

# Theatre Organ

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY



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November/December 2002

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# Theatre Organ

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## President's Message



I was most pleased recently to visit England for the first time. Like most, I guess, I wanted to see all the sights and experience the culture, which meant the Houses of Parliament, the Tower of London and of course one of the best darn theatre organ installations I have ever seen. (You were expecting anything different?) I was graciously invited by Don Hyde, Chairman of the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust, to visit with his group and attend a wonderful concert by local favorite, Nicholas Martin. The concert was great fun and the organ . . . well Mr. Wurlitzer would have been very proud.

The instrument has had a wonderful history, too rich to be described in this limited space, but let me tell you these folks did it right. Over the years spending over \$1.5 million. The organ was moved from its original home at the Paramount Manchester to the Free Trade Hall and ultimately to the Stockport Town Hall, which has a sumptuous ballroom whose acoustics enhance the already magnificent sound. Now Don tells me that there is soon to be a Robert Hope-Jones Museum that the LTOT is developing. Wow! Great job guys and thanks for the memories.

Also while in Stockport, I visited the Plaza Theatre, which is one of the UK's few remaining art deco super cinemas. Our host, David Blake, was most welcoming and showed us a fine afternoon letting us snoop around and ask questions. The best part was experiencing the beautiful Compton Theatre Organ with its unusual and highly attractive illuminated console. I just love the Compton sound with its unique metal Tibia. When traveling to Britain, I heartily recommend all theatre organ enthusiasts visit our theatre organ friends in Stockport. Not only for the pleasure of listening to these wonderful instruments but also to visit with brother and sister theatre organ lovers who could not have been nicer.

On behalf of the staff and members of the Board of Directors of the American Theatre Organ Society, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you, all our members . . . all our friends, a Happy Holiday Season and a joyous, prosperous and safe New Year. God Bless Us All.

Nelson Page

Ladies and Gentlemen—

THE

RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL

Grand Organ



ALL PHOTOS ARE FROM THE COLLECTION OF MR. AND MRS. RONALD CAMERON BISHOP

It has been introduced to millions in just that manner, being probably the most famous instrument of its type in the world. The writer was just five years old on first hearing it during a late fall 1941 production and thus began a life long fascination with this wonderful Wurlitzer installation. It being the leader in the order of four organs requested by

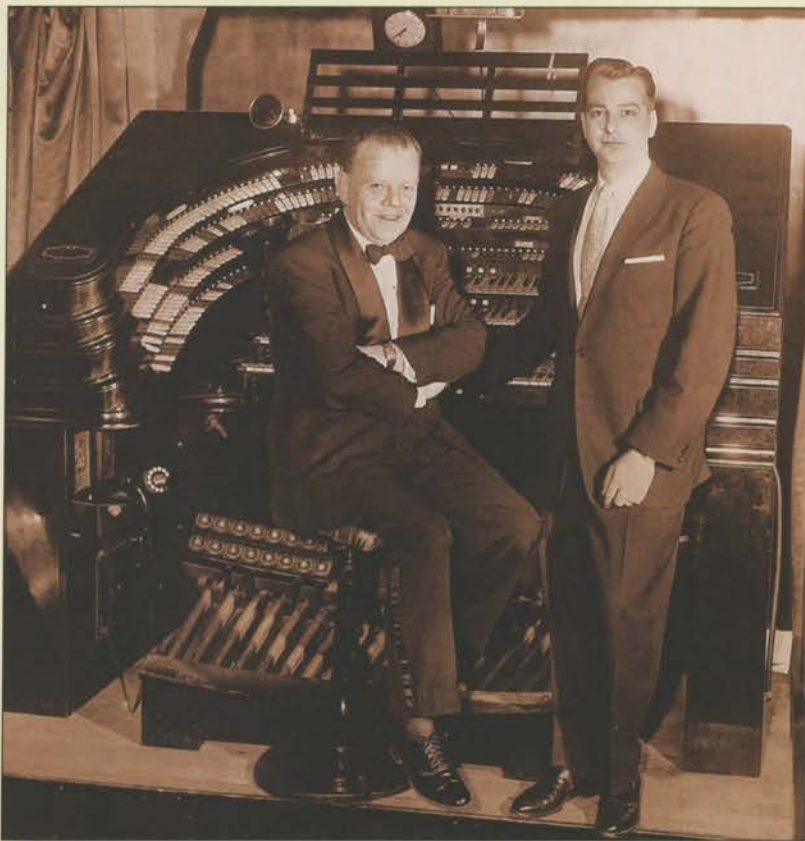
*Richard Liebert, seated, and  
Raymond Bohr.*

Rockefeller Center and the largest to ever leave the North Tonawanda plant. The other instruments in the group being the four-manual for the Center Theatre, the three-manual to be installed in the Music Hall Broadcasting Studio and the three-manual (with two consoles and automatic player) for the beautiful Rainbow Room.

The Music Hall Organ was installed in just four week's time through the efforts of a large crew headed by Mr. Cross, Mr. Eikler and Mr. Louis Ferrara who engaged my services as Associate Organ Technician in mid-1957. During the latter part of 1932 some last minute changes abounded in the organ installation process, which are confirmed in the original blue prints. Several involved the chamber layouts themselves along with a major downsizing of the relay room. Please remember that this organ was built with two separate 73-note (manual) relays so that the two consoles could operate independently of each other. Two setter board combination machines were also installed in another chamber just off one of the Rockettes' dressing rooms. The relay room remained jamb-packed until the day of the solid state installation and we always had to get special permission to set pistons and do combination action repairs for obvious reasons.

A major deviation from the original planning was the elimination of the two elevators—one at each end of the orchestra pit lift, which were to hold the consoles allowing them to descend 27 feet into the basement where they could be pushed off into storage rooms on either side of this area. The two console lifts could then be used for other purposes. A visitor to the theatre can still see the locations for these two elevators at each end of the pit shaft where the electric foot light covers have been cut and sealed off.

The consoles ended up in the alcove rooms to each side of the stage covered by the electric curtain sets, as we know them



today. These spots were to have been used for the appearance of solo performers and the consoles do not fit properly in them to this day, hanging out just a bit on the stage side aprons. In this revised installation arrangement all the electric cable ended up in a relay room storage box making things all the more congested.

As time began for me at Radio City Music Hall I had the honor to work with Richard Liebert, Raymond Bohr, Joseph Surace and Ashley Miller—great talents one and all. I can well understand why Mr. Liebert was first hired in 1932—he could play anything in any key, any time. Richard attended the Peabody Conservatory and was well grounded in the classics.

This was also true of many of the other organists. Raymond Bohr was a pupil of Harold Freidell and a superb arranger. The entire music department at the theatre was of the highest order with the organ often playing with the 60-piece symphony orchestra as a rich addition or as a solo instrument in arrangements made by the house staff.

In time I met a beautiful young Rockette named Emma Stiffler. During those days when the Easter Cathedral Scene was presented, both organ consoles were used and it was policy to have a Rockette sit at the console on the right side of the auditorium, the console being cut off from the control system for that time, and give the impression that two organists were at work. Because of her keyboard talent Emmie was given this assignment and insisted

*Emmie and Ron Bishop comparing notes at the  
"OP" console in the out position (50th Street  
side)—RCMH Wurlitzer.*



## THE RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL GRAND ORGAN PRIMARY TONAL RESOURCES

### GREAT CHAMBER

16'	Contra Bass (pedal only)	56 pipes
16'	Gedeckt	97 pipes
16'	Muted Diapason	97 pipes
16'	Viola	97 pipes
16'	Trombone	97 pipes
16'	French Horn	85 pipes
	(Pipes 1-12 metal Diaphone)	
8'	Open Diapason I	73 pipes
8'	Open Diapason II	73 pipes
4'	Octave	73 pipes
II	Mixture	122 pipes
IV	Mixture	244 pipes
8'	Concert Flute	85 pipes
8'	Unda Maris	85 pipes
8'	Clarinet	73 pipes
8'	Orchestral Oboe	73 pipes

### ORCHESTRAL CHAMBER

16'	Violin Diapason	97 pipes
16'	Tibia Minor	97 pipes
16'	Waldhorn	97 pipes
8'	Horn Diapason	73 pipes
8'	Spitzflute Celeste II	134 pipes
8'	Gamba	73 pipes
8'	Gamba Celeste	73 pipes
8'	Salicional	73 pipes
8'	Voix Celeste	73 pipes
8'	Muted Violins II	146 pipes
VI	Mixture	366 pipes
8'	Brass Trumpet	73 pipes
8'	Oboe Horn	73 pipes
8'	Vox Humana	73 pipes
8'	Vox Humana II	146 pipes

### SOLO ORGAN

8'	Melophone (Tibia Plena)	73 pipes
4'	Harmonic Flute	73 pipes
16'	Cello Violone	97 pipes
8'	Cello Celeste	73 pipes
8'	Saxophone	73 pipes
16'	English Horn	85 pipes
8'	Kinura	73 pipes
8'	Basset Horn	73 pipes
32'	Tuba Sonora	109 pipes
	(1-12 Bombarde)	

### SOLO ORGAN (Continued)

32'	Tibia Clausa	109 pipes
	(1-12 Subbass-64' Resultant)	
16'	English Post Horn	85 pipes
8'	Tuba Mirabilis	73 pipes
16'	Diaphonic Diapason	85 pipes
	(1-12 Wood Diaphone)	

### TREMULANTS

11 Tremulant tabs controlling multiple tremulants  
 Separate special tremulant for Tibia Clausa  
 Separate tremulant for Vox Humana  
 Separate tremulant for Vox Humanas II  
 Tremulant—Tuba Sonora and English Post Horn  
 Tremulant—Tuba Mirabilis and Diaphonic Diapason  
 Tremulant—Trombone  
 Tremulant—Tibia Minor  
 Tremulant—Solo  
 Tremulant—Great (controlling multiple tremulants)  
 Tremulant—Orchestral (controlling multiple tremulants)

### WIND PRESSURES

8 inches Vox Humana  
 15 inches Trombone, Tuba Sonora, Tibia Clausa,  
 Melophone, Harmonic Flute, Cello Violone, Cello  
 Celeste, and English Post Horn  
 25 inches Tuba Mirabilis and Diaphonic Diapason  
 10 inches all the rest of the organ

### PRECUSSIONS

Marimba/Harp	49 notes
Xylophone	49 notes
Glockenspiel/Bells	37 notes
Cathedral Chimes (Deagan)	25 notes
Mason and Hamlin Concert Grand Piano	88 notes
Celesta	49 bars
Bass Drum	Tambourine
Special Bass Drums (2)	Tom Tom
Snare Drums (2)	Shuffle
Chinese Gong	Crash Cymbal
Triangle	Bird Whistle
Chinese Block	Sleigh Bells (2)
Castanets	

### ONE SPENCER ORGAN BLOWER—50HP MULTIPLE RECTIFIERS OF AMPLE CAPACITY FOR SOLID STATE



Solo English Post Horn and Tuba Sonora—RCMH Wurlitzer.



Solo 16' Diaphone resonators and 8' Diaphonic Diapason—RCMH Wurlitzer.



Solo tuning sides 16' Diaphone and 8' Diaphonic Diapason—RCMH Wurlitzer.



Solo 25 inch pressure Tuba Mirabilis and Diaphonic Diapason—RCMH Wurlitzer.

Lower Great—RCMH Wurlitzer.



Lower Great offset chest—RCMH Wurlitzer.



Solo 32' Subbass (1 pipe shown) and 16' Tuba Profunda—RCMH Wurlitzer.



Lower orchestral showing Spitz Flute Celeste—RCMH Wurlitzer.

32' Bombarde (runs 2nd to 3rd floor).





*RCMH prompt console (51st Street side).*

that the proper score be on the music rack (*Tea For Two* would not do). I delivered the proper material to her during rehearsal and through God's great blessing she became my wife on September 3, 1960 beginning a marriage that grows deeper in its love as each day goes by. We have two sons—our youngest, Richard, followed me into the organ field and has headed the crew on the Music Hall restoration project. Emmie, too, has contributed much time and labor, as she is very gifted in the re-leathering department as well as installation work relative to the new solid-state system in the consoles. I am certain that the organists very much enjoy the new 99-level capture combination action on each console. No more elevator rides to the third floor to set pistons.

During our restoration work every pneumatic (primary and secondary) has been renewed along with total bellows rebuilding (replacement as necessary) and the complete reconstruction of the vast expression shutter system. The entire organ has been rewired and all new solid-state relay actions installed. The solid-state equipment was all custom made by Peterson Electro Musical Products. As one can imagine the Grand Organ has a very complex electrical system and our friends at Peterson have well met the challenge in every possible way.

As this new equipment is so compact the Music Hall has gained much needed space in the former relay and combination room areas, as we no longer require it. The combination actions are now in each console and the relay actions in the



*RCMH studio console prior to its removal to storage.*

*RCMH showing 51st street side.  
Note the location of the console.*



maintenance shop (50th Street side) and the Solo Chamber (51st Street side), which had some vacant space up until this point in time.

In addition, the solid-state conversion has made it possible to have each console now of the plug in type. With the alcoves remaining as home base on stage right and left one or both of the consoles can be placed anywhere on the stage elevators, turntable, or the orchestra pit lift and its movable band car. One can easily realize the production possibilities that now exist, including using the alcoves for their original intent with the consoles being located elsewhere by means of their data cable type connections.

There are two matters I would like to note at this point:

I am often questioned as to whether the instrument has 56 or 58 ranks. Many folks have copies of the specifications and go over and over them coming up with the 56 rank count. Two ranks are overlooked which bring the organ to 58 sets. There is an independent 4' Flute Harmonic (extended to 2') in the Solo Organ of 73 pipes. In addition there is the Pedal Division 16' Contra Bass, a rank of 56 pipes devoted to the Pedal Organ.

Many people think that the organ (or part of it) is installed above the stage. This is not the case as the Music Hall installation follows the pattern of organ chambers being located on either side of the proscenium arch.

The majority of the organ, Great and Orchestral Divisions, is installed on the 50th Street side of the auditorium, spread out over two floors with independent expressive control for both sections. The Solo Organ, containing 13 ranks, is placed on two levels located on the 51st Street side of the auditorium, along with the trap chamber, under full expressive control. The Mason and Hamlin Grand Piano and Deagan Chimes are in this same area in an unenclosed arrangement at the second floor level.

It is often said that the Music Hall tonal design was developed by the Kimball Organ Company, who did indeed bid on the project, and that the influence of the late Senator Emerson Richards was also reflected in this aspect both at the Center and Music Hall Theatres. I for one am quite certain that this is the case.

For example, the Music Hall's Great Division is based on an independent Diapason Chorus from 16' Double through 1st and 2nd Opens 8', Octave 4', Mixture II Ranks and Mixture IV Ranks. This concept was not typical of Wurlitzer but quite like

## The "MIGHTY WURLITZER" Organ



**RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL  
New York City**

many of the larger concert organs that had been built by the Kimball firm under Richard's consultation.

This Diapason Chorus provides the organ with its wonderful ensemble, which is backed up by a secondary Diapason Chorus (with limited unification) right up through a straight VI Rank Mixture in the Orchestral Division, which is equivalent to a fully developed English Swell organ with the added element of three Vox Humanas.

The Kimball Company had built the Roxy Theatre instruments but for whatever reasons the Rockefeller Center work went to Wurlitzer and again in my opinion provided them with an opportunity for what evolved into their finest hour giving consideration to all four instruments involved. The Center Theatre and Rainbow Room organs moved on in the mid-'50s to other locations. We placed the Music Hall Studio Organ in storage at the theatre's warehouse a number of years back when that portion of the building was given over to other uses.

It is my hope that with the wonderful restorative work in progress in the backstage areas that this beautiful three-manual organ can be re-installed and restored. It "starred" on many a recording and via the radio for many, many years. Time will tell.

Besides being a truly grand solo instrument the Music Hall Organ has made many appearances with orchestras, the first and foremost being with the Music Hall Symphony in special arrangements made by the in house staff at the time. The Rogers and Hammerstein and Bach Festival Overtures come to mind. Dick Liebert and Raymond Bohr were the soloists in these wonderful performances assisted in later times by Mr. John Detro who came to us from the Eastman School

The late Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops visited and brought Berj Zamkochian to play the Grand Organ in a very special appearance featuring *Pomp And Circumstance* in the truly grand manner. This was followed by the 1984 PBS Gala, which was taped at the theatre. The organ was used for a ballet sequence performed to the second movement of Saint-Saens

*Organ Symphony*. Anthony Newman was the organist with the American Symphony Orchestra conducted by James Levine. This was just a superb performance and resulted in a very sustained ovation. Only nine ranks of the organ were used including its 32' Sub Bass. A few days later it was back to show tunes but that has been and continues to be the life of this wonderful organ.

During a later engagement Carmine Coppola (Francis Ford's dad) came in to conduct a multi-weekend engagement of *Napoleon*, a 4½-hour silent film featuring the American Symphony Orchestra and the Grand Organ as played by Leonard Raver for the first portion of the run and Frederick Swann for the conclusion. Mr. Coppola (who had been a member of the Music Hall Symphony) composed the score for this production and what a wonderful musical experience he created. All performances were sold out and the engagement was held over. I will never forget those standing ovations for Mr. Coppola, the music, the orchestra and the gentlemen at the console.

Besides his appearances during the Christmas productions, in association with George Wesner, the most talented Robert MacDonald appeared with Liberace during his sold out runs at the theatre. Mr. Liberace had a great love for the instrument and enjoyed having it in his very beautiful productions.

Dr. John Weaver and Dr. Virgil Fox were special visitors to the console as guests of Raymond Bohr for some impromptu recitals which I only wish an audience could have heard. Dr. Fox and I worked on an article regarding the Music Hall organ for a magazine and he was planning an appearance at Radio City to include the Grand Organ, his traveling instrument and the light show. Sadly he passed away before this event could take place. What a performance that would have been—sold out house for sure.

We have also had the pleasure of working with Lance Luce in 1979 for his initial engagement in New York and with David Messineo and Bob Maidhof among others.

Bishop Pipe Organ Service is most grateful for the opportunity to carry out the restoration of this instrument and thank the Radio City Music Hall staff for all their confidence and kindness. As part of the building's restorative progress we are currently completing some remaining cleaning work to the pipework and chambers along with pipework repair and tonal regulation work.

Our Son, Richard Bishop, is in charge of this extensive operation and we thank him for his very fine and detailed efforts. As you can see this organ has been very special to the Bishop family and we continue our efforts to make it the very best it can possibly be as it sounds forth in the much improved acoustics of the Music Hall auditorium

The author wishes to express his sincere appreciation to the following for all their caring and assistance:

Emma Stiffler Bishop (Mrs. Ronald C.)

Richard C. Bishop

Dennis Morrelly (Assistant to Richard Bishop)

Bob Benett, Vice-President Stage Operations RCMH

Martin Fuller, Head of the Electrical Department RCMH

John Lamac, Assistant Electrical Department RCMH

Anthony Lamacchia, Assistant, Electrical Department

RCMH and all the members of the Music Hall  
Electrical Department.





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## Theatre Organ



Radio City Music Hall  
4/58 Wurlitzer

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Theatre Organ*, c/o ATOS Membership Office, P.O. Box 551081, Indianapolis, IN 46205-5581, fellenzer@atos.org

# OPENING OF NOMINATIONS *for* 2003 ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

It is time to nominate candidates to fill three (3) positions for ATOS Directors for the term of 2003 through 2006. All ATOS members who have maintained continuous membership in good standing for at least the last two years are eligible for nomination and may nominate themselves or be nominated by another member in good standing, in which case, written consent of the nominee is mandatory and must be received before the nominee's name can be placed on the ballot.

A nominee need have no special talent or experience in pipe organ technology or musicianship; however, nominees should have a demonstrated interest in ATOS and have the time to work toward the goals and growth of the society. While there are certain benefits enjoyed by Directors, one of which is the reimbursement of certain meeting related expenses, there are also responsi-

bilities. Along with a willingness to participate in the administrative affairs of the society, it is most important that Directors faithfully attend both Board and Committee meetings.

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

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



## Procedure to be observed in the nomination process is as follows:

1. Each nominee shall furnish a statement, not to exceed one hundred fifty (150) words, including the name and city/state of residence, personal data, work and theatre organ experience, a short platform statement, an evening/weekend telephone number, and a photo. Statements exceeding the one hundred fifty (150)-word limit will disqualify the candidate. The nominee name, city/state of residence, contact telephone number, fax number, or E-mail address are not to be included in the word count.
2. All candidates must have their statement and photo sent by Certified Return Receipt mail to the ATOS Nominating Chairperson, Bob Miloche; 80 Maywood Avenue; Maywood, NJ 07607, and must be postmarked not later than January 15, 2003.
3. We will use a separate mailing of ballots and résumés of the candidates. While this method is costly, we hope that it will encourage you to vote for the candidates of your choice, thus demonstrating your interest in and support of ATOS and its objectives.
4. If you have questions, please contact the Nominating Committee Chairperson, Bob Miloche, (201) 843-0083 or miloche@atos.org

### Counting words:

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

# General Information

## Grant Money Is Available To Chapters

A portion of the interest earned by the ATOS Endowment Fund is available to ATOS Chapters in the form of grants to assist with their projects or programs. All ATOS Chapters planning to engage in a project or program which will have a lasting impact on the preservation or presentation of the theatre pipe organ as a historically American instrument and musical art form or in a project or program of particular historical or scholarly merit are encouraged to submit an application for such a grant to the Endowment Fund Board of Trustees.

Now is the time for your chapter representative to send for a grant application form. When the completed application is returned—and that must be postmarked by April 1, 2003—it will be reviewed by the Endowment Fund Board of Trustees. The recommendation of that group will then be reviewed by your ATOS Board of Directors, which makes the final decision.

Please request your grant application form from the Chair of the Endowment Fund Board of Trustees, Fr. Gus L. Franklin (Vice-President of ATOS). He may be contacted by mail at 6508 Willow Springs Road, Springfield, IL 62707-9500, by e-mail at [franklin@atos.org](mailto:franklin@atos.org), by telephone at 217/585-1770, or by fax at 217/585-0835. See pages 68 and 69.

## 2002 ATOS Annual Convention

If you hurry, you can still make reservations to attend this year's ATOS Convention in San Diego. You will find a convention registration form printed on the inside front of the mailing cover on this issue. If you have questions regarding registration, please contact the Convention Registrar, Jeff Johnson at 858/663-4402 or [jeff8444@aol.com](mailto:jeff8444@aol.com).

The convention hotel is the Hanalei Hotel in San Diego. For hotel registration and/or information call 800/882-0858 or 619/297-1101 or go to [www.hanaleihotel.com](http://www.hanaleihotel.com).

Don't miss this opportunity to visit one of the most beautiful cities in the country and to enjoy theatre organ music played by world-class artists on some of the finest instruments in Southern California. (See pages 68 and 69.)

## ATOS Marketplace Items Are Still For Sale

Although the ATOS Marketplace Order Form has not been printed on the mailing cover of the last few issues of *THEATRE ORGAN*, the items listed on page 83 are still being offered for sale. Remember, many of the items offered make excellent holiday gifts for the theatre organ enthusiast.

To order simply write down the items you wish to be shipped to you and enclose a check or money order to cover the cost as listed. We do accept VISA and MasterCard. Mail your order to:

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# Members' Forum\*

Dear Editor:

RE: "Alfredo Mendez Discovered!" (Page 35, September/October issue)

It is obvious that "Alfredo Mendez" was, in fact, Frederick Mendelson. For one thing, in Spanish Frederick becomes Alfredo. For another, in Spanish the suffix "-dez" means "son of," as in Hernandez (son of Hernando), Martinez (son of Martino), etc., although it is often modified; so Mendez would be the son of Mendel, that is, Mendelson.

"Alfredo Mendez" was credited with the pipe organ part (which organ?) of *The Things I Love In Hi-Fi*, a Three Suns LP (RCA Victor LPM-1543), and other recordings.

Respectfully,  
Dino Cabrero



Dear Editor:

This letter is to request four copies of the current THE-ATRE ORGAN. I have gotten more excited about this issue than any since Stu and I wrote for the Journal. My issue is already dog-eared and worn and I want to pass the several articles around and I'm afraid I won't get it back.

BE OUR GUEST... Rob Richard's article. I will give Rob a run for his money as to who is the biggest Disney and organ fan. Everything in my living room has to be Music or Disney or it doesn't get in. Here the magazine comes out and the El Capitan is on the cover. I also watched and recorded his program on PBS of the Fox Theatre and organ. Then they switched to Hollywood and Rob was playing the Wurlitzer. San Francisco and Hooray for Hollywood. I even fired up the little Robert-Morton and played a chorus or two. I have already ordered the Disney Pipes recording.

When talk of installing the Fox organ in the El Capitan was the big dark secret, I hoped George (Wright) would be able to play a tune or concert on it but he didn't quite make it. I attended the El Capitan even when they had "canned" organ music. It was at least organ music in a restored theatre. When the Fox organ was first presented with the opening of *Tarzan* of course I had to be in the audience.

REFLECTIONS by Jelani Eddington was the second article of interest to me. If Jelani ever is unable to make the beautiful music he does any more (heaven forbid) he can write descriptive mystery stories. I have never been to New York but Stu

being a native, born in Rochester, grew up in Syracuse and I have heard and read much about the area, organs and theatres but from Jelani's article I could follow him through the rubble of September 11, 2001 as if I had a front row seat. Yes, I lived through Pearl Harbor, the assassination of Kennedy, California earthquakes and the Oklahoma and New York disasters but he so beautifully condensed the story it was a pleasure to read.

Ron Musselman's letter in the MEMBERS' FORUM... I have wanted to compliment Ron for several of his articles but had no address and just let it slip. His reviews of Wurlitzer Weekends and about the El Capitan Theatre were especially to my liking. His line "One thing leads to another" couldn't be truer in my case.

Sincerely, Peggy N. Green, Granada Hills, California

Dear Editor:

When I received the July/August issue I was pleased to find an article with a wonderful picture layout of the Rialto-fest and Chicago organ activities last April. Even though the picture layout was fantastic, the accompanying article missed the mark in several important areas. For one, the historic plaque presentation at the Chicago was never mentioned. This was an important event and part of the recognition of the Chicago Theatre Wurlitzer. More disturbing was the review of the Tivoli Theatre and its organ. The theatre was described as a "typical neighborhood house-the way many modest theatres looked before the real movie palaces began to appear." The Tivoli was a significant theatre, part of a hotel and entertainment complex serving the heart of downtown Downers Grove. It opened on Christmas Day 1928 as one of the first theatres in the country built to show "talkies." Originally decorated in red and gold, the French Renaissance-style theatre had a spacious auditorium with 1390 seats on one floor; there never was a balcony. The seats had red and gold horsehair upholstery. The theatre is the flagship of the Classic Cinemas theatre chain, and owners Willis and Shirley Johnson have taken a great deal of pride in being able to restore the theatre to its original decor. In 1996 two painters spent eight months repainting all the decorative elements in the auditorium. As a part of the project, special gold leaf paint, costing \$100 a gallon, was used. The redecoration created a new color scheme of blue and gold to highlight the auditorium's many decorative elements and to return to its original French Renaissance style.\*

The theatre has a working stage and is the home for several performing artists groups. The present organ, which is owned by the CATOE Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society, has an equally significant history. It has been preserved as one of the few remaining examples of the medium sized organ

\*Historical notes on the Tivoli are courtesy of the Classic Cinemas website at: <http://www.classiccinemas.com>.

## THE ORGAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Publishers of the quarterly journal*

### "THE TRACKER"

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that was so prevalent during the silent era and nearly extinct today. The organ was originally located in the Indiana Theatre in Indiana Harbor, Indiana and its history is intertwined with that of the late, great theatre organist John Muri. To dismiss this instrument as "a small mild mannered ballad organ" is truly unfair. Of course the Tivoli organ was the only three-manual organ used during Rialto-fest and could be easily dismissed as trivial when compared with all the four deckers. That because, there is a prevailing opinion among many that anything less than a magnificent movie palace with a four decker plus mega rank organ is not worth considering. That is unfortunate as you are apt to miss many very special treasures in both organs and theatres. One comment has been made that once one has heard the late George Wright play the San Francisco Fox everything else pales. Well I can tell you as one who heard George play the Fox (4/36), the Paramount (Granada) (4/33) down the street from the Fox and the Chicago (4/29) and the 2/10 at the Rialto Theatre in South Pasadena (which was one of George's favorite organs) that all the concerts were equally great. Chicago is "My Kind of Town" and fortunately one of the few best remaining theatre organ locations in the country. It is in part due to the contributions of folks like theatre owners Willis and Shirley Johnson who help keep it a great theatre organ destination. Classic Cinemas has two pipe organ equipped theatres and uses them regularly for the public's enjoyment.

Jon C. Habermaas



Dear Editor:

Having read in your March/April edition of *THEATRE ORGAN* about the installation of the 3/11 Möller organ in the Rylander Theatre, and that of a Rodgers 340 in the Roxbury High School, I pondered the article by Al Hermanns in his "Organ-izing" column. He makes the point that one can no longer afford 'home' organs, and that the youngsters of today, having nothing to play, are not in the position to replace the current ageing organists. How true! Therefore, to me, the installation of the electronic organ in a school setting is just as important as the placing of a pipe organ in a theatre. One should encourage the donation of more electronic instruments into schools, where exposure to theatre organs by the school children of today will do more to encourage them than any other means. Not every institution can be blessed with a pipe organ! I speak as one who has owned four electronic organs, and a Möller 3/11 theatre pipe organ (currently installed in Weikersheim, Germany). The electronic organs were the inspirations and teachers. So I say: Bravo! Jay Ross and Al Hermanns. You are on the right track! Let there be others!

*Yours faithfully, Arthur Hovis, Johannesburg, South Africa*



Dear Editor:

I'm an organ enthusiast, but unfortunately not an organist. I strongly agree with the remark Mr. Hermanns made in his column in the current issue of the *THEATRE ORGAN*, that during or after a concert the organist should demonstrate the sounds of various organ stops. Not only might this attract new

organists, but it would greatly enhance listening (live, or on CDs) for many of us.

I have an additional suggestion: someone should make a demonstration CD, so that people could learn how the sounds of the Kinura and Chrysoglott differ! I would think an interesting and very saleable record could be made, demonstrating the many stops plus the features of the "toy counter." If such a record already exists, I've been unable to find it, but sure wish I had such a thing.

Bill Mead, Purchase, New York



Via e-mail: Hello all who build the great ATOS site!

I am a theatre/cinema organ fan from when I was very young (I'm 28) and have already a nice collection of these great instruments. Today I bought a LP *Farewell to the Fox* with organists Tiny James and Everett Nourse at the Wurlitzer of the Fox Theatre, San Francisco. I used your site to look for more info about the organ and the building and I came out completely satisfied. I must say, we in Europe have got some magnificent instruments (in Holland for instance the Tuschinski and the AVRO concert organs) and of course the beautiful instruments in England, but your site shows that we are not alone, happily.

*Just thanks for a great useful worldwide service site!*  
Erwin Voorhaar, Hilversum, The Netherlands

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

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# Theatre Organ Techniques

By Cheryl Seppala



## 3/4 RHYTHMS

We began to study theatre organ technique with much emphasis on the development of a smooth legato touch. But not all tunes are meant to be played as dreamy ballads. You must also learn to play a variety of rhythmic accompaniments to become versatile in your interpretations.

Although many electronic organs have sophisticated automatic rhythms and background patterns, let us assume your approach is the old-fashioned way. Do it yourself!

Let's define a rhythmic organ accompaniment as any combination or alternation of chords and pedals that equal the desired number of beats per measure. When seeing a 3/4 time signature we do not always have to play pedal-chord-chord. In fact it is rarely desirable to chop our way through an entire waltz selection with such a monotonous drone.

Before we introduce specific rhythms and variations, let us lay some ground rules on general rhythm technique.

1. Rhythms cannot be accomplished with legato pedals and chords. This is your opportunity to lighten up your left

hand and foot. Learn to tap the pedals and chords lightly and staccato. Realize also it will involve considerable practice to be able to play your left hand and pedal staccato while keeping your right hand melody legato.

2. Strive to find pedals only by feel, as you will not have time to look down.
3. Memorize all alternating pedals as discussed in the last issue.
4. When attempting any new rhythm, always rehearse the left hand and pedal together until fluent before adding the melody.
5. When it is time to add the melody, begin slowly, counting aloud or using a metronome or compatible automatic rhythm.
6. Mark with pencil all difficult or syncopated passages of melody.
7. Many students find it helpful to use the same easy and familiar tune to rehearse each new rhythm.

Here are some easy and useful variations:

#1 #2 #3 #4 #5 #6 #7 #8

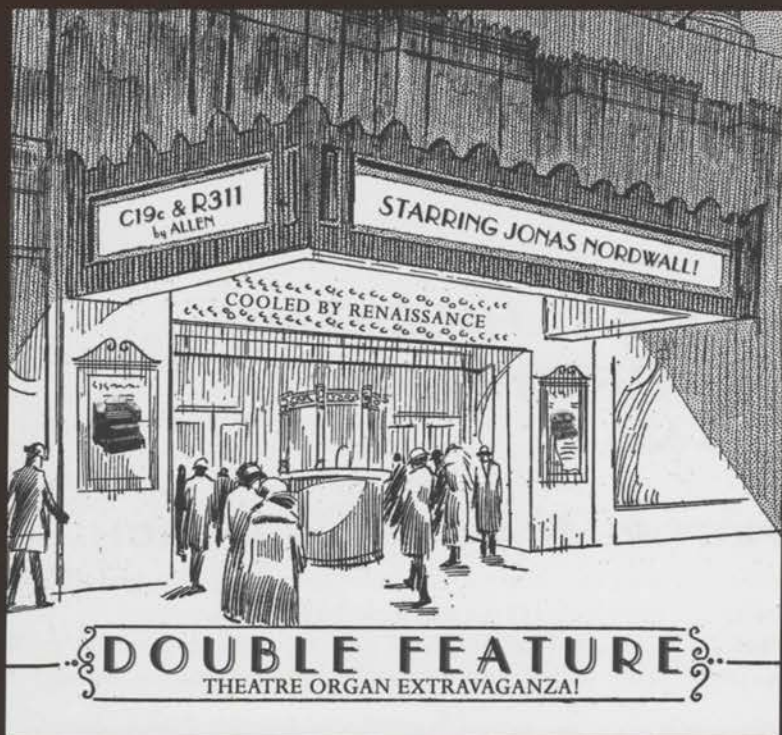
The following waltz variations are a bit more challenging to fit against a melody:

Viennese Waltz Spanish Waltz Simplified Jazz Waltz Jazz Waltz

Now we will begin to study the waltz rhythm or 3/4 time signature. The basic waltz rhythm requires you to tap the root of the chord on the pedal on count one of each measure. Then strike the chords crisply on counts two and three. Repeat this pattern every measure with alternating pedals. By the time you perfect this simple waltz rhythm, you will most likely be bored with it.

As you can see, there are many variations of a simple waltz pattern at your disposal. There is no reason to think of waltzes as boring. Experiment with these ideas to enhance your favorite waltz. Better yet, invent some 3/4 variations of your own!

In the next issue, we will continue our study of rhythms with 4/4 and Latin variations.



## DOUBLE FEATURE THEATRE ORGAN EXTRAVAGANZA!

- |                                      |                 |                               |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Music, Music, Music               | <b>BRAND</b>    | Weiss, Baum                   |
| 2. Birth of the Blues                |                 | DeSylva, Brown, Henderson     |
| 3. The Bullfighter                   | <b>NEW</b>      | Green                         |
| 4. Cherry                            |                 | Gilbert, Redman               |
| 5. Flying Saucers                    | <b>RELEASE!</b> | Magnante                      |
| 6. I Write the Songs                 |                 | Johnston                      |
| 7. Valencia                          |                 | Padilla, Boyer, Grey, Charles |
| 8. Smoke Gets In Your Eyes           |                 | Kern                          |
| 9. Take Five                         |                 | Desmond                       |
| 10. You Made Me Love You             |                 | McCarthy, Monaco              |
| 11. Ramona                           |                 | Wayne, Gilbert                |
| 12. Nagasaki                         |                 | Warren, Dixon                 |
| 13. That's My Desire                 |                 | Kresa, Lovesday               |
| 14. Espana Cani                      |                 | Marquina                      |
| 15. When the Organ Plays at Twilight |                 | Wallace, Campbell, Connelly   |
| 16. I'm Confessin'                   |                 | Neibu                         |

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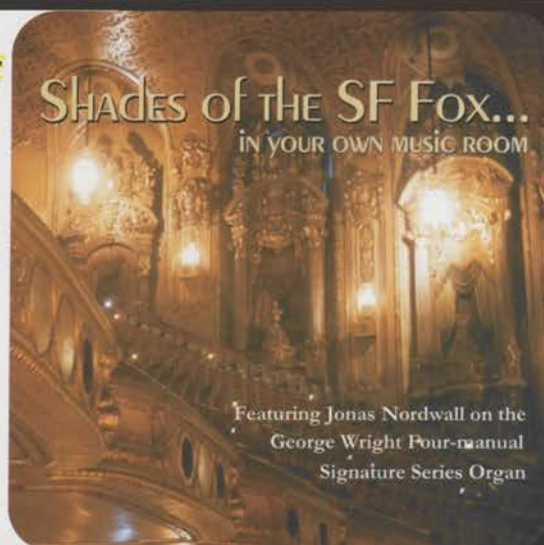
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## PART TWO: THE ABC'S OF P-M-A

*A How-To Guide for*

# PROMOTIONS, MARKETING, AND ADVERTISING

*By Ken Double*

## CREATING A SIMPLE, EFFECTIVE MARKETING BROCHURE

Any ATOS Chapter selling tickets to theatre organ concerts can help itself immensely by putting together a package that combines a corporate sponsor with a commercial radio station. This can be prepared as a package for a single concert, or for a season's series of concerts.

One six-page marketing brochure can be the tool that will help sell your presentation to both a potential sponsor and a potential radio partner. What follows are the first basic steps for preparing and presenting this brochure, and hopefully securing for you one or more corporate sponsors whose financial support will help your bottom line. We will attend specifically to the radio station side of this approach in the next issue.

It is this type of brochure that those of us in the sports business present to potential sponsor/clients all the time. Someone with minimal computer skills can do the brochure, or it can be prepared at little expense by Kinko's or a similar type company. If you are clever, and produce a program with your concert, you might be able to trade the Kinko's expense in exchange for an ad in the program and some tickets for the concert! (Remember—those hundreds of unused tickets can be as good as cash with a good trade/barter deal, thus cutting your expenses.)

### THE SIX PAGES

Your brochure should include these six pages, with detailed information to be discussed later:

Page 1—A cover sheet with a color picture of the console, and a photo of the artist for the concert, or smaller pictures of all the artists, and one banner headline announcing the event;

Page 2—A short paragraph about your chapter (include your 501(c) 3 IRS status) as the presenting organization (no more than a total of five lines) and then list the date, time, location and artist for the event or series;

Page 3—This page should "brag" about the event, i.e. promote the artist, the special nature of the organ or theatre, special parts of the show itself, and again, keep it brief, as these people will look to scan this material and get details from you later in person;

Page 4—The "sponsor" page will outline what is available to the sponsor, the promotional "value" to the sponsor of the package, and the cost;

Page 5—The "radio station" page will outline the details of

what the organization can bring to the station, and what will be expected of the station in support of the event;

Page 6—A "wrap-up" page with a final "pitch" as to why this is such a great deal, and complete contact information for follow-up discussions.

At the risk of sounding like TV real estate pitchman Carlton Sheets, this simple tool can help you acquire sponsors and radio station partners, and help your bottom line. It will be important to keep it simple, straight forward and BRIEF! This is neither the time nor the place for the history of the movie palace era. Now, for the first four pages of this package.

### THE PAGES IN DETAIL

As mentioned above, Page 1 is simply a cover page. A good color photo of the console (if there is a really good photo of the theatre/venue that could be added), and photos of the artist(s) will suffice. The script on the page should be brief. Using Lafayette and Long Center as an example, at the top it would read: THE LONG CENTER THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY PRESENTS THE MIGHTY WURLITZER THEATRE PIPE ORGAN.

That would be followed with the photos, and across the bottom would read: A SPONSORSHIP/MARKETING PROPOSAL. And that's all you need on the front page.

On Page 2, as indicated above, write a very brief paragraph on your chapter including membership, the involvement with the organ, the association with ATOS and its worldwide scope. Be sure to spell out American Theatre Organ Society and not use simply the letters ATOS. Both the potential corporate partner and the radio station will look more positively on the partnership if they know this is a not-for-profit organization, thus include a line that describes your chapter as "a recognized IRS 501(c) 3 not-for-profit organization." Be sure to have copies of your IRS Letter of Determination available should your new partners need verification for their records. Your sponsor company might commit promotional dollars to you, but if they commit charitable donation dollars to you, they will need that IRS information. (If your chapter is NOT a recognized not-for-profit organization, attend to that immediately. Not doing so could keep you from attracting major dollars.)

Page 3 can include some of the information that might be

included in a press release. As suggested above, use this page to "SELL" your event. Tell them the historic significance of the theatre or of the organ. Write about how great the artist is. And add a paragraph about the show itself, especially any special part of the show. Three to four paragraphs are plenty. I always try to tell newcomers and those unfamiliar with theatre organ that the music presented is like that of a symphony "pops" concert. If you have a CD of the artist, be prepared to send that along.

The most important page of the proposal is Page 4, the pitch to the corporate sponsor. If you did your homework and you have a list of potential sponsors, you should try and tailor this proposal to the specific client. For example, headline this page "A CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP PROPOSAL TO XYZ COMPANY, INC."

Next, write (again using Lafayette as an example):

*The LCTOS proposes the following package for a corporate sponsorship of the theatre organ concert(s) presented at the Long Center.*

Next, list the following benefits to be provided by your organization:

*In exchange for their participation, XYZ Company, Inc. will receive the following:*

- Title sponsorship of the concert event, i.e. "XYZ Company, Inc. presents Ken Double In Concert;"
- Said title sponsorship will include theatre marquee, all print materials including fliers, posters, tickets, all newspaper and print advertising and programs;
- A full-page ad in the printed program, (ad to be provided by XYZ Company at least 30 days prior to the event);
- Sponsorship will be included with our radio partnership, which will include at least 40 commercials on our partner station, plus "drop-ins" and on-air ticket give-aways;
- A minimum of 50 tickets in a specially reserved area for use by XYZ Company as it sees fit (that number could increase if necessary).

Next, list the value of this package to the company. Often times in the sports business, these "values" are quite arbitrary. Some of it will be based on the cost of radio and print advertising. Obviously, the cost of the tickets is easy to figure. This arbitrary figure is normal in the sports business, but must be defensible. Companies are often looking for at least a 5-1 return on their dollar invested, some seek as much as a 10-1 return.

*The value of the above listed Sponsorship package to XYZ Company is:*

Theatre marquee billing (at least two weeks in advance)	\$ 2,000
Programs, fliers, and other non-advertising print	\$ 1,000
Newspaper advertising	\$ 1,500
Radio advertising (spots, give-aways and drop-ins)	\$ 2,500
Tickets (50 at \$12/ea.)	\$ 600
<b>TOTAL VALUE:</b>	<b>\$ 7,600</b>


**XYZ COMPANY, INC. SPONSORSHIP COMMITMENT FOR THIS PACKAGE IS JUST \$1,000.**

There you have the package to be presented to as many corporations as you can call on to make the pitch. If you do a four-concert series, call on 15-to-20 to see if you can get four. It might take more, might take less. Turn to your chapter members to see if perhaps they are employed by a company that might do this. Start with the Yellow pages, or better yet, try and acquire a Chamber of Commerce business guide to get leads on companies.

Some companies might inquire if this will be an exclusive sponsorship, or are you seeking others. Your response should be, "We hope to acquire a second full sponsor, but we would be willing to talk to you about an exclusivity." Then, hit 'em for \$1,500!!! Note the amount requested is up to you and your market size. Detroit is different from Akron, which is different from Coleman, Oklahoma. It's all relative. However, \$1,000 works in Lafayette, Indiana. The Lafayette Symphony Orchestra gets \$5,000 for a full sponsor for one concert.

Your "pitch" is going to be made to a company executive such as a Director of Public Relations, or a Director of Community Affairs. It is always safe to send a copy to the President or Chief Operating Officer.


Take note of this: PR firms and ad agencies get paid big dollars to prepare just such a document that has been written above. And they successfully execute deals like this EVERY-DAY!

This is a lot to digest in terms of getting educated on this endeavor. One step at a time will help you better learn about this process. And, approaching a radio station is different than approaching your corporate partner. We will discuss that in the next issue of the Journal. 


## PIPE ORGAN PERCUSSIONS

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**H O O R A Y**



for

**hollywood**

by Steven Ball

# HOORAY for hollywood

By Steven Ball\*

AND THEN THE THING HAPPENED. How else can I begin? Explaining an equivalent circumstance to any person not connected with the world of the theater organ is rather like trying to explain the circumstance of tripping over a sleeping dinosaur—something which you know shouldn't be there because everyone thought it was extinct long ago, but there it is—right in front of you. Your classic Jurassic Park experience. Somehow, though, "Jurassic" just doesn't seem to come

close to being an adjective of sufficient proportions to adequately describe the effect which 20 tons worth of Barton theater organ creates at first glance.

And so, you see, this is the story of an organ and its extraordinary entrance into my life and career. The organ in question, Barton Opus 234, was constructed in 1927 for the Hollywood Theatre in Detroit, Michigan. More than just another organ, it was a calculated marketing move by Barton—designed in every way to make the biggest statement possible in Detroit's booming theatre organ market. It needed to. Detroit was, in the 1920s, America's fourth largest and fastest growing city. With over 300 theatre organ installations and more auditorium space than any other city in the nation, the so-called "Paris of the West" was a major focal point for the theatre organ industry.

Built at a total cost of over \$2 million dollars in 1927, the Hollywood Theatre was the largest and most deluxe neighborhood movie house in the city of Detroit. With the then astronomical price tag of \$75,000, the organ was a suitable match for the magnificence of the opulent Spanish interior. Tied for third place as one of the company's largest instruments (first and second place go to the 1929 Chicago Stadium instrument at 6/51 and the 1924 Dallas Fair Park Auditorium instrument at 4/24 respectively), it is currently the largest remaining original



THE ONE OF A KIND BARTON BRASS TRUMPET.

and intact Barton Opus in the world.

Although not identical, the Hollywood closely resembled two other instruments which the Oshkosh, Wisconsin factory produced: the 1926 4/22 installed in the Rialto Theatre in Joliet, Illinois and the 1925 4/21 installed in the Highland Theatre in Highland Park, Illinois. Mechanically, the most significant difference from these other two instruments is the presence of an additional wind chest installed in the Solo Chamber. This

was a preparation for a 22nd rank of pipes (a second celeste for the Solo String specifically) which, although installed and winded, was never provided with any pipes, nor was any preparation for this rank made in either the console or the relay.

From the standpoint of construction, there are several other highly unusual or completely unique features. It is the only known four-manual red and gold "deluxe style" or "Circus Wagon" console made by Barton. Additionally, it features a fourth toy counter with such unusual features as a surf effect (in this case, a large revolving drum with pebbles inside), a sand block (utilizing real sandpaper), sleigh bells, a 49 note Marimba Harp, a large scale 37 note Chrysoglott Harp, two large (master) scale xylophones, pneumatic swell shoe indicators, and a pressure piano.

Also highly unusual in the overall design of the organ are a few features obviously taken from Wurlitzer instruments. Although perhaps overlooked at first glance, their subtle presence represents a shrewd and unique marriage of ideas on the part of Barton's design staff. These include such details as glass fronted relays, the only known Barton Brass Trumpet (actually made by Gottfried), the presence of a snare drum tab on the Bombarde, the aforementioned pneumatic swell indicators (although Wurlitzer customarily used a direct mechanical linkage), occasional



THE DAMAGE TO THE CLARINET TREBBLES.  
NOTE TEETH MARKS!

Wurlitzer nomenclature appearing in the specification and a very rare pizzicato relay. The overall tonal design has also been likened to that of a Publix 1 with the addition of a Post Horn—a not unlikely inspiration for such a prominent installation.

Barton, fifth largest builder of theatre instruments in the nation, focused on the mid-West market almost exclusively. The small factory seldom sent instruments further away than the distance a Pullman sleeper car could travel in one night. For this reason, the instruments are almost completely unknown outside of this relatively small area.

Without question, there were some rather advanced marketing schemes at work here. Barton was very interested in developing long-standing relationships with clients. Not only would the company provide an organ to the theatre, but it was also capable of providing a qualified musician from one of its organ schools and a continuing maintenance contract. What Barton lacked in size, they made up for in agility and ingenuity. The company, and more specifically the talented marketing skills of Dan Barton, were no small force to be reckoned with.

The recent reappearance of the Hollywood to the list of surviving instruments has generated an incredible amount of excitement and interest, even after many years of storage. David Junchen, in his *Encyclopedia of the American Theater Organ* had this to say: "... The 4/21 Barton in Detroit's Hollywood Theatre was fondly remembered by several old timers as the second best organ in town—and that's up against competition from some fine large Wurlitzers such as the Fox 4/36, Fisher 4/34, Michigan 5/28 and the State and Capital 4/20's..."

Chiefly responsible for the untouched condition of the organ and its remarkable state of preservation until now

has been the Przybylski family of Dearborn Heights, Michigan. The organ was purchased and removed from the Hollywood Theatre in 1962 by Mr. Henry Przybylski, a young and innovative engineer, along with the help of several other volunteers with varying degrees of experience saving other pipe organs from Detroit area theatres. The entire process of removal took some five months against almost unimaginable odds. This included all of the windlines, which were located throughout the building, the complete console and relay (cables still intact) and every piece of floor frame and supporting lumber "except for one piece" as the story goes. An imaginative and resourceful problem solver, he used some incredibly creative (and sometimes unorthodox) solutions to navigate difficult problems. Michael Przybylski, his son, and an avid collector of Detroit theatre organ history, recounts many stories, which his father told about the removal.

As he relays,

Henry was frequently "one step ahead of the scrappers" and worked almost nonstop through a bitter Michigan winter and against the ever-present deadline for the demolition of the building.

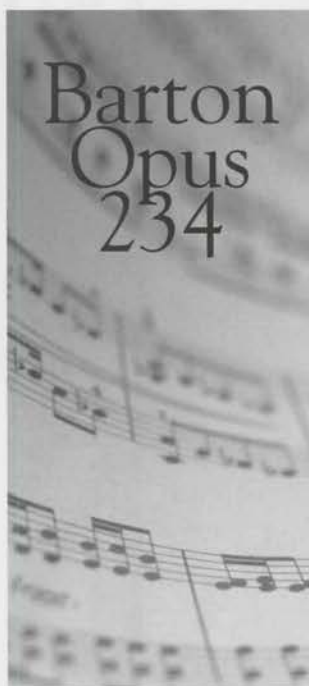
Mr. Przybylski was an ardent believer, as am I, of the quality and musicality of the Barton product as well as the importance of musical and mechanical integrity in the preservation of a historic organ. He was unfailingly dedicated to the preservation of the theater organ and never gave up hope that his instrument would one day play again. Since his unfortunate death last year, there has been left an incredible void in the tapestry of the Detroit theatre organ scene. His vivid stories, longstanding support of the instrument and unique prominence as a personality in the world of the theater organ are all an irreplaceable loss to those of us who knew him. It is because of his dedication and perseverance, as well as the

constant and unfailing support of his wife Mary and his son Michael that the instrument will play again.

With the re-packing, which was necessitated by the organ's recent removal from storage at the Przybylski residence, many interesting and long forgotten pieces of Detroit's past have come to light. Along with several piles of the latest news from 1962, the work crew was surprised to find re-used boxes from the first move of the former Fisher Theatre Wurlitzer to the Iris Theatre (it has since moved again and is now installed at the Senate Theatre, Detroit Michigan) as well as bits and pieces of painted plaster from the theatre, light bulbs, the ladies restroom sign, original shipping tags and boxes from Bartola Musical Instrument Co. and a myriad other relics.

A surprising amount of speculation circulated as to exactly what the condition of the organ would be in when it was brought to light for the first time in 40 years. Nobody, except the few who had ventured back into the tightly packed

storage space, had any idea of what to expect. Upon initial inspection, it became obvious that although not packed in traditional pipe trays, Mr. Przybylski had devised several unique methods for storing the pipes vertically. Since nobody had really seen the organ in 40 years, these were not immediately obvious facts. Speculation amongst those who were aware of the organ's existence ranged from optimistic to fears that the pipes had all collapsed under their own weight, glue joints would come to pieces and that the console would fall apart into a sorry heap of lumber if any attempt was made to move it. It was found, however, that amidst the densely and carefully packed components, almost everything was in a remarkable state of preservation. Excepting a rather overly hungry raccoon attacking some of the Clarinet trebles (he has good taste, perhaps?), the vast majority of the pipework was found to be in remarkably good condition—all eminently restorable and nowhere near as flat as local rumor had predicted. In some part, this seemingly miraculous state of preservation is due just as much to chance as to the high percentage of zinc that is found in a Barton Organ (as opposed to the softer Lead, Tin or Hoyt



Metal more common in other brands). But still, "It's alive!" as Dr. Frankenstein would have said—or so it seems.

It is sometimes surprising to realize exactly how few of the original instruments are left to us. Time and circumstance have all taken their toll in a remarkably short time upon the great movie palaces which once housed most of these magnificent creations. From a total of over 7,000 instruments installed in American theatres between 1915 and 1933, fewer than 40 now remain in their original homes. It is at once a shocking and tragic statement about a culture in which so much becomes disposable so very quickly. When the silent film era ended, these great "shrines to art and culture" became suddenly redundant. Disposable. The few organs which were lucky enough to still see occasional use in theatres had to escape repossession in the early years of the depression, water, fire, later theatre renovators, metal scrappers and wrecking balls not to mention the ever present menace of less than scrupulous organ enthusiasts eager to pilfer complete instruments for their "choice" parts. Destruction. Forever. Irreversible.

It is not here that the story will end, however. The theater organ is more than just another mechanical curiosity of the Roaring '20s. It is an art form. Do we all realize this? As the modern day staff organist of an original movie palace from the era, I am more than just the guardian of an anachronistic musical tradition associated with early film. I assure you that getting a pile of wood, metal and leather to sound anything like an orchestra (or whatever else you need for that matter) is as much of a challenge as it ever was. Still, it is obvious that there is something much more profound about the presence and use of these instruments in public spaces. How is it that a modern, digitally crazed, technologically informed theatre audience can be just as thrilled by the roar of a theatre organ as could an audience from 1927 when the phonograph was king?

The answer lies within the instrument itself. Like an orchestra, the theater organ is a remarkable palate of sound. Unlike its orchestral counterpart, however, it is at the instant disposal and complete will of a single performer—an inextricable, and even erotic marriage of technology, music, theatre and art. It is the presentation of a single individual as conductor, arranger, accompanist, soloist and magician—an entity capable of almost supernatural powers of appearance and disappearance as well as the ability to exercise absolute control over the most powerful and universal of human languages: Music. Therein lies the magic of this great art. Therein lies the vital importance of preservation for all time.

This organ, one of the finest examples of its era, is exceptional not only for its size and importance as an example of the Barton product, but also as an example of an original and untouched "archeological" record for how these instruments were built. A veritable time capsule of information, it is an invaluable guide to the restoration, not only of just this organ, but also of future Barton organs scattered far and wide.

Why is this at all significant? Many people sometimes forget

that by this time, most instruments have seen

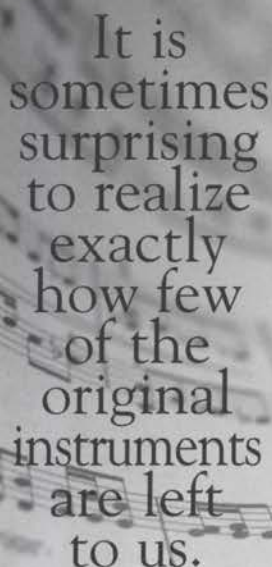
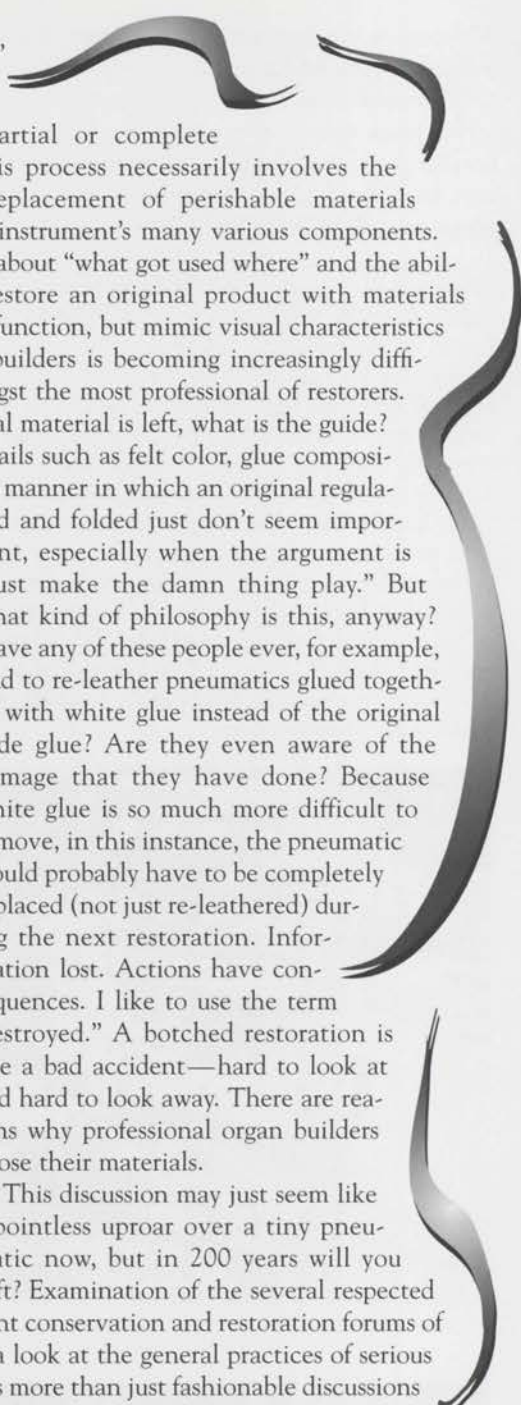
at least one partial or complete restoration. This process necessarily involves the removal and replacement of perishable materials throughout the instrument's many various components. The knowledge about "what got used where" and the ability to exactly restore an original product with materials which not only function, but mimic visual characteristics of the original builders is becoming increasingly difficult, even amongst the most professional of restorers. When no original material is left, what is the guide?

For some, details such as felt color, glue composition or the exact manner in which an original regulator was leathered and folded just don't seem important, especially when the argument is "just make the damn thing play." But what kind of philosophy is this, anyway? Have any of these people ever, for example, had to re-leather pneumatics glued together with white glue instead of the original hide glue? Are they even aware of the damage that they have done? Because white glue is so much more difficult to remove, in this instance, the pneumatic would probably have to be completely replaced (not just re-leathered) during the next restoration. Information lost. Actions have consequences. I like to use the term "restroyed." A botched restoration is like a bad accident—hard to look at and hard to look away. There are reasons why professional organ builders chose their materials.

This discussion may just seem like a pointless uproar over a tiny pneumatic now, but in 200 years will you have an organ left? Examination of the several respected historic instrument conservation and restoration forums of today, as well as a look at the general practices of serious museums presents more than just fashionable discussions about antiques. After all, where do you expect to find the instruments that you know and love after that span of time? Education and preservation begins with the individual and is hardly a matter for future consideration or debate. It is, perhaps, the single most important mission and role of the ATOS. That means you.


To describe the removal and re-packing of this organ as an "immense" project is almost an understatement. Many thanks must be given to all of the people who have assisted in the project thus far. In particular, I would like to thank the members of the Przybylski family, Lansing Theatre Organ, Inc., Eric Hartz, Arie Koelemij, Roger Mumbroe, Scott Smith, and Stephen Warner for their invaluable contributions and support thus far.

The restoration, when completed, will preserve the organ as an original and unaltered example of the Barton product.

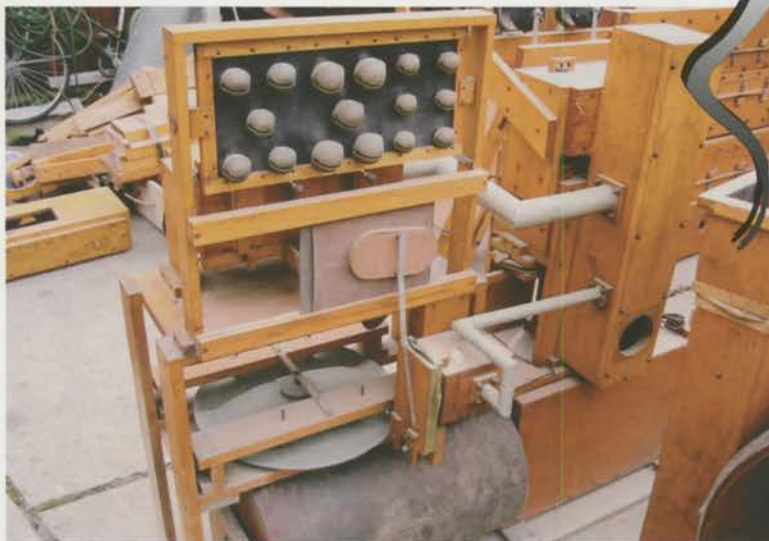


It is  
sometimes  
surprising  
to realize  
exactly  
how few  
of the  
original  
instruments  
are left  
to us.

Although a site has not currently been selected, the organ will eventually find a home in a space that will be available for public use, study and performance.

For more information about the organ and its current condition, to contribute to its restoration fund or to see regular updates about the progress of restoration itself, please visit: [WWW.STEVENBALL.COM](http://WWW.STEVENBALL.COM) 

*\*Steven Ball, a graduate of the University of Michigan School of Music, holds the unique distinction of being the first organist in the history of the nation to receive a diploma in organ performance recognizing his study of both the Theatre and Classical Organ. Mr. Ball has concertized and lectured around the world including solo performances and silent film presentations in the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, France, Portugal and Switzerland and was honored to receive the 2001 Fulbright Scholarship. Recently returned to the United States after an extensive year and a half abroad, Mr. Ball, in addition to his active silent film and concert schedule, now maintains the position of Staff Organist for the Michigan Theatre, Ann Arbor, Michigan in addition to his recent appointment as organist for Plymouth Congregational Church in Lansing, Michigan. His unique perspective, energy and performance style are at the forefront of efforts to continue the legacy of the uniquely American art form, which is the Theatre Organ.*



TOY COUNTER SHOWING (DESCENDING ORDER) SLEIGH BELLS, SANDBLOCK, CRASH CYMBAL AND SURF EFFECTS.



SOME OF THE PIPES BEFORE RE-PACKING.

# Barton Organ Opus 234 Hollywood Theatre

Detroit, Michigan—1927

The specification is listed exactly as it appears on the console and is presented here for the first time.

## specifications

### Pedal:

- 16' Diaphone
- 16' Tibia Clausa
- 16' Bourdon
- 16' Tuba Profunda
- 16' Piano
- 8' Octave
- 8' Flute
- 8' Tibia Clausa
- 8' Clarinet
- 8' Sax'phone
- 8' Tuba Horn
- 8' Tuba Mirabilis
- 8' Bass Solo String
- 8' Cello
- 4' Flute
- 8' Accomp to Pedal
- 8' Great to Pedal
- 8' Solo to Pedal
- 4' Accomp to Pedal
- Bass Drum on Pedals
- Cymbal on Pedals
- Snare Drum on Pedals

### Pedal 2nd Touch:

- Bass Drum
- Cymbal
- Snare Drum
- Kettle Drum
- Crash Cymbal

### Pedal Pizzicato:

- 16' Tuba Pizz

### Accompaniment:

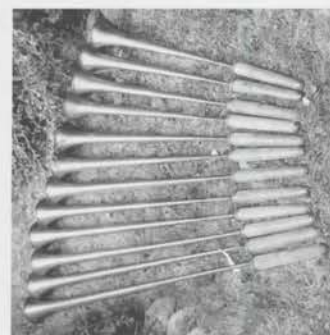
- 16' Solo String T. C.
- 8' Quintadena
- 8' Diaphonic Diapason
- 8' Concert Flute
- 8' Tibia Clausa
- 8' Solo Tibia Clausa
- 8' Oboe Horn
- 8' Sax'phone
- 8' Vox Human
- 8' Solo Vox Humana
- 8' Clarinet
- 8' Tuba horn
- 8' Trumpet
- 8' Solo String I
- 8' Solo String II
- 8' Viole d'Orchestre
- 8' Viole Celeste

8' Viole Celeste II  
 8' Solo to Accomp  
 4' Accomp to Accomp  
 Blank (white) 1  
 Blank (white) 2  
 Blank (white) 3  
 Blank (red) 4  
 Blank (red) 5  
 Blank (red) 6  
 Blank (red) 7  
 Blank (mottled yellow) 8  
 Blank (mottled yellow) 9  
 4' Flute  
 4' Piccolo  
 4' Solo Piccolo  
 4' Vox Humana  
 4' Solo Vox Humana  
 4' Viole  
 4' Octave Celeste  
 2<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub>' Twelfth  
 2' Piccolo  
 8' Marimba Rit.  
 8' Harp  
 8' Chrysoglott  
 8' Piano  
 Mandolin  
 Tamb'rine  
 Cast'nets  
 Chinese Block  
 Tom Tom  
 Sand Block  
 Snare Drum  
**Accomp. 2nd Touch:**  
 8' Diaphonic Diapason  
 8' Tibia Clausa  
 8' Solo Tibia Clausa  
 8' Sax'phone  
 8' Tuba Horn  
 8' Tuba Mirabilis  
 8' Eng. P. Horn  
 Blank (red) 1  
 8' Strings  
 4' Piccolos  
 8' Xyl'phone  
 4' Glockenspiel  
 8' Cath. Chimes  
 Triangle  
**Accomp. 2nd Touch**  
**Couplers:**  
 8' Solo  
**(Accomp) Pizzicato:**  
 (8') Solo Pizz.  
**Great:**  
 16' Diaphone  
 16' Tibia Clausa  
 16' Solo Tibia Clausa  
 16' Oboe Horn T. C.  
 16' Sax'phone T. C.  
 16' Vox Humana T. C.

16' Solo Vox Humana T. C.  
 16' Clarinet T. C.  
 16' Tuba Profunda  
 16' Solo Strings T. C.  
 8' Diaphonic Diapason  
 8' Concert Flute  
 8' Tibia Clausa  
 8' Solo Tibia Clausa  
 8' Oboe Horn  
 8' Sax'phone  
 8' Vox Human  
 8' Solo Vox Humana  
 8' Clarinet  
 8' Tuba Horn  
 8' Tuba Mirabilis  
 8' Orchest'l Oboe  
 8' Kinura  
 8' Trumpet  
 8' English Post Horn  
 8' Solo String I  
 8' Solo String II  
 8' Viole d'Orchestre  
 8' Viole Celeste I  
 8' Viole Celeste II  
 4' Flute  
 4' Piccolo  
 4' Solo Piccolo  
 4' Vox Human  
 4' Solo Vox Human  
 4' Viole  
 4' Octave Celeste  
 2' Fifteenth  
 2<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub>' Twelfth  
 2' Piccolo  
 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>5</sub>' Tierce  
 2<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub>' Tibia  
 16' Piano  
 8' Piano  
 4' Piano  
 8' Marimba Rit.  
 8' Harp  
 8' Chrysoglott  
 8' Cath. Chimes  
 8' Xyl'phone  
 8' Master Xyl'phone  
 4' Glockenspiel  
 4' Orchest. Bells  
 Sleigh Bells  
 Blank (white) 1  
 Blank (white) 2  
 Blank (white) 3  
 Blank (white) 4  
 Blank (red) 5  
 Blank (red) 6  
 Blank (red) 7  
 Blank (red) 8  
 Blank (mottled yellow) 9  
 Blank (mottled yellow) 10  
 Blank (mottled yellow) 11

Blank (mottled yellow) 12  
 16' Great to Great  
 4' Great to Great  
 8' Solo to Great  
**Great 2nd Touch:**  
 16' Tuba Prof.  
 16' Tibia Clausa  
 16' Solo Tib. Clausa  
 (Great 2nd Touch) Couplers  
 8' Solo  
**(Great) Pizzicato:**  
 (8') Solo Pizz.  
**Bombarde:**  
 16' Diaphone  
 16' Tibia Clausa  
 16' Solo Tibia Clausa  
 16' Tuba Mirabilis  
 16' Tuba Profunda  
 8' Diaphonic Diapason  
 8' Concert Flute  
 8' Tibia  
 8' Solo Tibia Clausa  
 8' Tuba Horn  
 8' Tuba Mirabilis  
 8' English Post Horn  
 8' Trumpet  
 8' Solo String I  
 8' Solo String II  
 8' Viole d'Orchestre  
 8' Viole Celeste I  
 8' Viole Celeste II  
 4' Piccolo  
 4' Solo Piccolo  
 4' Clarion  
 4' Clarion Mirabilis  
 8' Xyl'phone  
 4' Glockenspiel  
 Snare Drum  
 16' Great to Bombard  
 4' Great to Bombard  
 8' Solo to Bombard  
**Bombard 2nd Touch:**  
 16' Tuba Prof.  
 8' Tuba Horn  
 8' Tibia  
**Solo:**  
 8' Quintadena  
 8' Diaphonic Diapason  
 8' Tibia Clausa  
 8' Cathedral Chimes  
 8' Piano  
 8' Master Xyl'phone  
**Tremulants:**  
 Main  
 Solo  
 Vox  
 Tuba  
 Eng. P. Horn  
 Solo Tibia

Tibia  
 Blank (white) 1  
**Effects:**  
*(Mother of pearl buttons on touch-plate above Solo manual)*  
 Auto Horn  
 Fire Gong  
 Horse Hoofs  
 St. B. Whistle  
 Surf  
 Siren  
 Bird Song- I  
 Bird Song- II  
 Door Bell  
 Telephone Bell  
 Musicians (signal)  
 Stage (signal)  
**(Toe studs to the left of the swell pedals):**  
 Auto Horn  
 Fire Gong  
 Horse Hoofs  
 St. B. Whistle  
 Surf  
 Bird Song I  
 Bird Song II  
**Swell Pedals** *(with matching pneumatic indicators at the center of the top stop rail):*  
 Div. I  
 Div. II  
 Master  
 Cresc  
**Toe Levers** *(to the right of the swell pedals):*  
 Sforz. (with indicator light)  
 Thunder (with indicator light as Thund'r Lgt.)  
 Thund'r Crash (with indicator light as Thund'r Hvy.)  
**Pistons:**  
 Solo 1-10 + C  
 Bombarde 1-10 + C  
 Great 1-10 + C  
 Accompaniment 1-10 + C  
 Pedal 1-10 + C





# Closing Chord

## ALTON PHILIP 'PHIL' LYONS, JR.

The theatre organ world was saddened this week with the death of Alton Philip "Phil" Lyons, Jr. of Saucier, Mississippi. Phil was one of the greatest contemporary proponents of Theatre Organ, and he had devoted most of his adult life to spreading knowledge of the instrument and its music.

Lyons was best noted for his work in founding the Mississippi Coast Organists Association and the South Mississippi Gold Coast Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society. He served as President of both organizations. He was also well known for his work with Railroad Historical Preservation. He was considered a master organ craftsman and a respected church organist. Over the years, he directed efforts to restore organs throughout Louisiana and Mississippi including the historic pipe organ located at Jackson, Louisiana, and a large installation in his home, which he generously provided for use by ATOS members and visitors. Before his untimely death, he also served as organist of the Robinwood Baptist Church in Saucier.

Lyons was a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi, and he served in the United States Navy. He worked in the Aerospace industry at NASA facilities in Houston, New Orleans and Mississippi. He later became a career employee of Mississippi Power Company from which he retired.

With the escalation in popularity of the Internet, Lyons used the new medium to spread his in depth knowledge of organs and electronics to all who requested his assistance. He helped countless people in the organ world through obtaining and maintaining theatre pipe organs, and he also taught music at his Gulf Coast home studio.

Phil's death elicited statements of shock and condolence from all parts of the country. Those sentiments are best summed up by Darren Ferreter, President of the Cedar Rapids Area Theatre Organ Society who wrote: "I learned a lot from that great craftsman. A great loss to the world. He was a gentle gracious person who had the patience to teach a young person more on the hobbies he loved. We were friends in the Organ and Railroad world."

*John G. DeMajo*

## JOHN PAUL OTTERSON

John Otterson passed away in Lexington, Kentucky on July 28, 2002. John is survived by his wife Eloise, and daughters Riza and Gizella. John and Eloise were on vacation at the time of his death to visit Dr. John Landon and see the Page theatre pipe organ installation in Dr. Landon's home. John Otterson used to close his radio program with a hymn played by Dr. Landon on the Page organ.



John was very active in CFTOS for many years. He served on the CFTOS Board off and on over the last 20 years, also as President and in other positions. At the time of his death he was serving as Vice-President of CFTOS. He also was involved with the CFTOS Pinellas Park Wurlitzer from its inception in 1990, serving on the work and restoration crew of that organ. He was very active in supporting and participating in all the events that Manasota Held.

John, you might say, was the curator of the Tampa Theatre organ. He was involved in the restoration and installation of the Tampa Wurlitzer. Up to the time of his death he was still active as a crewmember doing maintenance. Most of us who have been exposed to the Tampa Wurlitzer were exposed through him. Over the years he graciously went out of his way to host out-of-town visitors from all over the world who came to visit and play the mighty Wurlitzer at the Tampa Theatre. John also was a volunteer organist at the Tampa Theatre for many years. He was known for his Tampa Theatre Wave as he took the console down into the pit after a performance.

John retired from the U.S. Government. He also was in the broadcasting profession and was a member of Pioneer Broadcasters. He was involved in broadcasting in the early days of television, working for TV stations in Buffalo, New York and the Washington, D.C. area in the early '50s. Locally, John for many years had a radio program called Popular Organ on WBVM on Sunday evenings between 5 and 6 p.m. He used to play recordings by various artists on theatre organs and also do one-on-one interviews with different artists on his programs. John was a student of Rosa Rio. Just this past year he had started taking lessons from her.

John lived to promote the CFTOS purpose: "To preserve and promote theatre organ and its music." John was a peacekeeper and ambassador and statesman wrapped up in one, which truly describes the kind of gentleman he was. We surely are going to miss him. He was one of the finest men I have ever known. God bless you, John Otterson.

Contributions may be made to CFTOS, c/o Tampa Theatre, P.O. Box 172188, Tampa, FL 33672-0188.

*Bill Shrive*

Dear Editor,

A great loss to our CFTOS Chapter here in Tampa, Florida was the sudden transition of our Vice-President and true friend John Paul Otterson. To me it is a deep personal loss of a true friend who I greatly admired and looked to for advice and counsel. John's love for the theatre pipe organ and a great supporter of our organ society plus his good sage advice and guidance will be remembered by all with deep appreciation and love.

John and I had much in common as we enjoyed our exchange of memories of those we knew in "ye old days of radio" as John was in Washington, D.C. in radio, also a U.S. diplomat, and I was with the networks in New York City. John and his lovely wife "Elsie" supported every musical event.

"To everything there is a season . . . a time to every purpose under the heavens" but for me, somehow, his passing hurts so.

Bless you John,

*Love, Rosa Rio*

## JOHN SENG

John Seng was found dead on August 25 at his Rogers Park home. He was 63. Heart disease was the cause of death.

John was born in Evanston and grew up in Rogers Park. His mother and grandmother reared him. He graduated from Loyola Academy and from Loyola University. He was an exemplary student at both schools. He studied piano at the American Conservatory in Chicago.

John worked from 1955 to 1957 as a staff organist at NBC in Chicago. He used to leave high school, rush down to the Merchandise Mart Building and play for his radio show. Then he would rush back afterwards to be on time for his next class.

He toured the nation as a product demonstrator and concert artist for the Wurlitzer Organ Company, and later for the Hammond Organ Company. He also helped to develop the world's first commercially available polyphonic synthesizer for Yamaha.

John wrote, arranged and conducted commercial jingles for major companies such as Greyhound, McDonald's and United Airlines. He wrote a special arrangement of *America The*



*Beautiful* and conducted it for a well-known public service spot on the environment that showed an American Indian weeping next to a polluted stream. He recorded a number of albums of organ music. Among them was the Columbia album *Dream Awhile* featuring trumpeter Bobby Hackett. Music from this album was used for years as theme music on NBC's *Today Show*. He also appeared as a guest performer on *Today*, the *Tonight Show* and the *Breakfast Club*. His movie and television credits include music for *Magnum P.I.*, *Nero Wolfe*, *Kojak*, *Alien*, *Superman* and *The Empire Strikes Back*.

John was a long time member of ATOS and was heard in concert at a number of ATOS Annual Conventions. During his career he appeared in concert at many concert venues such as Chicago's Orchestra Hall and Radio City Music Hall. He played hundreds of concerts around the country and in Europe and in Australia.

For the past eight years he was the organist at Our Lady of Pompeii. He was responsible for the redesign and rebuilding of the organ at St. Mary of the Lake Seminary in Mundelein. Parts of the CD he recorded on that organ were played at his memorial service on September 10. No family members survive him.

John Amy

## Tributes and Memories from friends of John Seng

About 1985 I stopped in for a pizza at Redwood City about 6:30 in the evening. It was an off night—Tuesday, I think, and there were not many customers. John was playing. I had planned to stay about an hour. But I stayed and stayed and the crowd got thinner and thinner. I think his last set was from 9 to 10 and by this time there were only a half dozen patrons left. Anyway, during the last set John played the most familiar pieces from *The Nutcracker Suite*—“Miniature Overture,” “March,” “Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy,” “Russian Dance,” “Arab Dance,” “Chinese Dance,” “Dance of the Reed Flutes,” and “Waltz of the Flowers.” The music flowed beautifully and effortlessly. What a musician!

Bert Atwood



I first met John Seng back in 1964 when I was playing the “Surf City Hotel” on Long Beach Island, New Jersey. John would come down to visit with the late Leroy Lewis who was also playing Long Beach Island at the time. We would hang out at Leroy's apartment, or on the beach, doing the things that “twenty something's” do at the shore.

John was truly a musical genius. He knew everything about music. His arrangements were mind-boggling and had a sophistication that was unique. His early sixties recording with trumpeter Bobby

Hackett made at the Dick Loderhose studio is proof of that. The arrangements are still fresh today and John was only about 21 years old at the time.

In the 1970s I played for Bill Bruer's “Capn's Galley” pizza parlors in the Bay Area and John was also working there. San Francisco was an organ Mecca in those days. Almost every night the “Who's Who” of the organ world would congregate at the New Belle on Polk Street where David Kelsey presided at the Allen organ. Some of the best jam sessions I've ever heard happened there and John was often a participant.

John could be quite a clown. I remember at the ATOS Convention held in San Francisco in 1975 he arrived at the cocktail party wearing an Afro wig and high platform soled shoes. Since he was well over six feet tall to begin with this was quite a sight! He later commented that he was trying to look “inconspicuous.”

In recent years I have not seen so much of John but we would communicate from time to time. The last time I saw him was in Milwaukee on a visit I made with Jack Moelmann a couple of years back. One of Jack's standards is “The Trolley Song” so John played the Massenet version to tease him. Most fortunately I had a video camera so this particular performance has been preserved.

It is sad that John left us so soon. He was only 63, which is not a great age these days. The loss is not just to the organ

fraternity but also to the whole music world. Rarely does such a talent occur and now it has been silenced too soon. We can await his successor but there will never be a replacement.

*Jeff Barker*



John was certainly a colorful character in both personality and musically. He had one of the most incredible musical minds I have ever come across. I met the man when I was about 10 years old or so and I still remember the absolutely wild program he played on that Rodgers Trio in Houston, Texas. He must have been in his early twenties when that took place because at his death he was only 63.

John was a musical marvel at a theatre organ. Over the course of his career, he found sounds and did things musically that have wowed and amazed the most jaded of us. From the bench of the Wurlitzer at Mundelein to the Yamaha electronics he promoted for a period, John never failed to make the most of whatever instrument he was playing at the time.

I sat in his living room a number of years back and listened to him play his Hammond X-66 for a while—I thought I knew everything that instrument could provide sonically—nope! He played for me and another friend for a good two hours—some of the most heart felt and wonderful music I have ever heard.

John was always a good person to talk to when one got a little disheartened with the “business.” He had a unique perspective since he was also involved in television and radio work in addition to playing concerts. He was a godsend for me personally on more occasions than I can remember—always understanding and helpful when I needed “direction.”

An incredible and loyal friend. An incredible and innovative musician. I loved him as a friend AND a musician. I will miss him terribly as will the world of music.

*Dan Bellomy*



Godspeed, Old Boy!

I am reminded of the last three concerts I heard John Seng play—Fresno Warnors Theatre at the 1990 Fresno Regional when that miserable Morton relay gave him and us hell for the first half of his concert. He more than made up for the balky organ in the second half! Same thing happened in the '94 Fresno convention when he played Pizza and Pipes Fresno—I had no intention of presenting that tired old organ in the convention, but John begged to play for the convention and asked if he could play P-P. He liked the organ when he was there in '90. I told him the organ was a ghost of its former self, but he insisted. Allen Miller, Jeff Weiler, and a couple of others did their best to pull that pile of junk out of the fire—but it was so far gone. John still played the holy tar out of that organ and made it sound better than it had any right to. It was also the last hurrah for that poor, tired old organ before it was removed to storage in New Jersey.

The last time I heard him was on the wild Barton in the Iowa Theatre, Cedar Rapids. The first half of the concert was grim—John was so nervous. But, look out for that second half! He sat down and, like Warnors in 1990; he lit into that Barton and played beyond belief. He was so apologetic after the concert to us privately. He had no reason to be. He gave a fabulous presentation of his awesome technique.

John lived a very self-punishing life. We are lucky that he was with us as long as he was. John would usually come through for his audience regardless of what condition he was in. For the 1975 San Francisco ATOS Convention, he played a Yamaha synthesizer concert at the Oakland Paramount (the present Wurlitzer was still several years from its premier). What he did on that synthesizer of the day was nothing short of incredible! The rudeness of many ATOS conventioners was also incredible! They booed, hissed, walked out, and then got nasty. It was uncalled for. John superbly played music suitable for the instrument at hand. The concert completely went over the heads of many an ATOS conventioner. They were expecting to hear soupy, syrupy glop and John was not about to try and play a pure theatre organ concert on the synthesizer! Those who were enlightened enough to stay through the concert, got a rare treat of another facet of the Seng talent.

There can be no doubt John was a pioneer in what he did with music. He played technically demanding music that many could barely understand let alone play. I'll never forget him at Redwood City Cap'n's Galley/Pizza and Pipes on New Year's Eve 1975. Some “momma's little darling” came up to him with \$1.00 for the tip jar and asked him to play “American in Paris”. For all to hear, he turned around and said, “You tell your mommy THAT is a \$20 selection!” He got his \$20 and we all heard “A in P”. Those were the days my friend. . . .

*Tom DeLay*



John and I met in 1955 at a The Gimble Hinged Music company in the Chicago Loop. I was playing a new Minshall electronic organ when John walked into the room. We struck up a conversation and became friends. John was taking piano lessons from a nun at school and I was taking organ lessons. John and I would do the organ company run on Walbash Avenue—Hammond, Consonata, Wurlitzer and Baldwin. Neither of us had an organ at home so we'd go to the music company stores to play the organs. The salesmen soon got wise to the fact we were not going to buy the organs and did not welcome our constant returns.

Since neither John nor myself had a driver license we would use public transportation to get around. I turned 16 and got my driver license. I would drive from Elmhurst to John's home in Chicago and we would do our organ crawls. All things were new to us and we could find fun in most anything we did, and without drinking! We thought that any organ sounded wonderful, either pipe or electronic, and would drive any distance to hear one.

Our meeting with Kay McAbee was our first link to the Wurlitzer Pipe Organ. John was very accomplished on the piano but not on the theatre organ. John's jazz playing was evident in the type of songs he played. The song "The Gypsy in My Soul" was one of the first jazz songs I heard him play. He had a wonderful ear and could play just about any pop song, without music, and in any key. As years moved on, I played the organ in roller rinks and John was selling and demonstrating Lowery Organs in Chicago. John's talent soon moved forward in leaps and bounds. In 1960 John announced to me he had been offered a job with the Wurlitzer Company as a touring concert organist. I was shocked at how much money he would be making plus benefits. He would be leaving the Lowery job and offered it to me. I quit the roller rink and took his place in the Chicago music store.

John introduced me to so many wonderful people. My first trip to California in 1961 was with John. The Wurlitzer Company had a store in Disneyland and Dee Fisher was the store manger and also the first Disneyland organist. We were his houseguests for a week. Dee introduced us to his very good friend Gaylord Carter. Gaylord invited us to attend the taping of *The Pinky Lee TV Show*. Gaylord was the musical accompanist using the Hammond Organ. We also spent several evenings playing Joe Kerns' Wurlitzer in Hollywood. We also attended the filming of the Joe Kerns' TV show, *Dennis The Menace*. We later drove to San Francisco and met Tom Hazleton and Ed Stout.

I moved to California in 1967 and started to play the Wurlitzer at the Santa Clara Cap'n's Galley Pizza & Pipes in 1968. A year later I took a week's vacation and John played for me. Bill Breuer, the owner of several pizza and pipes restaurants, offered John a job as full time organist. In 1977 John moved to California and accepted Bill's offer. Through the years our lives moved in different directions and we did not communicate very often. I will always remember my longtime friend and organ nut John Seng.

Jack Gustafson



News of John Seng's passing came to me as I was leaving work. I sat in my car and wept. My thoughts over the days since have been about John, our years of great friendship, the help he has given me with my music, his personality quirks and his individual brand of playing. To me, John was a potent combination of a highly developed technique combined with an original, inventive mind and a heartfelt sense of musicality. In John's hands the theatre organ came as close as it ever came to meeting its potential as an orchestral "replacement." He joined the exclusive company of Quentin Maclean and Reginald Foort in this art. His rendition of Gershwin's "An American in Paris" and Ravel's "LaValse" taken from a live concert at the Detroit Theater Organ Society's 4/34 Wurlitzer are astounding benchmarks of high level classical transcription. John was the premiere interpreter of Gershwin's music on our instrument. His 27-minute *Porgy and Bess*

medley on that Concert Recording label LP made a profound impression on me. Most theatre organ albums at that time were loosely knit meanders down memory lane. John's unusual style gave a steely edge to that music. When a character in the libretto is getting mean, John made the organ mean. I remember the first time I heard Johnny play. It was the "Love is Blue" cut, done in the style of Bach. Brilliant.

My 15-year old ears were just learning about the many approaches to the theatre organ. At that time I was most enamored with the recordings coming from the west coast by (then) young organists who came up in the shadow (and style) of George Wright. As often happens with young players, I started emulating these recordings. Three years later my good friend Scott Smith gave me a tape of Johnny's 1969 ATOE Convention concert at Mundelien. This hit me like a bolt of lightning, and forever changed how I approached the organ. As now, my ears were delighted in his creative inventiveness, his flawless technique, and the intelligence in programming selections. I just didn't know that an organ could sound so contemporary, so in the moment.

After many years of listening to John's recordings we met. It was in San Francisco. We hit it off, and I discovered an incredibly intelligent, quick thinking, literate person with plenty of unusual personality traits to match his abundant musical faculty. Immediately I noticed that John was a person with a strong sense of discipline. This is how he built his formidable technique, the hours spent at the piano, building dexterity. It showed in his daily early rising (no matter how late "festivities" went the night before) in his fastidious housekeeping and organization. This came from his strong German Catholic roots (his surname was shortened from "VonSeng" circa WWI). John was raised by his mother and grandmother. His father was divorced from his mother just prior to his birth. Educated in the excellent Chicago Catholic schools, John was a prodigious student and played piano well at an early age. John's friends would probably all agree on one thing—Johnny knew and cared passionately about music, regardless of whether it came from an organ or not.

His desire to achieve musical perfection led him to discover, restore, enlarge and redesign the auditorium Wurlitzer/Kilgen/whatever at the St. Mary of the Lake Seminary—Mundelein. John fashioned this into his own personal instrument, tailored to his highly individual style. John spent tens of thousands of dollars of his own money for pipe work, professional voicing and materials over a 13-year period. The recordings from that era are a treat to hear.

John's musical pedigree took him far from the theatre organ to the world of commercial music. Beginning in Chicago, John composed, orchestrated and conducted music used in many well-known advertising campaigns. Hollywood beckoned, and John played piano, organ and synthesizer for many movie and TV soundtracks. From this pinnacle John would still find time to play what he called his "first love," the theatre organ. In the early '70s John was

our “resident Hippy” with his long curly locks flowing down his back and “mod” clothes (even after they ceased to be Mod). I spent many hours with John, preparing for his concerts, visiting while on vacation, or when I played in San Francisco. When He moved back to Chicago it became easier to visit one another. He came to Detroit, I went to Chicago and we had great times visiting organ installations, eating at steakhouses (a true son of Chicago) and talking. John could occasionally test our friendship, especially when he preferred to be with his friend Jim Beam, or his old grand dad. I didn’t like those times, but as our friendship grew he became more in control of that demon. He helped me with my music and helped me become a better musician. He told me some things about my playing I needed to hear. Sometimes his help was from the “tough love” school, but you had to realize that he cared greatly about music. He came to three programs I gave in Chicago (including one at Mundelein—talk about nervous!) and was always supportive. Aside from constant telephone conversations we hadn’t seen each other in a few years when I made it a point to visit him last July. I wanted to take him out for his birthday, but that was a Saturday night, and he had to play at Church the next morning. So I met him at home on Friday, we spent the whole day talking music, organ world stuff, movies, cars (I helped him look after his beloved 1973 Pontiac Grand Am he bought new—and still owned) mutual friends, and friends who have gone on. We went to dinner at Biasetti’s, a wonderful Chicago steakhouse where our mutual friend Stan Zimmerman plays. Great dinner, more wonderful conversation. I last spoke to John when he called about three weeks ago to compliment me on the closing chord I wrote for Dorothy Van Steenkiste. His death leaves an immense void in my life. I’ll never forget the friendship, the coaching and advice he gave. Goodnight, sweet prince.

John Lauter



The music of John Seng was heard in our household for several years without any of us knowing who he was. His widely played LP “Dream Awhile,” on which he accompanied trumpeter Bobby Hackett, could be heard on television and countless “easy listening” formats from the early years of FM radio. I remember hearing his exotic sounding last name mentioned occasionally by an announcer. But it wasn’t until the early 1970s that I experienced the magic of John Seng as an innovative soloist. It came in the form of a disc spotted in the record bin of a stereo shop I used to haunt. Some of the really good theatre organists had begun to appear about that time, but this guy Seng’s approach to the instrument was somewhat “different” from all the others. In addition to the stupendous technique and absolute control, his music also covered many styles; jazz, ballads, show tunes, vintage novelties and even light and “long hair” classical material. But the “different” aspect? I never really could put my finger on that elusive quality found in most everything John played. It was an air of sophistication mixed with a cerebral property that prompt-

ed composer John Williams to remark, “John Seng is a musician’s musician.” To this day, I am at a loss for words to describe what made the Seng artistry so unique.

That first album, simply entitled “Johnny Seng,” was an ear-boggling sampler of his capabilities. It included a classical-laced “Love Is Blue,” a wonderfully hyped-up “To Russia With Love” (with a strong hint that it may have been a spoof on how George Wright might have played it), and a masterful *Porgy and Bess* medley that ran over 20 minutes. And the instrument? None other than the famous Mundelein Wurlitzer—the very organ that John had molded tonally into what he felt best suited his performance needs. Although it was a highly individualistic organ, as was its master’s music, it was still very identifiable as a theatre pipe organ.

In the early 1970s, I took a short vacation and went up to San Francisco. On the way home, the usual stop in Redwood City was made to have dinner at Pizza and Pipes. The organist that night was playing some incredible stuff. His arrangements were most inventive, and some of the orchestral colors were almost breathtaking. I looked up at the sign that identified the evening’s artist. It said “John Seng.” No wonder! Then he played Gershwin’s “An American In Paris” in its entirety—flawlessly, and with all the embellishments and appropriate sound effects. It was concert quality and absolutely electrifying in its impact. At the break, I went up to the console to speak with him and this first one-on-one encounter with that giant was a bit unsettling. I complimented him on his work. He seemed somewhat distracted. Still a bit naïve at the time, I said, “I really like those little classical-sounding flutes you used.” He quickly snapped back with, “This organ does not have little classical sounding flutes!” That retort felt much like a sharp rap on the knuckles, but I shook it off and remember saying that his “American In Paris” kind of made the pizza parlor disappear and took the listener to a night in the city. “I’ve never heard anything like that before.” He almost smiled and said, “Hey, thanks man.” Looking back at that moment, it’s possible that his uneven reactions could have been fueled by recurring struggles with unfortunate excesses, an area that some of us are all too familiar with in our own lives.

Years later, we got to know John as a friend (as well as a musical hero) when he played for various concert and convention events here in Fresno. He proved to be easy to work with and was surprisingly unfussy about any instrument he wound up playing.

The last time I saw John Seng was in 1998 during the Regional Convention at Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He was scheduled to play the closing concert on Sunday evening, and I looked forward to it with great anticipation. Several of my ATOS friends were there that weekend, and we spent quite a bit of time talking with this approachable legend. Between events and late in the evenings, we’d all sit around a table in the hotel lounge. John seemed to be very relaxed and happy, clear-headed, and was in a mood to talk about what really inter-

ested him. Most of the time, the rest of us just listened as he recalled past experiences, various instruments, and his fellow artists. He related story after story, many of them very interesting and amusing. John could be very articulate when expressing his thoughts, and was a superb storyteller.

This was only my second convention as reviewer for the ATOS Journal, and everything so far had gone smoothly. I began to think, "All you have to do is listen, take notes, then pull it all together into finished reviews and add a little local color for a sense of place . . . and a great time was had by all." But as the closing concert at Cedar Rapids approached, this freshman reviewer was about to be put to the test.

John was given a proper introduction. Then the problems began. Much of his opener was played with the swell shades closed, and the organ sounded as though it was in the next building. This was followed by several playing errors, long pauses between verse and chorus, erratic volume changes, etc. The number and nature of fumbles was embarrassing, and the tension in the audience was palpable. And the errors continued. This was terrible. Was this musical giant crumbling right before our eyes? Had the demons he'd struggled with earlier overtaken him again? And how could I handle this catastrophe and review it? John seemed to become increasingly flustered as the concert progressed. I literally felt like weeping and was becoming nauseated. At intermission, I rushed out to the lobby and ran into Tom DeLay, who looked quite dejected. "What is going on in there?" I almost yelled. "You tell me!" he shot back. Then in the second half, the great Seng redeemed himself. He later explained that he had a bad case of pre-concert jitters. But as the curious nervousness melted away, he gave us some brilliant playing during the rest of the evening. As Tom and I walked out of the theatre, I said something to the effect of "All's well that ends well." Tom said, "John Seng is a madman and a genius. Tonight, we saw him pull a rabbit out of a hat." And yet, John was clearly unhappy at the post concert gathering back at the hotel. He kept beating himself up for "screwing up the first half." It was sad that several people had to reassure him, but he just couldn't resolve it in his mind. That was the last time I ever saw John Seng. Then one night four years later, a flood of e-mails came in announcing that this enormous talent had passed away at the age of 63. That is far too short a life. But what a life of accomplishment it was—starting at the age of 18 as staff organist for the NBC Studios in Chicago. And his many achievements in the following years—as a nationally recognized musician are too numerous to list here.

The word "genius" gets tossed around very loosely these days. If a mediocre talent racks up big bucks from a large, unsophisticated audience, he or she may be hailed by the media as a "Genius." But John Seng was not a "one trick pony" or a simple celebrity whose main pull was just to be "famous for being famous." He was a real musician whose musical I.Q. was just about

off the scale. And for those with sufficient taste to fully appreciate what this genius did, John's music made life a little more worthwhile.

Ron Musselman



John Seng called me two weeks to the day before he died. It had been several months since the last time we had spoken. We chatted and laughed about the same things and the same people we had for years. We talked about his new VW "bug," and I smiled as I tried to envision how the very tall John would accordionate himself to fit into such a very small vehicle. Probably the same way he squeezed himself into a console. Carefully. It never occurred to me that it would be the last time I would ever speak with him. His mother had died only about a year prior to his own death, and he always bragged about how that side of the family had "*these hearts that just keep beating.*" Unfortunately, his own did not. As did his creative colleagues Buddy Cole, Ray Shelley and Father Jim Miller, John Seng left us far, far too soon.

Like most of my generation of organists, I stood in awe of John Seng, both in musicianship and physical stature. I first heard him play live on the former-Fisher Wurlitzer at the Senate Theatre in March 1973. No one ever, before or since, ever drew such convincing orchestral colors out of that or any other organ, for that matter. Who else would use the French Horn and Oboe Horn to support the unusual Cor Anglais, and then use them together as a solo stop? Who else would not use more than one Tibia stop at any given pitch? Who else would play the new tunes of the day so theatrically and yet so jazzy? As well as the usual pizza fare, he played transcriptions of Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* and Delius' *Winter Night* during that concert. The creativity and professional execution of the program put John up to a "top shelf, no dust" stature in my mind that evening. I heard him play live in numerous concerts over a period of nearly 30 years after that whenever I could. Some were great, some were good, and some were pretty rough. But you could always count on John to program at least one or two obscure, interesting or unusual pieces that he had figured out how to transcribe to the organ that no one else would ever dream of doing. Whether or not you liked it was up to you. John was an artist in the truest sense. He knew innately that part of art's job is to occasionally offend when challenging the status quo, and he always did it his own way with no apologies. But, in doing so, he wrote much of the book on modern theatre organ playing.

There certainly never was a more controversial organist who walked the Earth than John Seng. Not even Virgil Fox or George Wright. It didn't matter if you were speaking of his clothes, his manner, his program choices or the sounds he liked. The fans and non-fans were equally divided. But, controversial or not, John enjoyed the "bad boy" reputation, and, in many ways, lived it to the hilt, personifying a self-fulfilling prophesy. The John Seng stories are legion in

number, and generally have something to do with his ability to put away more than just a few belts.

No one can ever dispute John's role as an innovator in the theatre or electronic organ fields. His reworking of the Gottfried-Howell organ in the Auditorium Building of St. Mary of the Lake Seminary in Mundelein, Illinois is now something of legend. As well as exemplifying the jazzy-orchestral sound that John sought, it was arguably the first "modern" theatre organ. While George Wright's Pasadena Wurlitzer included its own special sounds and "tricks," John Seng's "Mundelein Organ" included numerous innovations never seen or heard before on a traditional theatre organ. If they had, John certainly changed them enough to call them his own. Things that now are in nearly every modern theatre organ spec were "innovative," even "radical" in those dim and dusty days of only thirty-five-or-so years ago. Trick couplers, "flip-flop" circuitry, electronic basses, custom traps and percussions, and variable scaling are all the norm now, but they weren't then. It is arguable that, without John's leadership, we would not have seen these innovations when we did. During that last telephone conversation, he reminded me, as he always did, that the initial renovation of the instrument in the early sixties was hampered by the lack of availability of new replacement parts. Unlike today, nearly everything had to be adapted from what was available from church organ supply houses, or fabricated from raw materials. It is arguable that John Seng influenced our expectations of modern theatre organ sound and quality of tone as a result of his use of the Mundelein Organ as a working musical laboratory, weeding out rank after rank until he got just the "right" sound.

From the time I first heard the Mundelein Organ on the original Concert Recording LP, *Johnny Seng*, I was hooked. Something in that organ and John's playing of it spoke directly to me. Not everyone liked it, for sure, but John's planning, execution and regulation all made perfect sense. Over the years, I've talked to most of the people who had something to do with its creation and refinement. Without exception, all spoke reverently of John's musicianship, and how he was truly at-one with that organ, and *only* that organ. Prior to the numerous changes that have since significantly altered John's vision of the instrument, I was able to play it when it was still in the same condition as when Walt Strony recorded his "Mundelein 1980" LP. I'll never forget it. Sure, it could be loud as Hell when you kicked it, but the response time was positively electric, even in the basses. It was astounding! The hair stood up on the back of my neck as I attempted to emulate some portions of Seng arrangements. In that acoustical environment, it was a concert hall for the theatre organ. But it wasn't all loud stuff. Not by a long shot. There was a pair of Wurlitzer Dulcianas and a pair of Meyer Blockflutes that were positively ethereal in that atmosphere. Over the years, I was inspired enough by Seng's creation to successfully incorporate many of his design concepts into my own creation of the organ at the Grand Ledge Opera House in Grand Ledge, Michigan.

John was truly an "out-of-the-box" kind of thinker, and

changed many minds by example, including my own. Before hearing the Concert Recording LP, I *hated* the sound of Vox Humanas. But, when I heard the opening sequence of voxes and strings of "Mood Indigo," my mind was changed forever. Years later, as the organ was being altered, I wondered what happened to that Gottfried Vox Humana, as I heard through the grapevine that it was being substituted with a Wurlitzer set. In an ironic twist, I was able to acquire this historic rank to install into the Grand Ledge organ, where it now resides. When I proudly told John that I now had the set, he typically downplayed its importance to the overall sound at Mundelein, but by then I knew him well enough to know that he would have thrown it out long ago if it had not performed adequately.

His stunning performance at the 1969 ATOE Convention is now also something of legend. At that concert, John Seng essentially threw down the gauntlet to his colleagues. The level of playing, professionalism and condition of the organ raised the bar several notches. That concert was just a few years prior to my initial interest in the theatre organ, but the recording of that concert acquired later was as good of a music lesson as I ever had. Who will ever play the suite from Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* as did John that evening? Who else but John would have taken the time to learn something as complex and obscure as the overture from Bernstein's *Candide* just to prove he and the organ could do it? The response from the audience was unbelievable. They came. They heard. They left in disbelief.

It was after the controversial concert at the 1975 ATOS Convention in San Francisco that we got to know each other. John played an intense, pyrotechnic, and rather loud concert on the Yamaha synthesizer at the Oakland Paramount Theatre. The dyed-in-the-wool crowd booed the performance and walked out in droves. Later, I wrote a letter to the then-editor of this publication, attempting to defend John and the concert, which only managed to raise the ire of many of those who attended. Frustrated, I wrote to John directly, expressing my own feelings about the concert. Much to my surprise, he responded immediately and we became longtime friends as a result. Even though he may have been cranky and irritable from time to time (who isn't!), he always treated me with great kindness.

In spite of his brash-appearing manner in public, John was actually very sensitive; a rather soft-spoken and private person who was mostly a homebody, at least around his close friends. He once related to me that while in high school, he was very shy and weighed in at over 300 lbs. On his 6'7"+ frame, that might not seem too excessive, but a real contrast with the slender figure we all came to know since then. He learned to get the attention of his peers by playing the piano for parties without actually having to talk directly to them. John also had a very soft spot for his older colleagues. He had a special love for Chicago-area organists Pearl White and John Muri. He told me he stayed in bed and cried the whole day Pearl White died. John and John had a special, almost father-son relationship.

John related the story of how he managed to get the gig of playing the organ on the "Dream



*John Seng and Scott Smith are shown in this 1979 post-concert photo taken at the former Roaring Twenties Pizza in Grand Rapids, Michigan.*

*Awhile*" LP when he was only 19 years old, saying that it was he who instructed Glenn Osser how to arrange for the organ; not the other way around. John still had all of those original charts from that recording in his possession at the time of his passing. He wistfully admitted to me one time that he was the living example of the saying: *The hardest thing for a young man to overcome is his own success.* Financially, he never came even close to what he made . . . and squandered from his compensation for that album, and he readily admitted it.

Many readers will be surprised to learn that John was a longtime member of Mensa, an international society whose only qualification for membership is a score in the top 2% of the general population on a standardized intelligence test. The word *mensa* has a triple meaning in Latin of *mind, table, month*, which suggests a monthly meeting of great minds around a table. Whether you liked John or not, his intelligence was undeniable.

John's return to Chicago from San Francisco was not entirely a happy one for him, but he made the most of it, with some studio keyboard work, a few concerts here and there and a position as organist at Our Lady of Pompeii Catholic Church on Chicago's south side. His later concerts were still programmed as interestingly as ever, but, ironically, the guy who had single-handedly brought up the technical standards of theatre organ playing to new heights could no longer do it himself. Readers can speculate all they want on why, but John was always a professional, and he never stopped trying. Never.

The case should be made here about persons of artistic temperament, high intelligence or those with other special gifts and our expectations of them. Gifted people, like John Seng are different from the masses, and they know it. Whether or not they explore or utilize their gifts, there is a lifelong struggle dealing with acceptance. Gifted people generally do not want special treatment, but as a respected friend says: *Acceptance begins where understanding leaves off.* Throughout recorded history, many of our most gifted creative people have engaged in self-destructive behavior, like Hemingway, Van Gogh and Tchaikovsky. From my viewpoint, John's "wild side," patterns of self-denial, long hair, loud clothing and self-abuse were all indications of his never ending desire to be loved and accepted simultaneously by two different worlds . . .

the theatre organ buffs and those in the "Real World." Because I appreciated the music he made so much, I tried to overlook whatever else he was doing. Sometimes that was very hard to do. I never felt especially "close" to John, but I doubt if many, if any were truly close to him. Oftentimes, persons of high intellect are rather emotionally detached or removed. We'll never know what John thought of himself. Surely, he knew he was extremely bright and extraordinarily talented. But, from where I stood, those gifts appeared to be as much of a burden as they were a blessing.

Among his many keyboard accomplishments were consultation on the Yamaha GX-1, the world's first polyphonic synthesizer, studio keyboard work (piano, organ, synthesizer) on many television and movie scores, where he worked with musical giants such as Elmer Bernstein and John Williams. He also did some touring with rock bands like Emerson, Lake & Palmer as a backup keyboardist.

In terms of what impact his passing has on the theatre organ field, it can only be placed in a category occupied by Jesse Crawford and George Wright. A giant has truly fallen. Will ATOS finally place John Seng rightfully in the Hall of Fame?

If I could speak to him right now, I would say: *Thank you, John. You have single-handedly altered our collective viewpoints of the theatre organ and our perception of music in general. You have expanded our world, and for those things, we are exceedingly grateful. We saw you, we heard you, we loved you . . . but we hardly knew ye, Johnny. Rest in peace, my friend.*

Scott Smith



The first that I heard of John Seng was when a good friend, Warren White, brought over the first recordings from the Loderhose Studio in New York. I was immediately hooked on John Seng's music. In late 1959 or early 1960 my father and I went to hear him on some kind of electronic in Oakland, and John invited us to join him at a late night session at the Original Oakland Paramount Wurlitzer. What a thrill! I was maybe 14 at the time, and John let me sit at the console with him as he played everything and anything for us that evening/morning. What a musician.

A second opportunity came during the early 60's ATOE Convention in Los Angeles, and again John invited dad, "DOC" Weil and me to join him at the Joe Kern's Residence Wurlitzer. We had a fabulous afternoon of music that only John Seng could provide.

In the seventies John came to the Bay Area and played a concert at the Redwood City Cap'n's Galley, and he really gave that instrument a work out. He joined the staff at Pizza and Pipes for a while, and played Redwood City, but primarily I remember him at Sierra Monte. That Wurlitzer seemed to be in line with John's style, and many, many nights were spent listening to John's magic at that instrument.

I will miss his music, and I will really miss that John was always kind to me and to my father "DOC" Weil. He always "knew" us and talked freely with us about music.

Richard R. Weil





The following article appeared in the July/August, 1995 issue of *Theatre Organ*.

# MEMOIRS OF A LATTER DAY THEATRE ORGANIST

by John Seng

A child of the "forties," I grew up in a softer gentler period of our nation's history. Popular music was evolving rapidly; and, although the Big Band era was coming to an end, live music was everywhere. The staff orchestras at Chicago's network-owned radio facilities . . . CBS, NBC, ABC and Mutual each numbered sixty plus world class players and each satellite had a theatre organ ranging from good to phenomenal. Unlike other American cities, a plethora of elaborate movie palaces stretched in every direction to Chicago's city limits. There were fewer airplanes and a driver's license could be had for cents. It was not until the early "fifties" that I would gain even a modicum of appreciation for these wondrous things which served as the backdrop to my childhood.

Chicago in the forties was still a major broadcast center; and, as a toddler, I vividly recall hearing the frequent voice of the theatre organ over the airwaves. Though totally unaware of the nature of its source, I was beguiled by that tonality; and, if a performance was rhythmic, I might dance around the room. Nearby but hidden under dusty discarded stage drapes, five silent theatre organs reposed.

Although my family was not particularly musical, it was rumored that my paternal grandfather had married his last wife because she owned a Steinway grand piano! This notwithstanding, my sporadic piano training began about age six under the guidance of one Sister Bertha whose questionable assignment was to aesthetically nurture grammar school brats

who exhibited an interest in music. Those of my peers who today consider me some sort of musical genius (I'm not) would have had a good laugh at the fumbling and disinterest I displayed in those days. In retrospect, this poor beloved nun was probably only a few lessons ahead of me!

Until its demise in the mid-seventies, Lyon and Healy had the Hammond Organ franchise in the Chicago area. At about age nine, I assaulted their Evanston store. Knowing zilch about drawbars, I attacked the instrument and would blithely play the pedals only when they were turned off. Occasionally the organ would go completely dead and I would take my leave thinking I had broken something. In reality a half crazed sales staff had pulled the master switch. I knocked on church doors asking if I could play their organs. Eighty percent of the time the answer was no. Undaunted, I continued my investigation of electronic instruments . . . the Connsnata, the Minshall, the Wurlitzer, the Baldwin. Being a potential customer, these outfits had to oblige me. Finally, after much pleading by my mother, I was allowed to play for services at our church. As a result of these early frustrations, I have never denied access to anyone wishing to play an instrument that I have created or controlled.

At age eleven, while attending a Boy Scout production at the Loyola Community Theatre, I saw and heard my first theatre organ. I nearly wet my pants. The instrument was a highly unified 3/6 Möller. Knowing nothing of unification, I assumed that the instrument was one-hundred ranks or more. Where did they put that many pipes? "Please, God, let me play this organ." Sorry, kid. At about the same time, I noticed a large covered mass in the orchestra pit of the lavish local Norshore Theatre. I crept down the aisle; put my right hand under the cover and felt two and one half rows of stopkeys and four keyboards. "This must be five-hundred ranks," I thought. I instantly became a console proper practicing my art at all the local theatres. I had to develop a plan to play these "off-limit" instruments and I did.

Famed theatre organist Preston

Sellers used to remark, "The organ is the easiest instrument to play badly." At age eleven, I was an adroit practitioner of his theory but this began to change when I met nineteen-year-old Kay Arthur McAbee, staff organist for the W.W. Kimball Company. Even back then Kay was a wonderful musician brimming with originality and pizzazz. He explained unification to me. The organ at the Norshore was not a 4/500 but rather a 4/20 Publix Wurlitzer. Later he exposed me to the George Wright HiFi recordings. Little by little, my playing began to improve. Thank you Kay. We remain friends to this day.

In the fall of 1962 with my left wrist in a cast from a Halloween accident. I finally played my first theatre organ, the aforementioned 3/6 Möller. "First experiences" can never be duplicated and I went to heaven and back that day. In December I auditioned on a Hammond for Adele Scott, a free lance radio and television organist at the NBC Studios located on the nineteenth floor of the Merchandise Mart in Chicago. Although I was rather dejected by her appraisal of my talents, I did manage to notice a large green steel studio door while departing. On it was imprinted: ORGAN ROOM — NO ADMITTANCE. Did this space contain one hundred Hammonds?

## What was Behind the Green Door? I was determined to find out.

Studio security was minimal in those days; so, in the summer of 1953, dressed in my best clothes, I hurriedly departed the elevator at the nineteenth floor. Acting like I was late for a very important appointment, I rushed past the guards while looking at my watch and headed for that Green Door. It was locked. I walked around the corner and entered Studio G. There sat a white three manual Wurlitzer and a Steinway grand piano. My heart was pounding as I rushed over to that organ. A key switch was located directly below the left lower stoprail. Enough Alice in

Wonderland for one day. I left making sure I said hello to everyone I encountered on the way out. Armed with a screwdriver and a short piece of end-stripped electrical cord, I returned two days later. I removed the switch cover and jumpered the switch. The organ sprang to life. Hours passed like minutes. This was a great instrument. Were all Wurlitzers like this one? Soon I was to learn that the answer was "no." Although unaware of it at the time, the Chicago NBC Wurlitzer like some of the British organs was a repo which was respecified by Crawford and installed in late 1935. It was the most highly unified organ ever built by Wurlitzer. Its perfectly selected thirteen ranks were spread between two chambers with percussions occupying a third. My covert operation lasted for about a month. Later I was told that I could have electrocuted myself! Today I consider the NBC Wurlitzer to be one of the three finest unit organs I have played. It was silent; it was perfectly voiced and regulated; and, it was totally musical. It served as a template for what was to come.

Time to legitimize my act. While no one knew that I had been playing the organ for a month without permission, I had made many friends at the station though nobody knew exactly what I did or why I was there! Helen Mortin, the staff organist, finally asked if I would like to try out the NBC Wurlitzer. This terrific gal/musician was quite amazed at my familiarity with the machine! In those days there was still a considerable amount of live music being broadcast; and because of a conflicting radio assignment, Helen asked if I would be available to play for a TV show called *Noontime Comics*. You can imagine my response. The format of this thirty-minute silent movie show was as follows: movie teaser followed by theme (*Ain't We Got Fun*) played on the pipe organ; main body of show (silent comedies) played on a Hammond;

closing theme on the Wurlitzer. This arrangement was instigated by the sponsor, Jewel Food Stores, who had to pay an additional fee for use of the pipe organ. I never did comprehend this rationale. Here I was in the early "fifties" and in my early teens, a silent movie organist. To this day I have never understood the "mystique" surrounding the musical accompaniment of silent films. It's really a very easy thing to do.

My gig as a silent movie organist lasted for about a year and a half. In the spring of 1955 the Wurlitzer was

his wife had been a theatre organist, Nate Platt, the executive in charge, hated organs. In retrospect, this edict yielded a mixed metaphor. On one hand, it saved the instruments from well-intended but often brutal attention by amateurs; on the other, it served to fully frustrate the desires of this young console groper. Time to return to my plan.

In the late spring of 1953, I learned that the Publix Wurlitzer at the nearby Norshore Theatre was used for a local high school graduation. I arrived there as a petite woman organist was "playing them out." In those days, the organs were permanently positioned at movie level, the console top flush with the stage floor. I had no way of realizing that the instruments were moveable. While asking this nice lady if I might try the organ, I heard a heavy footstep on the console top. A frightening voice was telling me "to get the hell out." God bless the Stagehands Union. The following year, I called the theatre manager, himself a recovering theatre organist, and told him I had been hired to play the graduation and needed to practice. I played that organ right up to the matinee for several days until the real organist appeared. I was unceremoniously removed from the premises. I fared better on the Publix at the Granada which was right around the corner from my high school. It wasn't until much later that I realized the



John Seng in 1958, recording at the Aurora Paramount.

professionally removed but ultimately scattered to the winds of time. What a tragedy.

## Balaban and Katz owned or controlled the vast majority of large Chicago movie palaces in the "fifties."

This corporation's policy regarding use of their numerous theatre organs was absolute: "Hands Off." Although

theatre manager had been friendly with many of the original organists; liked the instrument and was simply ignoring the Balaban and Katz "Hands Off" edict. Lucky me.

I eventually played four of those five "silent theatre organs" in our neighborhood: 3/15 Wurlitzer, Nortown; 4/20 Wurlitzer, Norshore; 4/20 Wurlitzer, Granada; 3/6 Möller, Loyola Community Theatre. The fifth, a 3/8 Kimball at the Howard Theatre was intact but inoperable.

In 1951 Kay McAbee unearthed a very late 3/14 Wurlitzer at the Aurora Paramount Theatre. With Bob

Schumway and others, Kay brought this excellent organ back to life adding collective general pistons and a Great 5 1/3' Tibia and Tuba. Kay, what was the reason for the 5 1/3' Tuba? Later, he recorded this instrument for Replica Records. The majority of Chicago's renowned theatre organists were still alive and kicking in the late fifties. Thus McAbee, Brother Andrew Corsini and I decided to form a chapter of the then three-year-old ATOE. The short-lived Midwest Chapter held its first meeting at the Paramount and its second and final meeting at the Palace Theatre in Gary, Indiana. Though invited, not one of the major players showed up. The best laid plans of mice and men!

The 4/24 Replica Recording Wurlitzer was assembled about this same time. Intended to compete with the superb 5/21 Vaughn HiFi Wurlitzer, it was loud, coarse and strange. During my senior year of high school. I played a radio show on it. Bill Huck, former well-driller and owner of Replica, couldn't stand my playing and replaced me with a Pointer System organist. Recorded sparsely, the instrument now reposes in a Sacramento Pizza Parlor.

Oh, during the course of the aforementioned machinations, I was also attending some very special schools. While studying pre-law in my Freshman year of college, I met Thomas Grant Sheet, a pre-med student and organist. His theatre organ affliction set in rapidly and he probably played more of Chicago's theatre organs in the first year of our friendship than I have to date. Once we drove one-hundred and fifty miles to listen to a Kinsman electronic organ because it had a Kinura stop. Whatever happened to Doctor Sheen and Barrister Seng? Whither youth?

By 1959 I was playing concerts for the Wurlitzer Company and had made my first major label recording for United Artists. Unfortunately, the playing on "Beyond the Blue Horizon" did not reflect my best work. Riddled with nerves unintentionally evoked by a one-time record producer, I spent most of the night after the first day's recording session in tears. Dick, whatever happened to my royalty checks?

"Dream Awhile," recorded with Bobby Hackett for Columbia the following year was another matter. It sold over 700,000 copies and one cut was used as theme music eighteen times daily in the *Today Show* It's odd shaving to one's own music for twelve years!

## My nine year association with the Wurlitzer Company was a joyous one.

Lou Hollingsworth, an executive with the firm, became my mentor. He and his family are always in my heart and mind. Farney Wurlitzer also took a shine to me and shared numerous fascinating yarns about his life. Every year Mr. Wurlitzer traveled to Germany where he had a very distinctive cheese created. When visiting him in North Tonawanda, I was usually a recipient of this delicious gift. Unfortunately, the morsel had an aversion to elongated trips in suitcases and would have to be discarded if my next destination wasn't home! I've saved Grace and Farney Wurlitzer's Christmas cards. Two and one-half years of concertizing for Hammond followed. In contrast, the staff at Hammond were rather cold and abstract.

Much has been written about the creation and refinement of the Mundelein organ; so, I'll limit my comments. From 1960 through 1972, the instrument was rebuilt and enlarged. Taking my cues from the NBC installation, it was totally silent, extremely responsive and easy to play. A remarkable acoustic didn't hurt and back then my colleagues loved to play Mundelein. My only regret is that foolish perfectionism severely limited my recording output. A new CD of unreleased material entitled Mundelein Revisited is available for the curious. If, as I'm told, my Mundelein performances for the 1965 and 1969 ATOS conventions were the highlight of those events, that organ had a lot to do with it.

Performing for the electronic organ manufacturers had left free time for

Mundelein and other pursuits. In 1968 I became involved with the Moog synthesizer. We produced many successful commercials on the then novel machine for five years until I departed for San Francisco. I ostensibly went there to study with Darius Millhaud, last of the surviving French impressionists; but, at Tom Hazleton's behest, wound up playing two nights a week in the Redwood City Pizza Parlor instead! Millhaud shortly returned to France and died.

The heyday of the pizza parlor organ was during the "seventies," and very few noteworthy theatre organists escaped duty performing in those establishments. While the phenomenon seemed limited mainly to the West Coast and Phoenix, the first truly visual pipe organ had been installed years earlier in New Jersey's Surf City Hotel by Ted Campbell and organist extraordinaire Leroy Lewis. Although mechanically noisy, the Redwood City instrument had an excellent specification and sounded great. Back then the audiences spoke English and it was possible for me to play complete orchestral scores with astonishing results. Virtually unmaintained and poorly played to an audience of indifferent thugs, this instrument exists today as a caricature of its former self in this now filthy location. Being paid to practice was wonderful, but time marches on.

Shortly after moving to the West Coast, I also became involved as tonal consultant for a multi-million dollar Yamaha project in Japan which resulted in the birth of the first polyphonic synthesizer. As evidenced by the Theramin and Novachord, film composers are constantly searching out new sounds and this association brought me in touch with the movers and shakers on the Hollywood music scene. These almost impossible doors now beckoned and I became acquainted with everyone from Steve Allen to Stevie Wonder. Johnny Green (composer of "Body and Soul") was especially helpful and film credits, too numerous to mention here, followed. In the world of studio music, theatre organs are generally used to "fill out" orchestras; and, owing to my abilities to follow a click (metronome) track, I did the majority of theatre organ play-

ing at Universal (3/10 Morton) and Twentieth (3/17 Wurlitzer) for quite a while.

## The ATOS did not share the Hollywood music community's enthusiasm for the Yamaha GX-1!


Here's the inside story. In the spring of 1975, Dick Clay, program chairman for the 1975 Theatre Organ Convention, sent a letter I had authored in his name to the electronic organ manufacturers. Would they be willing to participate in a proposed concert at the then "organless" Oakland Paramount Theatre? In reality, my letter intentionally spelled out the exact specifications of the Yamaha GX-1 synthesizer/organ I had designed. All corporations save Yamaha responded by stating that while interested, they lacked an appropriate product. Yamaha committed to the event and what followed was undoubtedly the most controversial concert in the annals of ATOS history.

My God-Given ability to play

authentically in any musical style has served me well over the years and the Paramount program I planned included everything from Chopin to Bach to Disco to Debussy. The poor Yamaha didn't play theatre organ music very well but I remember including "Jeannine I Dream of Lilac Time" as a theatrical "peace offering!" While I had not anticipated a fervent response, this audience booed, hissed and shouted expletives. Women took children to their skirts or to the awaiting convention buses. Overnight, I temporarily went from being a darling of the theatre organ world to its bad boy! From a purely musical vantage point, this was a great performance. The musicians and many others were awed, but there were actual vocal confrontations between these factions as I played! I've always enjoyed being something of a maverick, but enough is enough. John Seng was first in line at the bank the next morning to cash Yamaha's two-thousand-dollar check. Wrong place; wrong crowd and I promise never to do it again for any amount of money!

Based on my previous success at Yamaha, I was asked to join the Wurlitzer Company as a product design consultant in the late summer of 1979. I traveled once monthly from

my home in San Francisco to Wurlitzer headquarters in DeKalb, Illinois. At the onset of this three year contract, the company was flourishing. Home organ sales had peaked in 1977, but suddenly all hell broke loose. Sales across the industry plummeted and by 1980 Conn and Thomas were gone. Others would soon follow. Red ink and terminations were everywhere as Wurlitzer struggled to survive. Not unlike Robert Hope-Jones decades before, I was paid to stay home during the last term of this sad, difficult time. The company, as millions had known it, is gone now. The sales and executive staff at Wurlitzer were considered the industry's best. I miss those wonderful people.

And what of today? Theatre organ concerts across this country and abroad continue as does all that has gone before. A wonderful church position keeps me on the straight and narrow. Two years ago I returned to Chicago because of a family health problem. Same house, same neighborhood. Residential and office buildings have replaced the Norshore and Granada Theatres. The rundown Nortown is a church of sorts. I occasionally wander by these places and the spirits of softer gentler times ring out to me. 

*John Seng at the organ at St. Mary of the Lake Seminary Auditorium, Mundelein, Illinois (1965).*



# For the Records

**Ralph Beaudry, Associate Editor**

Compact discs, cassettes, videos and books to be reviewed should be sent to Ralph Beaudry, 5155 N. Fresno Street, Apt. 170, Fresno, CA 93710-6838. Please be aware items must be received three months prior to the issue date in which the review will appear. Information telephone 559/222-0239.

## FROM RAGTIME TO SWINGTIME

Lyn Larsen and the Jack Bethards Orchestra



For the past 20 years or more Lyn Larsen and the Jack Bethards band have been featured frequently in concerts for ATOS audiences. But it was only two years ago that the first recording of one of their wonderfully unique programs was released. That CD, *A Salute to the Swinging Years*, was recorded at Plummer Auditorium in Fullerton, California during a Southern California Wurlitzer Weekend (and reviewed in the Journal July 2000). Now we have a second 73-minute CD of their entertaining musical collaboration; it's the recording of this year's Wurlitzer Weekend concert and again features Lyn in organ solos on Plummer's original installation 4/37 Wurlitzer but this time he's joined by the Jack Bethards Orchestra of 15 top Hollywood musicians! This orchestra, in addition to the usual brass, woodwinds and percussions, has added four violinists and, for that authentic 1920s-'30s flavor, a first-rate banjo-ukulele player!

On this album's 20 tracks Lyn plays seven organ solos while the orchestra is featured in two solo spots. The organ and orchestra are heard together—as they

often were in the movie palaces of yesteryear—playing 11 authentic arrangements of some of the pop hits from that musical “Golden Age” nearly 70 years ago! We're going to say it right here and now: With the delightful quality of the programming, superb musicianship of all the artists, and the sonic perfection of the Plummer Auditorium and its Wurlitzer, this is a Must Have Recording! And Bill Lightner's excellent microphone placements, full range recording, and masterful editing have beautifully captured all the individual orchestral voices while keeping the organ and orchestra in perfect balance throughout this disc. It's quite possible that listening to this CD is even more enjoyable than being in the live audience last January!

After Don Near's brief welcome and introduction there's nothing better to set the mood for this program of all-American music than to open with a rousing march. But, instead of a Sousa parade piece, Lyn brings the console up with Wagner's “Under The Double Eagle.” No it's not Richard Wagner but Joseph Frederick Wagner who was born in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1900 and enjoyed a lengthy career teaching, conducting and composing in Boston and Los Angeles until his death in 1974. For a pleasant contrast Lyn next presents a 1926 novelty foxtrot by Bernard Barnes. It's his delightfully delicate “Dainty Miss” with some added delicious percussion touches here and there. From the same era is a warm, lush “Deep In My Heart” from Sigmund Romberg's most successful operetta, *The Student Prince*, which totaled 608 performances on Broadway and spawned touring companies that traveled around North America for the next 25 years! It should be noted that the Plummer organ was originally designed as a “Concert” instrument and so has a full compliment of rare

Wurlitzer ranks that are ideal for orchestral transcriptions; Lyn's registrations and arrangements take full advantage of all this organ has to offer.

With a brief introduction of Jack Bethards and his orchestra they launch right into a sizzling hot “Who Cares” which the Gershwins wrote for their 1931 musical *Of Thee I Sing*. Another swinger follows; it's a full-of-fun “I'd Love To Call You My Sweetheart” which Jesse Crawford recorded in 1926. Although Jack explains that his orchestra wanted to do one classical number, their version of “Hungarian Rhapsody” got a ricky-tick twist and came out as the “Hungarian Rag.” We should comment that, since Bethards is using original orchestral arrangements from 70 years ago, some of the numbers seem to end quite suddenly as it wasn't until the big-name singers took over the spotlight from orchestras in the late 1930s that we started hearing long endings on popular tunes.

Many readers will remember the true showbiz legend named Rudy Vallee. Rudy enjoyed a long running engagement at New York City's HeighHo Club and, after his shows there started being broadcast on radio in the mid-twenties, he became a nationwide radio star whose career lasted until well after WW2. During his broadcasting years he introduced such future stars (among many others) as Bob Burns, Victor Borge, Joe Penner, and Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy! After radio Vallee enjoyed a nightclub-performing career (and starred in the 1961 Broadway musical hit *How To Succeed In Business*) until his death in 1986. Lyn and Jack combine to recreate Rudy's own arrangement of his 1933 radio theme “On The Air.” It's a glistening, listening treasure!

Jack and his orchestra solo on the bright and chirpy novelty “Soldier On The Shelf.” Then Lyn rejoins him to

play a tune that, frankly, since the liner notes fail to list composers, has us puzzled. The song is titled "Once In A Blue Moon" and, as sometimes happens since song titles cannot be copyrighted, there are three tunes with that name! Jerome Kern wrote one for his 1923 musical *Stepping Stones*. In 1959 Rick Besoyan wrote a number with that title for his off-Broadway musical *Little Mary Sunshine* (which wonderfully spoofed the entire operetta genre). However, we believe it probably is the Harry Revel/Mack Gordon tune that Bing Crosby sang to Carole Lombard on a desert island in 1934's provocatively titled film *We're Not Dressing*. It's a beautiful romantic ballad, which seems written for Bing's seductive boo-boo-booing style of singing in the early 1930s.

In an organ solo Lyn next features the organ's rich Tibias and Strings on Harry Warren's beautiful "The Shadow Waltz" and rejoins the orchestra for "I Guess I'll Have To Change My Plans." Their first chorus is unusually subdued but, in the second chorus, it's flat-out, first-class, rip-snoiting ricky-tick featuring some great drum work! That tune was first presented on Broadway in a 1929 Schwartz/Dietz musical review, *The Little Show*. But it was a recycled melody Schwartz had originally written in 1924 (with Lorenz Hart lyrics!) for a summer camp show and its title then was "I Love To Lie Awake In Bed." OK, now it's time to "Wake Up And Live" as Lyn solos on the great Revel/Gordon title tune, which Alice Faye sang in that 1937 film. It's a mellow swinger and has a cute verse, which Lyn tastefully inserts between the two choruses.

Lyn next solos the Plummer Wurlitzer in a magnificent 15-minute medley of six wonderful songs from Jerome Kern's most popular musical play *Show Boat*.

In the order played these are "Make Believe," "Life Upon The Wicked Stage," "Nobody Else But Me," "You Are Love," "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man," and "Ol' Man River." Aside from his very colorful registrations Lyn also features the rarely heard verses of several of these selections. And it's of interest to note that "Nobody Else But Me" is the last piece of music Kern wrote for the stage—the 1946 Broadway revival of *Show Boat*—which opened two months after his death. Musicologist Stanley Green wrote that "Kern was the recognized father of the modern musical theatre. . ." During his lengthy career—which began with his first hit song in 1905—he wrote 38 Broadway musicals in addition to his many delightful melodies for Hollywood films of the 1930s and '40s.

The Bethards orchestra returns to join Lyn for some toe-tickling arrangements of "Crazy Rhythm" and the one that the lady in the tutti-frutti hat, Carmen Miranda, made famous—"Brazil." Slowing the tempo down is "The Song From Moulin Rouge." No, it's not the recent box office hit but the 1953 biopic about French painter Toulouse Lautrec. You'll probably recognize this enchanting melody under its more popular name, "Where Is Your Heart?" In the movie it was sung by (are you ready for this?) Zsa Zsa Gabor! Mercifully, her singing was dubbed by Muriel Smith. Continuing in a subdued mood, the orchestra presents the ravishing DeSylva/Brown/Henderson waltz "Just A Memory" which, indeed, does sound a bit like Eubie Blake's better-known song, "Memories Of You."

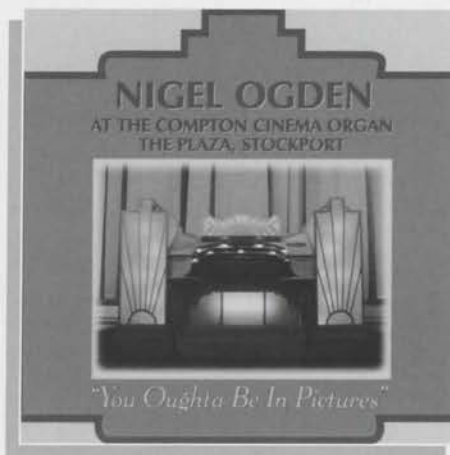
Nearing the concert's end Lyn solos the Plummer organ with the most delicate, sparkling, tinkly version we've ever heard of "Tico-Tico." And, for the sim-

ply smashing finale, the Bethards orchestra joins Lyn in a classic Big Band arrangement of "In The Mood" which allows all the members of the group to have their spotlight solos one last time—it will knock your socks off! A brief encore of "Good News" winds up the festivities. As we said before—this album is a Must Have musical treasure on all counts; there's no better entertainment theatre organ and Big Band aficionados will find anywhere!

It's available on compact disc only for \$20.00 postpaid from Beldale Records, P.O. Box 5786, Fullerton, CA 92838.

## YOU OUGHTA BE IN PICTURES

Nigel Ogden



It's now almost 30 years since the first review of a Nigel Ogden disc appeared in the Journal! Since then there have been an additional 21 Ogden albums reviewed in these pages (the most recent was *Late Night Hammond* in the March 2002 issue) and Nigel has been inducted into the ATOS Organist Hall of Fame! In between his numerous concert engagements and BBC radio broadcasts Nigel found time last January to record this

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77-minute CD on one of the few remaining original installation theatre organs in the UK! It's the 3/11 Compton (Opus A153) in Stockport's Plaza Super Cinema.

Opened in late 1932, this organ also boasts still having its original glazed sunburst style illuminated surround. (See the cover picture—and there are four additional full color photos in the six pages of liner notes.) Although the theatre closed in 1965 it became a Mecca Bingo Hall until 1998. Since then, because it is considered "... the best surviving Super Cinema auditorium in the entire North of England" it has been undergoing a complete refurbishment, which has included a restoration of the Compton organ. The Plaza reopened as an operating theatre in October 2000. This organ, as is true of many British installations, was installed in two stacked chambers on the right side of the proscenium. The excellent liner notes contain the complete story about the theatre, the organ and the restoration project.

As you might gather from the CD's title, all the music on this album has

been played on the silver screen—although a few of the tunes actually originated on Broadway. For instance, the title tune was written for Jane Froman to sing on stage in the *Ziegfeld Folies* of 1934. It wasn't until 1951 that Warner Brothers finally found a spot for this great tune in an otherwise forgettable film titled *Starlift!* Unfortunately space does not permit us to list the titles of all of the 39 melodies on this album's 27 tracks. But we must emphasize that while there are a few medleys, each tune receives a fully developed and appropriate arrangement. At 58 seconds the shortest selection is the "Cantina" music from *Star Wars* while the magnificent "Dream Of Olwin" and the martial "Thing To Come March" each are over four minutes long. Thankfully the liner notes name each composer (and lyricist) along with the film title (and film date) for every melody!

Nigel has divided his musical program into a number of categories and opens with a group of *Wild West* themes beginning with a bit of Jerome Moross' 1958 score for *The Big Country* and follows that with music written for one of Clint Eastwood's "spaghetti westerns"—so called for they were made by the famous Italian director Sergio Leone—although they were all actually filmed in Spain! It is, as one critic describe it, "... the raucous, brash, and rhythmically drive..." theme music Ennio Morricone wrote for "The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly." This group closes with a medley of Tiomkin's theme for "High Noon," "The Deadwood Stage" from the Doris Day film *Calamity Jane*, and "You Can't Get A Man With A Gun" from Irving Berlin's great stage and film musical *Annie Get Your Gun*. In the category of War music Nigel includes British composer Ron Goodwin's theme from the Cliff Robertson film *633 Squadron* followed by John William's Academy Award winning slow and somber theme from *Schindler's List* and concludes with a medley of tunes from *The Great Escape*, *Bridge On The River Kwai*, and the 1943 Berlin title song for *This Is The Army*.

A nine-minute medley of wonderful melodies from six Walt Disney films is next and then it's on to a *Space Odyssey* collection of "Also Sprach Zarathustra" and four written by John Williams (two from his score for *Star Wars* plus his

themes from *ET*, and *The Empire Strikes Back*). At over 19 minutes Nigel next plays some of everybody's all-time favorite melodies under what he titles *The Age of Romance*. First is the minor key ballad "Where Do I Begin?" (from 1970's *Love Story*) and includes, among others, "Speak Softly Love," "Maria," and "Intermezzo." Max Steiner's enthusiastic "King Kong March" is one of two Nigel plays in his *Sci-Fi* group.

The 20-minute concluding section is titled *Through The Mists of Time*. First is Addison's "The Charge of the Light Brigade" (written for the British 1968 remake of that film, not the 1936 Errol Flynn version). Then, from the actual music track of *Titanic* (not the "pop" version heard at the end of the film) is the emotional "My Heart Will Go On." Some may be surprised to find that the noted British composer Sir William Walton (1902-1983) wrote a number of memorable film scores. Nigel plays three of Walton's melodies from Laurence Olivier's 1955 film version of Shakespeare's *Richard III*. Following that is one of the most memorable movie themes ever written—Ernest Gold's magnificent "Main Theme" from *Exodus*. The disc closes with completely theatrical arrangements of three melodious Wright and Forrest songs (well, actually the music was written by Alexander Borodin) heard in both the stage and film versions of *Kismet*—"Stranger In Paradise," "Baubles, Bangles and Beads" and "This Is My Beloved."

In 77 minutes Nigel has presented a thoroughly enjoyable musical survey of some of the finest songs and themes from films made between 1933 and 1997! And, except for a scattering of "fun" pieces from a few of the films, these are all unforgettable melodies, which, though written for orchestras, transcribe so perfectly to the theatre organ. Especially under the fingers of a skilled musician like Nigel Ogden who, with this Compton's beautiful solo voices and gutsy, yet mellow, ensembles has created a unique, satisfying theatre organ listening experience, Ray Pickett has recorded the organ close-up so each voice speaks clean and clear—but in the satisfying spaciousness of a Super Cinema. Highly recommended! (Since this program contains not one of the wonderful bright, bouncy tunes from the hundreds of film

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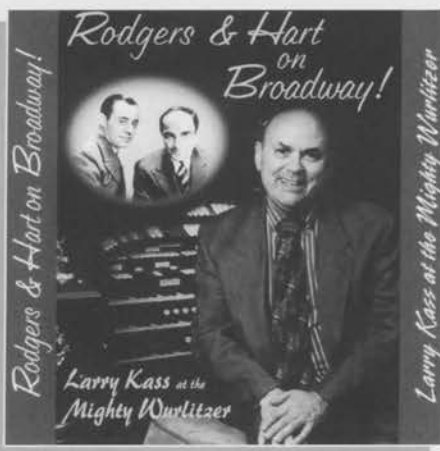
musicals with songs by Harry Warren, Cole Porter, Jerome Kern and so many others, dare we hope for a Volume Two?)

Compact disc only for \$21.00 (plus \$3.00 per order for shipping) from Organ Literature Foundation, 45 Norfolk Road, Braintree, MA 02184-5918.

## RODGERS & HART ON BROADWAY!

Larry Kass

Reviewed by Glenn White



This interesting CD, produced by Larry Kass's Razzmatazz Productions, covers the gamut of Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart's careers, from their Broadway debut in 1925 through their last Broadway show in 1942. (The composers took a vacation from Broadway between 1931 and 1935 when they lived in Hollywood composing memorable music for the movies. None of their motion picture music is represented here.)

Mr. Kass plays the 1928 Wurlitzer 220 Special originally installed in the Plaza Theatre in Kansas City, Missouri. The organ has been moved several times over the years but now resides in the Larry Kass residence outside Cleveland, Ohio. Although it was originally a 3/9 it's been

added to and restored to excellent condition (see the Journals for January 1990 and January 2001). The most telling addition is the 1927 Steinway Duo-Art Reproducing Piano, which plays from the organ console as well as from Duo-Art rolls. There is also a rare Wurlitzer vibraphone and other interesting percussions and on this disc we get to hear most of them. The sound of this well regulated organ is always pleasant and the piano is especially effective in several arrangements. The Clarinet (which is not heard enough for my taste) is a fine voice with a slight edge that gives it a sprightly yet haunting character.

Larry Kass, a former student of George Wright, arranged and plays these classic tunes with obvious affection and with a stylistic panache perfectly suited to the era they were written. The tempi chosen by Mr. Kass are always suited to the song and many are quite fast; but the playing is consistently full of clarity and vivacity, with clever, quick registration changes that show off the various voices of the organ. The registration changes are very well thought out and never conflict with the musical continuity. Mr. Kass adds many little jazz-inspired interludes and asides that are in the style that was heard in the 1920s and '30s. The melancholy tunes are played much more delicately, with a smoother musical line and lusher registrations. An example is the remarkably sensitive and effective rendition of "Falling In Love With Love" from the 1938 musical *The Boys From Syracuse*.

The disc is accompanied by very informative and well-written liner notes that discuss the music and sources in detail, and also summarizes the story of the composers' careers. A paragraph about the organ (sadly without the stop list) and several interesting pictures are

also included. The first track begins with a nicely done spoken introduction by Bill Rudman who gives a brief history of Rodgers and Hart and their musical accomplishments. The narration segues into the "Overture" to *On Your Toes*, a suitable curtain raiser for what follows. The remaining selections are in chronological order and the year of origin is listed for each track. This makes more fascinating listening for those who are interested in the composers' evolution of style and sophistication. The later songs lean progressively to the more melancholy culminating in the beautiful "Bewitched, Bothered, and Bewildered" presented on track 22, the penultimate track.

The earliest selection (track 2) is "Manhattan" (1925) from *The Garrick Gaieties*. This was Rodgers and Hart's first hit song. Mr. Kass plays it up-tempo with suitable verve and bounce, using the piano and percussions with telling effect. Next comes "The Girl Friend" (1926) played in a more relaxed and introspective style. Then we hear a brassy, but not overblown, rendition of "Mountain Greenery" (1926). The year 1927 brings us the old favorite "Thou Swell" (from *A Connecticut Yankee*) which receives a sprightly treatment. Then, from 1935, we hear "The Most Beautiful Girl In The World" given in a very imaginative, touching performance. This song seems to mark the start of a burst of creative energy that lasted to 1942, the year of their final show. Other hits from the 1930s include "My Romance," "The Lady Is A Tramp," "Johnny One Note," "My Funny Valentine," "This Can't Be Love," and "Falling In Love With Love." All of them are beautifully played.

It is obvious that Larry Kass really loves these songs and his enthusiasm

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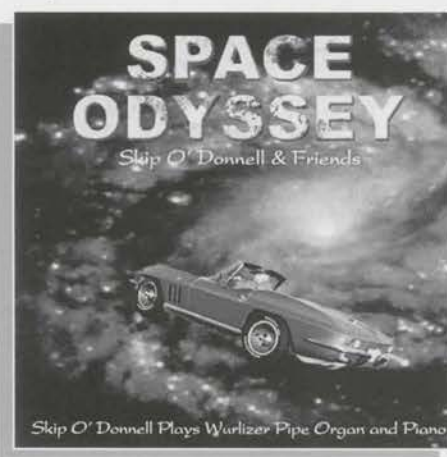


fairly jumps out of the speakers to the listener. Music and performance of this quality makes this disc a joy to hear over and over. The last track is "Ev'rything I've Got" (1942) from *By Jupiter*, the last Rodgers and Hart show—and a fitting finale it is! Immediately after the last tune Mr. Kass plays a short excerpt from "There's A Small Hotel" which fades out to silence. A nice touch to end a very well-conceived and expertly arranged and played monument to the immortal music of one of the most talented and most famous teams working in the Broadway Musical field. Highly recommended! The total playing time is 72 minutes and 5 seconds.

This CD is available for \$15.00 plus \$1.50 postage in the U.S. (Ohio residents add the appropriate sales tax) from Razzmatazz Productions, P.O. Box 401, Hinckley, OH 44233. Charge orders can be sent by FAX to 877/590-4849 or by e-mail to skass@prodigy.net.

## SPACE ODYSSEY

*Skip O'Donnell and Friends*



This name Skip O'Donnell surely will be new to most readers. Although he's been a professional musician for over four decades—playing piano and Hammond organ in nightclubs and lounges around the country—it wasn't until the early 1990s he finally was able to fulfill his desire to play theatre pipes. For eight years prior to its closing in 1999 he was one of the featured artists playing the 3/18 Wurlitzer at Uncle Milt's Pipe Organ Pizza Company in Vancouver, Washington. This is the third recording to be reviewed in the *Journal of that organ* which many organ buffs considered the sweet "baby sister" to Dennis Hedberg's enormous, powerful 4/47

Organ Grinder Wurlitzer across the river in Portland. Uncle Milt's daughter Wendy Kieffer and Rob York shared an LP about which reviewer Stu Green said "... (I)t's a fine sounding instrument and both players perform very well..." (January 1988). Dan Bellomy's *Puttin' On The Pipes* CD (May 1992) caused reviewer Bob Shafter to comment "... (I)t is one of the best 'finished' instruments I've heard..."

Uncle Milt's organ is Opus 1674, a 3/13 Style 235 Special first installed in Seattle's Orpheum Theatre in 1927. The Walton Wurlitzer List says it went to Harry Dost in Seattle in 1967 and the theatre was demolished. When Milt Kieffer rebuilt an abandoned church in Vancouver into a pizzeria, he installed the Orpheum organ (with a three-manual console from Opus 727 out of the Capitol Theatre in Atlantic City) and opened in August 1979. In the 1980s five more ranks were added and the console was replaced by the unique gold mottled console from Opus 1710 (also a 3/13 Style 235 Special) which had been in Portland's Oriental Theatre until Dennis Hedberg acquired that entire organ for his Organ Grinder restaurant in 1973. As Hedberg's organ grew in size he replaced the Oriental console with the four-manual console from Boston's Metropolitan (Music Hall) Theatre and the Oriental keydesk moved to Vancouver. Today Uncle Milt's Wurlitzer is stored in the San Diego area and awaiting reinstallation in a private residence.

Because Skip O'Donnell enjoyed playing with various jazz groups over the years, Sunday evenings at Uncle Milt's often turned into "jam sessions" when some of the fine local musicians dropped in. On some of the ten tracks on this 51-minute CD you'll hear Chris Hill playing an upright bass, Paul Schrimmer on guitar, and either Neil Masson or Keith Werner on drums. No, this certainly is not your typical theatre organ album! As Skip explains in his liner notes "On most of the selections I have mixed two styles of playing: theatre organ and jazz. I hope listeners will like the contrast of both styles and how they are intertwined..." *Space Odyssey* is a product of love and respect... love of music, musical stylings (and) magnificent instruments." We'll add that this is a most refreshing musical feast featuring lush, traditional theatre

organ stylings spiced up with tasty jazz flavors.

As you might guess from the album's title, you're going to hear first the opening theme from Stanley Kubrick's 1968 blockbuster film *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Actually, it's the brief (just 1 minute 53 second) "Introduction" from Richard Strauss' 35-minute tone poem *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. But, after Skip's brassy organ fanfare, it's six minutes of improvisations on the theme, which features the Wurlitzer's spectacular untremmed pyrotechnic rocketry supported by drum, and guitar—we think Richard Strauss would approve. Continuing the "space theme" Skip—accompanied by upright bass and drums—presents an innovative arrangement of "How High The Moon." Uncle Milt's immaculate instrument with the tremos turned off is the ideal organ for playing jazz on pipes!

Skip continues the space theme with one of the all-time greatest jazz numbers, "Fly Me To The Moon" which, somewhat surprisingly was written for and introduced by vocal legend Mabel Mercer in 1954. Born in England in 1900, Miss Mercer moved to the U.S. in 1938. According to the Smithsonian's *American Popular Song* "... her long running engagements at ... prestigious establishments ... (made her) something of a cult figure among composers, lyricists and fellow singers for her taste, her diction, and the grace and intelligence with which she brought a song to life ... (while) seated in a large high-backed chair occasionally punctuating the line of a song with a graceful gesture of her hand." Moving right along Skip next presents an original composition by trumpet virtuoso Miles Davis: it's his jazzy "Milestone." According to pop music expert Steve Braun "Miles Davis was practically a poster boy for the lounge movement in the late 1950s and early 1960s" It was the cool jazz era and Skip's arrangements features some great piano and pipe/percussion combinations—it's a swinger!

The tempo slows down considerably for Skip's next several selections and you'll hear his winning way of presenting ballads with lush combinations along with tasty touches of jazz here and there. His first ballad is usually listed as "The Theme From Somewhere In Time" but is, of course, mostly the 18th Variation from Rachmaninoff's "Rhapsody on a

Theme by Paganini." This particular piece features Uncle Milt's "second organ," a mint condition Hammond B-3, some tasty piano passages, and sparkling guitar additions in the final chorus. For Walter Gross' hit song "Tenderly" Skip has moved to the grand piano (the organ was over dubbed on this track) for a rich, romantic version of this wonderful melody which Sarah Vaughn introduced in 1946 and Rosemary Clooney (who died at age 74 last June) adopted for her theme song.

Skip at the piano gives "Flamingo" a gentle Latin beat before going a bit more up-tempo with those wonderful un-tremmed Wurlitzer pipes along with an upright bass and drums. Then it's cool organ pipes with tasty piano touches on "You Stepped Out Of A Dream" which Nacio Herb Brown and Gus Kahn wrote for Tony Martin to sing to a trio of beauties—Hedy Lamarr, Lana Turner and Judy Garland!—in the 1941 film *Ziegfeld Girl*. Next to closing is a somewhat far-out melody titled "Little Sunflower." But Skip's finale is another one of those wonderful romantic melodies we so rarely hear played today. It's a seven-minute arrangement of Gene DePaul's "I'll Remember April." Although not written for the 1941 Western *Ride 'Em Cowboy*, it was introduced in that film by its rugged singing hero Dick Foran. Skip turns the tremos on for this number and you'll hear this Wurlitzer's lovely Flutes and juicy Tibias in the first chorus before it segues into a slightly jazzy, fun-filled

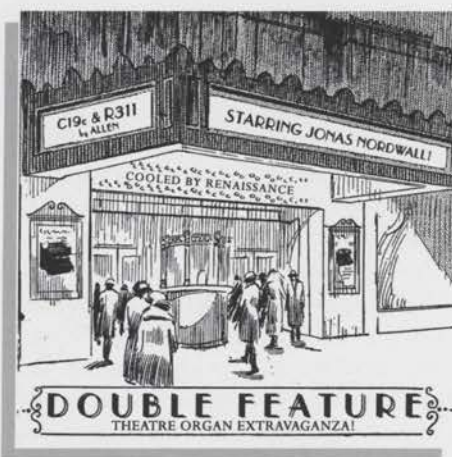
"Three Suns" type arrangement with bass and drum.

We recommend this beautifully recorded disc as a most refreshing way to cool off your musical taste buds and also stretch your appreciation of just how versatile a Wurlitzer organ can be when it's combined with piano, guitar, bass, and drums.

Compact disc only for \$14.99 plus shipping and handling from either Amazon.com or Soundtracks.com. (You can also inquire about Skip O'Connell's other CD recording of Uncle Milt's Wurlitzer.)

## DOUBLE FEATURE

Jonas Nordwall

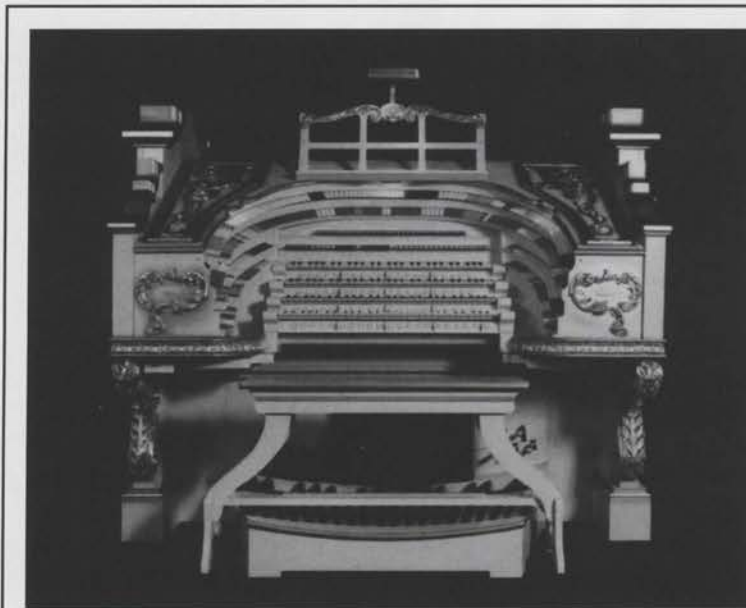


This is the third release in Jonas Nordwall's recent series of Allen Organ recordings. The first, *Definitive*, featured the Allen GW 319 EX (reviewed in the

January 2001 Journal) and the second, *Shades of the San Francisco Fox*, was made on the George Wright four-manual Signature Series Allen (reviewed in the March 2001 issue). This new *Double Feature* CD showcases two of the smaller Allen organs—the two-manual C19c (with the electronic equivalent of eight ranks) and the three-manual R311 (with 13 ranks). While these surely are a bit smaller, they are quite similar in size to the majority of the Wurlitzer organs we heard played live in most theatres and on radio broadcasts during theatre organ's Golden Age! And in no way are they smaller in sound or versatility as this album so beautifully demonstrates.

As Jonas explains in his informative eight pages of liner notes, "For this recording, the Virtual Acoustic™ settings of both the C19c and R311 were set to a comfortable *Medium* . . . Among the many features of the Allen Renaissance R311 is second touch, which was common on almost every Wurlitzer . . . (and) I've selected music to articulate the musical resources of these organs using various examples of musical styles from the 1920s through contemporary."

On this CD's 16 tracks are 57 minutes of some distinctive music from the past 60 years that successfully affirms Jonas' remarks. Since tracks made on the smaller two-manual C19c are interspersed with those made on the larger Allen—and the Nordwall registrations and arrangements for both organs are so musically satisfying—we'll discuss the



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tunes in the order played and indicate those made on the smaller organ with an asterisk following the song title.

Appropriately the cheerful "Music, Music, Music," with a slight Dixieland beat, opens Jonas' program. This song has a simple melody line but, if you listen closely, you'll realize it's a lot more complex than it sounds and Jonas adds some uniquely "Nordwall" touches, too! Right out of the 1926 version of the *George White Scandals* is the musical history lesson explaining "The Birth of the Blues." Harry Richmond introduced this number surrounded by a bevy of beautiful chorus girls dressed as angels representing both classic and popular music! A Latin flavored "The Bullfighter" is followed by the cheerful but all too brief novelty "Cherry" with its neat piano accompaniment. Written at the height of the UFO craze, accordionist Charles Magnante's "Flying Saucers"\* is loaded with spacey, tricky-fingered delights.

The moody ballad "I Write The Songs" is warm and rich in Tibias along with a refreshingly gentle rock beat. Everyone has heard Jesse Crawford's version of "Valencia"\* but this number first brought the house down when it was presented by scantily clothed show girls in the 1926 musical review *Great Temptations!* Jonas gives it a straight ahead reading with some counter melody touches worthy of a Don Baker and adds a surprise ending. For the dark haired


Broadway singing star with the exotic name Tamara, Jerome Kern wrote a mournful ballad about lost love—"Smoke Gets In Your Eyes." In the 1933 musical *Roberta* Tamara sang it while seated on a stool center stage in a solo spotlight and accompanied herself on a guitar. In a pleasingly different arrangement than we're used to hearing Jonas takes the tempo up a notch with the Brubeck/Desmond jazz classic "Take Five."

You may be a bit surprised that James Monaco's great pop standard "You Made Me Love You (I Didn't Want To Do It)"\* was first sung by Al Jolson way back in 1913. We're not sure when "Ramona" was written but in 1927 Paul Whiteman was the first to record that sensual Latin love song which was written by one of our very few female composers, Mabel Wayne! (Surprisingly it was on the "B" side of Whiteman's version of the long-forgotten song, "Lonely Melody.") Jonas gives "Ramona" a relaxed reading and features this Allen's beautifully tremulated Tibias.

Long before he became one of Hollywood's favorite composers Harry Warren played piano in silent film theatres and, while working as a song-plugger on Tin Pan Allen in 1928, wrote that hilarious Oriental ricky-tick tune "Nagasaki." You know, that's the place "Where the fellers chew tobacco/And the women wicky wacky woo." To offset that musical non-

sense Jonas next plays an emotional, romantic ballad with lyrics expressing the wish "To spend one night with you/In our old rendezvous/And reminisce with you/That's My Desire." Then Jonas reprises that all-time Latin favorite "España Cani." Although it has a slow start it soon turns into a spirited Nordwall blockbuster.

Next to closing is that lovely old melody—surely written for the theatre pipes—"When The Organ Played At Twilight."\* Take note of this Allen's splendid chimes. Jonas has indicated both that selection and his final track, "I'm Confessin'," are recreations of the 1920s Crawford arrangements. We agree the registrations are dead-on but feel Jonas has imparted a sense of relaxation we've never experienced in Crawford's own rather up tight, labored playing. This disc is beautifully recorded and is a thoroughly enjoyable listening experience in every way. It's Recommended!

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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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major chords built on those scale tones. Lower case Roman Numerals (ii, iii, vi, etc.) indicate minor chords built on those scale tones. Regular numbers are used to indicate the 1st (root), 3rd, 5th, 7th and 9th of each chord.

The I vi ii V<sup>7</sup> chords in the key of C are C, Am, Dm, G<sup>7</sup>. A variation of this, which sounds good, is C Am Ab<sup>7</sup> G<sup>7</sup>. Try these in all five keys and listen to the difference. 

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## 2002 CONVENTION

If you have not yet registered for the convention, it still may not be too late. Airline reservations may be sparse but you can get a seat if you shop wisely.

### ATOS PERKS

These projects are available for those who can make use of them. It's your ATOS dollars at work.

- Endowment Fund—Grants to Chapters for projects
- George Wright Memorial Fellowship—Provides convention expenses for a young organ fan
- Hobbyist Competition—Try your hand and enter
- Mentor Program—Provides one on one coaching during a convention
- Organist Scholarships—Provides scholarships for theatre organ students
- Young Theatre Organist Competition—An opportunity for young organists to compete

### ORGAN GOES INTO THEATRE

Organ lovers—you'll soon have another organ to love! In Medford, MA is the Chevalier Theatre, named for Medford resident and World War I hero Godfrey deCourcelles Chevalier. In the theatre is a 2/9 Wurlitzer Style 210 organ that has been patiently waiting in storage since April 1996, when the Pine Tree Chapter of ATOS presented it to the city. The wait is over, now that an organization has been formed with the specific purpose to renovate and install the Wurlitzer. The existing chamber will do very well, with some modifications. The Wurlitzer Opus #542 started life in 1922 in Dayton, Ohio's B. F. Keith Theatre. It became the property of the Pine Tree Chapter when owners of the organ (long since removed from its original site), David and Christine Bowers of Worlfeboro, NH,

### ATOS NEWS

Newsletter of the American Theatre Organ Society, published bi-monthly by the American Theatre Organ Society  
*HARRY HETH, EDITOR*

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1247 Peden, Houston, TX 77006-1130  
Phone: 713/527-8096; FAX 713/527-9182;  
E-mail: tibvox@aol.com.

All matters pertaining to membership or change of address must be sent to:

Michael Fellenzer  
ATOS Membership Office,  
P.O. Box 551081  
Indianapolis, IN 46205-5581  
E-mail: fellenzer@ATOS.org

# International ATOS NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
AMERICAN THEATRE  
ORGAN SOCIETY

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 5

<http://www.ATOS.org>

NOVEMBER, 2002

gave it to the Chapter. The search for a new home began.

The Chevalier Theatre is in a Greek revival style building with an art deco interior with seating capacity of over 2000. In 1983, it was placed on the National Register of Historical Places. Its current uses include theatrical productions and special events. With the commitment of volunteers of the Society, theatre organ music will one day fill the beautiful Chevalier Theatre, adding to the entertainment value of all presentations and bringing new audiences to the theatre.

The newly formed organization is the Chevalier Theatre Organ Society, Inc., which is accepting memberships. Anyone wishing to join the Society may do so by sending a check for \$10 payable to CHEVALIER THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY. Family membership is \$15. The address is Michael Cerullo, Sec-Treas., 93 Mitchell Ave, Medford, MA 02155. Members receive "Theatre Organ Notes." The Society's newsletter with updates as well as announcements of meetings and opportunities to assist the endeavor as a volunteer. Tax deductible donations are being sought to fund expenses of major projects ahead. Contributions may be sent to the same address. For more information, please call Dorothy Bromage at (976) 670-1269.

### WURLITZER OPUS 2123 IS GOING HOME

Hi gang,

It's finally starting to sink in. The El Paso City Council voted 6 to 1 with one absent to complete the funding for the restoration of the 2200 seat atmospheric Plaza Theatre. The Theatre opened on September 12, 1930. It has been closed for a number of years. The El Paso Community Foundation has been hard at work for over ten years to first secure the building from demolition and now get the 25+ Million it will take to put the theatre back in service. In 1997 the original organ was tracked down, purchased, and installed in a temporary location in the Sunland Park Mall in April 1998. I have been fortunate to be a part of the volunteer staff since that time.

Plans for the theatre complex are extensive. The area in front of the proscenium will look as it did in 1930. The stage house will be torn

down. Currently, the proscenium area is 75' wide by 100' tall. The new stage house will have a depth of 50' instead of the current 30'. The stage house will be 5 stories higher than the existing stage house and will include dressing rooms, rehearsal halls, office space and work areas. The rest of the theatre complex will include a restaurant, a children's theatre and a rooftop terrace restaurant. A new parking garage will be added to the whole complex. This complex is at the heart of the downtown cultural center and revitalization project, which includes an already completed museum, and other already restored downtown landmarks. Much work is left to do downtown with more cultural additions to the area.

The folks at the foundation did a great deal of research in putting this plan together. One of the overwhelming comments that came out of their research was that the organ coming out of the orchestra pit is by far the fondest memory that people have of the Plaza. Consequently, they have specified that the organ (console) will remain where it was in 1930 and will always be available for use.

Folks, what this means is that the console will not be covered over, and will not be taken off the lift. It will not be stored back stage or under stage where it takes an act of congress to get it out. Needless to say, a few of us were in tears after we heard this. The foundation is so committed to the preservation of the Wurlitzer that they have specified that when completed, the entire Plaza Theatre Complex will be handed over to the City of El Paso except for the Wurlitzer. The Foundation will remain owner of the organ and will lease it to the Plaza Theater for a nominal sum and will keep control of the instrument. Expected completion of the project is late 2004. Now we need to roll up our sleeves and get busy.

*Kenneth W. Fedorick Unpaid Volunteer  
Amateur Staff Organist Fixer of whatever is  
broken Plaza Theatre Wurlitzer El Paso,  
Texas.*

### AND TO ALL, A GOOD NIGHT

Greetings from the Officers, Directors, and Staff of ATOS to all of you in this coming holiday season. May your celebration be happy and safe.

## ATOS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Please send in your event schedules in well in advance, minimum 120 days. People will not come if they don't know about your concert.

—Thanks, Ed, <Tibvox@aol.com>

Codes used in listing: A=Austin, B=Barton, C=Compton, CHR=Christie, GB=Griffith Beach, H=Hybrid, K=Kimball, M=Möller, MC=Marr & Colton, P=Page, RM=Robert-Morton, W=Wurlitzer. Example: (4/19W) = 4 manual, 19 rank Wurlitzer. Schedules subject to change

### ALASKA

**State Office Building**, 333 Willoughby Ave, Juneau, AK, (907)465-2910, (2/8K); Organ concerts Fri at 12:00noon; E-mail: <mackinnon@gci.net>

### ALABAMA

**Alabama Theatre**, 1817 3rd Ave. North, Birmingham, AL, (205)252-2262, (4/28W); Sun, Nov 24, 2:00pm, Gene Stroble; Sun, Dec 8, 2:00pm, Gary Jones; <http://www.AlabamaTheatre.com>

### ARIZONA

**Organ Stop Pizza**, 1149 E Southern Ave, Mesa, AZ (480)813-5700, (4/74+W); Winter organ hours, Sun-Thu, 4:30pm - 9:00pm, Fri-Sat, 4:30pm - 10:00pm; Summer organ hours, Sun-Thu, 5:30pm - 9:00pm, Fri-Sat, 5:30pm - 10:00pm; Charlie Balogh, Lew Williams; <http://www.organstoppizza.com>

**Orpheum Theatre**, 203 W Adams, Phoenix, AZ, (602)252-9678, (3/30W); Sunday Silent Films with concert at 2:30pm, Ron Rhode; Dec 15, *The General*; Feb 9, 2003, *Blood and Sand*; Mar 9, 2003, *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*; Apr 13, 2003, *The Gold Rush*; <http://www.silentsundays.com>

### CALIFORNIA (NORTH)

**2003 ATOS Annual Convention** in the San Francisco Bay Area: July 4-8, 2003, Two AfterGloWS, July 9-10, 2003; Watch for details in the *Theatre Organ Journal*

**Angelino's Restaurant**, 3132 Williams Rd, San Jose, CA, (408)243-6095, (3/13W); Live music Thursday through Sunday evenings starting at 6:00pm; Dick Bailey, Mike Wright

**Bella Roma Pizza**, 4040 Alhambra Ave, Martinez, CA, (925)228-4935, (3/16W); Tue, Wed, Thu, Sun, 6:00pm - 9:00pm; Fri - Sat, 6:00pm - 10:00pm; Tue, Wed, Sat, Dave Moreno; Thu, Bob Reichert; Fri, Sun, Kevin King

**Berkeley Community Theatre**, 1930 Alston Way, Berkeley, CA, (510)632-9177, (4/33W); All concerts at Sun, 2:30pm; Nov 17, Ron Rhode; Jan 12, 2003, Clark Wilson; Mar 16, 2003, David Wickerham; May 18, 2003, David Peckham; <http://www.theatreorgans.com/norcal>

**Castro Theatre**, 429 Castro, San Francisco, CA, (415)621-6120, (4/21W); Intermissions played nightly by David Hegarty, Warren Lubich, or Keith Thompson

**Grand Lake Theatre**, 3200 Grand Ave, Oakland, CA, (510)452-3556, (3/18W); Intermissions: Fri & Sat Warren Lubich

**Grant Union High School**, 1500 Grand Ave, Sacramento, CA, (916)682-9699, (4/21W); Sun, Nov 10, 2:30pm, Barry Baker

**Harmony Wynelands**, 9291 East Harney Ln, Lodi, California, (209)369-4184, (3/15 RM); Tasting Room open Fri, Sat, Sun 11:00am - 5:00pm or by appointment; Bob Hartzell live and recorded performances; www.harmonywynelands.com

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

**Kautz Vineyards and Winery**, 1894 Six Mile Rd, Murphys, CA, (209)728-1251, (3/15 RM); Winery tours, theatre pipe organ; <http://www.ironstonevineyards.com/main.html>

**Paramount Theatre**, 2025 Broadway, Oakland, CA, (510)465-6400, (4/27W); Public tours on 1st and 3rd Saturdays, 10:00am; Movie Overtures, Thursdays at 6:30pm; <http://www.paramounttheatre.com>

**Stanford Theatre**, 221 University Ave, Palo Alto, CA, (650)324-3700, (3/21W); Organ played before and after the 7:30 movie; David Hegarty, Jerry Nagano, or Bill Taylor; Call to verify the theatre is open for the evening

**Towe Auto Museum**, ATOS Wurlitzer, 2200 Front St, Sacramento, CA, (916)442-6802, (3/16W); Sun concerts, 2:00pm free with museum admission; Nov 17, Warren Lubich; Dec 15, Dave Sauer; <http://www.toweautomuseum.org/>

**Towne Theatre**, 1433 The Alameda, San Jose, CA, (408)287-1433, (3/16W); Occasional use for special events, Warren Lubich, Jack Gustafson

**YE Olde Pizza Joynt**, 19510 Hesperian Blvd, San Leandro, CA, (510)785-1866, (3/14W); Wed thru Sun; Dean Cook & Don Croom

### CALIFORNIA (SOUTH)

**Avalon Casino Theatre**, One Casino Way, Catalina Island, CA, (562)862-5663, (4/16P); Fri & Sat, 6:15pm, Pre-Show concert, John Tusak

**Balboa Park, Spreckels Organ Pavilion**, San Diego, CA, (619)702-8138, (4/72A); All Concerts, Sunday Afternoon, 2:00pm unless otherwise noted; <http://www.serve.com/sosorgan/>

**Bay Theatre**, 340 Main St, Seal Beach, CA, (562)598-4489, (4/54W); Sun, Dec 15, 1:00pm, Tom Hazleton; <http://www.baytheatre.com>

**El Capitan Theatre**, 6838 Hollywood Blvd, Los Angeles, CA, (800)DISNEY6, (4/37W); Organ played for weekend intermissions & special showings; House Organist, Rob Richards, Staff Organists, John Ledwon & Ed Vodicka; <http://www.elcapitanickets.com/>

**Nethercutt Collection**, 15200 Bledsoe St, Sylmar, CA 91342, (818)367-2251, (4/74W); Guided tours twice a day, Tue-Sat at 10:00am and 1:30pm. Free admission by reservation; Organ is played at the end of each tour; Organ Concerts: Reservations required in advance; Sat, Dec 7, 2:00pm & 8:00pm, Ron Rhode; Sat, Dec 14, 2:00pm & 8:00pm, Tom Hazleton; Sat, Dec 21, 2:00pm & 8:00pm, Lyn Larsen; Fri, Jan 24, 2003, 8:00pm, Tony Fenelon; Sat, Jan 25, 2003, 2:00pm & 8:00pm, Tony Fenelon; Fri, Apr 25, 2003, 8:00pm, Scott Foppiano; Sat, Apr 26, 2003, 2:00pm & 8:00pm, Scott Foppiano; Fri, Jun 27,

2003, 8:00pm, Ken Double; Sat, Jun 28, 2003, 2:00pm & 8:00pm, Ken Double

**Old Town Music Hall**, 140 Richmond St, El Segundo, CA, (310)322-2592, (4/26W); Bill Field at the Wurlitzer; Fri & Sat 8:15pm, Sat & Sun 2:30 pm; Nov 29/30 Dec 1, Buster Keaton Festival; Dec 27/28/29, All Star Comedy Festival; Dec 13/14/15, Scrooge; 2003 Schedule; Jan 31 Feb 1/2, Laurel & Hardy Festival; Feb 28/Mar 1/2, The General; Mar 28/29/30, Buster Keaton Festival; <http://www.otmh.org>

**Orpheum Theatre**, 842 S Broadway, Los Angeles, CA, 1-310/329-1455, (3/14W); Sat, 11:30am, organ is featured as part of the guided tour of theatre; <http://www.laorpheum.com>

**Plummer Auditorium**, 201 E Chapman, Fullerton, CA, (714)671-1300, (4/36W); Sun, Nov 17, 2:00pm, Lew Williams; Sat, Nov 30, 2:00pm, ATOS 2002 Annual Convention; Sun, Jan 19, 2003, 2:00pm, Jelani Eddington; Sun, Apr 6, 2003, 2:00pm, Barry Baker; Sun, Jun 22, 2003, 2:00pm, Chris Elliott, Silent Film; <http://www.plummerorgan.com>

**Trinity Presbyterian Church**, 3092 Kenwood, Spring Valley (San Diego), CA, (619)286-9979, (4/24W); Sat, Feb 8, 2003, 7:00pm, Greg Breed, Silent Movie Nite with Charlie Chaplin in "The Circus"; Sat, Jun 21, 2003, 7:00pm, Ken Double

**2002 ATOS ANNUAL CONVENTION, NOV. 29 - DEC 2, 2002, AFTERGLOW DEC. 3, 2002**

### COLORADO

**Paramount Theatre**, 1621 Glenarm Pl, Denver CO, (303)671-8333, (4/20W); Sun, Nov 3, 2:30pm, Big Band-Big Pipes-Big Sound, Dean Bushnell Band & twin consoles of the organ.

### DELAWARE

**Dickinson High School**, 1801 Milltown Rd, Wilmington, DE, (302)995-2603, (3/66K); All concerts Sat, 8:00pm; Nov 9, Donna Parker; Sat, Jan 25, 2003, David Peckham; Mar 15, 2003, Robert Wolfe; Apr 26, 2003, Simon Gledhill; Jun 14, 2003, Ken Double; <http://www.geocities.com/dtoskimball>

### FLORIDA

**Grace Baptist Church**, 8000 Bee Ridge Rd, Sarasota, FL, (941)922-2044, (4/32W); Concerts Sunday afternoons at 2:30pm; Nov 3, Paul Roberts; Mar 16, 2003, Jelani Eddington; <http://theatreorgans.com/mtos/organ.htm>

**The Kirk Of Dunedin**, 2686 Bayshore Blvd, Dunedin, FL 34698, (813)733-5475, (4/100H); Thu & Fri, Nov 14 & 15, 8:00pm, Rob Richards; Sat, Nov 16, 2:00pm, Rob Richards; Thu & Fri, Dec 12 & 13, 8:00pm, Terry Charles; Sat, Dec 14, 2:00pm, Terry Charles; Thu & Fri, Dec 19 & 20, 2:00pm, Terry Charles; Sat, Dec 21, 2:00pm, Terry Charles; Thu & Fri, Jan 16 & 17, 2003, 8:00pm, Terry Charles; Sat, Jan 18, 2003, 2:00pm, Terry Charles; Wed, Feb 12, 2003, 2:00pm, Phil Kelsall; Thu & Fri, Feb 13 & 14, 2003, 8:00pm, Phil Kelsall; Sat, Feb 15, 2003, 2:00pm, Phil Kelsall; Sat, Feb 22, 2003, 2:00pm, Diane Bish; Thu & Fri, Mar 13 & 14, 2003, 8:00pm, Terry Charles; Sat, Mar 15, 2003, 2:00pm, Terry Charles; Thu & Fri, Apr 10 & 11, 2003, 8:00pm, Rosemary Bailey; Sat, Apr 12, 2003, 2:00pm, Rosemary Bailey; Thu & Fri, May 8 & 9, 2003, 8:00pm, Terry Charles; Sat, May 10, 2003, 2:00pm, Terry Charles; Fri, Jun 27, 2003, 8:00pm, Terry Charles; Sat, Jun 28, 2003, 2:00pm, Terry Charles; <http://www.kirkorgan.com/>

**Roaring 20's Pizza and Pipes**, 6750 U.S. Highway 301, Ellenton, FL, (941)723-1733, (4/41W); Sun-Thu eve, Open: 4:30pm-9:00pm, Organ performance: 5:00pm-9:00pm; Fri-Sat eve, Open: 4:30pm-10:00pm, Organ performance: 5:00pm-10:00pm; Sat & Sun aft, Open 12:00 - 2:30pm, Organ Performance: 12:30-2:30pm; Wed, Fri, Sat aft, Sun eve, Alternating Mon, Dwight Thomas; Tue, Thu, Sat eve, Sun aft, Alternating Mon, Bill Vlasak

**Royalty Theatre**, 405 Cleveland St, Clearwater, FL, (727)441-8868, (3/16MC+); <<http://www.royaltytheatre.org>>

**Tampa Theatre**, 711 Franklin St, Tampa FL, (813)274-8286, (3/12W); Movie Overtures, Bob Baker, Stephen Brittain, Bill Brusick, June Carter, Bob Courtney, Sandy Hobbis, and Tom Hoehn; <<http://www.tampatheatre.org>>

## GEORGIA

**St. Margaret's of Scotland Episcopal Church**, 1499 S. Main St, Moultrie, GA, (229)616-1116, (elect); Sat, May 3, 2003, 7:30pm, John McCall

## HAWAII (On the Big Island)

**Palace Theatre**, 38 Haili, Hilo, HI, (808)934-7010 (elect); 3/10 Morton is being returned to the theatre; Weekend movies, pre-show entertainment, Bob Alder; <<http://www.hilopalace.com>>

## ILLINOIS

**Beggar's Pizza**, 3524 Ridge Rd, Lansing, IL, (708)418-3500, (3/17B); Tue & Wed, 5:30pm - 8:30pm, Tim Tallar; Sat afternoon, 3:00pm - 5:30pm, Glenn Tallar

**Coronado Theatre**, 312 N Main, Rockford, IL, (815) 547-8544, (4/17B); Sun, Nov 17, 2:30pm, Paul Roberts; Sun, Apr 6, 2003, 2:30pm, Lew Williams

**Gateway Theatre**, 5216 W. Lawrence Ave, Chicago, IL, (773)777-9438, (3/17WH); <[www.silentfilmchicago.com](http://www.silentfilmchicago.com)>

**Lincoln Theatre**, 103 E Main St, Belleville IL, (618)233-0018, (3/15H); Organ plays movie overtures Fri, David Stephens, Sat, Volunteers; <<http://www.lincolntheatre-belleville.com>>

**Rialto Square Theatre**, 102 S.E. Van Buren, Joliet, IL, (815)726-6600, (4/27B); Sat, Dec 7, 8:00pm, Jelani Eddington & David Harris

**Tivoli Theatre**, 5201 Highland Ave, Downers Grove, IL, (630)968-0219, (3/10W); 4/24 Barton Theatre organ interludes on Friday, Dennis Scott; Saturday, Freddy Arnish; <<http://www.classiccinemas.com>>

**York Theatre**, 150 N. York Rd, Elmhurst, IL, (630)834-0675, (2/7B); Theatre organ overtures on Friday nights, Freddy Arnish; Saturday nights, Roland Frase; <<http://www.classiccinemas.com>>

## INDIANA

**Embassy Theatre**, 121 W Jefferson, Fort Wayne, IN, (219)424-5665, (4/16P); Sat, April 19, 2003, 7:30pm, Simon Gledhill; Sun, Jun 1, 2003, 2:00pm, Ken Double; <<http://www.EmbassyCentre.org>>

**Long Center For The Performing Arts**, 111 N 6th, Lafayette, IN, (765)742-5664, (3/21W); Sun, Feb 16, 2003, 7:30pm, Jelani Eddington & David Harris; Sun, Apr 25, 2003, 7:30pm, Dave Wickerham; Sat, Jun 7, 2:30pm & 7:30pm, Ken Double; <<http://www.theatreorgans.com/cicatos>>

**Manual High School**, 2405 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN, (317)356-3561, (3/26W); Sun, Feb

16, 2003, 2:30pm, Jelani Eddington & David Harris; Sun, Apr 27, 2003, 2:30pm, Jim Riggs, Fluttering Hearts; <<http://www.theatreorgans.com/cicatos>>

**Paramount Theatre**, 1124 Meridian, Anderson, IN, (800)523-4658, (3/12P); Sun, Mar 23, 2003, 2:30pm, Barry Baker; Sun, May 11, 2003, 2:30pm, Ron Rhode; <<http://www.parathea.org/>>

**Warren Center**, 9450 E 18th St, Indianapolis, IN, (317)356-3561, (3/18B); Sun, Aug 10, 2003, 2:30pm, Ken Double; Sun, Oct 12, 2003, 2:30pm, Simon Gledhill; <<http://www.theatreorgans.com/cicatos>>

## KANSAS

**Exhibition Hall**, Century II Center, 225 W Douglas, Wichita, KS, (316)838 3127, (4/38W); Sat, Mar 15, 2003, 7:00pm, Barry Baker; Sat, Apr 5, 2003, 7:00pm, Richard Hills; <<http://www.nyparamountwurlitzer.org/new/index.html>>; E-mail: <[wtopops@aol.com](mailto:wtopops@aol.com)>

**Little River Studio**, 6141 Fairfield Rd, Wichita, KS, (316)838-3127, (3/19W); Sun, Mar 16, 2003, 1:00pm, Rob Richards & Ralph Wolf; Sun, Apr 6, 2003, 1:00pm, Rick Shindell; E-mail: <[wtopops@aol.com](mailto:wtopops@aol.com)>

## MAINE

**Merrill Auditorium**, 389 Congress St, Portland, ME, (207)883-9525, (5/98A); All concerts Tue, 7:30pm unless otherwise noted; Mon, Dec 23, 7:30pm, Ray Cornils, Christmas Concert; Fri, Feb 14, 2003, 7:30pm, Dennis James, Silent Movie; <<http://www.foko.org/>>

## MARYLAND

**Weinberg Center For The Arts**, 20 W Patrick St, Frederick, MD, (301)228-2828, (2/8W); Fri, Dec 20, 7:30pm, Weinberg Winterfest; <[www.weinbergcenter.org](http://www.weinbergcenter.org)>

## MASSACHUSETTS

**Town Hall**, 35 Central St, on the Common, Stoneham, MA, (781)438-2466, (2/14 W); Sat, Apr 5, 2003, John Cook, 7:30pm, 61st Anniversary concert to benefit the Stoneham Theatre; [netten@peoplepc.com](mailto:netten@peoplepc.com)

**Knight Auditorium**, Babson College, Wellesley, MA, (617)244-9447, (4/18W); Sat, Nov 23, 7:30pm, Charlie Balogh; Sat, Mar 23, 2003, 7:30pm, Robert Wolfe; Sat, May 3, 2003, 7:30pm, Phil Kelsall

**Shanklin Conference Center**, 130 Sandy Pond Rd, Groton, MA, (978)448-8800, (4/34); Sun, Mar 23, 2003, 2:30pm, Robert Wolfe; Sun, May 4, 2003, 2:30pm, Phil Kelsall

## MICHIGAN

**Fox Theatre**, 2211 Woodward Ave, Detroit MI, (313)471-3200, (4/36W) & (3/12M); Lobby organ played for 45 minutes prior to selected shows.; Call Theatre for dates and times

**Michigan Theatre**, 603 E Liberty, Ann Arbor, MI (616)668-8397, (3/13 B); Fri & Sat intermissions (times vary); John Lauter, Henry Aldridge, Steven Ball, Newton Bates, Wade Bray & Fr. Andrew Rogers

**The Mole Hole**, 150 W. Michigan Ave, Marshall, MI, (616)781-5923, (2/6 B/K); Organ daily, Scott Smith, recorded artist

**Public Museum of Grand Rapids Meijer Theater**, 272 Pearl St NW Grand Rapids, MI, (616)459-4253, (3/30W); Tours by appt, and ATOS guests welcome to hear organ on Thurs noon weekly; story time slides program during school year; Organ played Sundays 1:00pm - 3:00pm

**Redford Theatre**, 17360 Lahser Rd, Detroit, MI, (313)531-4407, (3/10B); Movie Overtures, Fridays at 7:30pm and Saturdays at 1:30pm & 7:30pm; Guest Organists: Steven Ball, Gus Borman, David Calendine, Jennifer Candea, Gil Francis, John Lauter, Tony O'Brien, Sharron Patterson; <<http://theatreorgans.com/mi/redford>>

**Senate Theatre**, 6424 Michigan, Detroit, MI, (313)894-4100, (4/34 W); Sat, Nov 16, 7:00pm, Dave Wickerham; Sun, Dec 1, 3:00pm, Rich Lewis, Christmas Concert

## MINNESOTA

**Center For The Arts**, 124 Lincoln Ave W, Fergus Falls, MN, (218)736-5453, (3/13W); Sat, Oct 25, call for time, Paul Roberts; <<http://www.fergusarts.org>>

## MISSOURI

**Fox Theatre**, 527 Grand Blvd N, St Louis, MO, (314)534-1678, (4/36W); Daily 10:30am tours ending with Stan Kann playing a concert; Call (314)534-1678 for information and reservations; <<http://www.fabulousfox.com/>>

## NEBRASKA

**Rose Blumkin Performing Arts Center**, 2001 Farnam St., Omaha, NE, (402)345-4849, (3/20W); Sun, Nov 10, 3:00pm, Jeannie Mehuron & Greg Johnson

## NEW JERSEY

**Galaxy Theatre**, 7000 Boulevard E, Guttenberg, NJ (201)854-6540, (3/12 K); Fri, Sat evenings before and after evening shows, Jeff Barker; (Lobby, 2/6 M) Sun afternoon before matinee, Jeff Barker; <<http://www.galaxy-movie-theatre.com/>>

**The Music Hall at Northlandz**, Rt 202 South, Flemington, NJ, (908)982-4022, (5/39W); Organ played several times daily, Call for exact times.; Bruce Conway, Harry Ley, Bruce Williams

**Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Auditorium**, 27 Pilgrim Pathway, Ocean Grove, NJ, (732)775-0035, (4/154 Hope-Jones + Hybrid); <<http://www.oceangrove.org>>

**Symphony Hall**, 1040 Broad St, Newark, NJ, (973)256-5480, (3/15GB); Used for special events; <<http://www.gstos.org>>

**Trenton War Memorial**, W. Lafayette St @ Wilson, Trenton, NJ (732)741-4045, (3/16M); <<http://www.gstos.org>>

## NEW YORK

**Auditorium Center**, 875 E Main, Rochester, NY, (716)544-6595, (4/22W); Sat, Nov 16, 8:00pm, David Peckham; Sat, Dec 14, 8:00pm, Rich Lewis; <<http://www.theatreorgans.com/rochestr/>>

**Bardavon 1869 Opera House**, 35 Market Street, Poughkeepsie, NY, (914)473-2072, (2/8W); Organ played before selected movies. Call or check the website for details.; <<http://www.bardavon.org/>>

**Empire Theatre**, 581 State Fair Blvd, Syracuse, NY, (315)687-3580, (3/11W); All concerts start at 7:30pm; Sun, Nov 3, Don Malcolm; <[WWW.JRJUNCTION.COM/estmim.htm](http://WWW.JRJUNCTION.COM/estmim.htm)>

**Lafayette Theatre**, Lafayette Ave, Suffern, (914)357-6030, (2/10W); Sat, 7:30, Movie overtures, Dave Kopp, Keith Gramlich, Earle Seeley, Bernie Anderson

**Proctor's Theatre**, 432 State St., Schenectady, NY (518)346-8204 (3/18W); Noon Concert series, Tuesday unless stated otherwise; Nov 19, Paul



Roberts; Mon, Dec 23, Various Artists; Jan 14, 2003, William Hubert; Feb 11, 2003, David Lester; Apr 29, 2003, Al Moser; May 20, 2003, Robert Frederick; Jun 17, 2003, John Wiesner

**Riviera Theatre**, 67 Webster Ave, N Tonawanda, NY, (716)692-2113, (3/19W); All concerts Wednesday, 7:30pm unless stated otherwise; Nov 20, Lance Luce; Dec 11, Cole Holland

**Shea's Buffalo Theatre**, 646 Main St, Buffalo, NY, (716)684-8414 (4/28W); <<http://www.theatreorgans.com/ny/buffaloarea/sheas/concert.htm>>

## NORTH CAROLINA

**Carolina Theatre**, 310 South Green St, Greensboro, NC, (336)333-2600, (3/6M); Organ played before & after the Carolina Classic Film Series; <<http://www.carolinatheatre.com/index.htm>>

## NORTH DAKOTA

**Fargo Theatre**, 314 N. Broadway, Fargo, ND, (701)239-8385, (4/21W); Organ plays Fri, Sat, Sun evenings before and between performances; Short organ concerts, Lloyd Collins, Lance Johnson, & David Knudtson; <<http://www.fargotheatre.org/>>

## OHIO

**Akron Civic Theatre**, 182 S Main St, Akron OH, (330)253-2488, (3/19W); <<http://www.akroncivic.com/>>

**The Historic Ohio Theatre**, 3114 Lagrange St, Toledo, OH, (419)241-6785, (4/11MC); Organ pre-show for movies (6:30-7:00pm)

**Music Palace**, 11473 Chester Rd, Sharonville, OH, (513)771-1675, (4/33W); Tue, Thu, Sun, 5:30pm - 9:00pm; Wed, Fri, 11:30am - 2:00pm, 5:30pm - 9:00pm; Sat, 5:30pm - 10:00pm; Closed Holidays; Trent Sims

**Ohio Theatre**, 55 E State St, Columbus, OH, (614)469-1045, (4/34RM); Organ overtures and intermissions; <<http://www.capa.com/>>

## OREGON

**Bijou Theatre**, 1624 NE Highway 101, Lincoln City, OR, (541)994-8255, (Elect); Silent Film Series on Wednesdays at 1:00pm; <<http://www.cinematelovers.com/>>

**Cleveland High School Auditorium**, 3400 SE 26th Ave, Portland, OR, (503)848-0677, (3/26K); Fri, May 2, 2003, 7:30pm, Simon Gledhill

**Elsinore Theatre**, 170 High St NE, Salem, OR, (503)375-3574, (3/25W); Silent Movie Programs start Tuesdays at 7:00pm, Rick Parks, organist; Sun, Nov 24, 2:00pm, Barry Baker, for info, (503)775-2480; <<http://www.elsinoretheatre.com/>>

## PENNSYLVANIA

**Grand Court of Lord & Taylor**, 13th & Market, Philadelphia, PA (6/469 H); Organ concerts daily except Sunday, 11:15am-12noon, 5:15-6pm; <<http://www.wanamakerorgan.com/>>

**Keystone Oaks High School**, 1000 Kelton Ave, Pittsburgh, PA, (412)921-8558, (3/19W); All concerts on Saturday at 7:30pm; Apr 26, 2003, Jelani Eddington; <<http://www.aol.com/wurli2/index.html>>

**Longwood Gardens**, Kennett Square, PA (610)388-1000, (4/146 Aeolian); Sun, 2:30pm, Pipe Organ Concert Series

**Roxy Theatre**, 2004 Main St, Northampton, PA, (610)262-7699, (2/6W); Organ is played 6:30pm - 7:00pm and intermissions, Henry Thomas; <[www.Roxytheaternorthampton.com](http://www.Roxytheaternorthampton.com)>

**Strand-Capitol PAC**, 50 N George St, York, PA, (717)846-1111, (3/17W); <<http://www.strandcapitol.org/>>

**Sunnybrook Ballroom**, East High Street, Pottstown, PA, (610)326-6400, (3/14US); Organ plays for Sunday Brunch

## TENNESSEE

**The Paramount Center for the Arts**, 518 State St, Bristol, TN, (423)968-7456, (3/11+W); Sat, Jun 7, 2003, 8:00pm, Jelani Eddington; <<http://www.lostoprovince.com/PTOS>>

**Tennessee Theatre**, 604 S Gay St, Knoxville, TN, (865)673-9613, (3/16W); Concerts 12:00 noon the first Monday of each month; Sun, Nov 17, 2:30pm, Paul Roberts; <<http://www.tennesseetheatre.com>>

## TEXAS

**Sunland Park Mall**, I-10 & Sunland Park Dr, El Paso, TX, (3/15W); Mon, Wed, Fri, 1:00pm - 1:30pm; Tue, Thu, Sat, 6:30pm - 7:00pm; Sun, 5:00pm - 6:00pm

## VIRGINIA

**Byrd Theatre**, 2908 W Carey, Richmond, VA, (804)353-9911, (4/17W); Overtures Sat, 7:15pm & 9:30pm, Bob Gullledge

## WASHINGTON

**Everett Theatre**, 2911 Colby, Everett, WA, (425)258-6766, (3/16K); <<http://www.everetttheatre.org>>

**Hokum Hall**, 7904 35th Ave SW, Seattle, WA, (206)937-3613, (2/10W); Saturday and Sunday, 2:00pm, silent movie. Call to verify schedule.

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

**Paramount Theatre**, 911 Pine St, Seattle, WA, (206)467-5510, (4/20W); <<http://www.theparamount.com/>>

**Washington Center for the Performing Arts**, 512 Washington St SE, Olympia, WA, (360)753-8586, (3/25W); <<http://www.washingtoncenter.org/>>

## WISCONSIN

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

**Oriental Theatre**, 2230 N Farwell Ave, Milwaukee, WI, (414)276-8711, (3/38K); <http://theatreorgans.com/wi/milwaukee/orientaltheatre/>

**Phipps Center for the Arts**, 109 Locust St, Hudson, WI, (715)386-8409, (3/15W); Sat, Jan 25, 2003, 2:00pm, David Wickerham; Sat, Mar 22, 2003, 2:00pm, Clark Wilson, *The General*; Sat, Jun 1, 2003, 8:00pm, David Peckham

## AUSTRALIA

**Dendy Cinema**, 26 Church St, Brighton, VIC, (03)9781 5349, (3/15W); Organ before films, Saturday evening

## CANADA

**CASA LOMA**, 1 Austin Terrace, Toronto, ON, (416)421-0918, (4/19W); All concerts, Monday @ 8:00pm; Dec 2, Dave Wickerham; Mar 3, 2003, Bill O'Meara; Mar 31, 2003, Robert Wolfe; May 5, 2003, Lance Luce; <[www.theatreorgans.com/toronto/](http://www.theatreorgans.com/toronto/)>

**Church of the Redeemer**, 89 Kirkpatrick St, Kingston, ON, (613)386-3695, (3/28K); Fri, Dec. 6, 8:00pm, Regional Artists, Benefit Concert; Fri, Mar. 14, 2003, 8:00pm, Regional Artists, Benefit Concert; Fri, Apr. 11, 2003, 8:00pm Regional Artists, Benefit Concert; Wed, May. 7, 2003, 8:00pm, Lance Luce

## UNITED KINGDOM

**Ashorne Hall**, Ashorne Hill, Nr. Warwick, Warwickshire, 011 44 (0)1926 651444, (3/15W) (3/12C); Open first and last Sundays of each month for tours and Cinema Organ Show; <<http://www.ashornehall.co.uk>>

**The Assembly Hall**, Stoke Abbot Road, Worthing, Sussex, (0)1903-206 206, (3/23W); All concerts Sunday at 3:00pm unless noted otherwise; Dances Saturday, 7:15pm; Barry Memorial Theatre, Gladstone Road, Barry, South Wales. 44 1267 267267. (5/15 CHR); Sun, Nov 3, 2:30, John Ledwon.

**Civic Hall**, North Street, Wolverhampton, W Midlands, (0)1902 552121, (4/44C); Friday noontime concerts 11:15 - 12:15; All concerts Sat, 2:00pm; <[www.wolvescivic.co.uk/html/compton/index.asp](http://www.wolvescivic.co.uk/html/compton/index.asp)>

**Portslade Town Hall**, Victoria Rd, Portslade, Sussex, (0)1293 844788, (3/18C); Sat, Nov 10, 3:00pm, John Mann; Sat, Dec 8, 3:00pm, Michael Maine & Michael Wooldridge, Christmas Concert

**The Ritz Ballroom**, Bradford Road, Brighouse, W Yorkshire, 44 (0)1484 513879, (3/10W); All concerts, Sun, 2:30pm; Sun, Nov 10, 2:30pm, Concert, Kevin Morgan; Sun, Dec 8, 2:30pm, Concert, Eddie Ruhier

**Singing Hills Golf Course**, Albourne near Brighton, (0)1903 261972, (3/19W); All concerts at 3:00pm; Sun, Nov 17, Stephen Foulkes; Sun, Dec 15, Byron Jones; Sat, Jan 18, 2003, Phil Kelsall; Sun, Feb 16, 2003, Michael Wooldridge; Sun, Mar 16, 2003, Kevin Grunhill

**State Theatre**, High Road, Kilburn North London, 44 2089 040220, (4/16W); Concerts start at 2:30pm; Sun, Feb 2, 2003, 2:30pm Joyce Aldred

**Thomas Peacocke Community College**, The Grove, Rye, East Sussex, 01424 444058, (2/6W); Sun, Nov 24, 2:30pm, Simon Gledhill & Lesley Van Egmond; Sun, Dec 8, 2:30pm, Byron Jones & Peter Hayward; Sun, Jan 26, 2003, 2:30pm, Robert Wolfe; Sun, Feb 16, 2003, 2:30pm, Brian Sharp; Sun, Mar 16, 2003, 2:30pm, Joyce Aldred & Penny Weedon; Sun, Apr 20, 2003, 2:30pm, Jean Martyn; Fri, May 16, 2003, Len Rawle & The Battle Town Band; Sat, May 17, 2003, 8:00am - 10:00am, Len Rawle; Sat, May 17, 2003, 11:00am, Len Rawle, Silent Movie; Sat, May 17, 2003, 2:00pm, Len Rawle, Tea Dance; Sat, May 17, 2003, Evening Concert, Nigel Ogden & The Kent Police Male Voice Choir; Sun, May 18, 2003, Morning, Len Rawle & Guests; Sun, May 18, 2003, Buffet Lunch, John Mann, Janet Dowsett, Richard Hills, & Michael Maine; Fri, June 13, 2003, 2:30pm, Trent Simms; Sun, Sep 14, 2003, 2:30pm, Paul Roberts; Sun, Oct 19, 2003, 2:30pm, John Mann; Sun, Nov 16, 2003, 2:30pm, Byron Jones

**Woking Leisure Centre**, Woking, Surrey. 44 2089 040220 (3/16W); All concerts start at 7:30pm unless stated otherwise; Sat, Nov 16, John Mann; Sat, Dec 14, Len Rawle; Sun, Dec 15, 2:30pm

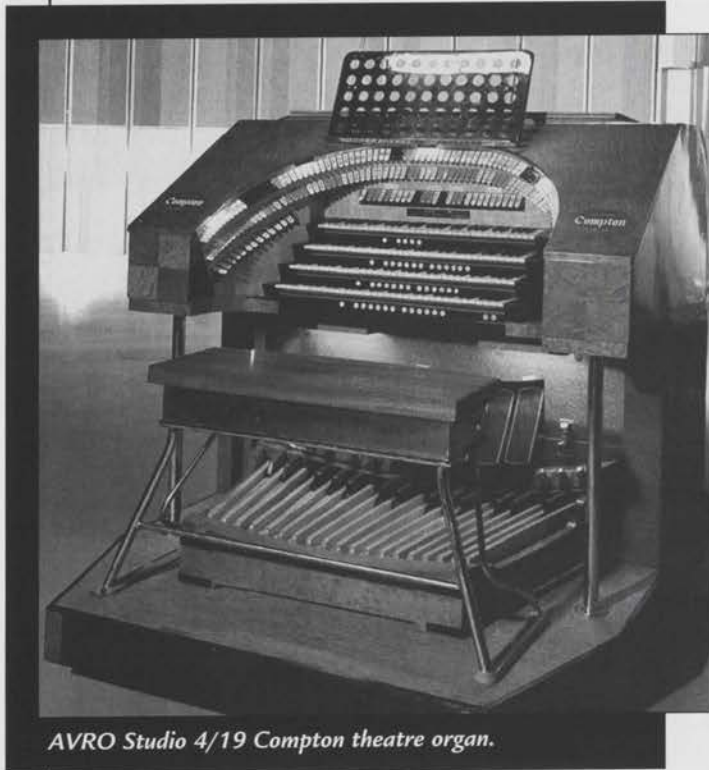
**Worthing Assembly Hall**, Stoke Abbott Road, Worthing, UK, 01903-206206, (3/24W + R350A); Sun, Nov 24, 3:00pm, Ron Rhode; Sun, Dec 22, 3:00pm, Brian Sharp

# The International Theatre Organ Scene

## Dutch Cinema Organs

Information provided by  
Cor L. Doesburg and Tom Veltman, The Netherlands

On reading the May/June 2002 issue of *THEATRE ORGAN* we feel that the list of organ installations given on pages 54 and 55 is far from complete. We would like, for the record, to add what is missing.



AVRO Studio 4/19 Compton theatre organ.

### ◀ AVRO Broadcasting Studio Complex, Hilversum, Holland

1. Unit Cinema Organ with 19 ranks and 1,315 pipes—four-manual console, specification similar to the Trocadero Wurlitzer in London. Pipework from the stock of the bankrupt organ builder Standaart, previously supplied by Gottfried, in USA. In 1942 a Jazz Trumpet by Laukhuff was added. In 1952 the Saxophone by Gottfried was removed and replaced with a Koppelflute by Stinkens. Opened by Pierre Palla in 1936.

2. Straight Church Organ with 49 speaking stops and 3,710 pipes—three-manual console. Pipework from Compton. The design of this organ was based on a Dutch organ concept, so this is the only “Dutch Church Organ” Compton ever made.

The AVRO Studio Complex was sold in 2001 and in 2002 the present owners disconnected all pipework and stored it somewhere in Holland. The future of both organs is ‘dark.’

### Voorburg, the CBS Building

Originally at the VARA Broadcasting Studio Complex in Hilversum, The Netherlands, installed in a newly built studio and replacing an earlier 2/6 Standaart theatre organ. Opened by Reginald Foort and Johann Jong in 1932. Pipework changed by NOF: Diapason rank, Clarinet rank and Kinura rank and a lot of other pipes. A piano is added.



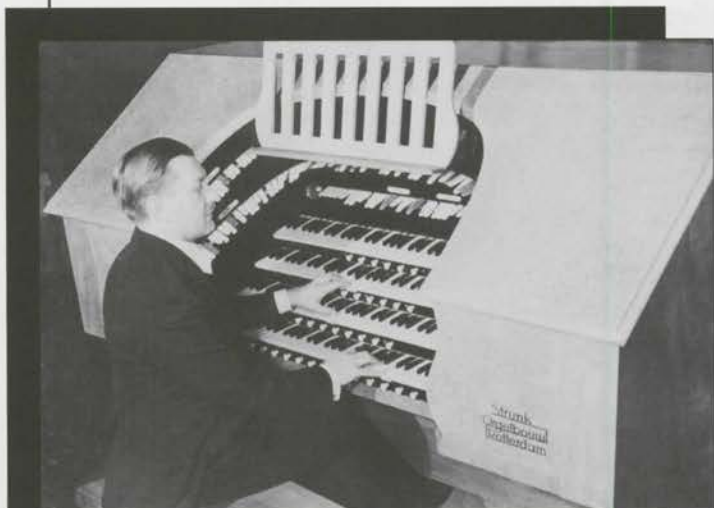
Cor Steyn at the VARA Studio Standaart theatre organ.

### Steenwijk, 'de Meenthe.'

About 60% of the pipe work is used from the 4/21 Strunk organ in the Asta Theatre, The Hague. Installed in 1932, as replacement of a German OSKALYD organ, built by Walcker, Germany. Strunk used 8 or 9 ranks from the Oskalyd organ, and even now the instrument has the sound of the Reeds and some labial pipes, like the German type Reeds, which sound like the Welte organs. All other pipe work is from many various demolished organs, mainly Standaard. Remarkable is an accordion in the organ, connected to the console. In the past the original Strunk Tibia II rank was given away and is at the present moment installed in the organ of Mr. Slingerland.



*Jos Carpay at the ASTA Theatre 4/21 Strunk theatre organ.*



*Reginald Foort at the City Theatre 4/22 Strunk theatre organ.*

### City Theatre, Amsterdam.

Originally installed with four-manuals and 22 ranks. Opened by Reginald Foort in 1935. At the present moment: 4/18—1,279 pipes. The four-rank Echo organ (Solo II) was burned out and in 1950 replaced by an eight-rank Standaard organ. The Echo organ was disconnected in the '70s and was given to the NOF.

### Tuschinski Theatre, Amsterdam.

In 1923 Wurlitzer installed a 2/6 cinema organ in this monumental theatre. This instrument was the successor of a 'loaned' 2/4 Wurlitzer (1921) from the Cinema la Monnaie in Brussels and in fact the first Wurlitzer in the Netherlands. The 1923 Wurlitzer was opened by Pierre Palla and the console had a built-in upright piano. The organ was maintained by Standaard. In 1940 the instrument was enlarged to a 4/10 by Theo Strunk, organ builders. On that occasion a new console was installed.



*Cor Steyn at the Tuschinski Theatre 4/10 Strunk theatre organ.*

### Prinsenbeek—Mr. Slingerland.

A HYBRID organ—the pipe work is from various dismantled organs in Eindhoven, Rotterdam and The Hague, made by Standaard and Strunk.

▶ **Leeuwarden, Residence of the late Mr. J. Tiemersma**

This 3/6 organ was built by Cor Standaart, Jr. (1950/51) and originally installed in a local dance hall of Mr.Houbein in Leeuwarden. The original instrument was enlarged later on with a Tibia, Gamba and Celeste and a real accordion. The console has the same design as the above mentioned ex-VARA organ.

**Leeuwarden. Pniël Chapel.**

Originally this 2/10 organ was a demo organ in the factory of Standaart. After a 'trip' along some cinema's, in 1936 it was installed in this protestant chapel. In 1999 the straight console was replaced by a newly built horseshoe one. There are no percussions and other toys in this organ.

**Lunteren. Residence of the late Mr. Van Oijen.**

This 2/7 organ was built by Cor Standaart, Jr. (1947) and was originally installed in the Passage Theatre, The Hague. A grand piano can be played from the console.



*3/7 Standaart theatre organ—Tiemersma residence.*



*Middelburg Concert Hall 3/11 Compton theatre organ.*

◀ **Middelburg. Concert- en gehoorzaal.**

John Compton Organ Company built this 3/11 Organ with 827 pipes in 1936 with the Opus number A-267. It was installed in the Majestic Theatre in Rochester, Kent, U.K. From 1961—1981 this organ served in a church. In 1982 it was purchased by the ZTOS and they installed it in the Concert Hall of Middelburg. All pipework is situated below the stage with open grills and toys and other percussion instruments found their place on the stage's end in an old existing organ case from an early used Sauer Organ.



*Ray Wells at the Passage Theatre 3/10 Standaart theatre organ.*

▶ **Schiedam (near Rotterdam), "Theater aan de Schie".**

Newly built theatre (2000) replacing the Passage Theatre, Schiedam. The 3/10 Standaart organ (1935) from this theatre installed by volunteers in the new theatre and enlarged the organ with a Trumpet rank (61 pipes) from Standaart. 3/11 Standaart Cinema organ from 1935.



Nicholas Martin at the Pernis 3/6 Compton theatre organ.

◀ **Pernis (near Rotterdam), Gereformeerd Jeugdcentrum (Calvinistic Youth Centre).**

The 3/6 Compton organ, Opus A-255, built in 1935 is from the Astoria Theatre, Folkstone, Great Britain.



## Some Facts About Dutch Organ Builders Involved With Cinema Organs

**Johann Theodor Strunk** was born in Poppelsdorf (Bonn) Germany on June 14, 1899 and passed away in Neuss, Germany on April 18, 1962. He was skilled as an organ builder at Klais in Bonn. In Holland he started at Standaart as voicer and organ designer, and then in 1928 he established his own company in Holland, building many church organs and also three large cinema organs: 4/21, 4/22 and 4/24. In 1942 he restored the AVRO organ and added the above-mentioned Jazz Trumpet rank and disconnected the church organ from the theatre console and removed the grand piano. He also built, in 1937, a Straight Church Organ with 10 speaking stops in the VPRO Broadcasting Studio Complex, Hilversum in Holland.

He kept his German nationality during his stay in Holland and after World War II he was not allowed to run a Dutch company, therefore he moved back to Germany. One of his main jobs was to improve the 3/24 Welte Studio organ in Hamburg (opened by Gerhard Gregor in 1930 and NDR3 Hamburg Broadcasting Society organist from 1930 till 1981).

**Adriaan Willem Jacobus Standaart** was born in Rotterdam on February 12, 1882 and died in Schiedam on January 11, 1958. He was a well skilled organ builder in that area, and installed a lot of church organs in the Netherlands. Other organ builders highly praised his thoroughness work. His 'Organ Factory' was one of the

most important organ building institutes in the Netherlands in that time.

His sons **A.W.J. Standaart, Jr.** and **Cor Standaart** were working together with their father on organ building. Adrian Standaart, Jr. received a degree in Berlin and after World War II he went to the United States starting his own Organ Factory with Reginald Foort as Vice-President. After 10 months, however, this enterprise failed. Unfortunately nothing is known in the Netherlands about his activities in the U.S.

About 1924 Standaart started with installing Cinema Organs. The design was based on the early Wurlitzers like the one in the Tuschinski Theatre with built-in upright piano. A striking detail was the placement of the two 44 keys manuals in-line, so that the number of keys matched the 88 key piano keyboard. It is unknown to us in the Netherlands if Hope-Jones utilized the same concept during the early days of his 'Unit Orchestra.' Standaart called his Cinema organ 'Wonder Orgel'—the 'Miracle Organ.'

### References:

- Léonie de Waal: *Theaterorgels in Nederland* (not published)
- Reginald Foort: *The Cinema Organ*, The Vestal Press, New York
- Cor L. Doesburg *Orgels bij de Omroep in Nederland*, Strengholt, Naarden. ISBN 90 6010 877 9



# Chapter News

**ATTENTION ALL CHAPTER CORRESPONDENTS:** The deadline for receiving Chapter News items for the March/April issue is January 5, 2003. If possible, send all text via e-mail. Be sure to include the name, telephone number and e-mail address of your chapter president, as well as the name of the principal city of operation for your chapter. You are reminded that the ATOS Board of Directors' Policy states that your article is not to include a list of titles of the music played at programs, or a list of the 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 the postal service. Thank you for your cooperation.

## ALABAMA

Dan Liles, President, 205/669-9322

**Birmingham, Alabama.** During the summer months, the Alabama Chapter has suspended our free public Sunday afternoon concerts at the Alabama Theatre. These concerts will resume in September. The theatre is now in the midst of "Summer Movie Series 2002." The classic movie series began in April 1986, when the Costa-Head organization owned the theatre. The Alabama ATOS Chapter, in agreement with Costa-Head, showed a classic movie every other weekend. In May 1987 the theatre was bought out of bankruptcy by newly organized, non-profit, Landmarks, Inc. Since that time the movies have been sponsored by Landmarks. The Alabama Chapter fully supported and still supports the Summer Movies with volunteer help.

For theatre organ enthusiasts, a ticket to the movie includes a mini concert on our Wurlitzer pipe organ. The organ is Opus 1783. Jesse Crawford designed this type organ for the Publix theatre chain theatres that were being built around 1927, thus its designation as Style Publix 1, currently tastefully expanded to 4/28.

We have three house organists for the movies this year. Cecil Whitmire and Stuart Thompson are back this summer. Gary Jones, after an absence from the area, is back. Each artist has his own unique style. "Sing Alongs" and music supporting the theme of the film being shown add to the entertainment.

The Chapter produced CD, *The Alabama Wurlitzer* by Tom Hazleton, is still available. This is an outstanding recording featuring music from his con-

cert on September 16, 2001. One selection is a patriotic tribute to those whose lives were lost in the tragic events of September 11. Information about ordering the CD is available on the theatre web site at: <http://www.alabamatheatre.com/wurlitzer2.html>

*Virginia Robertson*

## ATLANTA

John McCall, President  
229/891-2424, [jcmdc@alltel.net](mailto:jcmdc@alltel.net)

**Atlanta, Georgia.** Several special theatre organ events have occurred in the Atlanta, Georgia area this spring and summer. In April a "Hamorama" event took place at the Lee Lanier residence in Roswell, Georgia. Our guest artist was Lloyd Hess, a native of Canada, who studied piano at the Toronto Conservatory of Music. He can really fire up those Hammond keyboards to the likes of Lenny Dee and Jimmy Smith. Lloyd is also the organist for the very large Church of the Apostles, which faces I-75 as one comes into downtown Atlanta. The Lanier residence boasts a D-152 Concert Model Hammond complete with flanking PR-40 tone cabinets and a Leslie 222. What a surround sound that was! Lee also has a beautifully restored 1936 Chickering Ampico B reproducing piano and a Lyon and Healy upright Art Echo reproducer. We also heard some beautiful 78-rpm recordings on the Victor Orthophonic Credenza and 1941 Copenhart Console.

April also brought us the fantastic Barry Baker at the Rylander Theatre in Americus, Georgia. Barry got sounds out of the 3/11 Möller that people just could not believe! He also played another con-

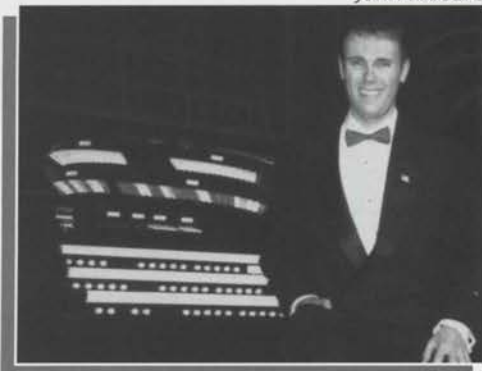
cert at the residence of our own Chapter President John McCall in Moultrie, Georgia. Barry made the McCall Allen 317EX sound like a new Renaissance model! He used everything but the kitchen sink and then some. What an artist! Barry is right up there (maybe above) any world class theatre organist. Also, he is just a gem to work with.

Our own Rick McGee played the chapter Page organ in Stephenson High School for our May program. This organ once belonged to Walt Winn who gave it to the Atlanta ATOS for installation in a public venue. Rick has been



*Lloyd Hess at the Hammond.*

JOHN TROULIAS



*Barry Baker at the McCall Allen 317EX.*



*Grand opening of Pro-Cleaners distribution center.*

entertaining our chapter for over 25 years. Rick has an extremely wide repertoire of both classical and popular music. He plays it like the composer wrote it—even the verse! Rick is comfortable at any organ console either electronic or pipe. Not only is he a talented musician but an expert on Wurlitzer consoles and theatre organ specification. Rick presented a well-rounded program and chapter members were joined by the students and parents of the high school at the conclusion of their baccalaureate program. The four-manual Page is making good progress with ten ranks playing and most of the winding done for the solo chamber. The last big project is the restoration of that huge four-manual Page console.

Also in May we had a FIRST! The grand opening of the Pro-Cleaners new distribution center in Carrollton, Georgia on the new Allen Renaissance 3/11 theatre organ owned by chapter member Neil Pollock. The Maestro at the console was none other than our Chapter President John McCall. This just proves that theatre organ music can be presented anywhere. We had several from the audience join our chapter! Mr. McCall, who won the amateur competition for ATOS this year, presented an evening of “Lite music.” We had a wonderful evening of fun, food, an official ribbon cutting and great entertainment. We are a chapter of players and are so thankful that we have such talent. The instrument was presented on a stage with a real façade of gold pipes in the background. Many attendees had never heard theatre organ before or had any idea about this forum for entertainment. They were enthralled with the organ and the artist.

Ron Rhode rocked the Rylander The-

atre 3/11 Möller theatre pipe organ for our very well attended June program in Americus, Georgia. Look for a CD to come out on this instrument in the near future. What can anyone say about Ron that has not already been said? He continues to present programs of the highest professional quality. He is truly the theatre organ Dean of Ragtime!

In the middle of summer our “hot” July program brought us to the residence of Atlanta Chapter Board Member Thrower in West Vinings, a suburb of Atlanta. Neil Pollock, a new comer to us, dazzled our attendees with his selections on the Thrower Rodgers Olympic Custom theatre organ with real glockenspiel. Neil is new to our chapter family and is a super guy. He started playing at age nine, was featured organist at the Capitol Theatre in Racine, Wisconsin. He also demonstrated and sold pianos and organs for Baldwin and Kimball. He gave up playing for 25 years but is back in action. He and Mr. Thrower also performed several duets with Neil at the Rodgers and James at the beautifully restored 1876 Weber grand piano. These two artists have got to be heard from again. It was literally a HOT program.

In August Dan Bellomy provided our program at the residence of chapter member Bucky Reddish. Mr. Reddish has installed a new Allen 3/11 theatre organ in a very live acoustical setting. He has expanded the instrument to three channels and experimented over the past year with different types of Allen speakers and their placement. He has reached perfection. The organ sounded completely but excitingly different under the fingertips of Mr. Bellomy. Heath Ward a local professional drummer accompanied Dan on over six selections and had the crowd really toe tapping to that unmis-



*James Thrower at the Weber grand.*



*Neil Pollock at the Rodgers Olympic.*

takable Bellomy rhythm. The chapter was fortunate to engage Dan on his return trip from the Rylander, where he had presented a theatre organ program in Americus.

*Ron Carter*

## **CENTRAL FLORIDA**

**Bill Shrive, President, 727/546-0564**

**Tampa, Florida.** We are saddened by the loss of member John Otterson who passed away on July 28. He was our Vice-President and was very active in CFTOS for over 20 years. He was involved with the installation of the Tampa Theatre Wurlitzer and also the CFTOS Pinellas Park Wurlitzer. We will really miss him.

Our monthly concerts continue at Pinellas Park. In June members Bill and Linda Van Twistern put on a wonderful program of show tunes. Linda accompanied Bill on the Wurlitzer with her beautiful voice.

In July Bob Courtney played a variety of tunes from the '20s to the present, including some tunes from *Sesame Street*. He also played a rock number we had never heard before. It sounded great. Bob is a pre-show organist at the Tampa Theatre and also a member of the work crew for the Polk Theatre Robert-Morton installation.

In August Dr. Bill Brusick gave a fine program of well-known tunes. There was something to please everyone. He closed with a lively march that he plays at the Tampa Theatre as the console descends into the pit. Bill is also one of our pre-show organists at the Tampa Theatre. He is currently Minister of Music at Grace Lutheran Church and teaches music at the Grace Lutheran Church School in St. Petersburg.

On August 25 Rosa Rio accompanied the 1924 silent film *Peter Pan* on the Tampa Theatre Wurlitzer. The film was preceded by a sing-a-long and a *Peter Pan* medley. The music was excellent and it was great to see a good crowd. There were 700 people in attendance. Those attending gave Rosa a well-deserved standing ovation.

We are looking forward to the dedication of the 3/11 Robert-Morton at the Polk Theatre in Lakeland in October, featuring Rosa Rio at the console. Work proceeds on schedule. Stay tuned.

*Sandy Hobbis*

## CENTRAL INDIANA

Carlton Smith, President  
317/356-1240, carlton@electrola.com

Indianapolis, Indiana. Retirement to some means leisure and relaxation, to others it is time for travel, but to CIC member Dyne Pfeffenberger, it seems to mean one simple thing—music! Since retiring as Chair of the Department of Accounting and Finance at Indiana

CLETUS GOENS



*Dyne Pfeffenberger at the Paramount Theatre Page.*

University—Purdue University at Fort Wayne, the stages of many area theatres have been graced by his talent and artistry. Our monthly meeting on July 14 at the Paramount Theatre in Anderson was just one such occasion. Although many things were absent from the meeting, including Chapter President, Carlton Smith, Treasurer Michael Fellenzer and even the street in front of the theatre—an afternoon of fabulous music was presented thanks to Mr. Pfeffenberger. Following a short but sweet business meeting conducted by First Vice-President, Jason Young, the music was underway. The lush tones of the 3/12 Page were showcased during Dyne's performance, with the contrasted style of a Zez Confrey penned novelty tune demonstrating the diverse abilities of artist and instrument alike. A bit of reminiscing found its way into the afternoon when Dyne featured selections he per-

MICHAEL FELLENER



*Ken Double at the Grande Barton.*

formed in the 1960s and '70s as duets with Buddy Nolan during Midnight Concerts at the Embassy Theatre in Fort Wayne.

Dedicated to ensuring meeting attendees have the needed treats to go with open console entertainment, Ron Wilson managed to get all the proper accoutrements into the Paramount despite the absence of a street. It has been said before, but cannot be repeated too many times—Thank you Ron and the Wilson Family!

In lieu of a monthly meeting in August, the Central Indiana Chapter presented a concert at the Warren Center for the Performing Arts that was dually grand—Ken Double at the 3/18 Grande Barton and none other than Dyne Pfeffenberger as special guest at the grand piano. To a packed house, Mr. Double presented a delightfully unique afternoon of theatre pipe organ music

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with his 'Salute to the Great Crooners.' The music of Tony Bennett evokes amorous feelings in and of itself, yet the flowing tones from the chambers and stars dancing around the auditorium from the mirror ball added an extra touch of romance. During a medley of Perry Como tunes, concertgoers were asked to exercise their collective diaphragm muscle for one of his most famous Latin numbers. At just the right moment, conducted from the bench by Maestro Double, his diaphragm orchestra released a simultaneous "UGH" to fill in what the Barton just couldn't do.

Following introduction of his guest, Ken did a little crooning of his own with piano accompaniment. After the well-received duet, it was Mr. Pfeffenberger's time to shine solo, which he achieved through an illuminated medley of songs having a New York theme. The medley was illuminated both through Dyne's amazing fingers on the keyboard as well as the added atmosphere of a city skyline silhouette projected on the curtain.

Finally, the Central Indiana Chapter is excited to announce the line-up for our 2003 Concert Season. February 16 will find the Dynamic Duo of Jelani Eddington and David Harris at the Manual High School Mighty Wurlitzer and grand piano followed by Jim Riggs on April 27 in a sure to be great performance at the same venue. The Grand Barton at the Warren Center for the Performing Arts has Ken Double returning for a performance on August 10 with Simon Gledhill closing out the season on October 12.

Shawn Chase



*Dave Wickerham at the Van Der Molen Robert Morton.*



*Benedict Memorial at the York Theatre with Mark Noller at the Barton Organ.*

## CHICAGO AREA

John J. Peters, President, 847/470-0743

**Chicago, Illinois.** On May 18 we held a combined social and business meeting at the beautifully reconstructed Van Der Molen's Wheaton Fox. It was a grand experience listening to Dave Wickerham's delightful concert on the Robert-Morton theatre pipe organ. The music room has been expanded and reconfigured. There is a new entrance hall and a stunning façade on the entire building which is both home and music hall. A virtual horde of CATOE members and



*The Oriental Console*

friends enjoyed every minute of Wickerham's performance as well as the visual effects of what is really a new venue. Congratulations to Paul and Linda for their gracious hosting.

On June 5 CATOE saluted the memory of Bill Benedict's many years of service to the club by holding a memorial service at the York Theatre in Elmhurst. Mark Noller presented a tasteful program on the Barton pipe organ. Benedict was a Past-President of CATOE and was a leading force in the saving of the Chicago Theatre and its Wurlitzer. He also served as a volunteer at the Chicago and was a member of the Theatre Historical Society. We regret his passing, but he joins the ranks of other great theatre organ supporters. We acknowledge his excellent leadership and support.

The CATOE board met at V.P. Bob Boins' home to discuss current and future projects. It was agreed that the Oriental Theatre console should be completely rebuilt and ready for display in the lobby of the Oriental Theatre. The shell is already restored to its original beauty. The project will entail

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David Rhodes

having volunteers on hand from time to time to explain what we wish to do and to distribute literature on the history of this instrument which shall

contain tactful requests for donations.

On August 24 we were treated to a social at the Tivoli Theatre, home of CATOE's 3/10 Wurlitzer. David Rhodes was the featured organist. He had been spotlighted at a CATOE program honoring the late John Muri. David performs regularly on the 3/10 Wurlitzer in the Downers Grove High School Auditorium for the students. We hope this will attract other young people into becoming members and future organists.

We look forward to a busy fall season with another public show and several socials as well as enjoying other vibrant clubs in the Midwest.

Hal Pritchard

### CONNECTICUT VALLEY

Jonathan Sibley, President  
860/345-2518, jsibley@snet.net

**Thomaston, Connecticut.** Juan Cardona, Jr. presented a concert on March 16 at the 3/15 Marr & Colton at the Thomaston Opera House, Thomaston, Connecticut. Juan's program included music from movie themes, orchestral transcriptions, big band numbers and an operatic aria. The program was very well received by the audience. Juan fully utilized the resources of the Marr & Colton, which is well known for its superb sound within the Victorian era 600-seat Thomaston auditorium. The efforts of John Agnevine for having the organ in top condition for the concert are appreciated.

Juan is a Past President of CVTOS and is very active along with his parents working with CVTOS activities. Juan has served as the house organist at the Thomaston Opera House for stage productions over a number of years. Also, Juan has achieved a Microsoft Certified Systems Engineering Degree and is employed as network engineer and systems manager at Latex Foam Products in Shelton, Connecticut. Our chapter is fortunate to have the talents of Juan to play at meetings and open console sessions.

The spring membership meeting was held at the home of Bob Fazzino in North Haven, Connecticut on June 16. Bob was a very gracious host providing an incredible spread of hors d'oeuvres and beverages. About 25 CVTOS members were in attendance along with guests from the Niagara Mohawk Chapter ATOS and the local chapter of the AGO.

After a brief business meeting, Allen Miller played a concert on the three-manual Allen theatre organ. One of Allen's offerings was a very innovative arrangement where no more than four notes were being played at one time and it was very well received by the audience. Allen played a number of other selections to include show tunes and light classical pieces that were enjoyed by all.

As a note of interest, Allen Miller was the founder of CVTOS in 1961 when he was a student at Trinity College in Hartford. Also, Allen is well known for the numerous theatre organ installations that he has done around the country over the years along with Z-Tronics pipe organ relays and combination actions he supplies.

Bob Fazzino's Allen organ is of interest as it was the first three-manual digital



Allen Miller at the three-manual Allen theatre organ at the residence of Bob Fazzino.



Juan Cardona, Jr. at the console of the 3/15 Marr & Colton at the Thomaston Opera House.

theatre organ built by Allen Organs in 1975. The organ was originally premiered with a concert by George Wright at Bushnell Auditorium at Hartford, Connecticut prior to delivery. We are very appreciative of the outstanding hospitality offered by Bob for the meeting.

Jon Sibley

### DELAWARE VALLEY

Vincent Kling, President, 610/935-9419

**Pottstown, Pennsylvania.** On the morning of August 11, 2002 we were invited, along with the Garden State Chapter, to join the Southern Jersey Theatre Organ Society for open console at the Broadway Theatre in Pitman, New Jersey. There they have restored and maintain a wonderfully sounding 3/8

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*Dottie Whitcomb, Lois Haney, and Vince Kling, from left, enjoying listening to the open console at the Broadway Theatre in Pitman, New Jersey.*

Kimball theatre pipe organ. We all had a great time listening to various members from all three groups. Even your reporter took a stab at playing it. The organ is an original installation. The theatre is a small movie palace in great condition and shows first run movies. We were allowed to tour the building and the organ chambers, which are on either side of the auditorium.

After lunch, we proceeded on to the Cinnaminson High School Auditorium in Riverton, New Jersey to hear and play the 3/16 Wurlitzer, also maintained in loving care by our hosts, the Southern Jersey Theatre Organ Society. Again, many members played at open console. Tours of the chambers (one on each side of the auditorium) were also available. Again, great sound. Some of the bass pipes were installed in a closet under the left chamber, and it was fun to feel the rumbling effect they produced. In all, everyone had a wonderful day. Many thanks go to Joe Rementer and to the members of Southern Jersey for their hospitality.

Work on our own instruments at the Colonial Theatre, Phoenixville, Pennsylvania and at the Keswick Theatre, Glenside, Pennsylvania, is progressing.

Those who would like to help out can contact our project manager, Tom Smerke, at 215/659-1323.

*Dick Auchincloss*

## **GARDEN STATE**

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

**Trenton, New Jersey.** The long unusual lack of rain and the breath taking heat of 90 plus degrees had New Jersey people staying close to their air conditioners. Happily the arrival of the July *Pedals and Pipes* newsletter announced that once again our annual GSTOS summer picnic would be held at the delightful lake front cottage of Bob and Cathy Martin on Lake Hopatcong. The owners, Bob and Cathy who are known for their hospitality, welcomed our members to a perfect cool, shaded, relaxing afternoon. Conversations, mountains of food and drinks continued all day. Some went boating and swimming while other talented members brought their instruments and entertained all. Other members just relaxed and enjoyed watching all types of boats going by. July 21 was an ideal day. Kudos to Bob and Cathy for our sixth annual picnic.

In August the Southern Jersey Chapter ATOS invited the Garden State and Delaware Valley Chapters to a summer organ crawl. Summer crawls have always been a favorite thing to do. For years ATOS members of the nearby states would gather in Surf City, New Jersey. They came to see and hear the famous Wurlitzer in the Surf City Hotel. Friendships were renewed, food enjoyed, others took part in open console and some took a last summer swim at the beach.

Time has passed and changes occurred but Garden State and New York Chapters have continued summer crawls. This year we were delighted when

Southern Jersey invited the chapters to an open console at the Broadway Theatre in Pitman, New Jersey and the Cinnaminson High School in Cinnaminson, New Jersey.

The Broadway Theatre has an original 3/8 Kimball theatre pipe organ. Through the years it was occasionally used. Members of the recently formed Southern Jersey Chapter made the pipe organ a chapter project. President/Crew Chief Joe Rementer, with a determined crew, began the organ restoration.

In May 2001 the chapter celebrated the 75th anniversary of the Broadway Theatre with a special exciting debut of the organ. Organist Dennis James' concert and silent movie featuring the organ was a wonderful success.

On Sunday August 11, 2002 our Garden State members traveled south to the Broadway Theatre and received a warm welcome from President Joe Rementer. Tours of the theatre and chambers continued while organists enjoyed playing the well-restored Kimball. Lunch was on our own and little groups enjoyed being with friends from other chapters.

Following lunch all traveled some 30 miles to Cinnaminson, New Jersey to its high school, which has a donated installed Carter Memorial 3/18 Wurlitzer. Members toured the chambers while organists shared playing time experiencing the sounds and placement of pipes, some close to the large stage. The afternoon ended with an enjoyable mini concert by Michael Lundy. Many thanks to Joe Rementer and his great crew.

*Jimny Vanore*

## **HUDSON-MOHAWK**

Frank Hackert, President, 518/355-4523

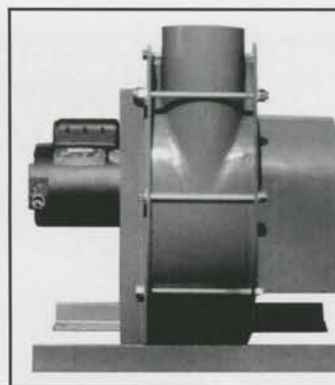
**Schenectady, New York.** Spring and summer in upstate New York's Capital District were pleasant both in the superb

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*Dick Calderwood, left, and Harold Russell with Goldie following the installation of the all new direct-electric stop rail bolster and fall board.*

weather and genre related activities available for theatre organ enthusiasts. The final two entries in the 2001-02 season Hudson-Mohawk Chapter's free noontime concert series at Proctor's Theatre Schenectady were excellent and spotlighted an extremely talented guest from the Washington, D.C. area as well as two area favorites. Proctor's Theatre is, of course, home to *Goldie*, a wonderful 3/18 Wurlitzer currently undergoing a complete makeover by organ club volunteers and external agents. On May 21, concert attendees were treated to the talents of visiting artist Joseph Graif and on June 18 regional favorites Carl Hackert and Ned Spain entertained an appreciative audience. The series resumes in September with the very popular and talented Ned Spain.

The final meeting at Proctor's Theatre, the organization's typical base of operations, was held on May 20 and, in addition to elections for the 2002-03 club officers, featured a really fun program of a *Name that Tune* inspired game of *Musical IQ* hosted by David Lester and starring *Goldie*. The officers for the Hudson-Mohawk Chapter for the 2002-03 season will be: Chair: Frank Hackert; Vice-Chair: Lucy Del Grosso; Secretary:

Maude Dunlap; and Treasurer: Fred Haupt. The chapter is again indebted to these individuals for volunteering their time for another year. In addition to the elected officers, Richard Calderwood and Harold Russell serve as our organ maintenance technicians and contribute an invaluable service in keeping *Goldie* running and directing the organ enhancement project. David Lester serves as our Program Chair.

The final outing of the season was the club's annual picnic held on June 8 at the scenic home of Betty and Ted Wood in Salem, New York. Thanks to Betty and Ted for being fabulous hosts.

Each year, Proctor's Theatre honors its volunteers by holding a Volunteer Appreciation Event in the theatre. Refreshments are served to the volunteers by theatre staff and awards are given out. Last year the theatre instituted a new award for the *Organ Society Volunteer of the Year*. The first recipient of this honor in June 2001 was Hudson-Mohawk Chapter's Chair Frank Hackert. This year the awardee was ATOS Correspondent and Publicity Chair Norene Grose. The theatre bestowed an inscribed plaque and a gift certificate for a local restaurant on the recipient.

Of additional interest, chapter member Avery Tunningley entertained at the New York State Fair in Syracuse on September 1 and 2. He provided original organ accompaniment to several silent features. Avery will bring his considerable acumen in this area to Proctor's Theatre on November 11 when he accompanies the silent classic *Teddy at the Throttle*.

The organ enhancement project progresses nicely. Present renovations to *Goldie* include upgrading the 20 year old combination system to the latest Z-tronics system; a new bolster from Crome Organs; a new fall board accommodating two rows of stops; replacing the pneumatic stop action in the console with direct electric Syndynes; and expanding the stop list to take advantage of the new space with all new stop tabs. Other improvements include the addition of MIDI and a new professional paint job that preserves the original shade of gold but replaces the previous non-original white latex finish with a custom mixed lacquer. This new paint matches the original Wurlitzer factory light yellow used on many consoles. The effect of the new yellow and gold color scheme greatly enhances the appearance of the console under theatrical spotlights and visually underlines the 70 year-old's nickname "Goldie." The Wurlitzer's console recently received a new paint job courtesy of a local area business; *Frank and Sons Auto Body* of Glenville, New York. WTEN, an ABC affiliate, covered the return of *Goldie* to the theatre following the painting and provided wonderful visuals of the return and interviews with the body shop owners and chapter member Harold Russell. Harold, Dick Calderwood, Al Moser and Frank Hackert assisted with the return.

*Norene Grose*

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*Dave Wickerham at the Victorian Palace.*

## JOLIET AREA

Jim Stemke, President, 847/534-1343  
sonics408@aol.com

**Joliet, Illinois.** Since the first of the year, JATOE members have been extremely busy. Intensive work on the 4/27 Grand Barton at Rialto Square Theatre has achieved major improvements to the instrument. We produced another exciting and successful JATOE-Fest in April, and since then we have enjoyed numerous concerts and social events. We have had fun!

A few months prior to our big April weekend, JATOE purchased and installed Walker Pedal electronics for the Barton. These included two huge subwoofers, and several midrange tweeter units. Digital samples by Chris Gorsuch of San Diego, including five new digital voices, were utilized to augment the pipes. Jim Stemke and Brant Duddy, with long hours of hard work, have made wonderful improvements to the organ. Thanks to all who have donated money and hard work to the Grand Barton Project.

We would like to thank all of those that attended the JATOE-Fest weekend. Once again, it was an exciting, wonderful success. The great group of attendees,

and the exceptional venues and artists, produced yet another set of unforgettable memories for JATOE and their guests.

Ron Rhode treated us to a beautiful concert for our June 23 social at the Rialto Theatre. While Ron was in the Chicago area, he was treated to some, "hospitality, unique to JATOE," (as Ron put it). While being chauffeured by Jim Stemke, Ron enjoyed a wild ride... not easily forgotten. Being the true professional, Ron fortunately recovered in time for the concert.

Our August 25 social, at the Rialto Theatre, featured local area talent. JATOE members, Mike Cierski, John Nicolson, Jim Patak and Don Walker, entertained us with a widely varied musical program on the Grand Barton.

On September 8, JATOE members and their guests enjoyed a very special surprise event, "Dave and Dessert." Mr. and Mrs. Jasper Sanfilippo graciously opened their beautiful home to us, and we were thrilled with a wonderful concert by Dave Wickerham.

We are anticipating the October 2 Social, with music by artist John Giacchi of Australia. JATOE is also preparing for



*Tivoli Theatre in Downer's Grove, Illinois.*

our annual Christmas gathering this year, followed by a concert featuring Jelani Eddington, David Harris, and Dave Wickerham.

Throughout the rest of this year, JATOE will be equally busy. Restoration and improvements to the Rialto Grand Barton will continue. With much planning and work already completed, we still have a tremendous amount of work ahead to produce another exciting JATOE-Fest in April of 2003.

Please occasionally stop by JATOE's website, [www.jatoe.org](http://www.jatoe.org), to see updates and additional information about JATOE activities and upcoming events.

*Jody Baker*

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## LONDON AND SOUTH OF ENGLAND

Ian Ridley, President  
ridley@atos-london.freemove.co.uk

London, England.  
Kilburn State Theatre  
July 7 at 2:30 p.m.  
Organist—Martin Atterbury

From an early age Martin had a good grounding in piano playing, but it was on



a visit to Scarborough when he heard Robinson Cleaver playing a C3 Hammond that he became attracted to the organ. He bought his own electronic Wurlitzer and soon started to develop his own style and made his first public performance in 1973 at the Granada Kingston upon Thames.

Following on from that he became heavily involved with teaching and at the same time continued his own studies gaining two diplomas in organ playing, as well as becoming an examiner for the examination body.

Today he still runs a busy teaching practice and is one of the regular organists at Ashorn Hall which houses both a Compton and Wurlitzer pipe organ. He also plays the Wurlitzer at Burton on Trent Town Hall and has occasionally played for dancing at the Blackpool Tower Ballroom.

After starting off with a rousing march Martin treated us to a wide selection of music from stage and screen. He included a very comprehensive selection of Al Jolson melodies, music from a well-known musical stage show and a selection of George Formby favourites.

In the second half he got underway with a great selection of music from the pen of Irving Berlin. Martin concluded his concert with a full selection of music

from Sigmund Romberg lasting 20 minutes, which went down very well with the audience. The audience really appreciated Martin's concert which was packed full of theatre organ favourites.



Memorial Theatre Barry  
July 14 at 2:30 p.m.  
Organist—Dr. Arnold Loxam

A very pleasingly large audience was present at the magnificent Memorial Theatre in Barry for a concert with Dr. Arnold Loxam. Arnold has had a long and distinguished career in the theatre organ field. He started his playing career in 1925 playing piano on radio for the BBC's Children's Hour. His first broadcast on a theatre organ was from a cinema in Bradford in 1946. He became involved with the development of Bradford Universities Computer Organ and for that co-operation, and his contribution in the music field generally; he was awarded an honorary doctorate.

He treated us to a wonderful concert with a programme of music for all tastes. He included many theatre organ favourites of course some numbers were played with the famous 'Loxam Bounce,' where his tremendously fast double footwork revealed his very colourful socks. This is one of Arnold's well-known trademarks. Arnold is not only a fantastic organist but a wonderful entertainer as well, and he kept the audience highly amused with his many stories. Towards the end we had a wonderful 'sing along' in which the audience eagerly participated.

After a truly entertaining concert delivered with Arnold's usual professionalism, the audience, after tumultuous applause, would not let him go without an encore.



Woking Leisure Centre  
July 20 at 7:30 p.m.  
Organists—Matthew Bason and Adam Evans

Matthew Bason, now aged around 22 years, won our Chapter's Young Organist of the Year competition in 1999. Since then he has played many concerts and has become quite busy on the organ scene. He has now successfully completed his studies at Reading University and is one of the resident organists at Ashorn Hall in Warwickshire, which houses a magnificent Compton and, almost completed, Wurlitzer.

Adam Evans is now 16 years old. He won the Chapter Competition last year in October. Earlier this year he entered the intermediate section of the International Young Organist Competition in America, and was judged the winner. He will represent that class in the competition in San Diego later this year in order to find the Overall Winner of the Young Theatre Organist of the Year Competition.

Adam started the proceedings and gave us a wide and varied choice of music. Notable in the first half was his medley of Bond Film Themes. This was very well received by the audience. Adam's registrations and playing technique demonstrated why the theatre organ was once referred to as a 'unit orchestra.' If you closed your eyes you would almost believe that you were listening to the actual film sound track, so realistic was the sound. Adam must have studied the film track very carefully to achieve this, and he finished his first half to enthusiastic applause from the audience.

It was then Matthew's first visit to the console and he gave us a very lively first half. We had popular Latin American

numbers set against nostalgic Glen Miller sounds and also an unusual version of a well-known popular standard. The audience was really enjoying themselves, but all too soon it was time for the interval, so the first half of the concert closed to great applause.

Matthew started the second half of the concert and gave us lovely and haunting selections of music. We had a very robust and lively performance to the end from Matthew and, of course,

the audience would not let Matthew leave without an encore.

It was now Adam's turn to visit the console for his final contribution to the concert, and we again had a lovely programme of music that included a delightful medley of many well-known favourites. Following on from this we had some lively tunes and a number not often heard. The evening's entertainment concluded with an encore from Adam as well, and then tumultuous applause from

the audience as both these talented young men were presented together for their final bow. I feel that with young organists such as these, the magic of the theatre organ is certainly assured in Britain for generations to come.

*Ian Ridley*

## LOS ANGELES

George Lakes, President, 805/983-2969  
thelakes@cipcug.org

Los Angeles, California. Ken, Janice and Charlie Rosen hosted a LATOS general membership picnic and open console at their home in Chatsworth on July 6. Ken is the proud owner of a two-manual Wurlitzer theatre organ housed in a separate building he designed behind his home and dubbed the Rosen Roxy.

While relaxing at tree-shaded tables on their lawn and patio overlooking a sparkling pool, members and guests enjoyed a delicious potluck. After eating far too much, we retired to the Roxy to enjoy open console.



LATOS members Lanna Pian and Tom Handforth.

The air-conditioned Roxy seats more than 80 and it looked to be standing room only at times during the afternoon. We enjoyed mini concerts by several local artists along with some very fine turns on the bench by our own members and guests.

The weather was pleasant, not too warm, and we all had a fine opportunity to socialize and compare notes about some of our favorite tunes, and listen to them played on Ken's fine theatre organ. We extend our thanks to the Rosens for their generous hospitality.

Progress is continuing on the installation of the Crotty Wurlitzer in South Pasadena High School Auditorium.

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Peter Crotty, who donated the organ to LATOS, is the project director, and the Gaylord Carter Memorial Fund was established by LATOS to raise funds for professional installation of what promises to be a state of the art instrument.

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*Char Hopwood*

**PUGET SOUND**

Barbara Graham, President  
206/525-7859

Seattle, Washington. Seventy-one Puget Sound Chapter members enjoyed a July Summer Social at the home of Russ and Jo Ann Evan, with Ray Harris at the console of the Evans' 3/16 Wurlitzer. Not only is Ray a fine musician, but an excellent entertainer, as well. No one would have guessed this was Ray's first concert on pipes. He played very imaginatively and presented a variety of the kind of music members really enjoy. We're looking forward to a return engagement!

In August a "Double The Pleasure—Double The Fun" event was staged.

Members Bill and Anita Masterman welcomed members to their home in Tacoma—a virtual museum of automatic musical instruments, including Wurlitzer band organs, player pianos, orchestrions, and other Wurlitzer automatic instruments, many of which are connected to each other. Nearly all play from rolls. AND there's a fully restored and functional 1948 Mack fire truck parked out front, the first historic item one sees when visiting the home.

After departing the Masterman home, the group went on to the second half of the event, a picnic and planned open console at the home of Bill Keller near Olympia. About 60 members enjoyed their picnic lunch on Bill's deck, then assembled for ten-minute presentations by a number of members, played on Bill's custom three-manual Allen. The home has a beautiful, acoustically delightful room in which the organ is situated. The sound is outstanding. It was a very enjoyable day for all.

*Jo Ann Evans*

**RIVER CITY**

Greg Johnson, President, 402/753-2486

Omaha, Nebraska. Our July 21 meeting was held at Joyce and Bob Markworth's house because the chapter's Barton organ was down for maintenance. President Greg Johnson chaired the meeting. After Paul Kanka presented his Treasurer's report, Harold Kenny, our



River City Chapter officers elected for another term are, from left: Greg Johnson, President, Jeanne Mehuron, Vice President, and Paul Kanka, Secretary-Treasurer.

BOB MARKWORTH



Donna Baller at the console of Markworth's Model A-100 Hammond spinet.

Chapter Administrator, announced the nominations for officers, with the annual election to be held at our August 18 meeting. It was noted that an article

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appeared in *New Horizons* (a monthly newspaper for senior citizens) honoring our own Vice-President, Jeanne Mehuron. Jeanne has been a volunteer entertainer for senior citizen groups for many years with her incomparable keyboard skills. Then Donna Baller was introduced as our guest artist for the day, who entertained us on Markworth's Hammond M-100 electronic organ. Donna's musical selections ranged from tunes with a Latin beat, a medley of polkas, pop tunes from the 1950s and 1960s, waltzes, and romantic ballads. Artists during open console on Markworth's Kimball pipe organ included Jerry Pawlak (a new member), Shirley Shainholtz, Jeanne Mehuron and Jim Boston.

Steve and Jeanne Mehuron hosted our August 18 meeting at their lakeside villa in Woodcliff (south of Fremont, Nebraska). We always look forward to this annual tradition, the twelfth consecutive year that we have been invited for a sumptuous meal, boat rides, and an organ concert. Greg Johnson, with Harold Kenney conducting the election of officers, chaired our business meeting. Re-elected by a unanimous voice vote were Greg Johnson, President; Jeanne Mehuron, Vice-President; and Paul Kanka, the combined office of Secretary-Treasurer. Other board members include Harold Kenney, George Rice and Bob Markworth. Because of personal com-

mitments Ed Martin was unable to serve as our Secretary—we thank Ed for his many years of service to River City Chapter.

During her program, Jeanne introduced her 11-year-old organ student, Andrew Cullen, who played three songs from memory. Andrew's performance was exceptionally good, and Jeanne noted that he had been playing for only five months. (Perhaps we have a potential candidate-in-the-making for the Young Organist Competition.) Last but not least, Jeanne Mehuron and Paul Kanka both celebrate their birthdays on August 19—as we were leaving, Jerry Pawlak played the "Happy Birthday" song in their honor.

*Paul Kanka, Bob Markworth,  
Tom Jeffery*

### SAN DIEGO

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

**San Diego, California.** At the present time all of San Diego Chapter's energies are being directed toward the upcoming ATOS Annual Convention. Committees are working at full pace to make this a wonderful experience for all of our visitors from around the world.

Registrations are coming in very well, however, it is noted that most of the early registrations were from Australia and England. Isn't it incredible how the world has become so small, since the arrival of the jet airplane? Now people travel all over the world, just to meet with friends and to hear great music. We promise that those of you who come from great distances won't be disappointed.

We have continued with our "Pops" Concerts with excellent success. The combination of artists with incredible talent, a wonderful instrument and a great venue, have made for a very successful season. Libby Hinkle, our program chairperson has already lined up a stellar list of artists for next year. Much of our success (financially) has come from the sale of "Series Tickets." They are an excellent value and have been very well received by the people who have taken advantage of the savings and convenience of these tickets. It also allows the board to better prepare a budget to bring you the very best in entertainment. Incidentally, this last paragraph is really a commercial for the sale of tickets for the upcoming season. I urge you to continue your support of the chapter.

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If production schedules are met and the "Creek don't rise," we hope to have a CD ready by Convention time. It will be the first CD made on our 4/24 Wurlitzer and I for one cannot wait. I have had numerous calls from around the country asking how they can hear our organ. Unfortunately, I have not been able to give them an answer. I can't reveal who the artist will be, but I can say that this recording will "knock your socks off." You will have to come to the Convention Store to be among the first to get this outstanding CD.

San Diego has long been called "America's Finest City" and we want to ensure that all of our visitors enjoy their stay here. We will do everything that we can to make everyone feel welcome and have nothing but fond memories (and CD's), as they return to their homes. Join us, at the end of November for the 2002 ATOS Annual Convention in beautiful San Diego.

Frank Hinkle

## TOLEDO AREA

Nelda Reno, President, 419/478-5959  
momreno@aol.com

Toledo, Ohio. TATOS activities for the summer were mostly road trips to other theatre pipe organ installations starting with a visit in May to the Redford Theatre and the Barton organ there. The restoration of the paintwork and new seats were a thrill to see and the

organ was in fine voice as well. Our thanks again to the wonderful folks that make the Redford a must see and hear theatre organ site.

In June we visited B. Bronson of Dundee, Michigan to see his collection of mechanical musical instruments as well as the 3/11 Wurlitzer in residence in the Victorian style music room. The organ is a remarkably fine instrument sounding much more like 18 ranks than its true count of 11. The voicing and ensemble are outstanding as well. It is a dream come true installation commenced by Mr. Bronson and his late father, Bud Bronson. It has an extensive library of electronically recorded performances of many well-known organists that are a dream come true in themselves. It sets a fine example of how a great home installation can be accomplished.

The July road trip took us to the Senate Theatre in Detroit, home of the Detroit Theatre Organ Society and the Wurlitzer originally delivered to the Fisher Theatre in Detroit. Dick Leichtamer, President of the DTOS and also a TATOS member, was our host and Jim Casterson, Assistant Theater Manager, were kind enough to spend their Sunday afternoon making the organ available for our enjoyment. Dick welcomed the group then played several selections on the Wurlitzer. Denny Kroeckel then played a fine array of tunes. Others tak-

ing their turn at the keyboards included: Patrick Hunter, Darel Brainard, Mike Hornyak, Betty Taylor, Bob Gosling, Richard Gray and guest Dick Dwyer. The customary tour of the Senate organ chambers followed, which are at stage level and easily accessible without any ladder climbing. Our admission fees were donated to the organ fund and graciously accepted by Dick Leichtamer.

We took a month off from touring for August but were pleased to have our Marr & Colton pipe organ at the Ohio Theatre here in Toledo, Ohio featured in a pre-show performance on the tenth of August for the Elvis Presley Impersonation concert by Robert Rosenkrantz. Bill Yaney, our House Organist, delighted the audience with a wonderful half hour of popular songs from the 1950s and 1960s. Many first time visitors to the Ohio Theatre were pleased, as they had not expected to hear to hear an organ overture. A number of names were added to our mailing list as well. Thankfully, the weather had cooperated by turning cooler, so the organ was back in good tune and only required minor servicing to provide Bill Yaney the vehicle for his musical trip to the time of Elvis. Mr. Rosenkrantz had been expected to provide about a 90-minute show but instead kept the energy level up for two and a quarter hours following Bill's pre-show organ performance.

Bill Frisk 



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# An Acre of Seats in a Palace of Splendor

By Steve Levin, Associate Editor

## BEACON


New York City

Opened: December 24, 1929 • Architect: Walter W. Ahlschlager • Capacity: 2676  
Organ: Wurlitzer 4/19, Style 260 Sp. Op. 1891

The resounding success of "his" theatre\* gave Roxy (Samuel L. Rothafel) the idea for a chain of satellite houses in Manhattan through which stage acts from the Roxy itself could be cycled. At least two were planned: the Roxy Mansion, at 58th Street and Lexington Avenue, and Roxy's Midway, on Broadway at 75th Street. Only the latter was actually built, but the project was sold during construction, and the theatre opened as Warner Brothers' Beacon. The shipping date of the organ, June 6, 1928, suggests the theatre was scheduled to open far earlier than it did.

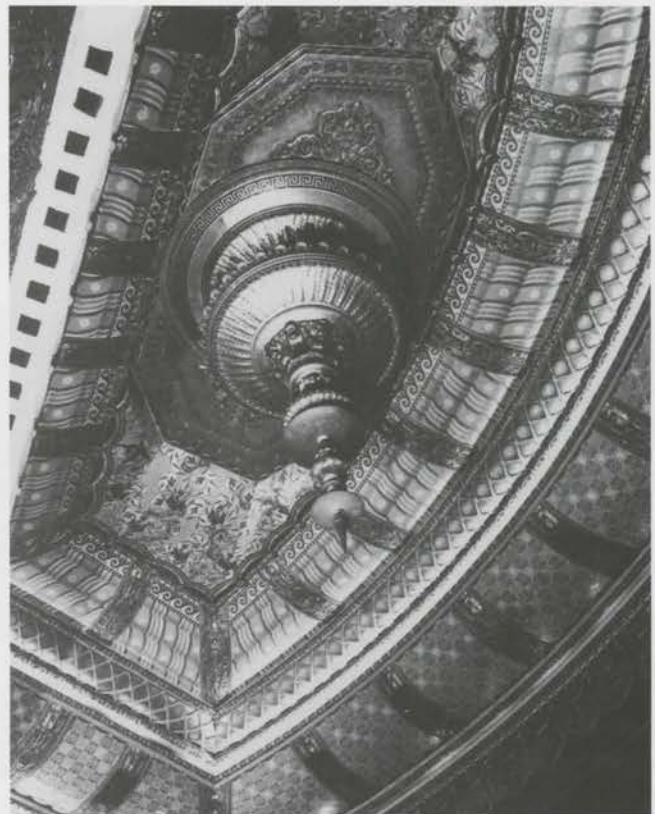
The Beacon is sometimes called the "little Roxy," but they were not that much alike. They shared the same architect, and both were set diagonally on their lots, but the auditoriums did not really resemble each other. As described by Ben Hall, the auditorium "give(s) the effect of being in some giant Arabian's battle encampment, with monumental piles of armor flanking the canopied stage," not at all the imagery projected by the Roxy. Only in its oval lobby does the Beacon truly suggest the Roxy, albeit on a much smaller scale.

Opening night was less ambitious than most: an orchestra filled the elevating pit, and Stuart Barrie presided at the Wurlitzer, but a string of Vitaphone shorts took the place of stage acts, anticipating the coming cutbacks made necessary by the growing Depression, and made possible by the talking picture. The Beacon spent most of its life as a sub-run house, by far the largest in its territory. The last regular movie screened in 1974; for most of the years since, it has been a rock venue. A 1986 proposal to level the main floor and make the house a disco was never implemented, and the Beacon survives in a decent state of preservation.

The organ is unique: added to the standard Style 260 ranks were a Tibia and Horn Diapason in the Main, and a Tuba Mirabilis and Solo String Celeste in the Solo. The third manual is called Orchestral, not Bombarde, and is more like a second Great. The combination relays and setter boards are remote. The organ was restored in the late 1960s by the New York Theatre Organ Society, and got some good exposure then, usually being played by Lee Erwin, who also recorded it. Unfortunately, the present policy at the Beacon allows for little, if any, use of the organ. 

\*The 5886-seat Roxy, at Seventh Avenue and 50th Street, was the largest movie palace built in the 1920s, and second in size only to the 5940-seat Radio City Music Hall (1932).

BEN HALL: BMH COLLECTION, THS



The Beacon's lozenge-shaped dome is the feature most reminiscent of the Roxy, although the decorative scheme is entirely different, and the Roxy did not have a central lighting fixture. Note the orchestra-pit lights worked into the front of the dome.

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*The peculiar shape of the Beacon makes it difficult to photograph: Ben Hall did very well to get in as much as he did in this classic shot from the late 1960s. The organ chambers are behind the swooping grillework above the proscenium. Note the hints of Art Deco on the grille. To maximize seating on the Beacon's misshapen site, the architect provided two balconies, something of a throwback.*

## Organs in *Italics* are still in place.

No.	Theatre	Location	Reg.	Architect	Organ	Status	Vol.	Year
1	Paramount	New York, NY	E	Rapp & Rapp	Wurlitzer	Dem	32/2	90
2	Castro	San Francisco, CA	W	Pflueger, Timothy	<i>Wurlitzer</i>	Movie	32/3	90
3	St. Louis	St. Louis, MO	MW	Rapp & Rapp	Kimball	PAC	32/4	90
4	Alabama	Birmingham, AL	S	Mayger & Graven	<i>Wurlitzer</i>	PAC	32/5	90
5	Paradise	Chicago, IL	MW	Eberson	Wurlitzer	Dem	32/6	90
6	Loew's Kings	Brooklyn, NY	E	Rapp & Rapp	Robert-Morton	Closed	33/1	91
7	T & D	Oakland, CA	W	Cunningham & Politeo	Wurlitzer	Dem	33/2	91
8	Capitol	New York, NY	E	Lamb	Estey	Dem	33/3	91
9	Tivoli	Chicago, IL	MW	Rapp & Rapp	Wurlitzer	Dem	33/4	91
9A	Chicago	Chicago, IL	MW	Rapp & Rapp	<i>Wurlitzer</i>	PAC	33/4	91
10	Metropolitan	Los Angeles, CA	W	Wollett, William L.	Wurlitzer	Dem	33/5	91
11	Roxy	New York, NY	E	Alschlager, Walter	Kimball	Dem	33/6	91
12	Fox	Atlanta, GA	S	Mayre, Alger & Vinour	<i>Moeller</i>	PAC	34/1	92
13	Granada	San Francisco, CA	W	Jacobs, Alfred H.	Wurlitzer	Dem	34/2	92
14	Mastbaum	Philadelphia, PA	E	Hoffman & Henon	Wurlitzer	Dem	34/3	92
15	Ohio	Columbus, OH	MW	Lamb	<i>Robert-Morton</i>	PAC	34/4	92
16	Fox	St. Louis, MO	MW	Crane	<i>Wurlitzer</i>	PAC	34/5	92
16A	Fox	Detroit, MI	MW	Crane	<i>Wurlitzer</i>	PAC	34/5	92
17	California	San Francisco, CA	W	Jacobs, Alfred H.	Wurlitzer	Dem	34/6	92
18	RKO Roxy	New York, NY	E	Associated	Wurlitzer	Dem	35/1	93
19	Fox	San Francisco, CA	W	Lamb	Wurlitzer	Dem	35/2	93
20	Uptown	Chicago, IL	MW	Rapp & Rapp	Wurlitzer	Closed	35/3	93
21	Paradise	Bronx, NY	E	Eberson	Robert-Morton	Closed	35/4	93
22	Paramount	Oakland, CA	W	Pflueger, Timothy	<i>Wurlitzer</i>	PAC	35/5	93
23	Saenger	New Orleans, LA	S	Weil, Emil	<i>Robert-Morton</i>	PAC	35/6	93
24	Radio City MH	New York, NY	E	Associated	<i>Wurlitzer</i>	PAC	36/1	94
25	Piccadilly	Chicago, IL	MW	Rapp & Rapp	Kilgen	Dem	36/2	94
26	Pantages	Fresno, CA	W	Priteca	<i>Robert-Morton</i>	PAC	36/3	94
27	Ambassador	St. Louis, MO	MW	Rapp & Rapp	Wurlitzer	Dem	36/4	94
28	Liberty	Seattle, WA	W	Ryan, Henderson	Wurlitzer	Dem	36/5	94
29	Midland	Kansas City, MO	MW	Lamb	Robert-Morton	PAC	36/6	94
30	Capitol	Detroit, MI	MW	Crane	Wurlitzer	PAC	37/1	95
31	Fox	Brooklyn, NY	E	Crane	Wurlitzer	Dem	37/2	95
32	Southtown	Chicago, IL	MW	Rapp & Rapp	Wurlitzer	Dem	37/3	95
33	Fox-Oakland	Oakland, CA	W	Weeks & Day	Wurlitzer	Closed	37/4	95
34	Hollywood	Detroit, MI	MW	Mayger & Graven	Barton	Dem	37/5	95
35	Oriental	Portland, OR	W	Thomas & Mercier	Wurlitzer	Dem	37/6	95
36	Orpheum	Los Angeles, CA	W	Lansburgh, G. A.	<i>Wurlitzer</i>	Movie	38/1	96
37	Paramount	Toledo, OH	MW	Rapp & Rapp	Wurlitzer	Dem	38/2	96
38	Fox	Seattle, WA	W	Ford, Sherwood	Robert-Morton	Dem	38/3	96
39	Tampa	Tampa, FL	S	Eberson	<i>Wurlitzer</i>	PAC	38/4	96

No.	Theatre	Location	Reg.	Architect	Organ	Status	Vol.	Year
40	Michigan	Detroit, MI	MW	Rapp & Rapp	Wurlitzer	Dem	38/5	96
41	Pantages	San Francisco, CA	W	Priteca	Robert-Morton	PAC	38/6	96
42	Shea's Buffalo	Buffalo, NY	E	Rapp & Rapp	Wurlitzer	PAC	39/1	97
43	State	Louisville, KY	S	Eberson	Wurlitzer	PAC	39/2	97
44	Paramount	Seattle, WA	W	Rapp & Rapp	Wurlitzer	PAC	39/3	97
45	United Artists	Los Angeles, CA	W	Crane	Wurlitzer	Church	39/4	97
46	Raymond	Raymond, WA	W	Grant, William R.	Wurlitzer	PAC	39/5	97
47	Loew's Penn	Pittsburgh, PA	E	Rapp & Rapp	Robert-Morton	PAC	39/6	97
48	Alhambra	San Francisco, CA	W	Miller & Pflueger	Wurlitzer	Movie	40/1	98
49	Oriental	Chicago, IL	MW	Rapp & Rapp	Wurlitzer	PAC	40/2	98
50	Avalon	Chicago, IL	MW	Eberson	Wurlitzer	Church	40/3	98
51	Loew's 175th St.	New York, NY	E	Lamb	Robert-Morton	Church	40/4	98
52	5th Avenue	Seattle, WA	W	R. C. Reamer	Wurlitzer	PAC	40/5	98
53	Palace	Rochester, NY	E	Mayger & Graven	Wurlitzer	Dem	40/6	98
54	Western (Wiltern)	Los Angeles, CA	W	Lansburgh, G. A.	Kimball	PAC	41/1	99
55	Minnesota	Minneapolis, MN	MW	Mayger & Graven	Wurlitzer	Dem	41/2	99
56	Loew's Valencia	Queens, NY	E	Eberson	Robert-Morton	Church	41/3	99
57	Los Angeles	Los Angeles, CA	W	Lee, S. Charles	Wurlitzer	Closed	41/4	99
58	Gate/Warfield	San Francisco, CA	W	Lansburgh, G. A.	Moller/Wurlitzer	PAC/PAC	41/5	99
59	Tennessee	Knoxville, TN	S	Mayger & Graven	Wurlitzer	PAC	41/6	99
60	Norshore	Chicago, IL	MW	Rapp & Rapp	Wurlitzer	Dem	42/1	00
61	El Capitan	San Francisco, CA	W	Lansburgh, G. A.	Wurlitzer	Dem	42/2	00
62	EARLY DAYS	All over					42/3	00
63	California	San Jose, CA	W	Weeks & Day	Wurlitzer	Closed	42/4	00
64	Keith's Memorial	Boston, MA	E	Lamb	Wurlitzer	Closed	42/5	00
65	Before the Castro	San Francisco, CA	W	n/a	n/a	n/a	42/6	00
66	Forum	Los Angeles, CA	W	Borgmeyer, Edward	Kimball	Church	43/1	01
67	Egyptian	Ogden, UT	MW	Hodgson-McClenahan	Wurlitzer	PAC	43/2	01
68	Loew's Jersey	Jersey City, NJ	E	Rapp & Rapp	Robert-Morton	PAC	43/3	01
69	Loew's	Akron, OH	MW	Eberson	Wurlitzer	PAC	43/4	01
70	Loew's State	New York, NY	E	Lamb	Moller	Dem	43/5	01
71	Majestic	Houston, TX	S	Eberson	Kilgen	Dem	43/6	01
72	Paramount	Portland, OR	W	Rapp & Rapp	Wurlitzer	PAC	44/1	02
73	Granada	Chicago, IL	MW	Levy & Klein	Wurlitzer	Dem	44/2	02
74	Fox Wilshire	Beverly Hills, CA	W	Lee, S. Charles	Wurlitzer/Maas	PAC	44/3	02
75	Majestic	San Antonio, TX	S	Eberson	Robert-Morton	PAC	44/4	02
76	Orpheum	Seattle, WA	W	Priteca	Wurlitzer	Dem	44/5	02
76A	Orpheum	Vancouver, BC	W	Priteca	Wurlitzer	PAC	44/5	02
77	Beacon	New York, NY	E	Alschlager, W. W.	Wurlitzer	Rock	44/6	02





# THE CHICAGO THEATRE TODAY

*Text and Photos by  
Ron Musselman, Associate Editor*

**D**uring the era of the movie palace, the greater Chicago area was widely considered to be the national capital of movie houses. The sprawling metropolitan area, which is measured in square miles instead of acres, was blessed with a vast array of theatres. They ranged in size from the modest 300 and 400-seat neighborhood houses to the gigantic Upton, with ornate, block-long lobbies and a palatial auditorium seating nearly 4,400. The late console genius and native Chicagoan John Seng best described Chicago's theatre scene when he said, "Unlike other American cities, a plethora of elaborate movie palaces stretched in every direction to Chicago's city limits."

Before television ultimately cut into movie going, the people of Chicago and its suburbs generated theatre attendance numbers that were almost beyond belief. The size of the local motion picture exhibition business in the 1920s can be partially illustrated by something that was related to me by a golden-ager. He said that Chicagoland employed 300 theatre organists (including part-time relief organists) before sound flicks came into play. And the almost immediate effect of the presence of "talkies" on the theatre pipe organ business—both in instrument production and musician employment—was disastrous. Less than a year later, the entire metro area had only about 50 theatre organists.

In the 1950s, the real carnage began as the theatres themselves started to disappear into history. The first major casualty occurred right in Chicago. The year was 1954, and the beautiful 3,700-seat Paradise came down, followed by many more irreplaceable landmark houses in the following decade. But due to the sheer numbers of theatres in the windy city, several remain today. The most unlikely place for a survivor is in downtown Chicago, where the city is built more vertically, rather than spread out. In a forest of high-rises, real estate is precious and valued by the square foot. That puts extra pressure on a building to produce a profit, or face one of two options; undergo severe remodeling to perform a totally different function, or face the ultimate indignity of demolition and

replacement by an undistinguished, slab-sided office building. But now and then, a miracle occurs, and a major downtown movie palace survives amidst dozens of skyscrapers. One of the finest examples can be seen in the pictures that support this article.

The 81 year-old Chicago Theatre still stands on famed State Street and awes a new generation of patrons. It opened in 1921, and for a relatively early house, the Chicago is very tastefully finished in the classic French style. The plasterwork of the lobby and auditorium is both cleanly and deeply sculpted. All of the decorative elements marry into a harmonious whole, and a lapse in taste or false note is nowhere to be found. A number of the old-timers built between 1910 and the early '20s were detailed enough, but many tended to have a look that suggested the architect was a little unsure of how to decorate such large surface areas. Some of the less ambitious schemes looked quite nice, while others had a heavy Romanesque bent, and some houses were more than a bit clumsy in style. But the Chicago's competently elegant décor has stood the test of time. First-time visitors (including this writer) are still hit with involuntarily dropped jaws and bugged eyes when seeing the auditorium in its entirety. It would benefit from a couple of things, such as replacing some previously removed drapery in a few areas, but as is, the theatre remains one of the country's most beautiful public spaces.

Originally seating just under 3,900, the Chicago was the flagship of the mighty Balaban and Katz chain. In this movie-hungry town, it took off like a rocket and enjoyed a very profitable existence for nearly half a century. In the first twelve years of operation, it saw more than 65,000,000 ticket-holders pass through its doors. The depression had almost no effect on the theatre's business, and in 1933, the heavily used facility underwent its first restoration. It continued to make money through the years, and eventually, two more refurbishings were necessary. By the early 1980s, the theatre's owners (understandably) put profitability ahead of historical preservation,

*A familiar sight  
on State Street  
for the past  
81 years.*

and for the first time in its relatively long life, the Chicago was in very serious danger. The plan was to demolish the theatre to make way for a high-rise office building. After a rather scary, prolonged struggle between the forces of commerce and those who understood the building's true worth, the theatre and its famous 4/27 Wurlitzer were ultimately saved. The pipe organ itself is a valuable entity. A fine musical instrument with a prized signature sound, the Chicago Wurlitzer is also noted for its ties to the two most famous theatre organists of all time—Jesse Crawford and George Wright. The pipe organ and the theatre are now both permanently protected city landmarks.

To examine the accompanying photographs is to see what the Chicago is today. All views were shot on April 25, 2002. For a vintage movie palace nut, seeing this stunning place was a genuine thrill. Within my limited time at that venue, I was determined to use every available second to shoot a photo essay that could be shared with others through the Journal.

Previously, I only knew the Chicago Theatre by way of writings and photos. Seventy to eighty year-old black-and-whites showed a lot of detail, but the overall look was "dark cave." Most later color shots were limited in color range and usually seemed to have either a dominant red or brown tinge. Now the theatre was being viewed first-hand (which aids in verifying color accuracy when the prints are seen later), and great pains were taken in making manual camera adjustments in an attempt to get a reasonably good color balance.











Even though a few shots were "blown," plenty of pictures were usable and show most of the major areas of interest. While our well-padded frame became exhausted from running all over the cavernous room, including at least three hikes up and down that enormous balcony (all without the help of elevators), doing this shoot was both exciting and rewarding. The old saying "one picture is worth a thousand words" is particularly true in the case of elaborately detailed theatre interiors. So we'll end our comments with that thought and invite the reader to enjoy several thousand words worth of visuals.

CHICAGO THEATRE PHOTOS BEGIN ON PAGE 70



# Daily Schedule

November 29–December 3, 2002

	FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 29	SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30
<b>MORNING</b>	<p>(Registration all day)</p> 	 <p>Experience <b>DISNEY'S</b> spectacular <b>HOLIDAY SHOW</b> at the El Capitan Theatre in Hollywood—home of the Former San Francisco Fox Theatre 4/37 Wurlitzer. Lunch and sightseeing in Hollywood immediately following the show.</p>
<b>AFTERNOON</b>	<p><i>Late Afternoon</i></p> <p><b>WELCOME RECEPTION</b> and no-host cocktail hour.</p>	 <p><b>CATHERINE DRUMMOND</b>, the overall winner of the 2001 Young Organist Competition, in concert at Plummer Auditorium, home of Orange County Chapter's 4/35 Wurlitzer. Hear the winners of the 2002 Young Organist Competition in cameo performances. Preview the 2003 ATOS Annual Convention.</p>
<b>EVENING</b>	 <p><b>CARLO CURLEY</b> and <b>LYN LARSEN</b></p>  <p>in a spectacular duo organ concert at Santa Sophia Church, at the consoles of two Allen Digital organs.</p> <p>.....</p> <p><i>Late Evening</i></p>  <p><b>JAM SESSION</b> at Trinity Church. Enjoy the magnificent sound of the San Diego Chapter 4/24 Wurlitzer.</p>	 <p><b>ROB RICHARDS</b>, Disney's El Capitan Theatre house organist, in concert at the console of the 4/35 Wurlitzer in Plummer Auditorium.</p>  <p>PLUMMER AUDITORIUM</p>

# Pacific Pipes 2002

ATOS Annual Convention • San Diego, California

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1



Annual **ATOS MEMBERSHIP MEETING** in the Kona/Coast Room, Hanalei Hotel. Lunch and shopping at San Diego's Seaport Village.

## MONDAY, DECEMBER 2



**BARRY BAKER** in concert at the console of the 4/24 Wurlitzer organ in Trinity Church (Group A).



**TOM HAZLETON** in concert at the console of the Allen George Wright IV organ in Santa Sophia Church (Group B).

## TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3

### Afterglow



SEAWORLD

Today you will have your choice of visiting one of San Diego's great attractions — either **SEAWORLD OF SAN DIEGO** or the **SAN DIEGO ZOO**.

Both of these fabulous venues will take a full day to thoroughly enjoy, so plan on a day filled with excitement and happy memories.



SAN DIEGO ZOO



**CAROL WILLIAMS**, San Diego Civic Organist, in concert at the Spreckels Organ Pavilion 4/73 Austin organ in Balboa Park.



**TOM HAZLETON** in concert at the console of the Allen George Wright IV organ in Santa Sophia Church (Group A).



**BARRY BAKER** in concert at the console of the 4/24 Wurlitzer organ in Trinity Church (Group B).



**PETER RICHARD CONTE** in concert at South Shores Church, at the console of the 5/333 Walker organ — one of the world's largest digital organs.



**Early Evening RECEPTION** and no-host cocktail hour featuring the piano artistry of **BOB MacLEOD** playing your favorite songs.

.....

### Evening



The annual **ATOS AWARDS BANQUET** in the Kona/Coast Room, Hanalei Hotel. Following the banquet everyone attending the convention is invited to hear **WAYNE** and **CHERYL SEPPALA**, the very popular San Diego husband and wife team, in a theatre organ and piano concert in the Kona/Coast room.



SOUTH SHORES CHURCH

For general information, call Jackie Porter, 2002 ATOS Convention Co-Chairperson, at 619/286-9979, or e-mail at [jackie19@cox.net](mailto:jackie19@cox.net).

For registration information contact Jeff Johnson, Convention Registrar, at 760/746-7469, or e-mail at [jeff8444@aol.com](mailto:jeff8444@aol.com).

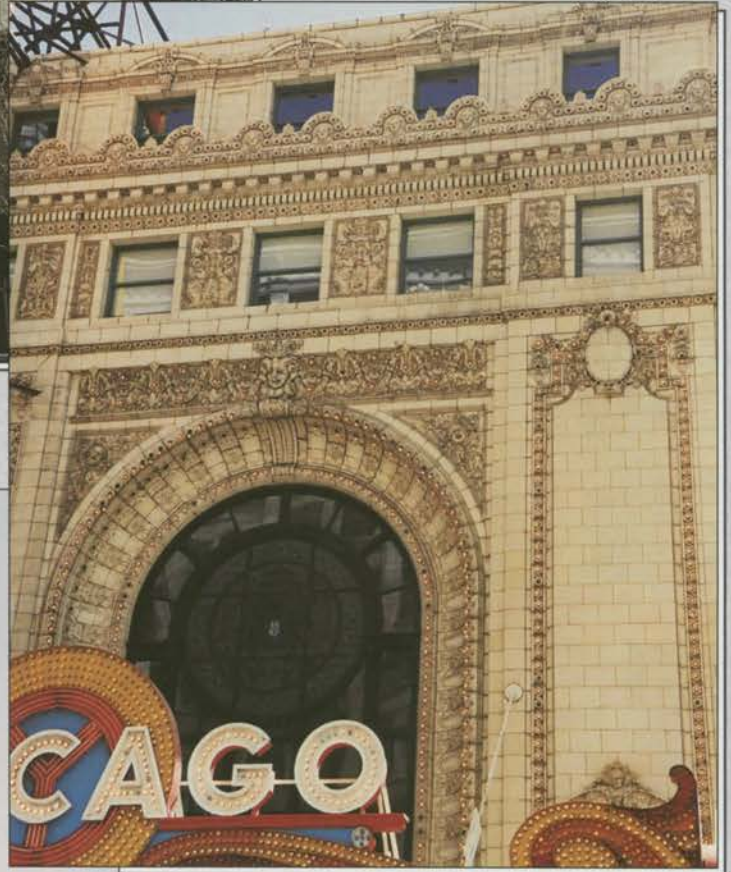
THE CHICAGO THEATRE TODAY  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 67

*Moving in a little closer reveals terra cotta detailing of façade.*

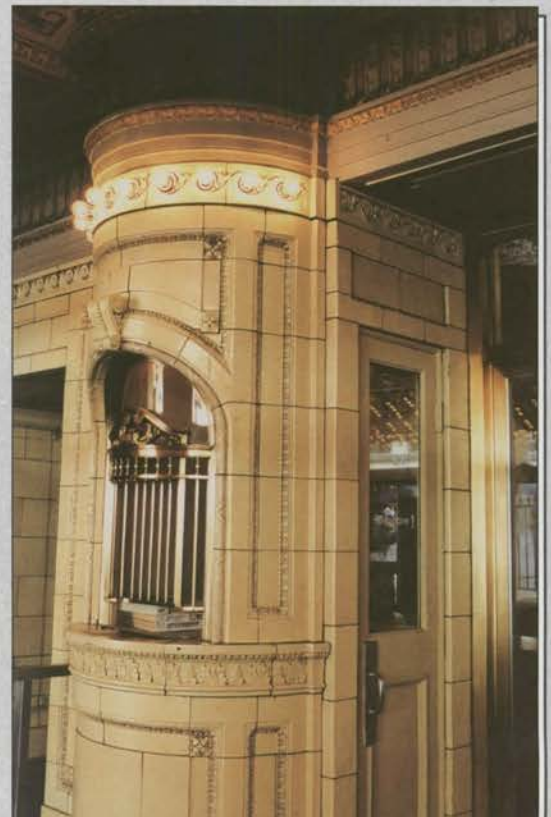


*Down the block a bit. Just visible to the right — auditorium roof and stage loft.*

*The all-new vertical sign can be seen for several blocks.*



*A ticket booth made to last.  
Note beautiful metalwork of grill.*





*Street level floor of lobby, facing auditorium.*

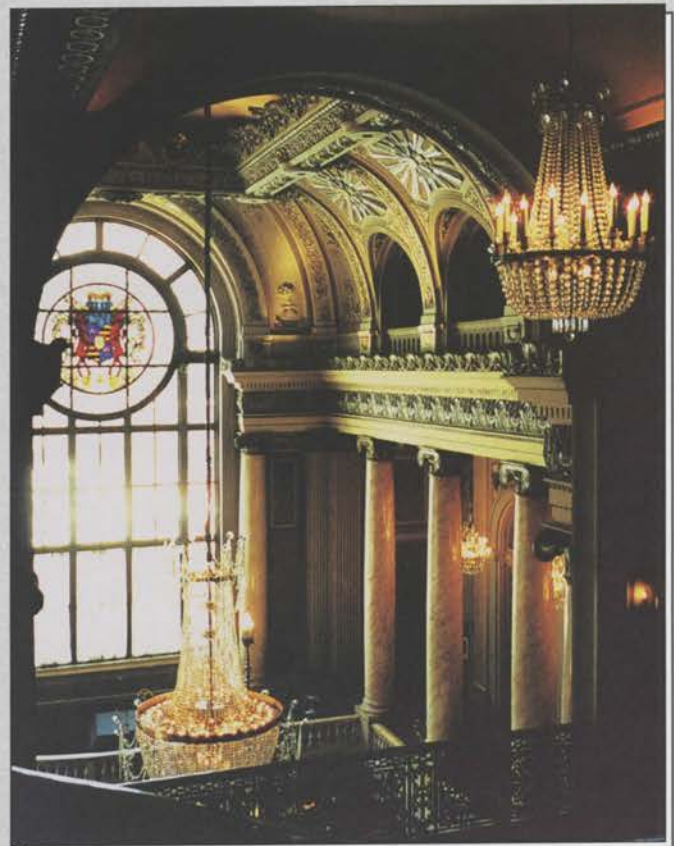


*Upper levels and rear ceiling of lobby. Behind all of this is rear of auditorium.*

*The famous elliptical staircase from the lobby to various upper levels. An incredible piece of workmanship. Amber colored slice near top center is corner of ceiling.*



*Upper right of lobby. Although the three arched windows face the adjacent alley, their height above the floor minimizes that fact, while admitting light in the daytime and adding an air of elegance day or night.*



*One of my favorite views of the Chicago—from an upper level looking out over the lobby and through the big, sunny arched window facing State Street.*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 84

# Classified Ads

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# Theatre Organ

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

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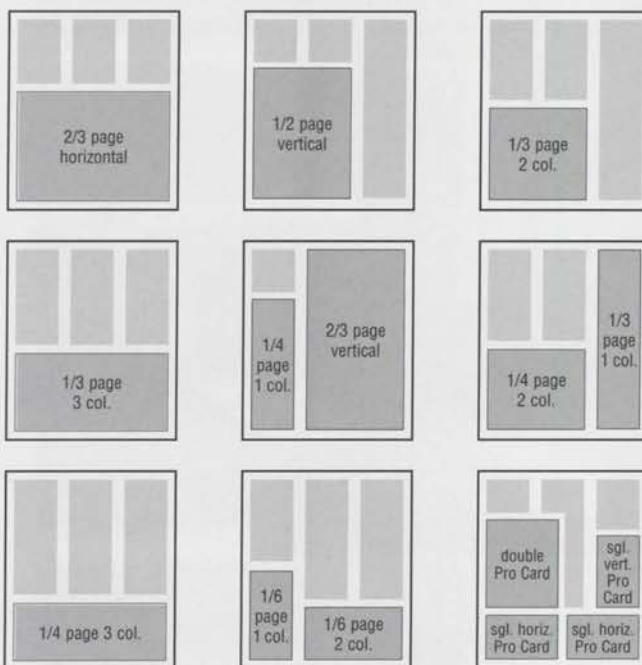
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# The **ATOS Archives** are **ALIVE** and **EXPANDING**

*By Jim Patak, Curator*

Throughout the past year, we (my wife Dolores and I) have been very busy with organizing, cleaning out files, and cataloging the large amount of new material we have received. We have received over 47 cases of material that we had to go through and check as to whether we already have any of this material. UPS and the Postal Service are not too happy with me.

ATOS thanks the following for their donations to the ATOS Archives/Library:

**Ralph Beaudry** for the many cases of artist files and venue files, and the records, CDs and Cassettes that he has reviewed.

**Al Richardson** of the *Doric Record Company* for all the master tapes he has donated.

**Robert Greene** for records and magazines that we added to our collection.

**California Polytechnic State University** for the Theatre Organ collections from the Robert E. Kennedy Library.

**Marjorie Stevens** for her husband Bill's entire organ record collection.

The Archives has not changed any prices for services provided. They are as follows:

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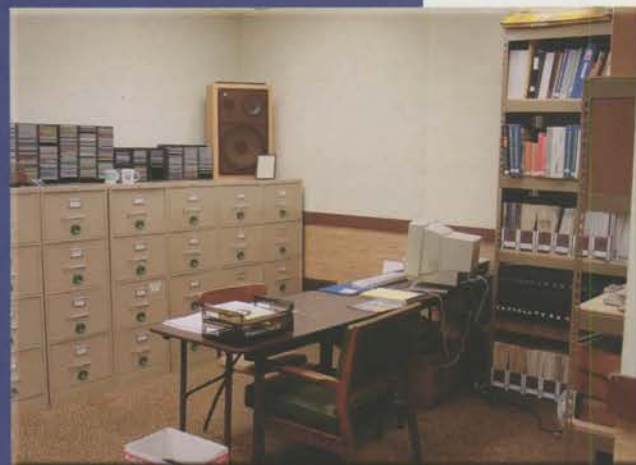
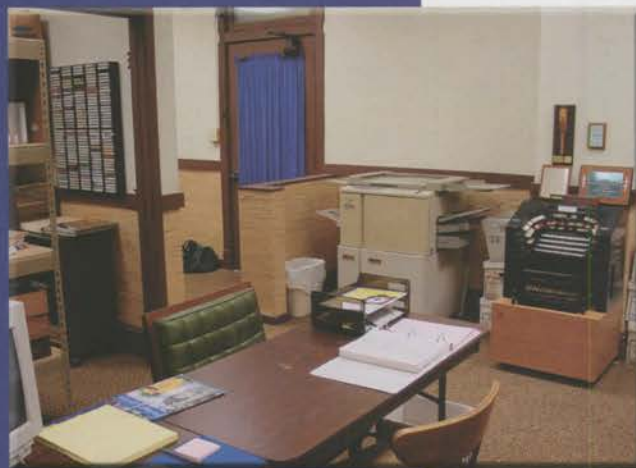
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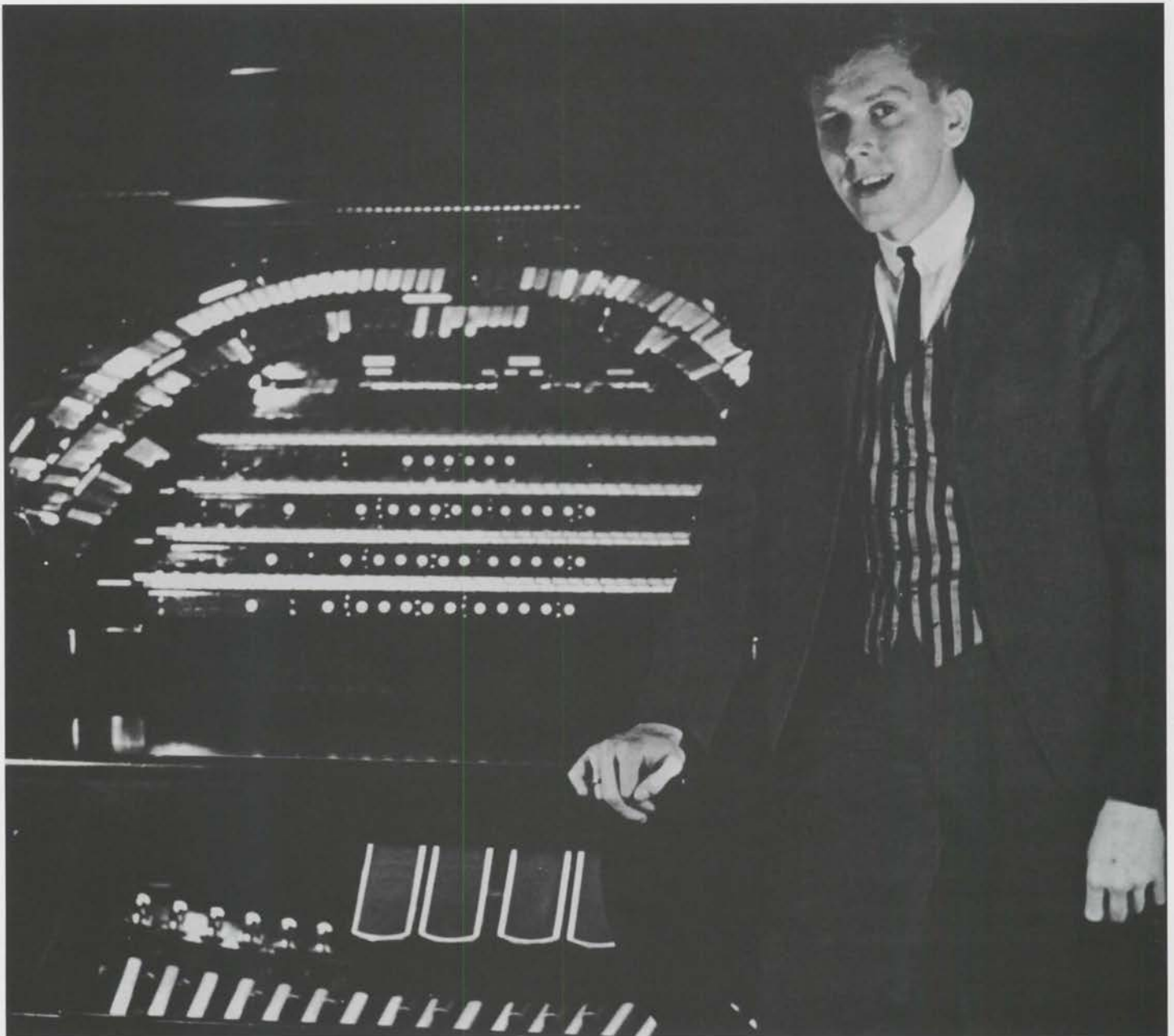


# The Bombardier

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## JOHN SENG'S 'MONASTERY MONSTER'



John Seng and his Dream Organ

# Our History—Our Heritage

As a tribute to the incredible musical genius of John Seng we present the following article, which appeared in *The Bombarde*, Volume 2, Number 3, Fall 1965.



For several years the theatre organ world has heard rumors of an exceptional instrument which was being kept under wraps by recording organist John Seng somewhere in the deep forest near Chicago. The rumor was traced down and proved to be correct. Now that it is complete and ready for recording, concerts -- and heard at the ATOE 1965 Convention -- John has okayed release of the whole saga for the first time.

## PROLOGUE

During the early 1920's, there arose to public prominence in Chicago an organist named Al Carney. A chubby good-natured man in his early twenties, Al had arrived from a small town in Iowa with one paramount idea in mind: to make his fortune playing the much-fabled theatre pipe organ. He left home with mother's blessings and a sizeable bank roll; his family was well-off. Carney, a quick-witted gregarious man, lost little time in becoming one of Chicago's most popular theatre organ performers. His fame and also his weight



Al Carney hit the big time at Chicago's McVickers Theatre in 1925.

increased rapidly. His bulk, upholstered with raccoon coat and a friend on each arm, became a familiar sight on Michigan Avenue. It was in 1925 that he began regular broadcasts from the McVickers Theatre, along with a young announcer named Pat Barnes. The team was to become increasingly popular through the end of the decade. By 1926 the broadcasts had become so popular that Al limited theatre work to guest appearances only. Later, the team moved to radio station WHT which had installed a Kilgen Organ.

The team, "Al and Pat," was the rage of Chicago radio listeners, especially for their late night programs of sentimental poetry and subdued organ music which reached out far from Chicago to thrill those in the Eastern time zone who had stayed up after their local stations had signed off to catch the wonderful programs from Chicago, which was on Central time (an hour earlier).

The poetry was romantic, sentimental, melodramatic, often trite and sometimes a bit maudlin for today's tastes but it was all new and wonderful in those carefree early days of radio. Al and Pat made a perfect team to the non-critical listeners of those days, even though Pat did seem to take up too much time with poetry when there was at least one listener who would have preferred more organ.

Their sign-off was particularly memorable. While Al played "Home Sweet Home" on rolling Tibias, Pat would read a verse about the importance of the home in our firma-



Al Carney's Music Studio on East Illinois Street. Note the sound-absorbing drapes. Early day broadcast studios were invariably "dead" acoustically.

ment, ending with the plea, ". . . and be sure to write home tonight." Then Al would close with "Taps," as it would sound played by several distant bugles with the echoes fingered somewhat polyphonically on untrem'd strings. This underscored the station sign-off. Then silence.

This was heady stuff to fall asleep to -- in 1926.

Soon, Al Carney's ambition took a new direction. He had long toyed with the idea of having his own studio and organ so that he might better reap the financial harvest of his activities.

At this point we must introduce Ken Simpson. Ken had become enthralled with the theatre organ while working as an usher at Chicago's south side Tivoli theatre. Soon he and the young organist there, one Harry Zimmerman, were fast friends (they still are) and, shortly thereafter, Ken's interest turned professional. By 1928 young Simpson had a reputation among better Chicago organists as a miraculous "tonal healer" of sick Wurlitzers. Carney's interest swelled; he contacted Simpson.

Although Carney was affluent enough to purchase any brand of new organ, he wanted something unique unto himself. The original Wurlitzer console from the Chicago theatre (an exact duplicate to the late San Francisco Paramount Style 285 console) had been stored backstage for several years. New twin consoles and enlargements for the



Chicago organ had been ordered by Crawford in 1924 so he and Helen Anderson could play duets. After some negotiation, Carney was able to purchase the unused console from the theatre. Fourteen ranks of pipework were ordered from Gottfried and the building of relays, chests, regulators etc. was sublet to A. C. Howell of Dixon, Illinois. Space was rented at 160 East Illinois St., Chicago, and the organ installed there. "The Howell Mastertone Organ," as it was called, sounded very good indeed although heavy rugs were installed in front of the chamber openings because of excessive volume. Several months after installation a 16' String extension was obtained from the fire gutted Oak Park Theatre organ.

Unfortunately, the career of both organ and Carney were short-lived. Excessive summer practice along with a powerful room fan blowing directly on the console made Mr. Carney catch cold. The cold turned into pneumonia and in 1931, at the age of thirty-three, he died.



This pleasant approach leads to the Seminary auditorium. The building was erected in 1934 through the efforts of Cardinal Mundelein.

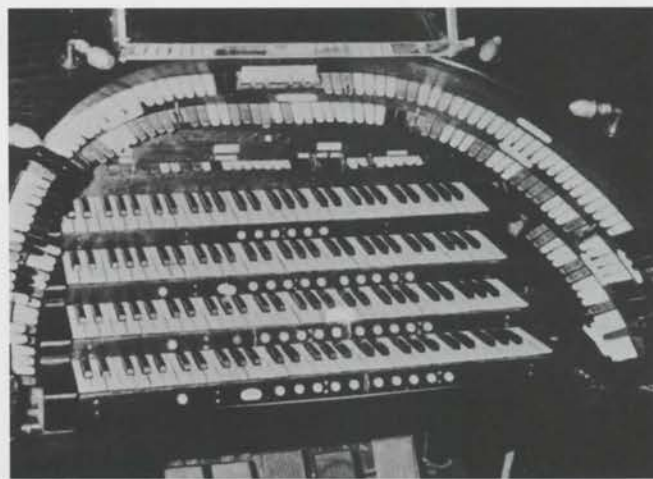
Cardinal George Mundelein, the dynamic Chicago prelate who built St. Mary of the Lake Seminary, had been a friend of Carney's. Through negotiations with the estate Cardinal Mundelein purchased the organ for one thousand dollars. It was stored on the seminary grounds until completion of the auditorium in 1934. Then, as the result of some astute dealing by Mundelein with the Kilgen Co., it was installed for the modest sum of one thousand dollars. The quality of the installation was reflected in the cost of same -- a nightmare of crossed and broken wires and scotch tape workmanship.

Here the organ sat, a semi-mute curio until 1960.

Enter -- John Seng

John had heard rumors about a theatre organ in a seminary and decided to track the beast down. Like other organists he had been caught up in the resurgence of interest in the theatre organ which had spawned a number of hobby clubs across the nation in the early '50s, resulting ultimately in the formation of the national ATOE in the mid-'50s. John was looking for an instrument suitable for recording, one on which he could set up just the voicing and unification he wanted. Obviously it would have to be an organ in which others had little interest, one he could more or less "take over" and transmogrify toward his conception of the ultimate theatre organ--Seng style.

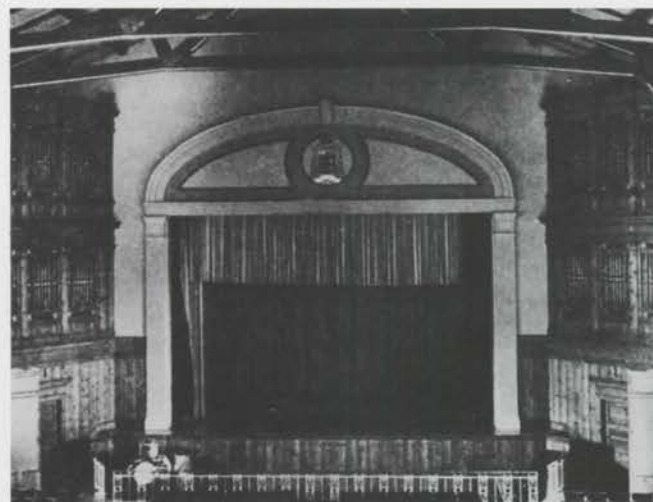
His discovery of the nearly forgotten organ in 1960 marked the start of a new era in the Seng career. He fell in love with the neglected instrument almost immediately, even though its full beauty was masked by dead notes, ciphers, pipes out-of-voice and ranks detuned by lack of servicing. But it was all there and the live acoustics of the hall were perfect for organ. The "seminarians," as Seng calls them, were interested in doing something about bettering the organ and John Seng might be just the man, so a deal was made. For months John spent every waking hour away from work at the Seminary, working on the instrument or supervising the



Closeup of the console before refinishing. Note the curious external console lights, reminiscent of old time auto dashboard lights. These were dispensed with when the new scalloped top was carved.

efforts of volunteers and the experts he hired. Work lagged whenever he was away from Chicago for extended periods of time, which was often because the Wurlitzer company had him "on the road" most of the time, demonstrating their electronics from Podunk to Paducah.

John was hip to the delicacy of pipes and the very great skills required to make them speak properly. He realized his tonal ideas would have to await the accumulation of green stuff to pay for voicing. He said way back in 1961, "It's frustrating to know how you want a funky pipe to sound and not be able to do a thing about it but I'm not naive enough to attempt such experiments myself." The voicing had to wait for money to accumulate. Some voicing improvements were accomplished by the replacement of whole ranks which were already voiced to suit the Seng requirements.



View of the Seminary auditorium showing the stacked chambers: Percussion and Main at left, Solo and Foundation at right. Wood and hard plaster reflecting surfaces provide a liveness that gives the organ excellent presence any place in the 842 seat hall, even with all seats occupied. The console may be moved to any location in the pit.

Another method of obtaining just the right sound, one the writer first encountered in George Wright's 3-30 Pasadena studio installation (BOMBARDE Feb. 1964), is the use of pipes from several ranks to make just one. This is a time consuming job, picking a rank to comprise the first two octaves of perhaps a Tibia, testing out several additional sets of pipes for the second one or two octaves and maybe



still another for the upper octaves -- not only time consuming but expensive. Thus, the Seng Solo Tibia, as noted in the Stop Analysis, consists actually of the pipes of two Tibias, Wurlitzer at either end and Gottfried providing the lushest sounding middle area. The Tibia Minor has three parents. The Seng ear is not easy to please.

While there was plenty of room in the chambers to build the organ up to its present 23 ranks (remember it started life as a 14 ranker), John decided to try adding electronic 16' extensions to some of the ranks which stopped at 8'C, an idea which proved very successful in the Wright instrument. This very special electronic equipment came from the same origination point as Wright's electronic extensions, an engineer with a sensitive ear at the Gulbransen Company, Dick Peterson. Perhaps Dick can explain what in thunder is meant by an 8' Pedal "Doghouse" --electronic, of course.



**SOLO CHAMBER (Front to Back):** Gottfried Posthorn (foreground), Tibia Minor, Wurlitzer Brass Sax and Vox Humana.

As the stop analysis indicates, only five ranks and two percussions of the original Carney instrument remain. All of the others (plus many parts) have been replaced or are additions and the variety of brand names covers much of the theatre and straight organ spectrum--Kilgen, Wurlitzer, Barton, Skinner, Kimball, Estey, Geneva, Wicks, Möller and, of course, the original Gottfried, all of which probably make this instrument the epitome of hybrid organs. Why all the pipework changes? Mainly because John Seng has his own conception of pop organ tone and it doesn't necessarily mesh with the usual theatre organ voicing. John's preferences run toward the bright, snappy, snortin' voicing which just can't be accomplished with too much emphasis on leathery Tubas and Tibias. However, the Tibias have not been neglected. On this subject and several others, John is enthusiastic:

"The organ has two of the finest Tibias I've ever encountered. There is none of that hoarse, tubby, tonally non-descript quality about them. They are light, bright and unleathered and vie for one another's and the organist's attention like two little girls! The organ is in a marvelous acoustical setup, far removed from theatre acoustics. The auditorium seats 842 people and is constructed of hard plaster walls with a high-beamed ceiling. The effect is sensational for the organ. No acoustical damping materials were used. The organ chambers are extremely shallow giving a wonderfully clear, articulate sound (almost electronic in that sense) which is heard as well at

the console as anywhere in the building. It's like playing a studio instrument with the added luxury of bright acoustics! The Diapasons are bright, more toward the Violin and Horn type rather than the wooly Wurlitzer Diaphonic variety. The Krumet Horn is a special Gottfried rank comprised basically of a Post Horn reed with Clarinet resonator and a flared bell top. The stop labelled "Oboe Horn" throughout is actually a Gottfried French Horn and is a little jewel."

Obtaining just the right effects was not only a matter of pipework. The equipment which controlled the pipework got a thorough overhauling. Even modern electronic switching was applied. Again, John Seng writes:

"In the console, solid state circuitry has replaced the combination action relay. Every valve, wire, contact, magnet, primary, motor pneumatic, pedal key, coupler switch, expression pedal, piston button and stop key in the console is new. The key relay contacts have all been replaced and extensive re-wiring has been done in the relays to facilitate more and different unification. All additional stop switches in the relay are Klann electric switches as is the coupler switch stack which is located in the console. A new scalloped top for the console was hand crafted by Algot Gustafson of Elmhurst, Illinois. All work on the organ has been professionally done to my specification. All major work has been completed. At last I have a pipe organ in perfect playing shape, with the specification I have always wanted. It records beautifully."

How does John Seng's wonder organ sound? Those who attended the 1965 ATOE Convention at Chicago had an opportunity to hear it played by two fine organists of widely different playing styles.

The long drive from Chicago ended with a tour of what seemed like miles of dense forest which surround the picturesque St. Mary of the Lake Seminary. The grounds of the school are a well planned park criss-crossed by ribbons of concrete. We followed the one which led in the direction of a sound with much attraction -- the distant peal of a great organ playing not the timeless modal paeans of Pope Gregory but a zingy, snapping "Just One of Those Things!"



**MAIN CHAMBER (L to R, ignoring out-of-perspective pipes in foreground):** Krumet Horn, String, Concert Flute, Viol d'Orch, Quintadena and Bourdon.



The organ created a mighty big sound in the acoustically "live" hall, despite the slight damping of several hundred ATOE bodies filling the seats. "Dear Heart" brought some clean, high Flutes into action; "Swanee" burst forth on the big brass then calmed down to an untrem'd String with great presence, accompanied by cymbal splats. "Lady Be Good" came through on a bright Tibia with some harping on the Chrysoglott. "Clap Yo' Hands" started on a fine solo reed played against an untrem'd Flute accompaniment. "Of Thee I Sing" called for a tremendous pedal bass--and got it. "My Heart Belongs to Daddy" was offered as a bump 'n grind routine with many right hand brass clusters (Posthorn "sneers") and Marimba clip-clops vying with a ubiquitous pedal Cymbal. "Brassmens' Holiday" is a roller-coaster thing which rose and fell on clickety-clack Xylophone bars. "The West Side Story medley" included a soaring and full "Maria," "Tonight" (played as a big beguine) and an impertinent Amay-ree-ca! with Xylophone taps and Tambourine sizzle accompanying a full brass combination. The reprise of "Maria" ebbed to distant Tibias while the Chrysoglott added foreground color. We can't possibly cover all the tunes Johnny played but his "Beyond the Blue Horizon" (with its pedal melody intro) deserves special mention because it provided something of a yardstick to measure John's playing today compared with when he recorded it years ago. The arrangement is about the same but the artistry involved in its execution has grown considerably. We've never heard him play better. The audience expressed overwhelming approval.

Of course John was playing his conception of the dream organ, an instrument for moderns. Gone are the lush Tibias, replaced by bright ones which may sound a little hard to "old timers." Emphasis is on rippin', snortin', snappin' reeds and keen strings. Diapasons are "silvery." All pipes seem to have been opened up at the bottom for maximum volume. Every seat in the house is like being directly inside the organ chamber. It's even a little overpowering. It's quite probable that fans of the traditional theatre organ won't be in full agreement with John's conception of specifi-



A proud John Seng MCs his program for the 1965 Conventioneers.



Veteran theatre organist Don Baker thrills the 1965 Conventioneers with a one hour non-stop program of his famous stylings on the Seng Organ.

cation and voicing but it must be admitted that he has created a distinctive organ, an instrument for today perhaps, and one on which he can best express the music of the nervous, tension-filled times in which we live.

In contrast to the Seng style was the playing of the second artist, Don Baker, an old smoothie from silent picture days (as though he needs any introduction!). To carry the music in his own lush and satisfying style Don sought out the stops that don't need muzzles or leashes and played a solid hour of his carefully arranged selections, some smooth ("Over the Rainbow," "When Day is Done," "Londonderry Air"), some a little wild ("Twilight in Turkey," "Tea For Two," "76 Trombones") and some that just spell out DON BAKER in big letters ("Cheek to Cheek," "Dancing Tambourine," "Chicago," "The High and the Mighty"). His characteristic pedal gliss came through well and he exploited all of the facilities of an unfamiliar organ with the professional ease of the old pro that he is.

The emotional strain of the afternoon was apparent on many faces as the concert ended to waves of applause -- for Don Baker, for John Seng and for the organ John has created. There were numerous damp eyes noted as the audience left.

All of which made John Seng happy. He had scored a personal victory with his playing and his organ had scored, both when he played his brand of music on it and again when it was entrusted to the fine touch of an old pro.

Before leaving John Seng in this blissful state, there's one matter we'd like to clear up, and no doubt the question has already formulated in the minds of readers: Why on earth would John put all this labor and money into enlarging and restoring an instrument which just might be sold (as has often happened to in-theatre restorers) as soon as he gets it finished? That won't happen this time. John bought the organ from the Seminary some time ago. He'll leave it there for several years while planning an eventual permanent studio home for the big hybrid.

Not bad for a young man who only a few years ago begged an audience to "Please buy my records -- so my poor mother can give up her paper route!"

Now, let's examine the Stop Analysis, then the Stop List.



4-23 PIPE ORGAN AT ST. MARY OF THE LAKE SEMINARY AUDITORIUM, MUNDELEIN, ILLINOIS

STOP ANALYSIS BY CHAMBERS

SOLO (Upper Right):

1. Violin Diapason - Kilgen
2. Vox Humana - Wurlitzer
3. Salicional - Wurlitzer
4. Viol Celeste - Wurlitzer
- \*5. English Post Horn - Gottfried (no trem)
6. Tibia Minor - Wurlitzer, Estey, Gottfried (selected)
- \*7. Brass Sax - Wurlitzer
8. Solo Vox Humana - Gottfried
9. Solo Tibia Clausa 8' (1-12 Wurlitzer, 13-60 Gottfried, 61-85 Wurli Sel.)
10. Saxophone - Kimball
11. Brass Trumpet - Wurlitzer

FOUNDATION (Lower Right):

- \*1. Oboe Horn - Gottfried French Horn (16' Octave electronic)
2. Open Diapason - Moeller
3. Gross Gamba - Skinner, Church type (16' octave electronic)
4. Viol Celeste - Kimball
5. Tuba (16' Gottfried, 8' - Kimball Bombarde 16' (Wicks) plays on pedal only, runs into Tuba 8' Trombone 16' -electronic, plays on pedal only, runs into Tuba 8')
6. Open Chest for experimental ranks, trial sets for selection etc.

MAIN (Lower Left):

- \*1. Krumet Horn - Gottfried (no trem)
2. Bourdon/Concert Flute -(1-24 Gottfried, 25-61 Kimball, 62-97 Gottfried-selected)
3. Viol d'Orch - Kimball
4. Clarinet - Kimball (16' octave electronic - Ped only)
- \*5. Quintadena
- 6-7 Unda Maris (2 ranks)
8. Vox Humanas - Kimball

PRECUSSION (Upper Left):

- Vibra Harp-Deagan, 49 Aluminum bars, large scale  
 Chrysoglott-Deagan, 49 bars, large scale  
 Xylophone - Deagan, 37 bars, master scale  
 \*Glockenspiel - Deagan, 37 bars  
 \*Marimba (Wood Harp), 49 bars, large scale  
 Chimes - Kohler Lieblich, large scale  
 Various cymbals and traps

Console on movable platform  
 \*Indicates original equipment



FOUNDATION CHAMBER (L to R): Möller 8' Open Diapason extension, Kimball Tuba, Kimball, Viol Celeste and Skinner, Gross Gamba. Tuba extension right foreground.

GREAT

- 16 Trumpet
- 16 Tuba
- 16 English Post Horn
- 16 Tibia Clausa
- 16 Tibia Clausa
- 16 Bass
- 16 Saxophone
- 16 Clarinet
- 16 Solo Gamba
- 16 Contra Viol
- 16 Bourdon
- 16 Oboe Horn
- 16 Solo Vox Humana
- 8 English Post Horn
- 8 Trumpet
- 8 Tuba
- 8 Open Diapason
- 8 Tibia Clausa
- 8 Tibia Clausa
- 8 Clarinet
- 8 Saxophone
- 8 Krumet Horn
- 8 Oboe Horn
- 8 Quintadena
- 8 Solo Gamba
- 8 Viol d'Orchestra
- 8 Concert Flute
- 8 Solo Vox Humana
- 5 1/3 Tibia
- 4 Clarion (Trumpet)
- 4 Piccolo (Tibia)
- 4 Piccolo (Tibia)
- 4 Viol
- 4 Flute
- 2 2/3 Tibia Twelfth
- 2 2/3 Tibia Twelfth
- 2 Tibia Piccolo
- 2 Tibia Piccolo
- 2 Flute Piccolo
- 2 Fifteenth
- 1 3/5 Tibia Tierce
- 1 3/5 Tibia Tierce
- 1 3/5 Flute Tierce
- 1 1/3 String Mixt.
- 1 Tibia Fife
- 1 Tibia Fife
- Xylophone
- Glockenspiel
- 16 Harp
- 8 Harp
- Chrysoglott
- Chimes
- Great Sub Octave Coupl.
- Great Unison Off Coupl.
- Great Octave Coup
- Great Twelfth Coup.
- Solo Great Sub Coupl
- Solo to Great Coupl. (8')

ACCOMPANIMENT

- 8 English Post Horn
- 8 Trumpet
- 8 Tuba
- 8 Open Diapason
- 8 Violin Diapason
- 8 Tibia Clausa
- 8 Tibia Minor
- 8 Saxophone
- 8 Clarinet
- 8 Krumet Horn
- 8 Oboe Horn
- 8 Solo Gamba

STOP LIST

Abbrev

- TRUM
- TUBA
- ENG
- TIBIA
- TIBIA
- BASS
- SAX
- CLAR
- GAM
- VIOL
- BOUR
- OBOE
- VOX
- ENG
- TRUM
- TUBA
- OPEN
- TIBIA
- TIBIA
- CLAR
- SAX
- KRUM
- OBOE
- QUINT
- GAM
- VIOL
- FLUTE
- VOX
- QUINT
- CLAR
- PICC
- PICC
- VIOL
- FLUTE
- TIBIA
- FLUTE
- TIBIA
- TIBIA
- FLUTE
- 15th
- TIBIA
- FLUTE
- FLUTE
- MIXT
- TIBIA
- TIBIA
- XYLO
- GLOCK
- HARP
- HARP
- CHRY
- CHIME
- GREAT
- GREAT
- GREAT
- GREAT
- SOLO
- SOLO
- ENG
- TRUM
- TUBA
- OPEN
- OPEN
- TIBIA
- TIBIA
- SAX
- CLAR
- KRUM
- OBOE
- SAX
- QUINT
- VOX
- PICC
- XYLO
- GLOCK
- GAM

ACCOMPANIMENT (Cont.)

- Gamba Off
- \* 8 String Amplex I
- 8 Quintadena
- 8 Viol d'Orchestra
- \* 8 String Amplex II
- 8 Concert Flute
- 8 Solo Vox Humana
- \* 8 Vox Amplex
- 8 (2 ranks) Unda Maris
- 4 Clarion (Trumpet)
- 4 Octave
- 4 Piccolo
- 4 Piccolo
- 4 Gambette
- 4 Viol
- 4 Flute
- 4 Solo Vox Humana
- 4 2 ranks Unda Maris
- 2 2/3 Flute Twelfth
- Xylophone
- 8 Harp
- 4 Harp
- Marimba, Re-it
- Chrysoglott
- Snare Drum Roll I
- Snare Drum Roll II
- Tambourine
- Castenets
- Chinese Block
- Sleigh Bells
- Triangle
- Choke Cymbal
- Tap Cymbal
- Sizzle Cymbal
- Accomp. Octave Coup.
- Solo to Accomp Coup.

Abbrev.

- GAM
- AMP
- QUINT
- VIOL
- AMP
- FLUTE
- VOX
- AMP
- UNDA
- CLAR
- OCT
- PICC
- PICC
- GAM
- VIOL
- FLUTE
- VOX
- UNDA
- FLUTE
- XYLO
- HARP
- HARP
- MAR
- CHRY
- CYM
- CYM
- CYM
- ACC
- SOLO

\*1. String Amplex I makes two ranks of Salicionals playable from the Solo Gamba Stop keys either with or without the Solo Gamba.  
 2. String Amplex II adds a Viol Celeste to the VDO whenever these stop keys are down.  
 3. Vox Amplex adds 2 ranks of Vox Humanas whenever Vox stop keys are down.

SOLO

- 16 English Post Horn
- 16 Krumet Horn
- 16 Tuba
- 8 English Post Horn
- 8 Trumpet
- 8 Tuba
- 8 Tibia Clausa
- 8 Tibia Clausa
- 8 Saxophone (Brass)
- 8 Clarinet
- 8 Krumet Horn
- 8 Oboe Horn
- 8 Kimball Saxophone
- 8 Quintadena
- 8 Solo Vox Humana
- 4 Piccolo
- Xylophone
- Glockenspiel
- 8 Harp

- ENG
- KRUM
- TUBA
- ENG
- TRUM
- TUBA
- TIBIA
- TIBIA
- SAX
- CLAR
- KRUM
- OBOE
- SAX
- QUINT
- VOX
- PICC
- XYLO
- GLOCK
- HARP

SOLO CONT.

- 8 Vibraharp
- Chrysoglott
- Chimes
- Solo Sub Octave Coup.
- Solo Octave Coupler
- 12 4/5 Coupler (e)
- 10 2/3 Coupler (g)
- 6 2/5 Coupler (e)
- 5 1/3 Coupler (g)

BOMBARDE

- 16 Trumpet
- 16 English Post Horn
- 16 Bass
- 16 Tibia Clausa
- 16 Tibia Clausa
- 8 English Post Horn
- 8 Trumpet
- 8 Open Diapason
- 8 Violin Diapason
- 8 Tibia Clausa
- 8 Tibia Clausa
- 8 Saxophone
- 8 Solo Gamba
- 8 Viol d'Orchestra
- 4 Clarion
- 4 Piccolo
- 4 Piccolo
- 8 Harp
- 8 Vibraharp
- Vibraharp Damper
- Bombarde Sub Octave Coupler
- Bombarde Octave Coupler
- Solo Bombarde Sub Coupler
- Solo to Bombarde Coupler
- Great to Bombarde Coupler
- Great Octave Bombarde Coupler

PEDAL

- 16 Tuba
- 16 Trombone (electr)
- 16 Bombarde
- Blank (red)
- 16 Diaphonic Horn (electr)
- 16 Clarinet (electr)
- 16 Solo Gamba (electr)
- 16 Contra Viol
- 16 Contra Viol Celeste
- 16 Bourdon
- 8 English Post Horn
- 8 Tuba
- 8 Open Diapason
- 8 Doghouse (electr)
- 8 Tibia Clausa
- 8 Tibia Clausa (Minor)
- 8 Oboe Horn
- 8 Solo Gamba
- 8 Cello
- 8 Flute
- 4 Clarion (Trumpet)
- 4 Flute
- Chimes
- Crash Cymbal
- Crash Cymbal Roll
- Choke Cymbal
- Tap Cymbal
- Sizzle Cymbal
- Brush Cymbal
- Ped. Acc. Trap Coupler
- 8 Accom to Pedal Coupler
- 8 Bombarde to Pedal Coupler
- 8 Solo to Pedal Coupler

Abbrev.

- VIB
- CHRYSO
- CHIMES
- SOLO
- SOLO
- SOLO
- SOLO
- SOLO
- SOLO

- TRUM
- ENG
- BASS
- TIBIA
- TIBIA
- ENG
- TRUM
- OPEN
- OPEN
- TIBIA
- TIBIA
- SAX
- GAM
- VIOL
- CLAR
- PICC
- PICC
- HARP
- VIB

- BOMB
- BOMB
- SOLO
- SOLO
- GREAT
- GREAT

- TUBA
- TROM
- BOMB

- BASS
- CLAR
- GAM
- VIOL
- VIOL
- BOUR
- ENG
- TUBA
- OPEN
- DOG
- TIBIA
- TIBIA
- OBOE
- GAM
- CELLO
- FLUTE
- CLAR
- FLUTE
- CHIMES
- CYM
- CYM
- CYM
- CYM
- CYM
- CYM
- COUP
- ACC
- BOMB
- SOLO

GREAT 2nd TOUCH

- Solo to Great 16 Coupler
- Solo to Great 8 Coupler
- Solo to Great Coupler
- Reverse

ACCOMP. 2nd TOUCH

- 8 English Post Horn
- 8 Trumpet
- 8 Tuba
- 8 Tibia Clausa
- 8 Tibia Clausa (Minor)
- 8 Saxophone
- 8 Clarinet
- 4 Piccolo
- 8 Piccolo
- 2 2/3 Tibia Twelfth
- 2 2/3 Tibia Twelfth (Minor)
- 2 Tibia Piccolo
- 2 Tibia Piccolo
- 1 3/5 Tibia Tierce
- 1 3/5 Tibia Tierce (Minor)
- Chimes
- Great Octave Accomp. Coup.
- Solo to Accomp 8 Coup
- Solo to Accomp. Coup

PISTONS

- Solo 1-6 (7-10 from Bomb.)
- Bombarde 1-10 (2nd T. Solo)
- Great 1-10 2nd Touch,
- Accomp. 1-10 2nd Touch,
- Pedal 1-8,
- 6 toe pistons that act as collective generals same as
- Great Pistons 2nd Touch.
- Gen. Cancel-Solo & Bombarde,
- Full Ensemble-entire organ,
- Cancel-Entire Organ,
- Trap Cancel-Acc & Pedal,
- Cancel-Acc & Ped.
- Accomp. to Pedal
- Great Sostenuto

TREMULANTS

- Main
- Solo
- Foundation
- Solo Tibia Clausa
- Gamba
- Vox (3 Trems)

The author is indebted to Ralph Banderob, Pat Barnes, St. Mary of the Lake Seminary faculty members, Ken Simpson and John Seng for the information which made this article possible. Historical photos were supplied by John Seng, Mel Doner and Bro. Andrew Corsini. Cover and 1965 Convention pix were shot by Lloyd Trimmier and Bill Lamb. The BOMBARDE is grateful to them all.

- Stu Green, Hollywood

\* \* \* \* \*



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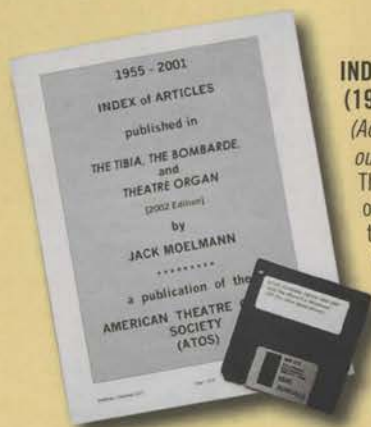
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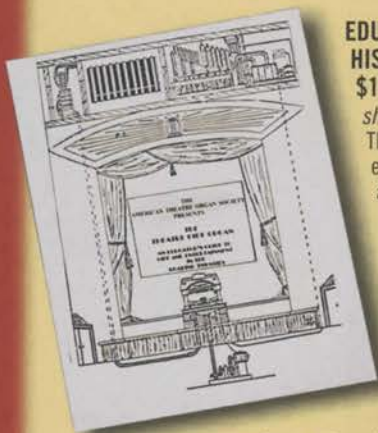
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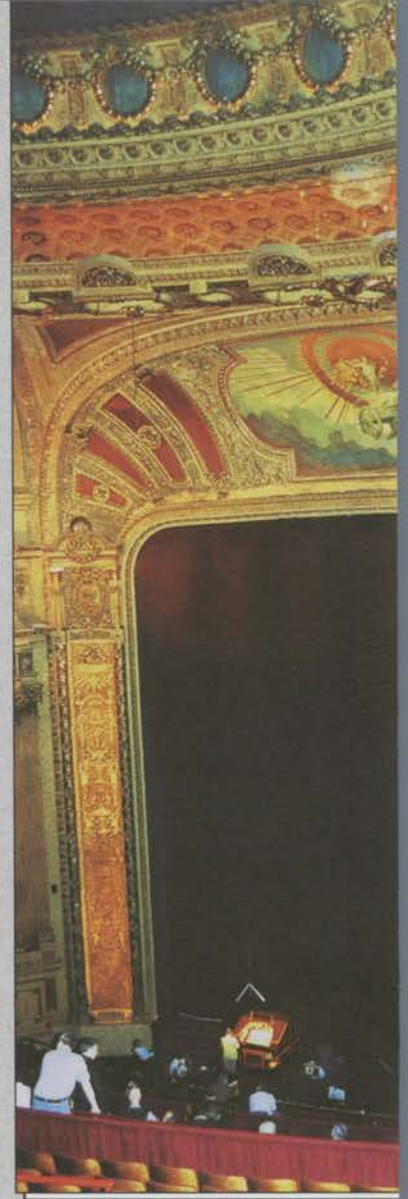


If you have any questions, please contact Vern Bickel, ATOS Marketplace Manager at [bickel@atos.org](mailto:bickel@atos.org), or 760/471-6194.



**THE CHICAGO  
THEATRE  
TODAY**  
CONTINUED  
FROM PAGE 71

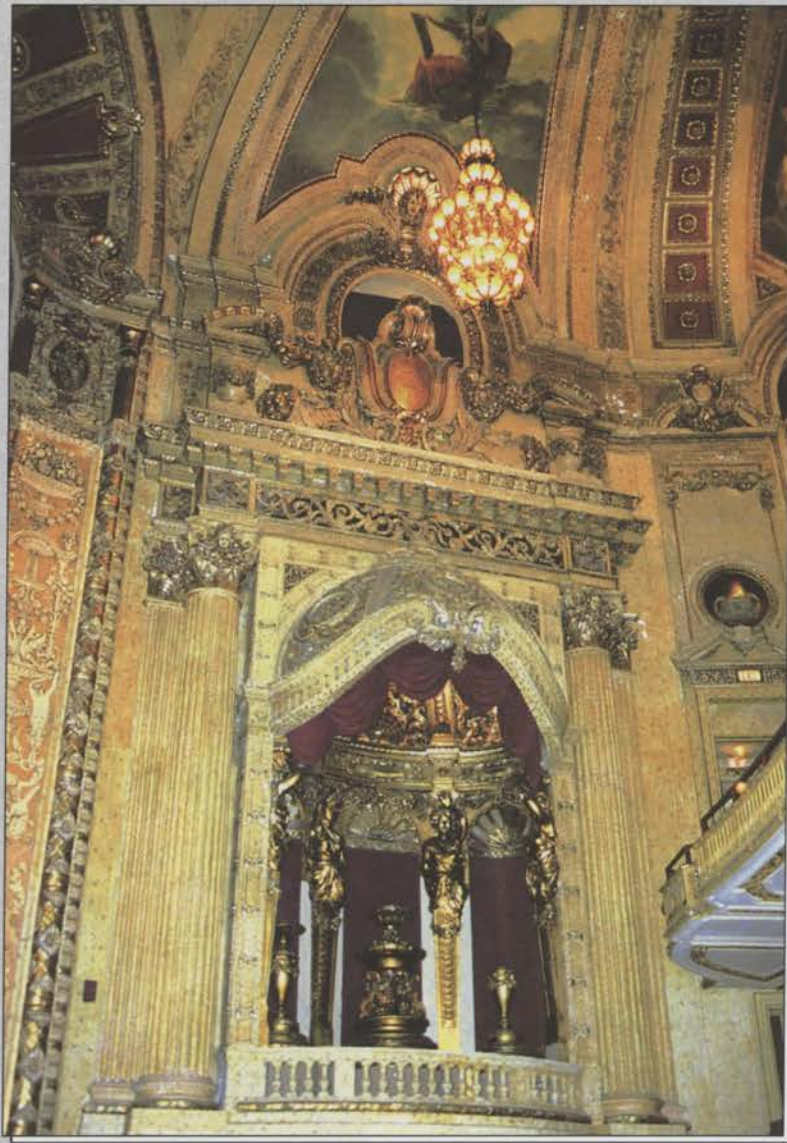
*View from lower right  
of balcony looking  
towards left-front of  
auditorium. Note  
smooth merging of  
various areas of decor.  
Size and height of room  
is apparent when  
4-manual Wurlitzer  
console is viewed near  
left of stage.*



*View from balcony showing top  
levels of decoration leading up*



*Front of mezzanine seating  
looking up into part of  
balcony soffit.*



*Right organ grill. Note elaborate detailing. At upper left is the beginning of proscenium arch curve.*

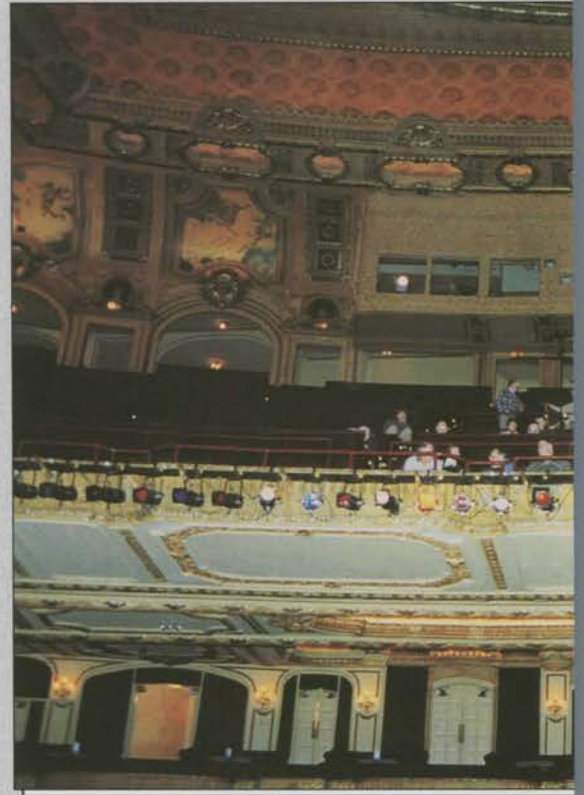
*proscenium with mural and several ceiling dome.*



*Looking across rear portion of main floor. Glowing portions of balcony soffit in this photograph looked very much like that as I faced them to take the shot; they glowed warmly.*



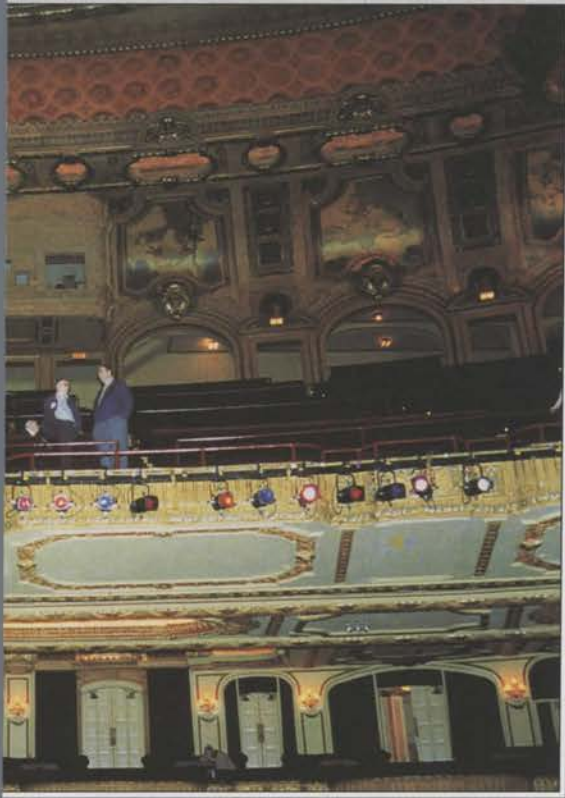
*Right side of balcony and upper walls from pit rail.*



*Looking across balcony to left organ grille, upper sidewalk, and a portion of rear above balcony.*



*Large dome of auditorium ceiling. Note fine plasterwork around the circular openings.*




*View from stage looking up at balcony. Murals and plaster detailing continue all the way around both sides of house and to the rear. Only the bulge of the projection booth at upper center occupies the area that would have sported two more mural panels.*



*Left side of Chicago Theatre auditorium. Note curved, painted murals and elegant touch added by upper sidewall chandeliers.*



*Console of Chicago Theatre Wurlitzer. For many years, it sported a white finish, but has now been returned to the original wood finish.* 

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