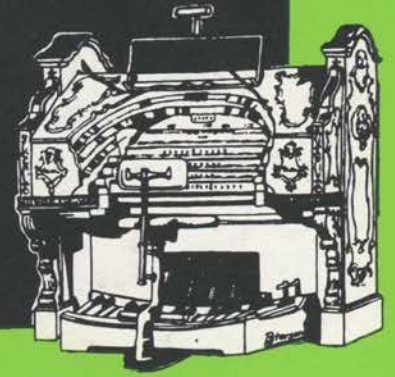


# THEATRE ORGAN

VOLUME 16, NO. 3

JUNE, 1974



**Journal of the American Theatre Organ Society**





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Journal of the American Theatre Organ Society

Volume 16, No. 3 June, 1974

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**Editorial Address**  
THEATRE ORGAN  
P.O. Box 1314,  
Salinas, California 93901

**Advertising Address**  
ATOS Advertising  
2231 North Burling Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60614

**National Headquarters**  
ATOS  
P.O. Box 1002  
Middleburg, Virginia 22117  
Phone (703) 554-8321

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JUNE, 1974

## cover photo...

Dick Kline and Lee Erwin in the solo chamber of the 4/28 Wurlitzer in the Kline residence. (See story on page five.)

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## president's message...



Where do we go from here? ATOS has already enjoyed a growth over five times that expected by its founders and there appears to be no end in sight; but possibly we should pause just long enough to examine this progress. Are we growing on a good foundation and are we following the guide line of our stated purpose?

From a loosely organized hobby group we have progressed to a point where we are now in a small business category and as such, must be organized and operate in accordance with the laws that govern us. Over the period of the last several years we have successfully reorganized to comply with corporate laws that we had ignorantly violated previously. Our administration

has been changed to better distribute the work load and to keep our records up to date. Yes, our foundation for further growth appears to be quite solid.

Unfortunately, a sign of the times is the steady decline of the motion picture theatre and with it the loss of theatre organs in theatres. The great majority of these fine instruments have been saved to sound again in other locations. In this operation, in the many ways the theatre organ is presented to the public in programs and in information presented in THEATRE ORGAN and many other publications, we are indeed following our stated purpose.

The future of ATOS is in your hands. Service in the many administrative levels is not all fun and games but is most certainly the key ingredient in this or any organization and must be for the good of the entire organization, rather than for personal gain or glory. Even as a voluntary action, the acceptance of any office carries with it the responsibility of doing the job.

Your officers and directors are trying to do the job for the benefit of all guided by the decisions of the majority. Our annual meeting in Detroit in July will include the annual meeting of the ATOS Board of Directors. All chapters are urged to have a representative at this meeting and members who are not chapter affiliated are likewise invited. Your input at this meeting will guide the actions of the officers and directors during the coming term to build for the future.

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*Erwin A. Young, Jr.*



# an acre of seats in a palace of splendor



*By Bill Peterson – Number 31 in a series*

## **SHERIDAN THEATRE – CHICAGO**

This theatre seating 3000 was designed by J.E.O. Pridmore. The classic Greek facade of this building faces on Sheridan Road where sign regulations did not permit a marquee that jutted out over the sidewalk. The attraction board was placed flush to the building entrance. The 4 manual 20 rank Wurlitzer organ was bought by Fred Kruse. Some years ago the theatre was converted to use as a synagogue, although to the best of the writer's knowledge it is once again used as a theatre.



# The Joys of Recording

by Ted Creech

*Recording is possibly the most difficult of all music-making processes, but Lee Erwin, Dick Kline, and a crew from Angel Records can testify that it can be a joyful experience – if you get the right people together under the right circumstances.*

**R**ichard Kline gave the go-ahead to Lee Erwin and Angel Records for a series of organ recordings on his 4/28 Wurlitzer on November 30, 1973. From that date until mid-afternoon on March 14, when Lee finished the last take of a Scott Joplin tune, the Kline residence became a beehive of activity the

likes of which Richard couldn't possibly have foreseen.

Getting the organ ready for the exacting demands of recording was routine, except for several sets of pipes which made a trip to the Moller factory for a bit of voicing. But it does take a tremendous amount of time and effort to make sure that everything is in perfect working condition even for an instrument as beautifully maintained as the Kline Wurlitzer.

The fun part began a full week before the scheduled taping date when three people from Angel Records in Los Angeles arrived at the Baltimore airport: Patti Laursen, the producer; Carson Taylor, the recording engineer;

and Mike Doyle, the electronics engineer. The next day a very large moving van from the West Coast backed up to the Kline residence. Richard had anticipated the usual assortment of professional equipment but he was hardly prepared for the tons – literally – of recording apparatus that began to emerge from that van: two 8-track tape recorders, a huge mixing console, power supply, microphones, mike stands, cables, speakers, 100 boxes of 1-inch recording tape and dozens of small pieces of necessary equipment. Very soon the house was full, the garage was full, the master bedroom had become a control room, the den a conference room, the kitchen a

Play-back time in the control-room/master-bedroom.







Decisions, decisions! Which one of the 3 Tibias shall I use?

“canteen,” and the organ studio a forest of mikes, cables and playback speakers!

By the time Lee Erwin arrived four days later, the Angel people had all their equipment set up and checked out. Richard was beginning to get accustomed to living in a house suddenly transformed into a recording studio and even seemed to be enjoying it in spite of everything. He must have wondered, however, what surprises lay in store before it was all over.

A weekend of organ-tuning, combination-setting, mike-placement, and finally everything was ready for tape machines to start rolling on Monday morning. Ten days later 30 musical selections were on tape, three albums in all: two records of the music of Scott Joplin and one of excerpts from Lee Erwin’s own scores for silent films.

A miracle of teamwork-in-action is the only way to describe the entire crew at work. Dubbed “the Ubiquity” by producer Patti Laursen, host Richard Kline was always on hand to help with quick combination changes, page-turning, touch-up tuning, etc., but more importantly to supply an extra pair of ears in the control room for registration purposes.

With complete score in hand of each selection, producer-director Patti Laursen pounced inexorably on wrong

notes or minor changes made now and then, purposely or otherwise, by Lee Erwin. When a major score change seemed necessary, Patti and Lee clicked like partners in an ESP mind-reading act that never failed.

Carson Taylor, the recording engineer, was a genius with sound. Said Lee Erwin: “What a joy to have someone at the controls who knows *how* and *what* to get on tape, so that the final mix is a perfect representation of the original sound!”

Electronics engineer Mike Doyle, the young man who kept all the recording equipment in perfect condition, was also keenly interested in every note of music that was being piped into the tape machines.

With everyone working together so perfectly, it seemed at times (if not always) that things happened almost effortlessly. But even a casual observer could sense that high degree of seriousness and dedication that were joined to the professionalism brought by each person to the making of a record. A recording session without difficulties? No. But in this case the consensus was that the joys far outweighed the sorrows and that the results – three exciting and innovative new theatre organ records – far exceeded anyone’s wildest expectations. □



Patti Laursen and Lee Erwin, “like partners in a mind-reading act.”

Richard Kline

Carson Taylor

Lee Erwin

Patti Laursen

Mike Doyle





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# THE END OF AN ERA AT THE ISTHMUS

by Jon Fisher

Panamanian organist Sr. Luis Alvarez sat down at the console of the Hotel El Panama's 3/27 Wurlitzer on Tuesday, January 22 at 9 P.M. as usual for six hours of prime theatre organ sounds. But this evening was different than other evenings at the El Bombarde lounge for when the blower was shut down at 3 a.m., it was for the last time. The next day the console cable was disconnected and the console was removed from the lounge. Later that same day, workmen painted the view windows black. Within a few weeks the organ was completely dismantled, crated, and put in storage. The fate of the organ is not known at this time.

After almost twelve years of continuous operation, one of Panama's great tourist attractions has ceased to exist. This of course is a great disappointment to the thousands of people who pass through Panama repeatedly in the pursuit of various business ventures. It is an even greater

disappointment to me, because during the year 1971-72, it was my privilege to be employed as the organist of the hotel. The Panamanians are warm and friendly people, and many of them went out of their way to make me feel welcome in a strange country. I won't go into the various details of the organ (specs and the like) since these have been covered by Doug Powers in an article in the October 1972 issue of THEATRE ORGAN. Doug was stationed in Panama and took a weeks leave to help us with the rebuilding of the combination action. We replaced the original pneumatic relay with direct electric relays, and moved the setter boards from the relay room to an area behind the console. This made life easier on the organist since he could change his combinations on his break time right at the console.

All of us have played Wurlitzers that have dead notes, faulty stop tabs, and all the rest of the various ills that

befell a theatre organ. Bernie Kirkwood, the technician that maintained this instrument, and worked on the original installation, made sure that none of these ills befell this particular Wurlitzer. Many ATOS members and other theatre organ buffs were thrilled to be able to sit down and play this organ without worrying whether or not an individual note or stop was going to work. We had a policy where anyone that wanted to try the organ could do so in the morning before the lounge opened, as long as Bernie or I was there.

During my stay, Bernie let me get involved in the maintenance of the organ, and I learned more about the care and feeding of a Wurlitzer in that one year than in the previous ten. This was a commercial installation, and Mondays were the only nights the organ was not in use. Any extensive repair work had to be accomplished between Monday morning and Tues-



The three chambers and the expression grilles as viewed from the console platform.



day night. The time we replaced the bolster cables and spacers all the work was completed in two days. This meant rewiring the bolsters to the spreaders, replacing the spacers, adjusting the bolster tension, and adjusting all the stop tab springs. We worked fast! When we tuned the organ, all 27 ranks were done in three afternoons!

Because the installation was geared for the Latin clientele several items were added to the organ, and some effects were not original. For instance, the oogah horn was from Sears — \$16.95 (no tax). The fire gong was replaced with a bell from one of the electric mules that pull the ships through the locks of the canal. All of the original toy counter items were retained, but two more tamborines were added, and a second marimba and xylophone were installed, as well as another ride cymbal.

Have you ever wanted a string bass for your Wurlitzer? Well, you take the spare 8' Tibia offset that has cluttered your cellar for years, add a tab to your pedal division, and wire it in through the pedal pizzicato relay, and Presto! String bass! In the Panama installation, the additional Tibia was located in the percussion chamber so that the volume could be independently controlled. Before my stay, the unit had been removed because of rearrangements in the percussion chamber. Some purists



The Console — a four manual shell, but only three manuals were ever installed.

objected to the departures from the original specs, but all I'd have to do was put on a Tibia, Vox, String, and Krumet registration with a little English Horn thrown in for emphasis, and they'd somehow forget about the Sears oogah horn.

With over two hundred and fifty stop tabs and twenty-seven ranks to

work with, along with beautiful unification, this Wurlitzer was a joy to play. One tends to take things for granted when one is exposed to the same thing day after day, but because of the constantly changing clientele, this job always provided variety. One night an Australian ship stopped in Balboa, and I swear the entire boatload crowded into that lounge. The bar was designed to seat around 250 people, but that night there must have been over 500. People were even sitting with me on the bench — and that's crowded! When I broke into "Waltzing Matilda," the place erupted with over 500 voices at the top of their lungs, and even 27 ranks couldn't compete with that!

This is a personal recollection of some of the good times and people that pivoted around the El Bombarde lounge. It was not my intention to give you a history of the organ — Doug Powers has done a superb job of that. It's a tragedy that this Wurlitzer speaks no more, but for almost twelve years, thousands of people, many of whom had never heard a theatre organ before, thrilled to the sound of this unique instrument. To those of us who were lucky enough to hear and play it; we have our memories. To paraphrase Doug Powers, 'There was a Wurlitzer alive and well and living in Panama.' □

The Solo Chamber — the 16' English Horn is at the extreme right.







# Hollywood Cavalcade

Directed by Lyle W. Nash

NEWSREEL . . . Silent star Louise Lovely today lives as Mrs. N. L. Cowen, 766 Sandy Bay Road, Lower Bay, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia. So reports Lois Warren . . . Jack Mulhall recently said he remembered LL well and made a picture with her . . . Film historian Alan Bruck reports that Kitty Gordon, 90, lives at the Ross Nursing Home, 839 Suffolk Ave., Brentwood, N. Y., 11717. She's glad to hear from old friends . . . Mary Astor is reported living at 23533 Mulholland Drive., Woodland Hills, Calif., 91364 . . . Gertrude Glover, 78, now lives in Boulder, Colo., 80303. GG played in Essanay films in the early days with Gloria Swanson and Colleen Moore . . . A new Gene Autry has been found. Neely Reynolds, 24, from Nashville, won a talent contest for a singing western type star. He is handsome and a talented singer.

*MAYBE all your film favorites are not appearing as often as you like, but Fenwick Falstaff Frisbee III reports see the following in recent films: Jeanne Crain, Vivian Blaine, Mable Albertson, Margaret O'Brien, Nancy Olson, Keefe Brasselle, Elizabeth Scott, and Kent Smith.*

MOTION pictures and films were not names used in describing cinema entertainment in the 1915-1930 era. New York critics often used such names as: photodrama, evanescent shadows, shadow stories, a prismatic shadow, celluloid masterpiece and shadow drama. Noted critics (who mostly scorned the idea of sound) referred to early talkies as: audibility of the screen, non-dialogue picture, audible film, audible device, audible screen form, vocalized film, audible picture and dialogue pictorial version.

*IN THE Golden Age of films (1920s, 1930s) fans showered mail on favorite players. Now a long lost analysis reveals what they wrote about. Out of 1000 letters some 91% wanted a free photo, some 54% also commented on their recent films and a few sent along a present. About 100 wanted money, jobs, clothing or whatever. Some 121 enclosed postage for a reply while 47 told the stars about family problems.*

ANSWERS to questions: "The 1929 All American football team appeared in the Warner's picture, *Maybe It's Love* with Joe E. Brown. . . Some of it was filmed in Rose Bowl . . . Hollywood Now by William Fadiman is best book for background on film industry and why it operates as it does . . . The movie that Soviet chief Brezhnev took home with him (a gift) was John Ford's *My Darling Clementine* . . . In 1929 Fox did advertise Janet Gaynor as "The Voice With a Soul" . . .

*FOR YOUR INFORMATION . . . Paramount officials in Toronto have 17 silent Paramount films (1919-1928) in 16 mm available to film groups . . . U.S. movie business was up 40% in first quarter of 1974 . . . Universal Studios is exploding. Couple months back the studio had 10,000 people working one day while another 30,000 visitors swarmed over the lot. Had plenty of parking for all . . . Fifty years after the founding of MGM (1924) not a single feature film was before the cameras . . . Lillian Red Wing St. Cyr, 90, who probably was the real first film star, died this spring. She was the American Indian (and a real one, too) in the 1913 version of the Squaw Man. Film was regarded as first American feature.*

MORE and more film personalities are turning to television commercials for easy money – and lots of it. Recently we've encountered such famous faces as Van Johnson, Lorraine Day, Butterfly McQueen, Eve Arden, Wendy Barrie, Sylvia Sidney, Lois Wilson, Esther Williams, Edie Adams, Anna Maria Alberghetti and Joan Fontaine pitching something or other on the tube. Not all are seen in all parts of the nation but they are reported by the fans. The money is good. With residuals it can run from \$3,000. to \$150,000. a year (Josephine the plumber).

*OF ALL the sub-titles in the silent films one I remember over others. It was the first one in Charlie Chaplin's *The Kid*. It was simple and haunting: "Her only sin was motherhood."*

DAY of the locust is the name of the new Paramount film about the movie industry. It will have lots of look-a-likes in it. Dick Powell, Jr. plays his father. Other doubles include Vivien Leigh, Myrna Loy, Marlene Dietrich and Ruby Keeler.

*IN-FLIGHT movies are good for somebody. Movie makers have earned \$100 million in the last 12 years . . . Most historians agree that the only player ever billed over Greta Garbo was Richardo Cortez in *The Torrent* . . . In the April issue I noted names of long time personalities who lasted and lasted. I forgot my favorite and the greatest of them all – Joan Crawford . . . Mack and Mabel will be a musical comedy about the life of Mack Sennett and Mabel Normand. Opens in Los Angeles, then plays San Francisco before it goes to New York . . . Shirley Temple's parents celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary this year . . . Comments and contributions are welcomed at P.O. Box 113, Pasadena, Calif., 91102. □*





Figure 1

# AWAKENING THE GIANT

## A TREATISE ON THEATRE ORGAN REEDS

### PART I

by Bob Mitchell

During the twenties and thirties, hundreds of movie palaces across the nation adopted the orchestral unit pipe organ as the most viable form of musical entertainment for the accompaniment of silent films. Orchestras, with or without the organ, were synonymous with the larger and more plush houses. The theatre pipe organ concept departed from traditional principles of a classic organ by employing expanded pipe scales, high wind pressures, augmented octave coupling, and an array of electropneumatic operated traps. Its sky rocketing

success was due no doubt to its expansive versatility. From the singing nuances of its Tibias to the crashing thunder of its Diaphones, it brought a "musical voice" to the projected silent frames of early screen epics. Such versatility, a broad compass of orchestral voices, and the economics of a "one man band" gave the theatre pipe organ a promise of many years of unassailed success and popularity. Complacent with this thought, the theatre organ Industry "geared up" to full production, placing several thousand orchestral pipe units in theatres across

the nation. As the development of the theatre organ grew by leaps and bounds in mechanical and tonal design, the ingenuity and inventiveness of the scientist was diligently at work searching to create a new medium for transducing sound — phonic and musical. Thus, a new marvel of sound emerged, and the great musical giant of the silent film era fell into an undisturbed slumber.

Not all the giants slept. Those who were fortunate enough to continue flexing their gussets and bellows survived the ravages of time. As the years



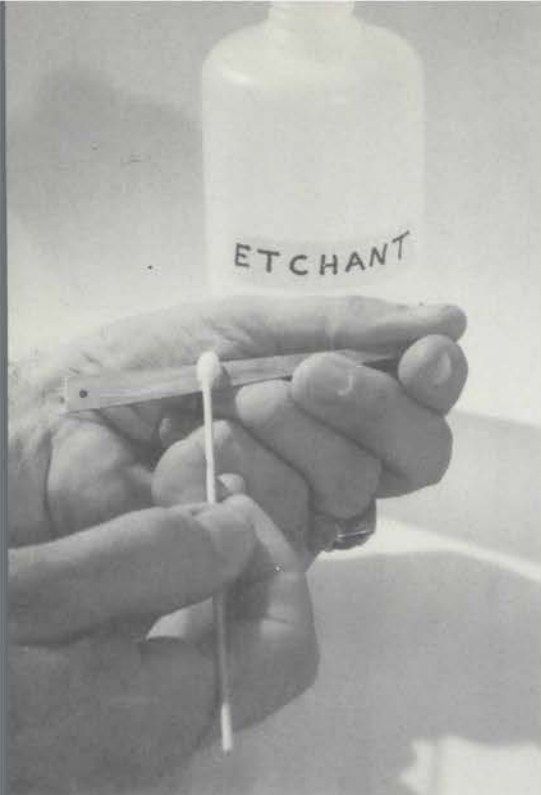


Figure II

passed, a gradual renewed interest in the theatre organ took hold and then, as suddenly as they went to sleep, the mighty giants awoke.

Restoration of the theatre pipe organ suddenly became the predominant hobby adventure of thousands of organ devotees throughout the world. Determined to learn as they progressed, they were confronted with the realization that their experiences, whether successful or fruitless, were to be their teachers. Electromechanics, winding, traps, and labial pipes were the easiest of the essential elements to deal with during the restoration efforts

performed on the orchestral unit pipe organ. Reeds proved to be the most difficult of all.

Reed tongues have been the subject of intensive study by the writer for some years. Of late, and at the insistence of friends in the ATOS, we will attempt to delve into the mysteries of what a reed tongue is made of, what applied scientific principles cause it to respond, what factors cause it to malfunction, and some "dos and don'ts" when coaxing these rascals into service.

As a start, consider the metallurgical composition of an original theatre organ reed "tongue". It's brilliant, lustrous copper appearance generally identifies its origin as being of some vintage theatre organ. To be scientifically correct the material was Grade "A" Phosphor Bronze in the No. 8 Spring Temper Range. Chemically, the compositions would mainly consist of 95% Copper, 4.30% Tin and .22% Phosphorous and some remaining trace elements. Grade "A" Phosphor Bronze is readily available today in spring temper as well as yellow brass. If one should desire such reed material, specify a hardness of 78.0 testing out at the Rockwell Indentation index of 30T. Given the proper brass material, it is cut to shape and in a perfectly flat state it is "sanded" through various grades of abrasive materials and finished mirror-like, completely free of surface aberrations. This surface preparation is absolutely essential to the reed voicing technique. When the prepared reed "tongue" is placed upon a curving iron and stroked with a burnishing tool, the brass material on the

side facing the tool becomes "strain hardened", and due to high tensile stresses created on that one side of the reed tongue, a curve is produced. When proper "curving" techniques are performed on a reed "tongue", and it is placed in position on the shallot, it will react to wind pressure by making oscillatory excursions "up and down" the shallot. Depending on the mass of the brass material and the vibrating length of the "tongue", these periods of oscillatory vibrations will produce pulses of air in the column of the pipe causing a "musical" note to sound. Laboratory tests prove the finished curve to be definitely parabolic in shape. High speed photography also shows that the reed "tongue" never completely closes the aperture of the shallot. Should closure take place, then the wind pressure could seal the "tongue" against the shallot and prevent oscillation. Of course, such techniques performed on reed tongues are manifest in that specialized field known as "reed voicing".

Experience and artistic ability in that particular field are the necessary ingredients for creating a voice which will articulate with proper speech throughout the compass of a particular stop; be it reed or labial.

Reeds suffer from many ills. Malfunctioning can be attributed to such intruders as dust, flying insects, an occasional inquisitive bird, and corrosion. However, the two major enemies of organ reeds are man and metallic strain. An inexperienced "finger nail" voicer can cause irreparable harm to a reed by bending the "tongue" to a point where it could exceed its yield strength and thus not be able to spring back to the precise place where the voicer left it.

What about metallic strain? We know that the burnishing tool creates the curve on the reed "tongue" by inducing tensile stresses on the surface next to the tool. Let us now proceed to investigate any phenomena which may cause a "flat" spot to appear upon a reed "tongue" after years of use. If the reed "tongue" is depressed against the shallot and the closing is observed by holding the unit before a light source, a "window" or "flat spot" will appear in the vicinity where the tuning wire rides the surface of the tongue.

In Figure I a tenor "C" reed tongue from a Wurlitzer 260 Brass Trumpet is being mounted for polishing. The brass

Figure III





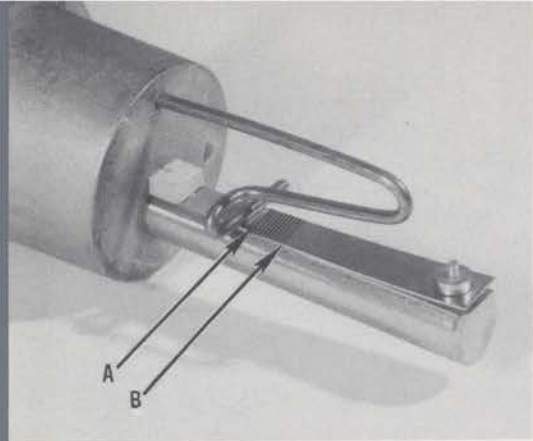


Figure IV

surface is prepared by rubbing same in a flat state on successively finer grades of special polishing papers and removing the finest scratches by polishing on a cloth or leather disc that is fed with water and fine polishing powder such as alumina or magnesia. The effect of this preparation is to produce a very thin layer of "flowed" metal that has been dragged over the surface. Etchants are used (Figure II) to lightly attack the layer, revealing fine lines called grain boundaries, which are clearly visible for study under a high powered microscope. Figure III a metallographic microscope is used to photograph areas of the brass reed "tongue" relating to our investigation. A completely assembled Tenor "C" Brass Trumpet reed is shown in Figure IV. This unit was subjected to eight inches of wind pressure in a laboratory controlled environment for a period of time equivalent to fifteen years of actual use in a pipe organ. Applying the law of probability, the Tenor "C" reed under study could have performed two billion excursions "up and down" the shallot. Multiple tunings, because of atmospheric temperature changes, have to be made. In Figure IV, the shaded area indicated between "A" and "B" (exaggerated for graphic purposes) represents that portion of the "tongue" over which the tuning wire passes. During the laboratory "shake-down", the tuning wire was automatically moved back and forth between "A" and "B" at the end of every 10,000 oscillations. It is this area and that portion directly adjacent to point "B" that photomicrographs have been taken. Figure V shows the area adjacent to point "B" which was not acted upon by the tuning wire. The areas surrounded by the grain boundaries are as expected on the entire convex surface of a new reed tongue which has just been voiced and not subjected to tuning other than the

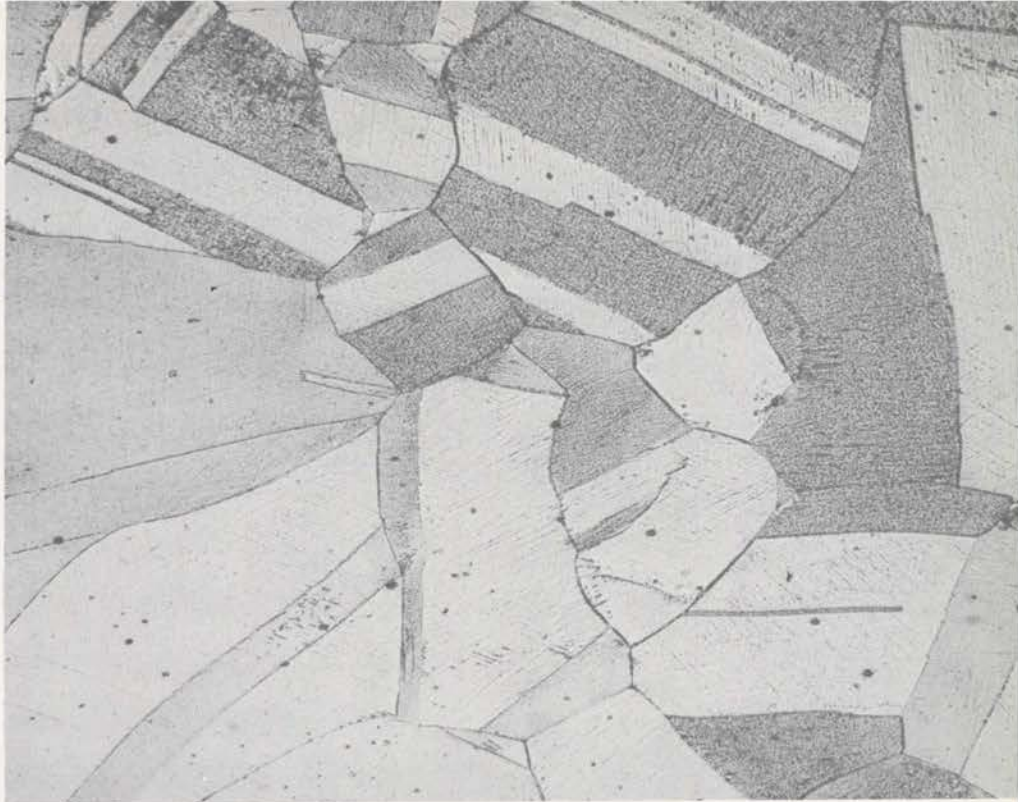
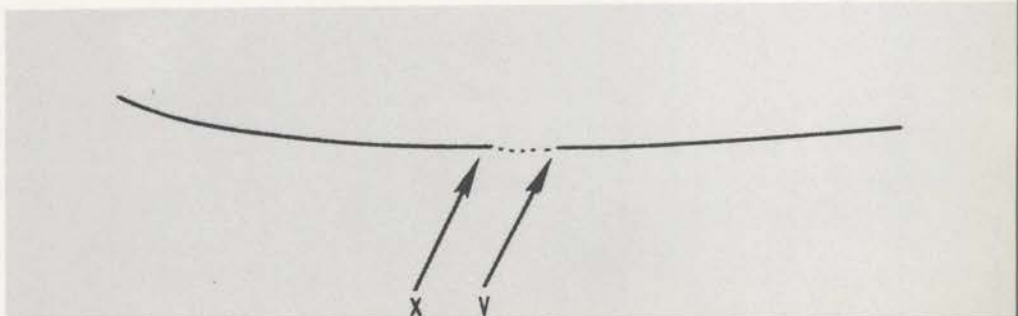


Figure V



Figure VI

Figure VII





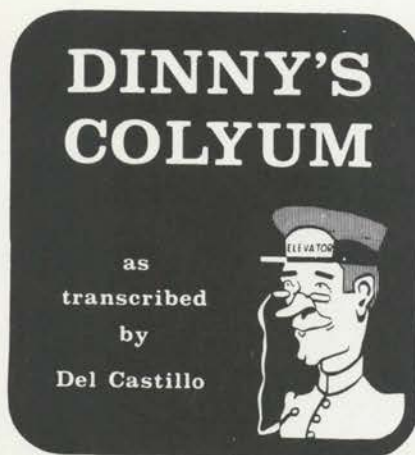
slight amount done by the voicer. However, Figure VI taken at the same magnification (200X) shows surface deformation of the area between "A" and "B". The only physical cause for this change was the action of the tuning wire on the surface creating the same high tensile stresses as the voicers burnishing tool. The tuning wire acts as a high unit load on the surface of the "reed tongue" as it is moved back and forth between "A" and "B" (Figure IV) This results in an additional curve in line with the original primary curve of a newly voiced reed. Figure VII shows this area between "X" and "Y". Such plastic deformation does not cause a "flat" spot on the tongue, but rather a curve within a curve. This "depression" acts as a lever and when the tongue is rolled down the shallot and observed in front of a light source, voila!, there is the "window"! It usually appears at point "X", but with excessive strain could also show up at point "Y". In actual practice, this "flat" spot or "window" is the main cause of a "buzzy" reed; provided it has been properly cleaned. Removal of the "buzzy flat spot" is a very difficult operation and usually meets with utter failure. Under an extremely skilled hand, a fraction of such reeds could be corrected.

There is one additional cause for "buzzy" reeds; and that is caused by a metallurgical reaction caused by the metal surface of the "tongue" rolling against the metal surface of the shallot. This action is called "fretting". Fretting is a form of corrosion that occurs on the contacting surfaces between loaded materials which are subject to slight relative movement. In the case of a "rolling" reed tongue there is always a very small amount of play between such surfaces. This gives rise to the galling and tearing off of tiny metallic particles, which sift out and gradually become oxidized. This oxide is found deposited between the tongue and shallot. It is formed by the action of moisture in the air acting on the metallic brass particles. The green oxide is either copper chloride or copper carbonate. It is easily removed by dipping the corroded parts in a solution of boiling water and sulfamic acid. It takes only a few seconds to remove and care must be taken not to erode the metal. The cleaned brass can than be polished with "crocus" cloth wetted with water. Under no circumstances, should a reed tongue or

shallot be subjected to abrasive cleaning.

These notes and experiments are in no way intended to contradict the findings and opinions of those more expert than this writer in the art of organ technology. It is hoped that these humble efforts may spark others to conduct similar investigative experiments into other areas of organ mechanics.

Part II of this treatise will illustrate and detail the actual construction of reeds and the voicing techniques employed by one of the foremost reed voicers in the world, Mr. Adolph Zajic of the M.P. Moller Organ Company, Inc., of Hagerstown, Maryland. □



I see as how all the organ enthoosia-sticks will be congregatin at Detroit next month for there Annual Convention, and I wonder if they will be any streakin goin on. The reason is that in Los Angeles last month at the Sunday mornin concert at the Wiltern Theayter which Mr. Bud Iverson had come down from San Francisco to play at, they was a streaker showed up. When the first people come in to take there seats around 9 A.M., all of a sudden they noticed a guy sittin right plum in the middle of the stage startin to take his close off. He got on there without nobody noticin him, and when the officers see him they didnt know just what to do, and the mgr. of the theayter sez we dont want no trouble except the poleece handles it because we dont want to get into no law suits or nothin like that.

Some of the boys was all for rushin him off the stage but on acct. of what the mgr. said they closed the doors and didnt let no one else in and then they had the electrickian put out all

the lites and the people that had come in just had to sit there in the dark. So the mgr. put in a fone call for the fuzz and pretty soon they come in and by that time the guy didnt have nothin on, so they made him put his shorts on and one officer took him by the arm and put handcuffs on him and marched him off the stage and the other officer gathered up all his close, so then the show was over and they put the lites up and let the rest of the people in and when Mr. Bud Iverson come up in the spotlight he says well I know the Los Angeles chapter of the ATOS always puts on a good show, but I never expected this. Later on he made a gag out of it and says well they got him outa the theayter before I could pay him the five bucks I promised him, and somebody else says probaly it was a member of the AGO that did it, but anyways it made a lot of excitement.

So I suppose most anywheres they is any kind of a meetin you never know but some streaker is goin to get into the act. I was lookin at Mr. David Nivens on TV at the Academy Awards, and sure enuff while I was lookin along comes a streaker runnin past the camera, and it broke Mr. Nivens all up. These streakers is all tryin to outdo each other, and one of em some place got nabbed and fined when he went streakin on a bicycle. But the one I liked the best was the two streakers that took there close off in there car, and when they got back to the car they found they locked thereselfs out.

I see by the peace the Detroit ATOS sent out about how to get there you can go by dog sled or the Iron Horse as they say or in a open cart or by bicycle. So on acct. I aint got the price of the R.R. fare, Im goin to start out this month by bicycle and if I can once get over the San Bardoo mountains maybe I can get to Detroit by July the 12th. If they's anybody tries to streak acrost the stage on one of them organ concerts I sure want to be there to see it. I just hope the organ player can think up somethin cute like The Streak of Araby, or Runnin Wild. □

**SAN FRANCISCO  
IN 1975**

— • —

**NATIONAL CONVENTION**



# The John Muri Story

by Lloyd E. Klos



One of the nicest personalities in the world of the theatre organ is John T. Muri. The author has known Mr. Muri for several years, having heard him perform four times. Each performance was a testimony to the man's capabilities as an organist, and as an artist in the accompaniment of silent films.

"I was born on October 4, 1906 in Hammond, Indiana in a fairly large but modest home, situated 35 feet from the Michigan Central Railroad tracks. (Thus Mr. Muri is one of the many theatre organ lovers who are also railroad enthusiasts). Both my parents were immigrants from Switzerland, my father coming from Bern, my mother from Lucerne. They first met in Chicago at a meeting of a local Swiss singing society.

"As a child, I was a willful youngster, but I do not recall ever having talked back to my father; he was too big, and had a hot temper. I didn't disobey my mother much for she had

her own ways of handling me.

"My first school experience was unhappy. Bewildered and bashful, I sat under a kindergarten table for some time before I was encouraged to come out and mix with the other children. I was always afraid of teachers, particularly one shop teacher who kept a 3-inch leather strap handy for disciplinary purposes.

"Outside of the usual childish fears, school life was relatively peaceful. I passed my classes, but never distinguished myself. I found great contentment in reading books, particularly *Pinocchio*, Thornton Burgess' animal series, the Oz books, and Lear's Nonsense books. As time passed, I progressed to more mature reading. As a freshman in high school, I'd go without lunch so I could purchase the weekly *Detective Story* magazine on Friday. When 15, I became a fan of Sax Rohmer and his Dr. Fu Manchu books, and at 17, discovered Chicago author, Harry Stephen Keeler's com-

plicated mystery novels whose web-work plots fascinated me. Later, I moved on to better authors, and now I am a fan of Lord Monbodo of Scotland and James Joyce."

It should be emphasized that Mr. Muri's reading proclivities stood him in good stead for the years ahead. One need only to read one of his columns in THEATRE ORGAN to realize how reading helped him gain an extensive vocabulary, coupled with excellent grammatical construction. Constant reading of good material will do this.

"I took to the piano without urging, very early. I first learned to play by ear without instruction, and as a result, it took a great deal of hard work and tough words by my teachers to get me out of the bad habits I developed in the early years.

"I took my first piano lessons at the Clifford Conservatory of Music in Hammond, Ind., did a little study in 1923-24 with Claude P. Ball, who taught theatre organ at Chicago's Kim-



ball Hall. Theory and advanced piano I took at Sherwood Music School in Chicago, and advanced organ with Arthur Dunham at the Chicago Temple in 1925-30.

"One of my best teachers was a man who didn't realize he was teaching me, Arthur Gutow. From 1923-26, I would go to the Chicago Theatre, week after week, to hear him give his morning concert at 10:45 and his playing of the current film, then hear Jesse Crawford do his solo.

"Sometimes, I stayed over to hear Mr. Crawford play the movie for the second show, but often I would leave the Chicago at 2 p.m. and go over to McVicker's Theatre where W. Remington Welch or Albert Hay Malotte was playing. It was during this time that I met Al Carney, second organist at McVicker's. He was very kind to me; he recommended me for good jobs, which I never took. I insisted upon remaining stuck in the Calumet region, south of Chicago.

"When I visited the organist at the Temple Theatre in Hammond in 1924, I discovered that the player was E. R. Howard, famous for his invention of the Howard Organ Seat. He asked me immediately if I'd take his job, as he had become tired of traveling from Chicago to Hammond every day. Thus, I had my first job handed to me at the age of 17, playing a 2/6 Wurlitzer. Every rank sounded bad, and the console, perched up in the ceiling above the pipes, gave me regular night-

mares of falling.

"A few months later, I learned of an opening at the Hoosier Theatre in Whiting, Indiana, applied for it, and got the job which was good for three years.

"In 1927, I received an offer to become organist at the Indiana Theatre at Indiana Harbor. The theatre had a nice 3/10 Wurlitzer which is still there." The Indiana patrons evidently liked Muri's work, because he stayed at the Indiana until the talkies put organists out of business. The organ remained unused until 1966, when, after a period of restoration by Chicago ATOS members, Mr. Muri rededicated the instrument. It has been profusely used since, including a feature presentation by Mr. Muri during the 1969 ATOS convention.

"In 1933, I became musical director of WWAE in Hammond. However, I sensed the demise of the organist on radio, so I worked to achieve my bachelor's degree, which I received at the University of Chicago in 1937. I have my employers at the station to thank for having made my radio schedule fit my programs at the university. In 1940, I received my master's degree from Indiana University. Wayne State University has recently awarded me a second master's.

"My bachelor's degree enabled me to take a position teaching English at Hammond Technical High, where I stayed for nine years. Then, I transferred to Hammond High School, which was the college preparatory school in town, and in 1965, I became

chairman of the English Department of Gavitt High School. In 1964, I joined the faculty of the northwestern campus of Indiana University at Gary, where I taught English on a part-time basis. In 1968, I resigned from both institutions and retired to Detroit on an Indiana pension, after 31 years in the Hammond school system.

For 27 years, Mr. Muri was organist at the Hammond Civic Center, playing for wrestling matches, basketball games, pancake breakfasts, music festivals, flower exhibits, and dog shows. On one occasion, he provided the sole musical background for an entire indoor circus for a week. The instrument was a highly amplified Hammond.

"In 1962, I was invited to play a concert for the Detroit Theater Organ Club, the second person to play a full evening's program for that group. From then on, my concert activities expanded."

He is adequately prepared for any type program, having several hundred hours of motion picture material which he can use to illustrate the work required of a theatre organist years ago. He has hundreds of slides, mostly complete sets of solos. And, he has many thematic cue sheets and complete musical scores which came with some of the bigger films.

"I have been teaching English at Wayne State University and Highland Park College for the past several years. I also lectured on music for the silent film (using slides I made of old movie music, both American and European), at a Silent Film Festival at Kent State

## LAST CALL...



On the 22nd of January, 1974, a great silence was heard across the Isthmus of Panamá. The mighty Wurlitzer 3/27 had thundered its final performance. With the possible exception of Radio City, no theater organ anywhere has been enjoyed by more world travelers than has the Hotel El Panamá's Wurlitzer.

"Panamá Viejo" (Old Panamá) is the only stereo recording ever made of this fabulous instrument, and there will never be another! Recorded under natural conditions, Jon Fisher carefully chose selections, including both Latin and American favorites that best demonstrate the special qualities of this unique installation. The album liner notes detail the history, installation, and specifications of the organ. Truly a collector's item that can never be again.

SEND \$5.50 p.p. CHECK OR M.O. to: LTA RECORDINGS, 9 CHURCH ST., WALTHAM, MA. 02154 (MASS. RES. ADD 15¢ TAX)



University, April 1971, accompanying no less than seven full-length features in two days' time."

Mr. Muri has played for ATOS Conventions in Detroit and Chicago, and only an airlines' strike prevented his playing at the 1966 convention in Portland. He has toured many installations in the Middle West and East, has a recording to his credit, and is a regular contributor to THEATRE ORGAN magazine, expressing the organist's viewpoint on facets of the hobby.

"I have assumed 20 acres of farm land in Michigan near Port Huron on which I plan to have 10 cottages surrounding a small lake, and a recreation hall in which I can install one of the two Wurlitzer organs I own, and show silent movies with music for the summer cottagers along Lake Huron between Port Huron and Lexington. We have planted vegetables, trees, corn, fruit, etc. and hope to have a substantial operation going soon.

"For fun, I am currently researching movie history of the period 1913-1916, using a Recordak microfilm viewer which I purchased for use with materials which I get from the Library of Congress, material which is not available in even the great city libraries of Chicago and Detroit. I have three major projects currently in research: (1) The silent serials of 1916, (2) The history of the earliest days of theatre organ, and (3) the Brenkert family of Detroit."

As if the above weren't enough to keep him busy, Mr. Muri is also getting ready two recordings; one on the Detroit Theater Organ Club Wurlitzer, and another on the Detroit Fox 4/36 Wurlitzer.

His concerts have been going very well. "We were sold out for the concert at Cedar Rapids, Iowa in April 1971, a week ahead of time - 2,000 seats. They printed "sorry - sold out" ads in the newspapers in May 1971 in Detroit for our concert in the Royal Oak Theatre, 1700 seats sold out a week in advance there. The crowds outside were so large two hours before concert time that they decided to sell standing room tickets in violation of fire rules, and contemplated doing a second show. How sweet it is!"

It is his feeling that the theatre organ has entered a new era which will see a tremendous popularity for that instrument. Thanks to John T. Muri and others of similar dedication, that era will be a long and brilliant one. □

## Arrests in Grant Union Fire

The Sunday, March 10 edition of the *Sacramento Bee* carried the following two column headline: CITY YOUTH AID, 3 OTHERS ARRESTED IN SCHOOL ARSON. This was the first of several similar stories to appear in the next few days. On March 14, the *Bee* carried the headline: NINTH ARREST MAY BE LAST IN ARSON CASE. The headlines and accompanying stories related to the destruction, on December 9/10, 1973, of the boys' gymnasium and the console of a beautiful theatre pipe organ at Grant Union High School.

The suspects ranged in age from 19 through 47 years. The alleged ring-leader was an employee of the City of Sacramento, a "pillar" of the community, and a pastor of a church. A simplified version of their motive was: "To get some money into the community to improve conditions." Nothing more can, or should, be said at this time because of legal considerations.

Initial bail on the suspects was set

at \$100,000. In arraignment hearings bail has been reset at \$4,000 and \$2,000. Charges have been dismissed against two of the nine. One of the remaining seven has pleaded guilty to arson, and three remain in custody, unable to post bail. It should also be said that all those arrested are residents of the Grant High neighborhood. One suspect, still in jail at this writing, is the son of a man who has worked diligently through the years for the community to have the use of the pipe organ.

Balcom and Vaughn of Seattle, Washington have been selected to build the replacement console. It is to be completed early in 1975. George Wright, a Grant alumnus, has volunteered to play the rededication concert, having been one of a trio of artists who dedicated the instrument in 1939. Emil Martin, one of the other dedicatory artists, is a member of Sierra Chapter, and had been playing the instrument for Sierra Chapter activities. Howard Scott, the third dedicatory artist, is now deceased. □

### You're Invited...

The THEATRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA invites you to GET INTO THE ACT by attending its fifth annual Convention in Detroit on July 7, 8, and 9, 1974. Convention headquarters will be the Sheraton-Cadillac Hotel, located in the heart of downtown Detroit.

The many interesting and magnificent theatres of the "motor city" will be visited during the course of the Convention and once again, you will be able to thrill to the magnificent pleasure palaces that made Detroit famous: the magnificent MICHIGAN THEATRE, the Auditoriums of the worlds' largest MASONIC TEMPLE, famed ORCHESTRA HALL, the stunning FISHER THEATRE remodeled from a movie palace of old into the foremost legit theatre in the midwest, the MUSIC HALL CENTER and many others including the fabulous Detroit FOX, still the second largest movie palace in America with 5042 seats in an oval-Byzantine auditorium.

The cost of the Convention is \$15.00 per person and \$3.00 for spouse and each child. Registration material and hotel information can be obtained from Frank Rossi, 3178 Hollywood St., Dearborn, Mich. 48124. Bus tours and a copy of the Historical Theatre Guide to Detroit will be included in the registration fee.

In addition, the Detroit Public Library Main Branch in cooperation with the Theatre Historical Society will host a huge display, running the entire month of July featuring the theatre buildings of the great Detroit architect, C. Howard Crane. Many rare, original photographs, plus sketches and original blueprints will be on view.





# HEAD BROS. CIRCUS



The tent at left-center measures 6 feet by 15 feet, while the Big-Top (upper left) is 12 feet wide and 24 feet long. Some 4000 yards of thread and 1000 yards of rope were used by Herb Head in the making of this miniature Big Top.

An unusual feature of this year's convention in Detroit will be a chance to see the Head Bros Circus, built and displayed by Motor City and Wolverine member, Herb Head. This 1" to 1' scale model will be a part of the Sunday morning and afternoon activities.

Herb has been working with this hobby for over 35 years and has done all of the building, carving, painting,

metal work and sewing himself. Many of the wagons are replicas of real wooden carved parade wagons, copied after those used in the days of parades and baggage horses when circuses travel by train. Everything has been authentically reproduced to scale including two calliope models — one air and one steam. Some of the figures that will be in the display are likenesses of circus people he has known.

Three miniature light plants provide power for animation and illumination.

It has been estimated that about ½ million pieces of various materials have gone into the authentic replicas he has built.

Don't miss this feature which will be set up rain or shine in the traditional circus day schedule for ATOS convention viewers. □





Asia Tableau — the original wagon was built in 1903 for the Barnum & Bailey Congress of Nations Parade. This miniature is 11" high and 20" long.

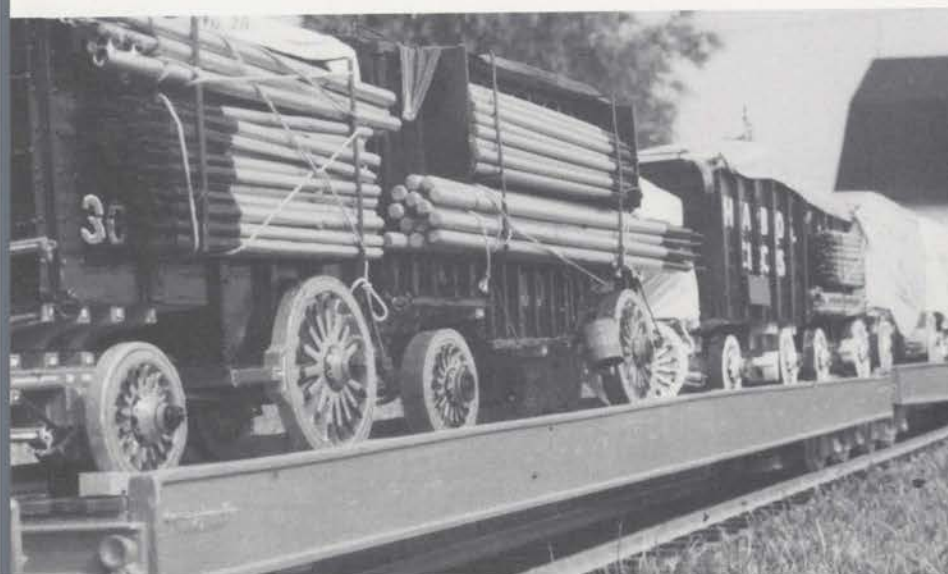


America — sister to the Asia. Original was built in 1904, along with Europe and Africa. (The top of the original Africa is on display in Greenfield Village.)



The original wagon was built to house the steam calliope for the Pawnee Bill Wild West Show. This miniature is 11" high and 16" long.

The No. 30 wagon (left), called the Baggage Horse Wagon, is seen here on the six foot long flat bed railroad car. This wagon carried the poles for the tents on the outside, and paraphenalia such as tents, water troughs, harness and blacksmith tools inside.



## STILL TIME TO REGISTER

Have *you* sent in your convention registration? If by chance you haven't, remember that pre-convention registration is important to us so we can intelligently estimate the number of buses we need, the number of banquet dinners to order and the number of seats we can sell for the public silent film show, but even more important to *you*.

If you have ever endured registration *after* having arrived at previous ATOS conventions, you already know how confusing it can be, with all sorts of decisions to make on the spur of the moment and hotel accommodations possibly uncertain.

All the information you need to know to register early is contained on page 34 of the April, 1974 issue of THEATRE ORGAN. So, even if you have misplaced the separate Convention Registration Form that was inserted in the April issue (or, just don't want to part with it) send in your check for registration and tell us what kind of rooms to reserve for you, on plain ordinary paper. We don't care what you write on, just let us know that you are coming. (If you still have questions, phone us at (313) 261-1610 and we will answer them for you.)

There is no better way to begin an ATOS convention, than to know that you will have no last minute worries. Register *now*, and the fun can begin when you arrive in Detroit for the Note-able Nineteenth. We want you to have fun. □



# VOX POPS



Conducted by Stu Green

Readers are encouraged to submit interesting sidelights on the organ hobby (exclusive of chapter news items) material they believe will be of general interest about local organ activities and installations and the people who work at the hobby. We know "there's VOX POPS in them there chapters" and it only requires an 8 cent postcard to get it to VOX POPS Editor, Box 3564, Granada Hills, California 91344. If the contributor can afford a 10 cent stamp, why not include a black and white photo which need not be returned.

How many remember Spike Jones' rendition of "Der Fuehrer's Face" which was extremely popular in 1942 and launched the Jones' aggregation on the road to success? Did you know the lyrics were composed by ATOS Hall of Famer Oliver Wallace? The song was originally written for a war-time Donald Duck cartoon, In Nutsy (Nazi) Land. After the master disc was made, Walt Disney changed the title to Der Fuehrer's Face and a million and a half Bluebird pressings of Spike's frenetic arrangement were sold in a short time.

Goof Correction Dept. About 25 of you came down real hard on your VOX POPPER for describing Lee Haggart as re-leathering a Wicks chest in the April column. Anyone with an ounce of savvy knows that Wicks chests are equipped with direct electric action and don't employ the leathered pneumatics found in other action systems. No excuses, we just plain goofed. Lee is planning on 11 ranks, as stated, but only seven will be on the

leatherless Wicks chest. The rest will play from a Smith chest and the Roosevelt chest which came with the erstwhile 5-rank Smith. It's the last two that Lee and Laurel are re-leathering in their Granada Hills, Calif. workshop. Sorry about the mistake.

Organs continue to move, usually over long distances. Wurlitzer opus 2128 somehow managed to find its way from Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas to Seattle, Wash., where the Balaban 3 is getting a facelifting while a home for it is being sought, perhaps in Spokane or Tacoma. A 2/6 Wurlitzer tagged along with the Shirey family when they quit the Chicago area for San Francisco. Charlie Evan's former WLW "Moon River" Wurlitzer has somehow managed a trip to Sacramento, Calif. (at least its new owner, Lawrence Weid, lives there) after several years sojourn in the Evans home in Dallas. In fact, Dallas is a hotbed of T.O. movement. Gordon Wright has rescued Texas' last remaining in-theatre organ, the long silent style 235 Wurlitzer from the Dallas Capri theatre. And Weldon Flanagan's former Dallas Palace Wurlitzer is due for a trip to Fort Worth to be with its new owner, Fred Graybeal. All of the above is based on shaky rumors picked up in massage parlors, city dumps, deserted gas stations, singles bars and parking lots where theatres once flourished. If any reader has any solid info, pls send up a few smoke signals.

Those with an eye toward making ATOS aspirations clear to the general public have been active. Getting a non-organ oriented publication to print a story about organs and ATOS is always a step in the right direction. Two such articles have been brought to our attention, one by Allen Miller who reports that the April edition of Yankee magazine ran a spread, with color photos, about the home pipe installations of ConValChap members. And we received a half-page clip from the Joliet (Illinois) Herald-News for March 31 announcing the Tony Tahlman concert at the 4/21 Barton in Joliet's Rialto theatre sponsored by the Joliet Area Theatre Organ Enthusiasts, an ATOS chapter with quite a switch in emphasis from the late "Kimbar Club" of a few years ago. The article included a solid plug for ATOS activities. When ATOS objec-

tives attract the notice of the daily or weekly press, or a magazine, only good can result.



A late arrival waits for her still later date at the Orange theatre. — (Stufoto)

Two big events marked the lives of ATOSers Bob Carson and Helen Dell recently. The rehabilitation of the Orange Theatre 2/8 Wicks organ (about 60 miles from Los Angeles) by Bob, Dick Stoney and a crew of ATOS volunteers, was celebrated by a well-attended public performance by Helen on March 2. In addition to Helen's well-received concert on the refurbished Wicks (now with mostly Robert Morton pipework), she accompanied a hilarious tongue-in-cheek 1927 spoof of action movies called The Fighting American, starring Mary Astor in her first major film role. However, comedian Raymond Hatton stole the show with his slightly plastered Chinese general role, upstaging even Warner Oland in a pre-Charlie Chan oriental role (he was actually of Irish lineage). The concert was opened with a fanfare by three trumpeters (playing straight Posthorns) borrowed from nearby Disneyland. So much for the plus side; the next event was more sobering. The Carsons (Bob & Helen, married y'know) have moved out of their Hollywood home which houses the Kearns/Carson 3/26 Wurlitzer, long a famous recording organ. It is one of three built by Wurlitzer specifically for studio use, thus "silent operation" and voicing for quality rather than volume. Reason: increased rent and cascading lawsuits over ownership of the organ. There was considerable apprehension on the part of West Coast pipe enthusiasts concerning the future of the instrument. For ten years Bob Carson has been its protector and champion.





Helen and Bob. The rent went up so they went out. — (Stufoto)

*The owner, whoever the law decrees he may be, may or may not be aware of the non-replaceable treasure in the home the late Joe Kearns built to house the instrument.*



As most fans know the Carson studio organ was designed and built in

1929 for the Warner Bros. movie studios on Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, where it was most familiar to organophiles as the *Amos and Andy* organ, with which Gaylord Carter opened and closed the nightly 15 minute radio program of the blackface comics in the early '30s. It was later acquired by CBS and stored. Actor Joe Kearns ("Mr. Wilson in Dennis the Menace), a former theatre organist, purchased it in the early '50s and built his Hollywood home around it. After his death, the organ was once again in danger, mostly because the property's new owners were not aware of the cultural treasure within the walls. This writer was consulted and recommended the applicant-tenant most likely to be kind to the organ, a new arrival from the mid-West — Bob Carson. It proved to be a good choice. The organ flourished during the Carson years, and contributed to the ascendancy of such recording organists as Lyn Larsen,

Shirley Hannum, Bud Taylor, Paul Beaver and Helen Dell, not to mention such pre-Carson stars as "Guy Melindy", "Jocelin McNeil" ("by George") and the late Dave Andrews and Johnny Duffy.

Reg. Foort taped a Readers' Digest release on the 3/26 during the Carson years and there was one release by George Wright on Carson's Malar label. Also one by Gaylord Carter. The Carson's guest book reads like a roll call of theatre organ greats, not to mention such luminaries in the classical field as Richard Purvis and the late Richard Ellsasser. Regarding the future of this historic instrument, we can only keep fingers crossed — and hope for the best.



*From Charleston, S.C., ATOSer Bill Smith submits a clipping from the News & Courier concerning a "phantom organist", so-called because he has so far eluded the fuzz. The "phantom's" idea of a successful night's work is to break into a church and play the organ, sometimes all night. Since last October he has entered eleven Roanoke, Georgia, churches, and practiced his vice. He rarely disturbs anything else but the premium on electrical energy gives him a nuisance value which keeps Roanoke's finest hot on his musical trail. Perhaps someone should tell him about ATOS or AGO.*



Dean McNichols, organist at the Los Angeles "Haven of Rest," reveals that the Haven's organ, heard everywhere on taped radiocasts, has been upgraded to a 3/13 Wurlitzer. It is now controlled by the style 260 Wurlitzer console from the Hollywood Egyptian theatre (which one-time owner Harvey Heck replaced with a style 285 Wurlitzer 4-decker when his pipework outgrew the 3-manual console many years ago). And the switching is now aided and abetted by the relays from the Portland Oriental Style 235 Wurlitzers which were replaced when the 13-ranker became the nucleus for the greatly enlarged Portland "Organ-grinder" pizzery instrument.



*Streakers? At organ concerts? Yes, it has happened. What is possibly the first one took place during a St. Patrick's day concert at the Los*



The Amos 'n' Andy cast pose outside the Hollywood CBS studio in 1939. Left to right they are announcer Bill Hay, Charles Correll (Andy), Madaline Lee (Miss Blue), Freeman Gosden (Amos) and Gaylord Carter who played the opening and closing theme, "The Perfect Song," through seven years of the show's west coast run. Prior to that, the program originated in Chicago and Dean Fossler played the theme. — (From Gaylord Carter's collection)



Angeles Wiltern theatre. Read about it in this issue's Los Angeles Chapter report. Two weeks later it happened again at the same theatre. Gaylord Carter had completed his overture for a premiere showing of a new film before an invited audience. The film was almost half over before the unclad lad sashayed across the stage for a few pirouettes, illuminated only by the movie which silhouetted him against the screen. He got quite a loud audience reaction. Our Chicago contributor, Harry "Pipes" Miller admits to a yen to streak during a concert but has been restrained, to date, by a probably fortunate problem: where to pin his chapter badge while perambulating in the buff. Any suggestions?



ATOSer Kurt Conley of Hamden, Conn., found our analogy of organ blower power consumption with 100 watt light bulbs in the April column a catalyst to further thought on the subject. We mentioned the possibility of reviving the long defunct Association of Former Organ Pumpers should power conditions worsen. Conley speaks from practical experience: circa 1908 he was the "energy" pumping the organ blower for two Sunday services at a Charlotte, Michigan Methodist church — all for one buck a Sunday. The small instrument on low pressure offered no great problem, but thinking back, Conley observes that the theatre organ could never have developed without low-priced electrical power. He cites the 5 hp blower we used as an example and estimates it would require about 15 hand pumpers (¼ to ½ hr each) to equal its output. Fifteen pumpers at say \$5.00 an hour and we run up a bill of \$75.00 an hour just for wind pressure! At the rate of 3 cents a kilowatt hour, the same amount of pressure can be generated for about fifteen cents. Therefore, concludes Conley, the wraiths of the former hand pumpers can resume their slumbers; no one can afford them at today's prices.



*In a recent column we made mention of the pipe organ in pianist Liberace's home and added that it looked like a Morton console. To keep the record straight it's a 2/15 Welte.*



Len Rawle in Rochester. — (Dick Harold Photo)

The Rochester Theatre Organ Society sponsored the American debut of British organist Len Rawle at the Auditorium Theatre on March 16, and judging by the ovation accorded the talented young organist, he will be back. The 1475 concertgoers were treated to a wide variety of playing styles which those "who remember when" were quick to identify. They included Jesse Crawford (ballads); Sigmund Krumbold (music for picture accompaniment); Sidney Torch and Reginald Dixon (bouncy British style); Lyn Larsen and George Wright (sophisticated treatments). Highlight was Len's rousing, pulsating closer of "Chattanooga Choo-Choo", which certainly endeared him to the steam locomotive buffs in the audience.



*ATOS visitors to the Palm Beach, Florida area might find it worth while to visit the Henry M. Flagler Museum.*

*The former home of the Florida East Coast Railway magnate contains a large music room wherein is housed a 2/24 Odell organ. It was installed in 1901 to entertain the Flaglers and their guests in weekly musicales, and during tea on the south porch, just off the music room. In 1965, it was completely restored by the firm which built it. When installed, it was the largest organ ever placed in a home in the U.S.A.*



From Downington, Pa., ATOSer Dottie Bloom adds another chapter to the amazing adventures of veteran organist C.A.J. ("Cass") Parmentier. Noting our account of his re-opening of the Philly Convention Hall Moller organ last issue, Dottie adds her account of what to most organists would be a downright impossible assignment; on March 23, Cass played a 2-hour concert on the John Dickinson High School Kimball while in intense pain from a fractured left knee! Cass had suffered a fall during rehearsal three days earlier and neither ice packs nor hot compresses helped much. The near-capacity audience never knew it was applauding also the dogged courage and determination of the organist when it gave him a standing ovation for his performance. Cass would not allow mention of the hairline fracture during his concert; he wanted no sympathy to color his show. Asked later why he didn't feel a fractured knee sufficient cause for a concert postponement, Cass grinned and said in his still slightly Belgian accent, "It was something about — the show must go on."



*In Los Altos, Calif. Jack Baumann has learned to be something of a "short order" organ parts maker. His latest project is a complete chest for just two pipes! And in a hurry. Steve Restivo, owner of the San Jose "Thundermug," had purchased a set of Posthorn pipes to add to the 3/9 Wurlitzer, but the two lowest pipes just wouldn't fit the prepared chest. With Bob Ralston set for a late April 7-session weekend stint, Steve was a little frantic. But Jack came through in a few hours with the 2-note chest and Bob Ralston had a complete Posthorn to punctuate his rhythm tunes. Jack says he took no shortcuts; it's a chest complete with primaries, valves,*





Bob Ralston. A two-pipe chest — in a hurry.

*springs and pouches, plus wiring and wind connection.*



We note with some trepidation that our name is listed on the ballot among the conditional candidates as "possibles" for the ATOS 1974 "Hall of Fame." There, among such revered names as Al Melgard, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Jack Ward, Iris Vining, Al Carney and Stuart Barrie, is one W. Stuart Green — on the "Deceased or Inactive" list. As unworthy (and flattered) as we may be, what in the Dickens is our name doing in the "dead file" while we are still pushing this pencil? Makes a guy wonder.



Celia Cohen advises that the former New York Times Square Paramount, now installed in the Century II Wichita (Kansas) Civic Center, is getting considerable local use. Miss Cohen reports that the now 4/42 Wurlitzer which once responded to Jesse Crawford's touch, was a prominent part of the Theta Sigma Phi's (journalism fraternity) Gridiron Show which spoofed prominent political figures recently. Alan Malaby, who used to play concerts in the gone Miller theatre, was soloist. The Wichita Symphony Orchestra's holiday concert boasted organ support by Tom Taylor at the Wurlitzer. The instrument was installed by (and is owned by) the Wichita Theatre Organ Group, Inc. Concerts by veteran theatre organists Rex Koury and Don Baker are set for Spring '75.



On April 17, the Rochester Theatre Organ Society presented Shirley Hannum before 1183 at the Auditorium Wurlitzer. Showing definite improvement over her 1968 Rochester appearance, she featured selections from the thirties and forties, a medley of radio themes, much music from the past twenty years, and told a few family-rated jokes. The best number was a spirited "Stars and Stripes Forever", including the famous piccolo passage. At a reception at the Gary Haines' afterwards, Shirley revealed that she is hopeful of a tour along the west coast in the near future.



Shirley Hannum



Rex Koury's star continues to rise on the concert trail. In March, he received standing ovations for two weekend concerts at Seattle's Granada Organ Loft. In April, he played a couple of dates in the Los Angeles area, plus an engagement at Reno's Pioneer Civic Auditorium on April 8, using a Rodgers electronic. In May, he performed on the Welte-Mignon 3/11 at Scotty's Death Valley Castle. On July 17 he will be at No. Tonawanda for the NF Chapter. On July 15, he'll perform for the ATOS Convention at Royal Oak, and on July 20 he returns to the Hammond Castle in Gloucester, Mass. In October and November, he expects to be on another Eastern tour. The "Boy With Miles of Smiles" is making a big name on the circuit and deservedly so, observes Old Prospector Klos.



That bundle of New Jersey energy, organist Esther Higgins submits a clip from the AFM's *International Musician* of a brief story about organist Terry Charles and his theatre organ installation in the Kirk (church) at Dunedin, Florida. Wonder if Terry knows he has a neighbor named Don Baker, newly settled in nearby Clearwater with his new bride?



Billy

Another Floridian planned to leave his adopted "Nineveh-on-the-Hudson" (his way of saying "New York") to accept an offer made by Wichita Theatre Organ Group, Inc. Early in 1975 organist Billy Nalle will move to Wichita to collaborate with the Group in musical projects centering around the now 4/42 Times Square Paramount Wurlitzer, now installed in one of the auditoria of the Wichita Century II Cultural Complex. It will be recalled that Billy made his recording debut on the same instrument in New York. The as yet undefined duties in Wichita will not diminish the Nalle concert and recording career, says a Group news release. This news got us to doing some checking the files on the Nalle career to date, and we uncovered a somewhat strange set of coincidences — all having to do with eight year intervals. For example, eight years after he left Florida for Gotham he moved into an apartment high in the sky of Manhattan (he calls it Casa Cielo) and his first album was released — both in 1958. Eight years later (1966) he played his first theatre organ concert on the Atlanta Fox "Mighty Mo". Now, eight years later ('74) he's getting set to pull up stakes and buy a one way ticket to Wichita. Wonder what the crystal ball will have him doing in 1982? Just so the reading doesn't involve an eight-ball.





The School of the Ozarks goes on the air, with Bert Buhrman (left) at the pipe organ. It was old stuff for Bert, who retired from similar duties at NBC New York a few years ago.

Organist Bert Buhrman sends along the news that he, with other musical people at the School of the Ozarks, started an FM radio series of half-hour programs on April 7, utilizing the school's 3/15 Wurlitzer. The shows are aired on KSOZ-FM, an affiliate of National Public Radio. Tapes are available to any network affiliate. So, if ATOS members having an NPR station in their neighborhood want theatre organ music on the air, they can ask the station's program director to contact Mr. Joe Embser, manager of the School of the Ozarks' Broadcasting Service at Pt. Lookout, Mo. 65726, and he'll make the arrangements.

Bert also says that a concert he did in Britain in November 1972, part of which was aired on the BBC, is going to be released as an album. The organ used is in the Ronald Curtis studio.



The theatre organ had a few short sequences during the showing of the two-part ABC-TV documentary, *The Movies March 31 and April 1*. The big chase music of *Buster Keaton's 1917 Cops* was done by Gaylord Carter. There was more theatre organ music in a scene from *The Phantom of the Opera*, and during *Gregory Peck's* narration, he turned to simulate playing on a horseshoe console. Also on April 1 was shown the new TV movie, *The Girl on the Late, Late Show*. With *Walter Pidgeon* posing as a veteran director, the camera showed a consid-

erable portion of the *Harold Lloyd Estate*: the manicured lawns, garden, fountains, walkways, and a short interior sequence.



The crowds waiting to enter Radio City Music Hall were bigger than ever, according to ATOS member John Roblin who included "The Showplace of America" on an Easter tour to New York. The annual *Glory of Easter* show is still a major attraction in the big town, and both consoles of the Wurlitzer were used in a part of the program. Jimmy Paulin gave a resounding version of "Easter Parade" utilizing the 32' stops. The organ was also used with the Paul Lavalley-led orchestra, tremulants off, and sounding much like a church instrument.



ATOS Vice President Duane Searle, who, like ATOS President Erwin Young, is a United Airlines captain, had occasion to spread the theatre organ gospel on March 6. Appearing at the Park Manor Nursing Home in Denver, Duane gave the senior citizens an evening of entertainment by showing a *Laurel & Hardy* epic *Hog Wild*, backed by a tape recording of the accompaniment by a pipe organ playing in a nearby restaurant. Duane also gave a commentary on the function of the theatre organ in its early days. "Reception of the program was excellent", he says. "Folks told me of their appreciation afterwards. One lady

fondly remembered the rising consoles in the old days, while another told how her husband had played theatre organs in the east, principally in New York State."



The Wurlitzer Co. announced on March 6 that it will cease the manufacture of juke boxes at its North Tonawanda, N.Y. Plant, laying off 400 of its 700 employees in the process. The company's chairman, R.C. Roling, said that the importance of this coin-operated instrument has diminished sharply, accounting for only 15% of the firm's business in 1973. The plant will continue to manufacture electronic organs, however.



During *Millie Alexander's March Seminar-Workshop* held at *Asilomar (Pacific Grove Conference Grounds)*, Calif., one of the recreational highlights was a mass safari to nearby Monterey and the Red Vest Pizzeria for a listen to the Wicks pipe organ, a break in the four days of study and cramming.



Bud Taylor shows Millie Alexander some of the Wicks organ's special features.

Staffer Bud Taylor was a gracious host; he shared the console with Millie's teachers and students. The feel of pipes was strange to all but Millie as the seminarians playing is done on electronics.

"I want all my teachers and students to be familiar with the sound of pipes, and the difference in technique required to play a pipe organ. After all, the pipe organ was my first love," said Millie, chomping a pickled canary tongue pizza.





Dedicated organ maintenance men are a rare breed, as is the case of Toronto Theatre Organ Society's Roly Webb. According to Jim Lahay, when Ronnie Padgett played a concert at Casa Loma on March 13, he did a medley of Scottish tunes, employing an emulation of a bagpipe. This was done by pinning down a key on the accompaniment manual to resemble the "drone" note one hears from bagpipes. Roly, not seeing this, assumed a cipher had reared its head, raced to the third floor chamber and pulled the pipe! When Ron found out later what happened, he explained to the audience which got a hearty laugh out of it.



*Allen Cole sent us a clipping from the Tuscaloosa (Alabama) News about the long closed Mentone Springs Hotel perched on the west brow of Lookout Mountain. Brooding and deteriorating, the former 60-room resort has little about it to attract interest – except that it's full of organ parts! The 1884 hotel, closed since 1950, is the headquarters of organ repairmen Norvell Hall and Danny Keil, the only tenants. They use only four rooms for their working area. They hope to open the ancient building eventually as an entertainment complex, with organ, of course. Redecoration is already under-way.*



Mentone Springs Hotel. New life for the old manse. — (Colepic)



Gloria Swanson and Lee Erwin at the Beacon Theatre in 1967.

Gloria Swanson and Lee Erwin are planning a nation-wide tour of movie houses with a new personal-appearance and silent-film presentation.

The new Swanson-Erwin show will have specially edited scenes from early Swanson silents, a bit of singing and dancing, "off-the-cuff" comments about Hollywood, and another rare showing of her historic last silent film, *QUEEN KELLY*, accompanied by Erwin's special organ score originally composed for the 1967 gala at New

York's Beacon Theatre, and recently recorded as part of his new LP for Angel Records.

The original Swanson-Erwin evening at the Beacon in 1967 was a smash sell-out, so the newly refurbished Beacon Theatre will be the launching pad for the new presentation.

Gloria has new costumes and is ready to travel, so any theatre with pipe organ is a potential showcase for this new presentation which is bound to attract SRO audiences from coast to coast.



*Tom Stehl submits a PR release which reads in part: On the evening of April 4th, Specialist Six Louis Hurvitz of the United States Military Academy Band entertained the Corps of Cadets and guests of the New York Military Academy in Cornwall-on-Hudson, N. Y. playing a concert of popular and theatre music on the NYMA 4/26 Moller. Lou, who is a native of St. Paul/Minneapolis has been playing the organ since the age of eight and is currently a student of Ashley Miller and a member of the Land-o-Lakes and New York Chapters of ATOS and the Rochester Theatre Organ Society. Lou put the NYMA organ, which was installed in the Academy's Chapel/Auditorium in 1927, through its paces, opening the concert with a medley including music from Jesus Christ Superstar, "Another Openin' Another Show", and Sigmund Romberg's*



IN ROSWELL . . .

# Carter Raps It Up



SPC 6 Lou Hurvitz. From the West Point band to a 4/26 Moller. — (Sieglar Photo)

*"Serenade". The highlight of the program was the sing-along. The audience raised the roof singing a selection of old songs as song slides along with color slides of various organ consoles, organ chambers and picture palaces flashed on the screen. General Francis J. Roberts, Superintendent of the Academy, expressing his appreciation on behalf of the cadets and the guests who filled the chapel, pointed out that Specialist Hurvitz is an example of the fine talent to be found among the enlisted men of the Armed Forces and particularly in the West Point Band. The cadets hope to have Lou return in the Fall to play another concert.*



Colonel Harry. It's a long way from that Marr & Colton in Oneonta to a town-hopping circus Hammond in California. — (Stufoto)

Former theatre organist, Col. Harry J. Jenkins recently went through his files and noted a listing of Marr & Colton organs. One of these he played from July to December in 1926. It was a little two-manual job in the 1045-seat Palace Theatre in Oneonta, N.Y. Gus Lampe was the house manager. Jenkins, now 71, lives in San Diego, but he's on the road each summer with a small circus. His Hammond is the circus band. □

Down in the Land of Enchantment, the New Mexico Military Institute Cadet Activities Forum presented the final "Showtime on the Mighty Theatre Organ" series for the 73-74 season, featuring Gaylord Carter, who was able to come over on such a short notice after a long drawn out tour in the midwest. The season has ended for the current school year, but in a celebration, for the first year anniversary of the rennovated organ.

It was a true honor to have Gaylord Carter do the season finale! He presented a wide variety of music, which turned out to be an evening full of entertainment and enjoyment. Just under 500 music lovers came to hear Mr. Carter perform before three very funny movies consisting of a W.C. Fields chase scene, and a Harold Lloyd flick with the feature movie *The Navigator* starring Buster Keaton. As well as to the movies, the audience responded with their voices to a 15 minute sing-along, with the showing of old time song slides.

The New Mexico Military Institute has put on a total of five shows this past year, and has averaged over 660 in attendance per show. To some large cities that's just a small crowd, but to Roswell, it's practically the whole town. A special organ society is being proposed to the school in order to sponsor and plan future programs. May 18 was graduation for Bob MacNeur from New Mexico Military, but he is planning to stay in Roswell to help keep the organ alive, to assist in future concerts, and to make additions to the original 14 ranks.

The faculty at NMMI would like to thank ATOS and the Theatre Organ staff for their support. Also, a special thanks to Mr. Alva Wilson and Mr. Jesse Reed, whose devoted time and knowledge has been dedicated to the reconstruction tasks of getting the organ in shape for this past season. We look forward to this fall, when the Hillgreen pipes will vibrate again in late September. □

Pictured at the console of the 3/14 Hillgreen Lane are (l to r) Mr. Gaylord Carter, the featured artist at NMMI with Mr. Alva Wilson who opened this particular instrument in 1922 at the Sunshine Theatre in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Also Cadet Robert MacNeur responsible for the rennovation of the organ.





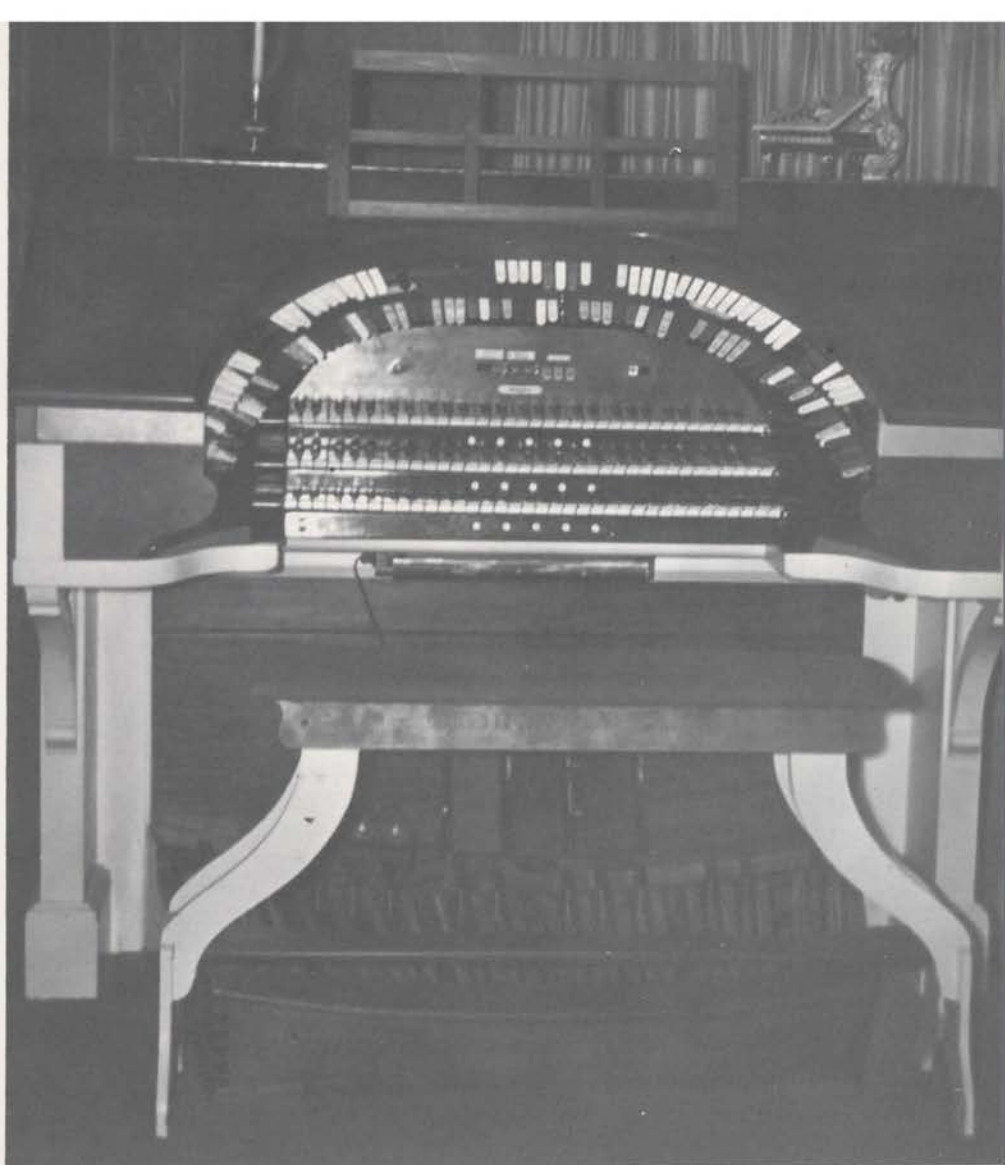
# *Moon River Organ Travels Again*

by Carroll Harris

The December, 1973 issue of THE-ATRE ORGAN carried a Lloyd E. Klos article, "Theatre Organists on Radio," in which he mentioned WLW, Cincinnati, Ohio, their three Wurlitzer theatre pipe organs and the long running *Moon River* program. Only one of these three Wurlitzers was designated "The Moon River Organ", and Charles Evans of Dallas, Texas has a letter to prove it. Charles Evans purchased the organ and installed it in his home, adding a piano in a rather unusual case. On January 11, 1974 Evans sold the 3/17 with piano to Lawrence E. Weid of Sacramento.

Lawrence Weid is vice chairman/treasurer of the Sierra Chapter. To say he is a pipe organ enthusiast is putting it mildly. His present Sacramento home now contains a beautiful 2/7 Wurlitzer, complete with Glockenspiel and xylophone. The Wurlitzer is Opus 939 and was formerly installed in the Palace Theatre in San Leandro, California. The installation is well planned. The console has been beautifully finished in antique white and gold leaf. The "works" are installed in what was meant to be a two car garage.

On February 15, Larry and three other Sacramento organ buffs left for Dallas to remove the 3/17 and piano from the Evans' home. Plans are not complete for one of radio's more famous organs when it arrives on the West Coast. Larry is certain the visible portions of the instrument will be refinished. This means a complete redoing of the console and piano. He is ready to augment the pipework with a least one more rank. Where it will go is open for discussion. His present home can't hold it without a major remodeling. Construction of a new home and installation therein is dependent upon building code variations. One thing is certain — "The Moon River Organ" will have a new home in Sacramento, California. □



The console of "The Moon River Organ" as it was installed in the Charles Evans home, Dallas, Texas. — (Weid/Baxter Photo)

Charles Evans added this beautifully encased piano to "The Moon River" Wurlitzer. — (Weid/Baxter Photo)





# Playing The Film

## PART II

by John Muri

What did the organist who had to look at the same movie two or more times a day for weeks think about? In most cases he had probably decided in advance what music he was going to use. These pieces would serve as his major themes. For the rest of the time he would rely upon inspiration and memory to fit the movie with decent tunes and listenable improvisations. If he was a well-trained musician, improvisation would not give him any difficulty other than that occurring on the days when his spirits were low or when the audience was cold and unresponsive. Small audiences on off-days had a way of drying up one's musical faculties and you would then have to rely on pieces drawn out of the filing case of memory. It got boring at the console hour after hour, day after day, especially if the organ was out of tune, was ciphering, or had dead notes. Many organists brought food, candy, and drinks and stored them in the ample handy side storage-coves of Kimball consoles. Wurlitzers didn't have quite so much room for goodies. Most organists I knew played with the console lights on, but some played in the dark, and it was they who probably had easiest and most frequent access to the *nosherei* while working. When there was a blizzard outside and business was bad (the Fourth of July was always a ghastly day of empty seats) inspiration was at its lowest ebb.

A good film for organists was one that had been edited so that a mood could be sustained for a reasonable amount of time. Many film editors did not have the gift of timing a film or giving it the tempo necessary to provide a fine musical background. Frequent and unmotivated shifts of mood were deadly to play for, but a film that properly sped up or slowed down in action was excellent for organists.

The cue sheets provided by the film companies were usually quite poor. In 1918, a writer in the MOTION PICTURE WORLD complained that some of the sheets had produced "a travesty

of a picture rather than a portrayal." Recognized musicians hired to work on the sheets were said "to slump into a well-beaten rut." One critic was judging fairly when he said, "We find the sheets pretty much the same for every picture . . . same numbers, same variety, same manner of handling cues, same quantity, and same quality throughout." At that time, the faults of the cue sheets were listed as (1) their too frequent use of favorite tunes, (2) their use of themes too often repeated, and (3) their use of music issued by a single publishing house. Many of us used the sheets only to establish timing and to become aware of mood-changes; the music was of our own choice. The sheets did not improve any during the twenties. Organists threw them away as soon as the little benefit they provided was extracted. That is probably why so few of the sheets are in existence; organists didn't think they were worth keeping.

Even some of the original complete scores left something to be desired, for they suffered from the defects to be found in the cue-sheets, but they were always welcome and made the scoring job easier. Speaking of original scores, I would not try very hard to write new music for a film unless I were absolutely sure that I had a special talent at composing and that music now available was not suitable.

There are three ways to score a movie. The first, the classical method, can be used when the film has been made as a series of well-defined and somewhat lengthy mood-sequences. The scorer will pick an appropriate set of pieces, assign them to different parts of the film, and play them through, sometimes more than once. When preparing to play for *Blood and Sand*, I pulled out the following titles, among others: Bizet's "L'Arlesienne" suites and selections from *Carmen*; Moszkowski's "Malaguena" and "Spanish Dances"; Chabrier's "España Rhapsody"; "El Relicario" and Kreisler's "La Gitana." These formed the nucleus of my score. I am positive I

couldn't write music to equal it. People need to hear this music, since the movies and TV have abandoned them for rock and synthesizer whooping. A few sessions of refresher practice on a dozen or two of pieces like these and you are ready for the screening.

The second device, which I shall call the excerpting method, is used when the film is made up of sequences that are short (as in slapstick comedies) or in films where excitement is built through increasingly rapid changes of scene. D. W. Griffith created excitement in his 1911 film *The Lonedale Operator* by making sixty-six changes of scene in his final sequence, with each scene lasting from two to six seconds. Tension is heightened in movies by alternating ("crosscutting" they call it in the trade) different kinds of action. One variation of the trick is to show someone in deadly peril alternating with shots of someone else who is able to relieve the situation but is unaware of its existence. There is no use in trying to change the music in sequences like these; all you can do is close the swell-shades for the less active part of the crosscut and open them up for the critical action. Most of the time, crosscuts are relatively long in duration and it is possible to play them using parts of musical compositions that are adaptable to fragmentation. There is a multitude of good composers whose work can be used in pieces. I have even used Ravel. The semi-improvisational compositions of the movie-music writers for publishing houses like Sam Fox, Belwin, Carl Fischer, and Schirmer are quite worth-while. J. S. Zamecnik's mood-pieces are tuneful if not inspired music. They always make better listening than a badly improvised "hurry" or "mysterioso." The advantage in music like this is that you can use small stretches of it as the occasion calls for. As a matter of course, all abridgements of compositions should be brought to a satisfactory closing cadence before the organist shifts to a new mood. It is disconcerting to hear an organist stop crudely in the middle of a phrase in order to start another tune. The player should know how long his scene will last and what he will have to do to get ready for his next mood-sequence, making sure that his modulation into another key will be pleasant and that his tempo-change, if any, will be



smooth.

A third method may be called improvisational. H. C. Macdougall, who wrote a book on extemporizing for G. Schirmer, Inc. in 1922, called it the art of inventing and playing "on the spur of the moment and without specific preparation, an unwritten piece of music . . . conforming reasonably to the principles of musical composition." Few theatre organists should try this method in public without a lot of practice, if the performances now being heard in theatres and television are indicative of current levels of ability. A good improviser thinks in phrases or blocks of music, which he manipulates in ways that have been frequently described in musical literature. Books on improvising have been written; theatre organists need to study them more than even church organists, because we have more occasions on which to improvise. Briefly, the technique involves handling the phrases or blocks by adding variational notes to them, changing their rhythms, changing their harmonies (but not too much), and inverting them by putting the melody into the bass and imposing a structure of harmony above it. Mere chord-sequence playing is a burlesque of improvisation.

If the organist can make up decent themes for each main character or situation in the film and can develop them in different keys, variations, inversions, and moods, he is then ready to play films in anybody's theatre. He has then only one more thing to remember, which is that all his playing, even his hurries and his catastrophe music, ought to be listenable. He ought always to keep in mind that his primary job is the production of music, not noise. Sound effects are in a class by themselves, and crashes, bumps and burps are legitimate on a theatre organ; but whenever the organist is called upon to play, he should keep in mind Otto Klemperer's thought that any idea expressed in musical terms, even turmoil, must always be music. A good organist practices restraint (how well Jesse Crawford did it!) and he works hard. A fellow named Francis Quarles, way back in the seventeenth century, roughly expressed the need for hard labor in the production of a fine product: "I see no virtues where I smell no sweat."

(To be continued)

## New York's Loss - Wichita's Gain

Organist Billy Nalle will be moving to Wichita in early 1975. While continuing his concert and recording career, Nalle will collaborate with Wichita Theatre Organ, Inc. in musical projects centering on the four manual, 42 rank Wichita Wurlitzer theatre organ at Century II, the civic/cultural complex in Wichita.

While living in New York, Nalle for 16 years covered a wide range of engagements on national network television involving well over 5,000 telecasts. In early 1958, he made his solo recording debut on the RCA label, an album made at the Times Square Paramount Theatre on the same world famous instrument now in its new home at Century II. Representing a new musical approach to popular music on the theatre organ and establishing Nalle as an artist of top rank, the recording was unusually successful.

In 1966 he made his theatre organ concert debut at the Atlanta (Ga.) Fox

Theatre, the first concert of popular music ever to be sponsored officially by a national convention of the classical organ society, the American Guild of Organists. During the past eight years, his musical firsts have set a record on the theatre organ.

Michael Coup, W.T.O.'s president said, "We will be pleased to have fine musician/showman Billy Nalle living in Wichita. The cultural climate will certainly be enhanced even though it is apparent that Wichita has a fine cultural community as evidenced by the fact that Billy Nalle has chosen to move here."

Nalle authors a regular theatre organ news column for *Music* magazine and writes musical articles and reviews for other publications. He has been a composer member of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers since 1956. Nalle, from Fort Myers, Fla., was graduated in piano and organ by the Juilliard School, New York. □

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Lee talks to his audience seated at the 3/8 Barton. — (Photo by Ben Bush)



Bob McKinnon, leader of the WMTOC, and Lee Erwin discuss the program.

# Muskegon Has Full House

The February snowstorm nearly prevented the organist from getting to Muskegon but didn't deter 1850 townspeople from filling the theatre.



The activities of the West Michigan Theatre Organ Club are centered, for the main, around a 3/8 Barton in the Michigan Theatre in Muskegon, Michigan. Muskegon to some may sound like a jumping off place. It is, particularly if you have in mind, swimming to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, which is across Lake Michigan from Muskegon. Despite the relatively small size of the organ, those in the know refer to it as "The Big Sounding Barton" which probably best describes the acoustics inherent in the theatre, which was built in 1930.

Lee Erwin was in our town on February 7 to do his thing with the Barton. He did so before a sell-out crowd in the 1850 seat Michigan Theatre. After an opening concert, the audience then took their turn and in their customary enthusiastic manner participated in the sing-along. They heartily joined in for the tongue twisters, parodies, and our own local "Muskegon Country" song. The climax to the whole sing-along came in the final number when the entire crowd stood for "God Bless America". After intermission, the silent, *Son of the Sheik* with the legendary Valentino, was presented with Lee accompanying at the Barton.

In discussing the evening's success, after the show, Lee raised the question as to what the population of this "jumpin' off place" was, and when informed it was about 100,000 he quickly countered with the statistic that we had two percent of our population in the theatre that night which indicates another successful program from the W.M.T.O.C. □



**NUGGETS**  
from the  
**GOLDEN**  
**DAYS**



Nuggets prospected by Lloyd E. Klos

With Detroit's serving as host to the 19th ATOS Convention next month, Jason and I found nuggets from the Motor City area and nearby states. References were American Organist (AO), Diapason (D), Jacobs (J), Metronome (Met.), Motion Picture Herald (MPH) magazines and local press (LP).

April 1925 (AO) ROBERT GORDON CLARKE and C. D. BOOMHOWER alternate at the 3-manual Hilgreen-Lane in Detroit's Capitol Theatre.

Jan. 1927 (J) HENRY FRANCIS PARKS recently had a 2-week engagement at the Racine, Wis. State Theatre. The Barton organ, "though small, was exquisitely sweet and very responsive."

Jan. 1927 (J) WALTER F. LINGMANN of Chicago, Duluth, Louisville and points west, is featured organist at the Rialto Theatre in Racine. He is a former demonstrator for Wurlitzer.

Feb. 1927 (AO) CIDNEE HAMILTON and ERNEST HUNT played a duet on November 17, using the organs in the Allen and State Theatres in Cleveland, over WTAM.

Mar. 1927 (J) ARTHUR RICHTER and LES HOADLEY are solo organists at the twin-console Barton in Milwaukee's Wisconsin Theatre.

Mar. 1927 (AO) A. W. TOBIAS is at the Wurlitzer in the Indiana Theatre in Washington, Ind.

July 1927 (Met.) F. DONALD MILLER is the solo organist at the State Theatre in Detroit.

Aug. 1927 (AO) FRANCIS T. YORK directs the department of theatre organ instruction in the Detroit Conservatory of Music.

Sep. 1927 (LP) ROBERT G. CLARKE opened the 4/21 Barton in Detroit's Hollywood Theatre.

Sep. 1927 (LP) Advertisement: CHARLES BOOMHOWER "On the Golden-Voiced Barton" at Detroit's Oriental Theatre. The Oriental is a co-operative theatre. Patrons may participate in the earnings. It is our aim to have every person who enters, receive a check for his share of the profits.

Sep. 1927 (LP) Detroit's Fisher Theatre opens. Musical number "Rainbow Rhapsody" features the Fisher 4/33 Wurlitzer Cathedral-Cinema Organ.

Sep. 1927 (J) OLIVER ERICKSON presides at the Wurlitzer in the State Theatre, while JACK PINGEL plays the Smith unit organ at the Wisconsin Theatre in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Sep. 1927 (D) FREDERICK MARRIOTT is playing the 3-manual Kilgen in the Palace Theatre in Gary, Indiana.

Sep. 1927 (J) ARTHUR GUTOW is at the Wurlitzer in Detroit's Michigan Theatre. Among the stars featured recently were Gilda Grey, the shimmy queen; long-distance swimmer, Gertrude Ederle; and the bands of Ben Bernie, Ted Lewis, Vincent Lopez, Paul Whiteman and John Phillip Sousa.

Aug. 1928 (D) The 3-manual Barton organ in the Al Ringling Theatre in Baraboo, Wisconsin was heard for the first time by the public on July 15.

Oct. 1928 (AO) HAROLD KRELL is playing the 3-manual Kimball in Cleveland's Variety Theatre.

Jan. 17, 1931 (MPH) DALE YOUNG, organist in the Publix Circle Theatre in Indianapolis, presents the second of a series of variety concerts this week. Dale's name is flashed on the screen and is billed as "The Wonder Organist". He turns to the audience and tells them the idea he has is to play every type of music so as to suit the taste of all. First, the "Finale" from "Orpheus in Hades Overture" is dedicated to the classic lovers. Then Dale announces his next number "When the Organ Played at Twilight". He next tells about the surprise he has and introduces The Varsity Three: Seward Baker, Ruell Moore and Vergil Herbert who appear in tuxedos, and stand near the organ console to sing "Sing Something Simple", "Nobody's Sweetheart" and for the finale "Sweet Jennie Lee". Solo went over big as usual.

May 1, 1931 (MPH) STEVEN BEAUCLAIR opens the 3/28 Kimball in the Warner Theatre in Milwaukee.

Feb. 13, 1932 (MPH) ARSENE SIEGEL at the Detroit Fisher Theatre, once more proves he is not limited to any one type of organ presentation. As his specialty this week, Siegel features a dramatic rendition of Suppe's "Light Cavalry Overture". His playing is superb and the coloring which his nimble fingers give to the stirring selection, raise it far above the usual. A tasteful set of slides gives the audience a word picture of each of the different moods of the overture.

Feb. 13, 1932 (MPH) ARTHUR GUTOW at Detroit's Michigan Theatre, substitutes for Dorothy Dix or Beatrice Fairfax in a musical skit called "Leap Year Lovelorn". A special set of illustrated slides helps out the comedy angle with special lyrics. The songs played include "Hoosier Little Sweetheart", "Good Night, Sweetheart", "You Call It Madness" and "All Of Me."

GOLD DUST: 4/26 CLARA GIESE & TOM PARRY, Allen Theatre, Cleveland; DESSA BYRD, Indianapolis' Circle... 11/26 PAUL BENNETT at the Delft Theatre in Munising, Mich.; CHARLES VOGEL, Capitol in Whiting, Ind.; GEORGE CEIGA, Gary's Orpheus; EVA BENNETT, Hollywood in Petosky, Mich.; HARRY LEE in the new theatre, Negaunee, Mich.; ERNEST BUSHONG, Ligonier (Ind.) Theatre; ROBERT G. CLARKE, Detroit's Capitol... 1/27 ARTHUR GUTOW, Detroit's Michigan... 2/27 C. SHARPE MINOR, Regent in Grand Rapids, Mich.

That should do it until next time. So long, sourdoughs!

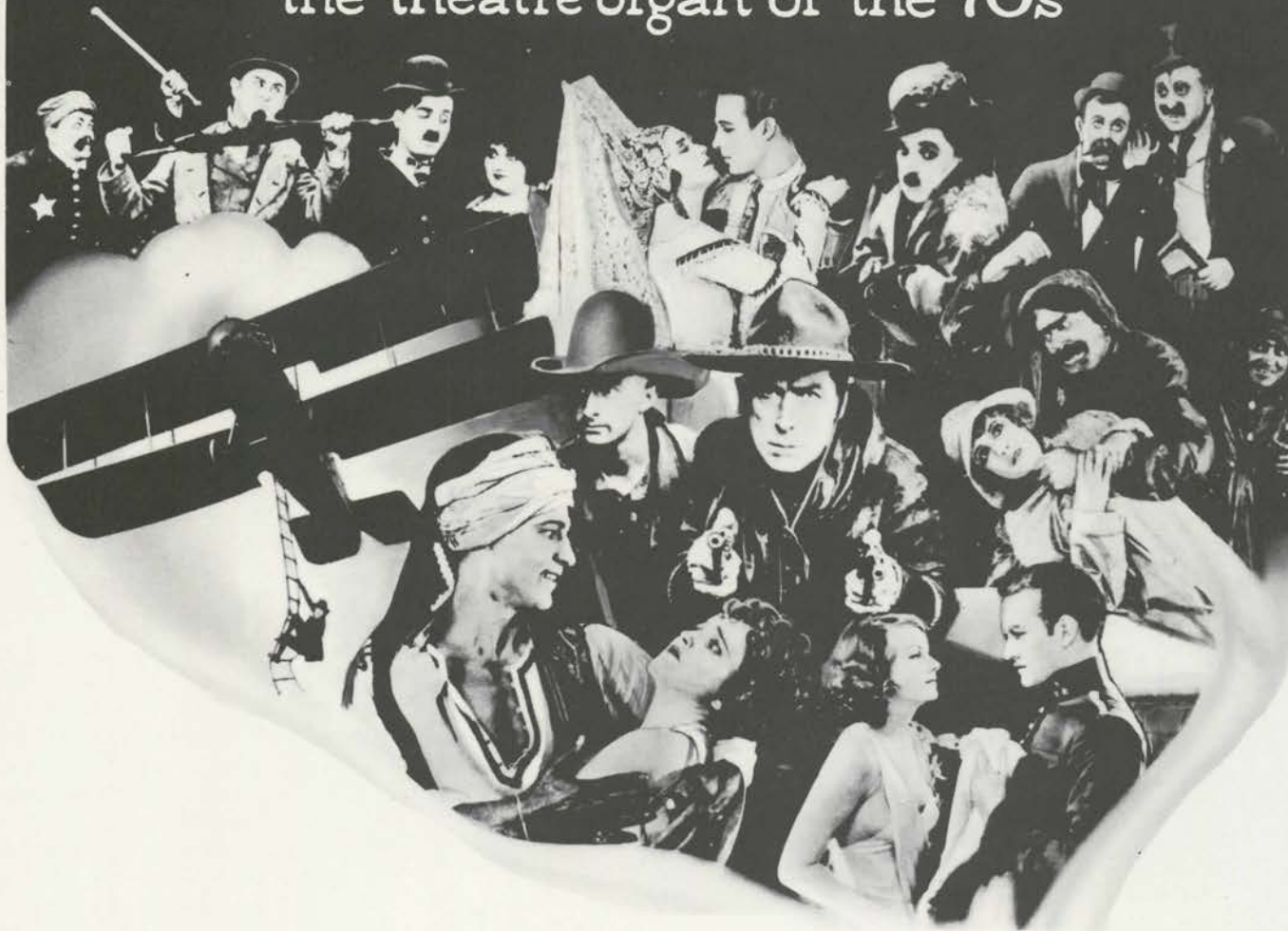
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CONVENTION  
EXTRA

# Rodger's Concert at Greenfield Village

Wednesday morning July 17, Lyn Larsen will play a special concert and accompany a short silent comedy on the new Rodgers Custom Theatre Organ installed recently in the world-famous Henry Ford Museum at Greenfield Village near Detroit. This convention "extra" will provide an added activity for convention-goers who plan to remain in Detroit for the moonlight "after-glow" cruise, but are not participating in the Wednesday home-tours. The program is sponsored by the Rodgers Organ Company and its Detroit representatives, Musical Heritage, Incorporated.

Dr. Donald S. Shelley, president of Greenfield Village was instrumental in working with Rodgers designers and technicians on the specifications of this custom organ, and over eighteen

months of activity transpired between the actual initiation of planning, and the delivery of this "one-of-a-kind" installation.

Following a short recital, Lyn will accompany the 1929 silent comedy *Bacon Grabbers* starring Laurel & Hardy with Jean Harlow and Edgar Kennedy, and after the program there will be sufficient time to have lunch, and explore the Henry Ford Museum, or 360 acre Greenfield Village.

Greenfield Village was founded in 1929 by the late Henry Ford as a general museum of American History. Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum, a non-profit, educational institution, house one of the greatest collections of Americana in existence, tracing three centuries of American

life through the development of its arts and skills. The vast collections are exhibited in a unique indoor-outdoor complex, visited annually by more than a million and a half persons. Indoors, the Henry Ford Museum displays show the milestones in the history of our decorative and mechanical arts and industrial development. Outdoors, in adjacent Greenfield Village, nearly 100 historic buildings transplanted from various parts of the United States show these collections in authentic settings, and at the same time preserve for posterity structures of various types that are fast disappearing from America.

Further information and tickets for bussing (\$1) and village or museum admission (\$2.50) will be available in the Convention Registration Room. □

The century-old steam locomotive, "Torch Lake," is one of two antique engines which make up the Greenfield Village Railroad taking visitors on a two-mile scenic tour.

**HENRY FORD MUSEUM.** A replica of Independence Hall, chosen for the entrance to this vast museum, housing historic collections of early American Commerce, decorative art, and the development of American industry.

A street of early American shops separates the Henry Ford Museum's decorative arts galleries from its 8-acre mechanical arts hall. — (Photo by Philippe Halsman)



Rodgers Custom Installation in the Ford Museum Theatre at Greenfield Village.





# The Men Behind the Dowager Empress

*The true highlights of a remarkable protege, Daniel L. Papp, who first installed the 'Dowager Empress' Wurlitzer organ in the Paramount Theatre of New York City, in 1926, then maintained it thereafter, and in particular of his mentor Heinrich Hosszer the man responsible for his initial direction in life.*

by Paulus Elm-Selig

**G**randpa Heinrich Hosszer was always one for appearance and personal dignity. With our tools and a clean set of work clothes in appropriate travel bags, we arrived at the Flagg Estate, Staten Island, New York, dressed in our Sunday best as was the case with every job. Work contracted for: general repairs and tuning. I was only 17 at the time. The year 1933. The butler escorted us to the impressive ballroom which housed the organ, Grandpa thanked him, and he left us with our task. The organ complex, quite often multiple floor or platform levels of organ pipes not in public view, does provide adequate privacy for a change to work clothes. So in a few minutes we stood before the organ console ready to go. As usual the first order came from Grandpa with definite sureness. "Remove the panel on the right first, then the left one next", was the quiet but firm instruction. This was the finely polished wooden paneling located just above the console. I proceeded to do what was expected of me while Grandpa started elsewhere in the complex behind.

Carefully I eased out the panel and set it aside, turned back to my simple chore, and there laying before me on something like a 2 x 4 beam, were what seemed to be several gleaming gold coins! I gasped, "why, it's money — looks like gold coins!" Grandpa responded to my completely unexpected exclamation, took one hard look and sternly commanded, "don't touch them!" "Find the butler and ask



Dan Papp, Wurlitzer maintenance expert, Paramount Theatre, Times Square, N.Y.C., June 27, 1956. — (Photo by H.C. Blakely, Picton, Ont.)

him to remove the money". I soon located the butler and gave him the message. When I returned to the ballroom Grandpa and I started on the next step of work to be done. This was shortly accomplished and we came down and around to the organ face again. The gold coins were still there. So off I had to go again after the butler, then back to the organ work. Half an hour later, we again stood before the organ console, and there as before the money stared at us. This was the final straw for Grandpa. With obvious irritation off he went after the butler, who must have been close by this time, because I could plainly overhear Grandpa telling him to remove the gold coins or for someone of

the Flagg household to do so, "or else we're packing our tools and leaving". Well, we were standing before the organ face for perhaps about 5 minutes when a man entered the ballroom and approached us. He was well groomed, of slight ruddy complexion, wearing a soft gray tweed suit, his hair in the early stages of turning white, and he greeted Grandpa softly in a friendly voice. They shook hands, and with polite introductions we now knew we were talking to the elder Mr. Flagg himself. He apologized for the difficulty the discovered money had caused, scooped up the coins, and said with evident warmth, "It's all right Mr. Hosszer, you can proceed, nobody will disturb or interfere with your work".

Now alone with our work, and a bit puzzled by all this, I asked, "Grandpa, what's all the mystery about?", "we could have removed the coins, set them aside, and gone ahead with our work... I don't get the reason for your point of insistence". He replied slowly with heavy emphasis, "just look at all that fine layer of dust in there; everything is covered with dust", "the gold coins were FREE of dust, and they were deliberately placed behind that panel before our arrival to test our honesty". "As strangers, we had to prove our trustworthiness to work inside this luxurious house with costly items around and about easy to steal and carry off". In stunned silence the realization of his words sank in. Supposing I had taken a coin for a souvenir? I shuddered at the thought! Grandpa continued, "the alternative



was to have someone watch over us at our work, an unpleasant measure which neither the owner nor I would have liked", "he saw fit, by means of a simple test, to learn quickly what manner of men we are, and as disagreeable as we find being subjected to such a test, it is best to presume that Mr. Flagg must have had a sad experience in life, hence his justifiable caution". "Of course there is an objectionable side to this too, and the implication of blanket dishonesty until proven honest, is certainly not welcome, so once the purpose of the test was determined I wanted the obstacle of "planted money" removed by the testor before taking any further step with our work." "The gain here is mutual respect and understanding".

**Mantle of Maturity.** Grandpa sensed my quasi-shock absorption of the startling experience and so he poured it on. "You will come to know", he went on, "that in the progress of longevity in life a human being takes in and holds, in varying degree of retention, experiences and impressions which make for a unique wisdom NOT found in books". "This wisdom emerges from errors, mistakes, failures, and even humiliations, to name a few, and all contribute special teaching values to the learning process". "Each passing year forward of physical aging reaps gainful corresponding mental maturity and sharper know-how". Grandpa paused, reached into his pocket for the familiar thin Between-the-Acts cigar box, fondly lit one, took a few slow easy puffs, then added with deliberate stress, "it is an indisputable fact with very remote exceptions that wisdom and knowledge is imparted and conveyed by the elder to youth AND NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND". "Heed well the lessons of life, use your ever growing experiences to sound advantage; temper it with humility and heart". Needless to say, as we proceeded with our work from day to day, I reflected time and time again, and indeed through the years, on Grandpa's words and the wisdom behind his comprehension. How well he must have learned life's lessons and how lucky I, the family, and many other apprentices were to gain a keener perspective.

**Struggle and Reward.** When Grandpa was a young man in Hungary learning his trade as master-mechanic

for pipe organ building and installation, it was during the proud Royal era of the Austro-Hungarian Empire before World War I. In spite of exacting discipline and a riches-poverty status quo as the accepted and resigned way of life, the bedfellow to this then prevailing condition was the relentless demand for perfection. The fact of the matter, devoid of pros and cons, is that the system produced exceptionally highly skilled professionals and Grandpa was such a product. In the passage of time he finally made the decision, well before WW I, to travel to America. It was, to be sure, a painful decision, because at this point of life he was both a husband and a father. The burden of responsibility was never greater. Away from familiar surroundings, the severely disturbing and discouraging language barrier in a new environment totally foreign proved to be a temporary hindrance. Even during the rough language transition period Grandpa had no problem securing steady employment. One look at the excellent quality of his work was enough to bring a fast "You're hired!" from ANY employer. Eventually he acquired sufficient mastery of English and it was then that his reputation slowly grew ultimately leading to service with the Aeolian Company where he became their seemingly infallible man. No assignment was too tough or impossible. The thorough and finely honed master-mechanic training in the Old Country brought success in a new land.

During the period between 1914 and 1940 history records and directly links Grandpa with famed families who list among their prized pos-

sessions a magnificent pipe organ masterpiece. The "Greats" of yesteryear, Ryrie, Woolworth, McVay, Pratt, Mershan, Tiffany, Billings, Vanderbilt, Harriman, Pulitzer, Oelrichs, Eastman, Hearn, Rockefeller, Carnegie, Schwab, and Belmont have come to own, and undoubtedly still own, a custom-made majestically toned organ built and installed by Heinrich Hosszer and crew. Many years before retirement in 1940, Grandpa found America very generous, and so he gratefully adopted the New World as his home and became a naturalized citizen.

**Behind The Scene.** Prior to the introduction and impact of "Talkie-movies" in the U.S.A., the organ industry held great potential for any young man willing to learn. I and my brother Bill had the advantage of being grandsons to one of the best teachers around in those days, so as a start, basic piano study was a must for acquaintance with musical tones and the keyboard. Although Grandpa was obliged to take along a Company mechanic and an apprentice, depending on the assignment and scope of work involved, he aided and trained his family at every opportunity. His son Henry learned rapidly under his fathers' guidance, but it was Uncle Dan who absorbed well the standards and techniques of the pipe organ industry from Grandpa, and he went on to become a giant in the trade in his own right. Uncle Dan's significant career began with the Wurlitzer Company in 1925 and the association endured for a major part of his life. Ben Hall refers to "Pop" Dan Papp as he of Paramount Wurlitzer fame and of his "priceless knowledge". When one speaks of the Dowager Empress of all Wurlitzer organs, three names come to mind: the Paramount Theatre, Jesse Crawford, and Dan Papp. For TV, radio, recordings, etc., performing artists Messrs. Foort, Baker, Wright, Mack, Floyd, Feibel, Liebert, and others, preferred the reassuring standby presence of Dan Papp because of his perfect-pitch ear and mechanical genius. Uncle Dan was indeed that rare man who could give to that optimum perfectionist and artist, Jesse Crawford, the exacting tonal qualities and responsiveness which he demanded. "How could anyone forget Dan Papp?" "He will be remembered as long as Wurlitzers will play!", so says Ben Hall. Truly a deserving testimonial for a remarkable protege. Yes, Grand-

moving?



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pa always said to me, "your Uncle Dan has the making of a far better than average mechanic". His words were prophetic. Uncle Dan, (Daniel L. Papp), retired in 1964 and his untimely last curtain call came in 1969. He is survived by his wife Thersea, who along with other honorary guests, on December 9, 1972, witnessed the sentimental and formal dedication ceremony of the Dowager Empress in Wichita's (Kansas) Century II Exhibition Hall, its' permanent new home, before an emotional and enthusiastic house attendance of 3,000. Fate and destiny, in the form of a visionary and determined Michael C. Coup and the Wichita Theatre Organ Inc. organization, set the pattern and momentum of events and circumstances which ultimately secured the acquisition and preservation of the mighty Wurlitzer along with its' planned projection into a new era of modern concert activity. Also, of unquestionable value and perception stands the shadow of Dan Papp and his many past years of personal care and association with the Paramount Theatre Wurlitzer organ, and if an expression of the heart can be accepted, his spiritual support and endorsement of the future years for his charge as well.

The reign and fall of the Dowager Empress is past history, and the extraordinary artisans and famed artists long associated with her are long gone. Her rebirth and new home in Wichita brings her in contact with a new breed of creative men, Mike Coup and his associates, which assures her a new exciting life and future history to be made. Today, it is not without sentimental attachment that I dreamily return with Grandpa to the Flagg Estate of yesteryear to vividly recall and to re-live as a young man once again that isolated experience which went far beyond the application of tools and blueprints in value which I related earlier in this true story. History records, that grand old man Grandpa Heinrich Hosszer, master mechanic plus, and his celebrated protege Uncle Dan Papp, were indeed 'the men behind the Dowager Empress'. Many ingredients made these men great in their own right, and Uncle Dan revealed one important aspect when he said, "NEVER be satisfied with 'good enough' for right then and there it is an admission of LESS than your best". □

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Lee Erwin



Lee Erwin, ATOS "Hall of Famer"

Whether you're a professional, or just someone who enjoys playing, I'm sure that this collection of 20 of the most famous piano solos of all time, transcribed for the organ, will be a welcome addition to your library of music.

I'm especially convinced that this collection will be invaluable to ATOS members who have instruments in their own homes.

The transcriptions have been done very carefully to make them sound good on the organ without sacrificing anything of the original piano pieces. They are not 'condensed' versions, so you won't find half of any piece missing, as happens with so many transcriptions.

All the pieces are in the original keys except where transpositions were necessary to make them fit on the 61 note organ keyboard. Close attention has been given to the choice of stops, so that the registrations will sound good on a small home installation or a large one in a big hall.

The pieces range from very easy to medium difficulty, and there is a wide variety of forms and composers.

You'll find the collection a great joy, especially with its stay-flat binding that eliminates fighting with a book of music that simply won't stay open. Then add the pleasure and convenience of having all the best pieces in one volume, instead of having to buy a dozen books, padded with things nobody ever heard of just to get the good ones.

You probably cannot find all of these 20 pieces in one collection anywhere else. (I tried, and went through 10 piano books just to locate them all!)

I hope you will have as much fun playing them as I did in making the transcriptions from piano to organ.

Lee Erwin

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- Chopin*  
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THE MINUTE WALTZ  
PRELUDE IN A MAJOR  
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PRELUDE IN E MINOR  
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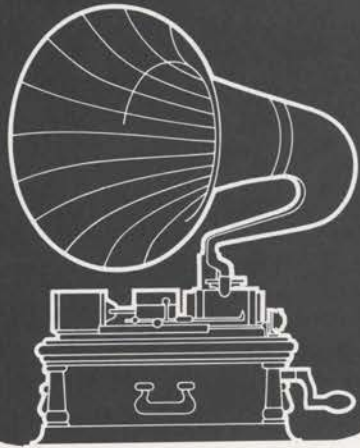
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## For The Records



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**HELEN DELL AT THE MISSION PLAYHOUSE. MAS-2023 (stereo), available at \$5.50 postpaid from Malar Productions, Box 3104, Glendale, Calif. 91201.**

Between 1968 and 1972, readers of this publication traced the progress of a style 260 Wurlitzer from its removal from the Brooklyn Albee theatre, it's journey across the country to eventual installation in the San Gabriel (Calif.) Civic Auditorium, or Mission Playhouse, as it was originally named. The transfer was a project of the L. A. Chapter of ATOS and how well the club has succeeded with regard to the now 16-rank instrument is well illustrated in these grooves. The impression is greatly enhanced by the warm and original stylings of Helen Dell, who has a way of playing that is all her own. Helen is one of those rare musicians whose years of professional plug-in playing doesn't show when she plays on pipes; she is then completely "theatrical". Of course, she learned on a wind-powered instrument — an accordion. Whatever the reasons, this is one of her finest efforts, a real beauty. So is the instrument and the manner in which Dick Stoney recorded it, placing his microphones and setting his at-

tenuators to compensate for what seems like a rather light pedal bass when the listener is present in the auditorium.

Helen Dell is a curious musician; she explores all the possibilities of an instrument — then uses them. Thus, the Wurlitzer's unique solo reeds get "soloed," and she makes effective use of second touch and pizzicato effects. The instrument is an especially cohesive one from the tonal standpoint; there's an exceptionally tasty blend to Helen's combinations. Yet, there's contrast between solo and accompaniment registration. If there's a "Dell style" it is probably most prominent in the sensual "bounce" inherent in such rhythm tunes as "I Like the Likes of You," "Isn't This a Lovely Day," "Time After Time," and "Let's Do It" (the last two soloing exquisite vox-heavy combinations). So much for style; there is much more to recommend the record. For example, an interesting reading of "Dam Busters' March" by that fine British light music composer, Eric Coates. Almost one-third of Side 2 is devoted to it, and rightly so. "You'll Never Know" features a scintillating massed string chorus and a sweet solo reed. "That's Entertainment," "Ridin' High" and "Cheek to Cheek" are played in bright "spotlight solo" style. "Churchmouse" and "Buttercup" are attractive novelty tunes. It's a most unusual record, to paraphrase another tune offered.



Helen Dell (shown here at the Wicks console, Orange theatre, Orange, Calif.) — (Stufoto)

Of course, there has to be a flaw, and luckily it's not in the music nor grooving, but only in the printed list of selections on our review pressing. Malar's nutty jacket note writer has mixed up the tune list completely on both disc and jacket. All the tunes listed are there, but they are so scrambled that it's rather fun trying to identify them. Because most are familiar, it's no problem. That minor flaw in no way touches the music, which is probably Helen's best since her "Sugar and Spice" album.

**DENNIS AND HEIDI JAMES, PUTTIN' ON THE RITZ, No. DIP-103 (stereo). Available at \$5.50 postpaid from Dennis James Productions, c/o Ohio Theatre, Capitol Square, Columbus, Ohio 43215.**

We have long awaited some proof that Dennis James survived both his sojourn as a pizza parlor organist and matrimony. This is it; we have learned through this recording what concert audiences have known through personal experience. We can't say what the pasta parlor experience may have done to the James charisma but apparently matrimony has improved it. Of course, any ATOSer who has followed the career of Dennis James in recent years has come to expect musical excellence, but would the addition of a performing wife to the act add or detract? Dennis seems like such a complete musical entity on his own. No problem. The incisive percussion of Heidi's piano added to the organ voices only makes the ensemble more orchestral. Together they are magnificent, and when soloing each of them does beautifully.

The organ is the magnificent 3/20 Robert Morton in the Ohio theatre in Columbus, an instrument described by Gaylord Carter as one of the finest theatre organs he has played. It has been recorded previously but never with such an ambitious program as offered here.

In the days when "Puttin' on the Ritz" was new, it was the practice of jazz orchestra musicians on radio and records to avoid the melody like poison, feeling their improvised variations were an improvement. Not many trumpet leads were of the Beiderbeck nor James (Harry, that is) calibre, so results, when played by Joe College's Saturday Night Stompers



were often crude. Thank goodness, Dennis is too young to have suffered through the "takeoff" era; his melody line is clean and there's no problem in identifying the tune (this for the benefit of those who think the old days of the '20s and '30s were all that good).



Heidi and Dennis James. They make beautiful music together.

Dennis' *Ritz* is jazzy and to the point. He doesn't do quite as well with his tinkly "Japanese Sandman" despite the Crawfordian overtones, due to a gimmicked chorus with a simulation of "Nola" as a counter melody. It's corny, contrived, well performed, and pure Lawrence Welk.

Heidi solos on the 88's with a Gershwin medley, "Do Do Do" and "I Got Rhythm." She captures the composer's mood but not his fire; more pedantic than jazzy. Or perhaps the somewhat muffled piano miking filtered out some of the brilliance. Her treatment of both tunes is interesting; the composer would approve.

"Warsaw Concerto" was composed by Richard Addinsell as a theme for the war time propaganda film, *Suicide Squadron*, just at a time when the US public was in the midst of a love affair with the "piano concerto" fad of the early '40s. Freddy Martin was busy bowdlerizing Tchaikowsky, Max Steiner's piano-oriented "Symphonie Moderne" (from the film *Four Daughters*) had been a favorite for several years and pianist Oscar Levant was in full thyroid with his dramatic readings of Gershwin. So the timely "Warsaw Concerto" found immediate ac-

ceptance. It was adopted by pop pianists who wanted to exhibit a little "class," and by classical pianists for a smashing encore. And it wears well, long after the parent film has been forgotten.

"Orchestral Transcriptions" have always been in the repertoires of skilled organists. This one is effectively performed by the duo, with Dennis playing the part of the orchestra. He gives loving attention to the orchestral shading and the organ sounds gorgeous in support of the solo piano. As mentioned before, the piano is on the "bassy" side and lacking brilliance. Yet, Heidi plays her part with a distinctive clarity. Together, the instruments present a thrilling sound, the "feature selection" of Side 1.

The closer for side 1 is by Dennis, soloing the "Great Escape March," with lots of traps and brass.

One half of side 2 is devoted to Dennis' transcription of the Richard Rodgers orchestral score for *Victory at Sea*, a durable WWII series now back on the small screen. For this we dusted off our Robert Russell Bennett recordings for comparison (he was the orchestrator and conductor both for the RCA record releases and the TV soundtrack). While the Bennett recording is longer, there is nothing essential missing from the James version. In fact, in Dennis' hands the organ becomes the "unit orchestra" envisioned by Hope-Jones. If we may be permitted the use of a non-original description, the Morton plus Dennis add up to the "sound of magnificence." The "Guadacanal March" alone is guaranteed to raise goosebumps on the hide of many a veteran.

After *Victory*, almost anything runs a chance of being an anticlimax. So Dennis shifts to a contrasting mood — Duke Ellington tunes. "Sophisticated Lady" and "Mood Indigo" are exquisitely orchestrated, but Dennis gets into trouble when he tries a fast and jazzy "Don't Get Around Much Anymore," mostly due to a faulty melody — unless he's trying for one of those 1920's trumpet "rides" we hoped he'd missed.

Dennis and Heidi return as a duo for the closer, a fast folk dance from spaghetti-land, "La Danza."

The well-chosen program has a wide appeal; so do the performances of the two beautiful young people responsible. And let's hear one for that wonderful Robert Morton organ!

**MELODY ON THE MOVE**, David Shepherd playing the 3/13 Compton/Christie organ in Osset Town Hall. Amberlee (stereo) No. AML 305X. Available at \$5.50 postpaid from Doric Records, Box 605 Alamo, Calif. 94507.



David Shepherd

This import from England has the fine technical quality we have come to expect. The instrument is new to this column; it's an assembled organ, mostly Compton but with a Christie Diapason, Wooden Tibia and Clarinet, plus some Wurlitzer percussions and traps. The organ also has its original Compton metal Tibia, as well as both an open and a stopped Flute. Outside of a Krummet the remaining stoplist is straightforward — 3 strings, Tuba, Trumpet, and Vox to total 13 ranks. The console is intriguing; unification has been carried out to the hilt, resulting in 186 stopkeys in three solid tiers around the stoprail. There are many couplers, combo buttons, toe studs and six tremulants. Chambers are under the stage.

The instrument was assembled and installed in the Ossett (Yorkshire) Town Hall by members of the Northern Theatre Organ Trust, a non-profit organization devoted to saving theatre organs in their area.

Organist David Shepherd is also new to this column. The young man presents a tastefully selected list of tunes which largely avoids the pot-boilers. He opens with a lively march by Britain's version of John Philip Sousa, "On the Quarterdeck" by Kenneth Alford, then goes into "Melody on the Move," a 1946 spinoff of "Holiday for Strings" with plenty



of plinking percussers. Next a single chorus of "When Day is Done" in ballad style, but the harsh "upper-work" registration nearly swamps the contemplative mood intended. David seems to be more at home while beating out oldies such as "You're the Cream in My Coffee" and "Varsity Drag," and letting his "Hammondry" show by closing the latter with a "schmear glissando." But he atones for that slip with a sensitively played "Demande et Réponse" by Coleridge-Taylor. The piano and assorted percussers permeate "We Just Couldn't Say Goodbye," as do assorted cutie Spike Jones effects (e.g. siren, block). The same might be said for some of the tunes in David's *Selection from the Boyfriend*. However, he gives us plenty of registration variety. The organ's Trumpet and Tuba are real zingers. The acoustic pedal 32-footer can be heard at the close of side 1.

One of the most scintillating tunes on the record is Zez Confrey's "Buffoon" which opens Side 2. One rare effect used here is a 5-1/3' coupler, a Super Quint effect which David uses sparingly but with good effect. He also does a nice job on "Misty." The brass carries the ball through part of Moszkowski's "Spanish Dance No. 4," a pleasant concert piece from piano literature. The fast-trem'd Tibia carries a portion of "Stardust" and David one-fingers a piano melody during a portion of "The Nearness of You" in a tribute to Hoagy Carmichael. Show

tunes "Cabaret" and "Tea For Two" are played with appropriate vigor, while "Hernando's Hideaway" gets a sneaky hesitation tango treatment. Also heard are "I Don't Know How to Love Him" and David's signature tune, "You and the Night and the Music."

Playing is entertaining and satisfying but rarely brilliant. Arrangements are varied and registration always interesting. The organ has some excellent solo reeds. However, the ensemble sound is a bit on the strident side, or perhaps lacking in cohesion for ears tuned to the mellow instruments heard on this side of the pond. Yet, some may prefer the bright sound, so this may be merely an opinion, not a fault. The recording is technically tops. Jacket notes provide some background on the organist and the music.

**SOUNDS LIKE BLACKPOOL, Ernest Broadbent at the Mighty Wurlitzers in the Manchester Odeon (4/20) and Gaumont (4/14) theatres. Acorn CF 235 (stereo). Available at \$6.49 air-postpaid. Make out checks on U.S. banks to the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust and send order to Mr. Tom Herd, Amsel Cottage, 19 Coupe Green, Hoghton, Preston Lincs, England.**

These organs are familiar to readers of this column through reviews of the previous four "Double Touch" series releases, but let us repeat that pro-

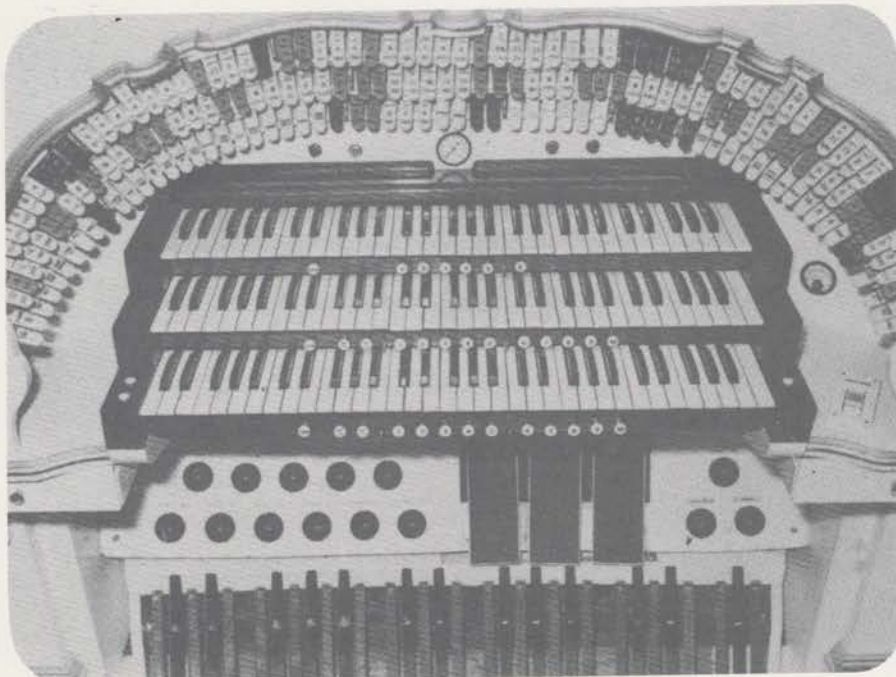


The Manchester Odeon (Paramount) console. A Publix No. 1 seeks a permanent home far from North Tonawanda. Chances look good.

ceeds from the sale of the Trust's records are used to rescue Britain's remaining Lancaster area theatre organs, including the two heard on this recording. The larger one is already removed and in storage, and perhaps the 4/14 is also out of its theatre and into storage by now. As in the case of the 3/13 Compton in the previous review, there seems to be emphasis on brightness in the upper ends of registers which edges on harshness. But, perhaps that's the way the English fans prefer the sound. Anyway, these Tibia tremulants don't chop, on either organ.

Ernest Broadbent has been a prominent theatre organist in Britain since the late '30s (his first BBC-cast was in 1938) and he now holds down the coveted post as organist at the Wurlitzer-equipped Tower Ballroom in the resort town of Blackpool. He serves as President of the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust and he plays like an old pro — smooth, knowledgeable, and effortlessly ("no sweat" in US parlance). Mr. Broadbent apparently has a liking for US tunes because with two or three exceptions his selections are American pop oldies.

First it's concert time on the Odeon 4/20 Wurlitzer, and after the opening radio theme, "For You," we again meet Britain's Sousa, Kenneth Alford, and "Great Little Army" march played with plenty of spirit but no traps. Next an overture, "If I Were King" by Adam, a selection often played by theatre orchestras in the '20s and one particularly adapted to organ presentation, with ever-changing patterns ranging from light and slow to full and violent in the best von Suppé style. There's plenty of nostalgia in the Noel Coward medley. He's as much



The Osset Town Hall console. A sea of stopkeys heightens the 'whale's mouth' vision.



ours as he is Britain's after filling our ears for years with such tunes as "Zigeuner," "Mr. Keen's" "Some Day I'll Find You" (nice Tuba solo, then lush Tibias) and "I'll See You Again." It's Viennese waltz time with Kalman's "Gypsy Princess Waltz" and then there's a difficult to describe novelty titled "Sammun."

Side 2, played on the 4/14 Gaumont Wurlitzer is an almost continual parade of US memory tunes, an Astaire/Rogers set from their films; a "dream" medley ("Dream, Dream a Little Dream of Me" and "I'm a Dreamer"); a Latin set of Paso Dobles, Beguines and a Samba by Sidney Torch; an Irving Berlin waltz medley ("All Alone," "What'll I Do?" and "Because I Love You") and a closing medley of "weather" tunes which includes, among others, "Keep Your Sunnyside Up" and "Singin' in the Rain." This last set is played in a tempo the British refer to as "quick-step" – fast, that is. The bright reeds and pizzicato coupler get a workout here.

Whether Ernest Broadbent is playing a concert overture or a "quick-step," such as "Powder Your Face With Sunshine," he plays with an easy expertise. His tempos, registration and arrangements are impeccable. His music has a nuance which leaves mere words inadequate. His stylings also do much to point up the differences and similarities of the two Wurlitzers. Note that he played his concert pieces on the larger instrument and the pops on the smaller, the latter being a better pop organ, say the jacket notes. The 4/14 seems to have a greater selection of mutation voices in evidence, but both instruments are beauties. We believe this to be the best effort of the Lancastrian Trust to date.

#### – THE PLUG-IN CORNER –

**VARIETY, BUD IVERSON PLAYING THE CONN (Model 650) THEATRE ORGAN, MAS 2012 (stereo). Available at \$5.50 postpaid from Malar Productions, Box 3104, Glendale, Calif. 91201.**

Bud Iverson, a well known name in the California Bay Area, is enjoying increasing concert calls from more distant points, resulting in concerts at such separated points as Seattle and Los Angeles, and played on pipes. For some years Bud has been associated



Bud Iverson. A superb Conn-man.

with the Conn organ, playing concerts for Conn at such nationally known events as the September Annual Home Organ Festival at Asilomar, Calif. So the Conn is his favorite "plug-in" (there are still a few readers who think of the term "plug-in" as a put-down; it is not). In Bud's able hands the Conn often becomes a thing of beauty – when it isn't expressing his pixie humor or ripping off a wild jazz ride. After a rather straight reading of Lecuona's "Malaguena," Bud lets his imagination soar during "Dream a Little Dream of Me," a colorful arrangement with many tempo and registration changes. For "Josephine" he turns on the humor and a touch of corn. Next a novel original, a study in chromatics in three-quarter time – "The Half-Step Waltz." "You Made Me Love You" gets a soupy sentimental reading, but subtle. The current interest in the "rag" as a musical form no doubt prompted Bud to include the lively "Grizzly Bear Rag" to close Side 1. The Side 2 opener is a sprightly reading of Leroy Anderson's "Promenade" which sticks closely to the notation, then an Iverson arranged "Taking a Chance on Love" during which we noticed a huge improvement in the Conn Brush Cymbal effect. It's been a long time since Glenn Miller set the standard for "Tuxedo Junction" and we had forgotten just how lowdown and dirty the Coleman Hawkins classic could sound. Bud milks it for all its unlauded wealth. "Sparkling Burgundy" is a tune with "class," the kind of moving theme silent movie organists used to accompany high society scenes, and that's the way Bud plays it. He's back in a sentimental mood for "Lover Come Back to Me," painting the plea in terms of lush harmonies and subtle shading – until the rhythm

chorus when he lets loose with that top manual full of Tubas, Kinuras and Posthorns. WOW! But our organist saved the best until last, violinist Fritz Kreisler's "Stars in My Eyes." The verse, played on Strings complemented by off-mike piano cascades is novel. Again, all the Iverson skill to make "Stars" a thing of beauty is brought into play and the Conn 650 meets his exacting demands all the way. A remarkable and worthwhile recording.

**MONTAGE, Ron Walls plays the Rodgers model 340. Ronson (stereo) No. RR 101. Available postpaid for \$5.50 from Ronson Records, 2423 Rebecca Layne, Niles, Michigan 49120.**



Ron Walls

When Ron Walls' first recording, made on a Hammond X66, was released we predicted he would gravitate toward pipes; he obtained so many orchestral effects from the X66 and approached the instrument and music from the theatre organist's viewpoint. Well, Ron is getting closer to pipes, if the listener will agree that the Rodgers 340 stands somewhere between the X66 and pipes. As before, Ron's approach is orchestral; he has the makings of a fine orchestral arranger in his grasp. His selections and treatments are chosen to appeal to both young and mature listeners: "I Got Rhythm," "Hymn to Love," "Til Love Touches Your Life," "How High the



Moon," "Begin the Beguine," "If," "Ecstasy Tango," "Brazilian Sleighbells" and "Cotton's Theme" (from "Bless the Beasts & Children"). Each is provided a distinctive arrangement designed to present it most effectively and musically. The Rodgers organ provides the proper facilities; this time Ron doesn't have to work so hard to get the desired effects and the resulting relaxation in his performance is apparent. That doesn't mean he's taking it easy. The complexity of his musical conceptions preclude that. Rather, he's enjoying his miking sessions. The Rodgers serves him well, providing good reed and string voices, a fair Tibia, a baroque sound, a good piano and a very good pizzicato effect. Recording is good and we note that our old friend, Gladys P. Muelbach, was loaned by Lift Records to write the precise jacket notes. You'll be hearing more from Ron Walls. His music wears well. □

— PERFORATED PAPER DEPT. —  
**GAUDIN MELODIES**, the 65-key Victory Gaudin Fair Organ. Amberlee (stereo) AFL-101X. Available at \$5.50 from Doric Records, Box 605, Alamo, Calif. 94507.

This is an 8-rank roll player built about 1914 in Paris by Gaudin Freres. It's sound is more refined than that of most outdoor orchestrations, and therefore the limited registration doesn't pall quickly. At least nineteen of the twenty-seven selections played are familiar to US fans and range from tunes by Lennon & McCartney to Rossini ("Wm. Tell Overture"). This is fun music for the automatic player fans. Recording technique is good. □



## BOOK REVIEW

by F. G. Hibbard

**"MR. BLACKPOOL — REGINALD DIXON M.B.E."** By Peter J. Ashman, 21 Great Break, Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL7 3EZ, England. Price including postage, \$3.00 Surface or \$5.00 Airmail.

Of all the famous theatre organists, Reginald Dixon stands out as one of the greatest, especially in his native country, England. Mr. Ashman, in this book, traces the career of Mr. Dixon from his earliest days and explores his forty year tenure at Blackpool.

The fact that Reginald Dixon held the Blackpool post for so many years is testimony to his popularity and musicianship. When one considers the great number of high quality organists produced in the British Isles during the golden era of theatre organ, it is amazing that one man could be good enough to retain the prized post for so long a period.

Mr. Ashman does a good job of shedding light on the life of Dixon which helps explain how he (Mr. Dixon) maintained his popularity over the years. Dixon comes through as a warm personality and a superb entertainer — a combination hard to beat.

Although the book has to be classed as a "paperback", the quality of paper is far superior to that usually used. Because of this, the 48 photos,

mostly candid, reproduce very well. The book of 179 pages covers the Dixon career, including his war service, anecdotes concerning Blackpool, as well as many reflections of Dixon including his command performances for Her Majesty the Queen.

It should be stated that not only did Reginald Dixon hold forth at Blackpool, but also maintained a series of radio programs and played theatre dates. This combination gave him a tremendous listening audience and ardent fans numbering in the millions.

This reviewer found Mr. Ashman's book very enlightening and well worth reading. □

## Ingling Joins Newport Organs



Harry C. Ingling brings eighteen years experience in the pipe organ field to Newport Organs of Newport Beach, California. Well regarded in the San Francisco Bay Area for his rebuilding and maintenance work, Mr. Ingling will specialize in designing and constructing new and rebuilt instruments and revoicing pipes.

Newport Organs is one of the few firms specializing in custom building. Their activities include multi-rank electronic organs, small pipe units attached to electronic organs and rebuilding pipe organs. Mr. Ingling is presently restoring a 12-ranker for a Ventura, California church. □

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# Closing Chord

On Friday, April 26, 1974 an era came to a close. **Dan Barton**, the last of the great theatre organ builders passed away. He would have been 90 years old this May 30.

Dan Barton was a living tribute to the theatre organ business. Only a person like Dan could start out with the smallest of theatre organs and end by building the largest in the world today. He was the first with many revolutionary ideas. Not only was he a fantastic salesman, but his inventiveness was unsurpassed.

It takes a certain amount of imagination to be a good organ builder and Dan was abundantly endowed. For a while it seemed as though he had lived much past his time and place in the theatre organ field, but he never lost his undaunted and gallant spirit. He was one of the great theatre organ builders of his time and my admiration for what he did is undiminished.

In 1965, the ATOS elected him an honorary member for his achievements.

The funeral was held on Monday at the Seefeld Funeral Home, directly across the street from the site of the Barton Organ Factory.

Dan is survived by his wife, Helen, three sons, George of Oshkosh, Richard of Lubbock, Texas, and David of Leicester, England, 10 Grand-



Dewey and Lorraine, a longtime love affair. This photo was made during the first day of the 1967 Home Organ Festival by Ralph Ehat, hours before Dewey's first heart seizure.

children and three great-grandchildren. He is the son of Daniel and Wilhelmina Barton and was born in Amherst, Wisconsin on May 30, 1884.

Fred Hermes Sr. and Jr., John Hill and Peter Charnon represented Dairyland Theatre Organ Society and the American Theatre Organ Society. Fred Sr. offered his services, played the organ and sang a solo at the funeral.

by John Hill

**Dewey Cagle** was the unchallenged "Mr. Organ" of the Bay Area of California. He could be seen at every gathering of organ enthusiasts within a wide radius of San Francisco, either to aid in the founding of a new organ club, trouble-shoot an ailing one, or

just to enjoy a concert. He couldn't seem to get enough of pipes or plug-ins. He was one of those who spearheaded promotion of the first George Wright concert at the San Francisco Fox in the early '60s. In fact, the organization assembled for that purpose became the Pacific Council for Organ Clubs, an amalgamation of organ dealer's clubs in the Bay Area, which prospered for 10 years under the guidance of Dewey Cagle and Kay Bradley until ill health forced Dewey to resign. But he left a monument, the 15-year-old Home Organ Festival (now under the guidance of Tiny James). The Festival was personally piloted by Dewey and Kay during its formative years at the Hoberg Resort.

Dewey Cagle was born in the Northwest (Chelan, Washington) and was attracted to the theatre organ early in life (the one he loved is still intact and perking in the Chelan Liberty theatre). He came to San Francisco in the mid-30's to pursue an electronics engineering career. While living in a boarding house, Dewey noticed another boarder named Lorraine Cress. The ensuing romance survived World War II. The marriage produced a boy, John, and a girl, Eileen. It survived a continual round of organ events, in addition to Dewey's participation in the publication of THEATRE ORGAN magazine as advertising manager, and serving on the ATOS Board of Directors. Dewey also wrote extensively for the PCOC's TABS & DRAWBARS. His backlog of record reviews continues in that Bay Area publication.



Dan at Christmas, 1972 showing photo of stadium presented to Dan by Fred Gollnick. - (John Hill Photo)



In 1967 Dewey suffered a heart attack on the first day of the Home Organ Festival. He wisely turned over the Festival reigns to others but his interest never flagged. He took time off from his electronics engineering job as necessary. There were several more seizures, then the massive one on April 1 of this year. Dewey was 61.

The little Oakland funeral chapel was overflowing with Dewey Cagle's friends and colleagues, a veritable "Who's Who" of Bay Area organ enthusiasts who had come to bid farewell to the likable guy with whom they had so much in common.

STU GREEN



*Letters to the Editor concerning all aspects of the theatre organ hobby are encouraged. Send them to the editor concerned. Unless it's stated clearly on the letter "not for publication," the editors feel free to reproduce it, in whole or part.*

*Address: P.O. Box 1314  
Salinas, Calif. 93901*

Dear Mr. Thompson:

A new era for theatre organ has begun and it would seem that the center of it will be Center City, U.S.A. That's why this citizen, in moving to Wichita, is moving to the future. For this Southerner, it will be going home spiritually, for the people there have proved to be as warm hearted, generous, lovable and music loving as people in the South. Their approach to each other and all of life makes for a life style in parallel to the great Southern traditions in which the writer was reared. As a matter of fact, the *only* thing Center City folks lack is a Southern accent! (Hmmm; perhaps that's my cue for teaching a language course on the side!) In ways both musical and personal, it will be coming full circle in this man's life . . . and the

time for that has come.

The exotic variety of challenges and satisfactions, the many musical successes and joys and the dear friends of New York, *all* will hold my heart ever in deepest gratitude to God for the years and ways in which Nineveh-on-Hudson has Blessed me. Now . . . I'm going to do exactly what the world famous theatre organ in the New York Paramount Theatre did and go to the city beginning its Century II. That wonderful old gal, the Statue of Liberty, will be the first to understand because, she is where she is for reminding us all to use our God given liberty well.

In Wichita . . . that clean, beautiful, happy city of blue skies and south Florida sunshine and Atlanta/Richmond traditions . . . is the genesis of a great new adventure in music and living. I want to be a part of and grow with that adventure . . . and so . . . I'm moving to the Future.

"Wichita Lineman,"  
BILLY NALLE

Gentlemen:

Once again, I'm thankful and proud to carry my Charter Membership Card for 1974.

I regret that I'm unable to be with all of you at our National Conventions because of being ill and am down here in Las Vegas to recuperate. I had a stroke at the organ, while playing for a hockey game and Mrs. Melgard had a serious operation and after almost 8 months of absolute rest, our Doctor said we were doing very good and of all the darn things, I WOULD get the 'Shingles' and had to visit him twice weekly for 5 weeks more! Well, I'm pleased to say he gave us his O.K. and we are really going to see THE TOWN for a change!

When the weather gets warmer in Chicago, we will fly up there to visit the Wirtz'es and our close friends, etc.

Enough of our troubles, so back to you and thanks again for my Charter Member card and — May all that is GOOD come to all ATOS's and their families!

Sincerely,  
"Al"

Dear Editor:

Mr. Walter Draughon, in the Feb. issue wonders about an organist \_\_\_\_\_ (?) Wilchar? Could it have been Louise Wilshire who I remember playing the "WOR" Wurlitzer

back in the early forties.

Incidentally the WOR organ was used frequently in that era by Kay Reed and Bill Wirges. Kay recently retired from radio station WNEW. I would guess she was with them for forty years.

Bill Wirges passed away about two years ago. He was one of the most active freelance organists in the radio and early TV days. He played the WMCA Organ (Now at the Kirkof Dunedin) at least three shows daily during the forties. This was sandwiched in with conducting jobs, and Hammond jobs at the Nets. Bill was also a prolific composer and publisher. One of his most successful numbers being the "Chiquita Banana" commercial which became a hit in the late forties.

Sincerely,  
Arnold Nocks

Dear Mr. Thompson,

This letter will cover three topics, so I hope it will not be too long. Firstly, as a result of Bob Longfield's 'der Wurlitzer orgels' article in last June's T.O. concerning Telefunken organ records, I have sought information from Douglas Badham, Chairman of the Cinema Organ Society. The results are as follows: —

ERNST FISCHER: The records listed were two out of a total of fourteen 10"-78 r.p.m. disks of an unspecified Wurlitzer. Two others were issued on the 'Gloria' label of an unspecified Welte, one of which was also issued on the English 'Parlophone' label, number R1790, the items being "Spinning Wheel" and "When a Thousand Tiny Stars".

GERD THOMAS: The titles given by Mr. Longfield *appear* to be the 'A' sides of a couple of 10" Telefunken (the 'B' sides were by Ernst Fischer). Additionally, two more such Telefunken records were also issued, four on the 'Polydor' label and one on 'Gloria'. This last was re-issued on English 'Parlophone', number R1188, the items being "Greetings to Sanssouci" and "Vision of Fuji-San". All these records were of an unspecified Wurlitzer.

ADOLPH WOLFF: This organist recorded nineteen 10"-78 r.p.m. Telefunken records at an unspecified Wurlitzer.

HANS HORST OSTERLOCH: Mr. Badham has one 10"-78 of this organist on Telefunken, number M6310,



recorded at a 2-6 Wurlitzer. Apparently no other records were issued of Herr Osterloh. So perhaps he was not the same person as Han-Henning Osterloh, mentioned by Mr. Longfield, although the Kristall Palastes organ is given in Judd Walton's magnum opus as a 165 Special (i.e. 2-6.)

**HORST HANNS SIEBER:** This organist made two 10"-78 solo disks and one with a pianist at an unspecified Wurlitzer on Telefunken label, number A2254. He is also reported to have played with Parlophone's 'Orchestra Mascotte' on certain records.

Other Telefunken organists — **ERWIN CHRISTOPH:** He made one 10" record on Telefunken, four records on Polydor label and three on Imperial/Kristall at unspecified Wurlitzer(s). There were 'Tempo' label recordings of him at the 2-8 Wurlitzer in the UFA Palast-am-Zoo in Berlin (one), and at the Kamera, Unter den Linden, Berlin, on the 2-5 Wurlitzer (two, of which Mr. Badham has one). Also he had two disks on the 'Hymnocord' label, apparently under the alias of Billy Dixie.

**HEINRICH REITHMÜLLER:** This organist had three 10"-78 Telefunken records 'with rhythm' at the Welte organ in the NDR broadcasting studios in Hamburg, and four disks at the organ, with a vocalist, on 'Odeon' label. Mr. Badham has three records of Herr Reithmüller, one on Parlophone label, one on 'Electrola' with orchestra, and one on German HMV with orchestra (one side only, the other is of orchestra alone).

**ALBERT ESPAGNE:** This gentleman played, with an orchestra, on a couple of Belgian Telefunken 10"-78 r.p.m. records.

It is almost certain that none of the in-theatre organs remain. However, there is also the Siemens Villa Wurlitzer in Berlin, but Mr. Badham knows of no records of this organ (which the writer visited in September, 1968 — see the relevant Vox Pop on page 23 of the December, 1968, T.O.B.). It would seem surprising if no records were made there, although it was a private installation originally. As for any of the organists still being alive, a tempus fugit — we are all older now than when we started reading this issue of the magazine! — and there was also that little matter of World War II.

The second topic I would mention, if I may make so bold as to dare to correct my good friend (I hope) Ray

Brubacher, concerns his (one-time BBC) Möller article in the October T.O. Ray refers to the first BBC Theatre Organ as having 36 ranks. Actually the Compton had but 22 units, 24 ranks (plus Melotone and Grand Pianoforte), according to the British magazine *Theatre Organ Review* of September, 1957. However, Reg Foort listed an additional rank, Violin Celeste, in his booklet, reprinted in the Vestal Press edition of Mr. Foort's Book *The Cinema Organ*. Also Ray, Sandy Macpherson was appointed to succeed Reginald Foort in late 1938, earlier than "shortly after the war began".

The last topic concerns the projected Regional Convention over here in 1976. Preliminary plans are being mulled over, and it looks as though we may plan a two-centre event, with several days in the London and South-East England area, and several days in the Manchester area, to include principally Blackpool but also, it is hoped, another notable Northern location. Travel and accommodation arrangements will have to be worked out with the travel agency/airline from your end. But I would recommend any members envisaging a trip to Europe to plan it for 1976!

Michael Candy



## CONVENTION FEATURE



# ONE MAN BAND

Vic Hyde — the musical phenomenon — is the performing example of the show business golden rule, leave 'em laughing! Everywhere he puts on his astonishing act he does exactly that . . . and leaves 'em asking for more. Night clubs, theatres, ballrooms, TV and radio — all cheered their audiences through the musical madcappery and humorous patter that makes Vic Hyde a most sought after one-man show.

Previous Detroit appearances included a booking at the enormous Fox theatre in 1933 as a stooge with Olsen and Johnson, appearances at the Michigan Theatre, the Downtown Theatre, Club Royale, conventions at the (at the time) Book Cadillac Hotel, Statler Hotel, Cobo Hall and frequent engagements at the Elmwood Casino in Windsor. After a command performance for Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, getting world publicity, his home town of Niles, Michigan made him its "Honorary Mayor". □





## CHAPTER NOTES

### ALABAMA

Anyone who has followed the Alabama chapter news in the past has probably noted this correspondent's frequent mention of the variety in our programs. At first glance, then, the programs for March and April would seem to depart from our apparent aim toward continued variety.

In March, Jim Ferguson's voice with Charles Durham at the console of the Mighty Wurlitzer opened a new and different dimension to Alabama chapter members, who had grown accustomed to strictly organ programs — however varied they were.

This was Jim and Charles' first appearance together — and in spite of a P.A. system that left much to be desired and little or no opportunity to rehearse at the theatre — their program came off well and was well received. Their program included something for everyone, and Charles rounded it out with some beautiful solos.

In April, Norville Hall and Danny Keil combined their talents to present

their "Tribute to Spring." Norville opened his program with ten selections which were omitted from the printed program and we were told to try to name them ourselves. It wasn't hard — they were all familiar old favorites.

Later, young Danny Keil joined Norville with several beautiful renditions of well known songs. They were a good combination. Both programs combined voice and organ. There, the semblance ended. Danny and Jim offered two distinct styles in their vocal contributions, and Norville and Charles are miles apart in their organ styles. So, for Alabama members, variety is still the name of the game.

Our work crew has grown to a point that plans are being made for two work sessions each month. We have almost as many women participating as men, giving us an opportunity to really participate. We all find it is a wonderful way to get better acquainted.

ALLEEN COLE

### CENTRAL INDIANA

With spring just around the corner I realize I have gotten far, far behind with my reporting. Something happened to that "new leaf" I planned to turn over at the beginning of 1974! So now instead of writing about spring, it's back to the snow and cold to bring us up to date.

November's meeting was held at Bill Lay's music store in Indianapolis. Highlighting this meeting was an educational session conducted by Ken Double. His discussion covered different methods of creating variety in playing style and arrangements through changes in registration, rhythm and key signatures. There is much interest in this educational series, so ably presented by Ken. Our thanks to the Bill Lays for hosting this meeting.

The December meeting is always one of our best. The festive season, the beautiful huge white flocked Christmas tree, and the lovely home of our president, Tim Needler, who is such a gracious host, start the holiday season off perfectly! After a short business meeting, Mr. Harry Campbell, noted ragtime and jazz pianist, gave a most interesting program. Mr. Campbell appeared in pit orchestras all over the city of Indianapolis in the early days, as well as in night clubs and local bands. His program consisted mostly of music from the theatre organ era, with unique interpretations of Duke Ellington, Scott Joplin and many others. A special thanks to Tess Moses, our refreshment chairman, who has



In March Charles Durham was at the Alabama console with vocalist Jim Ferguson. — (Photo by Thomas L. Hatter)



In April singer Danny Keil joined Norville Hall in another program of voice and organ. — (Photo by Thomas L. Hatter)



done an outstanding job this past year.

Also to add spice to the day in December was the opportunity to make sweet music on Tim's variety of instruments. He has two grand pianos (one a player grand), a rinky-tink upright, his Conn Artist model organ, a vibraharp and his newest addition, a C2 Hammond.

As the new year begins, we look forward to many new and interesting things under the able leadership of re-elected Tim Needler. Tim did a fantastic job last year, interjecting many new ideas, and with excellent cooperation and support, brought a successful and interesting year of accomplishment and fun.

January's meeting was rather small due to icy roads, snowy weather, and the energy crisis, however, the 26 members that braved the bad weather enjoyed the hospitality of hostess Farilyn Stone at her Indianapolis apartment and open console on her Lowery Lincolnwood organ and Weber grand piano.

Another well attended and looked-forward-to meeting is always the February meeting at the home of Les and Tess Moses. A very full meeting included another educational session presented by Ken Double covering the areas of key changes, counter melody and fill-ins. Open console time followed on the Moses' Deluxe Serenade Model Conn.

The March meeting at the lovely home of Bud and Ada Fisher was well attended and extremely full of interesting happenings. We were thrilled to have Dennis and Heidi James with us. Dennis has been appearing in many concerts all over the country and has since played a concert at St. Patrick's

Cathedral and presented his senior recital in the Indiana University Auditorium in Bloomington on March 18. Dennis and Heidi have a brand new recording, and I might add a terrific one. At the meeting they played several numbers together, then each performed separately. Heidi is an accomplished concert pianist. Also present to perform on the Fisher's 3-manual Conn was Jimmy Boyer, another of Indianapolis' theatre organ era personalities. We are happy to have Jimmy back after recovering from surgery several months ago. Open console time followed on the Conn, to which the Fisher's have added many extras, including electronic pipes and a Glockenspiel.

RUTH D. WARD

### CENTRAL OHIO

Our March meeting was held at St. Joseph's Academy for Girls in Columbus. The organ, installed in the gym, is a 2/7 Robert Morton purchased from Radio Station WBNS. Originally it was six ranks. The seventh, added for liturgical work, is a Harmonic Flute on a Marr & Colton chest. According to Dave Billmire, who, together with Willard Ebner, tune the organ for our meetings, the very fiery French Trumpet alone is worth a visit. Willard Ebner, who worked in the field of pipe organ, assisted with the installation at the Academy. President Frank Babbitt was first at the console with many members following during open console.

The last concerts of the organ series at the Ohio Theatre brought us Hector Olivera and Gaylord Carter. Hector received two standing ovations and applause, applause — richly deserved.

Stage Manager Joe Worman also deserves applause for his lighting effects.

Gaylord Carter, so special to all of us in ATOS, not only deserves the applause he received for his talent accompanying the silent *My Best Girl* with Mary Pickford and Buddy Rogers, plus his use of the Wonder Morton, but also for the way he shares the spotlight giving credit to others who have made possible the perfection being attained at the Ohio Theatre.

The revoicing of the reeds of the Robert Morton, expressly for the production of the album "Puttin' on the Ritz" with Dennis and Heidi James, was realized with their contribution of sufficient records to offset the cost. With Dennis and Heidi in the audience Gaylord called on them to accept our applause.

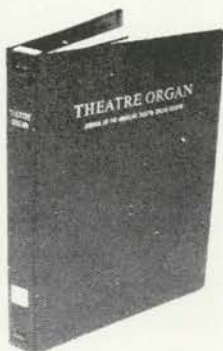
In tribute to Mary Pickford and our own chapter member, Mary Bishop, Gaylord played "Mary Is a Grand Old Name." Mary Bishop's efforts to save the Ohio Theatre and to restore the theatre to its present beauty represent a contribution of untold hours of devoted attention. We are tremendously proud of Mary and of her achievements.

Ann and Tom Hamilton hosted our April meeting giving us another chance to hear and play their custom built Rodgers-Morton. (see June, 1973 THEATRE ORGAN for details of organ). During the business meeting we were informed that one of our local churches was considering replacing their theatre style pipe organ with an electronic. Two of our members, Dave Billmire and Ed Smith, visited the church to inspect the organ at their request. Ed, who operates his own company for rebuilding and installing pipe organs, offered to teach a group of church members how to maintain the organ. A very nice way of saving another pipe organ.

The social part of the evening began with Tom Hamilton playing a tape which is a composite of five artists who had appeared in concert at the Ohio Theatre and later were taped playing Tom's Rodgers-Morton. Members were offered the choice of listening to the tape or going off to play the organ. All elected to listen to the tape and all agreed they had made the right choice. Many members played during open console including Dave Billmire. We should hear from him more often.

IRENE BLEGEN

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CATOE Chairman Russ Joseph presents recognition plaque to Mr. and Mrs. Bill Rieger at Evanston High social. — (Photo by Tom Tibia)

## CHICAGO AREA

An early March social found members of the Chicago Area Chapter in the modern auditorium of Evanston Township High School. The organ is a 4/30 hybrid donated by one of the school's alumni, noted organ expert Dr. William H. Barnes (Dr. Barnes was remarried Apr. 27. He is 81). After a business meeting to adopt new by-laws, Walt Strojny was presented at the organ. He is an 18 year old student at Chicago's Sherwood Music School whom CATOE has watched grow up since the days of his first organ lessons with Al Melgard. Only one classic piece was on the program, a Schubert sonata, as the organ is very romantic sounding and lends itself to more popular selections. They included "My Hero" from Oscar Strauss' *The Chocolate Soldier* and "My Way". Of particular note was Walt's transcription of the Robert Russell Bennet score from *Victory at Sea*. CATOE is proud to have watched Walt Strojny develop into a mature, competent musician. The Board of Directors has selected him to play the cameo appearance at the Redford Theatre during the Detroit convention in July.

The first CATOE concert of 1974 featured Frank Pellico and Rosemary Bailey at the 3/17 Barton in the Patio Theatre on March 28. The program was another sell-out. Frank Pellico is official organist for the Chicago Cubs

at Wrigley Field. Rosemary Bailey is a concert demonstrator for Hammond Organ. She learned theatre organ technique in lessons from Kay McAbee. Important news announced that night was that the Internal Revenue Service had granted CATOE tax exemption as a result of much effort by CATOE counsel Richard P. Glover.

CATOE also held a tuning workshop in March. It was in the shop of organ builder Kurt Roderer. Mr Roderer is known locally for his fine organ construction, especially new tracker organs. He is also currently rebuilding and enlarging the Skinner at Rockefeller Memorial Chapel. He spent a Saturday morning showing members basics about pipe voicing and tuning.

Mark Noller was featured organist at the April 6 social. His program at the Montclare Theatre avoided the usual theatre organ fare. *King of Kings* from the 1960s version of the Easter story contrasted with "Stay With Me" from *The Cardinal*. LeRoy Anderson's "Plink, Plank, Plunk" contrasted with "Anchor's Aweigh." Mark deliberately chose his program to be a quiet one in order to show off the results of the tonal work which the new Montclare organ crew has done on the 3/10 Barton. It has been the operating "philosophy" of crew leader Bill Benedict and technician Gary Bergmark that Dan Barton knew more

about organ building than they do. They have tried to return the organ to the way Barton installed it. Returning it to its original wind pressures has done wonders. Members marvel at the quality of the sound now heard at the Montclare.

During May CATOE presented the sensational South American, Hector Olivera in a return engagement, this time at the Oriental Theatre. A feature of that program was a cameo appearance by CATOE Honorary Life Member Al Melgard. Al and his wife were flown in from their retirement home in Las Vegas especially for the event. Melgard retired last June after 44 years as staff organist at the Chicago Stadium's 6/62 Barton, the largest unit organ ever installed.

RICHARD J. SKLENAR

## CONNECTICUT VALLEY

Our February 9 meeting was held at the Crystal Palace in West Goshen, Conn. It is owned by member John Starr and is an ideal place for meetings, a large hall with real theatre seats, a 3-manual Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ and other various musical items.

After an hour or so of open console, member Peter Piliero gave a fine demonstration of re-covering pneumatics, using the new "Perflex-E" plastic replacement for leather and cloth. This was one of a number of technical sessions we have had and will continue to have. They have been well received.

Phil Stock, our accomplished member organist, presented us with a fine evening's program interspersed with interesting comments prompted by his years of professional theatre organ playing. The program included some classical, ragtime, popular, jazz and other numbers, mostly arranged in medleys.

On Sunday, March 10, two bus loads of us went to Radio City Music Hall, New York, to hear a concert by the Music Hall's new staff organist, James Paulin, Jr. This concert was arranged by the New York chapter. It was heartening to see about 1000 people gathered at 9 A.M. on a Sunday to hear a theatre organ concert. They got their money's worth and then some. This fine young organist is competently at ease at the mighty Music Hall console.

Our annual scholarship competition is shaping up and we look forward



again to some talented playing by the young people in the competition.

We had scheduled a February concert at Thomaston by Lowell Ayers, but he was forced to cancel because of illness. We hope to hear him another time.

Our next concert at Thomaston Opera House, which houses a 3/11 Marr & Colton, was on April 27th with Tom Hazleton at the console. This was Tom's first visit to Thomaston.

Our Thomaston crew is busy adding additional ranks to the Marr & Colton, and Tom Hazleton had the benefit of them in April.

We have two new installations scheduled to get underway. Theatre pipe organs will be installed in the Sterling Opera House in Derby, Conn. and in the High School at Shelton, Conn. Meanwhile, Mike Foley's installation at the Windham Technical School in Willimantic progresses, as does continuing restoration work on the 3/11 Wurlitzer in the Julia Sanderson Theatre (formerly Paramount) in Springfield, Mass.

Our April meeting (Saturday, the 6th) was exceptional, indeed; in fact, it has been ten years since a similar program was undertaken. As usual, our day was an afternoon-evening schedule.

Obviously, the piece-de-resistance of this excellent day's program was the afternoon tour of the Austin Organ Co. facilities. Here we were treated, most cordially, to a close look at organ building in all its stages.

The size of the turn-out and the various comments overheard made it very clear that those who had witnessed organ building previously were as intrigued as the uninitiated.

Since Saturday was not a scheduled work day, the factory premises could accommodate our large group of 66 people. The Austin management had very graciously arranged to have enough artisans in the plant to enable all visitors to witness the various operations of organ manufacture.

It was a most memorable event on our calendar and we are most grateful to all those in the Austin organization who had a part in making us so welcome. These include, of course, our charter member Allen Miller, Assistant to the President of the Austin Organ Co.

A business session always goes more smoothly in appropriate surroundings and better than the Miller organ studio

there are not, so our business matters were completed on time, following dinner.

After the business session, concert time was shared by three artists, Al Miller (he's a busy one!) Ev Bassett and Bob Carangelo. Al gave us "Me Too", "Deep Night", "Dancing on the Ceiling", a Burt Bacharach number, closing with a medley of tunes from "42nd Street", all nicely done, as is usual with Al.

Ev Bassett played for us "Smile When You're Feeling Blue", "The Gypsy", "Mona Lisa", and "I Want to Be Happy", all in his own theatre organ styling.

Bob Carangelo did a fine job with "Jean", the lovely "Ebb Tide", and "Black Orpheus". We'd like to hear Bob more frequently.

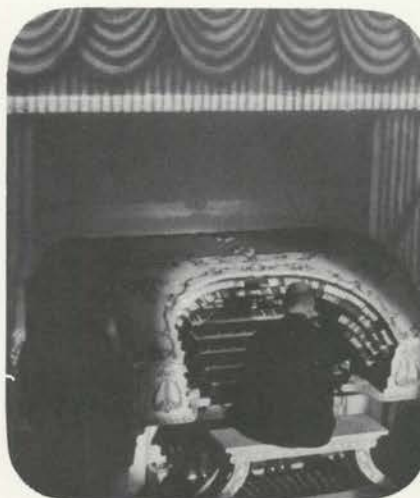
Bob was followed by open console time, the concluding hour on the calendar of a highly interesting day.

WALLACE F. POWERS, JR.

## DAIRYLAND

Despite rain and fog, 90 people from Dairyland and Land O'Lincoln chapters turned out at the home of Fred Hermes, January 20th for a combined social with Kay McAbee at the console.

Upon being introduced, McAbee quickly disappeared behind the great, gold curtain. Suddenly a thunderous blast was heard from the organ. The curtains parted and the console rose with McAbee playing "Just One of Those Things". The console was surrounded by a brenograph effect of a curtained proscenium arch in colors of



Kay McAbee at the Hermes console with Brenograph background. — (John Hill Photo)

magenta, yellow, and green. The effect captivated the audience. Kay closed the first half of the show with the old standby, "Tea for Two". The console descended and a collection of comic slides appeared on the screen, including an advertising slide for the Hermes Insurance Company.

Fred Hermes then entertained us with a silent movie, *School Days* with Larry Semon. After an exchange of gags between Fred Sr. at the console and Jr., in the booth, the film appeared on the screen. The hilarious comedy was enhanced by Fred's superb accompaniment.

While waiting for Kay to return to the console, Hermes opened the floor for questions about the organ. Kay arrived just in time to save Fred from having to explain where the speakers were. Fred cautioned Kay not to play the Tibias without the tremulants and Kay opened the second half of the show with the "Zampa" Overture.

After a number of selections, Kay concluded with his signature, "Land of the Pharaoh's".



Rick Johnson played the Feb. social on the 2/11 Wangerin. — (John Hill Photo)

Despite a terrible snow and ice storm on Friday, a faithful group of 25 members turned up at Milwaukee technical School on Sunday, February 24th to hear Rick Johnson in his first public appearance at the console of the 2/11 Wangerin organ.

Rick played a program of classical numbers that gave us a chance to hear the excellent pipe work that was used by Wangerin. The organ is suited for classical music, although it is limited in the registration possibilities due to the arrangement of the specification and limited unification. In spite of this difficulty, Johnson presented a fine and varied program of classical music, excellently played.



Milwaukee Technical High School is to be the future home of the 3/28 Kimball from the Warner Theatre. Plans are being discussed to possibly enlarge the present organ chamber to a size large enough to hold the Kimball. It will be necessary to alter the auditorium to enlarge the chamber.

The March 17th social was held at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Harvey Kuhlman. A 3/15 Wicks home theatre organ is installed in their studio. Brian Gerl was the organist and this is the first time he has played for Dairyland. His program was varied and showed a strong training in classical music and style, although he played popular music on the instrument. Open console was held at the close of Gerls performance and everyone had a chance to play the Wicks.

Work crews have been busy since the first of the year adding the clubs 16' Tibia to the organ in the Avalon Theatre. Rick Johnson, Fred Hermes Jr. and John Hill installed the Tibia while others, recovered the swell shade pneumatics. Jimm Brill, Fred and Rick handled this project. Carl Chadek, Greg Filardo, and Bob Leutner wired in the Tibia.

While the organ work proceeded, Louise Dove and Candy Brill cleaned and decorated a dressing room for artists to relax in. The job was a big one, as the room had not been used for anything except a store room for 20 years.

All the work paid off on April 2, when Lyn Larsen presented the best concert Dairyland has ever had. A record attendance turned out on Academy Awards night to hear Lyn. The show was a tremendous success and we have had calls and letters from audience members in record numbers thanking Lyn for the excellent show and asking for shows more often.

On April 21, Bob Coe presented a concert for the April Social at First



Lyn Larsen at the 3/8 Wurlitzer, Avalon Theatre. — (Roger Wetterau Photo)

Congregational Church in Whitewater, Wisconsin on a 4/26 hybrid he has assembled with the help of the church and friends. The program was presented as a group of medleys on various themes and was the most relaxing social we have had this year.

Four Dairyland members traveled to Oshkosh on April 29th for the funeral of Dan Barton. Fred Hermes Sr. & Jr., Pete Charnon and John Hill represented the Dairyland Theatre Organ Society and the American Theatre Organ Society.

Others at the funeral were Mrs. Walter Gollnick, Richard Gollnick and his wife and Fred Gollnick. Walter Gollnick was Dan Bartons chief installer and helped Dan to develop the Bartola. Fred Gollnick has followed in his fathers foot steps and is now in the organ business.

PETE CHARNON

### EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

The March meeting at Babson College held surprising and very pleasing revelations for many members and guests who had not heard the club organ since the November meeting when we last met at Babson. At that

meeting the organ was, at best, a musical noise maker with great potential, resembling in fact a Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ. Four months later at the March meeting the unit orchestra came together and played quite well, thanks to the devoted organ work crews in their untiring efforts to meet the May 18 Larry Ferrari spring concert deadline. This was a sound that especially impressed the members who were not close to the organ installation project. Some 40 minutes of console artistry by Bob Legon and Al Winslow were followed by a brief business meeting and then two excellent silent movies accompanied at the organ by Legon and Winslow. A much awaited open console time arrived to satisfy the pent-up appetites of several who had never had the opportunity to play such an instrument before.

The April meeting was also a time for startling revelations. Through the good hospitality of Frank Huard, vice president of Boston Organ and Piano, Natick, Mass., we gathered around two of the latest model Rodgers theatre organs, the Marquee and Olympic. Most members expressed pleasure at the remarkable authenticity of theatre pipe organ sound and feeling obtainable from these instruments. Interestingly, after several opening numbers performed by Mark Renwick, chapter president Chavanne was unable to coerce anyone else to play, as if we were an organ club without organists. Finally he sat at the console to break the "log jam." This was reminiscent of previous meetings when club members were reluctant to tackle a large, much respected theatre pipe organ for the first time. Many lingered on until the late hours as they gradually conquered their apprehensions and fears, and tackled both instruments. Hear that Tibia!

ERLE RENWICK



The console of the 4/26 organ in the First Congregational Church, Whitewater, Wisconsin; organist Bob Coe presented the April social on this powerhouse. — (Roger Wetterau Photo)



The console of the Kuhlman Wicks. — (Roger Wetterau Photo)



## GARDEN STATE

Wow! was the chorused reaction of some 80 members of GSTOS and the Central Jersey Chapter of the AGO on Sat., April 6, when 15 year old Rick DeKarski took his final encore bow, after an hour concert that kept the audience spellbound and the Old Rahway Theatre's "Biggest Little Wurlitzer" almost smoking.

In that hour, those in attendance were treated to every conceivable type of music that a theatre organ can provide, with some of the most imaginative arrangements ever heard. It was a performance that equalled, if not surpassed similar efforts by some of the country's leading artists.

It all started at age eight, when a small Magnus chord organ was given Rick's dad as a "joke" Christmas gift. Rick immediately commandeered it, and started picking out songs by ear. Lessons soon followed and a full size electronic entered the house. He is currently studying with Jerry Mendelson.

Then one cold Sunday in January, 1970, a tall 12 year old wandered into the Rahway Theatre after church, where he was and still is organist, and stood before the Rahway's 2/7 console with eyes a poppin' and mouth agape. He hasn't missed many weekends since, unless it's to venture to another theatre to play another mighty T.O.

Just about a month prior to his April concert, a last minute call arrived from Brooklyn, N. Y. It seems Jim Leaffe, house organist at LIU had to tape a TV show, and could not find a substitute to play the LIU basketball game on the ex-Brooklyn Paramount 4/26 Wurlitzer. From the phone call, through the game and for several weeks afterward, Rick boasted a full ear to ear grin, which was also echoed by all who heard him that night. To put it in Rick's own words, after the game was over, he looked up into the expanse of the great old Paramount auditorium and said, "O God, I hope heaven is like this and has one of these (Wurlitzers) there." I don't think he has to worry, as Hope-Jones has been there for a while, and I am sure he has seen to it.

All in all, we are proud and thrilled to have an exciting new talent on the horizon. Look out Detroit this summer. He'll be there.

It seems every spring, when we put on our annual silent film show at



Ingredients for a great cake!

Rahway, we ask ourselves, "How can we possibly top this year?" Well, when you mix your ingredients well, you just have to bake a great cake. So with a Mighty Wurlitzer in perfect shape, an enthusiastic crowd of 750, a perfect acoustical setting, a sing-along and a brand new print of the silent western classic, *Riders of the Purple Sage* (1925) with Tom Mix, all put together and topped off with Ashley Miller at the console, you have a gourmet's delight.



A pleased Ashley Miller takes a well deserved bow to a great ovation after the fadeout of *Riders of the Purple Sage*.

A special treat to area folk was the surprise showing of a Chamber of Commerce film of Rahway, made right after WWII, with many memories of places and races. This was the concluding event of the first half of the program which featured Ashley, in concert at his very best. It was a superb performance.

The second half saw Ashley appear in a complete cowboy outfit, boots and all. He 'mounted' the steed named Wurlitzer, and as Tom Mix mounted Tony, they both soared off to unparalleled artistic heights for the next hour. The thunderous ovation at the

end said it all. The program committee sure has their work cut out for them next year!

BOB BALFOUR

## LOS ANGELES

These past months have been busy ones. In addition to our busy schedule of concerts and 'jam sessions,' we scheduled a weekend trip (May 4 and 5) to Death Valley. We joined ATOS members from Northern California to brave the hot desert sands to hear Rex Koury play the 3/11 Welte organ at Scotty's Castle. Chapter Chairman Ray Bonner organized the whole affair, which carried two busloads of LA-ATOS members over the longest organ crawl in our memory. Your reporter brought along his "Stomach Steinway" (Accordion) on the bus, so it was "Pipes and Polkas." A report will be made in this column in the next issue.

The March 17 St. Patrick's Day concert featured Bud Iverson, who was preceded by the first stalker in LA-ATOS history. Chapter Chairman Bonner, Program Chairman Del Castillo, and organ maintenance Chief Leonard Worne arrived early, to find to their horror a man sitting on the stage in the last stages of undressing. He was working on his socks. Out went the house lights and shortly thereafter in came the fuzz. He was quickly redressed and escorted out, and it was established that he was definitely not a member of ATOS. The artist, Bud Iverson, was BARELY rattled by all this and proved to the Los Angeles audience that his musicianship is as good on pipes as it is on electronic organs. He played a lilting "Gold and Silver Waltz," a Henry



A stalker in the house? Organist Bud Iverson seems amazed. That's LA Chapter Program Chairman Del Castillo (left) looking on, undistracted by the pretty girl facing him. — (Stufoto)



Mancini medley, and then a set dedicated to the energy crisis: "Walking My Baby Back Home," "Button Up Your Overcoat," and "The World is Waiting for the Sunrise" (Daylight Saving Time). The audience had a laugh at the opening of the second half, when Program Chairman Del Castillo appeared sitting on the precise spot from which the stalker had been removed — taking off his shoes. Agile



Donna Parker answers questions from the audience concerning the Wiltern organ during intermission. — (Stufoto)

Del got to his feet, thanked Donna Parker for her explanation of how the organ worked to interested parties during intermission, made his announcements, and welcomed Bud back for his "second rising" this time to the familiar "Petite Waltz." Bud was also heard by a group of San Francisco enthusiasts who made the 400-mile trip to hear his concert.

The April concert featured Ann Leaf, who brought forth beautiful sounds from the Wiltern Kimball, with her renditions of "Pieces of Dreams," Selections from *Cabaret*, and Ferde Grofe's "Two Shades of Blue." Her varied program also featured "Marche Militaire Francaise" and closed with the "Washington Post March." Our chapter is initiating a series of teaching seminars conducted by well-known organists/instructors. The first, to be given June 9, will be by Bill Irwin, who will spend a full day with members, doing the same type of instructional program that he will take around the country later this year. We will have similar programs by various organists every 2 to 3 months.



ATOS invades the ORGANIST magazine's plug-in "Adventure." Examining the pipe display (l to r) are LA Chapter "Veep" Malin Dollinger, Chairman Ray Bonner, Talent Scout (for concerts) Del Castillo, Mrs. Bonner and Joe Koons. — (Bob Hill Photo)



Ann Leaf was in especially fine form for her Wiltern concert. Her program was varied, ranging from The Way We Were to Zez Confrey tunes, plus an ambitious Hoe-down by classical composer Aaron Copland. The diminutive Ann was swamped by admirers in the lobby following her concert. She is seen here signing her Senate theatre album for ATOSer Merle Bobzien, a member of the Wiltern maintenance crew. Ann has been "laying them in the aisles" ever since she first gained national recognition through her CBS "Nocturne" radiocasts. — (Photo by Bob Hill)

Scheduled for the May concert at the Wiltern 4-manual organ were Dennis and Heidi James in an organ/piano duo concert.

LA-ATOS had a display booth at the early April Home Organist's Ad-

venture in Long Beach, through the courtesy of Bill Worrall. It featured a "display rank" of various reed and flue pipes set up by member Joe Koons. This display was donated by Joe to the chapter and will be seen by the public attending our monthly concerts.

MALIN DOLLINGER

#### MOTOR CITY

The "Second Sunday" series, sponsored by Motor City to increase public awareness of theatre pipe organs, is gaining in popularity at the Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor. It is held on the second Sunday morning of every month. Some 150 people attended the March 10 "Second Sunday" in Ann Arbor to hear three artists at the 3/13 Barton: Jim Ford, who played a rag-time program, Bud Bates, who concentrated on the music of 1928 and Rupert and Alice Otto, whose organ and piano duets ranged from current show tunes to the classics. An open console session followed.

Lyn Larsen appeared at the Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor on Wednesday evening, April 3, before an audience that numbered close to 1000. Lyn's opening number was made even more spectacular by the appearance of a rotating mirrored ball just below the proscenium arch and changing lighting effects. On the screen we saw a Kinogram newsreel and the 1924 feature, *Sherlock, Jr.* starring Buster Keaton, both ably accompanied by Lyn at the 3/13 Barton.

Perhaps the high point of Lyn's many numbers that filled out the



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In keeping with the silent movie atmosphere, chapter members Dolores Frank, Dolores and Ron Werner, dress for the occasion of Lee Erwin accompanying *Seventh Heaven* at the Redford. — (Jerry McCray Photo)

balance of his program, were variations on the Mickey Mouse Club theme as it might have been done by five composers from Bach to The Carpenters. Included in the audience that night in Ann Arbor, were the president of the University of Michigan and his wife, and Allen Britton, Dean of the School of Music, who later wrote to the chapter commenting on the excellence of the program. Reaction of this sort makes all of our efforts worthwhile, and will help theatre organ attain its rightful and respectable place in the musical world.

An audience of 2400 attended our April 29-30 public show featuring Lee Erwin at the 3/10 Barton at the Redford Theatre. The film was the 1927 Academy Award winning *Seventh Heaven*, starring Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrell. Due to the two hour running time of the film, the concert portion was shorter than usual and the sing-along was dispensed with altogether.

Among the musical numbers Lee performed, prior to the film, were several Scott Joplin compositions from his forthcoming Angel recording. The audience thoroughly enjoyed Lee's playing and especially his original film score, in which he used the inevitable "Diane." It was surprising, for us at least, to learn afterward how many people were disappointed because there had been no sing-along. Al-

though of minor importance, the sing-along does have its place, when time permits, because there are people who enjoy it.

With chapter membership at an all time high, more members are becoming involved in convention activities as the Note-able Nineteenth draws near. Have you sent in your convention registration yet?

DON LOCKWOOD

## NEW YORK

Thanks to special cooperation of the Radio City Music Hall, the chapter was privileged to offer on Sunday, March 10, a marvelous six-hour entertainment package that quickly generated an ATOS "Mini-Convention" as members of many chapters throughout the Northeast descended upon the "Showplace of the Nation".

Everyone was rewarded with:

1. — A "show-stopper" concert by James Paulin, Jr., a featured artist at the ATOS "Fabulous Fifteenth" national convention in 1970 and the newest member of the Music Hall organ staff, who performed on the famed 4/58 Grand Organ.

2. — A demonstration of the mechanical marvels of the Music Hall's great stage, by John Henry Jackson, vice president of the Music Hall and a great friend of ATOS.

3. — Leon Leonidoff's famed in-

spirational pageant, *The Glory of Easter*.

4. — The sparkling Music Hall springtime festival variety stage show.

5. — The great new musical film *Mame*, which was premiered only the previous Thursday.

Over 700 ATOS members and their friends converged upon the Music Hall for this exciting program, including substantial chapter delegations from Delaware Valley (under Chairman W. Charles Schrader); Connecticut Valley (under Chairman Alfred E. Colton); Garden State (under Chairman Robert Balfour); Potomac Valley (under Chairman Leroy A. Wagner), and the Hammond Organ Society (under Chairman Peter R. Polito).

Much of the impetus for the "mini-convention" idea, we are told, came from Jean Lautzenheiser, a National director and former chairman of Potomac Valley.

Jimmy Paulin played an unusually varied program. His stylings were often quite in contrast with those of the other members of the Music Hall organ staff. Like most talented musicians, his training — largely classical — began at an early age. He was his high school's official organist and later became choir director and organist for the St. John's



DUET WITH AN ANGEL? — James Paulin, Jr., leads into a spectacular number on the Radio City Music Hall 4/56 Wurlitzer as the trumpeting wire angel in the background (part of the Easter Pageant setting) seemingly plays a fanfare to proclaim the start of his ATOS "mini-convention" concert.



Baptist church in Lakeview, Long Island, N. Y. He completed his formal musical education at Mannes College of Music and thereafter presided at the console of the Wonder Robert Morton of Manhattan's United Palace church — the former Loew's 175th St., Theatre. Jim also served as staff organist at the Nassau County Coliseum when it opened several years ago. He has performed concerts not only in the New York metropolitan area but also in Rochester and Binghamton as well as in Detroit, Mich. He has been a member of the RCMH organ staff for the past year — the first black man to hold such a position and already very popular with Music Hall audiences.

### Rosa — Radio and Roses

The following Sunday (March 17), the chapter journeyed back to the golden days of radio as the ever-popular Rosa Rio entertained us on Long Island University's 4/26 Wurlitzer. The university's basketball court and gymnasium, known today as "Founders Hall", was once the famed Brooklyn Paramount and the organ remains today in its original position in the building.

Chapter crewmen Bob Walker and Jim Leaffe keep this magnificent instrument in concert condition.

Rosa played a wide-ranging program of the music ATOS members love to hear. Among the nostalgic numbers she played, she chose to dedicate Jesse Crawford's theme "Forgotten Melody" to her friend Clealan Blakely of Picton, Ontario, who had journeyed the farthest to hear her concert.

After her final encore, she was presented with a large bouquet of red roses by Chapter Secretary-Treasurer Allen Rossiter on behalf of an appreciative chapter membership.

Prior to Rosa's concert, nineteen members had an opportunity to try their hand at the great instrument during an open console session.

Rosa Rio, a very vivacious and talented lady, keeps active playing concerts, recording, arranging, composing and, most importantly, teaching. She is very popular with organ students and teaches in her two studios — one in Huntington, Conn., and the other in Westport.

### Postscript

Several weeks later, while attending another notable organ concert in Connecticut, Rosa was seated in the



ROSES FOR ROSA — Acknowledging the applause of her distant but highly appreciative audience, Rosa Rio receives a bouquet of red roses from N.Y. Chapter Secretary-Treasurer Allen Rossiter as the LIU 4/26 Wurlitzer console shares the spotlight. — (Photo by Herbert G. Frank, Jr.)

audience and she confided to nearby friends (plus a number of her students) that her LIU concert, in one respect, was a puzzling experience.

She said she had the feeling that the audience wasn't there (they were, of course, and their applause proved it time and time again). But the console is separated from the first remaining row of seats by the entire basketball court and this makes it very difficult for the performing artist to sense the presence of the audience while playing. Moreover, while the huge auditorium now has exceptional reverb because of its great "acreage" of hardwood flooring, it takes quite a few seconds for sounds from the chambers to bounce back to the console. This makes playing exceptionally difficult for the artist. But from where the audience is seated, that Wurlitzer sound is almost unbeatable!

Rosa, your audience at LIU was completely unaware of your problem. They just enjoyed your music — thoroughly!

HERBERT G. FRANK, JR.

### NIAGARA FRONTIER

On February 13, Dennis James made his annual appearance at the Riviera Theatre.

I especially enjoyed the first half of Dennis' program. You could close your eyes as he played and your thoughts would wander back to the early days of radio, when the big bands were playing out of Chicago. As he changed from voice to voice and then to full orchestra, I thought what an arranger he could have made back

in the early thirties. To me, he played the theatre organ the way I think it should be played, that is to replace the pit orchestra.

On March 13 Frank Cimmino made his first appearance at the Riviera. It was also the first opportunity that I have had to hear him. Frank is well known downstate and in Jersey.

The Niagara Frontier Annual Banquet was at the Cavalier Restaurant. We have no exact count, but close to a hundred members and guests attended. Several radio and newspaper people were present and their fine publicity has been a great help to our chapter.

Luella Wickham (our chapter sweetheart) traveled all the way from Syracuse, and was seated at the head table next to the M.C. Art Melgier who has given so much to the chapter and who played several Buffalo theatres in the golden days, spoke briefly.

The M.C. recognized many officers and members who have worked so hard for the chapter. It would be impossible to mention all their names. However Ed Tucholka of radio station WBEN-FM was presented with one of the original stop tabs from the Riviera Wurlitzer (all new tabs have been installed during the renovating of the console). Through Ed's efforts, WBEN-FM has for several years, been making six or more spot announcements every day about our next concert along with a brief summary of the artist. This has been done as a public service at no cost to the chapter and has helped to fill the theatre and make our monthly concerts such a success.

Bill Hatzenbuehler was not allowed to get by without saying a few words.



Bill, who is one of the outstanding organ builders in the East, has been the mastermind in our rebuilding and expansion program of the Riviera Organ; not only has he given of his knowledge but hundreds of hours of his time.

We hope that this project will be completed some time this summer. I know that several members have given much of their time and I hope in the not-too-distant future to give a complete run down on this organ and credit to the faithful crew who, along with Joe Thomas and Paul Birk, have for all practical purposes made the Riviera their permanent residence. Joe and Paul go home occasionally for a change of laundry and to maintain their voting rights.

April 17 found Dick Smith at the Riviera. He seems to be one of the big attractions of the year, and the house is packed one hour before show time. I first heard Dick, October 13, 1965 on a 2M/6R in Gowanda, N. Y. and I must admit that I have traveled many miles on several occasions to hear this guy. I like to hear him play and I love to see him work. This must be his eighth or ninth year in a row that he has played in Buffalo.

May 15 will bring Karl Cole back for his third appearance. Karl made his first appearance here when he replaced Leon Berry on 24 hour notice when Leon fell ill. He was an instant hit and is also one of the crowd pleasers.

Rex Koury will be back on July 24. Rex made his first appearance at the Riviera last year. We also heard him in Portland at the '73 convention. He is certainly a fine artist, with an extra pleasant personality. We are glad he has accepted our invitation to come back again this year.

There is much discussion among chapter members about our National Convention this year in Detroit. More members than ever are planning to make the trip. Many who have never attended before are seriously considering attending this convention.

There is plenty of gas in Canada and it is only a five or six hour drive to Detroit, from the Peace Bridge at Buffalo, across beautiful countryside on excellent highways. If you can get enough gas to get to Buffalo you've got it made.

I would not only urge our chapter members, but all ATOS members in the northeast to attend. I am sure if you attended the '67 convention you will want to go back. Detroit was quite

the host. Next year's convention will be on the West Coast and depending on the energy crisis, travel could be restricted.

I will be looking for you in Detroit. I will be the one displaying the 8 foot VOX, stop tab, (that's because I speak so softly) stop me and say hello.

STEVE CROWLEY

## NORTH TEXAS

There's been plenty going on theatre organ-wise in the North Texas area, even though there hasn't been too much actual chapter activity since the February election-of-officers meeting. Jerry Bacon has his Fine-Arts Theatre installation up to 16 ranks, with new console and other improvements. The gang is planning some more of the Sunday morning work sessions on this instrument. Jerry has put in a lot of hard work on this installation and it's shaping up great.

Foundations have been poured for the new pizza parlor in Dallas and building construction is progressing. By the time this appears in THEATRE ORGAN, they might be to the point where Jim Peterson and his capable crew can install the instrument. It will give us a place to meet, complete with vittles, and should really make some upswings in the theatre organ interest curves in this area.

Dale Flannery again hosted the chapter at his home on April 14. 45 members attended including some new ones who were duly introduced and got their first taste of activity in the theatre organ world of North Texas. Earl MacDonald, 1974 Chapter Chairman got a short business session under way, utilizing his new ambidexterous two-headed gavel, made and presented to him by Mark Munzell Sr. Dale opened the musical portion of the afternoon with several numbers that really demonstrated the capabilities of both him and the organ. The "Colonel Bogie March" and "76 Trombones" really shook the rafters of Dale's home, even with the enthusiastic "warm bodies" to absorb a lot of that sound.

Open console followed with Charlie Evans, Stan Guy, Wally McDevitt and several others taking their turns. It was a great afternoon. It must have been, we signed up three new members! Those who weren't gathered around the console or in front of the swell shutters, gathered around the punch

bowl.

Chapter officers held a "board meeting" at Chairman Earl MacDonald's home. Doesn't sound like much, does it, until you realize that one board member made a 200 mile round trip to attend, and another one made a 100 mile journey. That's out of a group of 5 people, for a two-hour chapter guidance session. It was all worth it though, because by the time this hits the pages of THEATRE ORGAN'S next issue, one of the year's gala events will be behind us. That's the annual trip down to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Mitchell in Mexia (Ma-hay - ya, remember?) Texas. We're going by automobile convoy this time, bringing our own food, with Fred and Joye providing not only their beautiful home and its' grounds, but the cool drinks and other refreshments too. There will have been some swimming in the pool, visits to the railroad caboose Fred has restored on the grounds, and housing an organ, (pump-type that is,) too. Part of the program too are cameo concerts by two of the chapter's top-notch organists, played on Fred and Joye's super-deluxe Rodgers. Andy Crow was down to voice the instrument, so you know it's going to sound great. Wish you could have been here for the meeting too, Andy. And I know Dennis Hedberg and some of the other Portland Chapter would really have had themselves a fine "organ afternoon" down there on Fred and Joye's "spread". This was scheduled for May 26.

Other items discussed at the board meeting included possible "silent movie" presentations, sing-alongs, and "name artist" concerts. The chapter is off to a great start for the 1974 year under the able guidance of Earl MacDonald. (No - he's in electronics, not hamburgers.) We hope the rest of you have as great a year planned as we do.

JOE KOSKI

## OREGON

A chapter meeting was held at the home of Bert and Gwen Hedderly in Portland on March 31. It was the first concert featuring the Hedderly's recently installed 2/5 Wurlitzer.

The organ was removed from the First Congregational Church in The Dalles, Oregon, 90 miles up the Columbia River from Portland. Installed in the church, the organ con-





Paul Quarino at the 2/5 Wurlitzer at the Hadderly residence with a rather unusual stop, the cymbal-banging mechanical monkey, usually seen at the Organ Grinder Restaurant. — (Photo by Claude V. Neuffer)

sisted of three ranks, (Diapason, Flute & String) and Chimes. Bert added a Trumpet and Vox Humana, bringing the organ up to five ranks. This instrument was meticulously installed by Bert and his father and is as neat and clean a job as you'll see anywhere.

Our concert was played by Paul Quarino, who recently moved to Portland from the "Melody Inn" in Los Altos, California. Paul is now playing the 3/34 Wurlitzer at Portland's Organ Grinder restaurant, along with Jonas Nordwall.

That Quarino is a real showman! His numbers were interlaced with witty prattle and ad-libs. His program consisted of classics, improvisations on Bach and familiar pop tunes. It's really amazing what an artist of Paul's ability can get out of five ranks, and no Tibia, yet!

As is the custom at the Organ Grinder, Paul was up-staged in one number by the Grinders cymbal-banging mechanical monkey, placed on the console by Dennis Hedberg at the appropriate moment. This was met with complete delight by the audience, all of whom had seen the monkey in action before, at the restaurant.

Playing a small organ like this one of five ranks is quite a change from the 34 ranker which Paul plays daily. However, it certainly shows people how much music can be made on a small instrument.

DON INGRAM

## POTOMAC VALLEY

March saw the Potomac Valley chapter on busses bound for a New York weekend and a concert at Radio City Music Hall, as guests of the hosting New York chapter, featuring Jimmy Paulin, Jr. at the console. Seventy-eight of our members enjoyed an evening on the town, then on



Dick Smith at the Wagner Wurlitzer. — (Photo by R. Wagner)

Sunday morning convened at the Music Hall for what we knew would be a first rate performance. Jimmy's "Trem's off" approach was really refreshing and his mastery of both the music and the organ was complete. The demonstration of the Music Hall Wurlitzer with and without its amplification system was most enlightening but with or without it, Jimmy was a treat to hear.

Our April Dick Smith concert at the Wagner residence was nothing short of fantastic. A more lovely spring day couldn't have been ordered and by the car full our members arrived, expectant of coming events. Dick gave them all anyone could desire and more. In his inimitable styling he put the Wurlitzer through its paces and used everything on it to good advantage. From his Glenn Miller remembrances to Jesse Crawford stylings, from novelty silent movie score collection to rousing marches, Dick kept them happy and wanting more — which they demanded — and got — in three encores. We saw him, we heard him, and it is still difficult to believe one man can do so much with one instrument. Dick Smith is truly "An experience."

Preceding the concert a short business meeting was held at which our past chairman, Jean Lautzenheiser, was presented with a plaque in recognition of her outstanding accomplishments during her two years in office.

ROY WAGNER

## RED RIVER

The March assembly of the Fargo-Moorhead theatre organ buffs took place at Grace Lutheran Church in Fargo on a warm, sunny Sunday afternoon. The writer presented a short pops concert on the 2/8 Wangerin theatre organ. This instrument was installed at Grace Lutheran in 1938 after it was purchased from Wangerin in Milwaukee after the organ had been repossessed from a theatre. Very little "churchifying" was done except the percussions and toy counter were left at the factory. The organ was installed in a small single chamber and, because of the lack of space, the manual chests were criss-crossed. The organ is on ten inches wind pressure and speaks out with authority. The business meeting got under way in the fellowship hall where the concert committee reported on the upcoming silent movie spec-



tacular at the Fargo Theatre. After hearing that the *Exorcist* had been booked in for fifteen weeks at the Fargo and the theatre chain would not rent the theatre during this period, discussion turned to a Fall concert. A discussion then completed the business portion on means of promotion of the type used by the Cedar Rapids Chapter.

The April meeting started out as a supper hour pot-luck at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Reinhold Utke of Moorhead. The turnout was excellent! The business talk centered around maintaining good public relations with the theatre chain that owns the Fargo Theatre. After everyone had stuffed themselves to the limit with exceptionally good food, they all moved to Weld Hall on the Campus of Moorhead State College where they viewed *The Great K&A Train Robbery* starring Tom Mix. Alan Shorter, a silent film accompanist student from the college, played an original score on a piano. As a film surprise, the club also saw Harry Langdon try to take portraits of a very sedate family with some very naughty children. The idea of using a piano to accompany a film was to show the club that this instrument can be just as effective a vehicle for scoring as an organ, if done well. Al Shorter received warm applause at the end for a job extremely well done!

LANCE JOHNSON

## SOUTHEASTERN

Atlanta's Fox Theatre and its famous Moller theatre organ have long served as a base of operations for the Southeastern Chapter ATOS. In fact, the restoration of this instrument in the early sixties brought about the formation of the chapter. But home meetings have certainly taken no "back seat" to theatre organ activities in the Atlanta area.

Chapter members gathered on Sunday afternoon, March 31, at the home of Walter and Donna Winn to enjoy the sound of the Winn's newly-acquired Allen three manual electronic theatre organ. After a short business meeting, chapter chairman Bob Van Camp — now affiliated with Allen Organs since his retirement as one of the "voices of the South" on Atlanta's WSB radio — presented a cameo performance of some of his trademark songs. Open console at the Allen followed. Many chapter members con-

tributed to an afternoon of relaxation and good theatre organ sound, again attesting to the fact that the Southeastern Chapter is one of talented organists as well as enthusiasts.

On Sunday afternoon, May 5, ATOS activities centered around a concert by one of the chapter's most promising organists, Walter Winn. Winn's concert, at the home of chapter member John McCall, featured the Gulbransen Premiere electronic theatre organ. The program began with a lively arrangement of "Hallelujah" from



John McCall at the Winn's three-manual Allen.

Vincent Youman's *Hit the Deck* (1927), using a rich array of stop rail voices alternating with a strident sforzando with brass predominating. Winn's talent at "working full time" at the console and his adept, effective registration changes marked all of the organist's selections. To close the concert, Winn played Gershwin's "The Man I Love," a song first introduced by Adelle Astair in the Gershwin's musical, *Lady Be Good*. It is noteworthy

that the song was thrown out of the show after a week's run, and today it stands as one of the most aristocratic and admired of America's popular songs — as witnessed by Walter Winn's sensitive rendition.

Many feel that ATOS home meetings such as these are prime examples of how the theatre organ art has been promulgated throughout the homes of enthusiasts, allowing those with space problems or budget problems, or a combination of both, an unprecedented opportunity to enjoy the experience of the institution of the theatre organ. Electronic instruments — both good and inferior — have made the general public more aware of the organ as an entertainment medium as opposed to its traditional image based upon liturgical applications. Possibly it is with this open-mindedness that the ATOS will continue to function as an organization that will be attractive and useful to a great spectrum of enthusiasts.

JOHN CLARK McCALL, JR.

## SOUTHERN ARIZONA

Southern Arizona held the fourth regular meeting of the winter season with a program at the Northminster Presbyterian Church, Tucson. Ralph Cloos, entertainment chairman, demonstrated the McDowell-built pipe organ, a 2/17 instrument with 44 stops and 994 pipes. These pipes were cut in the building and not pre-cut. The Diapason Chorus was left open, toe voicing and no nicking. As the instrument is modern, some of the pipework was done with nicking and slotting. After a tour and talk about the operation of the organ, Ralph played several numbers, including "The Palms", in honor of Palm Sunday.

Past chairman, Lois Seamands then entertained members and guests at her home with open console and a social

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Australian David Pitts at the Conn 650 at Lois Seamand's home.

hour. David Pitts of New Castle, New South Wales, Australia, was our artist of the late afternoon and evening at the hostess' Conn 650 organ.

David Pitts has been the resident organist in the Kensington Theatre of New Castle NSW playing a Conn theatre organ before the film and during intermission. New Castle doesn't have pipe organs in its theatres but David has given two concerts on the 2/10 Wurlitzer in the Marrickville Town Hall, Sydney and has, in conjunction with Don Kingston, export manager for Conn, given concerts at the New Castle City Auditorium.

A student of Albert Burrows, English theatre organist, who has since returned to England, David has played organ for seven years. Starting at a very young age on piano, at 18 he took up the study of organ.

Mr. Burrows, David's teacher, studied at the College of Organists, London, England and with Eric Coates, the well known composer of the "London Suite" and other works. David says he tries not to copy anyone and he does have his own, a rather dramatic theatre style, which is very pleasant. He studied basic theatre style, Bach and other good foundation work and has tied it all together in an ear pleasing way that should make him very many musical fans and friends in the theatre organ world.

David got started at the Yamaha Regional Contest which he won three times. He went on to win the State finals and came in third in the National Finals. Quote: "Quite a good experience for me and helped me gain confidence for playing in public". Unquote. David played on contract

with the Australian Broadcasting Company, (radio) on the "Coastal" broadcast, for thirty minutes each day using a Conn 650 theatre organ. His home is built around an electronic organ. A nearly square studio of 600 sq. ft. was built wide enough with windows in the right places so the console can be in the center of the room. He built a special chamber for extra speakers which he designed and also has a Leslie.

Leaving Tucson in May, David will go to Phoenix, Arizona. Don Kingston, instigator of David's trip, had made

arrangements for employment and experience by working here in Tucson for the local Conn dealer, Broadway Organ and Piano Co. Broadway is opening a branch in Phoenix in May and David will go there. The many friends of David Pitts, here, hope to see him in Detroit at the convention this summer. After the U.S.A., he goes to Germany and then, home.

This reporter had a great deal of pleasure in conducting this interview.

BOB HIGH

## SOUTH FLORIDA

The March meeting of the South Florida Chapter was a double bonus: a joint meeting with the Miami Chapter of the American Guild of Organists and the eagerly-awaited dedication of the Wurlitzer from the Florida State Theatre in Jacksonville, which now resides in Andre Hall in Miami. Bob and Vivian Andre have spent countless hours lovingly rebuilding, and their work paid off with a magnificent evening for everyone. John Steele opened the program in fine style and treated the audience to many of its favorites, including excerpts from Walt Disney's *Snow White*. We are grateful to John for stepping in at the eleventh hour for the ailing Hal Stanton.

The second half of the Wurlitzer



Betty Lee Taylor, at the console. And organ owners Vivian and Bob Andre at the dedication concert for ATOS and AGO members. — (G. Gerhart Photo)



dedication took everyone back to vaudeville and the era of the silent movies. Betty Lee Taylor brought her own style and charm, along with her guests, tenor soloist, Oscar Davis and Gene Hoffman, a comedian dancer. Betty Lee was right in her element with her accompaniment of Harold Lloyd in *Haunted Spooks* and *Finishing Touch* with Laurel and Hardy. For some of the audience, it was a first-time thrill and for others, the re-awakening of fond memories. Thank you, Betty Lee, John, and most of all, Vivian and Bob, for a wonderful evening.

What is about eight feet high, six feet wide, two and one half feet deep and sings as sweetly as a bird? How often have you heard someone say "I'd love to have one but I don't have room?" Dot and Joe Muise, of our chapter, have the answer to both questions. It's the ideal solution for those of us who have small homes and large dreams of our own pipe organs, and it can be found in Dot and Joe's living room.

Yes, it really is a pipe organ chamber, with real pipes, and on wheels, yet! They, too, have invested time and love in their conversion of the four rank, mostly Estey tubular-pneumatic to the sweet sounding, direct electric instrument which chapter members

heard at the April meeting. A real treat was provided by the host and hostess with their piano and organ duets which included Bach's "Siciliano" and "Suite for Two Organs" by the Spanish composer, Antonio Soler. The voices of piano and organ complimented and balanced each other in a manner not often heard. The Soler featured the Estey and a reed pump organ for an unusual note. Open console and a chance to inspect the "inner workings" gave club members the perfect ending of a delightful Sunday afternoon. Thanks, Dot and Joe, for the warmth and graciousness of your hospitality, and for sharing your talents and your fine installation.

BOBBIE LITZINGER

### WESTERN RESERVE

It was really exhilarating to arise bright and early on a crispy-cold Saturday A.M. to join together for a social-historical event such as the W.R.T.O.S.'rs participated in back in February. The occasion was precipitated by the rejuvenation and re-soundification of the Palace Theatre 4/11 Wurlitzer in Lorain, Ohio. The following paragraph appeared in the *Lorain Journal* Friday, February 15, 1974:

"Some will even remember the gala

opening of the \$500,000 theatre, April 19, 1928. Larry Jean Fisher 'presided at the console,' featuring variations from "All Alone." A 10-piece orchestra played accompaniment to three acts of vaudeville, and the overture to the silent film, *Something's Always Bound to Happen*, starring Esther Ralston."

But as talking pictures, TV and rock bands surfaced on the cultural horizon, a disease, not at all unfamiliar even today, also surfaced. It has been diagnosed as "neglect." Sure enough, even back in 1963, it took six months of doctoring for W.R.T.O.S. to ready this grand Wurlitzer to be played for the Mary Lee Tucker Christmas Show.

However, "neglect" was replaced recently by a huge dose of "labor (plus) loads of love" and a dedication to revitalize this fine instrument. Among those who worked were Fred Carson, a teacher at Brookside School in Sheffield, John Leek of Oberlin, Ohio and Robert and Eloise Stilgenbauer. In Fred's own words, "The Palace Wurlitzer is a great treasure for the area - the only large organ in a theatre in northeastern Ohio. With some refurbishing of the theatre, promotion and the right schedule, organ concerts could be a big thing in the area."

We heartily thank Fred Packard of

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The Stilgenbauer installation includes a set of Haskell reedless Oboe pipes.

Shaker Heights who was our featured artist. His arrangements of well-remembered songs such as "Laura", "Wine and Roses", "Winter Wonderland", "As Time Goes By" and "The Trolley Song" indeed enlightened our senses to appreciate the unusual, rare and beautiful tones of the organ. Thank you, too, George Haeffer, manager of the Palace Theatre!

*Opus I  
Sui Generis  
(One of a Kind)*

*"For the pleasure and enjoyment of*

*all who will afford a few moments to play or listen – we dedicate this organ."*

*Eloise and Bob Stilgenbauer  
11-19-73*

So reads the plaque on Eloise and Bob's Estey pipe organ – also known as their "Marry them and bury them Estey," inasmuch as it was formerly used in the 20th Street Methodist Church, Lorain, Ohio.

Their devotion to the restoration of

this organ was so great that it necessitated a move to a larger home to eventually hear it played. Additional remodeling at the rear of their new home provided space for the creation of the extraordinary loft which houses 8 ranks of 445 pipes. It is colloquially and literally one of the "neatest" installations we have yet seen. Eloise and Bob's talents are further illustrated here by their imaginative use of decorative church pipes as an at-



Bob Stilgenbauer's Estey pipe organ and room divider utilizing used church pipes.

## LYN LARSEN

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tractive room divider.

*The Elyria Chronicle-Telegram* (12-8-73) and the *Lorain Journal* (2-15-74) also featured Eloise and Bob Stilgenbauer's Estey. Eloise and son, Rob, an especially musical twosome, can now entertain, to the pride of their family and friends, with duets, using the pipe organ and their Baldwin electronic organ.

Our March meeting took place at the Gray's Armory where Bob Brenner entertained us on our 3/13 Wurlitzer. W.R.T.O.S. member Bob Brenner began piano lessons as a child. He graduated to the organ at age 19, alternating his practice on a 4/M Moller church organ and a Hammond. For years he toured night clubs playing the Hammond. Bob has been a Baldwin dealer for 18 years, first in his native New Castle, Pa. and recently in Mentor, "The Baldwin Music Center." During the course of the program Bob introduced his recently published book, "Bob Brenner's Modular Memory Music Method." This book is designed for the person who knows nothing about music and also the person who has attempted music lessons and now wants to learn to play chords. Bob's method requires less than 20 seconds to learn each chord of which there are twelve. There are nine small rules to follow, similar to a



Bob Brenner describes his recently published music instruction book.

"times table", which take only 3 minutes a day to learn, having to do with changing chords. Bob's book sells for \$10.00. It has been a successful venture and has made many, many people happy!

Make yourself happy - you, too, can learn to play what you now enjoy!

BEA ROSSIN

#### WEST PENN

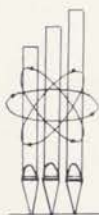
On Saturday, March 2, 1974, West Penn presented the second of its current silent films - *The Cat and the Canary*. The Joseph Horne Music Cen-

ter of Pittsburgh graciously furnished their recital hall and a fine three manual Rodgers classic instrument. Mr. George Christ, W.P.T.O.S., was our host. This "thriller" was enjoyed by all in attendance, particularly the young folks, who sat in rapt attention from start to finish. An intermission luncheon was served by Charlotte McKnight and Katherine Smonko. As an added attraction, Elva Houston and James Berna presented a program of popular organ duets and a sing-along. The "silent flick" was accompanied by Bob Mitchell.

On Saturday, March 30, 1974, West Penn presented the second of its current theatre organ workshops -



James Berna and Elva Houston shared the spotlight.



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"Pittsburgh's Early Theatres, Organs and Organists." Mr. George Christ, W.P.T.O.S. hosted the group at Joseph Hornes Music Center of Pittsburgh. The success of the event can be attributed to the hard work and diligent research conducted by the program committee — Mrs. Elva Houston, Programmer; Mr. Fran Verri, Historical Research; Mr. John Schwartz, Audio/Visual; and Miss Patty Schwartz, Special Committee.

Refreshments were coordinated by Mrs. Katherine Smonko and Mrs. Charlotte McKnight.

Musical Contributions were made by Mr. George Christ and Mr. Rey Galbraith.

A new member, Mrs. Julie Roberts was received into the Society.

BOB MITCHELL

## WOLVERINE

Many long and restless nights were spent in the basement of the Michigan Theatre in Lansing, Michigan, during the months of February and March. Four Wolverine organ crewmen completed restoration of the 3/12 Barton's water-damaged Tibia rank and chest. Those crewmen were Lawrie Mallett, George Gephart, Ed Corey and Scott Smith. Now back in their proper holes, the restored pipes breathe forth a new,



Gary Montgomery at the DTOC Wurlitzer console. — (Photo by George Gephart)

more sparkling sound which probably hasn't been heard in many moons in these parts. Other work being done includes a regulator to both the 16' pedal Tuba rank and the console. It was discovered that adjusting the blower fans to their proper tolerances caused the static line pressure to rise to a point where the organ must be regulated at all points. Other additions to the Barton are in the planning stage at the present time.

On Sunday, March 16, former Wolverine Chairman Gary Montgomery opened his program at console

of the 4/34 DTOC Wurlitzer with a medley from, *Annie, Get Your Gun*. Despite the fact that three solo division ranks were not playing due to restoration work, Gary played a fine program that was varied, and enjoyed by all. Following Gary's program, many got a chance to try their hands at the "Big One" at an open console session.

On Sunday, April 21, about fifty Wolverine members were treated to a program by the one-and-only John Muri, at the 3/67 Aeolian residence organ in Meadow Brook Hall, near Detroit. The organ, equipped with a player unit, is the largest residence organ in the state of Michigan. Those familiar with the organ were overheard to say that John's playing was superior to that of the rolls, which was no surprise to this writer. As well as the organ program, the attending members were treated to a tour of the 100-room house, to view how the "other half" lived in the early part of this century. John continued to play throughout the rest of the afternoon, for the listening pleasure of the public who came to view what the original occupants merely referred to as "The Farm." John Muri, known for getting the best out of any organ, certainly outdid himself at his Meadow Brook Hall performance.

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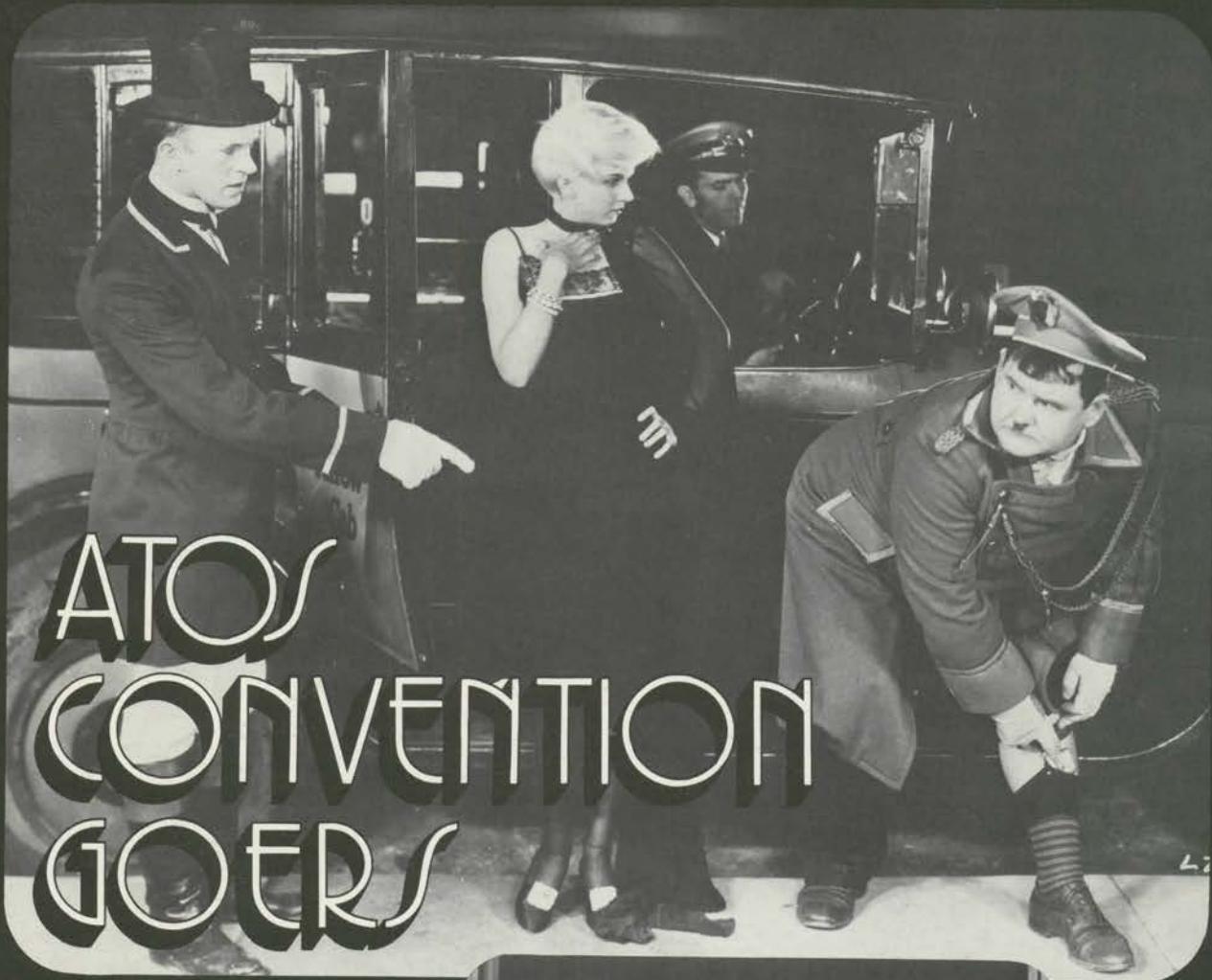
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