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JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY



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JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

May/June 2001 • Volume 43, Number 3

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY: Michael Fellenzer

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President's Message



Hey, how about our new web site! For those of you who haven't taken the opportunity to take a peek at this electronic masterpiece, please do so. It has recently gone “live” and although there are still a couple of bugs to be worked out, the overall results are, in a word, stunning.

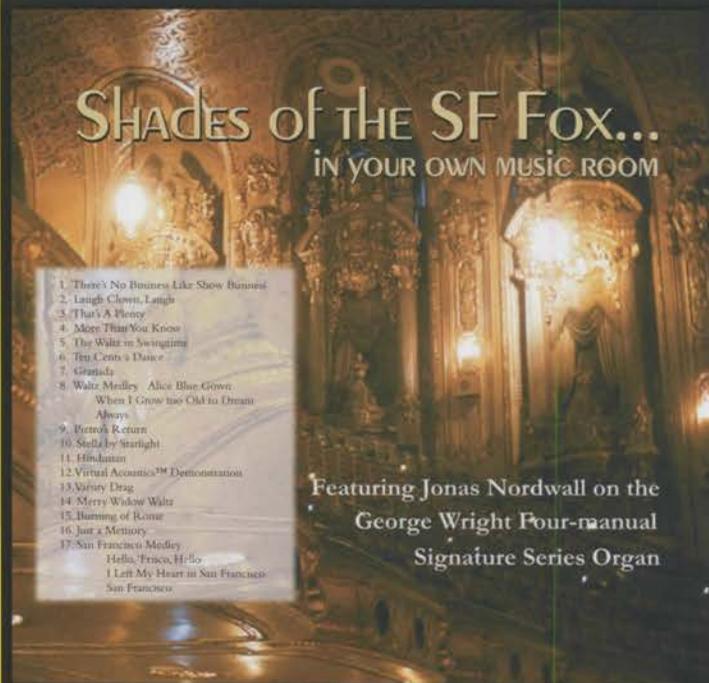
Many thanks to web designers Ivan de la Garza and Dale Wood for hundreds of hours of volunteer labor that was needed to change, alter, improve and reconfigure thousands of functions which ultimately made our website user friendly, easier to read and a delight to browse.

With the new website now in place, this kind of brings to a conclusion efforts that were begun a year and a half ago to make our publications more timely, more relevant to the membership and more pleasing to the eye. I think it's safe to say, “Mission accomplished.” Many of these things are due to the fine efforts of Bob Maney but not without the extraordinary help of Vern Bickel, Harry Heth, Jack Moelmann, Gus Franklin and with special thanks to Michael Fellenzer who held all of our hands while walking us through a lot of the technical stuff that keeps all these things going all at once. Many of you may notice how many of the same names keep cropping up when I write about the things that are happening in ATOS. The answer is simple, these guys have dedicated most, if not all, of their waking hours to the betterment of our organization. There is not enough that I can ever say to thank them for all that they have done. We are all in their debt.

Don't forget, register now for the 46th Annual ATOS Convention in Indianapolis, August 18th to the 22nd. Our friends in the Central Indiana Chapter are cooking up an absolutely fantastic event. See you there.

Nelson Page

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Theatre Organ Review—Jan/Feb 2001

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Front Cover: 3/12 Grande Page theatre pipe organ. Paramount Theatre, Anderson, Indiana.

<http://www.atos.org>

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General Information

NOTICE

The Annual 2001 ATOS Convention Registration

Forms are printed on the inside back page of the mailing cover on this issue. Due to a limited number of hotel rooms available it is urgent that you make your hotel reservations as early as possible if you wish to be housed in the Hyatt Regency Hotel for the convention.

Correction

In the January/February issue of *Theatre Organ*, page 25, the price quoted for the Lyn Larsen CD at the Coleman Theatre was incorrect. The cost for this CD is \$22.00 for all US and Canadian addresses. This CD was produced as a means to raise funds for the Friends of the Coleman Theatre. We are sorry for any inconvenience this error may have caused this organization and we request that everyone who ordered the CD to please pay the full price of \$22.00.

Nominations for ATOS Youth Liaison Board Member Are Now Being Accepted

The ATOS Board of Directors has authorized a Youth Liaison Board Member position to be filled by a young ATOS member, age 16 to 21 as of June 1st of each year.

The nominee must be a member of ATOS, or reside in a household of an ATOS member, and be able to attend and participate in the Annual Board of Directors meeting. Participation in the Board meeting is to allow for the free flow of thoughts and ideas and give the individual the opportunity of serving the organization.

The next annual Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for August 17 and 18 in Indianapolis, Indiana, just prior to the ATOS Convention. ATOS Convention attendance is highly recommended. Board members receive reimbursement of certain meeting related expenses.

Any ATOS Chapter may nominate one or more candidate or an individual may nominate himself/herself. The fol-

lowing procedure is to be observed in the nomination process:

1. Each nominee shall furnish an essay not to exceed two double-spaced typed pages. Information may include: personal data, leadership experiences in any organizations, your interest in ATOS, and the reasons you would like to serve in this position. An evening phone number must also be included.

2. Each nominee's essay is to be sent by Certified Return Receipt Mail to the Youth Liaison Board Member Committee Chairperson: Don Bickel, 1586 North Harding Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91104-1939. The essay must be post-marked on or before June 15, 2001.

All questions are to be directed to Don Bickel at the above address or phone 626/794-9652.

OFFICIAL NOTICE

TO:

Members of the
American Theatre Organ
Society (ATOS)

FROM:

Jack Moelmann, ATOS Secretary

SUBJECT:

Notice of Annual Membership Meeting

DATE:

AUGUST 22, 2001

The Annual Meeting of the members of the American Theatre Organ Society (ATOS) will be held at 10:30 AM, August 22, 2001 at the Hyatt Regency Indianapolis Hotel, One South Capitol Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana, during the 2001 ATOS Annual Convention.

Agenda:

- Approval of the 2000 Annual Membership Meeting Minutes as printed in the *Theatre Organ Journal* (Nov/Dec 2000)

- Presentation and acceptance of the Treasurer's Report
- Old Business: Report of Board Actions during the past year by the Secretary. Other status reports
- New Business

- Announcement of next Membership Meeting
- Adjournment

AMERICAN THEATRE
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Jack Moelmann, ATOS Secretary

Call for Nominations

As provided in the ATOS Bylaws, the Board of Directors appoints the ATOS Officers at the annual Board meeting. This year the Board of Directors will meet in Indianapolis on August 17, 2001 as part of the ATOS Annual Convention.

Candidates for these positions should submit their written resume and candidate statement to the ATOS President, Nelson Page, no later than June 30, 2001. Copies of the submissions will be made for distribution to the Board of Directors prior to the Board meeting. Candidates for these positions will be expected to present themselves, at their own expense, to the Board for personal interview on the morning of August 17, 2001. Appointment will immediately follow the interview process. Successful candidates should be available to participate in the remainder of the Board meeting and be ready to assume the duties of this office at the end of the Convention. Reimbursement of travel and hotel room expenses will be paid by ATOS for those appointed.

Officer position status at this time is:

President: available

Incumbent will continue if appointed.

Vice-President: available

Incumbent will continue if appointed.

Secretary: available

Incumbent will continue if appointed.

Treasurer: available

Incumbent will continue if appointed.

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

Nelson E. Page, ATOS President

International Pipe Piper

The annual *Pipe Piper*, a list of theatre pipe organs in public places, mainly in North America, appeared in the March/April issue of the THEATRE ORGAN Journal. In an effort to further evolve into "ATOS International" in scope, we would like to list ALL theatre pipe organs around the world—those that are in public places such as theatres, auditoriums, etc. Home installations are not appropriate for this listing.

The project needs your help. In order to compile a list, we need to know where the organs are located. We solicit your help if you have any information, especially from those of you outside the U.S. who know of instruments. The information needed is: Country, City, Street Address, the size and make of the organ, e.g. 2/9 Wurlitzer, and a notation about it being an original installation in a theatre, or an original installation in other than a theatre. While optional, a phone number and/or e-mail address of a contact for the instrument would be helpful. Please check the format starting on page 22 of the March/April issue of the Journal.

Please send any information that you might have to Tom DeLay at e-mail: tdelaycalifornia@worldnet.att.net. His mailing address, phone number, fax number, etc. can be found in the March/April issue of the Journal.

If after reviewing the current *Pipe Piper* listing in the Journal you note any changes, additions, or corrections, or possibly even deletions if the organ is no longer in the facility or completely inoperable, please forward them on to Tom DeLay. We hope that by next year we will have a rather complete list of theatre pipe organs around the world. In the meantime, we will also be updating the ATOS Web Page, which has a similar list and will be expanded over time to include international instruments. It can be seen at www.ATOS.org.

Share Your Special Theatre Pipe Organ Installation with the Readers of THEATRE ORGAN

Articles about theatre pipe organ installations in public venues and residential settings are being solicited for publication in THEATRE ORGAN—particularly those installations which have never been featured in the Journal. If you would like to tell the theatre organ world about a particular installation that you feel is very special, please contact the Editor for details.

New ATOS Chapters

During the mid-year Board of Directors' meeting, unanimous approval was given to add two more chapters to our society. The Chicago Area Theatre Organ Enthusiasts Chapter was thereby reinstated and the LaCrosse Scenic Bluffs Chapter was granted chapter status. Both chapters will be recognized during our Annual Convention in Indianapolis.

Please inform the ATOS Executive Secretary promptly when new officers are elected and, of course, any changes of address.

Send a copy (not e-mail) of your chapter newsletter to the ATOS President, ATOS Vice-President, ATOS Archives/Library Curator, and to me, Chairperson of the Chapter Relations Committee. Each issue of the THEATRE ORGAN Journal includes the names, addresses, and etc. for these incumbents.

We are pleased to have these chapters and invite their participation in ATOS activities. Best wishes for success in all of your endeavors to preserve theatre pipe as an art form.

Doris Erbe



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Members' Forum

Greetings,

My name is Michael Hix. I am a grandnephew of Lee Erwin. (Lee's sister Sara Hix is my Grandmother.) Lee meant a great deal to my family and greatly influenced my musical development.

I am currently pursuing my MM in Historical Musicology at Florida State University. I am gathering information concerning Lee for my thesis. My purpose in writing is to pursue additional sources. I am in the process of gathering recordings, scores, photos, letters, videos, articles, etc. I also hope to interview colleagues, former students and friends of Lee's. Any help from ATOS members will be greatly appreciated.

As I mentioned I am just beginning to gather materials for this project. Therefore I do not know in what direction my thesis will head. My area of interest is in the revival of the genre by Lee and others.

I would appreciate the opportunity to correspond with any of you who are inclined to do so.

Michael Hix

2039 N. Meridian, Apt. 121, Tallahassee, FL 32303
850/523-0515



Dear Vernon,

I would like to rectify a couple omissions of "credit where due" in the review of the Eastern Massachusetts Regional Convention reviews. Whereas I had overall responsibility for the condition of the organs, I could not have done this alone. Special recognition is due to Gary Phillips, Bob Newman and Don Phipps for their participation. While credit was given to these technicians in the Convention Brochure, it was not given in the reviews.

Gary Phillips of GHP Associates tuned both the Zeiterion and "Phipps' Experience" instruments. Whereas I was responsible for the restoration, reinstallation and tonal finishing of the Zeiterion Theatre 2/9 Wurlitzer, this was a project originally

spearheaded by the South Eastern New England Theatre Organ Society (SENETOS). This group has maintained the organ since its reinstallation, mostly due to the generous efforts of Ken Duffie and Don Phipps. Fortunately, this little Wurlitzer needs minimal ongoing work due to the total restoration it was given prior to reinstallation. Gary Phillips has professionally tuned the organ and kept it in regulation.

I had requested that full credit be given to those who participated in the Zeiterion organ's restoration, but a last minute revision of the Convention booklet omitted such details. Allen Miller Associates restored the main "manual" chests and provided tonal finishing, but the largest task of restoring all other components and installation was subcontracted to Foley-Baker, Inc. Under the direction of Mike Foley, all offset chests, regulators, percussions and console were restored, set up, winded and tested in the Foley-Baker shop. Since this organ was originally in the Zeiterion, floor frames were reconstructed to Wurlitzer factory drawings and, with the exception of the blower and relay, the organ was reinstalled exactly as it had been.

Bob Newman is under contract with the Providence Performing Arts Center for maintenance of the 5/21 Wurlitzer. Access time to the organ and the theatre's budget for the organ, which goes largely unused, does not permit much more than killing ciphers on a large organ that has never been rebuilt. Through the generosity of the theatre, and especially a donation from Mr. and Mrs. Garrett Shanklin, it was possible for extra time to be spent troubleshooting and repairing blown pneumatics and water damage to chests for those pipes deemed most needed for Walter Strony's concert. Don Phipps helped in this undertaking, while I worked around them, tuning and rough regulating the pipes that did play. Without the extra days spent by Bob Newman and his complete cooperation, the organ would not have been presentable. Walt worked around a malfunctioning combination action. It had been releathered a few years back by SENETOS, but when *Phantom of the Opera* demanded removal of the huge five-manual console, the huge cable, including wiring to the remote combination machine, was replaced with multiple telephone cables and plugs. The combination action has become unpredictable, at best. Working under difficult conditions, Walt pulled off a magnificent concert and, much to his credit, was able to conceal most of

the problems. No organist should be given this task. This should be a lesson to all. It was a huge mistake to have installed this organ without a total rebuild. It had already served two previous homes. With due respect to all involved in the project, the installation was done on a tight budget, and severe time constraints. But the theatre thought they had a "new" organ that was going to play reliably for many years to come. This makes it more difficult to go in and propose the now necessary removal of major components for a proper, complete restoration.

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It was with some trepidation that I accepted responsibility for the playability of the convention organs, poised to chase a cipher at any moment. In truth, in spite of what Allen Walker may have implied, only the unrestored, water-damaged Providence organ is prone to ciphering. Those that have been restored can be relied upon to be quite trouble-free. Still, it was due to the efforts of Bob Newman, Gary Phillips, Don Phipps and Ken Duffie, that my responsibility was made so much easier. My thanks to all.

Finally a word to the ATOS Board of Directors—The present allowance of \$500 per organ for bringing up to “concert readiness” needs to be reconsidered. At the Eastern Regional, we were committed to presenting the best, not just “good enough,” theatre organ experiences possible. It was a delight for us all to see how the audience responded. In many cases today, at least with the better instruments, professionals may be involved in continual maintenance, and they may not even be members of ATOS. This work is their living. \$500 may not even cover the cost of tuning a large instrument, the ones we seem to enjoy hearing most.

Allen Miller



Greetings from Las Vegas—
family, friends, listeners and everyone!!

Following what seems like an eternity, I am VERY pleased to report that Roxy's Pipe Organ Pizzeria at the Fiesta Casino/Hotel has reopened for business. My first night back was Sunday, March 25. (Performance hours 5 to 9 p.m.) Initially, the starting date was set for March 11, but it had to be postponed a couple of weeks because of delays in remodeling/construction.

After several meetings with Stations Casinos (the new owners), there's been a plan formulated that would allow the “room” to be used as a lounge/country/rock venue during the weekend (Thursday through Saturday) as well as KEEPING THE ORGAN THERE for use as a TO/Pizza restaurant (Sunday through Wednesday). I truly believe much of the credit for this decision goes to ALL OF YOU that have been SO kind to share your thoughts, feelings/frustrations in the form of letters, phone calls and emails.

Over the past two and a half months, there have been extensive additions to the stage area—the lighting and sound systems—about \$450,000 worth. The new sound and lighting upgrades have been installed so that the Roxy's “room” will be able to compete with other similar “rooms” in Vegas (C2K, House of Blues, The Railhead, etc.).

The organ presentation will be benefited by the additions because we'll have more flexibility with what we can do with lighting and sound. All the new lighting (canisters and leekos) is motor driven and can be aimed from the ground at the master lighting console with a joystick. All lighting presets are savable to disk. The MIDI equipment (Emu-Proteus and Boss-drum machine) will be mixed thru the new “house” sound system. In addition, one MIDI channel can be reserved to carry routines for elaborate synced canister swivel/motion and circuit on/off lighting sequences (write-able within rhythm patterns and songs). When it's all connected and running, it should make for some pretty hefty WOWs!

What about the organ? It was mothballed for a couple of months. We spent a good part of a week going through it and getting it ready for re-opening. There has been some discussion with management in regards to future additions, completions and tonal regulation. Hopefully the “receptive” mindset of the new owners will remain.

Needless to say, I'm REALLY excited to be back on the bench. That saying about performance being an addiction IS true! Fortunately, I've had some great concert opportunities during the down time, which have helped with the “fixes.” I'll be posting some updates as things progress over the next couple of months. If any of you are planning to be in Vegas or if you have any questions, please just drop me an email.

WHAT A RIDE THIS HAS BEEN!!! In spite of everything, the family and I are doing well. Hope all of you are too! Take Care and All the Best!

Sincerely,

Dave Wickerham

www.organman.com/dave



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WILSON GREGORY BRUGGERT

Wilson Gregory Bruggert, life member of the Western Reserve Theatre Organ Society, passed away peacefully December 29, 2000. Wilson was born in Cleveland, Ohio, September 27, 1910. As a youth in Cleveland, he dreamed of a career as a theatre organist. "When I was a kid, I'd go to the Loew's Liberty at Superior and East 105th, and, oh golly, I wished to heck I could play that organ, too." Said Wilson at his 85th birthday celebration.

He got his chance while attending Glenville High School and Case Western Reserve University. He trained under two organists in local theatres and filled in for them during their breaks and nights off. While in Cleveland, he played the Wurlitzers at the Liberty and State Theatres and the Kimball at Wade Park Manor.

Wilson moved to Akron, Ohio soon after talking films became the rage. He became a buyer for the B. F. Goodrich Company, retiring in 1975 with 32 years service.

His early interest in theatre organ followed him to Akron. At 182 South Main Street, a mile north of B. F. Goodrich Company, stood the Loew's Theatre (now the Akron Civic Theatre) with its 3/13 Wurlitzer. During the late 1960s Wilson was instrumental in beginning restoration on the theatre's Wurlitzer bringing it up to concert quality.

In 1973 he was one of the founding members of the Akron Civic Theatre Organ Guild. Wilson served as president of the ACTOG from 1975-1977 and from 1979-1989. During his years of leadership the guild presented 38 concert/silent movie events. Until 1990 he could be heard playing the Wurlitzer before and during the intermission of many events held at the Akron Civic. Of course, a tour of the theatre wasn't complete without a short demonstration by Wilson of the theatre's Mighty Wurlitzer.

Although Wilson was not a charter member of ATOS, he was a charter member of the Western Reserve Chapter when it was established in 1962. In the late 1960s he acquired the 3/15 Wurlitzer, Style 260, Opus 935, from the State Theatre in Cleveland, Ohio, with no console. He donated to the WRTOS Grays Armory installation the 32' and 16' wood Diaphones, the 8' Diapason, the 16' Tibia, the 8' Quintadena and the piano for helping remove the organ from the State Theatre. The remainder of the organ he installed in his West Akron home along with the Style 235, Opus 1191 console from the Park Theatre in Cleveland, Ohio. In addition to his home installation, he was involved with the restoration of the Wade Park Manor Kimball and the installation of the Robert-Morton in the Hobbis Residence in Solon, Ohio. The installation of the 3/26 Wurlitzer in the carriage house of the late Chuck Blair's home in Canton, Ohio was his final project.

In addition to his involvement in the Northeastern Ohio theatre organ activities, he was, in his earlier years, a member

of the Detroit Theatre Organ Society and often traveled to Detroit for their concerts. His name is also listed as a charter member of the Theatre Historical Society of America.

WRTOS members who were fortunate to have known Wilson will not soon forget his smooth theatre organ stylings and his vast knowledge of theatre organs and the theatres in which they were installed. New members who may have never met this gentleman need only listen carefully during the next concert at the Grays Armory or look closely at the words flashed on the screen during the traditional sing-a-long. The ranks of pipes and the antique glass song slides he donated to the WRTOS Chapter will keep his memory alive.

Harold and Frances Wade

WILLIAM EDWARD "EDDIE" BUTLER

"Eddie" Butler, 90, the man who for many years played the Mighty Wurlitzer at the Omaha, Nebraska Orpheum Theatre passed away. From 1931 to 1953, "Eddie" played the Orpheum organ regularly in midnight concerts that were broadcast live on local radio. In later years, he was a fixture at the keyboard at Creighton University basketball games in the Civic Auditorium.

A musical career that began at age ten, playing background music for silent movies in his native Council Bluffs, took "Eddie" across the country and around the world. In 1969, he became the first American to play the huge organ in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. In an interview, he recalled that his appearance came about the time the first American had walked on the moon and that he received a warm welcome from the Europeans. That appearance brought invitations for "Eddie" to play to thousands of people throughout Europe on magnificent organs in historic cathedrals and concert halls. A 1976 tour took him to Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, St. Stephen's Basilica in Vienna and Westminster Abbey in London.

When the Orpheum Theatre and the Wurlitzer organ were restored in 1975, "Eddie" performed at the reopening festivities. He was thrilled that the old organ was saved.

"Eddie" said that his musical interest began with the piano at age four. But, he said, the Catholic sisters at St. Francis Academy in the Bluffs thought he played too loudly and sat him down at the organ one day. "I've always been grateful to them for that," he said in a 1976 interview.

At age 14 "Eddie" became the youngest member of the American Guild of Organists. At 17 he won a competition to be the first organist at the new Wrigley Theatre on Catalina Island. "I'll never forget that summer," he said. "In those days movie stars spent a lot of time on Catalina. I became good friends with Gloria Swanson, Rudy Vallee and Richard Dix."

During World War II he was in the Navy and directed the Naval Academy Choir. After the war he returned to the Midwest, touring and performing. In 1958 he moved to Los Angeles to work as the official organist for the Academy of Motion Picture, Radio and Television Arts and Sciences.

He returned to Southwest Iowa after about ten years and then to Omaha. He presented numerous concerts on the Orpheum stage in later years as well as in local clubs and churches. His wife, Sylvia, preceded him in death. His survivors include a niece and a nephew.

JOHN MAZZAE

Central New York has lost the last silent movie theatre organist. John Mazzae was a good friend to me and to all who knew him. He was one of the "originals" of the Utica Theatre Organ Society and very best well-known organists of all of Central New York. He played several concerts on the New York State Fair theatre organ as well as almost every Saturday morning at his favorite 3/13 Wurlitzer at the Proctor High School in his home city of Utica. His obituary is below as it appeared in many area newspapers.

Mr. John F. Mazzae, 91, passed away with his loved ones by his side on Saturday, March 17, 2001, at St. Luke's Memorial Hospital. John was born in Utica, New York, March 19, 1909, a son of the late John and Antoinette (Albanese) Mazzae. He was educated in local schools. On August 18, 1934, in Italy, John was joined in marriage with Evelina "Eve" Alessio. The couple enjoyed a very close and loving marriage of over 66 years.

Mr. Mazzae was an extraordinary and well-known theatre organist. He played over the years in roller skating rinks in Utica and Canadarago Park. He played at the Fireside Inn in Schaumburg, Illinois, the Diplomat in Utica and for area churches, including St. Louis Gonzaga Church and St. Mark's Church. John was also instrumental in moving the original organ from the Stanley Theatre to Proctor High School. His talent and ability was revered throughout the music industry and will be sadly missed. He was a longtime member of the Musician's Union. He is survived by his beloved wife, Eve, and his two daughters, Antoinette and her husband, Robert Morris, of Venice, Florida and Linda Mazzae of Syracuse, New York. Also surviving are several grandchildren, great-

grandchildren and many in-laws, nieces, nephews and cousins here and in Italy. His son, John Mazzae and his daughter Eileen Apley predeceased him. His funeral was held at the Matt Funeral Home and at the St. Mark's Church in North Utica with interment in Calvary Cemetery. John will be missed greatly by his friends and all who ever heard his theatre organ artistry. A memorial page has been added to the Utica Theatre Organ Society home page—<http://www.albany.edu/piporg-l/svcmmds.html>.

Submitted in memory of John Mazzae by Philip A. Edwards 🎵



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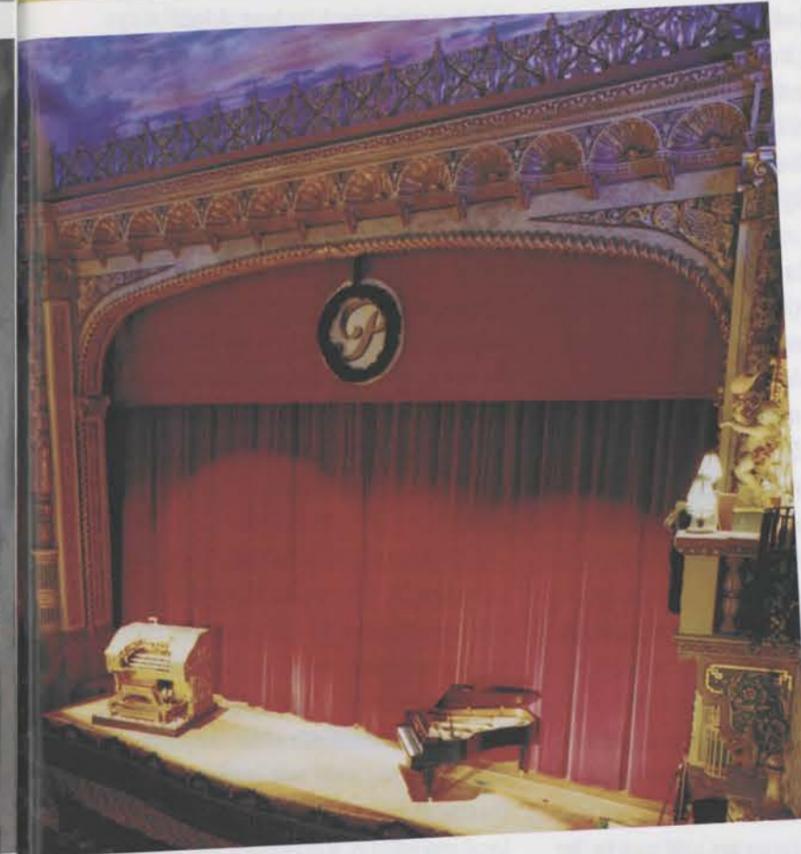
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LOOKING BACK

72 YEARS OF THE ANDERSON PARAMOUNT

BY CARLTON SMITH

MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT THE PARAMOUNT THEATRE IN ANDERSON, INDIANA, BUT NEVER HAS THE ENTIRE STORY BEEN TOLD, NAMING THE PEOPLE AND EVENTS THAT HAVE KEPT THIS SHOWPLACE ALIVE. INTERWOVEN THROUGH ITS HISTORY IS ITS PAGE THEATRE PIPE ORGAN THAT HAS PLAYED ALMOST CONTINUOUSLY SINCE THE DOORS FIRST OPENED IN 1929.



1933
Miss Hilda Lindstrom seated at the Page.



1955
18 year old John Landon at the Page Organ.



1960
John Landon at a late night practice session. The pipe is the stage night light stand.

MOVING FORWARD

Two landowners, I. R. Holycross and N. McCullough, began improvement of their property at 12th & Meridian Streets in bustling, downtown Anderson in 1928 when they entered into partnership with three developers to design and build an opulent new theatre building to be named the Palace. The group commissioned a Ft. Wayne architectural firm, A. M. Strauss Architects, to design an atmospheric theatre, then a new concept developed by Chicago architect John Eberson. Eberson and Strauss had collaborated two years earlier on the Ft. Wayne Embassy Theatre (although the latter was not atmospheric), and the plaster ornamentation in the Anderson theatre is without doubt from Eberson's Michelangelo Studios despite no known surviving documentation. A new 3/7 Page theatre pipe organ was shipped from Lima, Ohio, on January 3, 1929, to the Palace Theatre in Anderson. However, later in 1929 the developers found it necessary to lease the new property to the Paramount Publix Corporation who finished the building's construction and opened it as the Paramount Theatre on August 20th.

The organist chosen to open the new organ was Miss Hilda Lindstrum, age 31, already an important musical figure in the community. Hilda had started her career at age 18 playing piano at the Majestic Theatre in Elwood, Indiana, her hometown. By 1922 she was the organist at the Riviera Theatre in Anderson playing a Smith organ installed in 1919 when the Riviera was built. Hilda lived with her parents in Elwood and rode the Interurban some 20 miles to Anderson every day. In 1926 after her father passed away, Hilda and her mother moved to Anderson to be closer to Hilda's work. The Riviera Theatre installed a Style E Wurlitzer for Hilda in 1927, and she continued to play there exclusively until 1929 when the Paramount opened directly across the street, and she moved to the new, larger theatre as the house organist. It is reported that Hilda actually played at both venues during the 1930s, but she was mainly associated with the Paramount. During these years Hilda also broadcast the Page organ over radio station WHBU located in the Union Building next door to the theatre.

One can imagine her distress, however, when after only ten months of operation, the Paramount was closed for the summer of 1930 because the theatre did not have air-conditioning, and the Publix chain wanted to promote its newly-built State Theatre two blocks down the street that did have air-conditioning! About this same time the depression

scuttled the Paramount Publix Indiana Division which became bankrupt. The Paramount Theatre reverted back to the landowners, Holycross and McCullough, who reopened it in December of 1931. (One can assume that Hilda played at the Riviera during the period the Paramount was closed, but there is no documentation that could be found.) Hilda returned to the Paramount when it reopened and continued to play daily programs there throughout the 1930s and 1940s, an unusual situation compared to most theatres whose organs were silent during those years.

In 1950 Hilda lost her right leg to diabetes but continued to perform, not only at the Paramount but also at the local Labor Temple where she played a Hammond for dancing on a regular basis. (Beginning in 1951, she also played for all of the Ann Harmeson School of Dance recitals at the Paramount. Ann Harmeson would later become very instrumental in preserving the Page organ, an interest born when as a child Ann would dance in recitals on the stage of the Paramount, accompanied on the organ by Hilda Lindstrum.) A local high school boy, Bruce Thompson, befriended Hilda and would not only help her on and off the organ bench, he would lie on his side next to the console and operate the swell shoes out of sight of the audience since Hilda kept the console in its lowered position during these years. Bruce graduated from high school in 1953 and was no longer able to help Hilda as

much. However, he remained a very close friend to her until her death in March 1957 at the age of 59. Although forced to retire in 1955 due to poor health, Hilda had maintained a very successful theatre organist career far longer than most of her contemporaries.

Upon Hilda's retirement, the organ didn't remain silent for long. A local musician, Victor McGuire, would play the organ for special occasions and dance recitals. And an 18-year-old Taylor University student by the name of John Landon began to play for weekend intermissions, starting a love affair with this instrument that continues to this day. John regularly appeared for weekend intermissions from 1955 until 1963 when he moved to Iowa for a job opportunity. However, John was back in the Anderson area in 1964 and resumed his playing of weekend intermissions for a delighted public.

By this time, however, the Page organ had begun to show some signs of aging. Although it basically still played, it needed attention badly. The Alliance Theatre Corporation had purchased the theatre upon the death of Mr. Holycross in 1946, and they were very supportive of the theatre and its organ. In 1964 when two local individuals, Rex Hoppes and the late Lewis Hodson, approached the theatre manager to get permission to clean and repair the organ, he was

delighted. The two volunteers first cleaned



1965

Bruce Thompson.



1968

Lew Hodson and a young Mike Kinerk testing a pedal note.

the instrument, removing two fifty-five gallon drums of trash and dirt from the chambers. They releathered the console stop action pneumatics and some chamber components and repainted the gold-glittered console white and gold to imitate what Buddy Nolan had done to the Embassy Page console in Ft. Wayne. Once again, the organ was in good playing condition.

In August of 1964 Lew Hodson and some other central Indiana theatre organ enthusiasts got together to form the "Indiana Organ Club." In 1965 the group received a charter from the American Theatre Organ Enthusiasts as the Central Indiana Chapter, now CIC-ATOS, Inc. Though based in Indianapolis, the group held many meetings at the Anderson Paramount, and some of its members, such as David Ashby and Miriam Parkinson, also participated in weekend intermission concerts. Also in 1965 John Landon recorded the first LP on the Page, entitled "John Landon at the Paramount Theatre Pipe Organ." In 1966, Rex Hoppes left Anderson for a job in southern Indiana, leaving Lew Hodson in charge of the Page maintenance and John Landon playing the Page for the public on weekends.

In 1967 the organ was to be used as part of a local radio station's talent contest. A 14-year-old local high school student by the name of Michael Kinerk attended a pre-contest practice session to

lend encouragement to a young friend who was to play the Page. Mike had become interested in organs when a new Möller organ had been installed in his family's church, and he had apprenticed the summer before with the installing firm of Burger and Schaffer Organ Company of Findlay, Ohio. Mike quickly became a member of the Page maintenance crew helping Lew Hodson and playing intermissions occasionally as well. In 1968, an 8' Viol Celeste was acquired and installed with the help of Tom Martin, a friend of Mike's from his Burger and Schaffer days, bringing the organ to eight ranks. The next year the local talent contest produced another young enthusiast, Kevin Idlewine, who became one of the Paramount crew and also played intermissions on weekends. A young Indiana University student by the name of Dennis James would drive up from Bloomington, Indiana, on many weekends to play intermissions. And Buddy Nolan came to the Paramount to play a midnight organ concert, just as he had been doing at the Embassy in Ft. Wayne. Things were looking good for the Paramount and its Page!

But, in 1969 the Alliance Corporation sold the theatre to an out-of-state concern called Cinecom, and the work crew and organists began to encounter new managers with less appreciation for the organ. In 1972 Cinecom asked the group to quit working on the organ and suspended all use

of the organ. Only a year later, in the summer of 1973, Cinecom went bankrupt and the Paramount closed leaving the Page in an unprotected state. During this time the Kinura (Krum-Kin) rank, a most unusual set of pipes common only to Page organs, and the recently installed Viol Celeste disappeared from the organ.

Later in 1973 some Anderson citizens formed "Paramount Civic Center" group intending to purchase the theatre from the bankruptcy court. During this period, Lew Hodson was working at a local auto parts store and became acquainted with a Ball State University college student buying parts for his Corvair. Through conversations Lew realized this young man was very interested in vintage music and had obvious mechanical abilities. So, Lew invited him to go along on a tour of the building the citizens group was taking to see the condition of the interior and the organ. This young man was yours truly, and this was the beginning of an association with the Page organ that continues to this day. (I had first heard the organ when I was eight and had attended my sister's dance recitals there, produced by the Ann Harmeson School of Dance.) What we found on our tour was water damage to a Solo chamber chest and reservoir, but the organ was still in pretty good condition and still running on mostly 1929 leather since the earlier group had done only the console and a few chamber components.

However, the



1969

Kevin Idlewine during Christmas season.



1969

A young Dennis James.

bankruptcy court refused the citizens group's offer, and the theatre was sold to Solar Sport Systems in March of 1974.

Just before the new owners opened the theatre for regular business, Lew Hodson approached the new manager and was delighted to find him sympathetic to the organ and its use. The management presented an open house in the summer of 1974, and John Landon (now Dr. John Landon) played the Page for this event. One of the attendees was Bob Dunn who became very interested in the organ and eventually joined our little group that became known as "The Paramount Organ Society."

Since Lew had a full-time job, but Bob Dunn had been laid off from a local factory and I had some free time as a college student, much of the repairs fell to Bob and me. We sought guidance from Lew and also from local organ builders, an important one being Larry MacPherson in Indianapolis.

The Page was quickly brought back to good playing condition again and was now at 6 ranks with the Kinura still missing. John Landon resumed playing Saturday evening intermissions, and we began Friday and Sunday intermissions as well, which ran from 1974 until 1985. During this time I started playing on Fridays and Sundays but was assisted by others, such as Larry MacPherson, Roger Whitehead, Kurt Schakel, Ted Gaither,

Mazel Holiday, Barbara Sparks, Cletus Goens, Bob Dunn and Clark Wilson. Even Rex Hoppes returned from his home in southern Indiana to play a few times. Though these years Bruce Thompson would play for every one of the Ann Harmeson dance reviews. Other significant events during this period were the concert by John Muri in 1975 and a new recording of the Page entitled "Dr. John W. Landon at the Page Pipe Organ" in 1978. In 1979 John Landon appeared in concert for the 50th anniversary of the theatre. During that program a local theatre chain owner announced to several bystanders that he was purchasing the theatre. Sure enough, Tudor Amusements, based in Indianapolis, did purchase the Paramount shortly after the program. The owner was very supportive of the organ and the weekend intermissions and insisted on buying the group Saturday evening dinner between the two performances. He also paid for a new Trivo 8' Post Horn rank in 1982 which was installed in the Kinura chest since an original Page Kinura had never been located despite many attempts to find one. In 1984 the Central Indiana Chapter hosted its first ATOS Annual Convention and presented Lowell Ayars at the 3/7 Paramount Page.

However, in early 1985 Tudor Amusements went bankrupt, and the theatre was closed for most of a year with no heat or air-conditioning. The

Paramount Organ Society disbanded in despair. Although the building reverted back to Solar Sport Systems, they did nothing to maintain the building. The roof began to leak badly, ruining the organ relay and deteriorating most of the organ components. Finally in late 1985 a non-denominational church bought the building. When they turned on the organ, it was so damp in the chambers that the rib leather blew off all of the reservoirs. By this time I was working in Indianapolis for the Heaston Organ Company and was hired to re-leather the reservoirs. This allowed the Page to play somewhat, but the relay was too far damaged to be rebuilt. The church did use the organ with a local 14-year-old boy named Gary Houk as organist, but the organ soon became completely unplayable. By 1986 the church lost the theatre due to unpaid back taxes, and it was closed again and left for ruin, this time for three years.

By 1989 the Paramount property was considered a total loss by the city and was slated for the wrecking ball. Hearing word of this, a small group of prominent citizens banded together to form the "Paramount Heritage Foundation." Leslie Davidson and Mr. and Mrs. William M. Hardacre were the leaders. And who is Mrs. Hardacre? None other than the former Ann Harmeson who had loved the Page organ and the theatre since she was a child dancing on the stage to its music! These folks wisely sought the expertise of James R. Abraham, well-known locally for restoring historic properties,



1975

A youthful Carlton Smith during an intermission.



1992

Jeff Weiler, Mr. and Mrs. John Smith, and Carlton Smith pose after a silent film fundraiser.

who became Project Manager. With a green light from the city of Anderson, the Paramount Heritage Foundation commenced its fund-raising efforts, reopening the theatre on August 20, 1989, with the Artie Shaw Orchestra on stage to a sell-out crowd, a very encouraging first step on the long road that lay ahead. With the organ out of commission, the 1990 ATOS Annual Convention did not include the Paramount in its programming.

In late 1990, just after I started Carlton Smith Pipe Organ Restorations, Jim Abraham asked for a proposal to restore and enlarge the Page. After three years of water and humidity damage, the organ was in complete ruin. A plan was established to enlarge the organ to 12 ranks, and a second 3/7 Page organ (originally from the Palace Theatre in Marion, OH) was purchased in September of 1990 from Doug Gammage in Detroit, Michigan, for additions and replacements. The organ project was given a big boost with the selection of George and Norma Smith, local music store owners, to spearhead the fundraising for the Page. George is a well-known and well-liked organist in Anderson and devoted much of his time to accomplishing the task he and Norma had been given.

Jeff Weiler came to Anderson to play two silent movie fund raisers for the organ project, one in 1992 and another in 1993, using a Rodgers electronic owned by the late Ned Siebert who loaned it to the theatre for these performances. Jeff generously donated his services for both successful programs.

By December of 1995, the theatre had been gloriously restored by the Conrad Schmidt Studios, and the organ fund-raising was a success with additional help from William Hardacre. The console and organ components were removed and taken to my shop to begin the long process of total restoration. By

May of 1997, the restoration and expansion completed, the organ was reinstalled in the theatre with every attempt to make it appear as if the Page factory had made the additions to the organ.

On June 20, 1997, Ken Double played the gala inaugural concert on the 3/12 Page to a sold-out enthusiastic crowd of Anderson citizens, elated that their long-enjoyed Page organ was playing again. The following month, Clark Wilson was presented on the organ at the 1997 ATOS Annual Convention.

Since then, the Page has been used for weddings, symphony programs, gospel programs and an annual theatre organ concert series, featuring the wealth of musical talent available from around the country and the world. The organ is often played by George Smith who has become known as the Paramount house organist and is a favorite of the Anderson community. Just recently, Ken Double recorded a compact disc on the Page that will be available in time for the 2001 ATOS Annual Convention. Ron Rhode is scheduled to play the Paramount Page organ for the convention on Tuesday morning, August 21, 2001.

In its 72 years of life, there were a few times when the future seemed very dim for the Paramount and its Page organ, and fears of a sad demise were well-grounded. But, each time concerned people stepped forward and refused to let this happen. The organ and the theatre have long been a valued part of the community, and many have worked very hard over the years to keep the organ playing and the theatre in operation.

Its future looks bright once again, thanks to the Paramount Heritage Foundation, the efforts of Executive Director Donald J. Volk and supportive audiences of a wide variety of programming. Let us all hope that the lives of this beautiful theatre and its lovely organ continue on for many, many years to come! ■

PARAMOUNT 3/12 GRANDE PAGE THEATRE PIPE ORGAN

MAIN CHAMBER

16'	Concert Flute	101 notes
16'	Diapason (Sousaphone)	85 notes
16'	Tuba	73 notes
8'	Clarinet*	61 notes
8'	Viol d' Orchestra	85 notes
8'	Viol Celeste*	61 notes
	Chrysoglott/ Vibraphone	49 notes (Exposed above Main Chamber)
	Marimba Harp*	49 notes (MIDI)
	Piano*	85 notes (7' Yamaha Grand piano on stage)

Toy Counters:

(A) Bass Drum, Chinese Gong, Gong Roll, Triangle, Tap Cymbal, Crash Cymbal.

(B) Snare drum, Jazz Drum, Shuffle Drum, Tambourine, Castanets, Chinese Tom-tom, Wood Block, Fire Gong, Train Whistle, Jazz Cymbal.

SOLO CHAMBER

16'	Tibia Clausa	97 notes
8'	Vox Humana	73 notes
8'	Kinura (Krum-Kin)	61 notes
8'	Orchestral Oboe*	61 notes
8'	Trumpet*	61 notes
8'	Post Horn*	61 pipes
	Xylophone	37 notes
	Glockenspiel	30 notes
	Chimes	13 notes

Toy Counters:

Surf and Wave, Door Bell, Acme Siren, Siren, Klaxon Horn, Sleighbells, Bird Whistle.

*Additions

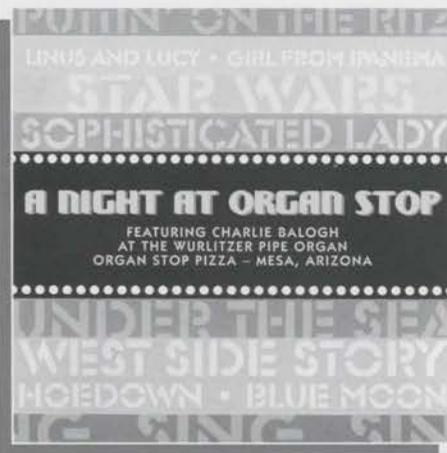
For the Records

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

A NIGHT AT ORGAN STOP

Charlie Balogh



“Something old, something new, something bold, something blue. An appropriate description of the music contained on my fourth album. It’s a multifaceted sample of what one is likely to hear during any evening’s performance.” That’s the opening paragraph from Charlie’s liner notes for his newest CD on the splendid 4/74+ Wurlitzer in Mesa, Arizona’s increasingly popular Organ Stop Pizzeria! While this is, indeed, Charlie’s fourth CD at Mesa, it is actually his seventh album since he was introduced to ATOS audiences at the 1976 Philadelphia Convention playing Trenton’s War Memorial Möller. In fact we’ve followed Charlie’s career since writing a review (*Console Magazine*, August 1983) of his second LP, *We’ve Got Rhythm*, which was one of three albums he made at Grand Rapids, Michigan’s Roaring 20s (Good Time Charley’s) restaurant prior to returning to Arizona where his professional career began in 1973!

And (to quote from our review of Charlie’s *By Request* in the *Journal*, March, 1999) “Because the title implies it might be all kiddies’ tunes, we’ll state right now, it isn’t! Sophisticated adult’s favorites is more like it.” Once again we

want to add that with Charlie’s musical good taste and exceptional talent he has developed his own enjoyable style of registering and arranging his music and wonderfully conveys the sheer joy he’s having at the massive Mesa console. Proving that statement is Charlie’s opening number, one of Irving Berlin’s choicest and cheeriest, “Puttin’ on the Ritz.” Originally written as the title song for a 1930 film musical starring Harry Richmond, its lyrics then were an invitation to view the Harlem swells strutting on Lennox Avenue. Most of us will better remember this number from Fred Astair’s 1946 film *Blue Skies* with Berlin’s completely revised lyrics to suggest visiting Park Avenue “where millionaires walk with sticks/Or um-ber-re-las in their mitts.”

For his next number Charlie switches from Berlin’s blazing *Blue Skies* to a cool, gently swinging arrangement of Rodgers and Hart’s “Blue Moon.” It’s Charlie at his Big Band Best! From the Alan Menken Oscar winning score (and Emmy winning soundtrack) for Disney’s *The Little Mermaid* we next hear “Under the Sea” with all the drums and assorted clackers (including the rare Wurlitzer tuned timpani) that make it sound like a calypso parade dancing down Canal Street at Mardi Gras! In contrast is a silky smooth version of the Duke Ellington harmonic masterpiece “Sophisticated Lady” which features a brief piano solo and what sounds like an unusually robust untremmed Style D Trumpet. Although the tune list credits it to “Duchess,” Charlie’s next melody is Antonio Carlos Jobim’s most popular bossa nova “The Girl From Ipanema.” Jobim described bossa nova as like a samba with a bump in it and his songs were so popular in 1967 that only the Beatles outsold him in the record shops (and this tune was the Number One hit in 1964!)

Composer (and former jazz pianist) Vince Guaraldi wrote some songs for the

1969 film *A Boy Named Charlie Brown* and also wrote most of the scores for the Peanuts Specials on TV. (It should be noted, however, that Clark Gesner composed the music for the stage productions *Snoopy* and *You’re A Good Man Charlie Brown*.) Charlie’s tribute to the well-loved comic strip is full of youthful joy as he salutes “Linus and Lucy” with drums and cymbals, and a bit of Hammond-izing we haven’t heard from this organ before! To introduce the next title, we’ll quote from Charlie’s interesting liner notes: “‘Hello Again’ is from Neil Diamond’s score for a remake of the film, *The Jazz Singer* . . . The opening of this arrangement showcases the magnificent strings and Vox Humana choruses in the Organ Stop Wurlitzer, which total 25 ranks. I don’t know of any other theatre organ in which these particular sounds work as well as they do here.”

Probably the most dramatic movie music ever written are the scores John Williams has composed for the *Star Wars* series. Charlie has assembled an earthshaking 11-minute medley, which features a few of the outstanding themes Williams has composed for each of those unbelievably popular George Lucas films! It’s a W-O-W! Going from the loudest to one of the most exquisitely delicate of film themes Charlie plays the quietly enchanting “When You Wish Upon a Star” which is followed by a nine-minute medley of Leonard Bernstein’s “Tonight,” “America,” and “Maria” from *West Side Story*. In his next number Charlie features, as he does on several other selections, the rather amazing automatic rhythm machine on the Mesa organ. We’re not sure if all the drum work is from the rhythm unit, is hand keyed by Charlie, or if he has a live drummer helping out—but—“Sing, Sing, Sing” hasn’t been so thrillingly spectacular since Goodman and Krupa played it in Carnegie Hall!

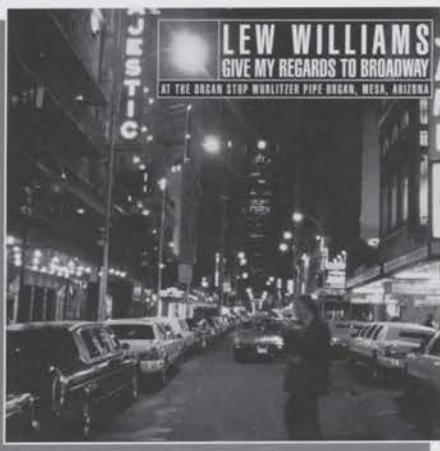
Ray Henderson and Rudy Vallee collaborated on the next to closing ballad.

"Deep Night" is a peaceful delight with just the touch of a Latin beat. For his final selection Charlie takes full advantage of everything the Mesa organ can offer for a rip-roaring "Hoedown." This is the fourth movement of Aaron Copland's *Rodeo*, a ballet he wrote for Agnes DeMille's Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo in 1942. However, Charlie's version is based on rock organist Keith Emerson's much more rowdy arrangement of the original and, as Charlie's notes state, "The Wurlitzer's rhythm section should win an award after this dynamic performance!"

This 69-minute CD once again captures quite accurately the organ as it sounds live on a typical 'Night at Organ Stop' (minus, of course, the typical full-house crowd noise.) But, go ahead and order a pizza, grab a beer and then just sit back and enjoy all the music for this disc is Highly Recommended in every way! CD only for \$20.00 postpaid from Organ Stop Recordings, 1149 East Southern Avenue, Mesa, AZ 85204. You can charge it to most credit cards and place your order either by FAX to 480/813-5700 Fax 222 or on their website at www.organstoppizza.com.

GIVE MY REGARDS TO BROADWAY

Lew Williams



Sharing the spotlight and console with Charlie Balogh at the Mesa Organ Stop's magnificent 4/74+ Wurlitzer is Lew Williams who has been a featured organist there since way back in 1979! As both artists' new recordings were released at the same time, we'll say right up front that they are equally enjoyable! Of course, there are some interesting contrasts in their selections, registrations

and arrangements, so we find the two discs wonderfully compliment (rather than duplicate) each other. Since Lew's CD title could be misinterpreted, we'll quote from his excellent liner notes.

"Give My Regards to Broadway . . . and not only Broadway, but Hollywood and points in between as well. This collection of music presents a cross-section of some of the most popular music of the 20th Century, as well as a few personal favorites thrown in . . . it was decided to present each of the more recognizable pieces as they were first heard, rather than stylizing them in my own way. In doing so, much of their original character could be transferred directly to the organ."

Lew opens his 69-minute program with the album's title tune. One of George M. Cohan's best known songs, it's from 1904's *Little Johnny Jones* which featured Cohan in the title role of an American jockey riding in the English Derby. After being accused of throwing the race, he's left standing alone on the dock as his friends, who are trying to prove his innocence, sail for home. A rocket is fired from the ship to signal they've proved his innocence, and, as one reviewer wrote, ". . . Jones goes into an exuberant rendering of (this song making it) one of the most memorable sequences in musical comedy history." Lew's arrangement completely captures the thrill of the original just as Joel Gray did in the Broadway musical *George M* and James Cagney did in the Oscar winning film *Yankee Doodle Dandy*.

From another classic Hollywood musical Lew recreates Gene Kelly's memorable title tune splash-dance in 1952's *Singin' in the Rain*. Despite the down-pour, both the film's score and Lew's version are filled with light-hearted musical sunshine. From rain clouds to star shine, Lew presents Hoagy Carmichael's biggest hit, "Star Dust," with a smooth, mellow Gordon Jenkins treatment. Jumping backwards a couple of decades is a Gay 90s-flavored version of "Take Me Out to the Ballgame." Jack Norworth wrote the familiar lyrics and it's composer, Albert Von Tilzer (with over 3,000 songs to his credit!) once said, ". . . nothing is too simple for the popular song." He should know for this waltz(!) soon will be 100 years old and it's impossible to imagine any baseball game being

played anywhere without hearing it!

One of Hollywood's finest composers, Maurice Jarre, wrote the Oscar winning score for 1965's poignant love story *Doctor Zhivago* (based on the smuggled-out-of-Russia but Nobel Prize winning novel by Boris Pasternack). Lew has beautifully transcribed the lilting waltz "Lara's Theme" which, with Paul Francis Webster's lyrics, became "Somewhere My Love"—a Top 10 hit for the Ray Coniff Singers. A quite different hit tune follows. It's Sy Oliver's "Opus No. One" and Lew gives us a sparkling organ transcription of Tommy Dorsey's 1944 recording. It's hard to believe, but true, that a previously unpublished George Gershwin composition finally came to light 30 years after his death. In 1919 (about the same time he wrote "Swanee") he also composed a string quartet aptly titled "Lullaby." The Julliard Quartet debuted it in Washington, DC in December 1967. As Lew's liner notes tell us, "This 'charming and kind' music (Ira Gershwin's description) shows off some of the quieter organ voices not normally heard during a busy evening."

It's a complete about-face for the rousing Andrews Sister's hit "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" which they introduced in the 1941 Abbott and Costello film *Buck Privates*; and reprised just two years later in the film *Swingtime Johnny!* From Andrew Lloyd Webber's real life rags-to-riches "opera"—*Evita*—Lew plays the powerfully dramatic "Don't Cry for Me, Argentina" and follows that with Glenn Miller's classic Big Band arrangement of "Little Brown Jug." Talk about variety in a program! Next is an enchanted sampling from John Barry's score for the rather unusual time-travel (from 1980 back to 1912) film *Some-where in Time*. Lew incorporates Barry's title melody with Rachmaninoff's "18th Variation on a Theme by Paganini" just as it was used in the film. (In an odd Hollywood boo-boo, the Rachmaninoff theme is heard played by a 1912 music box although the *Variations* weren't composed until 1934!)

It's time to cut another rug with Lew's killer diller Big Band arrangement of "Stomping at the Savoy" which was introduced by Chick Webb's band during their 1934 engagement at Harlem's famous Savoy Ballroom. A 17-year old Ella Fitzgerald got her first job when

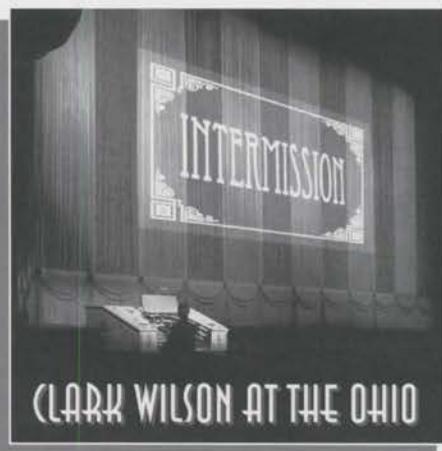
Webb hired her as his singer; and, following Webb's death in 1939, she led his band for two years before breaking it up to go solo! Next to closing is possibly the most loved piece of music ever written by a theatre organist. It's Albert Hay Malotte's inspired setting of "The Lord's Prayer" which was introduced by John Charles Thomas in 1935. Malotte is in the ATOS Hall of Fame (having been a featured organist for the major Chicago and Los Angeles theatres during the 1920s) although he achieved even greater renown after turning to film scoring when talkies arrived!

For his grand finale Lew presents a splendid 16-minute medley from Rodgers and Hammerstein's beloved *Sound of Music*. Lew presents his eight selections in the original Robert Russell Bennett orchestrations for the 1959 Broadway production! Mary Martin (and her husband Richard Halliday) commissioned this musical, were major investors in the show, and initially envisioned it as a play featuring some of the folk songs the Trapp Family performed in their worldwide concert tours plus one or two new tunes from R&H! Fortunately they finally agreed to have Rodgers and Hammerstein write an entirely new score. In the order played, Lew presents the title tune, "My Favorite Things," "Do-Re-Mi," "Lonely Goatherd," "(How Do You Solve a Problem Like) Maria," "Sixteen Going on Seventeen," "Edelweiss," and, for a glorious finale, "Climb Ev'ry Mountain."

As Lew's liner notes state, it's a wonderfully varied program, which beautifully transcribes original orchestrations from almost every decade of the 20th Century! The recording is superb and the album well deserves our Highest Recommendation! Compact disc only for \$20.00 postpaid from Organ Stop Recordings, 1149 East Southern Avenue, Mesa, AZ 85204. You can charge it to most credit cards and place your order by FAX to 480/813-5700 Fax 222 or on their website at www.organstoppizza.com.

INTERMISSION AT THE OHIO

Clark Wilson



The Ohio Theatre, located directly across the street from the state capitol in Columbus, is certainly one of the most magnificent of our few remaining 1920s

Movie Palaces! Since its complete restoration in the early 1970s it has been registered as a National Historical Landmark and, in 1978, was named the "Official Theatre of the State of Ohio." Surely the crowning glory of this 3,000-seat, Thomas Lamb designed Spanish-Moorish-Baroque treasure is its original installation Robert-Morton! The Ohio opened with Henry Murtagh at the Morton on March 17, 1928—and the organ was a featured part of the entertainment until the war intervened.

Members of the ATOS Central Ohio Chapter spearheaded the Morton's revival in the mid-1960s but, shortly after its reopening concert in 1969, the Ohio was threatened with demolition! Fortunately a community organization, the Columbus Association for the Performing Arts, quickly came to its rescue. Soon complete restoration of the theatre and its organ was underway. And, it's worth noting that, in the early 1970s, BOTH its original featured organist, Bill Dalton (from 1928 to 1932) and his successor, Roger Garrett (1932–1942) returned to the console for concerts and to make several stereo LP recordings which were issued as Concert Records CR-0024, 0141 and 0142!

A Summer Movie Series was begun in the early 1970s and Dennis James was often featured at the Morton between 1975 and 1990 during which time he released four stereo LPs (DJP 103, 104, 106 and 107). In the past decade Clark

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Wilson, the only individual to receive both the Technician of the Year and Organist of the Year awards from ATOS, has been associated with the Ohio's Morton and Movie Series. His *Live From the Ohio* digital cassette was reviewed in the Journal, July 1994. Also, in recent years, the organ has been enlarged to a 4/34! Clark's excellent, and unusually detailed, liner notes tell us "... no part of the core of the organ has been changed ... it's a rare case where the historian can hear precisely what the builder intended... The recent pipework additions have consisted almost entirely of quiet Morton church voices to allow for softer playing... The only exceptions are the second Tibia Clausa and a sassy, bright Krumet in the right chamber. Both of these stops are in keeping with what Morton provided on slightly bigger instruments..."

This 68-minute CD features Clark playing some of the music he has used for his overtures, intermissions and "house-outs" at the Ohio during the past nine years. His notes tell us "... I look first for any music featured in the films, then anything that might be associated with the plot, characters and stars, time frame of the picture or what was on the hit parade the year the film came out..." Thus his CD contains a rich variety of entertaining music starting with the quite appropriate, cheerful console raiser, "Hooray for Hollywood." Written for Warner Brothers' 1938 film *Hollywood*

Hotel, surprisingly it's not sung first by the star, Dick Powell, but by Johnny "Scat" Davis and Frances Langford (accompanied by Benny Goodman's orchestra) while they are driving to the St. Louis airport—to say "good bye" to their friend, Hollywood-bound Dick Powell!

That great opener beautifully showcases the rich, robust, resonate resources of the Morton in this wonderfully alive room, as does the theatre's Signature Tune, the lush, graceful waltz "Beautiful Ohio." Clark's first medley, a Cole Porter *Collection*, has three of the composer's best-known songs. "It's De-Lovely," in Ashley Miller's inimitable upbeat arrangement, is first. Then comes the seductive "In the Still of the Night," which West Point cadet Nelson Eddy sang to Eleanor Powell, a Princess from the mythical country of Romanza, in the 1937 film version of the operetta *Rosalie*. Porter excelled at writing "laundry list" songs, and one of his best was "You're the Top" which, in its seven refrains, includes such intriguing rhymes as "You're a dress from Saks's/You're next year's taxes" and "You're a Botticelli/You're Keats, You're Shelley."

1974's top hit tune is next—it's the title song Marvin Hamlisch wrote for the dramatic, but nonmusical, Barbara Streisand/Robert Redford film *The Way We Were*. At the Academy Awards for that year Hamlisch became the first composer to win three Oscars in one night; this film had the Best Song and

Best Original Score, while *The Sting* won for Best Adapted Score! Isn't George Wright the only theatre organist ever to record Clark's next tune? It's wild man "Slim" Gaillard's twisted syntax, mongrel vernacular delight—"Flat Foot Floogie." Clark tells us he used this when *Arsenic and Old Lace* was the Ohio's feature film! Ralph Rainger wrote about 200 songs for 65 films but none became a bigger hit than his engaging, danceable "Please" which Bing Crosby introduced in his first feature film, 1932's *Big Broadcast*. Note the distinctive silver-tipped Tibias in the second chorus.

Clark's second medley is from the show some music critics loved to hate! However, as its star Mary Martin said "Sound of Music was a triumph of audience over critics." Since the Broadway opening in 1959 (which had an advance sale of over \$2 million!) it has been licensed for performance by more than 17,500 stock and amateur productions. The 1965 film starring Julie Andrews now has a worldwide gross of almost \$300 million (it cost but \$8 million to make!) and is estimated to have been seen by at least 1 billion people! Critic Richard Watts sums up its appeal as being "warm-hearted, unashamedly sentimental and filled with a strangely gentle charm that is wonderfully endearing." Clark's 13-minute medley features pure theatre organ arrangements of the title tune, "The Lonely Goatherd," "Edelweiss," "Do Re Mi," the wedding



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scene music (which is rather classical, churchy variations on "How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria?") and "Climb Ev'ry Mountain."

From the first musical score ever written specifically for the movies (the Oscar winning *Broadway Melody of 1929*) is another smooth old-time favorite—"You Were Meant for Me." The registrations and arrangement superbly capture the misty musical marching of Leroy Anderson's "Phantom Regiment" and Clark then features some of the Morton's most delicate solo voices on "Love's Old Sweet Song." Quasi-Oriental, with a touch of ricky-tick, is that rarely played old charmer "Moonlight on the Ganges." Victor Herbert's exquisite melody "Ah, Sweet Mystery of Life" was written for the 1910 Broadway operetta *Naughty Marietta* but, surprisingly, it isn't listed in that show's program! Although fragments of the music are heard throughout the operetta, it wasn't sung completely until the end, so the first programs simply listed it as the "Finale."

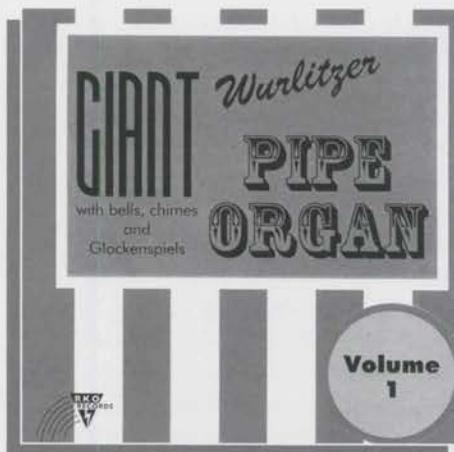
About this next to closing tune, "Oceana Roll," Clark's liner notes tell us "In Chaplin's masterpiece *The Gold Rush*, there's the famous roll dance scene and the title card mentions "The Oceana Roll" by name. It seems only right that the piece find a place on the program; there are two fast choruses of it here that give the new Krumet and the Xylophone and Wood Block a solid workout!" For the Ohio's showing of Kirk Douglas' 1960 blockbuster film *Spartacus* Clark prepared a faithful *tour de force* transcription of the "Entrance and Procession of Bacchus." In 1876 French composer Leo Delibes wrote this stirring, martial music for the ballet *Sylvia*. Although the story was based on ancient Greek gods and goddesses, Delibes score is best described as "... a model of French music." And it's an appropriate, thrilling finale for a visit to the beautiful Ohio Theatre!

Leo Klise's excellent balcony center recording (with mastering by Dick Clay) presents the Morton organ in all its majestic glory. Clark's programming and arrangements capture all the excitement of movie going as it used to be—and as it should be! Add to that the attractive packaging and complete liner notes and it certainly merits our Very Highest Recommendation! Compact disc only for \$20.00 postpaid. Make checks payable to

Clark Wilson Concert Productions, 1029 Ambrose Avenue, East Liverpool, OH 43920.

GIANT WURLITZER PIPE ORGAN—VOL. 1

Leon Berry



Here's a real "Blast from the Past!" It's Chicago's roller rink organist *par excellence* Leon Berry playing his residence organ. Affectionately known as The Beast in the Basement, it should not be confused with the equally famous Gorilla in the Garden, which is a completely different organ although, in the late 1950s, Replica Records issued LPs of each organ under those names. This brand new CD is a reissue of the Audio Fidelity LP (AFSD 5905), which came out in 1961. Although Leon was a featured performer at most of the Chicago ATOS Conventions, and his early recordings certainly helped popularize theatre organs and high fidelity equipment in the Midwest, his organ playing career began about 1930 at the Wilby Theatre's 2/6 Robert-Morton in his home town, Selma, Alabama.

In 1936 he moved to Chicago to work for the new Hammond Organ Company and was soon playing a Hammond in the Arcadia Roller Rink. Following his military service in WW2 Leon played for dancing at the Trianon Ballroom (at 63rd and Cottage Grove on Chicago's South Side) which had a 3/11 Wurlitzer (Opus 1137) installed in 1946. When the Hub Roller Rink opened in 1950 (see the review of Vol. 2 in this issue) Berry became their regular organist for the next 18 years. In 1955 he bought Wurlitzer Opus 2050 (a 2/4, Style 140) out of the El Tovar (Lake) Theatre in Crystal Lake, Illinois and moved it into

the basement of his home in the Chicago suburb of Norwood Park. Leon enlarged it to seven ranks by the time this recording was made and the original LP liner notes state "... it occupies the entire (basement) which is only 34 by 24 feet and seven and a half feet high."

Most of Leon's recordings for Audio Fidelity (both on his own Beast and on the Hub Rink's slightly larger organ) were issued under the "Giant Wurlitzer, etc." title. Certainly, while neither instrument qualifies for the "Giant Wurlitzer" label by today's standards, the close-up, wide range, high fidelity of the original recordings was so excellent they were used by Zenith to demonstrate their audio equipment! Surprisingly, although Leon has at least 14 LPs to his credit, the only one ever reviewed in the Journal was *Leon Tames the Lion* (December, 1972) and that recording was made after the organ had been moved to the basement of Leon's later home in Park Ridge, Illinois.

However, reviewer Stu Green's comments about the recording and playing style apply equally well to this album: "The microphone must have been strapped to the beast's adenoids. The recorded tonal range (is) exceptionally wide and many a woofer and tweeter (are) titillated by Leon's cymbals, orchestral bells, booming bass drum, rasping Posthorn, castanets and tambourine ... all the percussive excitement of the Chicago rink style Leon originated is displayed on this recording ... Summary: This one will please the army of Leon Berry fans everywhere." To which we need only add that Leon frequently uses the snare drum in his left-hand accompaniment and occasionally favors the reiterating tuned percussions for the melody line!

This CD is an exact copy of the original LP with the 12 tunes running just over 32-minutes. (And the CD liner notes are almost as vague as those on the original jacket.) This disc was recorded digitally, not from a tape, but by playing a mint condition copy of an LP! An A-B comparison with our own original LP demonstrates it is a superb copy of the original and does not have any of the shrillness sometimes associated with an analog to digital recording. Leon was 82 years old when he died in 1996 and today his beloved Beast is still in the basement of the Park Ridge home.

"Marche Aux Flambeau" (literally translated as "Torchlight March") is the spirited opening number and has a carousel flavor but with a bit of tricky fingering here and there. "Meet Mr. Calahan" is cheerfully bright and shows off a few solo voices between the reiterating percussions. Leon's version of 1903's "Waltzing Matilda" has an opening chorus that's more like a march than a waltz, a polka-flavored second chorus, and, with a change in tempo, a third chorus featuring bagpipes. A softer, more delicate tune is next—from 1947, it's Jack Lawrence's dance band favorite, "Linda." On the tune list next is "Off We Go Into the Wild Blue Yonder" which, of course, is better known as the "Song of the Army Air Corps."

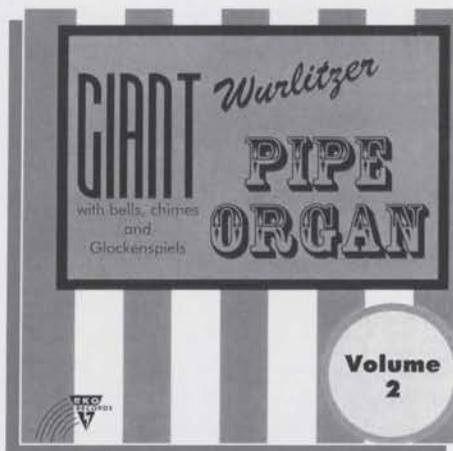
"It started in Scranton/It's now number one" is the opening line of that old favorite "Pennsylvania Polka" and was one of the Andrews Sisters' biggest hits. "Cartas Marcades" is a rather fast Latin-like waltz while Eliseo Grenet and F. Wolfe Gilbert's "Mama Inez" sports an unusually buzzy pedal—probably the Kinura that the CD's liner notes quite accurately describe as a tuned Bronx cheer. "Serenade of the Bells" isn't the least bit churchy but does feature the organ's chimes. "Honey Song" is a cute, cuddly, cheerful composition—until the snare drum once again intrudes. The album closes with what is probably the first choo-choo number ever written—Traditional's "I've Been Working on the Railroad"—and a tune credited to Johnny Mercer, the politely raunchy "Strip Polka."

Stu Green's summary says it all—"It's fun music!" And it has a surprising number of tunes no one else has ever recorded! But most importantly, if you're a dyed-in-the-wool Leon Berry fan, or devotee of the Chicago Roller Rink style

of playing, this album's for you! This CD is on the RKO/Unique label (CD #1043) and it should be available from major record retailers for about \$11.99. Or you can check the label's web site and place orders at www.rkounique.com.

GIANT WURLITZER PIPE ORGAN—VOL. 2

Leon Berry



The "Giant Wurlitzer" that Leon plays on this CD is Chicago's famous Hub (later Axle) Rink organ. It's Opus 2165, one of the very few Wurlitzers designed specifically for roller rink playing. Originally a two manual Special (with 8 ranks on 20" wind pressure!) it was built for Chicago's Madison Garden Roller Rink in 1931 and played there until that rink closed in 1948. But it wasn't silent for long as just two years later it reopened in the Hub Rink where Leon presided at its console for the next 18 years. Since the Hub was about twice the size of the Madison Garden, substantial changes in the organ had to be made as Leon described in an article he wrote for the *Journal* (March, 1984).

Briefly recapped, that article said that some added parts and pipework came

from Opus 1655 in Chicago's Rena (Lawndale) Theatre and additional parts, pipework and the three manual console were added from Opus 1950 in Buffalo, New York's Bailey Avenue Theatre. The percussions were placed outside the chambers and the wind pressures were increased on some of the ranks. This recording was originally released as an LP by Audio Fidelity (AFLP 1829) in 1957. That album's liner notes indicate it was then a 3/12 and proudly states that the organ is "...one of the most brilliant theatre installations in the world."

When Leon left in 1968 he was immediately replaced by Fred Arnish who presided at the console until the organ was removed in 1985. The Hub was renamed Axle in 1970, more additions and changes to the organ were made, and the organ became known as the "Arnishlitzer." In its Hub/Axle years it was a featured organ for several Chicago ATOS Conventions. As a 3/15 it was billed to be heard at the 1985 Convention, but that was not to be. Arnish released at least one recording on the organ (*Freddy*, a one-hour cassette, LP-1302). Since the organ's removal some of the added ranks and parts have been sold, but the unique original Madison Garden Rink organ is today intact and in storage at Minnesota's Century Pipe Organ Company.

Like the above Leon Berry disc, this is an exact copy of the original Audio Fidelity LP with 12 selections totaling just over 35 minutes. Leon opens with a rum-de-tum version of Leroy Anderson's rather mixed-up "Syncopated Clock." The listener will be immediately aware that, even though it is recorded fairly close to chambers that have high-pressure pipework, there is enough room sound to smooth it out for very enjoyable listening. The Tibias, some lovely solo

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combinations and a tasteful use of tuned percussions are highlights of Leon's first ballad, "Save the Last Waltz for Me." It's back to the snare drums for a bold and brassy "Tango of the Drums" which is followed by two more ballads. Number one is Harry Warren's first big hit, a sultry "Boulevard of Broken Dreams," which Constance Bennett sang in the 1934 film *Moulin Rouge*. The second is Richard Rodger's enchanting "No Other Love" (which was originally written for the TV series *Victory at Sea* as "Under the Southern Cross" but reappeared in 1957's Broadway musical *Me and Juliet* with its more familiar title).

For a sample of really raucous roller skate music Leon next plays the Gene Austin, James Johnson tune "I Hear You Knockin' (But You Can't Come In)" they wrote for Mae West's 1936 film *Klondike Annie*. A zippy *College Medley* of football fight-song favorites is followed by the nostalgic waltz "Three O'Clock in the Morning." In researching the next tune we were astonished to find that it is probably the first tune "Fats" Waller wrote! He was just 15 in 1919 (and touring as a vaudeville

pianist) when he composed an instrumental piece he titled "Boston Blues." In 1925 Clarence Williams wrote the lyrics and it became that saucy hit tune "Squeeze Me."

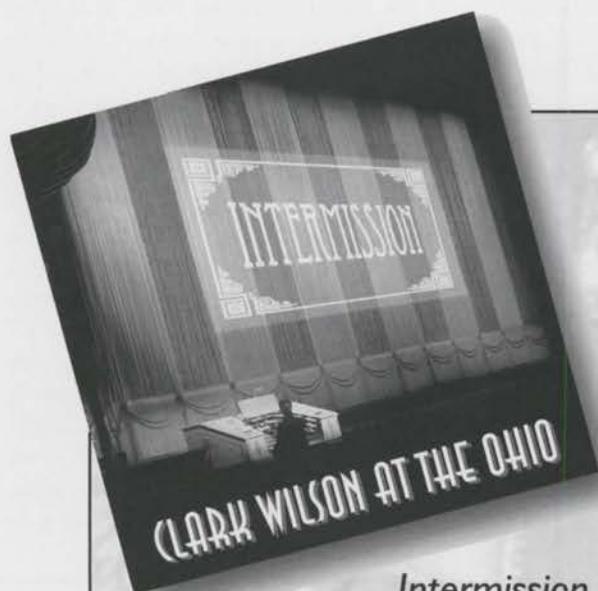
A cute, but rather slow and methodical "Night Wind" is followed by a surprisingly brief arrangement of the lovely waltz "Beautiful Ohio." Closing the disc is one of the five songs Richard Whiting wrote for Paramount's first sound musical—1929's *Innocents of Paris*—which was also Maurice Chevalier's American feature-film debut. Everyone thought the story was so trite and dull the film would be a guaranteed flop. But one of Whiting's songs turned it into a smash hit and that number became Chevalier's theme for the rest of his lengthy career—of course, it's "Louise." Ah, the power of one good song!

Since both these Leon Berry CDs were recorded from the original LPs—not from tapes—sharp ears will detect an occasional pop or tick but the original LPs were so well recorded in full-range sound that both these discs compare quite favorably with today's digital recordings! Thanks are due Robert Jack-

son for bringing these albums to our attention and to Terry Kleven and Jim Stemke for their valuable assistance in preparing these reviews. For information about obtaining copies of this disc (RKO-Unique #1044) see the above review.

A CORRECTION AND APOLOGY

In our review of *Rob Richards at the Milhous Museum* CD in the January issue we wrote that some readers might know "Doll Dance" by the title "Wedding of the Painted Doll." To our chagrin this is NOT one of those rare cases where a melody is known by two different titles. These two tunes are different—though somewhat similar. That's not too surprising as Nacio Herb Brown wrote both in the late 1920s! Obviously we should have checked further and apologize for not doing so. Since Brown (who was born Herb Brown Nacio) was a major Hollywood composer and his dozens of wonderful songs are played frequently in theatre organ concerts and on recordings, we thought it might be appropriate



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6. Please (Rainger & Robin) [3:54]
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8. You Were Meant for Me (Brown & Freed) [3:47]
9. Phantom Regiment (Anderson) [4:53]
10. Love's Old Sweet Song (Molloy) [5:01]
11. Moonlight on the Ganges (Myers & Wallace) [2:31]
12. Ah, Sweet Mystery of Life (Herbert) [3:42]
13. The Oceana Roll (Denni) [1:38]
14. Procession of Bacchus (Delibes) [7:37]

to briefly recount some highlights of his interesting life. Brown was born in Deming, New Mexico in 1896, took piano lessons from his mother, and after the family moved to Los Angeles he attended the Musical Arts High School and later started to take a Business Administration course at UCLA. However, he left college to be the pianist for vaudeville singer Alice Doll. After about a year of traveling he returned to Los Angeles, set up a custom-clothing business and became involved in buying Hollywood real estate. But, being a somewhat frustrated musician, in his spare time he started writing songs and often gave a custom-made suit to an orchestra leader who would play one of his tunes. He composed "Doll Dance" in 1927 for the *Hollywood Music Box Review* and that number became a big hit for the Vincent Lopez Orchestra. When M-G-M Studios decided to switch to sound pictures in 1928 he was hired to work with lyricist Arthur Freed on the musical numbers for their 1929 film *Broadway Melody*. One of the six songs they wrote for that early movie musical was "Wed-

ding of the Painted Doll." That same year they also wrote what is probably their best-known composition, "Singing in the Rain," for the film *Hollywood Review*. In the next decade their songs were sung in more than 40 films. When Arthur Freed became a major producer for M-G-M in the late 1930s their partnership ended and for a time Brown lived in Mexico, but he continued to write songs with other lyricists until the end of the 1940s. In 1952, when M-G-M decided to film a lighthearted, slightly satirical story about Hollywood's conversion from silents to talkies, they titled it *Singing in the Rain*. That wonderful film starred Gene Kelly, Debbie Reynolds, Cyd Charisse and Donald O'Connor and featured 11 great Freed-Brown compositions from their film library (plus two from other composers) and Brown and Freed wrote one new number—Donald O'Connor's show stopping "Make 'Em Laugh." In fact, of the film's 103 minute running time, 60 minutes are devoted to their music! Gene Kelly's water-soaked dance to the title song caused one critic to write that this film is "... an undoubt-

ed masterpiece and the finest, most durable musical ever to come out of Hollywood." Nacio Herb Brown died in 1964 but his wonderful melodies live on. Thanks to Rob Richards for pointing out our song title error and to Lew Williams for assistance in preparing this brief biography of Nacio Herb Brown. 🎵

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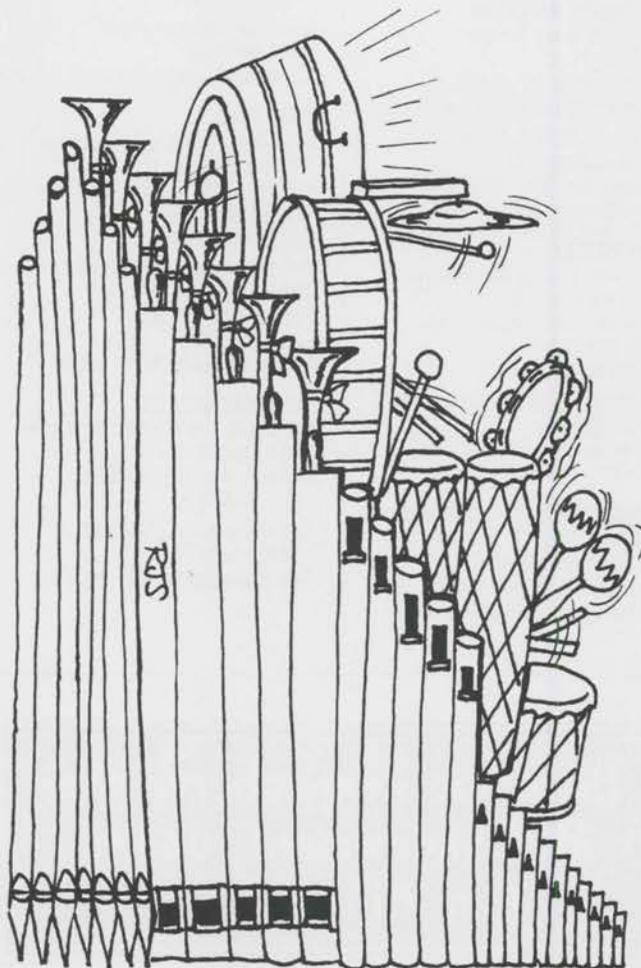
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Our History—Our Heritage

Gems From THEATRE ORGAN 40 Years Ago

Editor's Note: The following article was published in THEATRE ORGAN, Volume 3, Number 1, Spring 1961. It is reported that the former Simonton Wurlitzer is now installed in the Jack and Mildred Hardman Residence, Great Falls, Virginia.

|| ORGAN MUSIC || ON TOLUCA LAKE

By Douglas Marion

Dick Simonton's Wurlitzer 4/36



The approach to the home is along a tree-lined street of quiet beauty. Unless you knew, you would be unaware of the nearby lake as you turned into the circular driveway. Your first impression would indicate a shake-roof western style home of average proportions. But if you examine it closely, you will note that an architect has here created an impression of quiet simplicity and unassuming beauty that does not quite overcome the feeling of expectancy and excitement you somehow seem to be feeling. For here is the North Hollywood home of Dick and Helena Simonton and their four children.

As your host leads you through the foyer with its Peter Pan fountain, you approach a large sloped-ceiling living room, where your attention is immediately drawn to a four manual draw-knob console, the business end of the 65 rank Aeolian-Skinner concert organ installed at the end of the room. To your left, as you turn for a closer look and just above a door to the patio, is an eight rank Positiv division, with exposed pipework in a symmetrical arrangement.

At the end of a short hall, past the den, you turn down a circular staircase, lighted by a domed sky-light. At the bottom, a door is opened, and immediately in front of you across the room reposes a gleaming black 4 manual console — Wurlitzer! Later, you can't seem to remember crossing the room, but you can remember the row-upon-row of stop tablets! It is impossible not to be completely awestruck as you feast your eyes on the hundreds of stops, with everything inscribed on them that you ever dreamed of, and many more you may

never have seen before. You find yourself reading stops so fast, you can't really digest those you just passed over!

After the first shock wave has hit you, you do begin to realize that you are in a tastefully decorated theatre auditorium. On your right is the stage with a red and white striped french curtain, and softly upholstered theatre seats in a soft grey extend back toward a projection room. In addition to the arc-light projector there are installed complete stereo recorders, play-back equipment, and a small but efficient work bench with several interest-whetting projects scattered about.

Then, as if drawn by a magnet too powerful to resist, you are back at that big, black, beautiful console. As if from afar, you hear someone say, "Well, lets turn it on" — and it takes on the breath of life. "Go ahead — try it!!!!" — Where do you start??? you find yourself wondering

How DID this all start?

Back in 1926, Dick Simonton was a young boy living in Seattle. He was attracted to the theatre organ when about 10, and spent many an hour in the theatres watching the organists turn out the sigh and sob music for the silents of the day. He studied piano for a couple of years, and finally found a job with a local organ installation and rebuilding concern. In those days, a Style D Wurlitzer could be had for a thousand bucks! But who had a thousand? He worked after school and on vacations at the rate of \$5.00 for a 60 hour week! He recalls spending HOURS changing stop tab engraving from TIBIA to Stopped Diapason — this to satisfy the organ buying church

committees! (Of course the pipes weren't changed — and many more than should didn't know the difference).

His interests turned to electronics when in high school, and he began working on theatre sound equipment. An electronic bass of 32' and 16' pitch was a device he built during this period, and with a working model he applied for a patent. During all this time, theatre organ music could be heard on records, and over live radio broadcasts. He remembers that his first organ record was Crawford's ROSES OF PICARDY, received on his twelfth birthday. Many hours were enjoyably spent listening to Ann Leaf and Eddie Dunstedter, the latter from KMOX which was picked up by Pacific Northwest stations.

The year 1938 found Simonton in Chicago with the W. W. Kimball Organ Company, where plans were being made to bring out an electric organ. When these plans did not develop, he returned to California, but only after discussing with the factory the building of a pipe organ for his planned-for home. In 1940 he acquired the Muzak franchise for southern California, and formed the company he now owns, Pacific Network, Inc.

En route to New York on his honeymoon in 1943, he stopped off at the Kimball factory and made final arrangements for the purchase of his first pipe organ. The war intervened, and delivery of a two manual seven rank classic type unit organ, was not made until 1945. It was the last organ to be delivered by the Kimball factory.

After much research, and knowing that he wanted a true theatre organ, Simonton arranged for the new home which now contains his two four-

manual organs. In 1952 it was completed, and he no sooner moved in than he and his family left for Europe. Dick had tentatively decided he wanted one organ with two consoles, one to play theatre style, and the other to do the classics. After visiting the Compton Factory in England, and other organs on the continent, he wisely decided that this idea was not what he wanted — it must be two separate organs.

Upon his return, he immediately started planning for both organs as separate projects. His search led him to many theatres and other supposed sources of theatre organs, but he was not long in finding what he wanted and arranging for the purchase. Both organ installations were underway at the same time, and perhaps it is a miracle that the tibias did not end up in the choir division of the concert organ! As a matter of fact, a brief mention of the AEolian-Skinner is in order at this point, even though it must be reserved as a separate story at a later date. As the instrument now stands it is made up of six divisions: -

Pedal - 8 ranks, Choir - 10 ranks, Great - 13 ranks, Swell - 20 ranks, Positiv - 8 ranks, Echo - '6 ranks, (electronic). It is a thoroughly complete American Classic Organ designed after the standards established by the late G. Donald Harrison of the AEolian-Skinner Organ Company. It has been just recently completed with the final tonal finishing of the pipe work by Don Gillespie of Boston, Mass.

The Wurlitzer 4/36 is made up primarily of two organs -- Opus No. 2035 built March 1929 for Paramount Picture Studios, Hollywood. It was originally a 3 manual of 19 ranks designed for recording purposes and was installed on the scoring sound stage. James Nuttal was responsible for the design, installation and tonal regulation. It was used intermittently until 1931 when it was removed, crated and stored. In 1942 it was sold to NBC in San Francisco and installed there. While in the Bay area city it was broadcast by many prominent organists including George Wright, who served as staff organist for a time at the station. It was subsequently removed in 1953 to make room for a TV studio and at that time it was acquired by Simonton.

Installation started almost immediately, and additions to the organ came primarily from Opus No. 1732, a 3/8 Wurlitzer installed by the factory at Treasure Island, San Francisco, for the exposition of 1939-40. Other additions came from Opus No. 170 built for the Coliseum Theatre, Seattle, and from the Hope-Jones Organ built for St. Paul's Cathedral, Buffalo, New York. The four rank Vox Humana Chorus is from the Seattle Coliseum and is installed as an echo organ at the rear of the theatre. It includes a 4' rank, an 8' with 8' celeste, and a 16' rank that actually extends down to 16' C!

For months, as the organs and assemblies were received, the theatre looked like an organ factory store-room without apparent rhyme or reason. One had to gingerly thread his way through the maze of boxes, parts, chests, reservoirs, cable, percussion instruments and the like to get from one end of the room to another. Gradually, however, and with painstaking care the organ was being installed in the two chambers behind the stage. When it was determined that something was amiss, out it came for re-installation based on improved plans. At times it seemed as if the work had stopped; the pile of parts seemed to be growing larger rather than smaller as one might expect. But each part was finally properly located, and the duct-work and wiring were beginning to reach completion.

No great to-do was heard when the blower was first turned on, as there remained the task of leak chasing, pressure regulation, etc. With still much to do, work progressed at a steady pace with every effort directed toward an installation as near technically perfect as possible. Even at this stage, removal of a component part and re-installation was done to make it just right.

The triple-bolster console is an impressive creation which was executed by Bill Bunch using the console shell and combination action and manuals from the St. Paul Cathedral organ. The bolster and combination-pneumatic assembly were fashioned by hand with painstaking emphasis to detail, following closely the measurements and design established by the Wurlitzer factory. It is complete with all new stop tablets, engraved to the exact organ specifications.

As of today, work still is progressing on final details of the organ. Preliminary tonal regulation has been done for the entire organ. Final work is now underway on this phase of the finishing, and even as late as a month or two ago, some re-arrangement was being undertaken to eliminate "bugs" that had shown up in the completed organ.

Those who have not heard the organ would wonder how it might sound. Even many who have heard it, but whose impressions were gained several months ago, might well ask the same question. For much has transpired since then. The organ has many wonderfully soft and lovely combinations available. The Muted String, Quintadena, Dulciana and their celeste ranks make possible some of the most delicate tonal shadings imaginable. On the other hand, the reeds have power and fire to satisfy the whims of the most ardent exponent of the "blast 'em out of their seats" school!

Here has been created a really magnificent theatre organ. Many persons have stopped by to try their hand -- amateurs and professionals alike -- during the various stages of comple-

tion. As of this writing, it is Jesse Crawford who is giving the organ the workout it deserves -- and if ever an organ was built for an organist here is the prime example. What's to come? Just you wait and see!

As you are brought back to the present, and find yourself thoroughly enjoying your surroundings, you cannot help but marvel over the fact that theatre organ enthusiasts are so dead in earnest in their desire to promote and encourage the preservation of the theatre organ. Not as a competitor to their close relative, the concert organ, but as a distinctive musical form in its own right!

In Simonton's home, notable among the activities centering around the theatre with its fine Wurlitzer have been the showing of some of the silent movie classics of several decades ago. With Gaylord Carter doing the interpretive accompaniment at the organ, Dick has shown BEAU GESTE, THE BIG PARADE, etc, to name just a few, to capacity audiences. At the most recent such affair, which was by invitation only, Oliver Wallace was the guest of honor. Wallace is musical director of the Walt Disney Studios, but will perhaps be better remembered for his early-day work with the then new form of theatre instrument introduced in the Pacific Northwest, the Wurlitzer Theatre Organ. It was Wallace who gave Crawford his first insight into the possibilities of the Theatre Organ as an interpretive instrument. For in those early days Crawford was just starting his career as a Theatre organist.

Dick, incidentally, is a member of the Hollywood Film Archives Committee which is planning a multi-million dollar silent film archive near Hollywood Bowl. It is planned to equip the theatre itself with a fine example of the Wurlitzer art in the form of a 3 manual 19 rank late model Wurlitzer. At a recent board meeting, A.T.O.E. pledged itself to assist in this aspect of the Archive to the fullest extent possible.

* * * * *



Positiv division of Simonton's concert organ.

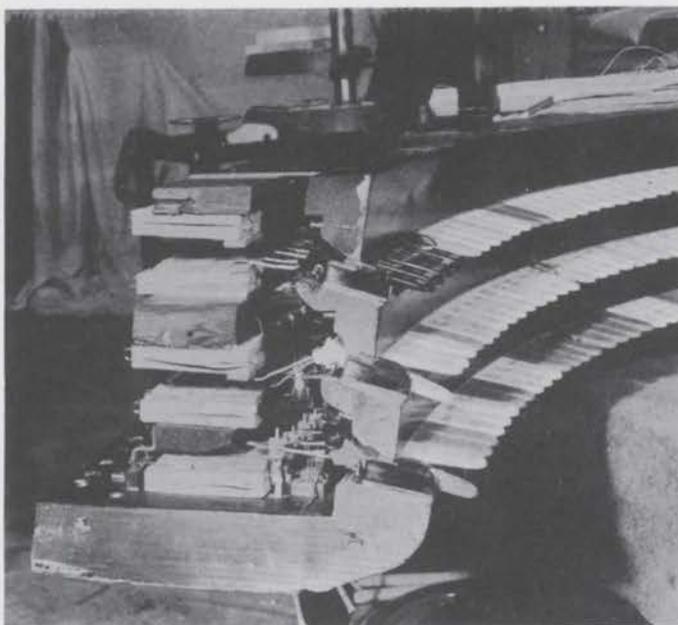
ORGAN MUSIC ON TOLUCA LAKE



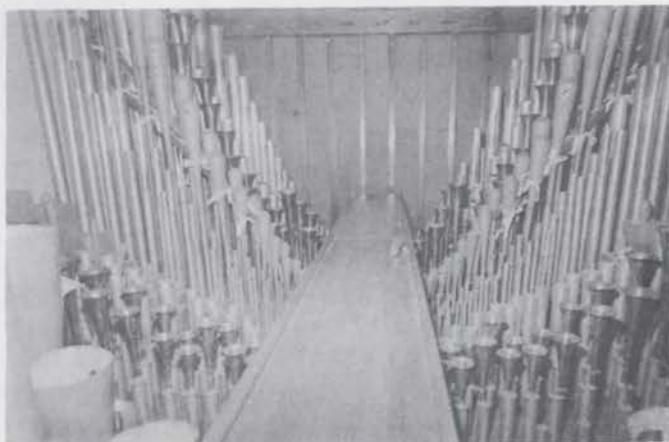
Dick Simonton, past ATOE President, holding very rare vox humana pipe, low C of the 16' octave echo chamber! (ccc)



Oliver Wallace, Dean of Theatre Organists, and Musical Director for Walt Disney productions, shown at the Simonton organ. Photo taken recently when he was guest of honor at a silent picture showing.



Close-up of Bolster showing three tiers of stops and pneumatics, specially built from Wurlitzer plans.



View of solo chamber looking toward the shutters. Main chamber arrangement is identical in layout of manual chests.

Journal of American Organbuilding

Quarterly Publication
of the American Institute
of Organbuilders

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

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

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ORGAN-IZING POPULAR MUSIC

by
AL HERMANN'S

Registration Variety and Contrast

Many people do not realize that a three manual organ is easier to play than a two manual organ, and four manuals is ideal. With more than two manuals it is not necessary to change any (or many) stops to produce a different sound whenever the theme of the song changes.

The first step is to try out all the sounds available on the organ you are going to play. A Tibia ensemble—16', 8', 5 1/3', 4', 2 2/3', 2' can produce eight or more good, musical theatre organ registrations. For solo melody, set up 16', 8', 4', 2 2/3', 2' and listen to the sound it makes in middle and high range. With one small change, taking off 2', you get a different sound in the middle range. Then take off the 2 2/3' and add the 2' for another

noticeably different sound.

For a completely different sound—good for blues or novelty effects, set Tibia 8', 5 1/3', plus Vox Humana 16', 8', 4' and listen to it while playing solo or chord melody. This will provide a good contrast with any other registration, but should not be over-done.

For playing slow-medium songs with legato chord melody, many Tibia combinations are possible:

Tibia 8' and 4'

Tibia 8', 2 2/3' with or without
Vox Humana 8'

Tibia 8', 4', 2 2/3' and Vox Humana

Tibia 8' and 2' or 16' and 4' for
Open Harmony

Play the following 1 octave higher:

Tibia 16', 8', 4'

Tibia 16', 8', 2 2/3'

Tibia 16', 8', 2'

Set up each one of the above with a Diapason and String accompaniment and play several songs and listen to each setting until you can recognize it. Notice how easy it is to change from one to the other.

The next step is to select a few songs you like to play. Before playing them, study the form of each one; notice where the themes change or repeat. Then determine how you want each song to sound, using the various Tibia combinations, and make them sound that way. This is not difficult and will help you to develop a REAL THEATRE ORGAN STYLE AND TECHNIQUE.

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THE AL. RINGLING THEATRE IS STRUGGLING

By Robert C. Dewel, D.D.S.

ATOS MEMBERS who attended the afterglow in Baraboo, Wisconsin last summer will remember the Al. Ringling Theatre and its Mighty 3/9 Barton as played by Ken Double. As one of the theatre docents I want to thank ATOS for including the Al. Ringling Theatre in the tour and would like to supply some information on the history and importance of the theatre.

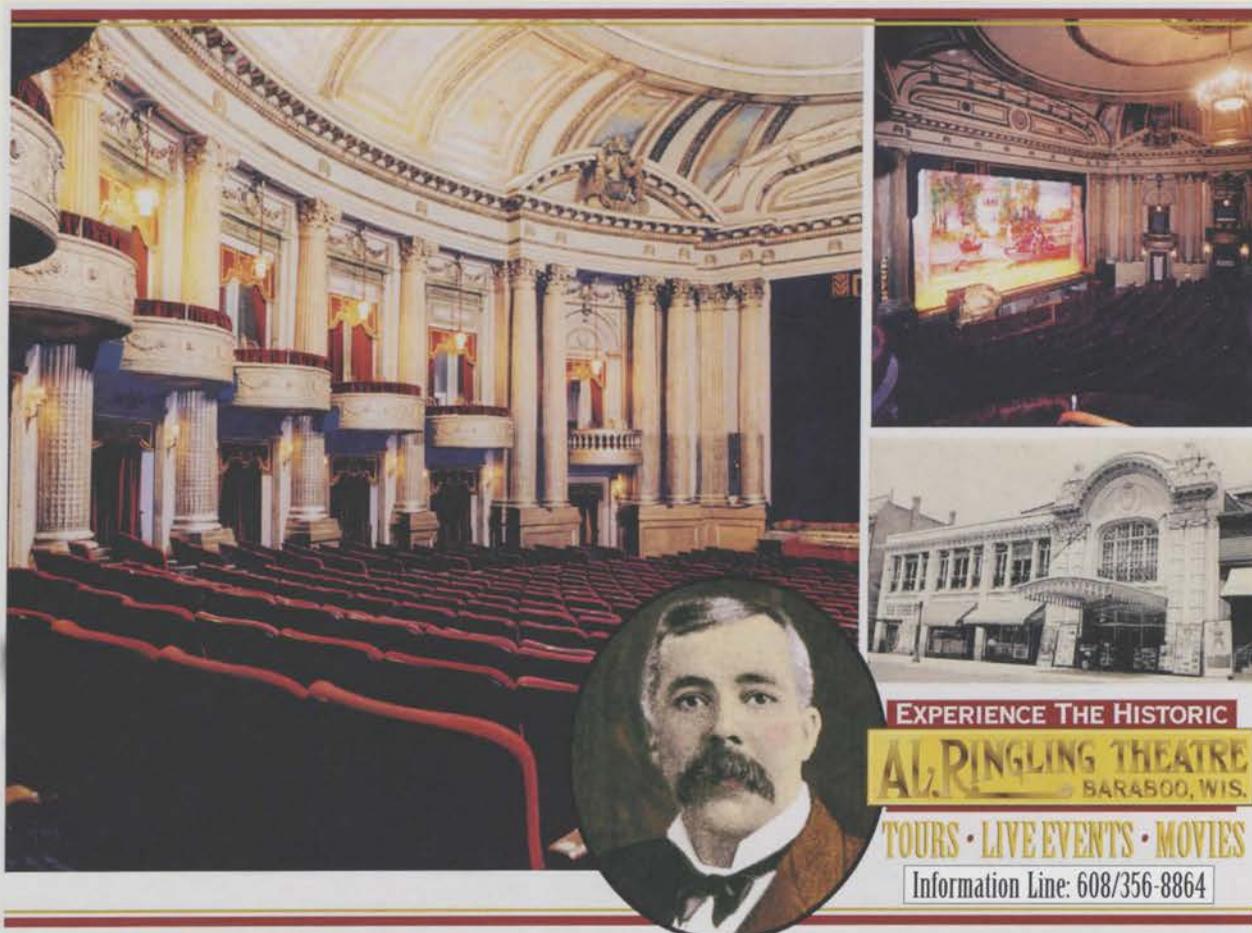
Built in 1915 by circus king Al. Ringling, the theatre is recognized by the Theatre Historical Society of America as "one of the first examples of palatial design applied to the moving picture theatre in this country, the earliest that can accurately be called a 'movie palace' . . . this isn't just any old theatre." The architects, Rapp and Rapp of Chicago, went on to build the Chicago, the Paramount in New York City and many other theatres all over the country. Remarkably, the Ringling has escaped remodeling and modernization over the years, retaining its authenticity.

In addition, there is reason to believe that this is the oldest continuously operating motion picture theatre in the country, though the stage is also used at least 50 times a year for live

performances. The original Hope-Jones Wurlitzer organ was replaced in 1928 with the Barton—in continuous use since then and is maintained by a skilled volunteer docent. Two of the theatre organists are members of ATOS.

Baraboo is a small town; population 10,000, and beset with million dollar drives for the hospital, schools and government expansion. The theatre is owned now by the Al. Ringling Theatre Friends, a non-profit qualified group. Despite other civic drives, they have raised and spent over \$900,000 on roof, tuck pointing and terra cotta façade replacement and plan now to proceed with authentic interior restoration. Financial contributions are urgently needed to continue with the restoration of the theatre. Should any ATOS member feel inspired to help us, membership categories are in dollar amounts of 35, 75, 250, 500, 1000 and 2500 increments. In addition, the Capital Improvement contribution categories are \$100 to \$1000, \$2500, \$5000 and \$7500.

The address is: Al. Ringling Theatre Friends, 136 Fourth Avenue, Baraboo, WI 53913. Telephone: 608/356-8864. E-mail: ringling@Baraboo.com.



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An Acre of Seats in a Palace of Splendor

By Steve Levin, Associate Editor

Loew's Jersey

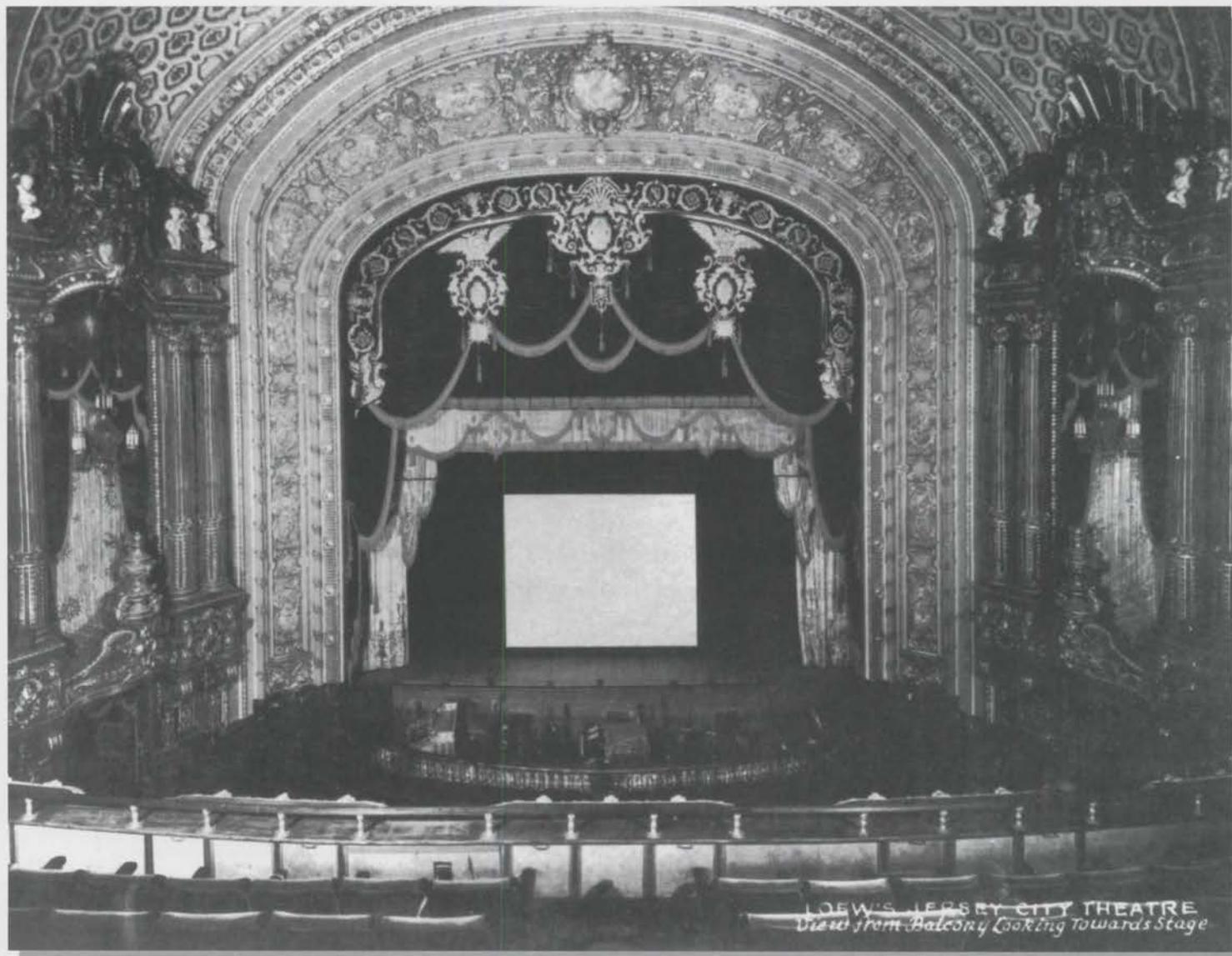
Jersey City, New Jersey

Opened: September 28, 1929 • Architect: C.W. & George L. Rapp • Capacity: 3187

Organ: Robert Morton 4/23

The beautiful Jersey was the only one of the five Loew's "Wonder Theatres" not located within the corporate limits of New York City, but rather just across the Hudson at Journal Square in Jersey City. It opened in the same month as two of its sisters, the Paradise, Bronx, and Kings, Brooklyn, an indication of the efficiency of Loew's top management and their various

contractors. Architecturally, the Jersey is a bit anomalous: while it is not unusual to find Rapp theatres that look like other Rapp theatres, it is a surprise to find an auditorium that closely resembles the later work of Thomas Lamb, particularly the Midland, Kansas City (1927) and the Fox, San Francisco. The lobby, however, is unmistakably Rapp & Rapp.



LOEW'S JERSEY CITY THEATRE
View from Balcony Looking Towards Stage

The Jersey had the normal sort of life, playing first-run product for over five decades. In 1974 the theatre was triplexed with the construction of two small auditoriums beneath the balcony. This added a dozen years to the Jersey's economic life, but only that many: it closed in August, 1986. Demolition seemed imminent several times, but determined local action staved it off, and in 1993 the city purchased the building of the paltry sum of \$325,000. While some public funds have been made available for restoration of the house, much of the work is being done by a volunteer crew organized as "Friends of the Loew's. The Friends also maintain a fine website at www.loews-jersey.com, with many pictures, some historical data and ongoing updates on the restoration.

The five so-called "Wonder Mortons" (Wonder Organ was actually a Kilgen sales line) were the last big projects completed by the builder before production ceased in April, 1929. They are all of Morton's late "boomer" type (of which most were built for Loew's) with the Manual chests mostly on 15" pressure and the pedal on 20". The Jersey's organ was removed at the time of the triplexing and now plays in Arlington, Santa Barbara, California. Fortunately the Garden State Theatre Organ Society was able to find and acquire an identical organ from the Paradise, Bronx. It has been on site and under restoration since 1997. 

For membership, back issue publications and photo availability, research and museum hours information, contact:

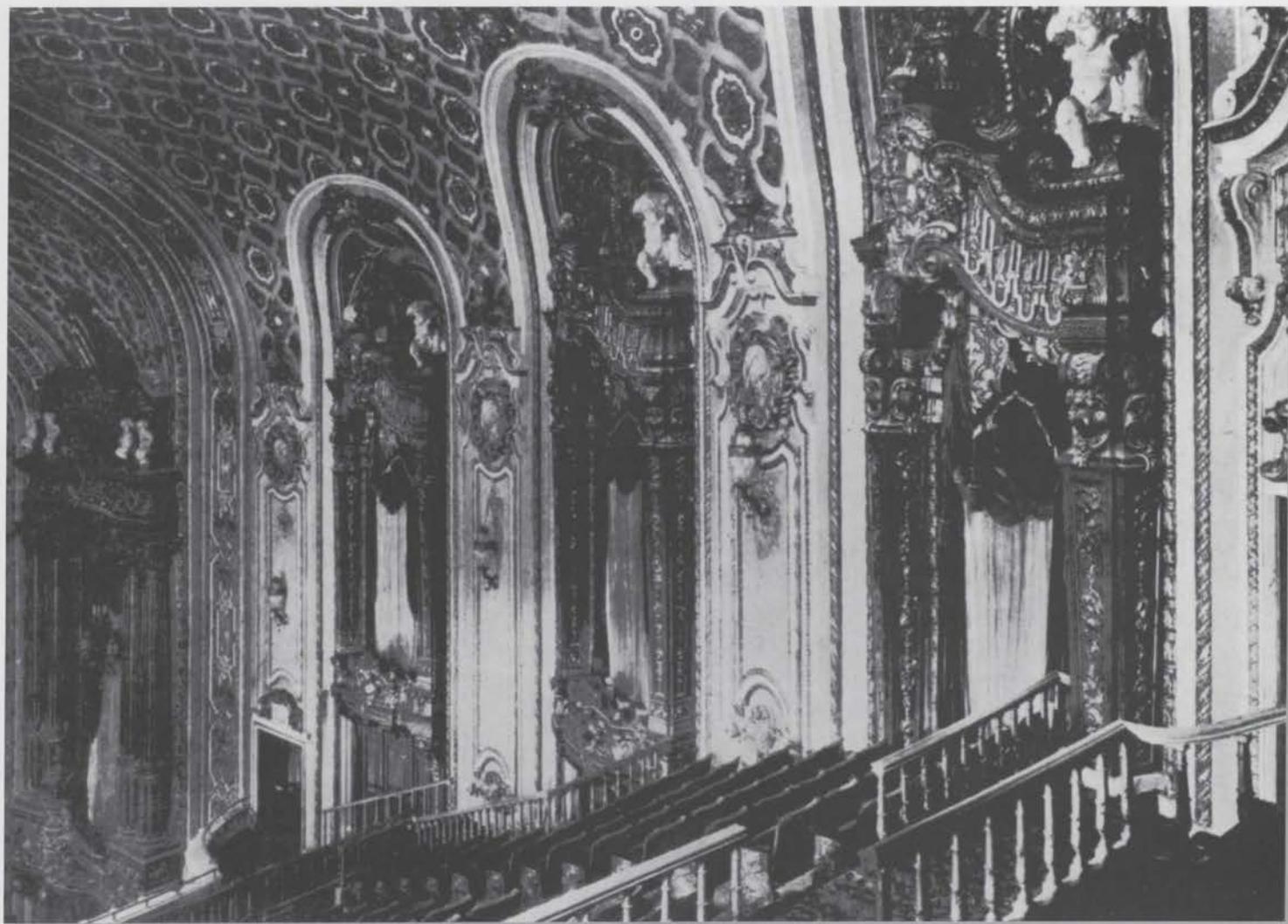
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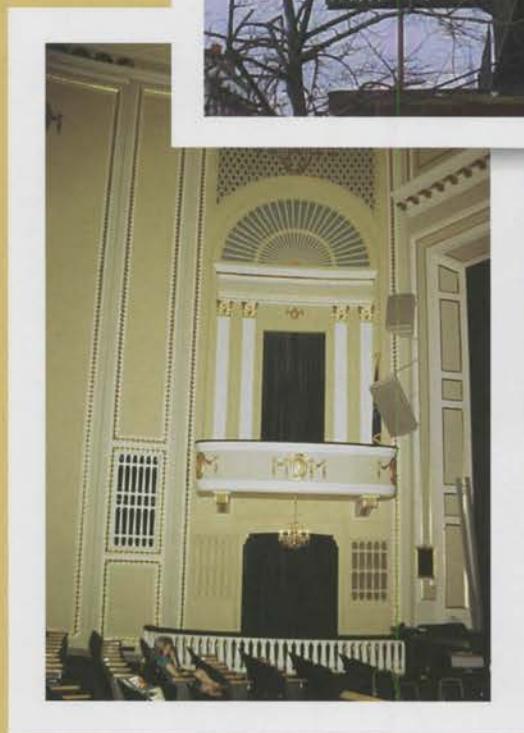
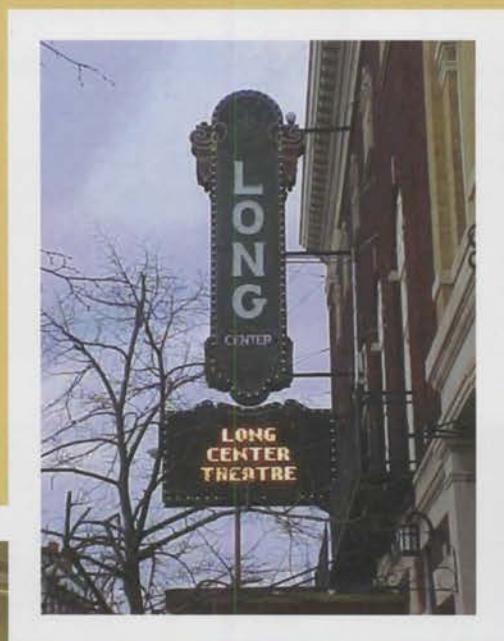
The auditorium ceiling has plaster coffering similar to that carried out in the Midland and originally planned for the San Francisco Fox, but replaced by elaborate stencilwork as an economy move.

Note the small size of the screen: in large theatres of the day, screen size was limited by the intensity of the projection lamps, which were not then as powerful as they would become later.



THE FOURTH TIME'S

**THE FOUR PIPE
ORGANS IN THE
HISTORY OF
LONG CENTER**



THE CHARM

This story is clearly a case of musical history repeating itself. When the attendees of this summer's ATOS Annual Convention enjoy the music of the Mighty Wurlitzer at the Lafayette, IN, Long Center, they will do so knowing, as radio commentator Paul Harvey might say, "the rest of the story."

The City of Lafayette is rich in history. Its landmark 1888 French-style courthouse, beautifully renovated, sits just a few miles from the battlefield that helped make William Henry Harrison famous and sent him to the White House. Across the Tippecanoe River from downtown sits Purdue University, Alma Mater of many of the great astronauts and a handful of great football quarterbacks.

A fire brought down the city's opera house in 1916. When it was determined that a new first-class theatre for top-rated vaudeville acts and silent films was needed, the Luna Amusement Company seizing on the headlines of the day proclaiming the discovery of a new planet, proudly announced the opening of the Mars Theatre in 1921. The theatre boasted nearly 1400 seats and was lavishly appointed. However, the original 3/10 Smith-Geneva pipe organ apparently left plenty to be desired. After three short years, that organ was scrapped for a Mighty Wurlitzer, also of three manuals and ten ranks. Organist Ding Kendall became a local celebrity for his work at the Mars Theatre.

Fast forward to the early 1960s when pipe organs in old theatres were a dime a dozen if they hadn't been scrapped or hacked through to accommodate air

conditioning ductwork. The late Al Mason, former ATOS President, visited Lafayette and found the Wurlitzer to his liking and available. He and his wife Betty proudly displayed that organ in their home for many years before it eventually found a home in the Palace Theatre in Marion, Ohio.

About that time (1979), a young sportscaster named Ken Double and a not-so-young retired band director named Carroll Copeland were eager to be involved in a city-wide effort to save the Mars Theatre and return a pipe organ to its empty chambers. A donation by the Long family, owners of the theatre, and the efforts of then-Mayor Jim Riehle saved the theatre, now re-named The Long Center for the Performing Arts. The search for organ number three was full steam ahead.

In 1980, two key individuals got involved in the project and helped immensely. Warren R. North was a wealthy farmer in Brookston, Indiana, about 15 miles north of Lafayette. Well known in agriculture (he was the subject of a cover story in TIME magazine in 1957, having been credited with inventions revolutionizing the automated feeding of cattle), Warren was a self-taught organist and also the owner of a small Hilgreen-Lane church organ installed in the family home. His generous donations, including the first \$20,000 gift for the purchase of components, provided the initial financial momentum that moved the project along. Warren North passed away in 1989 before the new installation was complete. But the memory of his cheery "Take the bridle off it, Ken!" when the organ was at full

volume lives on for many associated with Long Center.

The other key individual at this time was Sally Scranton. Her husband Ron loved the theatre organ and was gathering components for a home installation. His sudden passing left Sally with the problem of disposing of the myriad parts that make up a theatre organ. Fortunately, she thought of Long Center. A three-manual console, chestwork to accommodate more than 15 ranks of pipes, tremos, regulators, a toy counter and the biggest Chinese gong one might ever see were all packed up for the trip to Lafayette.

These two wonderful people provided key support in the early stages of the project. However, as the project moved forth, common sense fell by the wayside as impatience came to the forefront. Although components had been acquired, the overall expertise for a world-class installation had not. It was determined that a concert to show off the organ had to be scheduled. And, to paraphrase, the gun was jumped badly.

As it has been with so many of these projects, the learning experience can be time consuming and costly. In February of 1982, with the installation of an organ well short of completion, a concert was staged nonetheless. Ken Double packed the now-1200-seat house twice for the dedication concerts, with the instrument then at three manuals and 11 ranks, and in reality less than concert ready. Made up of a Barton console, mostly Marr and Colton chests and pipework of every description, the organ nonetheless made music and was the basic instrument

LONG CENTER 3/21 WURLITZER THEATRE PIPE ORGAN

MAIN CHAMBER

16'	Tuba Horn	73 notes
16'	Open Diapason	85 notes
8'	Tibia Clausa	85 notes
8'	Clarinet	61 notes
16'	Concert Flute	97 notes
16'	Oboe Horn	73 notes
16'	Salicional	85 notes
16'	Voix Celeste	85 notes
8'	Quintadena	73 notes
4'	Flute Celeste	61 notes
8'	Vox Humana	61 notes
	Wood Harp (MIDI)	49 notes
	Piano (MIDI)	85 notes

Exposed: (Main side under chamber)
Chrysoglott 49 notes

Trap Counter:

Bass Drum, Tympani, Snare Drum,
Tom-tom, Chinese Gong, Tambourine,
Castanets, Wood Block, Jazz Cymbal,
Splash Cymbal, Roll Cymbal, Crash
Cymbal, Triangle, Fire Gong, Klaxon,
Telephone Bell.

SOLO CHAMBER

8'	English Post Horn	61 notes
8'	Trumpet	61 notes
8'	Solo Tibia Clausa	85 notes
8'	Saxophone	61 notes
8'	Kinura	61 notes
8'	Orchestal Oboe	61 notes
8'	Viol d' Orchestre	85 notes
8'	Viol Celeste	73 notes
8'	Vox Humana	61 notes

Exposed: (Solo Side stage wall)
16' Tibia Clausa 44 notes
(on Solo side stage wall)

Trap Counter:

Shuffle

heard at the first Indianapolis ATOS convention in 1984 with Tom Hazelton at the console.

But, as it was with the original Smith-Geneva, so it was with this next-generation pipe organ. It was deemed unworthy and in definite need of replacement. The formation of the not-for-profit Long Center Theatre Organ Society, Inc. helped fuel generous donations from hundreds of individuals, providing the necessary funds to start from scratch. By 1990, the organ was playing 14 ranks of mostly Wurlitzer pipework on those old Marr and Colton chests. Much additional pipework had been acquired, and the funding was in place for a complete reinstallation. In 1991, Carlton Smith delivered a sparkling, totally restored and appropriately redecorated, three-manual console, originally the keydesk for the United Artists' Wurlitzer in Detroit. In 1992, with Smith assisting, the Crome Organ Company completed the installation of 21 glorious ranks where there had once been just ten. And, indeed, the fourth time was the charm.

This exciting 3/21 Wurlitzer, mostly utilizing black-cap chests from the Detroit United Artist theatre, has been heard in concert hundreds of times and has been recorded by Ken Double on several occasions, including a new third CD release due this summer. Prior to the convention, on June 23rd, Double will celebrate his 20th anniversary concert at what he calls his "musical home" before an appreciative crowd that has continually packed the house to enjoy his distinctive brand of showmanship.

Just in time for the convention, Carlton Smith has touched up the gold leaf on the pretty console, but that's not all that has gotten polished up in Lafayette. My, oh my, have things changed in the Long Center auditorium!

A new Board of Directors took control in 1996 and successfully raised more than \$2 million. The once fading emerald is once again the "crown jewel" of a resurgent downtown Lafayette. A magnificent, new marquee with a vertical sign reminiscent of the original now greets visitors as they approach the theatre. The small lobby has been augmented with the addition of the new St. John Family Pavilion, providing a plush meeting space prior to concerts and during intermissions. Most importantly, the famous Conrad Schmitt Studios put their magic touch to the auditorium, replacing the cracking plaster and faded paint with a spectacular splash of gold leaf and fresh color. Last September, the first public performance in the newly-decorated auditorium featured the traditional jazz music of vocalist Terry Blaine, her pianist Mark Shane and jazz band The New York All Stars, all wrapped around Ken Double at the Mighty Wurlitzer.

You'll have the opportunity to see the improvements, enjoy the comfortable surroundings at Long Center and hear the music of jovial Ken Double and the great Clark Wilson at the two wonderful programs Central Indiana Chapter has planned for this year's convention.

We hope you are making your plans to be with us at these events in August for a taste of that famous Hoosier Hospitality, Long Center style. ■

The International Theatre Organ Scene

Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust Loses Granada Venue

By David Alldred, Secretary
The Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust

After eight successful years of association between the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust and Granada Studios Tour, Manchester, UK, the decision has been made by Granada that the Tours complex is to cease operating at the end of February 2001.

Following the peaking of visitors to the Tours complex some two years ago, the decision was made by Granada to continue to use the attractions for corporate entertaining, etc. This to some extent has been beneficial to Granada's bottom line. However, since the dramatic increase of digital broadcasting in the UK and more and more shopping channels coming on stream it was decided to pull out of corporate entertaining and revert the premises back to TV studios, the only concession being that the Coronation Street set be maintained and at some future date open this attraction to the public.

The Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust installed the ex Gaumont, Manchester, 4/14 Wurlitzer into the Baronial Hall complex, which in itself was a scaled down replica of the foyer of the Granada Cinema, Tooting in London and opened it in November 1992, the featured artists being Tony Fenelon and LTOT Vice Presidents, Len Rawle, Joyce Alldred, Nigel Ogden and Doreen Chadwick. Since the opening, the Wurlitzer has been used as part of the Tours attractions, for LTOT shows and presentation, corporate bookings and LTOT weekends. The last weekend, as some of you will remember, was the follow on weekend from the 1999 ATOS convention in London. Over the years the Trust has had a very agreeable relationship with the management of the Tours and we thank them for their support.

Following meetings with executives of Granada, Don Hyde, chairman of the Trust and myself, formulated a mutual agree-

ment to the benefit of the Trust, providing the Wurlitzer be removed within three months from the end of February 2001.

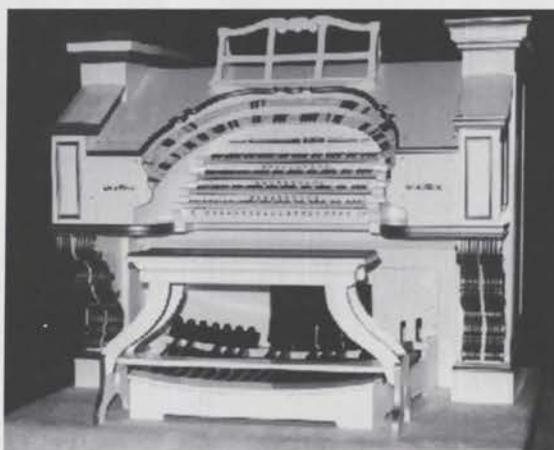
Following the very successful installation and opening of the ex Paramount, Odeon, Free Trade Hall, Manchester, 4/20 Wurlitzer, in the ballroom of Stockport Town Hall in November 1999, the Trust has agreed, subject to the official agreement being drawn up, to install the ex Davenport, Stockport 3/6 Compton in the Pavilion Gardens, in Buxton, some 15 miles from Stockport. We now have the additional project of removing the Granada Wurlitzer, finding suitable storage and sourcing a new home.

At a recent meeting, the executives of the LTOT agreed in principle that the Trust should, if at all possible, find a suitable building to purchase outright, thereby giving the Trust complete control of events, provide central headquar-

ters, have the facility to display our archives and hold our records. This is our ultimate objective and in true Lancastrian endeavour we view this not as a setback, but as a challenge. We shall in the coming months embark on a fund raising drive, asking for straight donations and Gift Aid Donations attracting tax advantages. Further details will follow.

During the last two weeks in February we embarked on a recording marathon, putting as much material in the can as was possible. We invited nine artists to record a programme, which will eventually be released on CDs.

You can of course access up to date progress and information via our web site <www.voxlancastrina.org.uk> or contact me direct, <david.joyce.allred@zetnet.co.uk> I thank all ATOS members for their support of the Trust over the years and look forward to a happy association in the future. 



THE AMERICAN ORGANIST MAGAZINE
Official Journal of the
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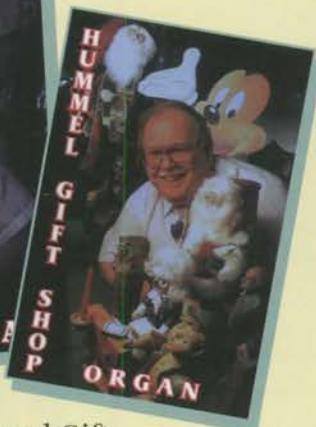
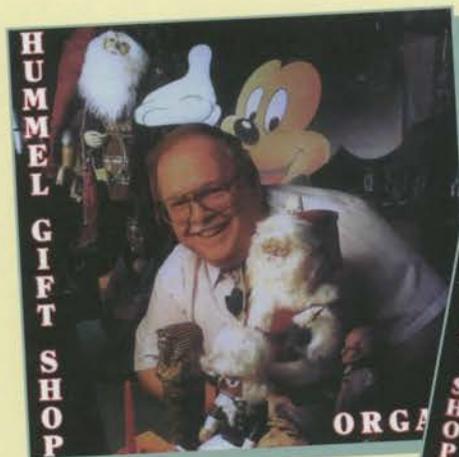
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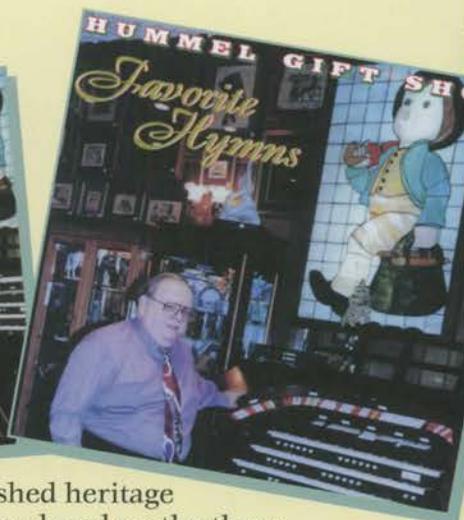
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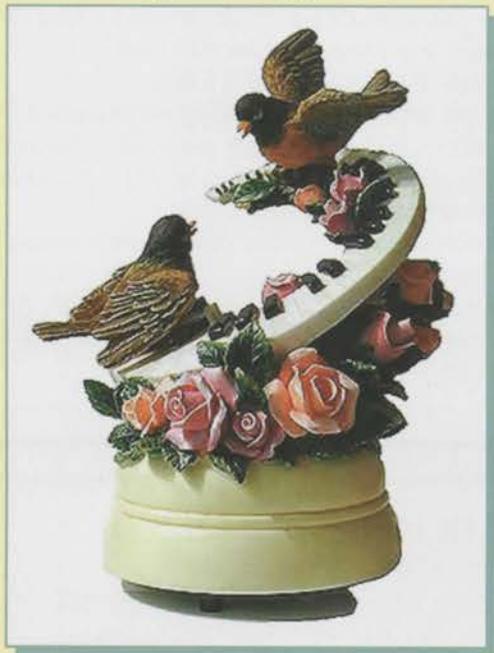


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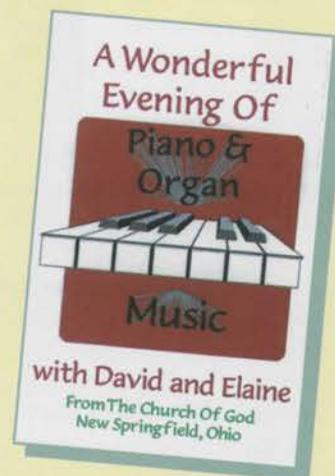


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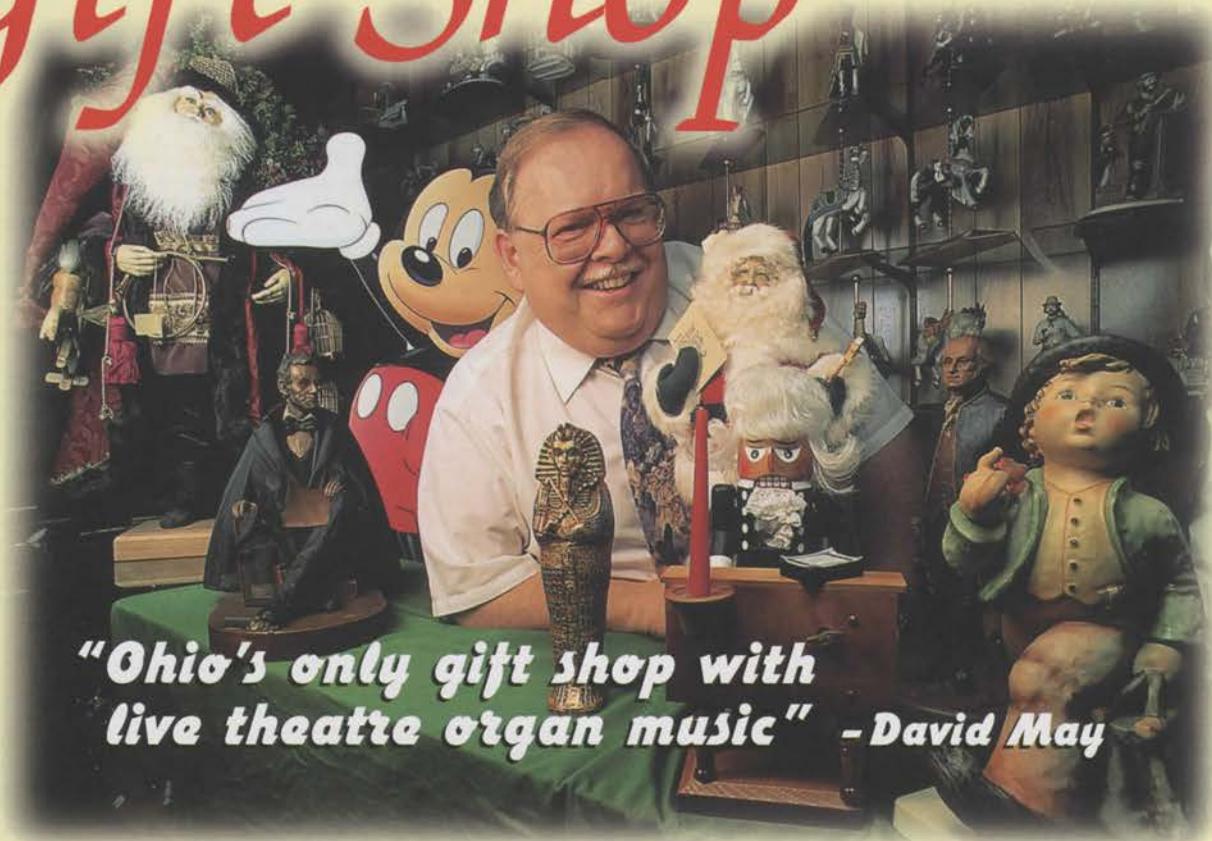


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ATOS HISTORIC THEATRE ORGAN PRESERVATION PROGRAM

STATEMENT OF NEED

It is a sad paradox that we have fewer as-built, original theatre organs from the 20th century than church organs from the 18th and 19th centuries! This is astounding when you consider the number of theatre organs produced in the instrument's golden age just over a half-century ago. Theatre organs by the hundreds have been lost forever through carelessness, thoughtless alteration and enlargement, as well as negligent storage, rebuilding and maintenance; sometimes at the hand of ATOS members and in the name of "preservation" or "restoration." Several societies exist worldwide to encourage preservation of church organs and it is past time for the ATOS to sponsor a similar activity for theatre organs.

Aside from the pure academic and nostalgic reasons for preserving examples of the craft of theatre organ building, there is a strong economic reason. Because the theatre organ, unlike the church organ, was built on a definite system of design even to the point of standardized models, there is no reason the theatre organ cannot gain the same "collectible" status as classic cars, orchestrions, music boxes, phonographs, etc. People have made huge investments in the theatre organ hobby only to find a limited market when time comes to sell an instrument. This is because there is no standard of quality and desirability in the theatre organ hobby. It is not too late to establish the kind of standards which will increase the value of theatre organs.

STRATEGIES FOR THEATRE ORGAN PRESERVATION

There is no way that the ATOS can prevent bad practices in theatre organ restoration and maintenance; however, the ATOS can encourage good work by recognizing it! By setting standards and then making highly publicized awards to instruments and their owners who meet these standards, ATOS can prevent the destruction of the few remaining original theatre organs and encourage high-quality work on theatre organs built or assembled for today's musical needs.

We recommend establishing categories for theatre organs (much like those for automobiles such as Classic, Antique, etc.) A blue-ribbon committee would then nominate instruments for plaques or certificates recognizing their status. These nominations would be publicized in THEATRE ORGAN and awards would be presented at the annual convention, being accorded the same status as "Hall of Fame," "Member of The Year," etc.

Another function of the committee would be to handle complaints against individuals or groups actively violating the purposes of the Guidelines, and to make a list of bona fide restorers or consultants.

CATEGORIES OF EXCELLENCE

In order to be included in *any one* of the following ATOS award categories, the instrument and its restoration process must qualify under the ATOS general guidelines for theatre organ restoration and maintenance.

Descriptions of each of the historic categories of theatre organs follows (along with the additional special qualifications required for each category):

HERITAGE INSTRUMENTS: Heritage instruments are those which present to us a faithful picture of what the theatre organ was like in its golden age. This category includes original instruments in original locations, original instruments moved to acoustically compatible new locations, instruments restored faithfully to their original condition, and instruments newly built or assembled from parts which follow EXACTLY all details of a theatre organ as built by a theatre organ manufacturer prior to World War II.

The only alterations from original condition which are allowed are:

Replacement of perishable parts with original type materials or appropriate substitute materials if originals are not available.

Replacement of generator with rectifier.

Replacement of electrical cabling if required by National Electrical Code in the case of a relocated instrument.

Re-framing and replacement of wind conductors if done to original standards in the case of a relocated organ.

Re-regulation of pipework, but only in order to correct problems which have occurred subsequent to the original installation.

In this classification, equal importance is given to instruments regardless of age, size, builder, or any other special characteristic provided they meet the above qualifications. For example, a perfectly original Style D Wurlitzer would be as important a member of this class as a four-manual Fox Special. Although the Fox Special may be a far more famous instrument, the Style D

represents a type of instrument that was probably heard by more movie patrons than any other in the golden age of the theatre organ.

Likewise, a Style 35 Wurlitzer with its straight Solo division and no Tibia Unification would be just as important as a late model Style 260 which more closely represents the sound we are interested in today.

Instruments which would be candidate for this category, if properly restored, would be the Paramount Studio organ and the last Wurlitzer organ ever built, opus 2238. In other words, the list would include instruments which have gained world fame as well as those which are of interest simply because they represent a point of historic importance.

VINTAGE INSTRUMENTS: This category includes instruments assembled from original parts or built new as reproductions (or a combination of both) which follow the general ideas of a single theatre organ builder but which do not necessarily emulate any particular instrument or model of instrument. These could represent the design philosophy of a company active during the golden age of the theatre organ or could represent a point of development the builder might have reached had it stayed in business. An example of the former would be the Castro Theatre Wurlitzer in San Francisco. An example of the latter would be the Berkeley Community Theatre in Berkeley, California.

In addition to those allowed in the Heritage category, the following alterations are allowable for the Vintage category:

Changes in stop list (both voices and unification).

Use of components from different periods in the builder's history.

Changes in the design of the winding system.

Use of solid-state relay and/or combination action where dictated by constraint of space or moveability of the console to multiple locations in a public auditorium having multiple uses.

LANDMARK INSTRUMENTS: We recognize that the theatre organ is a living, constantly evolving musical instrument. Although it is important to preserve examples of the past, it is equally important to encourage excellent new work along progressive tonal and mechanical lines. Landmark instruments are those which represent high-quality ideals of organbuilding, but which do not necessarily reflect the style of any past theatre organbuilder. Since few, if any, theatre organs are built today, it is permissible for organs in this category to be made from parts of one or more theatre organ manufacturers of the past provided the work follows the ATOS general guidelines for theatre organ restoration and maintenance AND provided that no instrument which would be a candidate for Heritage or Vintage status is destroyed in order to create a supply of parts for a Landmark instrument.

An example of the Landmark category would have been John Seng's instrument at Mundelein, as well as Buddy Cole's and George Wright's re-cording organs if they still existed and met the requirements of the ATOS guidelines today.

In this category, there are no restrictions against the use of solid-state relays and combination actions, electric console stop actions, non-traditional wind systems, non-traditional stop lists, etc. Following the ATOS general guidelines for theatre organ restoration and maintenance and achieving a generally recognized result of mechanical and musical integrity are the requirements.

STATUS PENDING: This category would cover COMPLETE instruments which are in storage as of June 1, 1992, and which would meet the requirements of a Vintage or Heritage instrument pending restoration and installation. Specific requirements for storage and current condition must be met in order to gain status in the category.

The instrument must be in good restorable condition with minimal damage due to water, vermin, or poor handling or storage conditions. All components must be stored in crates or appropriately padded and protected from atmospheric, mechanical, or vermin damage. Pipes must be stored in shallow pipe trays, individually wrapped or properly padded as protection from corrosion, crushing, denting, and accumulation of dirt.

The storage area must be well protected from the elements and appropriate measures taken to provide ample security as protection from vandalism and pilfering. The importance of properly storing a valuable instrument can not be overstated.

Upon completion of restoration and installation according to the ATOS Guidelines, the instrument will be eligible for re-evaluation as a candidate for either Vintage or Heritage categories. Any such instrument broken up for parts will void the award and the instrument in which component parts are included will not be eligible for Landmark category status.

THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY GUIDELINES FOR CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION

PREFACE

These guidelines establish that a true restoration returns a pipe organ to its original state of existence, or to some appropriate later state, through repair of original parts and replacement of missing parts with replications made from identical materials. This includes replacement of original perishable materials. Good theatre organ conservation or maintenance requires these same principles. The interpretation of these tenets and execution by, or under the direct supervision of, a competent restorer of theatre pipe organs (recognized as such by his peers), sympathetic to these Guidelines and the requirements of the installation, is the determinant of success in making a good musical instrument remain musical. Which theatre organs are appropriate for restoration is sometimes a perplexing question. Generally, any pipe organs built under the "unit" principles of an orchestral nature and installed originally for public entertainment purposes are candidates. Additionally, instruments which may have been augmented at a later date, but which are marked by great mechanical craftsmanship and musical integrity shall be possible candidates, although they may be more selectively appropriate. The basic requirements of a restored theatre organ are that it must work well and it must fit the musical needs of its users.

GUIDELINES

1. To be regarded as Historic or Significant:

- A. Any theatre organ which remains with all of its original parts in unaltered condition is considered Historic. Its significance increases with its age, its rarity, and condition. A complete organ, no matter how small, should never be broken up for parts.
- B. Any substantially unaltered theatre organ which is an outstanding example of a particular style or builder's work, or is unique in some other way, such as the only remaining example of a particular builder's work is considered Historic.
- C. The criteria may be applied to theatre organs which have been rebuilt or augmented if they represent important periods of milestones in the development of the theatre organ as a continually evolving instrument of modern performance. Such instruments are considered Significant and possibly Historic.
- D. Instruments which have been so radically altered tonally and/or mechanically that they no longer represent the style of a period or the original builder may be regarded as having minimal historic importance or significance, even though the instrument may contain earlier, or potentially significant components. An example might be an organ assembled from parts of several famous theatre organs.

2. Historic or Significant theatre organs should be considered as worthy of preservation and restoration as any other fine antique or piece of art.

3. Restoration may be defined as the process of returning an organ to its original state, provided that sufficient original material remains to make this feasible. In some cases, a totally unaltered theatre organ may be in such basically good condition that simple repair and cleaning will accomplish this. If a substantial number of original components are missing or in bad condition and must be made new or replaced, the process is more properly termed reconstruction.

- A. In general, all existing original components should be preserved and properly repaired. Severely damaged components may be replaced by new if incapable of being put into reliable working order, and missing parts replaced with exact duplicate parts of the same builder or reproductions made of the same construction and materials as the originals.
- B. Pipework should be carefully repaired by a professional pipemaker. Several pipe organ companies and supply houses are recognized for their ability to repair or replace theatre organ pipework. Replacements for missing pipes are to be made of the same material and construction details as the originals. The original means of tuning should be preserved wherever possible. An effort should be made to ascertain the original pitch and voicing. Voicing should be limited to the re-regulation of repaired pipes, correction of speech deficiencies which may have occurred through improper handling or deterioration with age. Re-regulation may also be dictated by acoustical changes to the original auditorium or installation in a new acoustical environment. Voicing of any replacement pipes should be in the style of remaining originals or other examples of the specific builder's work. Voicing and re-regulation as covered herein should be considered as Tonal Finishing and should include regulation of an instrument to fit its acoustical environment.
- C. Keyboards, stop controls, and other console components should be kept in, or restored to, their original condition. Key and stop action should always be restored in such a way that any new materials should conform to the operation and appearance of the original materials. Replacement of the stop actions, combination action, or relay system for purposes of augmentation or economics of rebuilding or maintenance shall be considered as major alterations.

If major alterations are necessary in order to fulfill the requirements of the end use of the instrument as a contemporary musical instrument, it is recognized that solid-state combination actions or relay systems may be necessary to feasibly meet requirements of the installation. These non-historic devices may be necessary to provide a full range of organist control (General Pistons for example) or movability and multiple con-

sole locations (requiring cable disconnects.) In these situations, careful thought should be given to retaining the original stopkey actuation system. Original setter boards could be left installed for historic purposes, but carefully disconnected for reason of practicality. To be considered as a significant instrument, any use of solid-state, electric stop actions, computer control or MIDI devices must be designed and installed to equal the aesthetic appearance, feel, and functionality of original console controls, and their implementation.

Rewiring with plastic insulated cable of approved type should be considered acceptable if necessitated by National Electric Code requirements which do not allow the use of original DCC wire when an organ is moved or modified.

- D. Windchests should be very carefully restored and checked for soundness. Materials and operating dimensions should be carefully checked and should correspond to those of the original builder. In cases where original materials were of an inferior nature or are no longer available, similar materials as used by other builders and recognized as suitable for the purpose may be substituted.
- E. The original style of chest should be restored using original techniques of design, construction, compatible materials and replacement parts. Replacement of pneumatics with electric actions or modular pneumatic actions of a different builder, even though the chest structure is retained, shall be regarded as inappropriate.
- F. Original regulators, wind trunks, and other components which determine the wind characteristics of a theatre organ should always be retained and re-leathered. If missing they should be replaced with new components conforming to the originals. Tremulants should be restored and adjusted.

It is considered acceptable to improve winding by providing separate wind systems for offset basses or to provide additional separate complete wind systems where more than four or five ranks may have been wound together originally, or where ranks requiring different wind characteristics may have been originally wound from the same regulator for economic purposes. This is an artistic judgment and should be done under the consultation of a sympathetic restorer having experience in this area.

Additional regulators, tremulants, and winding should be in the style of the original builder. It is considered acceptable to modify winding practices in order to achieve a musically acceptable tremulant in cases where the original winding proved to be unsuccessful.

In a new installation, it is acceptable to use PVC or similar pipe, provided that care is given to appropriate aesthetic installation of this material. Schedule 40 pipe with mitred joints or 1/8" wall pipe with its fittings may be affixed to pipe organ components with appropriate pipe organ type flanges. If done by a careful workman, plastic pipe can be as functional and visually appropriate as galvanized or zinc wind lines.

- G. If the original console finish has been altered, an effort should be made to determine the original finish and restore it wherever feasible. In repairing damaged wood or veneer, care should be taken to match new wood to old.
- H. In instances where financial or artistic considerations dictate that some original part of the organ be removed or left unrestored, these should be carefully packed up and stored in a safe part of the building, properly labeled as to their significance. In cases where appearance is modified, such as in refinishing a console to fit the architecture of a new installation, photographs and accurate records of original color and detail should be kept.

If the restoration or owner requires the inclusion of a self-playing device, any original such device should be restored if paper rolls exist. Modern devices may be wired to an original relay system and do not necessarily dictate disposal of the original relay system.

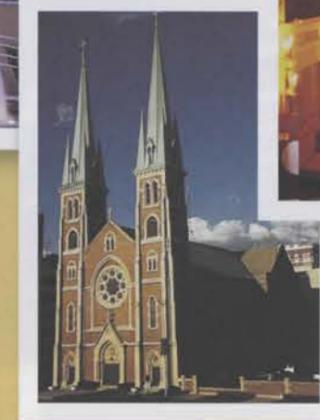
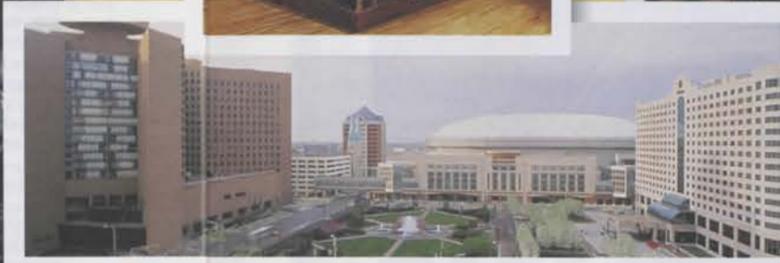
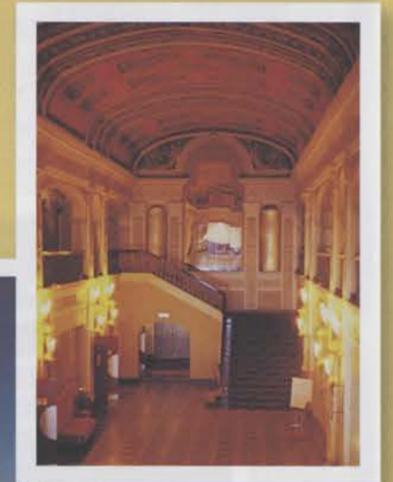
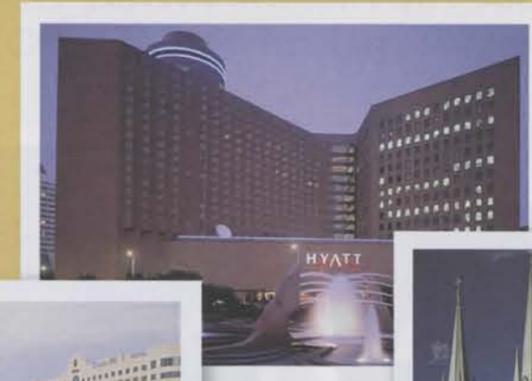
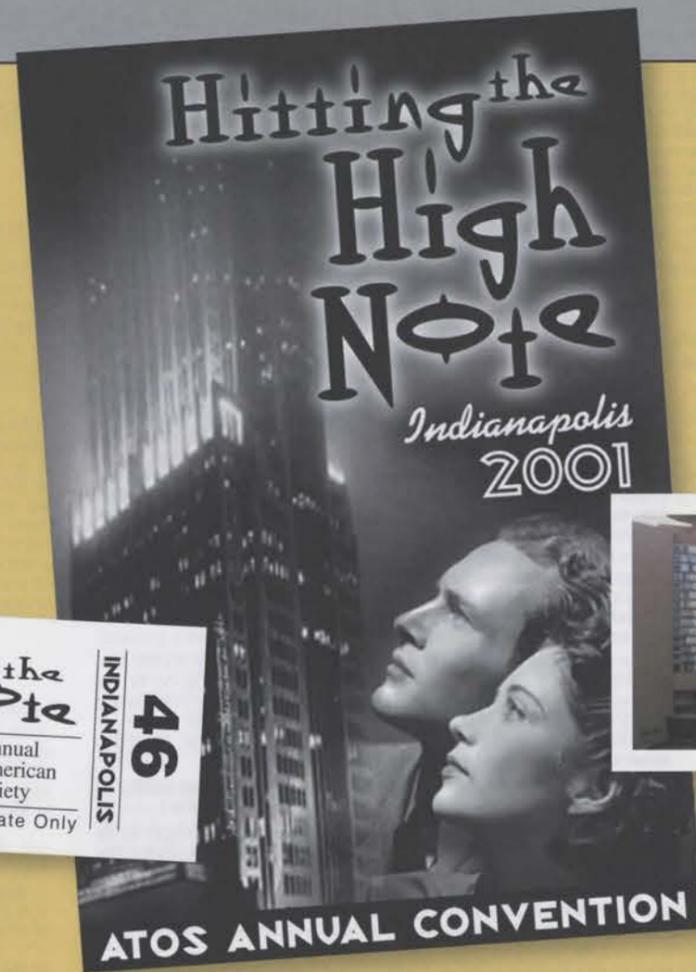
If the requirements of a new installation dictate the replacement of the original relay system, the original relay should be retained for preservation.

- I. It is highly desirable that a restorer keep detailed records, measurements, photographs, etc. during the course of the restoration work. Recordings of the sound of individual ranks and pipes should be made using high quality recording equipment. Copies of such records sent to the ATOS Archives are always appreciated and may provide valuable information to future researchers and restorers.
- J. Restoration of historic or significant theatre organs should always be done by an experienced professional restorer (recognized as such by his peers) specializing in work on the particular type of organ involved, and never entrusted to unsupervised amateurs. Any work undertaken by volunteers or amateurs must be under the close supervision and direction of a qualified professional. For the sake of the owner's own financial investment as well as the preservation of the theatre organ, it is incumbent upon the owners of historic or significant instruments to thoroughly investigate the reputation, previous work, and references of any prospective restorer. Quality of work, rather than price, should be the criterion in the choice of a restorer. A fine and historic organ may be irreparably altered or damaged by incompetent or unqualified workers, but a well-restored historic organ can be a musical treasure and a legacy to future generations.

Based upon the GUIDELINES FOR CONSERVATION & RESTORATION adopted by the Organ Historical Society.

2001 ATOS ANNUAL CONVENTION

**INDIANAPOLIS, IN
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AFTERGLOW
AUGUST 23**
HOSTED BY CIC-ATOS

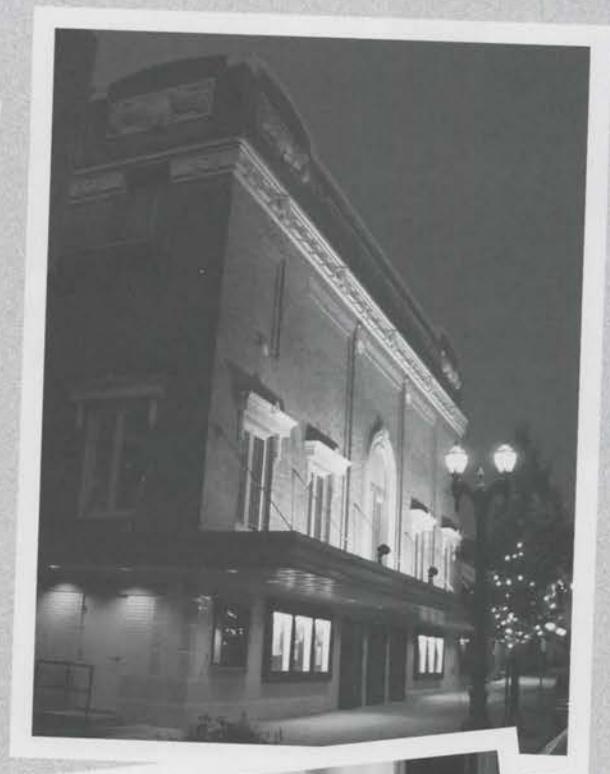
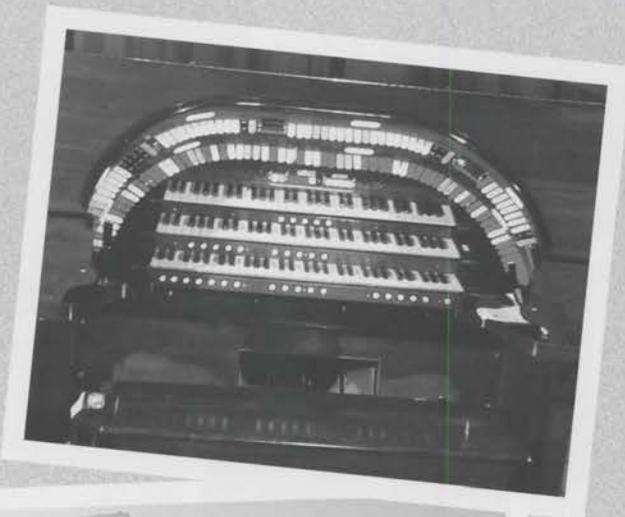


CONVENTION SCHEDULE

	SATURDAY, AUGUST 18	SUNDAY, AUGUST 19	MONDAY, AUGUST 20	TUESDAY, AUGUST 21	WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 22	THURSDAY, AUGUST 23
MORNING	Registration 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.	Seminar on Tips for Writing for Theatre Organ – Vern Bickel Members' Forum	DAN BELLOMY Hedback Theatre, 2/11 Wurlitzer ROB RICHARDS Walker Theatre, Walker Digital	RON RHODE Paramount Theatre, 3/12 Page Lunch, Paramount Ballroom and Open Console	DONNA PARKER St. John Church, 2/36+ Goulding & Wood Annual Meeting Hyatt Ballroom	AFTERGLOW: BARRY BAKER Wehmeier Residence, 4/36 Wurlitzer
AFTERNOON	Opening Cocktail Party 4 p.m. – 6 p.m., Hyatt Ballroom	KEN DOUBLE Long Center, 3/21 Wurlitzer CLARK WILSON Long Center, 3/21 Wurlitzer	WALTER STRONY Circle Theatre, Allen GW Digital ETONES Meeting Hyatt Regency	JELANI EDDINGTON & DAVID HARRIS, Piano, Embassy Theatre, 4/16 Page Cocktails & Dinner Grand Wayne Center	MICHELLE NICOLLE & ATOS Young Artists Warren Performing Arts Center, 3/18 Barton	Lunch Cincinnati Music Palace, 4/33 Wurlitzer
EVENING	SIMON GLEDHILL Warren Performing Arts Center, 3/18 Barton	SEMINARS Simon Gledhill & Clark Wilson	DWIGHT THOMAS Manual High School, 3/26 Wurlitzer Jam Session afterward	JIM RIGGS Embassy Theatre, 4/16 Page	Cocktails & Banquet Indiana Roof BILL TANDY	Ohio River Dinner Cruise, Queen City Riverboats

Preview of Coming Attractions

Read about The Historic Everett Theatre
in the July/August issue of THEATRE ORGAN.



Introducing...

Rodney James Spiros



Many readers of THEATRE ORGAN have been intrigued by the pen and ink line drawings that have appeared on the mailing covers and in the Journal over the past several months.

These drawings are done by one of our members—a long time theatre pipe organ enthusiast. So that you may appreciate the talent of this extraordinary and talented human being we provide the following biographical information, printed here as he submitted it:

"Greetings to all you ATOS members. I'm Rodney James Spiros, the one who draws those fancy theatre pipe organ pictures for certain holiday events. My favorite holiday events are Easter, Halloween and Thanksgiving. I'm borderline mentally challenged and I taught myself how to play the piano with E-Z play music books and later my parents bought me a small organ. My hobbies are ceramics, candle making and drawing.

I was born and reared in the Panama Canal Zone. I attended regular Special Education classes in the Canal Zone public schools. I graduated in 1977 at age 20.

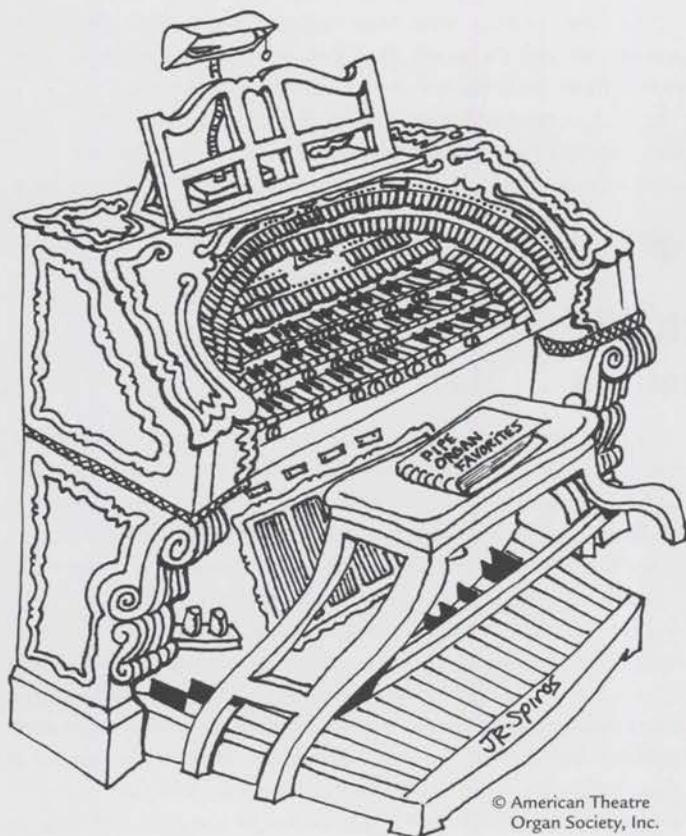
I first started loving theatre pipe organ music when I first heard Leroy Lewis on LP records. And boy did I fall in love with theatre pipe organ music!! I also like certain American graffiti music, some easy jazz and a wee bit of certain classical music. I don't play the organ since I no longer have one. Perhaps later on in the near future.

As a teenager my parents would take me to see the Panama theatre pipe organ at the Hotel El Panama. That was the first time I ever saw a theatre pipe organ in my life. Later on I would see others when my family would come to the states for vacations.

My parents and I left the Canal Zone in 1981 because it was being given back to the Republic of Panama. We moved to Dothan, Alabama where many "Zonians" (people who lived and grew up in the Canal Zone) moved due to the climate, cost, etc. My sister moved my Mom and me last year to South Carolina to be close to her and her family.

I want to thank those of you who complimented me on my fancy theatre pipe organ drawings. I hopefully will continue drawing for ATOS if I don't run out of ideas!"

Rodney James Spiros



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FAREWELL TO THE FOX...

A PERSONAL MEMORY

By Ron Musselman



RON MUSSELMAN/1996

FOX THEATRE, SAN FRANCISCO. 1929-1963

FROM THE COLLECTION OF CHARLES PORTER

EDITOR'S NOTE: A few years after the "last chance farewell" concert at the San Francisco Fox Theatre, played by the legendary George Wright, Ron Musselman wanted to put his impressions of that night on paper. Written for a project in his freshman year of college, it was an attempt to share a treasured experience with others and, of course, to help shore up his grade in English. The handwritten original was

discovered in a box of old school papers. Although his perception and writing style have matured since then, this account through the words of a teenager reflects what was then a fairly fresh recording of relatively recent memories. The essay is reprinted in its entirety in the pages that follow. Ron comments, "I sincerely hope the reader will enjoy this glimpse of an event that can never be duplicated."



A RETROSPECTIVE: The World's Greatest Theatre In Its Final Year

I'LL NEVER FORGET that evening early in 1962 when the news appeared. It was in the movie section of the *Bakersfield Californian* right at the top of the page with the heading: "LAVISH S. F. MOVIE PALACE TO CLOSE—FAREWELL CONCERT SCHEDULED." And when I reached the part that said George Wright was playing the concert, that did it. I just had to go. Only a few months earlier, I had spent some of my earnings from mowing lawns on George Wright's Showtime and his recording of *The Roaring 20s*. Both of these albums had been recorded on the San Francisco Fox Wurlitzer pipe organ and I was absolutely nuts over both of them, especially *Showtime*. The emotional climax of "Old Man River" that concluded side two was already so badly distorted

from repeated playings that detail no longer present on the disc had to be filled in from memory. Listening to this record on the family's colonial-style Packard-Bell console stereo was an exciting experience. Even though the sounds that emanated from the big solid maple piece of furniture were somewhat smoothed over (thanks to an over-ripe and warm 12-inch woofer that added a delicious fatness to almost any pedal stop, and polite tweeters that chose to ignore most of the top octave) and loading into a typical living room, I could imagine what the organ must have sounded like first-hand from looking at the cover shot of the vast auditorium. Most of the center of the picture was filled with the main curtain and the huge proscenium arch, which surrounded some of the grandest drapery

to be found in any building in the world. Almost straight across, at least 100 feet away from the camera that took this photo was one of the most towering, ornate organ grills imaginable. Part of the impossibly high ceiling and a large dome could be seen at the top of the cover. Down near the bottom of all this expansive grandeur at "solo" level in the orchestra pit was George Wright at the big four-manual console. With the enormous space surrounding it, the console looked like a tiny toy manned by an ant. The dome at the top seemed to be a good 100 feet above his head. This was the only interior picture of the Fox I had ever seen, but it and the grim announcement in the paper were enough to make this 7th grader realize that the chance of a lifetime was fast approaching . . . and as young as I was at the time, there was a sickening feeling in the pit of my stomach driven by the anticipation of a massive loss; a loss that would never be replaced. The reality of profit-and-loss was understood to some degree, as was the cost of land in crowded San Francisco and the difficulty of keeping a 5,000-seat theatre in the black in any city. Even in an area of relatively low operating cost like Bakersfield, with plentiful, inexpensive land, several older theatres much smaller than the San Francisco Fox had to cut staff size down in the late 1950s as attendance continued to dwindle and profits eroded. There was even talk of the California Theatre downtown being closed and sold. Just a few years later, it was sold and remodeled into a bank.

Although the destruction of the world's greatest theatre was only a year away from the farewell concert announcement, there would still be a few moments of false hope in the coming months, but several great movie palaces in other major cities had already bitten the dust under similar circumstances and demolition was inevitable. Since I was too young to drive at the time, my parents were approached with an urgent plea that we drive up to San Francisco for this most special concert. While my father and mother were both sympathetic, this request represented a sizable sacrifice—The concert started at midnight, and my father had to be back the following day . . . and he had to work the day before the concert. To top it off, the total driving time up and back would be over eleven hours. Imagine coming out of a concert at 3:00 in the morning then driving for almost six hours! They talked it over, then much to my delight, mailed off a check for four tickets. How much did it mean to me? That concert was played several years ago and I still thank them every time a memory from that evening comes back.



For the next several weeks, I would find myself staring at the *Showtime* jacket at various times and wondering what it would actually feel like to be inside the finest of what was once a chain of over 800 theatres. The album cover only showed the front portion of the auditorium. The whole room must be stupendous. Fueling this even more was the newspaper item referring to the theatre as being "the largest and most opulent west of the Mississippi." (And I was about to find out that you could just about eliminate "west of the Mississippi" from that statement.) And, of course, there were the liner notes of the record speaking of the auditorium as a "house with a main floor of staggering proportions and tier upon tier of balcony seats" . . . or "the plush Victorian opulence of the cavernous Fox" and "the

sensuous thrilling might of the Wurlitzer pipe organ." Hearing this great instrument live after only playing recordings of it would prove to be like walking through a beautiful rose garden bursting with vivid colors on a sunny day after previously seeing it only through a small, dirty window.



Finally, the big day arrived and the family started out for San Francisco in the afternoon, stopping only once to drop off my two younger brothers at our grandparents' house. Then the rest of us, including my sister, continued on. At about 11:00 that night, we were taking in the panorama of city lights as we rolled across the Oakland Bay Bridge. About 20 minutes later, Dad was driving up Market Street looking for a vertical sign with the letters F-O-X. It was finally spotted from several blocks away and we started looking for a place to park. As we walked to the theatre from a side street parking space, I recall a moment of anxiousness as my mother asked, "Roy, you did remember the tickets, didn't you?" As Dad pulled out the envelope containing the four manila-colored tickets, he shot her one of his patented over-the-glasses stares with a half-smirk/half-frown that said, "Of course I did." Two or three blocks later, we reached the theatre to find a line of people four abreast, starting from under the marquee and winding clear around the back of the stage house, ending on the other side of the building on Hayes Street. Several hundred more people fell into line behind us. As we stood in the crisp, breezy night air, I distinctly remember thinking what an exciting, sophisticated place San Francisco was, then gazing up the side of the huge building I observed several rows of windows which were later found out to be those of the many dressing rooms used through the years by show business notables including Judy Garland, Bob Hope, Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis. From somewhere down the line of people came the voice of a pitchman that kept repeating the words, "Getcher souvenir copy of the book on the Fox Theatre, just a dollar and a half." When he reached us, my father gave him the dollar-fifty and was handed a copy of the "book," a 7" x 11" paperback with 48 pages of text and pictures entitled, *San Francisco's Fabulous and Foolish Fox*. As Dad handed me the booklet, I started looking at it right there under the streetlight. Several pages flipped past my thumb until I reached the middle where the binding staples were. At that point, the two halves stayed apart to reveal the most astonishing "centerfold" ever printed. Across the pages was a sweeping view of the auditorium taken from the top of the balcony. From this point, the stage, proscenium arch and organ grills were so far away they almost looked small. Several other arches almost as ornate as those covering the organ chambers continued up the sidewalls in this remarkable photo. Even though it was just black and white and somewhat grainy, this picture was literally staggering. Now I could hardly wait to see this place in the flesh. The line started to move slowly as the entrance doors were opened and the crowd was herded into the lobbies to wait for the last movie to end. As we rounded the corner onto Market Street, people started to trickle out of the exit at the left front of the auditorium and down the long covered walkway to the sidewalk. About this time, there was a commotion farther down near the marquee as George Wright made his arrival. I heard the sound of fanfare trumpets, followed by applause and cheering. In an act of typical juvenile

impatience, I jumped out of the line and started to run to the front to get a glimpse of George Wright in person . . . and maybe even shake his hand. But before I got more than two steps away, Dad grabbed my arm. "Just wait Ronnie, you'll get to see him on stage in a few minutes."

The line finally started to move faster as the inner doors of the grand lobby were opened and the enormous theatre began to fill to capacity. Shortly, we were almost directly under the towering vertical sign and looking at the side of the marquee with a crush of people under it. Then we were under the 70-foot wide marquee and headed for one of the entrance doors. In the excitement and scramble to get inside, I didn't notice the elaborate underside of the marquee or, for that matter, the elegant box office. The next thing I knew, we were walking through one of the several doorways into the "small" outer lobby. It was similar to the grand lobby, very elegant with the finest detail, so I assumed we were in the "big" lobby. As we passed through the next set of doors into the grand lobby itself, I expected to be in the auditorium. As we entered it, I remember thinking for a few seconds, "This is impressive, but I thought the auditorium would be bigger than this." Then it struck home—this spacious, high-ceilinged room is crammed with standing people and there are no seats . . . this isn't the auditorium, it's the grand lobby! The gold and walnut hues and sculptured detailing of this grandest of all lobbies was so stunning that there is no really clear picture in my memory of actually being there; a case of sensory overload, just too much to take in during a couple of minutes of trying to get to the correct door to the auditorium in a big crowd of people, some of them a bit confused.

My Dad showed the tickets to an usher who directed him to the aisle door closest to our seats. As we started down the aisle, I saw a broad ocean of seats extending out at least 125 feet in front of us and now about half-filled with concertgoers. I had never seen anything like it. The Bakersfield Fox is a big theatre, but all of its main floor and balcony seats together would literally come several hundred seats short of filling this vast orchestra floor, not to mention almost 2,000 additional seats in the tremendous balcony. Then I looked up and thought that, while the theatre was immense, it didn't have the feeling of height as seen in the souvenir book. That was only because we were under the balcony. Even though it cleared the main floor by more than two stories, it did seem low for a room of such great width and depth. Our seats were about ten rows behind the front edge of the balcony. While this spot gave a view of all the essentials up front and most of the bottom half of the theatre (including a good portion of the organ grills), the full visual impact of this giant was not to be seen until I walked down to the stage during intermission time.

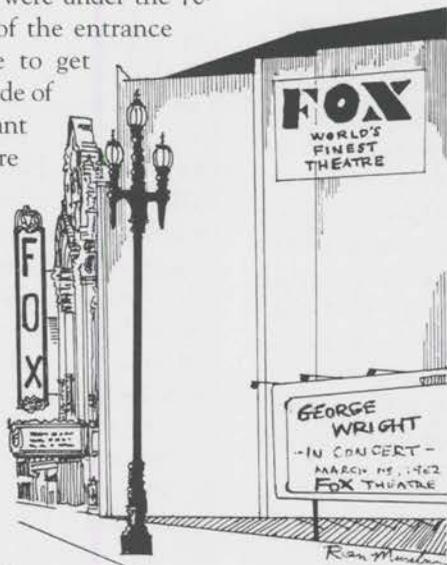
As we sat in the glow of indirect lighting waiting for the concert to begin, I looked up at the graceful panels on the underside of the balcony and noticed the lush brocade on the lower sidewalls. Much of the interior, especially the brocade-

covered areas, was somewhat soiled after more than 30 years of exposure to public wear-and-tear. But the Fox was still a thing of undeniably solid beauty, built of the best materials by craftsmen who put it together to last. Even with the dust, grime and worn places here and there, the first-class design and construction of the place was quite obvious.

With the theatre full and everyone settled into his seat, it was just after midnight and time for the concert to begin. Then the house lights slowly dimmed and the rustling audience suddenly grew quiet. Little sprinkles of scattered applause broke out in anticipation. Another few seconds of silence followed, then a spotlight beam hit the center of the orchestra pit, and the incomparable sounds of the San Francisco Fox Wurlitzer rolled out of the chambers and seemed to be coming from everywhere—organ grills, walls, floor, overhead—it surrounded the listener. I don't even recall what he opened with, just the sound. And its expanse, depth and texture were almost beyond belief. One thing I do remember about the "riser" is hearing large-scale tibias for a few bars. They seemed to be coming from both left and right and merging over the first few rows near the stage. It was a beautiful, warm, almost feminine sound. And underpinning it was a big, firm

pedal sound that generated a sensation of controlled but potentially immense power. The opener continued and the console slowly rose up into the spotlight with the one and only George Wright seated on the bench, completely in control of the instrument, making occasional split-second jabs at the stop rails to get exactly what he wanted. As my heart pounded in my chest, he brought the first selection to a characteristically exciting "George Wright ending." Even before the reverberation began to decay, there was an almost deafening explosion of applause as 5,000 people showed their approval. Like the rest of that vast audience, this kid was swept away by the excitement, and it's a feeling I will never forget.

When the applause died down, George turned around to greet his audience. "Good evening ladies and gentlemen . . . and welcome to the first annual farewell to the Fox concert!" Almost everyone in this full house laughed as though they believed it was true that the Fox wasn't really going to be torn down. The concert continued with the super-sized Wurlitzer giving each song a bigger than life sonic perspective. In between each typically clever G. W. arrangement were comments spiked with the usual unpredictable Wright wit. During one number, a rather loud cipher cut through the music, forming a rather jarring discordance. George lifted his hands from the manuals in a gesture of aggravation as much of the audience groaned in sympathy over this unfortunate development. But a few unknowing souls laughed out loud, probably thinking it was a Victor Borge-type stunt. It sounded like a Tuba around 8' "C." George turned to one side and started yelling out instructions, apparently to someone headed for the relay room. At the time, it sounded something like, "Hey Joe, go pull number 14 in relay 6 and close the main grounding lines."



Still more laughter from the house . . . but these were real instructions. He then turned to his audience and gave a look like "Oh well, these things happen sometimes." While the malfunction was being corrected, he decided to keep the throng entertained by demonstrating some of the organ's facilities. Referring to the cipher, he said, "I'll show you something that makes that sound like nothing." Pointing to the top of the proscenium, George revealed that this installation had a pipe high over the stage that was 32 feet long. He then pressed the 32' Diaphone tab, touched low "C" on the pedal board and out came a tremendous rumble I'll never forget hearing . . . or feeling. I could actually feel it through the seat! A cyclic squeaking noise was heard along with the fundamental and he commented "a wire or something up there is loose." Then something was said to the effect that this lowest octave of pipes was only played once in a while "to blow the dust out of them." Then high "C" was played to illustrate the extreme range of this behemoth. I guess it was either the top of one of the Tibias or a Flute. Even this tiny, thin sound was clearly heard from our seats way back under the balcony. Then came the four-rank Vox Humana chorus, which was referred to as "a bunch of nanny goats." While the Vox may generally be a peculiar sound in single notes, these four played in chords in this jumbo-sized theatre seemed to ooze out of the chambers and float over the balcony. Again, it was amazing how much detail in these delicate voices reached us so far away seated in a less-than-ideal position—another revelation of the building's excellent acoustics. And this room gave fantastic support to even a single human voice issuing from the stage. This was witnessed when George began a sentence after finishing a number and got out several words before his mike was switched back on. From where we sat, his unamplified voice sounded thin and far away, but every word was clearly understood. And he wasn't shouting, but speaking in a normal conversational voice, thinking the PA system was carrying his voice. And yet, even during some of the big crescendos heard from the organ that evening, it never assaulted the ears, but sounded powerful and commanding. Some of the orchestral imitations were displayed during the impromptu demonstration, and the part that sticks

out in my mind involved a rank of strings. It was in the voicing and the way George keyed the manual that created a fairly convincing illusion of someone standing in one of the left-hand organ chambers playing a violin. This quiet "tin viol" was also clearly heard without sounding at all muffled. The fact that a theatre organ can sound quite churchy became obvious when one of the three Diapasons played that old hymn "Bringing in the Sheaves." It was here that the irrepressible Wright humor and inventiveness cut loose and the Diapason was joined by some brassy reeds. The whole thing turned into a rhythmic, driving big band arrangement of "Sheaves" with a slam-bang ending that brought gales of laughter as well as applause. And it wasn't sacrilegious, but just a funny collision of two totally dissimilar things. A similar moment occurred later when he played "The Stripper," a current hit by David Rose. Bold and swaggering, it swung and bounced along, complete with bass drum beats that added a touch of nastiness. It brought the house down. The world's most elegant and dignified auditorium had been converted into a 5,000-seat strip joint.

Intermission time came, and instead of heading for the lounges, I bolted down the aisle toward the orchestra pit to get a closer look at the console. As I cleared the front edge of the balcony, the ornateness of the now-exposed upper sidewalls of the theatre attracted my attention then directed my eyes toward the ceiling. I nearly fell over backwards when I looked up at the main dome ten stories above the floor under my feet. Now the Fox Theatre down in Bakersfield didn't seem much larger than the grand lobby adjoining this magnificent hall. I continued down to the pit, trying to take in the details of the high auditorium walls, walking somewhat unsteadily. Once at the edge of the organ console pit, I found myself staring into a big dark hole. The manuals and rows of stop tabs were barely visible, along with some of the ornamentation on top of the console. Even in this dim light, it was imposing, but there wasn't much to see, so I hopped off the pit lift and walked around it to get a look at the backstage area. Dozens of people were back there walking around, looking over the counter-weight system and lighting board. One man in his mid-fifties stood near the center of the stage floor, peering up into the semi-

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darkness of the grid, probably trying to get a glimpse of the big Diaphones. I strolled over to the wide and terribly complex lighting board and wondered just what kind of magic it could perform on the stage and in the auditorium. Four or five people were gathered around a short, dark-haired man who was answering their questions about the building. He could have been the stage manager. Just before going back out into the auditorium, I walked up to him and said, "You know, it sure is too bad that all this is going to be torn down." He shook his head "no" and in a voice that sounded like a Bronx cab driver, answered, "Sonny, they ain't gonna tear this place down." Maybe he knew something? I came back with a feeble note of hopefulness, "I hope not." He shook his head "no" again with an air of confidence. As I walked from between the main curtain and proscenium, still another mind-boggling view appeared. The trip down to the stage had been made without a backward glance to see the balcony. But now, standing at the front of the stage, I could see the whole auditorium—main floor, balcony, sidewalls top to bottom, and the lofty ceiling above it all. I couldn't get over the sight of that wide balcony with its thirty rows of seats seeming to stretch back a city block. The people in the last few rows looked as though they were sitting clear across a football stadium. I stood at the top of those steps at the left side of the stage for a few seconds to take in the enormity of this cathedral, and then plodded back to find my family under the balcony. After a few moments, the house grew dark again as part two of the concert began and a beam of bright light hit the center of the pit. I remember George playing Mancini's "Moon River," which was on a Dot Records recording of his studio organ released around that time.

It seems as though we had been in the theatre scarcely an hour when 2:45 came around. George indicated it was about time to bring things to a close, but added, "I don't suppose you'd let me out of here without playing something from *The Roaring 20s*. Applause quickly followed. It was amazing to hear him play "The Charleston" and a few other things from that album, sounding just like they did on the record, only with a much greater sense of space and power. It was almost too perfect. It gave the uncanny illusion that the recording was being played through the largest, finest stereo system available with giant speakers up in the organ chambers. But it was 100% live performance and George Wright literally brought the recording back to life, note-for-note, stop-for-stop with the same emphasis and feel of the recorded version.

The last clear memory I have of being in the theatre is stumbling up the aisle as "exit music" finished the night, and my Dad urging, "Come on, it's time to go." George tore into an exuberant "San Francisco." I wanted to soak in as much of this as possible. It was a magnificent sound I would never hear again.

After that night, not much thought was given about the Fox falling victim to the wrecking ball, nor any concern raised. The two upbeat remarks heard the night of the "first annual farewell concert" led me to believe the city was coming to its senses and would convert it into the country's grandest civic auditorium. I assumed it was still intact.

Then in August of 1963, the family headed to the coast for a week of vacation from the valley heat. We stopped in Santa Cruz to visit Grandpa before going up to the city. Once in San

Francisco, we checked into our motel then took a drive down to the Embarcadero. "Hey, Dad, let's turn up Market Street and drive by the Fox." Nothing had been planned for the day, so we headed up the fascinating thoroughfare with its beautiful building façades, some of them belonging to movie palaces built in the 20s or earlier. Not remembering the exact location of the Fox, I wasn't too alarmed when we came up to a triangular block containing the rubble of a recently demolished building. "That's where it was," said Dad, pointing to the big chunks of concrete and twisted steel. "No, the lot's too small," I said. "It must be a few blocks farther." He glanced over his shoulder at the ruins again. "No, son, I'm afraid that was it. It's gone." We drove down the street until the area it could have been in had definitely passed. Then it hit home—the great San Francisco Fox Theatre was gone. San Francisco is still my favorite city, but it will never again be quite the same.



While it's strictly a matter of coincidence, theatre marquees have been known to carry messages that make a comment about something nearby or can prove to be prophetic. Here in Bakersfield, the appliance store across the street from the local Fox Theatre caught fire late one night and turned into a raging inferno of such intensity that its heat damaged the outside of the theatre. The melted plastic letters on the marquee spelled out the title of the featured movie at the time—"In the Heat of the Night."



1929-1963

In the case of the San Francisco Fox, the marquee displayed a chilling prophecy regarding the theatre's future. It was there as we slowly advanced toward the entrance the night of that "first annual farewell concert." The message was the two-word title of a horror picture showing there that week. I looked up, and staring at me were the words, "Premature Burial."



For the past two years, Ron Musselman has been collecting information from various sources and working on a manuscript that, when published, will comprise a biography of George Wright. Ron says, "Writing George Wright's story has been a dream of mine that goes back 20 years. On an absolute basis, he was one of the greatest musicians of the twentieth century. There has been a great deal of interest in George and his music, particularly since his passing in 1998. Equally important as filling a need within the theatre organ community and for his thousands of fans is the matter of documenting his many accomplishments. I feel very strongly that the general public must never forget him and that future generations should be aware of what he achieved. For there to never be a major biography written about him would be an insult to his memory. This has proven to be a huge undertaking, but my enthusiasm for it is as strong today as it was all those years ago. It is hoped that a great deal of progress can be made during this next year. While this personal recollection above is not a direct lift from the biography manuscript, information from it will be utilized in the book."

Chapter News

ATTENTION ALL CHAPTER CORRESPONDENTS: The deadline for receiving Chapter News items for the September/October issue is July 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. Thank you for your cooperation.

ATLANTA

David Tuck, President, 404/634-0833

Atlanta, Georgia. Hello to everyone from Atlanta! We've had some cold weather (for Atlanta), but it's early March and things are blooming! We have had and are ready for a great season of theatre organ events.

For our annual Christmas party, we were very fortunate to have Clark Wilson entertain us at Dr. Michael Petway's Allen GW IV home installation. The instrument is outstanding, as was Clark's program. Good food, too! For those of you who haven't heard one of the big GWs, it worth a trip to the nearest installation to experience the sound. Allen has done a super job of capturing that George Wright "studio sound!"

February found us in Gainesville, Georgia to hear George Whitmire's superb Marr and Colton installation. George has spent many hours on the organ and the surroundings, and it shows! Chicago's Dennis Scott joined us and played a wonderful program and also played all the requests we could give him. Dennis seems able to coax all the right sounds out of the instrument—great job, Dennis, and thanks!

In March we'll travel to Americus, Georgia to the Rylander Theatre to hear the famous Rosa Rio perform on the restored 3/13 Möller. We are really looking forward to this event—Rosa is a "must see and hear" artist! John Tanner and crew always ensure the Möller sounds superb. This is a just right organ in a just perfect venue and it's worth the trip to experience the combination. The theatre has been attracting full audi-

ences for organ events and Lyn Larsen will play for the Georgia Historic Trust in the Rylander April 6. Tickets are already scarce for both events!

Also in April, we'll have a choir loft party at St. Mark's Methodist in downtown Atlanta. Our artist for the event will be Atlanta Chapter's own Jerry Myers and he'll be playing a wonderful Aeolian-Skinner, allegedly the last one installed in this area. It has been superbly maintained over the years and the room in which it speaks is great. Atlanta has many churches with wonderful instruments and great acoustics. We are seeking to have a few meetings at these venues, as long as theatre style tunes are allowed!

In May, Tom Hazleton will be in Atlanta for a performance on Dr. Petway's GW IV. Mike continues to refine the sound of the big Allen and we are pleased to have Tom return and play for us.

We have a full year of theatre organ events planned and visitors are always welcome!

Paul Beavin

AUSTRALIA FELIX

Brian Pearson, President,
INT + 618 8298 6201

Adelaide, South Australia. Lance Luce has recently given much pleasure in his first return visit to this continent, and we are looking forward to tours later this year by Ken Double in early July for his second most welcome visit and David Wickerham who made many loyal friends and admirers during his time as the featured organist at the last Melbourne TOSA Easter convention in September.

The multi-talented classical/theatre organist Richard Hills left his duties as organ scholar at Exeter College, Oxford, long enough to pay a flying second visit to Australia for the TOSA Easter Convention in Brisbane. We look forward to welcoming all three (and our other overseas organist friends) again in future years. We may be a very long way from the rest of the organ loving world, but the constant interchange of organists and enthusiasts in recent years has ensured that firm international friendships and the interchange of 'know-how' and musical ideas have been made, and that in many ways the world has become a much smaller place.

Bruce Hester, John Giacchi and Darren Everitt have spent countless hours working on the 1924 Style 260 Dendy Wurlitzer in Brighton, Melbourne, to bring it up to tip-top condition, and Paul Fitzgerald of Adelaide has spent more than a month completely refurbishing the manuals of both the Dendy organ and the Malvern Town Hall Compton hybrid. They are now in first class order.

It would be hard to beat the sheer dedication to his art of eighteen-year-old Robert Wetherall of Brisbane who saves every spare cent from his meager income to fly 1000 miles to Adelaide several times a year to take lessons on the 4/29 Capri organ from his teacher Paul Fitzgerald. They have to cram work into a crowded two or three days late at night after the film sessions have finished before a dog-tired Robert makes the long journey home and goes straight to work. Fifteen-year-old Mathew Loeser who has very competently been entertaining us at the Capri since he was ten, frequently playing his own pleasant compositions, has regularly to motor up from his home in Victor Harbor, missing a day's school and having to make up the work to his teachers' satisfaction in the process, and Perin Smith of Melbourne frequently drives the 70 miles to Ballarat to practice there.

The Queensland division of TOSA has completely re-built the console of its 3/9 Christie hybrid and re-furbished the organ in Kelvin Grove High School auditorium.

I have explained before that the Australia Felix Chapter covers almost all of the ATOS members in all of Australia, which is the same size as the continental

United States. Most of us are also active members of the kindred, but quite separate, Theatre Organ Society of Australia (TOSA), hence most of the news from this chapter inevitably refers also to the activities of various TOSA divisions.

In this vein you will see that the news that Graham and Gail Ward have recently been to visit their many friends in the USA and to attend such events as the Joliet music-fest extraordinaire (I have very fond personal memories of the beautiful Rialto, the Barton and the hospitable folk there) concerns both organizations. Gail is currently the Concert Manager and a committee member of TOSA(SA)'s Capri Theatre, and Graham is one of those most responsible for bringing its Wurlitzer hybrid 4/29 to world class standard. Both are also active on the executive of Australia Felix. Similarly, such dual members as Robert Gliddon and Bill Schumacher of Sydney, and John McLennan of Melbourne are well known in the USA and very active in their respective divisions of TOSA.

Our founding President Eric Wicks is still as interested in the theatre organ and its promotion as ever, as am I. Inevitably, though, time catches up on us and by the time that you read this I may no longer be President of Australia Felix. Nevertheless I hope to continue to contribute to the rosy future of our beloved instrument and the soul-touching music that it makes in any way I can, and in particular to keep in touch with you all through the columns of this esteemed journal.

Brian Pearson

CEDAR RAPIDS

Darren Ferreter, Chairman
319/393-4129, GEU30CG@aol.com

Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Our chapter is doing our best to stay active for the ben-

efit of the organ and our members. Each month we arrange a gathering at one of our two theatre organ venues or a building in the Cedar Rapids area that possesses a pipe organ. Thanks to our visiting guests and local "social" organists. In addition, 2000 was a great year for our continuing concert series with truly professional artists—Hector Olivera, Scott Foppiano and David Wickerham all presenting well received concerts.

Among some of the 2000 CRATOS Board successes included an agreement with the city owned Paramount Theatre. CRATOS has always had a "handshake" agreement as to our connection with the Wurlitzer organ at the Paramount since 1969. Now we have an official paper signed by the Mayor of Cedar Rapids and others stating our rights as to the access of the organ for its maintenance and our group being the organ's official caregivers. This was a two-year process that finally came together. A special thank you to all members involved including our negotiators George Baldwin and Paul Montague.

We finished off our year with our Annual Dinner at the Coe College Clark Alumni House. Elections were held at that time and we are pleased to announce our Officers and Board for 2001. Chairman-Darren Ferreter; Vice-Chairman-Ray Frischkorn; Secretary-Jeff Korn; Treasurer-George Baldwin; Board Members-David Kelzenberg, Paul Montague and Scott Wiley. Each of these members possesses unique ideas and talent that truly makes our organization one of the best.

A gracious thank you to past board members for all their work. Susan Frischkorn spent the last number of years as the chapter secretary and now changes her center of attention to spending time with church activities and new

grandchild. Susan also coordinates the arrangements of snacks and beverages at our socials. Susan's husband Ray continues to serve on the CRATOS board. Paul Gemelire also leaves the board this year to change his focus on heading our committee for publicity. Cheers to both!

Plans are underway for our 2001 concert series with a return trip of Simon Gledhill to the console of the 3/12 Wurlitzer at the Paramount Theatre for the Performing Arts. His concert will be Sunday, May 6 at 2 p.m. Simon has suggested his theme of "Hands Across the Sea." Some may recall the last time Simon played, he not only played a full two-hour spectacular, but a sudden tornado siren required everyone to remain in the theatre. Simon continued to play an additional 40 minutes of uninterrupted melody—A true artist and extra treat! CRATOS looks forward to renewing our friendship with Simon and our regular concert attendees tell us they look forward to seeing him again.

August 12 will bring Barry Baker to the Rhinestone 3/14 Wangerin-Barton of the Cedar Rapids Community (Iowa) Theatre. If you note the calendar, this is the week prior to the convention in Indiana. If you are driving to the convention, consider a stop in Cedar Rapids. This will be Barry's second trip to our city. Some of you may remember that he played the Paramount Wurlitzer as one of the featured artists at the 1998 CRATOS Regional Convention. We look forward to hearing Barry for the first time on the Rhinestone Barton.

October 14, CRATOS will host Dennis James for a series of short comedy films and musical interludes at the Paramount Wurlitzer. Dennis also played for the 1998 Regional. Our audience really loves films and to see the organ used as it was intended—as an accompaniment to

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silent films. We are eager to welcome silent film artist Dennis James back to the console. Mark your calendars for all of these fine artists and make the trip over to Cedar Rapids!

Although plans are still in the making as this is written, CRATOS is going to have a first time participation in the 2001 Cedar Rapids Freedom Festival. The Freedom Festival is a two-week celebration surrounding Independence Day. It was suggested that we host a one-day entertainment variety show at the Paramount Theatre on the 4th of July. The board all agreed that Jack Moelmann and his Tribute to America program would be a fine way to introduce a whole new audience to the theatre organ. Keep your eye on the ATOS International News and this column for more on this anticipated WILD program.

In other news related to the organ, plans are being developed to expand the stage and update the Air Conditioning System of the Paramount Theatre. At this moment we are not 100% sure how this may affect our scheduling for concerts in 2002. We do know that construction will not affect console placement in the theatre or the visual appeal of the room decor. However, it was suggested by the architect that we might have to remove the entire original relay to allow for demolition of the relay room. We took the architect and engineers through the relay room and chambers and OPENED their eyes as to the hidden world of the pipe organ. I think they thought the organ was just a small speaker opening under the console! It was priceless when one engineer examined the wiring at the original operating relay and exclaimed "THE WIRE IS ALL GREY AND THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF THEM!!" Keep your fingers crossed on this project. CRATOS

is supportive in this project and hope to work closely with the Construction Company to protect this fine instrument from accidental damage.

Two CRATOS members are working on home organ installations. Although both projects are in their planning stages, members Darren Ferreter and Karl Hoffmann are each designing pseudo "theatre organs" from low-pressure instruments. It will be interesting to see how these instruments will evolve in the coming years.

We welcome traveling ATOS members to call or visit us if you are in the area. Arranging to see the organs in both theatres is not a difficult task and with a little advance notice we would be happy to show them. 2001 is proving to be an exciting year so far.

Darren Ferreter

CENTRAL FLORIDA

Bill Shrive, President, 727/546-0564

Tampa, Florida. In November our meeting at Bill and Becky Shrive's home

WINONA SULLIVAN



Al Hermans with President Bill Shrive.

featured member and artist Dr. Bill Brusick, Minister of Music at Grace Lutheran in St. Petersburg and pre-show organist at Tampa Theatre. It was a wonderful program on their 2/4 Robert-Morton. In December we met at Pinellas

Park City Auditorium for our potluck dinner and annual meeting. Work is proceeding on our 2/9 Wurlitzer and we look forward to having our regular meetings at the auditorium and Wurlitzer playing. Al Hermans gave us a fine Christmas program on an Allen theatre organ.

The New Year began with our January meeting at the home of Bill and Joan Griffis. Our artist was Warren York of Urbana, Illinois on the Griffis' Yamaha ELX-1. Warren was in the area to play a concert for the Manasota Chapter so we were fortunate to have him play for us as well.

In February we met at the home of John and Sandra Hobbs. Our featured artist was Cliff Shaffer on the Hobbs' Gulbranson organ. Cliff is a member and pre-show organist at the Tampa Theatre who is currently studying with Rosa Rio. It was a delightful program of old standards. Also at our February meeting we honored our own nationally known Al Hermans with a plaque for his 14 years

WINONA SULLIVAN



Cliff Shaffer entertaining CFTOS.

of service as a pre-show organist at the Tampa Theatre. Bill Shrive, our President, designed the plaque.

On February 25 our other nationally known member, Rosa Rio, once again played to a crowd at Tampa Theatre. This time she accompanied the silent



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film *The Cameraman* with Buster Keaton. It was another outstanding job. The audience loved Rosa and the film was hilarious.

Sandy Hobbis

CENTRAL ILLINOIS

Fr. Gus Franklin, President
217/585-1770, franklin@atos.org

Springfield/Champaign-Urbana, Illinois. The fall meetings started with a joyful gathering at the home of Keith and Lila Andrews where members were



Mark Gifford at the Williams' 2/7 Wicks at our September, 2000 meeting.

encouraged to play their Conn 652 to which Keith has added an external Leslie speaker. Some 16 of our members attended the 2000 Annual ATOS Convention in Milwaukee and they shared their enthusiasm for the event during the meeting.

The 2/7 Wicks organ in the home of Tom and Loreitha Williams continues to grow with additional wiring. This has

THURMAN ROBERTSON



LeRoy Cramer at his new Allen R3111 at our June, 2000 meeting at the Cramer's home in Decatur.

added further unification on the accompaniment manual. Tom saved an ornamental plasterwork piece from the local Orpheum Theatre wrecking ball. He has been lovingly refurbishing the piece and uses it as a decorative grill to the Wicks pipe chamber.

A group from the Land of Lincoln Theatre Organ Society (Rockford) came to Springfield to visit the 3/12 Orpheum Barton at Springfield High School as well as the Williams' 2/7 Wicks and the 2/5 Wicks in the home of Leo and Sally Kikendall. Leo has replaced the air reservoir and eliminated most of the wind leaks.

The Central Illinois Chapter members are a traveling lot. Some meetings are held in O'Fallon, some in Champaign, some in Chatham, some in Springfield and others in Decatur and Danville. Dennis and Mary Lou Ammann of Highland hosted the

November meeting and introduced members to their 2/12 Barton theatre pipe organ. A silent movie, which Dennis accompanied, elicited great laughter and much joy.

Champaign and Springfield have New Year's Eve celebrations, which include theatre pipe organ programs. Warren York played the 2/8 Wurlitzer at the Virginia Theatre in Champaign and Mark Gifford presented the 3/12 Barton in Springfield High School at an afternoon program for youngsters and a later concert for all-comers.

Jack Moelmann provided our local newsletter with a three part series of articles on "The Theatre Pipe Organ—How it Works." The articles were designed to help educate those who enjoy the music of the theatre organ but are unaware of how it works.

President, Fr. Gus Franklin, opened his home to a Twelfth Night Party. Several of our area organists played, as they often do, at our gatherings. Area organists who frequently play at our meetings and some other events include Fr. Gus Franklin, Ron Greeson, Mark Gifford, Warren York, Jack Moelmann, Leo Kikendall, Keith Andrews and LeRoy Cramer. Accordionist Jay Landers often sits in for a gig or so.

Your travels may bring you to Central Illinois. Please contact the president if you are interested in hearing any of the instruments in our area.

Martha Bradley

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CENTRAL INDIANA

Thomas A. Nichols, President
317/844-3712
thomasnichols@prodigy.net

Indianapolis, Indiana. On Sunday January 14, the Central Indiana Chapter met at Manual High School on the near south side of Indianapolis. The ATOS Annual Convention 2001 was a major topic of discussion. The highlight of the business portion, however, was the presentation of an Honorary Lifetime Membership to Ruth Ward. Ruth is a long time member who has given unselfishly of her time and energy, ensuring that the Hedback Community Theatre 2/11 Page/Wurlitzer continues to entertain audiences prior to every Footlite Musical performance. The theatre patrons are treated to half-hour interludes played by chapter members, which we are told, are as significant a portion of the whole experience as the musical itself. Without Ruth's dedication to scheduling organists, we would miss out on this opportunity to present the theatre pipe organ to the general public.

Following a motion to close the business portion, those in attendance were treated to the talent on the keys of Jack Moelmann. Colonel Jack brought the console of the Mighty Wurlitzer up from the pit with a medley of songs paying homage to his hometown. Later in the concert we discovered he must have been doing some weather forecasting when planning his program, as he played

"Rubber Ducky" while outside a gentle rain was falling. The Colonel not only kept the audience entertained with fingers on the keys and feet dancing on the pedals, but also through his witty sense of humor. To close his performance, Jack accompanied a silent film short showing the vast diversity and majesty of the United States landscape. The collection of patriotic songs he arranged in conjunction with the film left not a single soul in their seat or without feelings of pride for their country.

The month of February brought the sound of singing pipes from all over the state. So much so that a decision was made to forego the regular monthly meeting. Sunday the 4th found Central Indiana's own Bill Tandy delighting a large audience at the Grande Barton in the Warren Performing Arts Center. Bill presented a wonderful concert along with his special brand of humor appreciated by all. The program ranged from ballads full of warm emotion to jazz so hot the piano sitting outside the solo chamber was nearly smoking. On February 11 in Fort Wayne, Barry Baker occupied the bench of the Embassy Theatre's Grande Page for a superb Sunday afternoon concert. Not surprisingly, Barry reinforced his reputation as a fine theatre organist.

Finally, the 25th saw the return of Ken Double to Indiana for a concert on the Grande Page in Anderson at the Paramount Theatre. Following a harrow-

ing late Saturday night drive from Grand Rapids, Michigan, Ken gave a fine performance. During the first half he utilized the warm, yet powerful sounds of the Yamaha grand piano through the manuals of the organ. Starting off after intermission, he gave his fingers a break and, using the computer playback feature, sang "When You're Smiling." The next day, before finishing his whirlwind trip and returning to Grand Rapids to commentate another hockey game, Ken played material for a new recording due out this summer. This will be the first recording on the Paramount's Grande Page in over 20 years and the first since a complete restoration of the instrument in 1996.

Shawn Chase

CENTRAL MINNESOTA OTTER TAIL

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Myron Dahle at the console.

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for the Arts had to be cancelled due to cold weather and dangerous driving conditions. Some of our members travel a great distance to attend our meetings. Our January chapter meeting was well attended and all enjoyed the Christmas potluck dinner.

The chapter has purchased a television set with a VCR for those who wish to practice playing for silent movies.

Twice a year the Center for the Arts holds a Film Festival showing both classic and recently released films. During the festival, members of the chapter played a mini-concert before the Sunday matinee and evening showing. Patrons enjoyed the concerts.

In March, on the 16th and 17th, Lance Johnson will be playing for the Harold Lloyd silent film *The Kid Brother*. He will also be performing for the Brown Bag Lunch concerts on June 9, (Summerfest), June 29, July 27 and August 24.

August 10 and 11 will also be silent movie nights at the Center for the Arts.

We are looking forward to October 6 when Don Thompson will be giving a concert at the Center at 7 p.m. He will also be giving a workshop for interested organists.

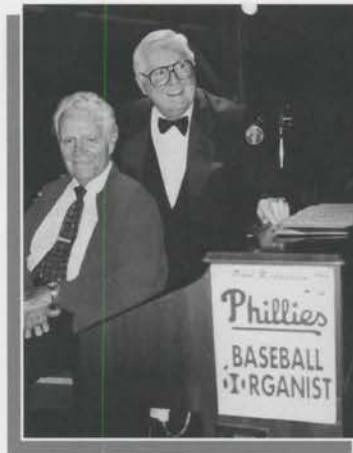
Berta Baker

DELAWARE VALLEY

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

Pottstown, Pennsylvania. TOSDV reports about \$800 was raised for our

LILLIAN ERICKSON



Vincent Kling (seated) with Paul Richardson at Mr. Kling's fall fundraiser benefit for TOSDV.

organ restoration fund from the fall benefit evening at Vincent Kling's "Farm Hall." The featured artist was Paul Richards, organist for the Phillies National League Baseball Club and TOSDV member who donated his services for the fundraiser. TOSDV extends warmest thanks to Vince and Paul!

In December *The Nutcracker* was performed at the Keswick Theatre in three separate performances accompanied by three different artists. The local dance company had music played on our Möller by members Dick Metzger, Bernie McGorrey and Barbara Fensmeir. Best of all, it was to three full houses. Great exposure for the organ!

Project work is now focused on the Keswick Möller as work progresses on

TOM SMERKE



Dick Metzger at the Moller Console Keswick Theatre, Glenside, Pennsylvania.

installation of the new Emutek combination action and control system under the direction of our electronics man, Jack Swartzenberg. The console has been removed from its left of stage platform to backstage for wiring modification, repair and testing. The chambers will be getting a thorough cleaning while the chests are shifted around, repaired and wired for the new control system. Some of the chests will be marked for additional extensive work needed to restore the instrument to A-1 shape. As reported earlier, some ranks of wood pipes stored in basement rooms at the Keswick were destroyed when a flash flood filled the rooms to the ceiling. Additionally, some other ranks were missing in whole or part when we inventoried the organ. Other ranks in the organ suffered that all too common problem of big foot HVAC people moving through the chambers. Director of Projects, Tom Smerke, is searching for replacements and reports

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some success locating these ranks: Trumpet; Kinura; Strings and a Tibia Clausa. It's hoped most of the work can be completed by the fall of 2001.

At Penn State, Abington, member Wayne Zimmerman is again donating his services to accompany the classic silent film *The General* on April 1, 2001. Once again, our host will be Professor Moylan Mills, Professor Emeritus of Integrative Arts, who will discuss the silent film era, the stars, studios and system of distribution and what it meant to the America of that era. The TOSDV Annual Meeting will precede the movie program.

Tom Rotunno

EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

Hank Lysaght, President, 781/235-9009

Wellesley, Massachusetts. A concert by member, Peter Krasinski, at Babson on January 7 preceded our annual meeting with reports, election of officers and board members. Our year 2001 officers remain the same, but new board members were elected to fill the vacancies of those whose term of office expired. Robert Evans and Dorothy Bromage were made life members of the chapter for their exemplary work on our regional convention.

Our first silent movie this year, *Tell It To The Marines*, was shown at Babson on January 13 and featured Lon Chaney as the tough sergeant breaking in new recruits. Organist Juan Cardona, Jr., from

the Connecticut Valley Chapter, provided excellent accompaniment. He also played a selection before and after the film. His fine work was acknowledged by much applause and whistling from his audience.

On February 4 member, Robert Legon, was our entertainer from our console and Bob fashioned a rather unusual format. This consisted mainly of songs and stylings over the years, including radio shows, whose themes were played on either unit pipes or electronics and his audience tried to identify the selection with the show. Although we did very well, some eluded us.

David Wickerham made his first appearance with EMCATOS at Babson on February 24 and what a fine impression he made with his large audience! This evening everything worked well with our Wurlitzer, which has never been in better regulation and tune. Our artist performed a varied program as he demonstrated great talent and registration combinations not heard before—something for every musical taste.

Dave can play any type of music on any unit, concert or church organ with a solid classical training. This was very evident as his program progressed from pops, pizza parlor varieties, marches, hymns, and medleys including one of Irish songs and even bordering on classical.

Mr. Wickerham played various ranks of pipes, traps and percussions to show those present what a unit orchestra can

do. Included in his well-planned performance was a 7-8 minute sing-a-long complete with song slides and a silent movie, *Putting the Pants on Philip* with Laurel and Hardy.

Our artist obviously pleased his listeners as he was given two standing ovations. Dave had a nice easy rapport with his audience and they responded accordingly. We all wish him well in his career as a professional organist. (This concert was not attended by the writer due to illness but fellow chapter members, Eugene Dolloff and Stuart Hinchliffe, supplied sufficient details for him to write this coverage.)

Stanley C. Garnis

GARDEN STATE

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

Trenton, New Jersey. Saturday, January 27, was a pleasant day for our members who were interested in touring the

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Coralie Romano and Fran Monte, Secretary/Treasurer, enjoying hospitality in Rahway Senior Center.

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At back from left, Coralie Romano, Fran Monti. Front row, Barbra Bacon, Jelani Eddington, Karen Nahra, Robin Fox.



Sean Price at console. Youngest member of GSTOS. At back from left, Howard Ellis and Norman Andre.

Senior Citizens' Center in Rahway, New Jersey where our chapter is installing the famous RCA Rainbow Room Wurlitzer, which was donated to us. The Senior Center was the previous Rahway Post Office built 65 years ago. The interior of the building was designed to protect the mail and federal money that traveled in and out of it. There are still openings in the walls that were placed to view the employees. Postal guards had a practice pistol range in the basement, which is still there but not used.

The town made renovations to the building and it was named the Senior Citizens' Center of Rahway. The center now has a pleasant bright, very large room with tables, chairs, piano, TV and a small electronic organ. A variety of



GSTOS members inspecting Solo chamber in Rahway Senior Center. From left, Dave Kopp, Bob Raymond Jr., Mike Fox, crew chief, and Bob Martin.

programs are sponsored for the senior groups.

The Wurlitzer console will be placed at the end of the social room. A stairway leads to a second floor where two large rooms are being accommodated to become solo and main chambers.

President Cathy Martin called the Meeting to order at 1 p.m. and the annual budget was discussed. The 2001 financial budget was passed and members enjoyed several interesting videos of the old famous theatre organists now gone but not forgotten. Tours were conducted through the pipe chambers. It was a pleasant afternoon in a new surrounding.

Our February meeting and open console was held on Saturday, February 24, at 10:30 a.m. in the former Rahway Theatre now named the Union County Arts Center of Rahway, New Jersey. The open console was a main attraction as our members were eager to play once again the famous "Biggest Little Wurlitzer." This 2/7 theatre pipe organ was installed in the theatre in 1928 and like other organs of the 20s had a similar history of no longer being played and just gathering dust. In 1961 Bob Balfour, Mike Hughes and Wendel Rotter discovered the organ and restored it. They found

the Wurlitzer pipes matched perfect with the acoustics of the large auditorium, thus the name "Biggest Little Wurlitzer" is really true. During the 1960s Delaware Valley Chapter and New York Chapter would meet and use the organ for meetings and programs.

While driving on the Garden State Parkway to the February 24 meeting, I thought back to our first meeting that was held in Ye Olde Rahway Theatre in October 1971. Sixty ATOS members and friends, who loved theatre organ music, came to the theatre. The purpose was to start a New Jersey Chapter. It was a wonderful exciting time. After a successful year of meetings, open consoles, organ crawls, workshops and concerts on our Wurlitzer, ATOS accepted our Garden State Theatre Organ Society as a chapter. Through the years GSTOS has been very fortunate to bring many hours of enjoyment to the audiences with famous theatre organists performing on the 2/7 "Biggest Little Wurlitzer." Unfortunately, it is now the only original Wurlitzer in a theatre in New Jersey.

The meeting day, Saturday the 24th, was a dull, rainy day with frozen ice and snow. Not discouraged, organists and members promptly arrived at the theatre and soon eager players surrounded the console. The open console list was filled and members were able to play their favorite music, disregarding some missing notes and defects. All admired the recently restored auditorium filled with gold leaf trim . . . Gorgeous, Beautiful, WOW, could be heard. The theatre is outstanding.

Paul Jacyk, Vice President, conducted a short meeting at 1:30 p.m. A group of members remained in the theatre and enjoyed a silent film, *Gertie the Dinosaur*, the first animated cartoon with accompaniment by Bernard Anderson, who

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later in the evening accompanied *The Great Train Robbery*. We also viewed a movie *Duck Soup* with the Marx Brothers. These films were part of the Library of Congress Film Preservation Tour presented by American Movie Classics. The Union County Arts Center sponsored the festival for six days. It was an interesting day. Thank you to the Union County Arts Center who made this meeting possible.

Jinny Vanore

HUDSON-MOHAWK

Frank Hackert, President
518/355-4523

Hudson-Mohawk, Schenectady, New York. The winter monthly meetings of the Hudson-Mohawk Chapter were



Carl Hackert and Charley Lowe.

reflective of the performance and technical aspects of the club. The two meetings consisted of a celebration of a musical life well lived and a technical session serving to enhance organist's repertoires.

The Chapter's January 22 meeting at Proctor's Theatre, Schenectady, New York consisted of an evening's tribute to the late regional theatre organist and piano tuner Raymond Norton who passed away on January 4, 2001 at the age of 93. Ray played in many capital area theatres during the silent film era including Proctor's Theatre pre-Goldie.

(Goldie, Proctor's Theatre's 3/18 Wurlitzer, is not the theatre's original installation.) During the meeting, videos of interviews with Ray were shown and members who knew him shared reminiscences. These interviews are a legacy of a charming raconteur who demonstrated a vivid recollection of the early days of theatre organ. He will be missed.

On February 19, also at Proctor's Theatre, talented chapter member David Lester provided an informational talk and demonstration on variations and how to play them. Open console and refreshments followed.

The Chapter's monthly noontime free organ concert series continued to gain in popularity and audience support during the winter months. On January



From left, Bubbles LaRue, Avery Tunningley and Stormy Windbag.

23, Carl Hackert, with vocalist Charley Lowe, delighted their audience with a wonderful program. On February 20, Proctor's Theatre was host to a "Touch of Vaudeville" presented by impresario Avery Tunningley at the console with ample assistance from glamorous divas

Bubbles LaRue and Stormy Windbag. The program consisted of vaudeville-style music and a wonderfully funny short silent (accompanied by Avery on Goldie) starring Charlie Chase. Much fun was had by all.

Norene Grose

LONDON AND SOUTH OF ENGLAND

Jim C. Bruce, President
24 Priory Crescent, Wembley, Middx.
HA0 2QQ, UK

Concert at the State Theatre Kilburn,
January 7 at 2:30 p.m. Organist,
Simon Gledhill (4/16 Wurlitzer)

To commence our 2001 season of concerts, what better place to start than the magnificent State Theatre Kilburn. This year the theatre has become available to us for afternoon concerts, so we decided to switch our concerts from Sunday morning to Sunday afternoon in the hope of attracting a bigger audience.

Well we certainly did that, but I'm sure that this was also due in no short measure to the calibre of our organist, Simon Gledhill. Simon kept the audience entranced for the whole concert with both his playing and choice of music. We were treated to marches, novelty items, music from the shows and big band sounds, in fact music to suit everyone. In the end we ran over our allotted time but the audience would not let him go without an encore. Everyone left the venue talking about Simon's mastery of the Wurlitzer and the wonderful registrations that they had heard.



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Woking Leisure Centre, January 20 at 7:30 p.m. Organist, Robert Wolfe on the Society's 3/16 Wurlitzer

Wurlitzer Hall in the Leisure Centre was packed to capacity for Robert's concert. He has many fans around the country and I'm sure many of them had travelled great distances to visit Woking that evening, in order to be part of Robert's lively and exciting performance. The



Woking Wurlitzer does not have a piano attachment, but as a Yamaha HS8 happened to be available on site, Robert asked for this to be plugged up to the MIDI interface on the Wurlitzer so he could use it as a piano. To the audience's delight he used this to great effect in many numbers, particularly when playing "Rag Time." Robert kept the audience enthralled the whole evening with his own particular exciting and dynamic style of playing. All too soon it was time to end the concert, which concluded with Robert playing the audience out after the closing announcements. Afterwards we had many requests from members of the audience for Robert's early return to Woking for another concert.

Technical News from the Barry four-manual Christie.

It was still dark when our chapter technical team left London on January 2



for the three-hour drive to the Memorial Hall, Barry in South Wales. By 10:30 a.m. the console had been brought up on its lift and was being dismantled in preparation for the insertion of a huge board full of electronics. Meanwhile in the two chambers downstairs the driver

boards were being attached to the walls and existing cables from the chests to the old relays were being removed and gently guided towards the new electronics where the thousands of soldered joints would be made.

This was the start of an operation, which was to last until the middle of February when the Mighty Christie Organ spoke again, driven by its new electronic relays. The installation, which has involved several weeks' work, has gone very smoothly, but on one occasion a peculiar thing happened. While the organ was switched on, and when no one was touching any part of it, every pipe in the solo chamber started to play. Within seconds the main switch to the electronics was thrown. As you can imagine the noise was unbelievable. It was fortunate that no one was in the chamber at the time. This unexpected interruption to our day was caused by only one microchip going faulty. With so many chips involved it is not uncommon for the odd one to 'give up' in the first few hours of their use. All the chips are plugged into holders so they can be changed in seconds, once identified.

Before the St. David's Day Concert on March 3 the team will be staying once again in Barry to finish off some remaining work, re-assemble the newly painted console, test and tune the instrument. Further reports on the Christie Organ and our concert in the next issue.

Ian Ridley

LOS ANGELES

Irv Eilers, President, 323/254-0987

Los Angeles, California. For the third year in a row, LATOS and the Orange County Theatre Organ Society joined forces to produce Wurlitzer Weekend 2001, "A Theatre Organ Odyssey." As in the past, the weekend was a success in spite of the inevitable glitches. Over 200 weekend packages were sold with more than 65 people from Pennsylvania, Colorado, Minnesota, Arizona, the San Francisco Bay area, Sacramento, San Diego and the Inland Empire of California in attendance. Others attended one or more selected performances, making some of the largest LATOS audiences in recent memory.

The Weekend got off to a great start on Friday evening with Stan Kann and

surprise guest pianist Ralph Wolf in a splendid show of popular music peppered with their unique humor at the San Gabriel Civic Auditorium. The rain-storm the week before poured water into the main chamber making the Wurlitzer unplayable but a three-manual George Wright Signature Series Allen electronic organ was graciously provided by Henry Hunt of Church Organs, Inc., and the show went on! The 22 speakers in the orchestra pit made the instrument sound as though the music was coming from the chambers. Our hats off to Jack Darr and any others who spent hours very carefully carrying all those speakers in and making sure they were adjusted to provide just the right sound!

Jim Riggs played duplicate shows, which included a silent film on Saturday morning and Saturday afternoon, at the Bay Theatre in Seal Beach. Ticket sales at the door, added to the Weekend passport holders, nearly filled the theatre at each performance and theatre owner Dick Loderhose reported lots of candy, popcorn, and soft drink sales.

The Saturday evening performance at Sexson Auditorium with Jelani Eddington at the organ and David Harris at the piano was spectacular! The highly professional performance was a tremendous success with three standing ovations and three encores. This was only their second public performance as a duo after their debut at the Wichita Regional in 1999 and few in the audience were aware of some of the problems Jelani encountered (and overcame) while playing the new four manual Avery Johnson console. Jelani is a true professional as most of our artists are. Donn Linton, Bill Willis and Jerry McCoy spent many hours practically right up to show time getting the console ready for its debut. Gordon Belt spent hours writing the program for the new computer. Thanks to all.

The event on Sunday morning with Rob Richards at the El Capitan Wurlitzer (former San Francisco Fox Wurlitzer) in Hollywood was made possible through the efforts of Ed Collins and Kevin Frawley of Buena Vista Productions. Scott MacQueen, Walt Disney Studios Film Archives Historian, gave a wonderful presentation detailing the story of Animated drawing. Silent Mickey Mouse comics accompanied by Rob

and Rob's trip through the organ were very well received.

The finale on Sunday afternoon at Plummer Auditorium in Fullerton featured Hector Olivera on the Wurlitzer and on the Roland Atelier provided by Robert Tall and Associates of San Dimas. Although some were disappointed in not hearing more from the big Wurlitzer, most enjoyed Mr. Olivera's dynamic dexterity at the Atelier.

A great big thanks to all the folks that came in from out of town for this weekend and of course to all the LATOS and OCTOS members who attended. Planning is already underway for Wurlitzer Weekend IV to be held in January 2002.

Wayne Flottman

MANASOTA

Vince Messing, President 941/627-5096

Sarasota, Florida. In January, Norman Arnold and Allen Miller voiced and tuned the J. Tyson Forker Memorial Wurlitzer organ installed at Grace Baptist Church in Sarasota. All of the percussions are operating as well as the Zimbelstern. For the January meeting Warren York, a winter visitor from Illinois, played for over 70 members and visitors.

In February, George Wesner and Fred Davies from RCMH performed for a large crowd at Grace Church. The March meeting at Grace will feature Warren Thomas and John Steele visiting from Orlando. John was involved with the installation of the Wurlitzer when it was installed in Andre Hall in Miami.

The Board of Directors is devoting all of their combined efforts in arranging details for the Tom Hazleton concert at Grace on April 1, 2001.

Carl C. Walker

MOTOR CITY

David Ambory, President,
810/792-5899

Detroit, Michigan. Our members have been very busy taking care of contracts and making arrangements for the installation of new seats in the theatre. It is a tremendous undertaking. Committees are working diligently composing flyers for distribution to our many patrons and members for a gigantic fund raising drive.

Many people have already purchased seats for \$250.00 each. Their name will be placed on the back of the seat.

Restoration work continues in the theatre. George McCann, Charlie Mack and John Neil Skelly are painting the walls. David Dawson and Gabe Tapler have been working on the new lighting fixtures for the auditorium. Tom Hurst and David Ambory have been working on our Barton theatre organ. They have installed all new springs on the pedal board, rebuilt one of the pressure regulators for the Tibia rank and re-leathered one of the pneumatics in the console.

A few of our members went to the Walter P. Reuther Library at Wayne State University. The library is home to the archives of Labor and Urban Affairs. It is among the largest and finest collections of its type in the world. The holdings also include collections that document the urban history of the Detroit area. Mr. Tom Featherstone, Audio Visual Archivist, spent the whole day with us going through historic pictures of Detroit. We had slides made of the various theatres that no longer exist. We show some of these slides before all of our performances at the theatre in conjunction with the Detroit "300" Tri-Centennial Celebration.

We were very sorry to hear of the death of one of our long-time members, Henry Gerald Przybylski. He passed away on February 24th from respiratory and heart failure and a very rare form of Leukemia. Henry was the first member that contacted the owners of the Redford Theatre to make arrangements for the Motor City Theatre Organ Society to use the Barton theatre organ. Henry was also very active in saving the Wurlitzer theatre organ at the Fox Theatre. His contribution to the theatre organ world will always be remembered. There

D. VAN STEENKISTE



From left, Andrew Novak, Tom Featherstone, Audio Visual Archivist, Michael Hauser, George McCann, Oren Walther.

was a memorial service for him at St. Sabina Catholic Church in Dearborn Heights, Michigan and following there was a reception in his honor at the Redford Theatre.

Our movie series continues featuring our many local artists during overtures and intermissions. We owe a great deal to these organists that volunteer their time and entertain our patrons, introducing many of them to the theatre organ for the first time. The ones that have played during this series are Gus Borman, Gil Francis, Jennifer M. Candea, Steven Ball, Dave Calendine, Scott Foppiano, Tony O'Brien, Sharron Patterson, John Lauter and Don Haller.

For further information be sure to visit the website of MCTOS and the Redford Theatre at <http://theatreorgans.com/mi/redford> or call 313/537-2560.

Dorothy Van Steenkiste

NORTH TEXAS

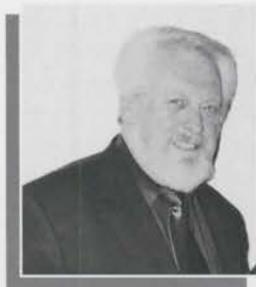
Donald Peterson, President
972/517-2562, dpete1@jcpenny.com

Dallas/Ft. Worth, Texas. After suffering water damage to our chapter Robert-Morton organ in the Lakewood Theatre from various roof leaks over the past several years, we built a waterproof roof over the chambers and felt secure. Ironically, we have now found that we are vulnerable to rising ground water! On January 13, the organ crew entered the theatre for the scheduled Saturday maintenance and as they walked down the aisle toward the stage they found that the carpet felt soggy under their feet. They quickly discovered that the entire stage area was under water, including the pit beneath the stage containing the organ console sitting on the lift platform in the down position. Shining their lights into the console area their worst fears were confirmed. Even in the dim light they could see that the water in the pit covered the lift mechanism and the bottom one-third of the console. They quickly sent out for a portable pump and began the task of pumping the hundreds of gallons of water out of the theatre. With water covering electrical connections and motors under the stage, they used caution in their examination of the situation of our organ and lift.

They found that we were victims of several circumstances: the sump pump

failed; the sewer line into which the pump usually disposes of ground water it pumps was plugged up and recent rains had raised the ground water level which filled the pit. The city was called and they cleared the sewer blockage to the line behind the theatre. The sump pump was repaired and the organ crew installed a back-up pump and then set about determining the extent of the damage. It was determined that the lift would need extensive rebuilding or replacement. The pedal board and swell shoes would need replacement and the console would require extensive repairs. Fortunately, the newly installed electronics were above the water line and were perhaps salvageable.

Since the inundation, the console has been removed from the theatre and is receiving closer inspection and preservation. Fortunately, the insurance is expected to cover the major costs of the repairs and replacements. But! we are without our organ for several months, which affects the plans of both the chapter, and the theatre management for the use of the instrument. In the interim,



Bill Horn played for North Texas "Wersifest" in January.

chapter meetings will have to be moved to alternate venues.

The February annual business meeting of the North Texas Chapter was held in the Dallas home of Irving and Ruth Light. The main items of business were the election of officers and the discussion of the damage to the Robert-Morton.

After the business meeting, a free-form musical afternoon of solos, duets and trios using the Light's two organs and grand piano ensued. With the three instruments in the same, spacious music room, a musicale at the Light's is always a fun time. President Don Peterson extended the thanks of the chapter to Irving and Ruth for filling in on such short notice.



Don Reasons opened the musical program following the North Texas annual business meeting in February. Home of Irving and Ruth Light.

In January, Evan and Teddy Santistevan invited the chapter members to a "Wersi Winterfest" in their lovely home. Last year at this same time they extended the first invitation to have a chance to hear international organist/entertainer and Wersi demonstrator, Bill Horn, play their prized Wersi organ. Again, they were able to engage Bill to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 72

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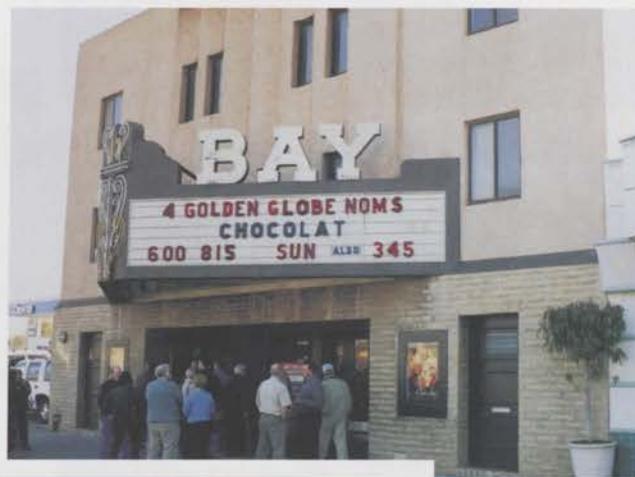
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Wurlitzer Weekend III

Text and photos by Ron Musselmann, Convention Reviewer

Exterior, Bay Theatre,
Seal Beach



Jim Riggs, Bay Theatre



Interior, Bay Theatre,
Seal Beach

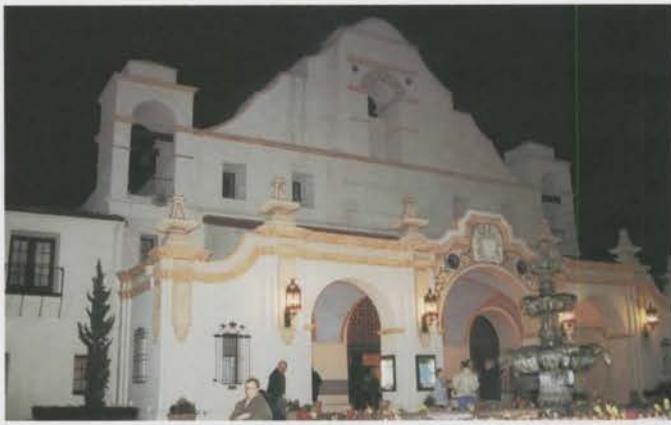
IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE that each succeeding year of a multi-event shindig can keep changing and topping itself. That was certainly the case with the 2001 Wurlitzer Weekend. In addition to the weekend concerts, this year's edition kicked off with a Friday night show. So we went down earlier in the day and once again took in the Nethercutt collection at San Sylmar. As has been the case in our other half-dozen visits over the years, Curator Byron Matson, now celebrating his 28th year at America's finest array of vintage automobiles, conducted the tour. We never tire of viewing the tower's display of autos, unusual pieces of "functional fine art," and musical instruments, which includes a magnificent music room centerpiece—a 74-rank Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ. But this year saw the completion of still another attraction. Across the street from the original tower is a new 40,000 square foot building displaying dozens of additional priceless cars and boasting a theatre for videos and other presentations and a working library. And there are plans for further expansion. It was a rewarding afternoon and, as usual, there were new things to see and learn about.

We left a little early from dinner hoping to reach San Gabriel in plenty of time for Stan Kann's opening concert, but getting there from anywhere is always an adventure. As we pulled into the parking lot late, the attendant was asked

about how much of the show had been missed, explaining, "We were given some

bad directions." The kid shook his head and shot back, "There are no *good* directions to this place!"

Once inside the mission-style San Gabriel Civic Auditorium we found that Stan had just finished his opener and was addressing the audience. Surprise #1 for the weekend: Clear from the back of the auditorium it was obvious that the white three-manual Wurlitzer was not at solo position in the pit, but there was a smaller walnut-finish three-manual on stage. He took his place at the console and played some music from *Beauty and the Beast*. Much of the sound seemed to be issuing from the pipe organ grills and at times it almost sounded as if it could have been the Wurlitzer, but something was different. We later found out that when the organ crew came in to tune the Wurlitzer a few days earlier it was discovered that one of the chambers had sustained water damage from a recent storm. It could not be repaired that quickly so an Allen digital was hurriedly put into place the day before the concert, with most of the speakers aimed toward the organ grills. The San Gabriel Wurlitzer is a favorite of many, but I don't think anyone with a reasonably well balanced attitude was disappointed that evening, especially given the unforeseen problem. And Stan is



Exterior, San Gabriel Civic Auditorium



Proscenium, San Gabriel Civic Auditorium



Stage, San Gabriel Civic Auditorium



Ralph Wolf and Stan Kann

such a showman, you could put him in the spotlight with nothing but a kazoo and one of his beloved old vacuum cleaners and he would still give the audience a successful performance. He is one of the most inherently humorous people to ever command a stage. We recall one of his dozens of appearances on the "Tonight Show" in which Stan had Johnny Carson laughing so hard that the host nearly fell out of his chair and disappeared behind the desk. And with Stan at the con-

sole, the Wurlitzer's stand-in did a credible job. His "One Moment in Time" was nicely done, although there was a strange buzzing sound that was heard from time to time amid the pleasing passages on the Strings. The first half also included the novelty "Teddy Bear's Picnic" and a pairing of "What I Did For Love" and "One."

Going into part two, Stan began with one of his seemingly clumsy/nervous monologues (You never can tell where the "real" Stan Kann ends and the act begins!), and told the audience, "I'll play something to open the second half... as soon as I can figure out what I wrote up here!" He then announced it was "I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself an E-Mail." It was a little later that Kann confessed to the audience that he had a curious habit that was impossible to control. The habit

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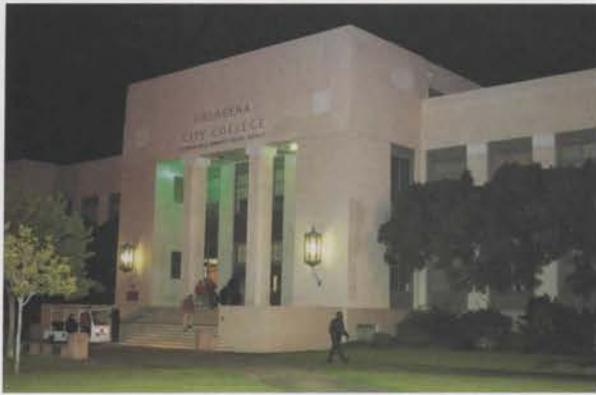
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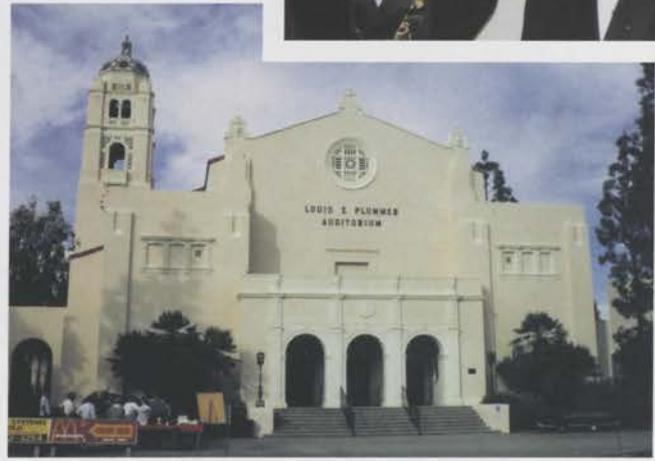


*Sexon Auditorium,
Pasadena City College*

*Jelani Eddington
and David Harris*



*4/23 Wurlitzer
Console, Sexon
Auditorium*



Plummer Auditorium

was humming while he played, even during a concert. That explained the earlier curious intermittent buzzing, which was not an organ malfunction, but Stan humming over the P.A. system through a mike that had been left on. He added, "And I don't always hum the same thing I'm playing."

What happened next was one of the weekend's wonderful bonuses. Veteran pianist Ralph Wolf, a solid pro who has worked with names like Mel Torme, joined Stan. During this segment of duets, there was some really funny bantering between the two, and Ralph kept right up with Stan, including a couple of jokes about Kann's "vertically-challenged" stature. But most important, the playing by both was superb. Wolf rendered a really nice solo in "You Do Something to Me," and the interplay between the two instruments in "I Love Paris" was flawless. More than once, we were shown that Ralph Wolf is not a run-of-the-mill cocktail pianist. This was most evident during "Lover" and "Falling in Love With Love," which was given an exciting finish. After Ralph exited to vigorous applause, Stan closed the evening with a medley from *Phantom of the Opera*, well-arranged and making good use of the 319's resources.

Saturday morning took us south of L.A. down to Seal Beach. The venue was Richard Loderhose's Bay Theatre, which houses the former N.Y. Times Square Paramount studio Wurlitzer, now sporting 46 ranks of pipes. We entered the Main Street façade a little before 10 a.m. expecting to hear two hours of pleasant '20s and '30s music and see a couple of silent comedy shorts. What we experienced was nearly 3½ hours of superb music in which the artist surpassed anything we ever heard him do before, and he has always been one of our favorites. We have not heard from Jim Riggs for some time, and it is great to see him back on the scene. Here is a man who seems to have been reborn, both as a musician and in his out-

look on anything he speaks about. Jim looks great, he was in a good mood, with articulate, witty and informative comments, and we have never heard him play better. This exceptional program was prefaced by a Dick Loderhose prologue, an informal chat in which the audience was treated to interesting anecdotes involving George Wright, Bobby Hackett, John Seng and Jesse Crawford. And about this greatly enlarged

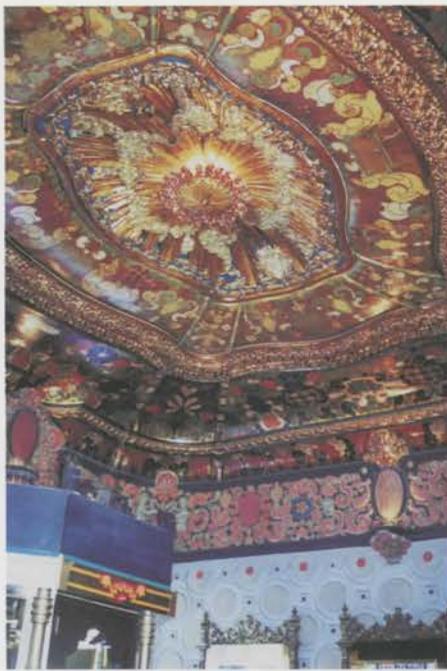
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historic instrument, Loderhose said "She's like a Frankenstein after the last electrode has been fully charged."

Jim opened his concert with an appropriate "Paramount on Parade." The feeling of nostalgia was ignited with Crawford's

"Forgotten Melody." It was easy to imagine Jesse Crawford playing this same instrument some 70 years ago. Riggs then tore into a snappy, razor-sharp "You Turned the Tables on Me." A particularly good arrangement of "St. Louis Blues" was



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played. When a Flute pipe ciphered early on, he stopped for a second, yelled, "At least it's in tune," and then kept right on playing. Luckily, it finally cleared. St. Louis Blues featured a strongly rhythmic second half—in some places lilting, at other times hard driving, it was one of the best versions we've ever heard. "If I Had You" showed more of a new Jim Riggs—a sparkling arrangement and a bravura ending. In Cole Porter's "Begin the Beguine," there was an interesting effect—the use of two stops of contrasting colors, one tremmed, the other not. They stood apart and gave the illusion of two additional parts being played instead of fusing together—adding interest for the ear.

For those familiar with the life and work of the late Eubie Blake, his lovely, haunting "Memories of You" brought back memories of Eubie. In this wonderful presentation, one could almost hear the words "Memories of You" when Jim played those four notes. The first half ended with music from *Singing in the Rain*, a skillfully crafted medley with smooth, logical transitions from song to song.

"Taking a Chance on Love" kicked off the second half, a classic "riser" played with pizzazz and on-the-money timing. Jim showed his strengths as silent movie accompanist when two comedy shorts were screened. First was Laurel and Hardy's *Love and Hisses*. His score provided a lot of solos between the various colors and accents. I found myself concentrating on his accompaniment, even though it supported the visual precisely as it should. It was interesting to watch Jim's handling of the huge console, as he only glanced at the screen now and then to pick up visual cues.

Before the second short, he paused to offer some thoughtful comments about our homeland. Then, to amplify his thoughts, Riggs turned to the console. In a moment of inspired patriotism, he played an improvised "America the Beautiful" that emerged from the chambers as soaring majesty. It was a totally unexpected inclusion, and one of the best things Jim has ever done.

The second flick was a Charley Chase comedy, *Fluttering Hearts*. It featured cross-dressing and a cleverly choreographed sequence with a mannequin. As before, much color and musical interest was present in the accompaniment.

As the generous offering of entertainment drew to a close, Jim aired a few more reflections. Regarding the theatre organ as a way of life, he said, "Rational people don't take this up for a living—it's a calling." He referred to that genre of instruments as "something I can always count on to feed my heart." And in keeping with that line of thought, instead of closing with a barnburner, the last song we heard was a warmly sentimental "Always."

After a late lunch in Seal Beach, there was still a lot of free time until the next concert that evening, so we opted to take a long, leisurely drive back up into L.A. on the Pacific Coast Highway. It was an enjoyable cruise with a variety of scenic side trips we hadn't made in over 30 years. When we finally re-convened with our friends who went to the second Jim Riggs concert, there was just enough time to dine in the unique ambience of the downtown Pasadena McDonald's.

Then we drove a few blocks to the Sexson Auditorium at Pasadena City College for the Jelani Eddington/David Harris concert. A four-manual French-style beauty has replaced the

23-rank Wurlitzer's original gloss black three-manual console with expanded stop rail facilities approaching those of a Fox special. But to the experienced ear, many more hidden changes had taken place. Several first-rate musicians have previously played this organ in successful concerts, but it sounded a little coarse and somewhat indifferent. But unsung heroes have obviously achieved a great deal of tonal refinement since then. In addition to vastly improved octave-to-octave consistency in solo voices (including a no-longer raspy Post Horn), the various combinations were now much more pleasing. This was a very fortunate transformation for the capable team we were to hear tonight, a duo who had taken the 1999 Wichita Regional by storm. This would be only their second performance of duets, but one would swear they sounded like veterans who had played together for 20 years.

A Wrightesque arrangement of "Waltz in Swingtime" got things off to a spirited start, followed by "Fascinatin' Rhythm," one of their usual precise duets, sporting a color reed and Tibia/Clarinet combination, and ending with an ear-catching upward run. Next was "September Song," deftly introduced with a hint of "With A Song In My Heart." Another nicely integrated duet, it was enhanced by effective flavoring with Strings, both in celestated accompaniment and a brief orchestral chorus. After Jelani played a Latin American romp with some fast and clean fingering on Oboe family color reeds, David rejoined him for a medley from *Singing in the Rain*. There was a contemplative solo by Harris and Eddington's part of this assembly showed his expected vivid registration, literally crackling with vitality. One particularly orchestral intro

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infused with the title song led into a sunny "Good Morning." Then a hint of that song smoothly segued into the next selection, and then on to "Give Me the Simple Life," which started with another cheery color combo, followed by a rapid succession of contrasting colors. Then, as he did at the Wichita Regional, David Harris favored us with his piano solo of Gershwin's "But Not For Me," a quiet moment that transported us to an elegant Manhattan supper club. Then in a seamless marriage of piano and organ, the two artists gave us Copland's "Hoe Down" from *Rodeo*. At times, the texture was startlingly faithful to the orchestral original. With Jelani's playing of "Hungarian Dance #5," the Wurlitzer's mettle in delivering classical fare was shown through some cleverly registered tremors-off sequences. In his Cole Porter medley, opened with one of the best-structured intros we've ever heard, the audience was treated to much variety of registration and some very creative bridges between each selection. Jelani is still quite young, but his grasp of the instrument and taste have reached maturity. David returned to the piano to give us Berlin's "What'll I Do?," another exquisite melancholy moment that draws the listener in.

The two men teamed up for the closer, Gottschalk's "Grand Tarantella." This joint display of virtuosity electrified the crowd. And David Harris is more than a purveyor of show tunes—his technique displayed in this demanding classical piece made that very clear. At the rousing conclusion, everyone in the house leaped to his feet, and the evening was not over until three encores had been played.

On Sunday afternoon, it was down to the Fullerton High School Auditorium to hear Hector Olivera play its 4/37 Wurlitzer. It had been many years since we had heard him concertize on a theatre pipe organ, and many of us looked forward to this event. It was a surprise to find the Wurlitzer console joined onstage by a boxy two-manual electronic device. Instead of "Olivera at the Wurlitzer," the weekend attendees heard a presentation dominated by electronic music in which the Wurlitzer was mostly relegated to the back seat. He played "You Make Me Feel So Young" on the synthesizer—shades of Nelson Riddle and other orchestral covers popular in the 1950s and '60s. There were pretty good imitations of French Horns, Trombones and muted Trumpets. In "Moonlight Serenade" Hector played both instruments—the electronic played back the pre-recorded up-front portion, while the Wurlitzer was played live, although mostly subordinated to more bland accompanimental sounds. Then he shut off the electronic and let the real thing take center stage with "That's Entertainment." It opened big and bold, then continued with more relaxed and varied passages before a typical aggressive Olivera coda. Hector was his usual energetic, humorous self, frequently punctuating comments with his new trademark "Thank you very much!" After demonstrating some more of the electronic's imitative and sound effect capabilities, he returned to the pipe organ for a great rendition of "One Morning in May," well registered and played with a great deal of feeling. It exhibited a tremendous dynamic range, from full orchestra to a distant purr—a high point of the afternoon. Much of the remaining time was taken up by electronic imitations of a cathedral choir singing in Latin with the church's organ accompanying, complete with the sound of a Trumpet en Chamade. And

there was a synthetic big band piece with a mercilessly lengthy drum solo.

Quite a bit of grumbling was overheard at intermission time regarding the major intrusion of the electronic into what was supposed to be a theatre pipe organ concert. The most pointed remark came from an individual who said, "The place to sell an electronic product is in a music store demonstration with punch and cookies . . . not at a concert where people paid to get in."

In fairness to Mr. Olivera, it must be said that he is a virtuoso musician with astounding technique. The man can do just about anything he turns his attention to. And his abilities were present at various times that day, although even some of the work at the Wurlitzer was a bit heavy-handed and weighted towards the loud end of the scale. More than one patron expressed "wanting to hear Hector do what we know he can do." And there is no doubt that all of his capabilities are intact. It is most unfortunate when other considerations get in the way. But nothing was in the way when he returned to the Wurlitzer with an eyebrow-raising Jongen intro followed by "The Trolley Song," deftly played with some well-integrated classical influences. Many of his fans look forward to the day when Hector plays a concert in which he decides to focus all of his considerable talents on a great pipe organ.

The Bonus Event: Disney's Showplace

The extra fifth concert this year was a most welcome addition. We were excited to find out that a concert at the El Capitan Theatre in Hollywood would be played, and at only \$10 a ticket, this exceptional package proved to be the bargain of the weekend. Our group got started early that morning, which gave us time to take a look at some prominent landmarks—the Chinese, Warner's and Pantages Theatres and the Capitol Records tower. While the others had coffee in a nearby "historic" Hollywood hash house, yours truly went solo into the El Capitan on a hurried self-guided tour and inspected every last nook and cranny of the public spaces. The Disney Company is to be congratulated for their thorough \$10 million restoration of this theatrical jewel. From the massive marquee, ornate entry hall ceiling, updated lobby, to the elegant auditorium with its magnificent expanse of golden proscenium plasterwork, this theatre is stunning in the quality of its finish work. And praise be to Disney's Dick Cook for providing the driving force that eventually resulted in the restoration and installation of the El Cap's crowning glory—the magnificent San Francisco Fox Wurlitzer pipe organ. And today, we fortunates were there to hear the premiere solo concert played by the El Capitan's principal organist, Rob Richards. Moments after a polite uniformed usher routed us to our balcony seats, Disney Studios archive film historian Scott Mac Queen appeared on stage to welcome the weekenders, and he provided an interesting bio of Disney's music composer and former pioneer theatre organist, Oliver Wallace. His comments were fortified by a film about the history of animation featuring Mr. Wallace and hosted onscreen by Walt Disney himself. Scott then introduced Rob, who accompanied an early Mickey Mouse cartoon, *Plane Crazy*. After the cartoon, he segued into the "El Capitan March." Richards was his usual upbeat self, and was obviously very excited about this morning. Since joining the Disney Company a year and a half ago, he has played more than 1,000

shows on this historic instrument and has been involved in several music projects. And added to all that activity, he is still able to concertize and make recordings. Richards is also product specialist for Walker digital theatre organs, whose designs seem to be giving the competition a royal run for the money, as evidenced from Walker's spectacular debut last year in Milwaukee.

Rob grew up on George Wright recordings, and while not a slavish Wright sound-alike, it can be seen how George's overall approach to the instrument has helped mold Richards and other contemporaries. He talked about George's ties to the instrument, saying that Wright considered it to be "the quintessential theatre organ." He aptly referred to George as "the greatest genius to ever approach the theatre organ," then demonstrated one facet of that genius (humor) by playing the GW arrangement of "Tiptoe Through the Tulips With Me." He then went directly into a quite faithful rendition of a Wright trademark, "Jalousie." Richards continued by showcasing the music of Oliver Wallace with a medley from Disney's animated feature *Dumbo*. After "A Whistler and His Dog" (complete with expertly simulated dog barks and whistling), Rob demonstrated much of the big Wurlitzer's tonal facilities. The impressive parade of tone colors was preceded by remarks on the history of this and the other four Fox specials, the Wurlitzer Company, and the theatre pipe organ in general. The demo started with the three varieties of Diapasons being played individually to show their distinct characteristics. This was followed by the three Tibias, then several of the many ranks of Strings. He then played all the Strings together. What an ensemble! We were also given samples of the broad assortment of various Flutes; color Reeds, including an ocean of Voxes, Trumpets, Tubas, and the ensemble-capping Post Horn. The organ seems to be finely honed. Everything from the tiniest reed to the giant 32' Diaphones (which could literally be felt coming up through the concrete floor) sounded good.

The remainder of the program featured a generous helping of wonderful Disney movie music classics that Richards seems to love as much as anything he plays. He played a memorable

arrangement of pieces from *Jungle Book*, *Lady and the Tramp*, *That Darn Cat*, *It's A Small World* and some cartoon shorts. One of the loveliest moments, both in terms of melody and registrational texture was "Pooh's Lullabee." In what might have been an unspoken George Wright tribute, Rob delivered an outstanding "Slaughter on 10th Avenue." The tonal and dynamic variety as well as the physical impact of the Fox Wurlitzer in this orchestral tour de force was something to behold.

A second Mickey Mouse cartoon was screened, and it was loaded with imaginative and outrageous sight gags, all of which were well supported by Rob's work at the great golden console.

As the morning drew to a close, the artist named a long list of people who made everything we had seen and heard possible, a nice and rare gesture. As Richards related how Walt Disney's work had been a part of his life since the age of five, he briefly began to choke up with emotion, giving a revealing glimpse of just how much all of this really means to him. And he could not have said it any better than with the words, "I am thrilled to be just a tiny part of the Disney magic." Most appropriately, Rob closed with "When You Wish Upon A Star," then added "Hooray For Hollywood."

It is very heartening to see such an important piece of theatre pipe organ history preserved and ably played in a highly visible venue, visited by several hundred thousand people a year. Rob is the featured organist at the El Capitan and John Ledwon, an ATOS Director, is also on the organ staff. Both Rob and John perform regularly prior to movie show times, premieres and special events. And it is my guess that at least 90% of those who pass through those ornate doors understand and identify with the music they hear inside. The future of the Mighty Wurlitzer is being served very well on Hollywood Boulevard.

For the third year in a row, the dedicated theatre organ groups in Southern California gave us a fine weekend of music. As we have said about other hosts in the past—When these folks send out an invitation, accept it and show up. You will always be guaranteed more than one experience that will leave you with fond memories. 

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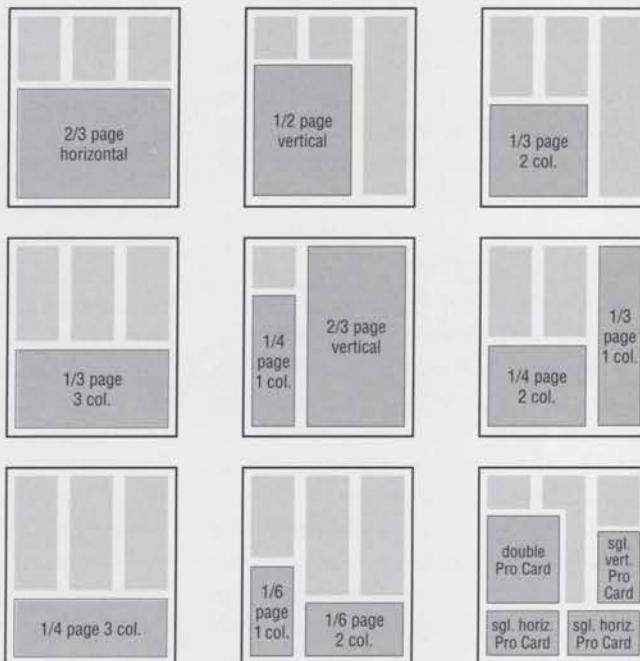
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CHAPTER NEWS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 62

play for the North Texas members and we were excited at this rare opportunity to hear this very talented musician again. He was even more exciting than we remembered from his earlier appearance. Taking only a few breaks to wipe his brow, he continued to play his arrangements of a wondrously diverse selection of our favorites. To everyone's delight and amazement, he was tirelessly generous and the afternoon slipped away without our noticing or caring. We thank the Santistevans and Bill Horn for a most enjoyable and exciting Wersi experience.

The North Texas Chapter is privileged to enjoy a close relationship with Dallas radio station KAAM. KAAM plays great selections from past decades and gives its extensive listening audience a real treat any time you tune in. Our President, Don Peterson, proudly states that all of his radios are permanently tuned to KAAM! North Texas Chapter is especially grateful to all the KAAM family for their help and enthusiastic promotion given to us in connection with our presentation of *The General* last year. Over 525 people came to the Lakewood Theatre, largely due to their efforts. We are assured that they are looking forward to continuing to promote and support our events.

Irving Light

OHIO VALLEY

Joseph L. Hollmann, President
513/522-1800, jhollmann@fuse.net

Cincinnati, Ohio. Exciting times are upon the Ohio Valley Chapter! The Chapter had to vacate our home for the last 27 years, The Emery Theatre, located in downtown Cincinnati. The owners of Emery decided to close the theatre for possible future renovations and our chapter found it necessary to remove our Mighty Wurlitzer from the premises towards the end of 1999. The Wurlitzer is in safe storage and receiving a complete re-leathering by the all-volunteer organ crew. The exciting news is that a new home for our chapter and the Albee Mighty Wurlitzer has been secured!

The College of Mount Saint Joseph, located in a western suburb of Cincinnati, has an 1100 seat theatre and the college was looking to obtain an organ for installation in the theatre. Opportu-

nity presented itself, discussions were held and it was agreed upon between our chapter and Mt. Saint Joseph that this would be the new home for The Albee Mighty Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ. The campus theatre receives much use and will present many opportunities for the Wurlitzer to be enjoyed by all. Completion of the project is scheduled for late 2003. Chambers in the theatre must be enlarged, the console will receive a complete refinishing, the original Wurlitzer relay will be replaced with a Rickman Uniflex 2000 control system, a console lift will be purchased and the re-leathering will continue. There is much to do. But, before you know it, the Albee Mighty Wurlitzer, located on the campus of Mount Saint Joseph, will rise out of the orchestra pit for its dedication concert to the applause of all!

Joseph L. Hollmann

ORLANDO AREA

Warren Thomas, President
904/761-0592

Orlando, Florida. It's been too long since the news from the "mouse town" has visited these pages, but we'll try to bring you up to date as briefly as possible.

First, we must mention the sadness and loss felt by the passing of our good friend and chapter member, Leroy Lewis. He will be missed not only by the members of this chapter but also by all who knew him in and out of the theatre organ world. Farewell, Leroy.

In keeping with attempting to secure the best local theatre organists for our monthly meetings, in January our own John Steele held forth at the console of the chapter 3/17 Wurlitzer at Lake Brantley High School. John gave a scintillating mini-concert topped off by his accompaniment of an Edgar Kennedy two-reeler on 16mm film.

Prior to our February meeting, the Board met to take care of some house-keeping chores such as electing a new president and vice-president and rounding out a full slate of board members. Our new President is Warren Thomas. And the corporate address is: 5939 Kendrew, Port Orange, FL 32127-5887. All correspondence pertaining to OATOS should be directed to this address.

The guest artist (the term is used advisedly) for our February meeting was David Cogswell from Sarasota. David was a high school music teacher and band

director for some 30 years. He is currently music director at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Sarasota. He has given concerts in Chicago and throughout the state of Michigan. He occasionally takes a turn at The Roarin' Twenties Restaurant in Ellenton. Thinking we heard some familiar runs and fills, we asked David if the late Buddy Cole had had any influence on his music and he said, "Yes, and a lot of George Wright, too!"

In March, about 45 of us have chartered a bus and will be going to Sarasota to hear John Steele play the former Andre Hall (Miami) Wurlitzer newly installed in Grace Baptist Church, stopping on the return trip in Ellenton at The Roarin' Twenties. Since this will be after the fact as you read this, full report next Journal.

Jack Doyle

PUGET SOUND

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

Seattle, Washington. Over 90 folks arrived at West Seattle's Hokum Hall to



Russ Evans and Bill Keller look on as Clyde and Adeline Hook display their Honorary Life Membership award.



Adeline Hook shows off the beautiful embroidered jacket presented to her by Bill Keller.

enjoy a hugely successful Valentine's Day "Wurlitzer With Pizza" party. And what a great day it was!

Andy Crow did his usual outstanding job of accompanying a silent movie,

Sappy Service, a typical slapstick comedy new to many folks. Russ Evans showed for the first time ever a movie documenting Balcom & Vaughn's building of the replacement New York Paramount Theatre Wurlitzer console, the original having been destroyed in an arson fire. Russ had been "on call" for the entire three year construction period during the early 1970s, grabbing his camera and light bars and driving to Balcom & Vaughn each time Bill Bunch called. The movie chronicled the entire process, from initial design using photos and measurements taken from other consoles, to all the beautiful woodworking, to laminating the curved horseshoe, to fitting the complex parts around the keydesk, to wiring, to assembly and to the final "roll-out." It was completely narrated by Russ from notes he and Bill had made prior to Bill's death. There were numerous familiar faces in the movie, making it even more enjoyable and a real trip down memory lane! Andy played delightful soft background music on the Wurlitzer during the presentation. After enjoying the catered pizza, beverages and relish trays, a number of talented members participated in an enjoyable open console.

Hokum Jeebs' generosity is much appreciated for welcoming PSTOS to Hokum Hall. Many folks have mentioned what a superb time they had and how they hope the event might be repeated next year ... *at Hokum Hall!!!*

At the Valentine's Day Party, Clyde and Adeline Hook were presented a framed Honorary Life Membership certificate in recognition of their many years of participation in and support of PSTOS. The certificate reads: "With gratitude for your many years of loyal Chapter membership, for your masterful officiating at numerous Open Console sessions, for your superb service as Bus Captains for many Chapter events, for always helping to further the goals of the Chapter, this award is presented in recognition of and appreciation for outstanding service to Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society." Previous members of this prestigious group: Eddie Zollman, Bill Bunch, Thelma Barclay, and Bill Hale.

In addition to the Honorary Life Membership award, member Bill Keller presented Adeline with a beautiful white jacket embroidered with a full color theatre pipe organ on both front and back.

Bill knew Adeline had her eye on one of his outstanding embroidered garments and the timing was perfect for him to present the jacket to her. Bill has created numerous theatre organ related designs. Contact him at tibia8and2@aol.com to learn more about them.

Jo Ann Evans

RIVER CITY

Greg Johnson, President, 402/753-2486

Omaha, Nebraska. In Omaha "The weather outside has been frightful" (with sincere apologies to the lyricist of this familiar pop tune). River City Chapter had to cancel its January meeting because of icy street conditions and a scheduling conflict with a host theatre. Instead, our clan gathered on Saturday, February 17, at the Crossroads Shopping Mall in midtown Omaha. Greg Johnson hosted the meeting at Keyboard Kastle's store in the mall. Apparently everybody in Omaha was suffering from "cabin fever," and most stores in the mall were holding big sales—parking in the expansive lots and garage was tight, but we all arrived for the program.

TOM JEFFREY



Greg Johnson, who has been playing "electronics" for over 27 years, gave us a musical tour of the unique sounds and patterns available on the Technics SX-G100.

Greg Johnson, a staff member for Keyboard Kastle, hosted the meeting and was our first guest artist for the day. Greg announced the death one of Omaha's favorite theatre organists, Eddie Butler, who passed away on February 2, 2001 at age 90. Eddie was noted for his midnight organ concerts over local radio stations and for his many years at the console of the Orpheum Theatre's Wurlitzer.

Greg Johnson, who allowed that he has been playing "electronic organs" for over 27 years, opened his program with background information on the Technics SX-G100 spinet organ, and the



Jim Wieda, manager of Keyboard Kastle's store in Crossroads Mall, offered a program of tunes ranging from romantic to military marches.

sounds and versatile patterns of the instrument. Especially interesting were the automatic introductions and endings the organ could supply, appropriate to the style of music played. Greg's musical potpourri was drawn from both pop and classical composers, including Rodgers and Hammerstein, Franz Lehár and John Philip Sousa.

Next, Greg introduced the store manager, Jim Wieda, who continued the program with tunes that ranged from romantic songs for St. Valentine's Day to a lively military march in honor of Presidents' Day. This was our first opportunity to hear Jim Wieda play and we are certain that he will be invited for return engagements. The chapter is very indebted to Greg, Jim and Keyboard Kastle for a delightful afternoon.

Tom Jeffery

SAN DIEGO

Frank Y. Hinkle, President
619/460-1920, fyh3@Yahoo.com

San Diego, California. The hair on the back of my neck is beginning to stand on end and beads of sweat are breaking out on my forehead. My blood pressure medicine is not working and I feel like I am about six and a half days on a seven-day deodorant pad. What prompted these feelings of anxiety, this sick feeling in the pit of my stomach and a tongue that feels like the inside of a Russian soldier's boot. I just realized that San Diego will be hosting the Annual ATOS Convention in 2002. Schedules have to be confirmed, busses have to be secured and we have to have all of this ready for a presentation at the 46th Annual Convention in Indianapolis this August. So much to do and so little time. I guess that every President of every chapter that has ever hosted a conven-

tion has gone through the sheer panic that comes with this undertaking.

We are fortunate that in addition to our wonderful organs, we have one of the most beautiful scenic areas in the country. Those of you who have been to San Diego will certainly enjoy coming back. For those visitors who will be here for the first time, you will have an opportunity to see a little bit of our "East County." Unlike most Conventions that are held in urban cities, most of our venues will be in more residential and park-like settings. We certainly hope that when you visit our city that you stay for some extra time so that you can enjoy "America's Finest City."

Enough of the commercial, on to the news. Our 2001 Pops Series is off to a good start. Dennis James entertained us in February. He is always a hit and this program was enjoyed by all. Bobby Korda of Los Angeles accompanied Dennis. Bobby gives new meaning to the word "Fiddler." He played the most amazing numbers while Dennis played the piano and the organ accompanied them with songs that Dennis had pre-recorded. Two musicians and three instruments—What a concept!

In March, Rob Richards will show his talents here at our 4/24 Wurlitzer and in May, Donna Parker will entertain us. We are so pleased to be able to present such fine artists. I am so impressed that theatre organ music is "happy music." I notice that when the artist strikes those first notes, that everyone in the audience smiles. It certainly brings back memories of my childhood, spent in Pitman, New Jersey, when Lowell Ayars played the Kimball in the Broadway Theatre. There is a certain spark, when the lights dim, and the spot light comes on to illuminate those incredible instruments. I guess it's worth working for the convention.

See you in Indianapolis in August and then here in San Diego, November of 2002.

Frank Hinkle

SOONER STATE

Joyce Hatchett, President, 918/743-1854

Tulsa, Oklahoma. Although Sooner State Chapter was threatened with another snow-out on the evening of our January meeting, fortune smiled on us and the snow did not materialize! So we enjoyed a delightful session of open console on our 3/13 Robert-Morton at Tulsa Technology Center's Broken Arrow campus. Vernon Jackson was first on the bench. Almost-thirteen-year-old Kenneth Pierce, who played some hymns, was next. We heard Dick Deaver, Vivian Williams and Wayne Barrington. Wayne played several numbers and then started on a selection from *Titanic*—and the organ thudded to a stop! We thought it might have sunk in honor of the music! However, it turned out that the blower had overheated and after waiting a few minutes for it to cool off the overload switch was quickly reset by Wayne, Phil Judkins and Lee Lomas. So the music went on. (The crew promised to look into the problem later.)

Sam Collier had a turn, then Dorothy Smith, who played some Christmas music and Carolyn Craft, now recovered from her broken right wrist. Then at the end of Phil Judkins' turn we heard the unmistakable sound of a cipher! Phil dutifully climbed off the bench and pulled the offending Saxophone pipe and returned to finish his piece. The meeting closed with music from Joyce Hatchett and one selection by Bonnie Duncan.

We also elected officers at this meeting. Serving for the next two-year term are Joyce Hatchett, President; Wayne

Barrington and Phil Judkins, Vice-Presidents; Carolyn Craft, Secretary and Lee Lomas, Treasurer. Fred Rixe, J. A. Swartz, Sam Collier and Lee Smith were elected as Directors.

We returned to Tulsa Technology Center for our February meeting, with Wayne Barrington and Phil Judkins featured for the mini-concert. Each played a delightful program of popular music and there were no organ disasters this time! Six persons played at open console.

Jim Reel presented our president with a couple of programs from a Southwest Regional Convention, "Sooner Sonic Sights and Sounds," held in the Tulsa area in February of 1970. It's hard to believe that 30+ years could go by so quickly!

Dorothy Smith

WOLVERINE

Edward Brockhahn, President
248/544-2793

Detroit, Michigan. The Wolverine Chapter held their Annual Meeting at the Redford Theatre on February 11. They had an election of new officers. President—Ed Brockhahn; Vice-President—Jim Teevin; Secretary and News Editor—Charlie Baas; Treasurer—Edie Teevin; Friendship Secretary—Lucille Mitchell.

It was decided that they would meet bi-monthly this year, the last Sunday of the month. They will continue meeting at homes of their members. The hostess has the option of having a professional organist play or just have open console. The members elected to purchase a new seat for the Redford Theatre in the name of the Wolverine Theatre Organ Society. The meeting continued with open console at the Barton theatre organ.

Dorothy Van Steenkiste 🎵

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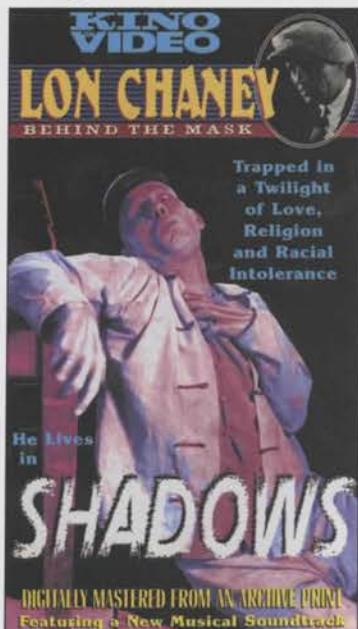
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The Sounds of Silent Movies

By Robert Gates, Associate Editor

THREE BY CARTER— AND ONE BY MURI?

**SHADOWS, 1922; with Lon Chaney,
Marguerite De La Motte and Harrison Ford**



Photoplay, for January 1923, spoke of *Shadows* as “An idea of delicacy and charm that has been translated with great care to the screen.” The same could be said for Carter’s accompaniment, delicate where appropriate and always melodic; we ride it through *Shadows* over the smoothest seas imaginable. The Sargent/Stark Wurlitzer is nicely regulated and well recorded, providing a background not unlike that heard in *Wings*¹. There is only one insignificant interruption in the music (unusually

the producers of Carter’s videos treat him far worse) and synchronization is fine throughout.

As always, Lon Chaney works with wonderful skill. We first see him on a beach after a sudden storm has wrecked his ship. Stooped, shivering, equipped with false upper teeth and a salad-bowl haircut, he is the 1920’s stereotype of a poor Chinese laundryman. His character, Yen Sin, is also called “The Heathen”, and is quickly rejected by the local fisher people because his religion differs from theirs. Another survivor reports that the cruel husband, Daniel Gibbs (Walter Long), of sweet (and extraordinarily passive) Charity Gibbs (Marguerite De La Motte) has been killed.

After a time, Yen Sin has established a laundry on a primitive houseboat and a new minister, John Malden (Harrison Ford, no, not *that* Harrison Ford) comes to town. Romance arises between him and Charity and soon they marry, much to the displeasure of Nate Snow (John Sainpolis), the richest man in the town. Our somewhat holier-than-thou minister lives contentedly until a church conference calls him away accompanied by rival Snow. After he makes his presentation, he receives a telegram telling him of his newborn daughter and a letter from Daniel Gibbs, who says he was not lost at sea after all and demands a \$500 “loan” not to make trouble. Malden

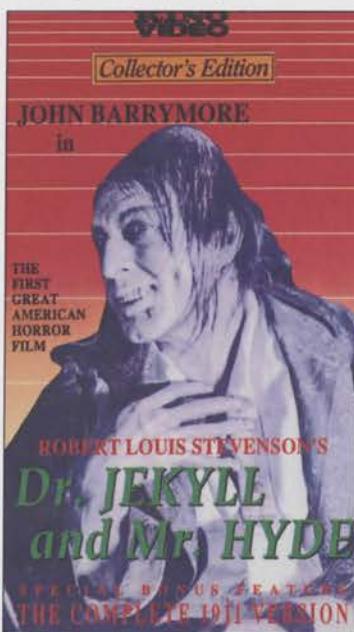
leaves money in an envelope for Gibbs, and returns a broken man. He moves out of his home to avoid tainting his family and “resigns the pulpit”. But a friend of Yen Sin writes him on a shirt collar (cheaper than paper, apparently) that he has seen something important which Sin finally discloses as he is dying, that may release the minister and his wife from the “Shadows” that enveloped them.

This is not quite the end of the film, however. In a controversial sequence, Yen Sin seemingly renounces his “barbaric” faith, but a more careful look at the circumstances and dialogue shows a bargain rather than an abnegation, leading to a nice balance between the racism of the 20’s and the depicted character of a “noble savage”.

In Brief: Excellent acting and fine music. You’ll want to stay with it until the end.

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

DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE, 1920; with John Barrymore and Nita Naldi



According to the jacket notes, this video is “today accepted as the best (version) and the most faithful to the original story.” Barrymore is in full flower in this Robert Louis Stevenson tale of a good man undone. When the movie opens, we find his Dr. Jekyll working long hours to heal the many poor who need him. His great renown becomes very annoying to his fiancée’s father, Sir George Carew (Brandon Hurst). When the two meet after a dinner, worldly Sir George muses about

human character, saying that a weak man is the one who is afraid of experience. He goes on to the remarkable pronouncement that, “The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it.”

Jekyll takes this very seriously, but worries about the effect of such license on the soul. After much pondering, he concludes that if a man could have two bodies, one for good and the other for evil, the soul of the good man should not suffer from the deeds of the bad one. The next problem, of course, is to make this happen.

He locks himself in his laboratory and eventually devises an elixir, a terrible black concoction which in a thrice turns him into Henry Hyde! And even more remarkably, another swig takes him back to Jekyll once again! These transformations are great fun for the viewer. We see him writhe horribly, become

stooped and watch as his fingertips grow to twice their former length. Although we do not see this happen, he loses much of his hair, dons false "uppers" and a large conical projection blossoms from the top of his head. Here, before our eyes, is the first feature film Conehead, ready for action!

His first actions involve Miss Gina (Nita Naldi) who seems to be the least skilled cabaret dancer in all of filmdom. Pounds lighter than when she was seen in *The Ten Commandments*², Naldi is a striking vamp. Hyde makes her his mistress, but his Hyde side is becoming stronger, causing him to discard her and do far worse deeds as the evil within him intensifies to a breathtaking level.

John Barrymore must have enjoyed this role, because of the Chaney-rivaling opportunities it presented. He was also malevolent as Rasputin in *Rasputin and the Empress*, was Captain Ahab in two versions of *Moby Dick* and Svengali in the movie of the same name. Younger than his two remarkable siblings, Lionel and Ethel, he had a matinee idol's looks and voice, and was dubbed "The Great Profile", a side of him amply depicted when shown as Jekyll. He was an acclaimed stage actor and the nonpareil Hamlet and Richard III of his day.

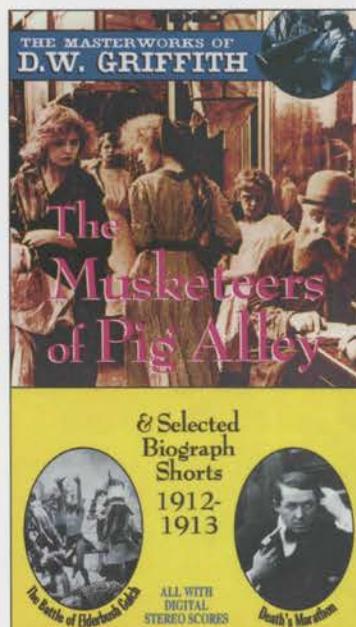
Unfortunately, his great gifts were too soon lost. An alcoholic from a very early age, his acting abilities began to decline in the early thirties. He died in 1942 of pneumonia and cirrhosis of the liver, 33 years before his granddaughter, actress Drew Barrymore, was born.

Carter provides music for this screenplay that is totally appropriate and beautifully coordinated. Uncharacteristically, he accompanies Hyde's appearance with a quiet, unmelodic solo accompanied by even softer moving chords, a mordantly eerie soundscape that can make your hair stand on end. Unfortunately, at least in the review copy, there were times when a severe case of the "wows" was evident, pitch variations that spanned as much as a half tone. The greater part of the performance was steady, though, making it worth wading through the distortions.

In brief: Beautifully acted, scary and heavy.

From Kino International Corp., address above; \$24.95 plus postage.

THE BATTLE AT ELDERBUSH GULCH, (1914); with Lionel Barrymore and Mae Marsh



This film is one of seven shorts that are in the collection titled *The Musketeers of Pig Alley*. All were directed by D. W. Griffith for Biograph. The pictorial quality of these videos is outstanding, giving the viewer a rare opportunity to see how clear movies really were when they were shown in the early 'teens. Robert Israel's "Biograph Quartet" accompanies six of them and the jacket tells us that the seventh, *The Battle at Elderbush Gulch*, has an "organ score by Gaylord Carter". Not so!!

Compelling auditory evidence places John Muri at the console of what seems to be an organ in a theatre. The fine arrangements and playing are characteristic. Skeptics might want to listen to Buster Keaton's *College*³, a Muri performance on a similar organ, to judge for themselves who is playing.

The Battle—is a tale of the old West, where a needless conflict arises between a group of settlers and a local tribe of dog-eating Indians. Two sisters (Mae Marsh is the older) join the settlers, bringing two adorable pet puppies with them. The dogs get loose and the Indians go to red alert. Just as the chief's son is about to knife one of the pups, the girls' uncle shoots him. War is declared, followed by cowboys-and-indians conflict and deeds of bravery and treachery.

Typically, in movies of this vintage, players are not introduced. Blanche Sweet apparently plays the mother of a baby whom the Indians capture. Lionel Barrymore is probably the

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uncle, but the identification is not positive.

Lionel, the oldest of the three Barrymore siblings, had the most active film career of the trio. He appeared in some 220 movies, 90 of which were made before 1920. He was an unforgettable Scrooge in the annual radio performance of the Dickens *A Christmas Carol*, and was Dr. Kildare's mentor, Dr. Gillespie, on screen and in broadcasts.

In brief: Action a-plenty, with excellent Muri accompaniment. From Kino International Corp., address above; \$24.95 plus postage.

JUDITH OF BETHULIA, (1914); with Lionel Barrymore, Blanche Sweet and Three Gishes

This 62-minute movie, also directed by Griffith, seems to be a warm-up for his *Intolerance*⁴, made two years later.

Judith (Blanche Sweet), known as "the Devout", dwells in Bethulia at the time of an attempted invasion by a Captain Holofernes (Henry Walthall), the "Bull of Assur". We see a narrow-gauge battle of Babylon in which masses of soldiers with swords, spears and a scaling tower try unsuccessfully to enter the walled city. After this failure, Holofernes decides to seal the city, preventing the dwellers from bringing food in or reaching the wells that are just outside the gates.

Judith, seeing the misery of her people, announces modestly that she will "—do a thing which shall go through all generations." After a sackcloth moment, she dresses alluringly and sneaks into Holofernes' tent somehow hiding a large (and blunt-looking) sword. Tent life could be beautiful then. Servants, curtains and oriental rugs are everywhere and plump dancers in full sway appear at one's beck.

After a very short acquaintance, Judith falls madly in love with the Captain. Will she dispatch him despite this or will she tryst with him in romantic "Nineveh"?

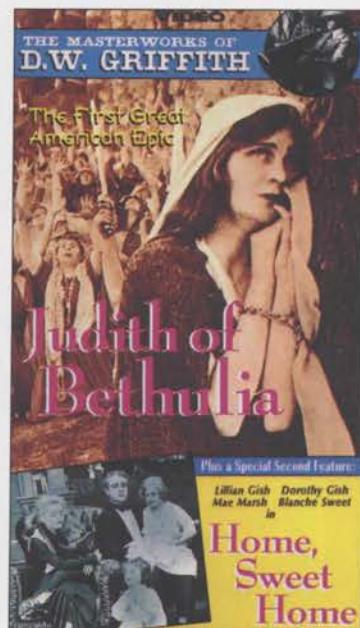
Most of the Griffith regulars appear in this screenplay. Mother Mary Gish joins her daughters Lillian and Dorothy in small roles and Robert Harron loves Mae Marsh every bit as much as he did in *Intolerance*.

The music, alas, is a drawback. Carter plays just as well as always and coordinates nicely to the action, but the audio reproduction is very poor. The recording was made around 1976 on the 3/16 Wurlitzer organ in Preston "Sandy" Fleet's San Diego home. It must have

sounded fine in the studio, but what we hear has the those annoying "wows" almost all the way through. Furthermore, a kind of quivery distortion infects the highs, which, curiously, is just as obvious in the piano music accompanying *Home, Sweet Home*, the second feature of this videotape.

In Brief: A good tale undone by the soundtrack.

From Kino International Corp., address above; \$24.95 plus postage.



¹Reviewed in the "Theatre Organ" for March/April 1999

²Ibid., September/October 1999

³Ibid., January/February 2001

⁴Ibid., March/April 2001



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