotel.

DAY 3

Tuesday was an all lecture day. Organist Dame Gillian Weir started out the morning session with a lecture entitled "Console Design From The Organists View". She spoke of the increasing complexity new technology poses to the organist. The main focus of her lecture centered on the new solid-state combination systems available today and how each one is different in operation and language used in describing its operation. She pointed out that the last thing an artist wants when arriving at an instrument prior to a concert is to be handed three manuals and told once you read these you will understand how to set your pistons. She stressed her two general principles:

1. Simplicity—The console aid must be simple and straightforward to operate
2. Total Access and Control of the right pistons.

As a result of her lecture the AIO formed a committee to define common industry standards for manufacturers to follow when designing their systems in the future.

The next lecture was entitled "The Design and Manufacture Of The Centrifugal Blower" and was presented by Hans-Erich Laukhuff. Topics included methods of eliminating wind pulses and wind noise from organ winding systems.

Following our lunch break the next presentation was "CAD/CAM and The CNC Router". Peter Duys explained how this technology applies to organ building and how it is slowly finding its way into use in the smaller organ building

shops. The main obstacle in adopting such systems is justifying the initial investment required and whether the rate of pay back makes economic sense.

John Seest presented the last lecture of the day, "Basic Structural Engineering For Pipe Organs". This presentation addressed structural engineering considerations for new instrument installations. It covered codes, loads and anchors. Different building codes were discussed as well as several different types of loads including live, dead and seismic loads. The lecture concluded with a discussion of the various types of anchors used in construction today and which type to use for different construction methods.

Tuesday evening was designated "An Evening On Your Own". It consisted of being bused to and from downtown Colorado Springs for dinner at a restaurant of your choice followed by a self guided tour and inspection of the organs in several open downtown churches.

DAY 4 The last day of the convention began with the second part of the AIO Annual Membership Meeting. As part of the meeting Bob Ebert gave a presentation on the health of the organ industry. Bob shared many interesting statistics he gathered from the responses received from a questionnaire sent out to a number organ builders. Of these statistics a few of the more interesting ones were in 1999: a) The total number of new ranks sold was 2469, b) A total of 62 new organs were installed, c) The median price of a new organ was approximately \$360,000 and d.) The majority of organ sales were to Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Methodist churches. The upshot of his analysis was the organ industry is very healthy today reflecting the general economic trend but that companies should have plans in place for handling any eventual economic downturn.

Following this meeting a panel discussion entitled "Voicing and Acoustics" was presented. This discussion focused on pipe organ building at high altitudes. As with any panel discussion there was some disagreement on certain issues among panel members but in general they all agreed on the following when building organs for high altitudes (low air density): one compensates by increasing the pipe length, increasing the pipe's scale (diameter), increasing the cutup of the pipe mouths on flues by 2% to 3%, and specifying a larger blower than would be used at lower altitudes. They confirmed two of the most important variables that need to be closely controlled are the temperature and humidity of the environment in which the organ is located. They also offered a definition for two words which are often incorrectly used interchangeably; Echo is where sound repeats itself and Reverberation is where sound decays naturally. Typically the former is not desired while the latter is.

After lunch Susan Tattershall presented a lecture entitled "Teaching Organists About The Organ". She gave a detailed account of a university level course she taught at Eastern

Michigan University that introduced students with a variety of backgrounds to the pipe organ.

The final activity was a series of six 20-minute mini-seminars called Table Talks. The entire group was divided into six subgroups each of which rotated between each of the six mini sessions every 20 minutes. Each mini-seminar covered a different topic; Todd Evers presented a look at woodworking joints, Stephen Leslie made a very interesting but all to fast presentation on setting a temperament, Charles Hendrickson presented a discussion on moving entire organs (trackers) on a cushion of air, John Grunow and Irv Lawless described working with government contracts (I didn't know there was a pipe organ at Camp David), Rick Morel presented a short seminar on pipe cleaning, and Charles Ruggles conducted a demonstration called "Test Your Own Pipes At 6000 Feet" where participants were invited to bring in their own pipes and see what they sound like at a higher altitude.

The day concluded with the evening Banquet and Awards ceremony. Dr. Joseph Galema and the United States Air Force Academy Cadet Chorus provided the evening's musical entertainment.

DAY 5 As I mentioned earlier Thursday was much like an ATOS afterglow. AIO conventioners had a choice of boarding a bus to Denver to tour additional organ installations or boarding a bus for a Rocky Mountain sightseeing trip. I opted for the latter which included a visit to the Garden Of The Gods with its fantastic rock formations, a stop in Old Colorado City visiting the old stores there, lunch at the Cliff House in nearby Manitou Springs and a magnificent ride to the top of Pike's Peak (14,110 feet) on the Cog Railway.

DAY 6 Friday was a travel day back home again on Northwest Airlines but this time everything went without a hitch.

Just a couple of closing thoughts; when in Colorado Springs if you ever get lost just remember the mountains are always to the west, the room service personnel in Colorado Springs do not know how to make a bed any better than the room service personnel in Milwaukee, and most importantly whatever you do, do not eat lunch just prior to going up Pike's Peak. I now know what high altitude sickness is.

Finally I would like to congratulate the AIO for putting on a great convention this year. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience while also learning many new things about organ design, construction and maintenance. I would personally like to thank outgoing AIO president Renee Marceau and all of the other AIO members I met for the hospitality that was shown me as a first time participant. I would also like to extend my thanks to Jeff Weiler for his assistance in facilitating my attendance and to ATOS for the opportunity of representing them at this year's AIO convention.

If there was anything missing from this year's convention it was a visit to an operating organ shop to see organs being built. The AIO will more than make up for this at next year's convention in Boston where they will be visiting four organ building shops; Andover Organ Company, Nelson Barden & Associates, C.B. Fisk, and Noack Organ. It promises to be a great convention.

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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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ORGAN-IZING POPULAR MUSIC

by
AL HERMANN'S

Melody Plus Chord Symbols— Your Own Arrangement

In the last four issues of THEATRE ORGAN, I have explained how organists who depend entirely on reading music can develop their own style of playing popular music. The first step was to learn to find all chords quickly with the left hand between the two F's near middle C on the accompaniment manual. You can then play any popular song using a melody line with the chord symbols above.

Playing the melody of a song with the right hand on the upper manual, and improvising an accompaniment with the left hand and pedals, using the chord symbols, is the easiest way to play popular music on the organ. However, that is only the beginning. By adding introductions, counter-melodies, fill-in devices on long melody notes and a variety of endings, it is possible to develop your

own style of playing anything you want to. You may then use any Fake Books, which are large collections of old and recent popular songs, or sheet music in which the melody is separated from the accompaniment.

The first chord symbols appeared above the melody around 1923. They were intended for guitars and ukuleles, but pianists soon learned to use them. During the 1930s, there were "Modern Musical Art Studios" all over the country. Professional pianists taught students and amateurs how to use the chord symbols to make their own arrangements of popular songs.

In the 1940s and '50s, home organs became very popular. Most home organists wanted to play popular music and the organ dealers promoted various beginner courses, which accomplished very little. Remember the "Pointer System?" In 1966, the Big 3 Publishing Corporation (Robbins, Miller and Feist) realized there was a need for a more advanced course for home organists. I was engaged to write a serious course on keyboard harmony and arranging popular songs in Theatre Organ style. The result was ORGAN-izing Popular Music—a series of twelve instruction books and eighty organ solo arrangements which were sold in many music stores in this country and Canada all during the 1970s and '80s.

Unfortunately, Big 3 went out of business in 1978 and their catalog was taken over by other companies, which have now allowed all the ORGAN-izing books and arrangements to go out of print. As of November 1, I still have 20 ORGAN-izing Book 1 and they will be sold soon.

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Wilson, Clark	28

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theatreorgans.com/lancast/lanc1.htm

Piping Hot Recording Company
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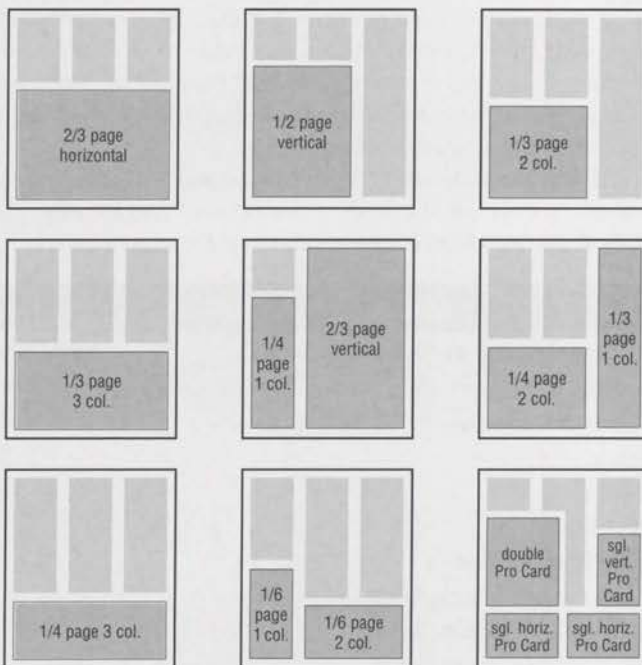
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The International Theatre Organ Scene

The Pavillon Baltard 4/15 Christie Cinema Pipe Organ Nogent Sur Marne, France

By Bernard Dargassies

I was surprised to read an article in THEATRE ORGAN, which mentions interest in the ex-Gaumont Palace de Paris Christie cinema pipe organ, now located in The Pavillon Baltard in Nogent sur Marne, France and the recording I made on this instrument in 1986. I am flattered and I thank you for your interest.

I am, above all, an organ builder and have been since 1972. At that time I learned my trade with companies like Gutschmitter and Gonzalez. I purchased the latter company in 1989. At present we have restoration and construction contracts for a number of large organs in Paris.

In 1979 we received a contract to restore and rebuild the ex-Gaumont Palace de Paris Christie cinema pipe organ. This instrument was originally installed in the Paris theatre in 1930 and was moved to the town of Nogent sur Marne, not far from Paris, in 1979. Up to that time I had never had the opportunity to work on this type of organ. For me it was an interesting discovery, which opened up a new world. At that time I met Tommy Desserre, the man who had played this very same instrument for almost 40 years. From that moment on I got the appetite for the cinema organ.

After 16 months of work, this organ was successfully refurbished. We rebuilt it exactly to its original specification. The only parts we changed were relays and a synchronizer. The

console was in rosewood. However, it was in very poor condition. We decided to paint it white to lighten the color and to hide the badly damaged wood. We also added a Post Horn 8' and a new bass to the Tibia Solo 16'. The tremolo on the Tibia was replaced by another of larger dimensions. I play this instrument regularly to enliven musical evenings and dances.

The disk I recorded in 1986 was a must for me as it was a unique occasion for this beautiful organ to rise again from the forgotten past. At that time I discovered what a cinema organ was. Although I can truthfully say that my musical agility was somewhat limited and I played the organ in a "Parisian" style, over the years my playing has improved thanks to organ players like Robin Richmond. I invited him over to give a concert in 1987. I had first met Robin in 1981 at the inauguration of the Wurlitzer organ that we had dismantled, restored and rebuilt again in Geneva, Switzerland. This instrument was originally in the Granada Cinema, Clapham Junction, London. Robin and I remained firm friends until his death in July 1999.

The recording company that released my recording on the Christie cinema organ wanted to update it to a CD in 1990. To be able to accomplish this, some parts of the music were recorded "live" and transferred onto a CD.

Here are the specifications of The Pavillon Baltard 4/15 Christie Cinema pipe organ:

MAIN CHAMBER					SOLO CHAMBER								
Bourdon/Concert Flute	16	8	4	2 ² / ₃	2	Post Horn	8	4 (new)					
Open Diapason	8		4			Ophicleide	16	8	4				
Viole D'Orchestre	16	8	4			Trumpet	8						
Viole D'Amour	8		4		2	Diaphone Diapason	16	8					
Strings II	8		4			Tibia Clausa	16	8	5 ¹ / ₃	4	2 ² / ₃	2	13/5
Clarinet	16	8				Saxophone (30 notes)	8						
Orchestral Oboe	8					Contra Violone	16	8	4	2			
Chrysoglott/Vibraphone (49 notes)						Vox Humana	8						
Tremulants: Main, Reeds						Marimba (49 notes)							
Bass Drum, Snare Drum, Tom Tom, Tambourine Tap, Tambourine Slap, Sand Block, Cymbal Crash, Cymbal Roll, Loose Cymbal, Castanets, Triangle, Wood Block, Jingles, Birds.						Xylophone (37 notes)							
EFFECTS													
Crockery Smash, Siren, Boat, Police, Surf, Train, Phone, Fire Bell.													
					Glockenspiel/Bells (30 notes)								
					Chimes (17 notes)								
					Tremulants: Solo, Reeds, Tibia, Vox Humana								
					1st keyboard 61 notes accompaniments with 2nd touch								
					2nd keyboard 61 notes great 2nd touch.								
					3rd keyboard 61 notes solo								
					4th keyboard 61 notes tonal percussions: 49 notes playing								
					Pedal 30 notes with 2nd touch.								



4/15 Christie, the Pavillon Baltard, Nogent Sur Marne, France.



Bernard Dargassies at the 4/15 Christie Cinema Pipe Organ.



MAIN CHAMBER: *Orchestral Oboe, Clarinet, Viole d'Orchestre, Viole d'Amour.*

SOLO CHAMBER: *Trumpet, Vox humana, Diapason, Bass Diapason.*

SOLO CHAMBER: *Open diapason, Contra violone, Orchestral trumpet.*



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The Strader Residence

3/18 Wurlitzer



Strader Residence in Cincinnati. Note the organ chambers on the left.



Joan Strader at the 3/18 Wurlitzer.

The year 1960 was a busy and exciting time for Mr. and Mrs. John J. Strader (Jack and Joan) of Cincinnati, Ohio. It was early in the year they learned from a friend, who was manager of one of the downtown theatres, that the first run movie theatre in Walnut Hills—The Paramount Theatre—might be closing. This came as quite a surprise to Jack. This suburban theatre had a pipe organ—a Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ! This was the instrument on which he learned to play. He never had a music lesson and did not read music.

Mrs. Howard Wurlitzer, daughter-in-law to Rudolph Wurlitzer, built the Paramount Theatre in 1930. The Wurlitzer factory saw to it that an outstanding instrument was installed in the theatre owned by Mrs. Wurlitzer—Opus 2151, Wurlitzer Style Balaban 3, originally a 3/15 instrument. The theatre was leased by RKO General Corporation.

A close friend of the Strader's, Richard C. Simonton, was most helpful in securing this instrument. Mr. Simonton was the one who helped to found the American Theatre Organ Enthusiasts, which later became known as the American Theatre Organ Society. By the spring of 1961 RKO decided to close the theatre due to a decline in attendance. Thanks to Dick Simonton's friend, Tom O'Neil, Chairman of the Board of RKO General Corporation, a meeting was

arranged between RKO and the Straders. Obviously it was a successful meeting.

Now came the task of packing the pipes, chests, relays, blower and moving them from the theatre to their new location—a private residence. Once the console and all components were safely stored at the new location the next job was to decide where the chamber would be located—its size and design. Once again thanks to Dick Simonton's good friend, Henry Pope, who entered the picture and designed the

Relay room—blower room in back.




chambers. Henry Pope installed all the studio pipe organs for CBS in Los Angeles. He also maintained many of the theatre instruments in the area.

While in New York meeting with RKO General to purchase the Wurlitzer, Dick Simonton introduced the Straders to Louis Ferrara and Ronald Bishop. They maintained the Wurlitzer organ at Radio City Music Hall. They assisted in removing the instrument from the Paramount Theatre and did the re-installation in the Strader residence.

At the beginning of this article it was stated that 1960 was a busy and exciting time for the Straders. September 11, 1960, a

Sunday, was the time a gathering of people took place at the apartment of Herb Wottle on Madison Road. The people who met were all theatre organ enthusiasts. The Ohio Valley Chapter of ATOS was formed that afternoon. Herb Wottle was elected first chairman; Pat Gillick was chairman the second year, Jack Strader, Vice-Chairman and Joan Strader, Secretary-Treasurer. All meetings for the next three years or so were held at the Strader residence.

The installation of the Paramount Theatre Wurlitzer in the Strader's Cincinnati, Ohio home was completed October 1961. Ron Wehmeier maintains the Strader organ. 

Top: Main Chamber; Below: Solo Chamber



The Strader 3/18 Wurlitzer

MAIN CHAMBER

Concert Flute through 16' Bourdon
Open Diapason through 16' Wood Diaphone
Tuba Horn through 16' Tuba
VDO
Viol Celeste
Clarinet
Vox Humana
Tibia Minor
Chrysoglott/Vibraphone

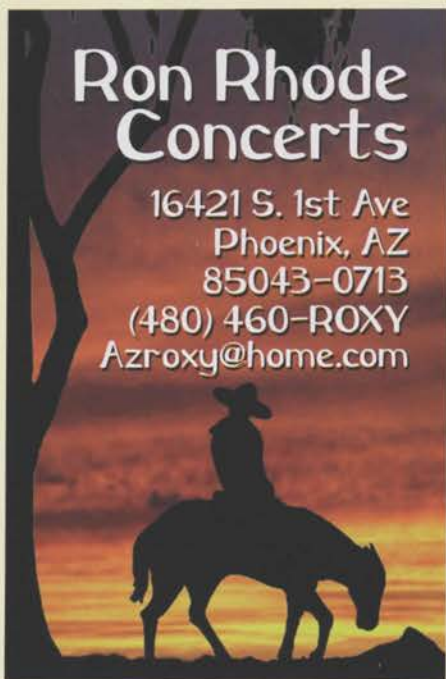
SOLO CHAMBER

Tibia through 16'
Musette
Orchestral Oboe
Oboe Horn
Post Horn
Salicional
Quintadena
Brass Trumpet
Brass Saxophone
Kinura
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A Wehmeier Residence 4/36 Wurlitzer Update




The Wehmeier Residence Music Room, Cincinnati, Ohio.

The Ron Wehmeier Cincinnati residence Wurlitzer organ was first introduced to THEATRE ORGAN readers in the May/June 1990 issue. Then, in the September/October 1993 issue there was an extensive article, which chronicled the many additions and improvements to Ron's original installation.

This brief article is to bring our readers up to date and let them know that Ron has now added yet another rank of pipes to his outstanding residence installation. He informs us that a

second Tibia has been added in the Solo chamber. This gives the Wurlitzer three Tibias—the Murray Harris Redwood set in the Main, and a Wurlitzer and Morton in the Solo, played using current unification on an either/or basis. Ron points out that this is another George Wright innovation, as installed in the Pasadena Studio Wurlitzer.

For a complete chamber analysis, please see THEATRE ORGAN, Volume 35, Number 5 (September/October 1993), Page 9. 

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Theatre Organ Review—Jan/Feb 2001

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Gershwin Medley	George and Ira Gershwin
Embraceable You	
I've Got Rhythm	
The Man I Love	
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Try to Remember	Schmidt/Jones
Dancing Butterfly	
Lullabye of the Leaves	Petkere/Young
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3/26 Wurlitzer Organ, Manual
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Indianapolis,
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3/18 Barton
Organ, Warren
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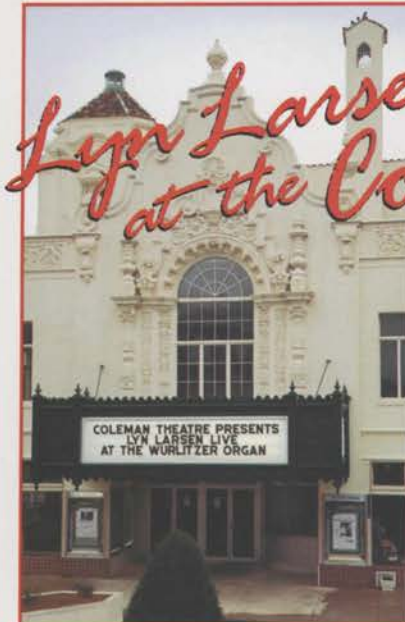
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